The Dawkins Delusion?

Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the Divine

By: Alister McGrath & Joanna Collicutt McGrath

A brief summary of the book:

"Alister McGrath" is one of the most prominent and influential figures in the West, who after his most popular book "The Dawkins Delusion?" was published, he wrote another book in response to Richard Dawkins' book "The God Delusion". The two books are directed at the attacks on religion and faith in God. However, the two books are not similar, although I feel that the "Alister McGrath" book is more thorough in its defense of faith. It aims to show that faith in God is a better and more logical position than atheism. However, it sometimes misrepresents some ideas (such as the intelligent design) and misinterprets them. I believe that the "Alister McGrath" book is trying to win the confidence of the atheist reader, and to take a neutral stance, but sometimes he departs from his neutrality to stand on the side of the atheist in a provocative way for the believing reader.

The "Alister McGrath" book is full of critical comments, and it aims to defend some of the ideas of "Alister McGrath" and explain them. It is important to note that the book is a direct response to the hardest attacks on religion. Even some of the"Alister McGrath" religious ideas in some cases, such as saying that faith in God is not a superstition! (and I kept these words in the book to avoid repeating them later, but it was necessary to warn!)

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لبعض المحاولات الخاطئة في تحرير حل النزاع بين المؤمنين والمُلحدين، وعندما يقوم مكجراث بإعادة صياغة الحجة الموجّهة للمُلحدين، يقوم بصياغتها بشكل محكم جداً! وهذا أهمّ ما في الكتاب!

الكتاب يتناول أربعة مواضيع رئيسية: فكرة الوهم، العلم والإيمان، أصل الأديان، وشر الأديان، ويقوم بالرد على فكرة أن المؤمنين يعيشون وهماً كبيراً بإيمانهم بالدين والإله، وكذلك يرد على أن العلم قادر على معرفة كل شيء، والإجابة عن كل الأسئلة، أو أن العلم أثبت عدم وجود إله، أو عدم حاجتنا له، ويرد على أن الدين في الأصل من اختراع البشر، وفي النهاية يرد على اتهام دوكيتس المشهور بأن الدين هو أصل ومصدر كل الشر! وهذا مُلحق في نهاية الكتاب يشير إلى العديد من المراجع الأخرى في مجالات فكرة مختلفة لمن يريد الوقوف على الموضوعات الأساسية المطرحية في الكتاب: الرد على دوكيتس، الدين والنفس، الدين والعلم.

**Introduction**

- He is out to convert his readers. ‘If this book works as I intend, religious readers who open it will be atheists when they put it down.’ [Dawkins, God Delusion, 5.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 41-42). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Yet the fact that Dawkins has penned a 400-page book declaring that God is a delusion is itself highly significant. Why is such a book still necessary? Religion was meant to have disappeared years ago. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 44-45). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- The humanist writer Michael Shermer, perhaps best known as the director of the Skeptics Society and publisher of Skeptic magazine, made this point forcefully back in 2000, when he pointed out that never in history have so many, and such a high percentage of the American population, believed in God. Not only is God not ‘dead’ – as the German philosopher Nietzsche prematurely proclaimed – he never seems to have been more alive. [Michael Shermer, *How We Believe: Science, Skepticism, and the Search for God.* New York: Freeman, 2000, 16–31.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt

- This may be an answer, but it’s not particularly a persuasive answer. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 74-75). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Religion to Dawkins is like a red rag to a bull – evoking not merely an aggressive response, but one that throws normal scholarly conventions about scrupulous accuracy and fairness to the winds. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 100-101). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

1 Deluded about God?


- It is a ‘process of non-thinking’. It is ‘evil precisely because it requires no justification, and brooks no argument’. [Dawkins, *God Delusion*, 308.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 150-151). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]


[3]
• The basic line of thought guiding Aquinas is that the world mirrors God, as its creator. It is an assumption, derived from faith, which Thomas argues to resonate with what we observe in the world. For example, its signs of ordering can be explained on the basis of the existence of God as its creator. **This approach is still widely encountered in Christian writings, to argue that an existing faith in God offers a better ‘empirical fit’ with the world than its alternatives.** As Dawkins himself uses this same approach to commend atheism elsewhere, I cannot really see that he has much to complain about here. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 257-261). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

• At no point does Thomas speak of these as being ‘proofs’ for God’s existence; rather they are to be seen as a demonstration of the inner coherence of belief in God. Aquinas is interested in exploring the rational implications of faith in terms of our experience of beauty, causality and so forth. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 262-264). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

