

## **SHOULD RELIGION BE BANNED?**

### **Answering an atheist's hatred of religion**

Sam Harris is a familiar name in religious circles. He's the best-selling author of *Letter to a Christian Nation*, a blistering attack against religion, in which he writes, "Words like 'God' or 'Allah' should go the way of 'Apollo' and 'Baal,' or they will unmake our world." In other words, we should banish God and Allah to the realm of mythology and ban the religions spawned in their names, or they will destroy us.

He has a ton of evidence to support him, of course. Wars and atrocities in the name of God and Allah have killed and maimed millions of people. Devastation and chaos continue today, as well, caused by a whole host of religious crackpots who think "doing God's will" justifies killing innocent people.

He's right. Religion has a nasty habit of transforming people into mindless cretins and cold-blooded murderers. Would Sam Harris also be right in his recommendation, then, that we ban religion before it becomes a threat to our survival?

Is religion entirely to blame, though?

No, because the worst wars we've ever experienced, World Wars 1 and 2, weren't caused by religion. Some of the worst atrocities we've seen since World War 2, like Rwanda and Bosnia, were tribal wars, not religious wars. So, give religion a bit of a break, Sam, it's not entirely to blame.

I cannot deny the fact, though, that religions have produced their own share of cutthroats, militant monks, abusive leaders, egomaniacs and perverts.

And that raises a question for me. How can religions that claim to be operating on a higher, spiritual level than raw human nature, end up so twisted? It's been shattering for Muslims, for instance, watching their religion being horribly misrepresented by deranged killers who claim their abominable actions are the will of Allah.

And think of the Crusades, too, bitterly fought by two religions of peace! Something went horribly wrong during that time in history that neither Muslims nor Christians can explain in light of what their religions believe. Neither religion can justify the delusional claptrap spouted by Muslim and Christian alike that led to the slaughtering of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. But that's what happened.

So, what caused this horrendous departure from the original teachings of Mohammed and Jesus? Was it God and Allah? Because if they truly were to blame, then let's go with what Sam Harris recommends and banish them to the shadows of myth forever, because the atrocities inflicted in their names are a hell-born stink in history.

The Bible talks of another source, however, the Devil, a mastermind at "divide and conquer." People may not believe the Devil exists, but to get two great religions of peace ripping each other to shreds while believing they're doing God and Allah a favour, is "devilishly" clever!

I wonder if Sam Harris thinks so, too. He ought to. Or is the Devil going to get off scot-free again and God and Allah are the dangers to civilization?!

But that would be devilishly clever, too, wouldn't it? God gets the blame for the lunatic elements in religion, and no one points a finger at the Devil? Come on, Sam, play fair. If we're going to blame anyone for the madness going in our world, let's consider who the real enemy might be.