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# Freethinker

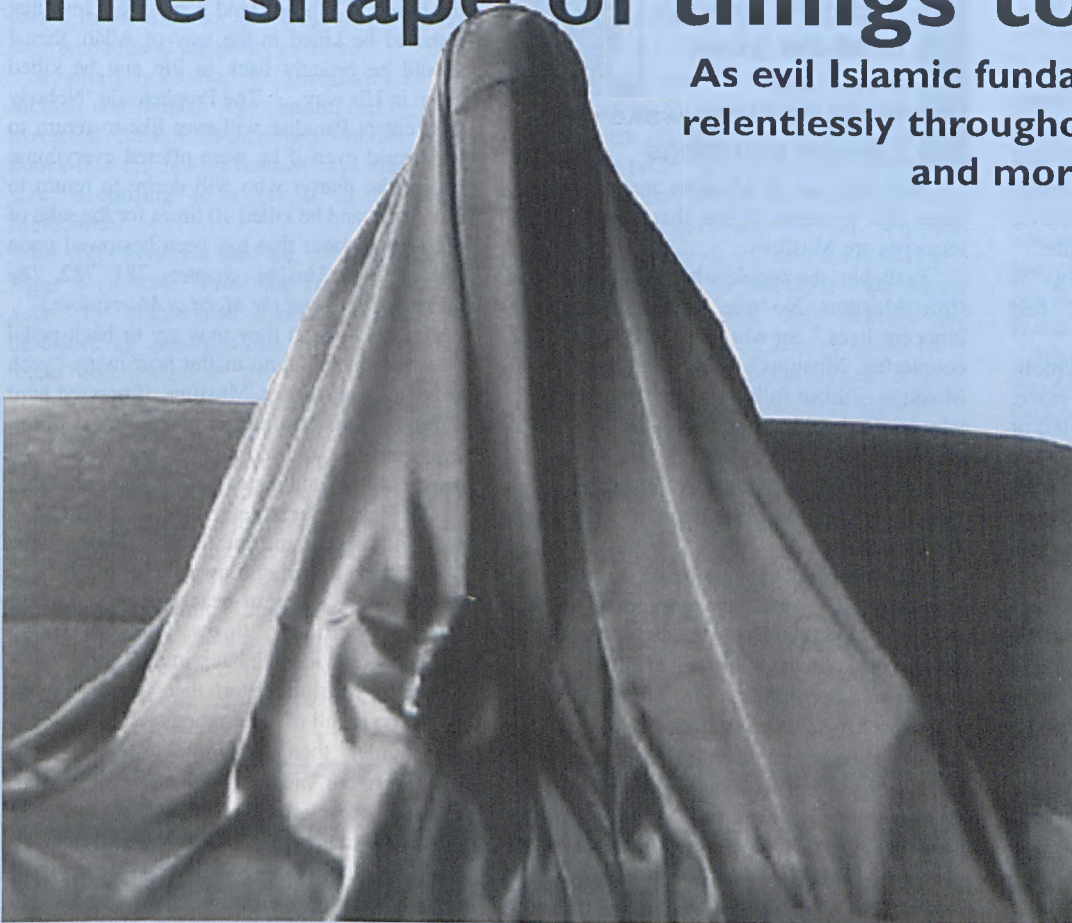
Secular Humanist monthly founded by G W Foote in 1881

## The shape of things to come?

As evil Islamic fundamentalism spreads relentlessly throughout the West, more and more women are being

forced to adopt traditional Islamic 'values', and are being entombed in those creepy, health-damaging binbags known as *burkhas*

– see centre page feature: *Europe or Eurabia* – What are we to do to halt the menace of *Islamisation*?



For the safety of us all,  
religion must be tamed

– see p6

### Also in this issue:

Australian Jews accuse Muslims of religious vilification – p3

Devout Christians jailed for abuse of a young girl they said was a witch – p3

New Zealand morals campaigner jailed – p5



A WHILE back I stumbled across a report of an interview given to Saudi Iqra TV by Egyptian historian Professor Zaynab Abd Al-Aziz. During the course of the interview on May 26 Al-Aziz claimed that the US "had fabricated the show of 9/11".

"I call it a fabrication because much has been written on this. We [the Muslims] are also to blame. Why do we accept a single perspective? Countless books were written, some of which were even translated into Arabic, like Thierry Meyssan's *9/11 – The Appalling Fraud and Pentagate*. He brings documents to prove that the method used in destroying the three towers was 'a controlled demolition'."

Abd Aziz, who clearly can't count, let alone think straight, elaborated: "This is an architectural engineering theory, which was invented by the Americans. They teach it in their universities. They make movies and documentaries about it. They incorporated it in movie scenarios and then carried it out in real life."

Interviewer: "My God, doctor. This is unbelievable! You're saying that this destruction..."

Abd Al-Aziz: "...was a controlled demolition. The buildings collapsed in their place, without hitting a single building to their left or right. You could sense the (9/11) operation was pre-planned because many things were revealed in the days that followed. For example, 4,000 Jews caught influenza on that exact day. They set a timer, and all 4,000 ..."

Interviewer: "By God, you crack me up! They all set a timer and got influenza on the same day. So the building was completely empty of Jews?" Abd Al-Aziz: "Yes. Much has been written about this. 150 Congressmen demanded an inquiry."

Fast forward to Thursday, July 14, and a news item on BBC Radio 4. A woman interviewer takes to the streets of Luton, home of one of the London bombers, and solicits the views of around 40 young Muslims. About half deny that the bombers were Muslims. If not Muslims, who? Some had no answer, but others were adamant it was the work of Jews, bent on fomenting hatred of Islam. Or the CIA. Or the British Special Branch. Perhaps it was Sponge Bob, or Tinky Winky or Harry Potter. In any event it was an act by enemies of Islam designed to besmirch the religion and demonise Muslims.

As the day progressed, the news grew more depressing. Not only were Muslims in complete denial about the events of the previous week, so too were the great and the good. Prince Charles, "Defender of Faiths", exhibiting a lamentable ignorance of Islam, wrote an article in the *Daily Mirror* in which he said: "Some may think the cause is Islam. It is anything but. It is a perversion of traditional Islam."

Those Muslims who *did* accept that the terror had come from within their own ranks did

so purely on a "yeah, but" basis,

"Yeah, but, these youngsters were ordinary, good kids who must have been brainwashed by dark Jihadist forces. They could not have acted on their own ..."

"Yeah, but, we have to understand that the Islamophobia in British society is to blame for marginalising young Muslims who, in the face of rejection, are turning in increasing numbers to radical Islam ..."

**Freethinker editor BARRY DUKE has had quite enough of all the 'yeah, but,' that followed in the wake of the London bombings**



"Yeah, but, not all Muslims are terrorists..." Sure. But it seems to me that nowadays all terrorists are Muslims.

