

ISLAM

Misinterpretation of religion

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One of the main disclosures of modern physics has been that the energy reaching the Earth from the Sun is the result of nuclear reactions at the centre of the Sun. As the physicist Fritjof Capra wrote, nuclear processes at the centre of the Sun are of singular importance for our planet, "because they furnish the energy which sustains our terrestrial environment." — The Tao of Physics.

The fact that nuclear energy transmitted by the sun reaches the earth in the form of light shows that nuclear energy, in the hands of nature, is a source of sustenance for the world. But the same energy in the hands of men becomes an instrument of death and destruction.

Nature has no power of its own. We, on the other hand, have been invested with freedom. Just as nuclear energy, when it emanates from nature in the form of sun's rays, is a source of light and sustenance for the planet, so religion, as revealed to us by God, is a source of light and sustenance for the spiritual world.

But just as people have mishandled nuclear energy, they have mishandled religion. They have used it to advance themselves to positions of power, to win esteem, to accumulate wealth for themselves and to spread conflict and hate. The author Richard Dawkins, in his famous book, *The God Delusion*, blames religion for much of the bloodshed in the world and many of the ills in society.

It would be wrong to blame nuclear energy for the potential of destruction it holds for us, because that would be due to its misuse, not to any fault of its own. In the same way, it is wrong to blame religion for the evils which people have perpetrated in its name. This is the fault of humans, not the fault of the divine religion which they corrupt.

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