

Some ways in which religion leads to violence without obviously inciting it

A bad social entity or person can cause untold harm without even trying. It may not command harm for it knows it does not need to and in secret laughs into its sleeve at the people within and without who have been corrupted by its moral arsenic. And as people have moral arsenic of their own religion only needs to push certain buttons without looking like it is in any way responsible.

If a religion or scripture does not strictly lay it down that x must be done and the religion tends to do x then don't let anybody say, "X is bad but its not really part of the religion." Each religion has to be more than what its doctrines and scriptures say. Take for example, Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet did not decree by law that Mormon males must spend two years on mission work. Yet who can deny this practice is part of true Mormonism. Its too ingrained and its allowed and endorsed by the principles. It expresses Mormon beliefs so that is enough. As a religion surely has to allow for mistakes it follows it is still to blame if some believers wrongly think they should start wars to overthrow secularism.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You cannot fight an ideology of religious violence. You can bomb but it will always come back. The violence is a symptom of the ideology. Nobody says, "Okay we want terrorism and war and suicide bombings so let us invent an ideology that demands it." Any ideology can lead to such evil. But if you say your ideology is not yours but given to you by God or Jesus or the Archangel Michael you lay the responsibility on it and the reasons for it on somebody else - somebody who may not exist or have spoken at all! Such ideology has special power to do evil for it is protected from tests that may show its human origin. Anything that is protected from testing is telling you to believe and close your mind. A religion having a God who creates violent feelings in people, who lets them be enslaved by hate, who inspires bloody prophets and revelations, that uses its good works to get you to ignore its bad side and which approves of people having lost their lives over God (e.g. Christianity says that though it is now wrong to kill people it was okay under the guidelines left by God in Old Testament times) should be abandoned like it was on fire. Its worship of God is trampling on graves. Some say religion is not the worst warmonger. That is nonsense. It is. But even if it were not, the fact remains that a system that condones evil though acts non-violent deserves all the rancour that a warmongering religion does. Today's people who do not hate murder and violence enough become killers tomorrow or if they get the opportunity. A religion not being belligerent means nothing if that religion condones evil.

HOW RELIGIONS OF PEACE CAN BE THE BEST FRIENDS RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE EVER HAD

A religion can hide its true feelings about other religions and their members. Though it is not overtly hostile to other religions and the people in them it is still hostile. While religious identity is by nature not so much an individual thing as much as a way to feel connected to others with the same identity or a God who fosters your identity, it is about in some way fully or partly, excluding somebody who does not fit the criteria for having a connection with.

We all want to be part of groups. Organised religion is a group. You can live without being part of it but to be strong a group needs an enemy for that increases bonding in the group. It needs to invent one. Usually the enemy is just another religion. A group without an enemy will soon look for one and antagonise in order to get one.

A religion that claims to have the proper ideals is claiming to have potential for perfection. It is perfect in what it knows if nothing else. Thinking you are perfect means you think your core is perfect. Or that you are perfect enough in some area. So you will strike out at whatever group or person challenges your self-image of perfection. It does not matter if it is you as an individual or a group. As M Scott Peck warns in *The People of the Lie*, "our potential for evil as a group is still sufficient for us to avoid looking squarely at it."

We all know that natural selection is true - it is not necessarily about evolution. The strongest and most manipulative will survive. We have to live with that victimising and threatening fact. The more we blind ourselves to it the more we fear it. We don't want to see it. Belief in a higher power is another tactic of many that we use to blind ourselves with and try to protect ourselves with. We want that power to give us an extra edge in the face of nature which is red in tooth and claw and know that a meteorite can wipe the planet of life anytime. Religion does not need to command harm doing in order to get us to harm. If the natural world is about a survival battle then surely the same happens in the spirit world? If resources are limited in any world we will act Darwinian. Does religion give us more Darwinism than Darwin did? Yes - it gives us more perceived resources to worry about.

People go to war over scarce resources or perceived ones. When times are bad people use religion to feel that resources are coming or ahead. When secularism gives them fulfillment away from religion they fall away from religion. In both cases

there is intense self-interest. In both the attitude is there, "I would battle and kill for what I have if I have to." That is subliminal in the person who says they need nothing. It is still there.

Tolerance is fine but the less you need it the better so don't create groups and categories that are not really needed. Tolerance implies putting up with and refusing to persecute. But it wears out if there are too many roads for it. Religions tend to form groups so that is bad.

Religion must know as we all do that the more we try to pray away and suppress sexual and violent thoughts the stronger the temptation to give into them gets. The preoccupation with evil gets stronger. Religion could be using suppression and encouraging it to get people to explode.

Any entity or ideology can be violent in either, or both of two ways. One, it can attack people just because they are not believers in it. For example, Anglicanism murdered Catholic priests in the penal times. Two, it may punish those it considers immoral or sinners. For example, Jesus attacking people in the temple and refusing to admit that Moses and his God were evil for commanding people to stone others to death. Paul in Romans 13 said its God's will even for pagan nations to be vindictive to law-breakers.

