

The Problem With Faith: 11 Ways Religion Is Destroying Humanity

Religion has been a part of humanity since the first astronomers peered into the sky and created elaborate stories to define the movements of our universe. It made its way into our minds as we fearfully created devils and demons to explain the danger lurking in the darkness of night. It has both enchanted and burdened us as we attempt to define our world with the information available to us as we work our way through history.

However, things are quickly changing. For a growing number of us worldwide, what was once indescribable is now easily explained by the vast data we have gathered as we work towards refining our understanding. We are becoming painfully aware that, although our religions gave us a starting place for thinking about how our world functions, they no longer serve us in that process; and in fact, have left a trail of destruction in their historic path.

Here are 11 ways religion is destroying humanity:

1.) The assumption of truth.

Most of our world's major religions each assume that it is *their* faith alone that is the "absolute truth" and refuse to concede that those traditions may be mistaken. Instead, they discover ways to force conflicting information to *adapt* to their own doctrine; no matter how effective the evidence is at actually *disproving* the rationality of that particular religion.

Many religious adherents have no problem understanding the irrationality of *others* beliefs, but are unable to apply the same logic when observing their own doctrine. Instead, every effort is made to justify why it is their – and only their – religion that is void of any fault. If they were to observe their own faith with the same set of scrutinizing eyes that they see through when evaluating other's faiths, they would understand what many of us have already concluded – all of our religious texts

were written by people, not gods. They are the stories and traditions that *we* created in order to explain our world in the past.

For instance, the majority of Christians would agree that the idea of Mohammad riding a flying horse into the heavens is an impossible fairy-tale; while simultaneously, they are unable to see how their own story of a talking snake or a man living inside a fish for three days is *also* impossible. We know that horses can't fly. They are not airborne animals, they are land animals. We know that snakes can't speak – they lack the vocal cords to produce the sounds necessary for speech. We also know that the digestive mechanisms of the fish would make it impossible for a man to *actually* live (let alone breathe) inside of a fish for three days. These stories, some of them with deep and purposeful meanings, cannot be understood, let alone correctly interpreted for beneficial use, when they are assumed to be truth, rather than for the allegories that they are.

The problem with this is that by insisting that (an obviously fabricated story) is absolute truth, the opportunity of arriving at the actual truth is greatly diminished. It creates a world where stories are placed above reality and reality is never within reach. It creates a mental mindset in people that is driven by misinformation and then passed on to future generations w



here misguided concepts are perpetuated.

2.) The promise of reward.

The faith of many followers hinges on the idea that there is some reward for devotion to their deity. For the Islamic gentleman, it is a promise of virgins after death. For the Christian, it is a perfect place of infinite peace and comfort. For Hindus, it is escaping the grueling task of reincarnation; and for the Buddhist it is reaching Nirvana.

How many of these same enthusiasts would subscribe to their religion if there were *not* a reward for their commitment? Without a reward, the faith does not carry

the same power to control its congregations. There *must* be a conclusion to every religious story – a reason for carrying the belief to its completion.

It's not difficult to understand why this is necessary for the ongoing functioning of a religion. Human beings are *rarely* motivated to commit to anything without a reward for their commitment. We work diligently through school for the reward of a career and money. We work hard in our relationships for the reward of satisfying unity with other human beings. We work attentively on our goals for the gratification of living a purposeful, meaningful and accomplished life. We take time daily to exercise and eat healthy to maintain a fit and healthful body. We humans do *everything* to reap the rewards of doing that thing.

...And those who *create* the religions our world follows know this well. Without the reward, the base of followers cannot sustain itself. This is a problem because it keeps people hinged to a system that they never question because they are so immersed in the promise of *the reward* that they never stop to question if the reward is *real*, or human-conceived.

Religion keeps people bonded to beliefs that may actually hinder human progress rather than helping procure our growth. It prevents individuals from progressing beyond antiquated thinking. Only they cannot see the problem because no matter what personal sacrifice is made in this life – there is a reward in the end – even if they can't see that reward until the life they now have is gone from them.

3.) The superiority complex.

Religion enables people to act callously and inflict mental punishment on those they label “evil” without consequence to their hatred; and then permits them to *honestly* believe that their hatred is defensible as “good moral conduct”.