"Yeah, but, the people who did this were not 'true' Muslims. No 'true' Muslims would take innocent lives." So who is churning out these counterfeit Muslims? And what have 'true' Muslims – those fully-integrated regular Joes who regularly enjoy a pint (of water, naturally) alongside the infidel down at the Porcupine and Parrot with their wives, husbands, girlfriends or boyfriends – done to oust these fanatical fakes?

And the "yeah buts" continued on for the rest of the day – and went completely unchallenged by interviewers who clearly had little or no knowledge of radical Islam, and its agenda of imposing its vile, fascist ideology wherever it is allowed to take root.

One simple question that should have been asked of the hand-wringing imams and representatives of organisations like the Muslim Council of Britain, was this: "Why are Muslim youngsters – who will believe *anything* so long it comes from a cleric – not being told that they will rot in hell for eternity if they become suicide bombers, rather than be fast-tracked to Paradise to reap Islam's promised reward for martyrs of 72 virgins?"

This would have left Muslims without answer, for there is no way they could deny that Islam has a very special regard for those who kill in the Muslim cause.

In an article in the *Guardian* ("Virgins, What Virgins?" January 12, 2002) Ibn Warraq wrote that "since September 11, news stories have repeated the story of suicide bombers and their heavenly rewards, and equally Muslim scholars and Western apologists of Islam have repeated that suicide is forbidden in Islam. Suicide (*qatlu nafsi-hi*) is not referred to in the Koran but is indeed forbidden in the Traditions (*Hadith* in Arabic), which are the collected sayings and doings attributed to the Prophet and traced back to him through a series of

putatively trustworthy witnesses."

Warraq pointed out that a Hamas spokesman, in a TV interview, "correctly used the word 'martyr' (*shahid*) and not 'suicide bomber', since those who blow themselves up almost daily in Israel and those who died on September 11 were dying in the noblest of all causes, *jihad*, which is an incumbent religious duty, established in the Koran and in the Traditions as a divine institution, and enjoined for the purpose of advancing Islam.

"While suicide is forbidden, martyrdom is everywhere praised, welcomed, and urged: 'By the Being in Whose Hand is my life, I love that I should be killed in the way of Allah; then I should be brought back to life and be killed again in His way ...'. The Prophet said 'Nobody who enters Paradise will ever like to return to this world even if he were offered everything, except the martyr who will desire to return to this world and be killed 10 times for the sake of the great honour that has been bestowed upon him'. (*Sahih Muslim*, chapters 781, 782, *The Merit of Jihad and the Merit of Martyrdom*.)"

However much they may try to back-pedal over this question, no matter how many "yeah buts" they may offer, Muslims, if pressed hard enough, must finally concede this point. Interviewers and commentators should be aware of this, and instead of allowing the likes of Sir Iqbal Sacranie, head of the Muslim Council of Britain, and Prince Charles, and Tony Blair, to wriggle away with the lie that "Islam is a religion of peace", they should, at every opportunity, throw Islam's explicit demands for violence back in their faces.

And if Muslims retort that "yeah, but, the Bible too is full of exhortations to blood-letting and murder" then an obvious response should be: "Yeah, but, most of us in the West (with the obvious exception of God-addled America), nowadays treat the Bible with the contempt it deserves, and no longer allow that disgusting old tome to damage our thinking and drive us to acts of unspeakable terror. Isn't it time you started doing the same with the Koran?"

OUR heartfelt sympathies go out to the family of Giles Hart, Vice-Chairman of the Havering and District Humanist Society who was killed on July 7 in the terrorist bombings of London. Giles was described in the *Observer* of July 17 as a "champion of human rights" who, as a prominent member of the Solidarity movement, helped Lech Walensa deliver Poland from totalitarian rule.

In a statement, his family said: "Giles was always a champion of human rights and a campaigner against political injustice and bigotry. It is tragic that he fell victim to the very evil against which he struggled.

For the past three years he had been chairman of the H G Wells Society. On the day of his death he was due to give a lecture on the lesser-known works of Lewis Carroll to the Havering Group.

## “Holy war” books spark threat from Jewish council

A MELBOURNE Jewish group says it will use Victoria’s anti-vilification laws unless a Muslim shop in Brunswick, Victoria, stops selling books that it says call for a “holy war”.

“This shop sells books that are inciting hatred,” Jewish Community Council of Victoria president Michael Lipshutz said. “The hatred in these books and some of the things they recommend are pretty extreme.”

A small bookshop at Brunswick’s Ahl Sunnah wal Jamaah Association, run by controversial Sheikh Mohammed Omran, sells books that the Jewish council says are offensive, according to a report in the *Age*, Melbourne.

Of chief concern, said the council, was *Al Wala’ wa’l Bara’ (Love and Hate for Allah’s Sake)*, by Muhammad Saeed al-Qahtani. It describes all non-Muslims as “the allies of Satan” who should be “trampled underfoot”.

“It is either Islam or death,” says one chapter detailing why Muslims must not befriend Jews, Christians or non-Muslims.

“If it becomes clear that someone is at odds with Islam, then fight him. The (Jew or Christian) who insults the Prophet should be killed.”

Jewish and Islamic groups met last month to discuss how they could avoid legal action.

The Jewish council says it will go to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to

stop the centre selling the books.

Islamic Council of Victoria president Waleed Aly said he would try to help resolve the dispute. But Sheikh Omran’s Brunswick group was not aligned with the Islamic Council, he added.

“The matter doesn’t directly concern us because the bookshop is not in any way linked to us. [This is] a marginal organisation and a marginal bookshop.”

A spokesman for the bookstore, who asked not to be named, said the shop would consider not stocking the books “if truly they are offensive”.

But complaints about the books had been “badly taken out of context”, he said. “If a complaint is valid, then we will take the books out.”

Last December, in the first case under Victoria’s controversial 2001 Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal upheld a complaint from the Islamic Council of Victoria.

It said Muslims were vilified by Christian group Catch the Fire Ministries, which suggested the Koran promoted killing, that only terrorists were true Muslims, and that Muslims wanted to rule Australia.

On 11 July, Sheikh Omran denied al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden or any Muslim groups were involved in the bombings in London on July 7, or the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

## Van Gogh’s killer unrepentant

THE man charged with the murder of the controversial Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh confessed to the killing at his trial last month in Amsterdam.

Exhibiting total contempt for the court, Mohammed Bouyeri, 27, said he acted out of his religious beliefs and that he would do “exactly the same” if he were ever set free.

Bouyeri killed Mr Van Gogh in a ritualistic murder committed in the name of radical Islam in November 2004. The killing shocked the Netherlands and raised ethnic tensions.

Bouyeri, who has dual Dutch-Moroccan nationality, could face a life sentence if he is convicted.

“I take complete responsibility for my actions. I acted purely in the name of my religion,” he told the court. “I can assure you that one day, should I be set free, I would do exactly the same ... *exactly* the same,” he added.