Any ideology is inherently evil for its about making an idol of ideas. A political or social one is not as bad as a religious one for the former if nonsense will collapse and weaken while religion solidifies and it is hard to get it to self-destruct. It is immune to evidence for it claims the evidence is God's concern.

Every religion to a point says that if somebody hurts you badly it is not always wise to strike back. The reason many agree is that they see that if they hate their enemy they are self-tormenting themselves over that enemy which is what the enemy wants. To take away the power of the enemy over you it is necessary to maybe let it go. There is no love of enemy when all you want to do is protect yourself by refusing to give that person power over you. The love of enemies is really passive aggression. The cloak of piety is necessary to disguise it.

Evil breeds evil and is usually very crafty in how it does it. That is why a religion of peace is not a religion of peace if so much as one person becomes willing to hurt others for it. The proof of the pudding ...

Religious peace is just the absence of war. That is not real deep peace and it will not last and never does.

A religion itself or individual religionists can be supportive of religious inspired violence if not in deed, then certainly in principle. No religion will ever be able to be all violent so it is a mistake to use the good members or the heretical ones or the lazy ones as an excuse for denying that religion or a kind of religion produces violence. It is one thing for an outsider to excuse the religion but the religion excusing itself is disgraceful. Self-praise is no praise and all that! A religion may condemn another religion as a religion of violence which means the first religion will attack it and dodge the bad reputation of warmongering. A religion is to blame as a worldview for killing whether it is a few who kill for it or many. It is an insult to make a numbers game of it by pointing to those who are non-violent as an excuse for saying the violent ones have in fact nothing to do with the religion. Religious and political causality of violence are essentially the same thing - both impact how the society is governed - and one feeds off the other.

A religion is a system of doctrine but there is always 99 implied or unsaid doctrines for every 1 doctrine. Thus if a religions teaching seems innocuous or even inspiring that is not the whole story and the unsaid can be leading some or all of the members into faith-related violence or some other form of evil. Errors cause much the same trouble as lies so a religion of man being deluded that it is from God or has infallible truth is enough.

Some of the problems come from the nature of morality - goodness is not all roses and flowers. Deep down people think moral rules force themselves on us and guilt blackmails us to do good. Even when we feel free in jail cell we are still not free. Deep down they think that if their religion starts forcing any other people it is no big deal for we are forced anyway to be good. It is easy to force religious morality on people and think, "I am not the one doing the forcing. The morality is." All people force others morally at times and feel it is right to do so.

Nobody likes war. We know that even if it is motivated by self-defence many will abuse the lack of law and order and will murder and rape and pillage. You never know if a war was worth it even a little until it is all weighed up afterwards. All who engage in war detest it vehemently. Only faith in some form can get them to wage war. It is faith that their efforts like magic will bear worthwhile good fruit. This faith often appears as faith in God but it need not do so. So faith and religion is a form of faith is behind war. It stands to reason that the higher the sense that magic will make it work out the more dangerous the faith is. Faith is worse say if you express it as faith in God.

A religion then does not need to command you to be a terrorist or warmonger to be to blame for what you do.

A religion cannot successfully command you unless you are already inspired by faith to see evil as productive of good. It is

not really the commanding then that matters.

Religion uses, "Our holy doctrine or our leaders didn't tell x to kill others or to oppress them" as an excuse. That excuse is itself evil and an insult.

If religion with its concern for looking good is going to lead us to war and murder it will lead us to them without us realising. There has to be a reason why religion is so violent and intolerant. It need not be obvious and what would you expect?

Human nature tends to develop faith which at root is thinking that luck will always be on your side. Its a magical belief though the person may not realise it. The realistic person knows that if you feel lucky you could be very wrong. The feeling of safety can be dangerous and it is clearly magical. That is why a person of faith can be so belligerent. You don't need to be in a religion for that to happen. But religion is a catalyst for it. If faith kills, religion makes sure it does a better job.

One subtle way religion makes the sea for violence to swim in is by stressing virtue and doing good with a virtuous heart. There is no concern for how a person who feels wonderful when and after helping others and whose motivation to do good gets intense and heroic for that reasons. People want you to want them to feel good. The virtue is going to lead to despair and fakery and lies and abuse. Virtue is too inhuman to produce truly good people. Now we know why such prayerful saints as Dominic and Thomas More were such blood-letters.

In 2017, the world is coming close to nuclear war and faith has a clear role as does religion. Trump is considered Christian by evangelicals who continually bless him and inform him about the "rapture." The rapture doctrine holds that one day there will be Armageddon and Jesus will take his own from the earth. They will just disappear and only the non-Christians will be left to suffer as the blessed rest safe with Christ in the sky. Immature Trump has nothing to fear if he believes that! His target North Korea shows clear sign of strong religious faith and is putting itself in danger by threatening nuclear attacks. Its leader is regarded as divine and a god. If they were Muslims we would be saying their faith had something to do with it. That is unfair.