• Belief in God is actually assumed; it is then shown that this belief makes sense of what may be observed within the world. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Location 264). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

• The appearance of design can offer persuasion, not proof, concerning the role of divine creativity in the universe. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 264-265). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

• Where Dawkins sees faith as intellectual nonsense, most of us are aware that we hold many beliefs that we cannot prove to be true, but are nonetheless perfectly reasonable to entertain. [For the importance of this point, see Samuel P. Huntington and Lawrence E. Harrison (eds), *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 267-269). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]
• our beliefs may be shown to be justifiable, without thereby demonstrating that they are proven. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 269-270). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

• There is no difficulty, for example, in believing that Darwin’s theory of evolution is presently the best explanation of the available evidence; but that doesn’t mean it is correct. [A point that Dawkins himself makes: Devil’s Chaplain, 81: ‘We must acknowledge the possibility that new facts may come to light which will force our successors of the twenty-first century to abandon Darwinism or modify it beyond recognition.’] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 272-273). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

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• However, it needs to be pointed out here that the holy grail of the natural sciences is the quest for the ‘grand unified theory’ – the ‘theory of everything’. Why is such a theory regarded as being so important? Because it can explain everything, without itself requiring or demanding an explanation. [Among the best introductions, see David Deutsch, The Fabric of Reality. London: Allen Lane, 1997; Brian Greene, The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory. London: Vintage, 2000.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 284-286). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

• Unfortunately, having made such a good point, Dawkins then weakens his argument by suggesting that all religious people try to stop scientists from exploring those gaps: ‘one of the truly bad effects of religion is that it teaches us that it is a virtue to be satisfied with not understanding’. [Dawkins, God Delusion, 126.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins
As Dawkins himself pointed out elsewhere: Modern physics teaches us that there is more to truth than meets the eye; or than meets the all too limited human mind, evolved as it was to cope with medium-sized objects moving at medium speeds through medium distances in Africa. [Dawkins, Devil’s Chaplain, 19.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 315-318). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

For this strategy is still used by the Intelligent Design movement – a movement, based primarily in North America, which argues for an ‘Intelligent Designer’ based on gaps in scientific explanation, such as the ‘irreducible complexity’ of the world. It is not an approach which I accept, either on scientific or theological grounds. In my view, those who adopt this approach make Christianity deeply – and needlessly – vulnerable to scientific progress. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 321-323). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

For instance, the Oxford philosopher Richard Swinburne is one of many writers to argue that the capacity of science to explain itself requires explanation – and that the most economical and reliable account of this explanatory capacity lies in the notion of a creator God. [Richard Swinburne, *Is There a God?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 328-331). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

Swinburne’s argument asserts that the intelligibility of the universe itself needs explanation. It is therefore not the gaps in our understanding of the world which point to God, but rather the very comprehensibility of scientific and other forms of understanding that requires an explanation. In brief, the argument is that explicable itself requires explanation. The more scientific advance is achieved, the greater will be our understanding of the universe – and hence the greater our need to explain this very success. It is an approach which commends and encourages scientific investigation, not seeks to inhibit
2 Has science disproved God?