I remember when I first left my religion. People who I thought were friends and close family members labelled me as “wicked” simply for leaving my faith. Suddenly, I “needed” the prayers of family and friends, even though I had not said that I was going through anything difficult. “I'll pray for you” became a common theme in many of my talks with these people. Pray for me? Have I done something wrong? Have I made some kind of mistake? Why do I need your prayers?

~ Anonymous

This is the illusory carrot of religion: an eternal reward for an elected few, and infinite punishment for everyone else. It is a narcissistic mindset that keeps adherents both comforted and terrified; a virtual mental prison to which the follower is consciously unaware. It saturates their relationships, often keeping those relationships from ever truly holding any love and kindness when those they interact with do not agree with their religious interpretations.

This is not always completely true for more kindly religious adherents; but unfortunately, even the kinder followers can sometimes hold internal judgements against their non-believing counterparts – simply for not believing.

4.) The usefulness of control.

Most religious supporters are not mindful of the fear that has been instilled in them, often from birth. It is a fear that is so subtle that it goes undetected for much of the follower's life. It is so deeply embedded that it is not even recognized as fear, but as truth; when in reality, it is a most destructive form of control.

For those who take the time to study the origins of religious beliefs, they are well aware of how, when and for what purpose a religion began. They are aware of the common themes and beliefs during the time the religion was created. They know what literary archetypes the religion was taken from in order to create the new doctrine. They understand the historic flow of language and the written word and how it has influenced our world – including our many religions.

Unfortunately, a great number of religious followers are either prevented from or discouraged from learning the truth about how their religious system was established. This is highly evident in modern theocracies where citizens are restricted from viewing numerous websites that would offer the information that would reveal the truth about the origin of their religion.

There is a very fundamental reason why many religions insist that their followers do not look elsewhere for answers to life's questions. It is the questioning that *leads* to the answers that free people and give them an understanding of the *whole* picture rather than the narrow view from a small corner of their mind. It is the refusal to ask

the questions that keeps them devoted to one specific answer. Take away the questioning and you ensure a future of followers. How do you take away the questioning? You make *everything else* evil. You make everything scary and frightful so that the follower is actually afraid of swaying from that one answer they have been given. You take away their *desire* to ask the questions.

Why do many believers refuse to study ancient religions, cultures, science, and philosophy? Why do they refuse to befriend or feel scornfully towards those who do not share their beliefs? Why are these things, these other people around them, these conflicting ideas *automatically* wrong? Have they been taught this mindset?

Anything that fervidly opposes diligent inquiry is not representative of the truth.

Former believers are most aware that the reason for this fear is that their god, their family or peers, their religious leaders and their own internal self-judgement will be discontent with their “inappropriate” curiosity. They fear that it is “the enemy” tempting them away from their faith by introducing them to ideas that conflict with their religion’s version of the truth. They have been taught (often from birth) that questioning is *wrong* – that seeking answers and gaining knowledge was not meant for us. These concepts are so deeply embedded in their thought that they can even feel guilty just thinking about questioning their faith. Many rarely stop to think about *why* they have been discouraged from asking questions and understanding things outside their religious sphere. Does the truth need restrictions if it is the truth? No, not unless the truth is being hidden in order to perpetuate the misconception in order to reap the benefits of the purpose of hiding that truth. This becomes overwhelmingly obvious to those who *do* ask the questions and *honestly* think about the answers. How obvious this becomes when we recognize how hiding the truth can profit those who discourage their followers from questioning the validity of their beliefs.

How well we know what a profitable superstition this fable of Christ has been for us.

~ Pope Leo X (1513 -1521)

Even those who have chosen to leave a religion must deal with the remnants of fear until it has been sufficiently purged from their life; that is, until they consciously

choose to *stop* believing in monsters and ghosts and demons and the devil and feathered angels and ask the *questions* that they have spent much of their life needlessly fearing.

When you keep people from asking questions, you maintain control of them. Kings and queens know this. Religious leaders know this. Governments who restrict internet access that provides many of those answers know this. The wise know this. It's time religious followers know this too. It's *ok* to ask questions. It's ok to find the answers. Asking questions is where you truly find freedom.