His lawyer told the court when the trial began that there would be no defence case put forward by Bouyeri or his legal representatives.

The prosecution said Bouyeri had hoped to die a “martyr” at the hands of the police.

Meanwhile, French police have arrested a 25-year-old Chechen thought to have been involved in Van Gogh’s murder.

Bislan Ismailov was arrested in Tours, central France. Dutch prosecutors want Mr Ismailov extradited as they suspect he was an accomplice of Bouyeri. Press reports said Ismailov’s fingerprints were found on a note left pinned to Van Gogh’s body.



Bouyeri and the late Theo van Gogh

## Three devout Christians jailed for cruelty to girl they claimed was a witch

THREE people have been jailed for between four and ten years over the torture of an eight-year-old girl they accused of being a witch.

The Old Bailey trial heard the girl was beaten, cut with a knife and had chilli peppers rubbed in her eyes at a flat in Hackney, east London, in 2003.

Her aunt, who cannot be named, was jailed for ten years for child cruelty.

Sita Kisanga and Sebastian Pinto, found guilty of helping her, were sentenced to ten and four years respectively.

The judge, Christopher Moss, said they had mounted a “campaign of cruelty that amounted to a campaign of torture”.

“It is the very pinnacle of cruelty to a child that demands the maximum sentence,” he added.

The court heard the orphan was beaten until she was made to admit she had been practising witchcraft and is still traumatised by the

experience.

The girl’s 40-year-old aunt, who had brought her to England from Africa in 2002, was convicted of four charges of cruelty.

Her cousin, Sita Kisanga, 35, of Hackney, east London, was found guilty of three charges of aiding and abetting child cruelty.

Both were cleared of conspiring to murder the girl. Kisanga’s brother Sebastian Pinto, 33, of Stoke Newington, north London, was found guilty of one charge of aiding and abetting.

The girl’s three abusers were members of the Church of Spiritual Warfare, which promotes the idea that children can be “possessed”.

Bishop Dr Joe Aldred, chair of the Council of Black-led Churches in Birmingham, said: “The African faith community has been horrified by this case of child abuse.

“Any religious practice or belief that harms children cannot be justified or excused.”

### Quotable quote

“THE most ridiculous concept ever perpetrated by *homo sapiens* is that the Lord God of Creation, Shaper and Ruler of the Universe, wants the saccharine adoration of his creations, that he can be persuaded by their prayers, and becomes petulant if he does not receive this flattery. Yet this ridiculous notion, without one real shred of evidence to bolster it, has gone on to found one of the oldest, largest and least productive industries in history.”

— Author Robert Heinlein



WITH volatile, sex-starved suicide bombers exploding all over the planet in order to get their hands on the promised 72 paradisaical virgins, MARTIN M BODEK wonders whether these "martyrs" ever pause to ask themselves some basic questions about the prizes awaiting them.

With this in mind, he has prepared the following set of questions for would-be suicide bombers.

1. What if the bomber wants girls with more experience?
2. What if one virgin is crap in bed? Does she get replaced or is he stuck with 71?
3. If he's gay, does he get male virgins?
4. What if he's celibate? What does he get?
5. What if he hasn't reached puberty yet? Does he get 72 X-Boxes till he comes of age?
6. If he's bisexual, does he get 36 of each?
7. If he blows himself up while building the bomb, does he still get credit?
8. What do you call a relationship with 72 women, a *menage-a-soixante-dix-et-deux*?
9. Are they like 72 wives or one wife and 71 concubines?
10. What if he's ugly or smells bad and the virgins don't want anything to do with him?
11. Is there Viagra in Paradise? Ya know, just in case?
12. Is there an age of consent?
13. When they're deflowered, do they get

### Catholic Church counts the cost of priestly paedophilia

THE paedophile scandal in Boston three years ago almost rendered the Catholic archdiocese bankrupt. Boston's Catholic archbishop, Cardinal Law, was forced to resign, and, in the largest settlement by a US diocese to resolve sexual abuse claims, great tracts of church land were sold, the archbishop's Italianate palazzo was put on the market and dozens of parishes had to close.

The church was ordered to pay \$120-million in compensation to victims after it emerged in January 2002 that priests had abused 815 children over the previous 50 years.

There were 550 lawsuits by abuse victims, who got between \$80,000 and \$300,000 in a settlement that new archbishop, Sean O'Malley brokered.

The archdiocese had to sell 15 properties and much of its headquarters, including the archbishop's residence and 22.6 adjoining hectares, for \$100 million.

Archbishop O'Malley pledged that no parish or archdiocese operating money would be used to settle the cases.

But more than 40 parishes have closed since the scandal, as the archdiocese pays legal bills and other debts, as well as debts brought on by declining attendance.

## Seventy-two questions about those 72 virgins

replaced by new virgins or are they "born again"?

14. Do they eventually become his common-law wives?
15. If he has a tryst with a 73rd virgin, do the others consider it cheating?
16. Do the virgins have a union? If so, can they strike if they're not satisfied?
17. Is there a temp agency that replaces virgins if they call in sick?
18. What if the bomber's into animals? Does he get accommodated?
19. Why 72? Is 71 too few? Is 73 too many?
20. If it was a female bomber, how do the male virgins prove their virginity?
21. What happens when Paradise runs out of virgins?
22. Can a bomber reserve specific virgins before he blows himself up?
23. If there are no virgins available, is he put on a waiting list?
24. If he's a Catholic priest, does he get 72 little boys?
25. Would you call a female bomber a bomb-shell?
26. Would you call a child bomber a bombino?
27. Is it not 73 out of respect for Barry Bond's home run record?
28. If the bomber previously dated one of the virgins, does it get awkward?
29. Do they have a bomb squad in Paradise just in case one of the charges didn't go off?
30. Did they start using female bombers because they ran out of virgins for the guys?
31. If she's a lesbian, do they "convert" the virgins, or will straight girls suffice her?
32. Does a hermaphrodite bomber get hermaphrodite virgins?
33. If so, are there 72 available?
34. If they run out of virgins, do they get inflatable dolls till they find more?
35. If a bomber finds an infidel in paradise, can he blow him up and get 72 more virgins?
36. Could the Koran have had a typo, and that just *one* 72-year-old virgin is the prize?
37. Is Muslim hell being one of the 72 virgins?
38. Instead of 72 guys, would a female bomber settle for just one man who does dishes and garbage?
39. Do the bombers go broke on Valentine's Day?
40. If he's monogamous, does he pick one of

the 72 or does he get a supermodel?