- As Gould observed in Rocks of Ages, based on the religious views of leading evolutionary biologists: ‘Either half my colleagues are enormously stupid, or else the science of Darwinism is fully compatible with conventional religious beliefs – and equally compatible with atheism.’ [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?*: *Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 337-342). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- The same view, much to Dawkins’ irritation, is found in Sir Martin Rees’ admirable Cosmic Habitat, which (entirely reasonably) points out that some ultimate questions ‘lie beyond science’. As Rees is the President of the Royal Society, which brings together Britain’s leading scientists, his comments deserve careful and critical attention. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?*: *Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 351-353). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- The fundamental issue confronting the sciences is how to make sense of a highly complex, multifaceted, multilayered reality. This fundamental question in human knowledge has been much discussed by philosophers of science, and often ignored by those who, for their own reasons, want to portray science as the only viable route to genuine knowledge. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?*: *Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 362-364). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- The natural sciences depend on inductive inference, which is a matter of ‘weighing evidence and judging probability, not of proof’. [I take this from one of the best recent studies of this question: Peter Lipton, *Inference to the best explanation*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge, 2004, 5.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?*: *Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 366-367). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Science is the only reliable tool that we possess to understand the world. It has no limits. We may not know something now – but we will in the future.
It is just a matter of time. This view, found throughout Dawkins’ body of writings [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 375-376). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- In a sophisticated recent critique of the philosophical shallowness of much contemporary scientific writing, particularly in the neurosciences, Max Bennett and Peter Hacker direct particular criticism against the naïve ‘science explains everything’ outlook that Dawkins seems determined to advance.9 Scientific theories cannot be said to ‘explain the world’ – only to explain the phenomena which are observed within the world. Furthermore, they argue, scientific theories do not, and are not intended to, describe and explain ‘everything about the world’ – such as its purpose. [M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, 372–6.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 405-409). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Bennett and Hacker point out that the natural sciences are not in a position to comment upon this, if their methods are applied legitimately. [Bennett and Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations*, 374: ‘It is wrongheaded to suppose that the only forms of explanation are scientific.’ The entire section dealing with reductionism (355–77) merits close study.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 414-415). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- This point was made repeatedly by Sir Peter Medawar, an Oxford immunologist who won the Nobel Prize for medicine for the discovery of acquired immunological tolerance. In a significant publication entitled *The Limits of Science*, Medawar explored the question of how science was limited by the nature of reality. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 417-419). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Medawar is clear on this matter: That there is indeed a limit upon science is made very likely by the existence of questions that science cannot answer, and that no conceivable advance of science would empower it to answer … I have in mind such questions as: How did everything begin? What are we
all here for? What is the point of living? Doctrinaire positivism – now something of a period piece – dismissed all such questions as nonquestions or pseudoquestions such as only simpletons ask and only charlatans profess to be able to answer. [Peter B. Medawar, The Limits of Science. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, 66.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 425-432). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- For there is, of course, a third option – that of ‘partially overlapping magisteria’ (a POMA, so to speak), reflecting a realization that science and religion offer possibilities of cross-fertilization on account of the interpenetration of their subjects and methods. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 448-450). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Owen Gingerich, a noted Harvard astronomer, produced God’s Universe, declaring that ‘the universe has been created with intention and purpose, and that this belief does not interfere with the scientific enterprise’. [Owen Gingerich, God’s Universe. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 464-466). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Dawkins, however, has a radically different view. Science and religion are locked into a battle to the death. Only one can emerge victorious – and it must be science. [Dawkins, God Delusion, 279–86.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 520-522). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- The relationship between science and religion is complex and variegated – but it could never conceivably be represented as a state of total war. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 531-532). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- We are offered an atheist fundamentalism that is as deeply flawed and skewed as its religious counterparts. [Dawkins insists that he is not an atheist fundamentalist: God Delusion, 282. This is very contestable!] [Alister
McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 553-554). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

3 What are the origins of religion?

- The core, incontrovertible, foundational assumption of atheism is that there is no God. So why would anyone believe in God? For Dawkins, this is an utterly irrational belief – like believing in a teapot orbiting the sun. [Dawkins, God Delusion, 51–4. The idea is borrowed from Bertrand Russell.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 600-601). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- In 1841, Feuerbach argued that God was basically an invention, dreamed up by human beings to provide metaphysical and spiritual consolation.2 His argument runs like this. There is no God. But lots of people believe in God. Why? Because they want consolation. So they ‘project’ or ‘objectify’ their longings, and call this ‘God’. So this non-existent ‘God’ is simply the projection of human longings. [See Van A. Harvey, Feuerbach and the Interpretation of Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 607-613). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- For a start, wanting something is no demonstration that it does not exist. Human thirst points to the need for water. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 614-615). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- This argument also suggests that all world views are a response to human needs and desires – including, of course, atheism, which can be seen as a response to the human desire for moral autonomy. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 615-616). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Yet both Dawkins and Dennett adopt a very cognitive view of religion, defining it virtually exclusively in terms of ‘belief in God’. Yet this is certainly not the sole aspect of religion; nor is it even necessarily the most fundamental. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 615-616). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

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Yet this is a minor point. The main criticism of this ‘accidental by-product’ theory is the lack of serious evidence offered on its behalf. Where’s the science? What’s the evidence for such a belief? We find speculation and supposition taking the place of the rigorous evidence-driven and evidence-based arguments that we have a right to expect. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 625-627). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

Natural explanations may be given of the origins of belief in God. In the end, this is a circular argument, which presupposes its conclusions. It begins from the assumption that there is no God, and then proceeds to show that an explanation of God can be offered which is entirely consistent with this. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 641-644). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

Dawkins sets out to demonstrate that all aspects of religion may be accounted for in terms of a single theory – in this case, ‘universal Darwinism’. [Dawkins, *God Delusion*, 161–207. In terms of the substance of Dawkins’ intellectual case against religion, this is the most important chapter in the book.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 652-654). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