5.) The distraction of division.

As most propagandists understand, by separating individuals from their peers, they are usually able to think more clearly and logically about the information being presented to them. However, when consistently surrounded by their peers, if they are not cautious, they may likely fall prey to being persuaded into believing a "truth" that is not true at all. Religion depends on this human herd mentality in order to maintain its stronghold. When you keep a person within a specific religion, reinforce the ideas of that group and then make *everyone else* outside of the group somehow immoral, maintaining control of hatred towards others is effortless. The best way to do this is by teaching followers the religion's concepts from birth; and then reinforcing those ideas throughout the entirety of their life.

Religion segregates people into clusters of believers and non-believers, making human unity and peace nearly impossible. It teaches people that those who disagree with them on a variety of life's issues are perceptively evil and unworthy of their friendship, or even of their humanity.

The problem with this is that it perpetuates a cycle of division in societies. That division causes an insurmountable distraction that enables the internal corruption that destroys nations. Those in power are well aware that a community divided amongst itself has no strength to withstand tyranny or corruption. But, a society unified and aware is able to make lasting changes to benefit all.

For human unity and peace to ever become a part of our experience, we must become more aware of how our beliefs divide us and work to reconcile this division by placing our *humanity* above our religious contentions.

6.) The threat of theocracy.



Many individuals who support religious leaders and concepts do not realize the impact that a theocracy will have on their own lives and freedoms. Some people simply follow certain political and religious leaders and trust that they have their best interest in mind; but, in reality, the agenda they support will both further corrupt and further oppress their own country and its people.

A modest study of modern and past theocratic societies easily demonstrates how oppressive religiously governed countries are towards their people. How many more societies do we need to watch crumble beneath the stranglehold of religious oppression? How many more women are to be disparaged, mutilated and controlled by governments whose religious rule makes such atrocities acceptable? How many

more religiously motivated wars, massacres, stonings, bombings, inquisitions, witch hunts, crusades, bigotry, intentional suppression of knowledge and tyrannical and inhumane policies do we need to experience before we will *finally* realize that theocratic government rule is a horrific way to live as a citizen?

7.) The illusion of love.

Is it? There may be some parts that describe love and encourage positive relationships amongst members of the human race; but, what about all the *other* parts? Are we to ignore some things and only identify with the good?

Here is the problem: Many of our most revered religious texts have hundreds of verses where the deity of the story literally instructs people to abduct and rape young girls whose family members they have just murdered, kill disobedient children, kill disobedient women, commit genocide and infanticide, subdue and silence women, commit incest, oppress mass communities, force marriage on rape victims, torture people, enslave people and loot and pillage entire societies. All by the instruction of or in the name of their god.

Here is the bigger problem: It's one thing that these words are written, but it is a terrifying thought that many people in this world actually *excuse* this behavior simply because a god they worship did it or authorized it. They rationalize that this behavior is acceptable if an all knowing being approves it or that their god was punishing "sinful" people who did not agree with the same teachings they follow. This enables atrocious people to justify inhumane actions if they commit those actions in the name of their god. Many even go as far as to change the meaning of the (quite plainly written words) to mean something else than what is written outright in order to justify the action, rather than facing the reality of what their text is actually communicating.

If a human being were to commit these *same* types of offenses as listed above, we would label them sadistically insane and sentence them to death; yet, many dismiss the corrupt nature of these horrifically unethical crimes when it applies to a deity.

In their defense, many people are raised with their religious background and taught that it is completely about love. At the same time, the religious leaders that instruct them do not even attempt to discuss the negative characteristics of their text. Often,

when they do, it is glossed over and never given full thought as to the magnitude of what is being described. If we *really* thought about it, we would be able to draw the same conclusions for the wrongdoings of our man-made deities as we do for those human beings who choose to commit similar hideous acts.

Instead, the most horrific parts of our text are ignored – or sugar-coated – and then wrapped in an illusion and fed to the people in a mental package labeled “god is love”. It is *not* love; and it skews our interpretation of love when we agree that sadistic and violent acts against people are justified because *a god* instructed those actions.