41. What if he doesn't like either gender? Does he just klutz around in Paradise?
42. Eternity is long, and eventually he'll grow bored of his 72 women. What happens then?
43. How does he pick the 72 to begin with? Lottery? Beauty pageant? Police lineup?
44. Is he allowed to covet his neighbour's virgins?
45. Do the virgins have agents and/or contracts?
46. If so, can a virgin request to be traded or put on waivers if she's unhappy?
47. What should he say if one of the virgins asks "Does this burkha make me look fat?"
48. If he gives the wrong answer, is he uh, screwed?
49. How is anyone expected to handle a cat-fight amongst 72 women?
50. Did those 9/11 hijackers who didn't know they were going to die get 72 virgins too?
51. Are scouts employed to find virgin talent?
52. Do the virgins ever retire, or do they remain virgins forever?
53. If they retire, what kind of pension plan do they get?
54. Wouldn't it be interesting if they're virgins because they're ugly?
55. So is it 72 Muslim girls or one virgin from every culture?
56. Wouldn't it be sweet if Lorena Bobbit got hired as one of the virgins?
57. What does Gloria Steinem have to say about all this?
58. When he gets home, does he have to say "How was your day?" to all 72 virgins?
59. Do they have counseling for sexual addiction in Paradise?
60. If the virgins start hogging the TV remote, is he in hell?
61. They must take up an entire theater when they go to the movies, huh?
62. Are there restaurants in Paradise that can accommodate a reservation for 73?
63. If a virgin suffers from multiple personalities, is she considered two virgins?
64. Does he get all the virgins at once, or do they have an instalment plan?
65. Is the bomber entitled to substitutes, exchanges, or refunds?
66. What if all the king's horses and all the king's men can't put the bomber back together again?
67. Is "not tonight, dear, I have a headache" a valid excuse in Paradise?
68. Do the virgins come with a warranty?
69. If so, does Paradise replace defective parts and provide on-site service?
70. What do you call a lifetime warranty if you're dead?
71. Do siamese twin bombers get 144 virgins?
72. Who gets to clean up all those mucky sheets?

## Hate-mongering Christian Voice is 'saddened' by hostile gay marchers

CHRISTIAN Voice, the extremist evangelical organisation which was ordered to close its account with the Co-op because the bank objected to its hate-filled rhetoric, against lesbians and gays, says its members were subjected to hatred, threats of violence, and actual violence when it "witnessed" against the 30,000 people who took part last month in London's annual Gay Pride march.

Stephen Green, National Director of Christian Voice, said "The purpose of our witness was two-fold. Firstly, we had to make clear that even in politically-correct Britain, Christians are still prepared to stand up for their Lord and deplore the sin of Sodom being paraded, in all its obscenity – and with the support of police parading in it in full uniform – through the streets of London.

"Secondly, I was deeply saddened by the sight of so many men and women celebrating their involvement in a sinful lifestyle characterised by deceit, degradation and death. We just had to reach out in the love of Christ with the message that Jesus died to save sinners like us and like them.

"Sadly, all we got back from 'the gays' was hatred, expressed in screaming and obscene gestures, and threats of violence – actual violence on four occasions during our hour of witness. I did not see any tolerance from the supposedly tolerant, nor any respect for the right of free speech. It is as if Satan cannot bear one word of dissent."

Bellowing through a megaphone behind a heavy police cordon, Green told the marchers: "For the first time you have got Christians standing up to you, and you can't bear to hear someone say you are sinful."

Most of the Pride paraders reacted to the homophobes with derisive laughter. Others railed against them with jocular or mocking chants. One man shouted: "Jesus was gay and God is a woman!"

Christian Voice's hatred of homosexuality exceeded only by fundamentalist Muslim groups, who reportedly issued death threats before the Pride March against gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell and other members of his organisation, Outrage – campaign co-ordinator Brett Lock and Outrage's Muslim spokesman, Aaron Saeed.

According to a report in the *Pink Paper*, in a series of threatening calls, the three were told they were on a "hit list" and that they were about to be "beheaded" and "chopped up" in accordance with "Islamic law".

Outrage claimed that extremists have posed as journalists, police officers and representatives of the Muslim Council of Britain in their



**Christian Voice's Stephen Green: He's got a Bible and ain't afraid to use it!**

Photo: Barry Duke

attempts to track Tatchell.

In a chilling late-night threat, one caller told him: "We are going to punish you all. The punishment for sodomy is death."

Jack Gilbert, of the Metropolitan Police's LGBT advisory group, said police had not previously investigated these calls as part of intelligence trawls in the wake of the July 7 bombings. But they have now included the information. He added: "Under normal circumstances you might consider these calls to be the actions of a crank. And they may be. But under current circumstances we have to take them seriously, and the police are doing so.

Tatchell warned: "Gay venues could be bombed by Islamic terrorists. Muslim fundamentalists have a violent hatred of lesbians and gay men. They believe we should be killed. Our community could be their next target. This is no time for complacency.

Meanwhile, at the annual Gay Pride march in Jerusalem – the fourth to be staged in the city – a 30-year-old ultra-orthodox Jew broke through a police cordon, and went on a stabbing rampage. Three people, one a woman, were treated in hospital for wounds inflicted by Yishai Schlissel, who was arrested after the attack. A further 13 religious Jews were arrested for trying to block the march.

## Child sex was consensual, says disgraced Christian bigot

NEW ZEALAND morals guardian Graham Capill told friends that sex with one of his child victims was consensual – despite later pleading guilty to her rape.

Capill (see *Freethinker* report, July) appeared in Christchurch District Court last month where he was sentenced to nine years for rape and indecent assault.

Capill's astonishing claim came in an email sent by the former Christian Heritage Party leader to his supporters on the eve of his guilty pleas.

He admitted a representative charge of raping one of three victims, but in his email tried to suggest the girl was a willing participant.

She was just eight when Capill began abusing her. He raped her twice before her 12th birthday, according to the Crown. Now in her late teens, the woman was understood to be extremely angry when she learned of the consensual sex claim.

In the email, Capill asked his friends to pray for a lenient judge and prison term.

A source said Capill's message to supporters was "full of self-serving statements". It was at odds with earlier court images of Capill as a tearful, broken man said to be full of remorse.

Denise Ritchie, a campaigner against child sex, was dumbfounded by the revelation, and urged Capill to take responsibility for his actions. "There is absolutely no such thing as legal consent from a child," she said. "To even begin to justify it by using consent shows a real blind spot in the thinking of a perpetrator."

Capill molested three girls over a span of more than a decade. What began as groping an eight-year-old – which he told her was a "game" – escalated to rape by the time the abuse ended, years later.

For another girl, being sexually abused by him formed her earliest childhood memory. Two of the girls told Capill's wife, but police were not alerted.

Then in February this year, when Capill was working as a police prosecutor in Christchurch,



**A tearful Graham Capill**

Anglican vicar Wally Behan alerted police to allegations involving the third girl.

Capill admitted indecently assaulting that girl and was awaiting sentence when the other two women came forward and he was charged with rape and indecent assault.