Everybody including the Church has little interest in how so much money is spent and wasted in defence which usually is provocative. If there really is a supernatural influence over the religion then what is going on? It simply has to be far from benign and up to something!

When a religious system of belief and doctrine and worship leads to religious hate and violence that are above the norm there may be no way of telling how it incubates such evil. Only the results can show incubation is taking place. The members including the good ones need to be educated out of the religion. As for the bad, blaming the religion is more important than blaming them. Religious evil starts with a stubborn refusal to give up refuted and obviously wrong doctrines. When that happens, the person's morals become based on opposition to truth and thus to the rights of others for lies, intended or otherwise, put others at risk of error or harm. Right for the wrong reason is not right at all. Love, we are told by religion in particular, seeks nothing back. But this does not make love selfless. In fact it is putting freedom into action for always doing things for things feels like bondage. So love does seek something back - something that is far more pleasing than any other reward. Love for God and neighbour is not as selfless as believers say so we cannot really expect religion to be harmless. The religionist thrives on magical thinking - that some hidden power is going to make sure her efforts work. The argument that magical thinking means you expect fast results is wrong. Magical is magical whether it is fast results or slow-burners. The reality is that helped or not by magic, natural methods to improve things can and often do work. The magic is really about you trying to cheat.

The arsenic that eventually kills

Peaceful leaders of a religion that has violent revelations from God - either they show they secretly admire violence or they may blatantly command it - cannot make the religion a truly peaceful religion. Its version of God is still pro-suffering and pro-death. It is not your place to call a religion with violent revelations from God and ridiculous teachings and which produces at least some violent members who will make the innocent bleed in its name a religion of peace. It is up to the evidence to do that and it does it by looking at its scriptures and its alleged power to cure violent religious fanaticism.

The notion of a religion with a violent god or scriptures producing good people is too bizarre for words. Their goodness is not down to the religion and it will not last if it is.

The Catholic who teaches that God uses evil and lets people commit immense atrocities for it is his wise plan and the Muslim who thinks it is God's will to blow yourself up to take innocent people to death have the exact same kind of faith. They just act it out differently. Both say yes to suffering for they want to please God or want to feel they please God. Not all members are violent but the membership that lives within the law is making the violence possible and must take some responsibility. Without Catholicism for example, there cannot be Catholic motivated violence.

Only a religion that has scriptures that are intolerant of violence and lies and evil and which seems to have an uncanny power to lift man to higher degrees of virtue than you would expect can use the not all bad argument. Christianity or Islam is not that religion. The fact that their holy books portray a violent God settles that.

A person does not just do evil. The person absorbs evil influences and most of that influence will be absorbed without the person realizing it. So the question is not, "How evil is x for setting out to be a religious terrorist and suicide bomber?" The question is what has influenced him to think it is okay and to feel he should do it? As he is a religious based terrorist the obvious answer is that the religious influence is the problem. His action raises the question, have others influenced him deliberately or unwittingly? Have others not given him the right influence. Has the religion come across as permitting terrorism or inferring it is not a terrible wrong but an okay wrong?

If a person is conditioned to believe that killing people of other religions is not seriously wrong or not wrong at all or even good you need incredible evidence before you can trust that person in society. Conditioning is very powerful and can seem to be gone and then resurrect itself unexpectedly. The person themselves could end up surprised at what they want to do and do. The seeds of violence were planted in the child and seeds can grow when the person himself least expects it.

Bullies thrive on the feeling that they are at least secretly approved and supported by those who matter to them. They certainly feel supported by God whether or not they think he approves. Many easily feel that God does not care if they do harm and even that in some mysterious way he is happy they are doing it.

A religion that makes it hard to trace how it leads at least some to violence is worse than one that makes it obvious. If we are to blame the religious faith not the believer then we should see the violence and say, "His faith led him to do this and was his ruin even if we cannot tell exactly how."

FINALLY

Calling religious people who maim and kill in the name of faith terrorists is wrong. It accuses them of being about creating fear and discord not religion. Call them harmful religious believers or faith terrorists. That is what they are. Faith in religion, its God and the men he commissions us to have faith in as his speakers, demands that we tell ourselves lies that they are terrorists.

Not all in a religion are terrorists.

So what?

Some recruit the terrorists. Some train them. Some fund them. Some motivate them. Some shelter them. Some offer the scriptural and prayerful support. Some provide them legal support and protection. Some simply stand by to let them develop. Some use politics to help them appear and act. Some say outwardly they condemn their actions but are secretly happy. Some are careful to make sure their condemnations have no real effect. The main thing is the gaslighting, "only a small number of us are bad. The bad ones do not matter at all."

Each thing in this list is a particular case of good people needing religion to get them to do harm or pave the way for it.