A scenario to consider: Suppose you were to have a serious conversation with a parent who told you that, since their child did not obey, love and trust them – they were going to take the child to the basement and burn him until he learned his lesson. Would you turn that parent in to child protective services for potential child abuse? If you heard or read that some parent had tortured their child for not behaving, what would you think of that parent. How would you feel for the child who endured that punishment? Of course you would turn the parent in; of course you would feel awful to hear about such a tragic story! You would want to protect the child because you know that no loving human being would ever do that to their child, no matter how awful they’ve behaved.

Yet, children across the world are forced to endure hideous mental intrusions on a consistent basis in one of our world’s largest belief structures. If they do not believe in their religious deity, he will take them down to hell and torture them forever and ever. They will live in a place of fear and anguish for eternity.

If you would not threaten this to your own child as a punishment you personally would inflict upon them, why tell them someone else will? Is it acceptable because it is not you who will do it?

Another scenario to consider: If your friend told you that she was raped and that her rapist paid her Father for the injustice and is now forcing her to marry the person who raped her, what would you tell your friend? Would you encourage her to follow through with the marriage or would you encourage her leave both the rapist and her Father behind and move on with her life? Would you help her find a safe place to go

in order to flee the situation? Or, would you encourage her to follow through with the dreadful plans? Of course you would discourage your friend from following through with such a horrible situation for her life. You would likely even encourage her to file charges against the perpetrator.

Yet, this is the exact instructions found in one of our world's most popular holy text. One of many scriptures only recently coming to the forefront of religious debates as countless people are becoming more aware of the unethical ideas written in many of our ancient books. (See Deuteronomy 22:28-29 NLT)

If you have to explain or justify why a horrible atrocity was committed by the deity you worship; what does love really mean to you? Love is...

8.) Justification for inequality.

A simple and honest study of our world's theocracies (and countries such as America where those issues are being debated) reveals how our holy texts are used to discriminate against women, LGBTs, and foreigners. Our top three world religions' texts are *full* of discrimination against these groups. In fact, it is openly used as justification for that discrimination.

Religion facilitates erroneous rationalization of the attempts to remove basic rights from others. It prevents people from living in peace as a community and within their own lives. It forces entire groups of people to work tirelessly to create and preserve rights that should be available to them already.

Many of our religions treat women as subhuman property rather than the part of the human species that gives life to every one of us – a position that deserves respect. Many of our world's countries have so drastically restricted the rights of women that they are not allowed to attend school to earn an education, drive a car, be seen in public without a male family member, hold a career, or even speak their own thoughts. In each instance where this gender based bigotry is enforced, it is *always* attached to a religiously based belief system.

Religion also treats the LGBT community with disdain, even to the point where some countries prescribe death as a punishment for not following that religion's definition of what sex should look like. The problem with this is that homosexuality can be

found in many species, not just amongst humanity. Anyone who has done their research knows this. Unfortunately, religion has not caught up to this reality. Although homosexuality has existed for millennia, religion *still* persists in fighting what comes natural to much of nature. Is it a god that gave us permission to interrogate and murder people based on sexual orientation, or is it the people who wrote our religious texts and simply did not understand or agree with that part of nature?

Sadly, our religious texts have been used to discriminate against a vast assortment of people, including, tribes, minorities and foreigners. People outside of a religion's belief structure or cultural background have been tortured, enslaved and stripped of their human rights – all in the name of a god and the religion that god represents.

Religion gives followers justification for treating others who are not like them in inhumane ways. It enables our world to perpetuate the cycles of hatred towards others and justify our efforts in restricting the happiness of our fellow human beings.

9.) The subjugation of advancement.

We are moving towards a time where we no longer need to base our ideas on things that we cannot see or explain (faith). We *can* explain much more than ever and our ability to explain our world is expanding rapidly.

Now that science can explain our world, we no longer need mythology to do it for us.

We have a plethora of information available to us today. Information that enables us to become aware of the origins of our religions, the origins and functionings of our planet and of our universe. We understand how weather works and that it is not simply the anger of our gods being poured upon us as our early ancestors believed. We can interpret weather patterns, send people into space, and predict future atmospheric, economic, planetary and biological disruptions and much much more.

