

# Does religion cause wars?

Religion



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There is a conventional belief among many individuals that religion is the main cause of the present and past wars inflicting torment within the world. However, many humans fail to see past that belief; they are unable to understand that religion is just a small factor amongst the many contributing to the cause of wars. In fact, religion is merely a tool and an excuse used to hide the need for power and sins of the human nature. Among these factors, it may be the misinterpretation of religious teachings and the differing ideals of many individuals.

Unfortunately, these factors are often overlooked as most people view this issue with a simplistic mindset. The idea of religion is often able to bring peace and harmony within the world. In saying this though, religion may be twisted and exploited by individuals for either economic or political reasons, mostly with the blind ambition for power and control. Such people have used religion as a tool and an excuse in order to achieve their own personal desires. This is apparent with the previous Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein.

The Iraqi president had aimed to persuade the Jihadists to start a holy war against the United States and British forces, who were seeking to dismiss him for his position. Saddam Hussein had publicly voiced his call toward the Jihadists in an Iraqi state television, where he encouraged them through his statement, “ jihad is a duty in confronting them... Those who are martyred will be rewarded in heaven. Seize the opportunity, my brothers” (Saddam Hussein). It is evident; however, that Saddam Hussein did not really view the war he intended to begin as a religious war.

Instead he planned to use religion as an excuse for his own political gains, which was to maintain his position as president of Iraq. In conclusion, religion

is not the sole reason of the previous and present wars within the world, it is also the people themselves who exploit and twist religion itself. Many individuals often find it difficult to give religion a precise definition. It is within their ability to understand the concept of religion yet are unable to provide an accurate definition of the word. Therefore, many may have their own interpretations of what religion truly is.

This notion is similar to how individuals may have varying views in regards to the religious teachings of their religion. Sadly, in some cases, people may actually misinterpret the teachings of their religion, which can often lead to disastrous outcomes. Such consequences are evident with the infamous belief of 'Jihad'. The concept of Jihad means “ holy war” or “ the holy struggle”. It also teaches that there shall be no use of violence“ except in the case of defensive wars, wars which are waged to punish a tyrant, or those which are meant to uphold freedom” (Concept of Jihad, pg 2).

Unfortunately, there are others who misunderstand the concept of Jihad and instead believe it to be complete submission to Allah, which further means they are “ prepared to die (martyrdom) in the course of this submission”. Such cases usually result in terrorism and suicide bombings, where individuals believe that by forcing others into their religion, by death, will please Allah. The most known example of these occurrences is the September 11 suicide bombings where approximately two planes crashed into the twin towers in New York, USA.

This event was not necessarily a war but was instead an attack part of the already ongoing war between the United States and the Islamic, terrorist group, Al-Qaeda. From this event it is evident that the members of Al-Qaeda

had misinterpreted the concept of Jihad and instead violated the religion by using violence for unnecessary reasons. It can be concluded that even though religion may play a role in the cause of wars, it is not necessarily the only factor to blame but also the misinterpretation of the religious teachings of religions.

It is not solely religion itself that spur the gruesome wars that have occurred throughout history, but also the varying ideals of the religious worshipers. Unfortunately, in some cases there is a chance that the ideals of certain individuals may have a larger influence on them than their own religious beliefs. Such terms are often confused with each other; however, there is a prominent difference between the two. Beliefs are set in stone already, statements or truths that humans have decided to place their confidence in.

On the other hand, ideals are personal concepts of perfection; they have no boundaries unlike beliefs. When the ideals of humans have a larger power over them, the results often have a high chance of becoming cataclysmic. Such results are evident within Nazi Germany during the Second World War, after the 1930s. Germany had been under the dictatorship of a tyrant known as Adolf Hitler. Hitler was infamously known for his cruelty and mass murder towards the Jews in Germany at that time.

His reason for his actions was that by protecting himself against the Jews, he was “defending the handiwork of God” (Mein Kampf, pg 60). Despite his religious reason, he had a deeper hatred towards the Jews and desired an ideal world, where there was only a majority of pure descendants of the “Aryan” race. The Aryan race involved humans with certain features such as blonde hair and blue eyes. Hitler believed that the Jews were contaminating

his ideal race as they offered the “ most striking contrast to the Aryan” (Mein Kampf, pg 259), thus leading to his revulsion towards the Jews.

It is unmistakable that the beliefs of Hitler were not the only cause of his actions but also his extreme ideals, which had lead to the carnage he had incited. Therefore, it is not only religion itself that cause wars but also the differing ideals of humans. Religion is often unfairly blamed as the direct cause of wars throughout the world. It is often used as a scapegoat as many people cannot look past that simplistic view. Many individuals have never considered the possibilities of other factors contributing to such wars. A few of these factors are the exploitation of religion for the personal gains of individuals, the misinterpretation of religious teachings and the differing ideals of many humans. From these factors, it is evident that it is not just religion itself that causes the wars, but the people themselves also who actually wage these atrocities.

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