Quite properly, the Government is anxious that innocent, peace-loving Muslims must not become scapegoats for the activities of the group of fanatics who carried out the bombings in London last week. We all want to see tolerance and justice in this country. Only hate-filled racists want to see mob rule, lynchings and persecution.

Having said that, was Tony Blair right to claim that "true" Islam played no part in these atrocities? (It is unclear where Mr Blair gets his authority to identify what is and is not "true" Islam, but that's another matter). He asserted in parliament that the bombers were motivated by a "perversion" of Islam which, he said, was a peaceful, humane faith.

Then, Chief Superintendent Brian Paddick of the Metropolitan Police castigated a journalist at a press conference for mentioning the words "Muslim" and "terrorist" in the same context as, he said, one had no connection with the other.

Then Prince Charles wrote in the *Daily Mirror*: "Some may think this cause is Islam. It is anything but. It is a perversion of traditional Islam. As I understand it, Islam preaches humanity, tolerance and a sense of community."

The parish priest of the church where the Number 30 bus was blown up said in his sermon on Sunday: "We must name the people who did these things as criminals or terrorists. We must not name them as Muslims."

Sir Iqbal Sacranie, the supposed leading Muslim representative, also made his usual pleas for understanding Islam – "the religion of harmony". Is this the same Iqbal Sacranie who, in 1989, as the spokesman for the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, said, during the Salman Rushdie affair: "Death, perhaps, is a bit too easy for him... his mind must be tormented for the rest of his life unless he asks for forgiveness to Almighty Allah"?

Derek Beck challenged this idea that all this has nothing to do with Islam. In a letter to the *Daily Express* he wrote: "Am I alone in thinking that a prerequisite for membership of Al-Qaeda and similar organisations is that one should be a Muslim?"

There is no doubt that the bombers were devout. One of them is said to have been a regular guy, well liked by his friends, who suddenly became "very religious" just a year before he decided to kill himself and others. He went to Pakistan as a person the average Brit could understand and came back a murderous automaton.

He was probably seduced by the Wahhabi brand of Islam, which believes in "purity" in all things and considers even Muslims who subscribe to other sects of Islam to be as unacceptable as Christians, Jews and atheists.

Only religious delusion, coupled with a sense of alienation and an excess of testosterone, has the requisite power to make a 19-year old or a 22-year old, with all their natural love of life, feel the need to atomise themselves with explosives, killing as many "infidels" as possible in the process.

Writing in the *Daily Mail*, Kevin Toolis, who is making a film about suicide bombers for Channel 4, tried to describe the mind of the average suicide bomber. "Brainwashed by his recruiters ... [he would be] convinced that 'jannah' (the gardens of Paradise) lay waiting for him. In these fabled gardens, 72 dark-eyed women would attend his every need. Luscious fruit would fall from the trees and there would be drink and sweet things to eat. He would live for ever close to the Prophet, as a living saint, and his murderous deed, carried out in the soul of London, would be glorified as the work of 'a blessed martyr'."

Mr Toolis visited an Israeli jail to interview Hassan Kahlut, who had been captured before he could carry out his mission to blow up a bus. He had asked what would have happened to all the passengers and Kahlut had answered "They would all have gone straight to hell". Mr Toolis thinks the message of hate would have been the same for the London bombers.

And it turns out that the London bombers were not from Afghanistan or Pakistan or any other country being torn apart by religious fanaticism. They were from Leeds. They were born and bred in this country, coming from relatively affluent backgrounds. They watched *Eastenders* and one of their fathers ran that most authentic of British institutions, a chip shop. How did they come to this?

The question now becomes – how do we protect ourselves from these madmen in our midst (and latest intelligence reports say there are hundreds of others who would willingly follow in the footsteps of these young men)?

Melanie Phillips in the *Daily Mail* has no doubts that the roots of this are religious. "This war against the West is not only being fought in the name of Islam, but its aims, if not all its tactics, have been condoned by countless Islamic states and religious authorities and supported by millions of Muslims around the world," she wrote.

"Our leaders are too frightened to say this for fear of upsetting the Muslim community. So on the basis of a deeply flawed analysis, the Government has produced a hopelessly flawed strategy. This is to give British Muslims widespread concessions in the hope that this will dampen down the rage of the most extreme. According to the Home Office Permanent Secretary Sir John Gieve, the roots of Muslim extremism in Britain lie in 'discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion'. The remedy

## For the safety of religion must

therefore is to reduce discrimination and promote integration. Hence, for example, ministers' support for the law against incitement to religious hatred, or the introduction of sharia-compliant mortgages and suggestions by the Inland Revenue that polygamy can be recognised for the purposes of income tax."

The *Daily Express's* political editor, Patrick O'Flynn, opined that it was necessary for us to demand that people who come from other cultures be reminded of the rules of the game when living in Britain.

"It is time for Britain to ask more of those

**'We must boost secularism and return religion to its rightful place – inside the heads of believers, and in their homes and places of worship,' insists TERRY SANDERSON, Vice-President of the National Secular Society**

who choose to become British by travelling to these shores. It is also time for members of ethnic minority communities who do fully abide by essential British values to show a little less tolerance towards those in their midst who do not. We have something precious here – a multi-ethnic country where different colours and faiths do largely co-exist in peace and enrich each other's lives. But we put that prize in jeopardy if a few cultural refuseniks within our immigrant communities are allowed to wilfully imperil any notion of a core common culture."

Baroness Faulkner, a Lib Dem peer (and herself a Muslim), was more honest than Tony Blair in her assessment of the role of religion in provoking these acts.

In the *Independent* she said: "When extremism culminates in terrorism, the refrain from leaders is that these are not 'real' Muslims. While almost all Muslims would not condone terrorism, it is now evident that there are some who conflate justice for the Muslim *umma* with justification for murder. These people do not see themselves as outside our faith, indeed they see themselves as representing its unsullied purity. What is more, the boundary

# fety of us all, ust be tamed

between these apologists and the mainstream is not always clearly identifiable.”

She also tells of the isolation that is apparent in the Muslim communities. In some instances they have cut themselves off almost entirely from the mainstream.

“As a politician who goes around the different Muslim communities in the UK, the reasons are complex. Socio-economic issues are part of the problem. The levels of social deprivation of Muslims living in Burnley, Bradford or Leeds tell the story of years of neglect, ignorance, poor upward mobility and segregated communities, hence alienation from the mainstream.

“A further outcome of segregation is the inability to ‘test’ values and ideas against competing norms. The experience of racial difference, and most Muslims are not white, sits differently within our skins at differing stages of our lives, but it is most difficult in youth. When religious and cultural difference is added and reinforced through very tight fami-

## Muslims target ‘offensive’ advertising billboards

MUSLIM activists have stepped up a campaign to censor advertising billboards featuring some degrees of nudity in areas with large numbers of Muslims.