Unfortunately, religion has never been much a friend to human knowledge and advancement. Even now we are plagued by leaders who seek to oppress our access to and progression of our knowledge. Religion is known for insisting that it is *not* humankind's place to understand things – to seek knowledge of our world. In fact, it makes seeking that understanding wrong and it's not difficult to find followers

who will even quote text supporting why we should not explore our world, ask questions and look for answers.

This is a religious tactic that keeps people in ignorance; and it has worked for thousands of years. Since we know that it is *people* who wrote the concepts that make up our holy texts; it makes much more sense that it is not *god* who wanted to keep us in ignorance – it is those who wrote our holy books, created our religious doctrines and insisted that knowledge and the pursuit of knowledge is evil. Religion perpetuates ignorance in societies. It hinders humanity’s mental progression and, thus the quality of our lives, health and environments.

10.) The fear of “end times”.



For thousands of years, religion has used the fear of “end times” to control the masses. What began as mythology that told gruesome stories of a horrific end to our world has evolved into periodic religious mania over an impending doom lurking above the future of humanity.

Fortunately, we have grown enough in our understanding to realize that prophecies of war, famine, atmospheric disruptions, pandemics and expulsion of redundant belief structures are *effortless* formulations when one comprehends that these occurrences have been and will remain a repetitive element of the human experience. In other words – it is not difficult to predict the future when you *understand* how human beings think and how nature functions. Anyone who understands the natural world and the mind of human beings can make a fairly accurate prediction of what will occur 10, 20, 100 or even 5,000 years from now. History does repeat itself. Nature repeats itself. This is the cyclical part of life – when you understand the cycle, you are never shocked by the result.

The problem is, we are still living amongst an assortment of end times theories and religious fables that insist we are living in that time. Strangely, every generation since the stories were created lives in *that* time. Even more menacing is how an entire community of believers can *completely* ignore the time frame in which their own text plainly states that the horrid event will occur, and then apply the same story to every future generation. Why? Because the story *always* perpetuates itself – it *must* perpetuate itself in order to survive. If the story is fulfilled, the story ends and we all move on. It *must* continue generation after generation in order to live on in the minds of human beings. This is *how* religion works.

Here's the painful truth. When you have a story that billions of people believe, there will *inevitably* be some people who have the power and the invested interest in making that story appear as fact. This *doesn't* make the prediction true – it makes it a purposeful effort. It is a problematic illusion where those who want it to be true work to make it true; and those who are unaware of the work others have done to make the illusion appear real – believe it is real.

If our world is truly going to explode in a fiery furnace of wrath and agony – it will be by our own hands when *we* destroy one another by our human hatred. Or, it will be by the mechanisms of our universe; a common way planets and stars *actually do* experience their “end times”.

11.) The oppression of terror.

It would be easy for some to look at the violence in religion today and point fingers at one specific religion. The propagandist that dominate many of our mainstream news outlets ensure this. But, the truth is, many of our religions have *already* asserted themselves through force and violence in the past. This is *not* merely a modern problem.

Humanity's most vicious ambitions have been carried out in the name of gods no one has ever seen and beliefs followers are not willing to question and investigate. Until humankind learns to more closely examine their beliefs, wars waged in ignorance will continue to plague our species and prevent lasting peace.

Our history is full of examples of this religious human dilemma; and is even written in the pages of some of our own holy text. It is a truth that many deny because it is easier to deny atrocity than to face it; especially when that barbarism has been committed by the very same faith that we follow. Our religions excuse the terror and oppression we inflict upon our fellow human beings. It's time our excuses are called out for what they are – irrational thinking based upon archaic concepts that no longer serve our human advancement towards a sustainable and peaceful future.

It's time to let go and rise above the outdated and cruel exploits of our past that we inherited from our ancestors, and realize that our early misinterpretations of our world do not have to define the future of humanity. We have grown. We have reached a time in our history where the misunderstandings of the past must be reconciled and the truth about the origins of our early beliefs must be revealed. It's time that our world's religions face the tragic horrors of their past and make honest progression towards love and kindness for all of humanity. Our world, our peace and our growth all depend upon us and our ability to move forward in our understanding. It's time to embrace our humanity and cultivate the harmonious future we all deserve.