Christianity does not demand ritual food practices or customs, such as kosher or hallal. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 706-707). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

There are many who believe passionately in God, but eschew ‘religious’ behaviour – evangelicals represent a case in point. Again, it is possible to have ‘religious’ attitudes, without any attending belief in God – Buddhism is a case in point. Many individuals have a reverential attitude towards nature which is not ultimately theistic, but could still reasonably be termed ‘religious’. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 676-677). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- More seriously, he draws attention to the hypothesis of Michael Persinger that religious experience is associated with pathological brain activity, subtly implying that religion is itself therefore pathological. Readers ought to be aware (for Dawkins does not mention it) that Persinger’s experiments have been severely criticized for their conceptual and design limitations, and that his theory is no longer regarded as plausible. [Michael A. Persinger, Neuropsychological Bases of God Beliefs. New York: Praeger, 1987. Dawkins does not appear to be familiar with this work at first hand, providing indirect reference (God Delusion, 168) through Shermer’s How We Believe. He offers no critical assessment of the validity of the hypothesis.] [Peter Fenwick, ‘The neurophysiology of religious experiences’, in D. Bhugra (ed.), Psychiatry and Religion: Context, Consensus, and Controversies, 167–77. London: Routledge, 1996.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 781-785). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- Since belief in God is utterly irrational (one of Dawkins’ core beliefs), there has to be some way of explaining why so many people – in fact, by far the greater part of the world’s population – fall victim to such a delusion. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 817-819). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

4 Is religion evil?

- All of us need to work to rid the world of the baleful influence of religious violence. On that point, Dawkins and I are agreed. Yet is this a necessary feature of religion? Here, I must insist that we abandon the outmoded idea that all religions say more or less the same things. They clearly do not. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 903-905). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- If the world were more like Jesus of Nazareth, violence might indeed be a thing of the past. But that does not appear to be an answer that Dawkins feels comfortable with. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The [12]

This hardly fits in with another of Dawkins’ creedal statements: ‘I do not believe there is an atheist in the world who would bulldoze Mecca – or Chartres, York Minster, or Notre Dame.’ [Dawkins, God Delusion, 249] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 932-934). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

The reality of the situation is that human beings are capable of both violence and moral excellence – and that both these may be provoked by world views, whether religious or otherwise. It is not a comfortable insight, but one that alerts us to the shortcomings and dangers of identifying any one people-group as the source of violence and the ills of humanity. [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine (Kindle Locations 947-950). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

As Robert Pape showed in his definitive account of the motivations of such attacks, based on surveys of every suicide bombing since 1980, religious belief of any kind is neither necessary nor sufficient to create suicide bombers – despite Dawkins’ breezy simplifications.10 (Remember, the infamous ‘suicide vest’ was invented by Tamil Tigers back in 1991.) Pape’s evidence is that the fundamental motivation is political: the desire to force the withdrawal of foreign forces occupying land believed to belong to an oppressed people, who have seriously limited military resources at their disposal. [Robert A. Pape, Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. New York: Random House, 2005. See also the nuanced

- When Dawkins tells us that St Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews, you realize just how bad things are. [Dawkins, *God Delusion*, 253. It has been accepted for several centuries that the author of this letter is not Paul.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 1085-1086). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- While rightly castigating these – a criticism which I gladly echo – Shermer goes on to make a point that most atheists I know would endorse. There is clearly a significant positive side to religion: However, for every one of these grand tragedies there are ten thousand acts of personal kindness and social good that go unreported … Religion, like all social institutions of such historical depth and cultural impact, cannot be reduced to an unambiguous good or evil. [Shermer, *How We Believe*, 71.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 1155-1159). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

- As Terry Eagleton comments, with a sarcasm reflecting his obvious exasperation at *The God Delusion*’s risible caricatures of religion: Such is Dawkins’s unruffled scientific impartiality that in a book of almost four hundred pages, he can scarcely bring himself to concede that a single human benefit has flowed from religious faith, a view which is as a priori improbable as it is empirically false. [Eagleton, ‘Lunging, flailing, mispunching’. For Eagleton’s own perceptive and critical comments on this important issue, see Terry Eagleton, *Holy Terror*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.] [Alister McGrath; Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (Kindle Locations 1165-1169). SPCK. Kindle Edition.]

الحمد لله الذي بنعمتته تنم الصلاحات

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