According to a report in *Muslim News*, the campaign has achieved some of its goals, as there were now fewer such billboards close to mosques.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) said that increasing numbers of posters were being torn down or painted over in predominantly Muslim areas.

Adverts for perfume, hair dye, bras and television programmes are among those that have been attacked, it said.

Photographs of semi-dressed women are the most frequently targeted, with the offending body parts painted over or ripped off.

A poster advertising the TV *Desperate Housewives* was the most recent target. The images of two scantily clad actresses were torn from an east London billboard but three fully dressed characters were left intact.

A website giving advice on how to vandalise billboards, and listing potential targets, has been set up by a group calling themselves Muslims Against Advertising (MAAD).

MAAD, based in Birmingham, gives an index of defaced ads in the city, including

ly structures where integration into the wider British community is rare, then mainstream values do not easily transfer across.”

This, surely, is the unarguable case to stop the expansion of faith schools that further inhibit the meeting of these communities. Indeed, it makes one step back and wonder how these completely separate and parallel communities have grown up in the midst of our cities. It sometimes feels as though small areas of Pakistan have somehow been transplanted into Britain, and Britons are not welcome in them.

Although there are many and varied problems to face if we are to stop this grotesque violence proliferating, we cannot escape religion’s part in it. We must not put restrictions on our ability to point the finger when a finger needs to be pointed.

We must not conclude that the way to appease religion is to give it more influence. We must boost secularism and return religion to its rightful place – inside the heads of believers, and in their homes and places of worship. And when religion attempts to dictate the agenda, as Islam is so powerfully doing at present, we must resist every encroachment on secular values to the utmost of our abilities. One concession is never enough for religion, and neither is a dozen. Given the chance, prac-

tically all religions would be totalitarian, as history teaches us. Their demands, if acceded to, will be endless.

As the *Daily Telegraph* said in an editorial this week: “We believe in a secular state, which allows the free expression of a plurality of religious beliefs. One of the most difficult aspects of this debate is the fact that many Muslims do not acknowledge the difference, or accept a separation, between the secular and the spiritual spheres. Mohammed, after all, was both a religious and a temporal leader, a prophet and a politician. This is a considerable stumbling block to the assimilation of Muslims in the West. Yet many devout Muslims manage it; those who wish Britain to be an Islamic theocracy are irreconcilables.”

The only way to contain them is to deny them power. At present we are going in the opposite direction, we are in the grip of a man who wants to promote religion into being an arm of the state. But that arm will one day turn out to have an iron fist.

The pious Prime Minister had better come down from his ivory tower and start travelling on the tube with the rest of us.

• Terry Sanderson article first appeared in the *NSS Newline*, and is reproduced with permission.

Levis, Wonderbra, PaddyPower, a radio station and a strip club. It says on its website that it believes in “direct action” and “has paint and isn’t afraid to use it... There is no longer any need to cringe as you walk past a sleazy poster, we’ll improve it.”

An ASA spokeswoman told *Muslim News*, “There do seem to be more incidents. It’s a criminal offence and private property is being defaced... It happens in a lot of Muslim areas

such as Luton, Bradford, Glasgow and Birmingham.”

She said the authority encouraged people to contact it so that action against offensive billboards could be taken through the proper channel.

“The spokesperson refused to comment on why no guidelines were drawn to address the repetitive problem of offensive advertising being placed near mosques,” the newspaper said.

### Rickets rise linked to mothers who cover up

CHILDHOOD rickets is soaring in Australia, particularly among babies born to Muslim mothers who cover themselves up completely for religious or cultural reasons, according to paediatric endocrinologist Chris Cowell.

The number of cases has doubled at three Sydney hospitals between 2002 and 2003, and specialists in Melbourne and Adelaide have recounted similar experiences. All but five of the 126 cases reported by the three Sydney hospitals in the 11 years to 2003 occurred in immigrant families. The rise coincided with an increase in immigration by people of North African, Middle Eastern and Indian heritage.

Rickets, a bone-softening disease that causes seizures, bowed legs and bone pain, was common among children in Europe during the industrial revolution, when factory smoke blocked the ultraviolet rays from the sun, reducing vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is important in helping bones absorb calcium, and low levels can cause rickets.

Professor Cowell, of the Children’s Hospital at Sydney’s Westmead, said that in the past 20 to 30 years, Australian doctors had seen a “very small” number of cases of childhood rickets. But the rate had risen in the past four or five years in line with increasing immigration from countries where women often wear veils, or have darker skin types.

# Europe or Eurabia do to halt the mena

"ONCE Muslims have immigrated into a host country in large enough numbers they establish their own little enclaves. Afterwards, a process of encroachment begins where they start to assimilate the surrounding areas within the host country on a street-by-street, building-by-building, block-by-block basis which they start referring to as their 'Islamic' territory. They then demand their own schools, etc, and also insist that Muslim-controlled enclaves be run by the local imams and mullahs and governed by Sharia Law ...

Once such enclaves are established, the infidels find themselves having to deal with an angry subset of their own population – people who are increasingly agitated, vocal, even riotous. They commit acts of desecration of infidel religious structures, cemeteries, etc, and harass, intimidate, beat, rape and even murder infidels... Muslims do not assimilate into a culture, they assimilate the culture itself!"

This view was posted on an internet message board by an unnamed contributor shortly before the London bombing outrage. At around the same time, *Muslim News*, published in the UK, carried an item about MAAD (Muslims Against Advertising) a newly-constituted organisation set up in Birmingham to deface posters deemed "objectionable" to Muslims (see page 7).

This report was the latest of many examples of certain areas of Britain becoming so Islamicised that they have virtually become "no-go" areas for advertisers, or for certain sections of the indigenous population, particularly gays and single women. And, as mosques spread across the land like a canker, Britain is likely to find more and more of these "no-go" zones.

It is, of course, a problem not confined to Britain alone. Here is a snapshot of what is happening in two other European countries, Holland and France.

## The Dutch experience

The Dutch, arguably the most liberal nation in Europe, if not the world, welcomed its first wave of Muslim immigrants with open arms in the 1960s, and, in the spirit of multi-culturalism, generously began funding Islamic organisations, believing that this was the best way of integrating the newcomers into Dutch society. Britain went a step further, and allowed a rag-bag of Islamic firebrands – like the hook-handed horror, Abu Hamza – to set up shop in the UK, and to spread their radicalism among the young. Presumably this was done in the belief that having them here would ensure that our Muslim population would never turn on us – a classic example of having them in the tent pissing out, rather outside pissing in. This, as the events of July 7 show, proved a ghastly mistake.

In Holland, as in the UK, Muslims lost no time in rejecting efforts to integrate them, and

attacked the host nations for 'immorality' and 'licentiousness'.

In her essay, *The Dutch-Muslim Culture War* published in the US two months ago, award-winning American investigative reporter Deborah Scroggins wrote:

"There was always a latent conflict in the idea of Europe's most sexually wide-open country funding institutions aimed at promoting traditional Muslim values. Pim Fortuyn, an openly gay sociology professor, seized on that conflict after a number of assaults on gay couples by Muslim youths. He ran for office in Rotterdam in 2001 and won handily on a platform calling for a halt to Muslim immigration. Labelling Islam a 'backward' religion, he questioned whether Muslim attitudes toward women and homosexuality were compatible with Dutch ideas of individual rights."

When Fortuyn was assassinated, his place was taken by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the Somali-born woman legislator who has since waged a relentless war against Islamic "values." At the age of 22, the woman who had undergone a strict Islamic upbringing and education, wound up as an asylum-seeker in Holland. Rather than turning to other immigrants for help, as most newcomers do, she found herself a Dutch foster mother, who helped her learn the language. Eventually she managed to earn a degree in politics at Leiden University.

While still living in an asylum centre, Hirsi Ali began translating for the Dutch social services in shelters and hospitals. Over the years, she met women who had been locked inside their homes for years; she interviewed others who had been raped and beaten. She heard about girls who had been killed for holding hands with non-Muslim boys.

Armed with her new understanding of women's rights under Dutch law, she was outraged to learn that the authorities seldom interfered in such cases, writing them off as "family conflicts". She had read and strongly agreed with the late American feminist Susan Moller Okin's argument that multi-culturalist policies aimed at protecting "culture" often end up contributing to the repression of women and children. She took particular exception to the

Dutch policy of subsidising more than 700 mosques, schools and clubs. She said conservative Muslim men use them to perpetuate their ideas about gender and sexuality and to prevent Dutch Muslim women from exercising their legal rights.

In the pages of newspapers she harangued the health authorities to examine schoolgirls for evi-

**'Why are we afraid to tell Muslims to adapt to us, simply because our values and norms represent a higher level of civilisation – better, more pleasant and more humane. No more integration, but assimilation!'**

– Dutch politician  
Geert Wilders

dence of genital mutilation.

Last year, Hirsi Ali's implacable campaign against what she views as Islam's oppression of women prompted a Muslim fanatic to ritually slaughter Theo van Gogh, her Dutch collaborator on the film *Submission*. The murder sent Dutch society into paroxysms of rage and fear, sparking dozens of attacks on mosques and schools.

But it didn't seem to faze Hirsi Ali. In a series of defiant interviews, the former refugee refused to be intimidated. When a group of Muslims tried to block her from making a sequel to *Submission*, she fought back in court and won.

"Like a dark avenging angel, she seemed to loom over Holland's wintry Dutch, her ubiquitous media presence a virtual guarantee of further conflict," wrote Scroggins.

She added: "Well before Van Gogh's murder, she had become a major hate figure among Dutch Muslims, who accuse her of stirring up islamophobia on behalf of a cabal of right-wing politicians and columnists. Since the murder, a surprising number of native-born Dutch intellectuals have come around to the Muslim point of view.

"In a series of 'Letters to Hirsi Ali' published this spring in the newspaper *De Volkskrant*, several well-known, mostly male writers charged her with poisoning the political atmosphere with her strident attacks on



Ayaan Hirsi Ali



# a – What are we to hance of Islamisation?

Islam and the Prophet Mohammed. They argued that by pandering to Dutch prejudices and putting Muslims on the defensive, she contributes to the very Islamic radicalisation she claims to want to stop. In a book rushed into print in February, the popular historian Geert Mak went so far as to compare *Submission* to Joseph Goebbels's infamous Nazi propaganda film *The Eternal Jew*. He warned that the Netherlands could be on the road to civil war.

"The backlash against Hirsi Ali has astonished and disappointed many Dutch feminists, who continue to count themselves among her biggest fans. Margreet Fogteloo, editor of the weekly *De Groene Amsterdammer*, said flatly that Mak is crazy. 'People like him feel guilty because they were closing their eyes for such a long time to what was going on', she said. In what appears to be a Europe-wide pattern, some feminists are aligning themselves with the anti-immigrant right against their former multi-culturalist allies on the left. Joining them in this exodus to the right are gay activists, who blame Muslim immigrants for the rising number of attacks on gay couples."

As is customary in Somalia, Hirsi Ali's mother and grandmother forced her to undergo what she calls "the cruel ritual" of female genital mutilation at the age of six. "I remember the lesson I learned more than the pain," Hirsi Ali told one interviewer: "to be a Muslim woman is to be born for the pleasure of men."

Pim Fortuyn's shocking assassination in May 2002, Holland's first political murder in 300 years, hardened Hirsi Ali's determination to press forward. She wrote an article calling on Muslim women to abandon the "outdated religious opinions" that prevented them from claiming their rights under Dutch law. A circle of older Dutch writers and politicians began to gather around her. Some, like the University of Utrecht philosopher Herman Phillipse, warned that Holland's Muslim community was rapidly



Pim Fortuyn

becoming indigestible. The politician Geert Wilders was perhaps the most inflammatory. "Why are we afraid to tell Muslims to adapt to us, simply because our values and norms represent a higher level of

civilisation – better, more pleasant and more humane. No more integration, but assimilation!" Wilders wrote.

"Hirsi Ali's many critics," Deborah Scroggins wrote "contend that far from being a revolutionary, she brings a message that the West is all too willing to hear. They say that in calling for European governments to protect Muslim women from Muslim men, she and her admirers recycle the same Orientalist tropes that the West has used since colonial times as an excuse to control and subjugate Muslims. 'White men saving black women from black men – it's a very old fantasy that is always popular', Annelies Moors, a University of Amsterdam anthropologist who writes about Islamic gender relations, said 'I don't think male violence against women, a phenomenon known to every society in history, can be explained by a few Koranic verses'.

"Moors and others don't dispute the existence of the social problems Hirsi Ali identifies. Many Dutch Muslim women do live in segregated 'parallel cities' where Islamic social codes are enforced. One million Muslims make up only 5.5 percent of the Dutch population, but they account for more than half the women in battered women's shelters and more than half of those seeking abortions. Muslim girls have far higher suicide rates than non-Muslim girls. Some Muslim girls, mostly African, are genitally mutilated. But in putting all the blame on Islam, they say, Hirsi Ali ignores the influence of patriarchal custom as well as the work of a generation of Muslim feminists.

"Whatever happens to Hirsi Ali, the debate she helped polarise over women and Islam is sure to spread and intensify all over Europe in the next few years. As Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris have argued in their book *Rising Tide*, the true clash of opinions between Islam and the West is not about democracy but sex. Successive World Values Surveys, in which social scientists polled public opinion in more than eighty countries between 1981 and 2001, have shown that people in Muslim countries share broadly the same views on political participation as people in the West. What they disagree strongly about is gender equality and sexual liberalisation.

"In France, Belgium, Germany and Scandinavia, as in the Netherlands, the 'woman question' is at the centre of the debate over how to integrate the Muslim community.

'I know most of my Muslim friends will disagree with me, but in my opinion the gender issue is the most important issue', says Martijn de Koning, an anthropologist at Leiden University who studies jihadi groups. 'The headscarf, the Islamic schools, the policy of family reunification – every debate here more or less concerns the position of women.

"Hirsi Ali is the most prominent of a number of young Muslim women who have lately begun to criticise their own communities for their treatment of women. In Sweden, Fadime Sahindal campaigned against forced marriages before her father killed her in 2002 for having a relationship with a Swedish man. In France, Fadela Amara heads the *Ni Putes ni Soumises* ("Neither Whores nor Submissives") movement against Islamist groups she calls "the green fascists." In Germany, where six honour killings have taken place just this year, Seyran Ates, a Berlin-based lawyer, has charged the government with allowing Islamic fundamentalism to flourish under a policy of false tolerance.

"In the US, too, some of the Islamists' most vigorous opponents have been female. Asra Nomani, a former *Wall Street Journal* reporter, and Amina Wadud, a professor of Islamic studies, have led the fight to open Muslim prayers to women. Most of the members of the newly formed Progressive Muslim Union, which aims to provide liberal Muslims with a platform, are women, according to co-founder Ahmed Nassef.

"Many conservative Muslims have been almost as hostile to these female critics as they have been to Hirsi Ali. As with Hirsi Ali, they tend to regard the women as deviants who want to change Islamic sexual mores because of their personal failure to live up to them. Nomani, who bore a son out of wedlock, was expelled from her hometown mosque in Morgantown, West Virginia. She and Wadud received death threats and condemnation from religious authorities around the Muslim world for organising a female-led prayer service in March in New York."

Norwegian journalist and human rights activist Hege Storhaug argues that strict controls on immigration are the best way to protect European values and Muslim women's rights. Storhaug, the information director of Human Rights Service, says that Europe's concept of Muslim integration used to amount to "Get the father a job and integration will follow." The new motto, she says, should be "Integrate the mother and two-thirds of the job is done, because the mother will integrate the children."

Storhaug says that to dry up radical Islam, European governments need to break up the "parallel societies" Muslims have established in cities across the continent. Older men in these communities prevent integration by controlling marriages. "The families are under

(Continued on p10)

tremendous pressure to bring relatives from the home country to Europe", she said. "Relatives are willing to pay a lot for those residency visas. Especially with young immigrant brides, who become completely dependent on their husbands and in-laws. Young women who are born in Norway are forced to marry cousins who can then come to this country." She says that in the ninety such forced marriages her group studied, all but three of the brides said they had been raped.

Denmark has been widely criticised for passing a law in 2002 establishing a number of tests for citizens or residents who wish to bring spouses into the country from overseas. Both partners must be at least 24 years old. They must demonstrate that the marriage is voluntary. They must have a certain income and own a residence with at least two rooms. And they must show a stronger connection to Denmark than to any other country. As a result, the number of people from outside the EU who were allowed to join Danish spouses or other close family members fell from 10,950 in 2001 to 3,835 last year. In November the Netherlands became the first to follow Denmark's example, raising the age to 21 to qualify for family reunion.

When the Danish measure was proposed, Muslim groups opposed it vigorously. But Storhaug quotes immigrant parents who now say the law has released them from family pressures to use their children as "human visas". And she says young Muslims can continue their education without fear of being married off. "It's rubbish to say the Danish policy is racist," she said. "It's the best policy for women in Europe."

Her group, Human Rights Service, has given Hirsi Ali its "Bellwether of Europe" prize. "I think she is doing a great service to democracy and the future, because Islamism is the biggest threat to democracy and to Europe," she said.

### The French experience

On December 23, 2003, the American on-line magazine, *FrontPage*, under the headline "France's Wake-Up Call", carried the following report by Olivier Guitta.

"Last week, French President Jacques Chirac declared that '(French) schools will remain secular.' Thus, the *hijab*, the *yarmulke* and 'large crosses' are going to be banned in France's schools.

"But the real underlying issue, one not addressed by Chirac, concerns the extremist version of Islam currently threatening the French Republic, host to the largest Muslim population in Europe. The French Muslim community, estimated at anywhere between five and eight million people, is totally indoctrinated and controlled by extremist organisations such as UOIF (*Union des Organisations Islamiques de France*), which is affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood, a notorious Islamist terrorist group founded in Egypt in 1927. These fanatics control most French mosques and get financial support from Saudi Arabia. In fact, the Arab Kingdom is behind almost every mosque and Islamic centre in France. For example, last week, it was revealed in the French newspaper *Le Monde* that Saudi Arabia is going to finance the restoration of the Paris Mosque, thus exporting discreetly its extremist version of Islam, Wahhabism.

"The most vocal advocate of Wahhabism in France is Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss philosophy teacher who happens to be the grandson of Hassan Al Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. Ramadan has been very active in France during the past ten years, spreading his extremist views and becoming the unofficial voice of French Islam. He has now become a 'star,' appearing constantly on French prime-time television. Ramadan symbolises the view, as Jacques Jormier (a leading French expert on Islam) puts it, 'that does not modernise Islam but Islamises modernity.' The extent to which Ramadan's brand of totalitarian Islam has gained a strong foothold in France can be seen in the plight of French Muslim women.

"In certain cases, French Muslim families are paid 500 Euros per trimester by Muslim organizations just to have their daughters wear the hijab. In fact, a survey done last May found that 77 per cent of girls wearing the hijab do so because of the physical threats received from Islamist groups.

"*Liberation*, a major French newspaper, recently showed how Muslim women and girls in France who refuse to wear the hijab are insulted, rejected and often times physically threatened, by Muslim males. One of the teenage girls interviewed said, 'Every day, bearded men come to me and advise me strongly on wearing the veil. It is a war. For now, there are no dead but there are looks and words that do kill.' Muslim women who try to rebel are considered outcasts and 'whores'. Some of them want to move to areas 'with no Muslims' to escape. However, that might not be a solution, as Islamists are at work everywhere in France. For example, *L'Humanite*, the Communist French newspaper usually very much in sync with France's Arab population, recently interviewed two Catholic-born French women who said that they converted to Islam after a methodical indoctrination by the Muslim Brotherhood.

"This extremist indoctrination also extends to French schools, where non-Muslim teachers are subject to daily insults and racist remarks. For instance, the principal of the Trappes' primary school described how, 'An 11-year-old kid insulted his female teacher because she was not wearing the *hijab*. Intolerant behaviour, especially against teachers and other religions, has skyrocketed in the past three years.'

"These young children are taught from the time they can walk that Islam is the answer to everything – the Ultimate Truth – and that is why even six-year-olds are now fasting during Ramadan. Therefore, it is not surprising that ten-year-olds call for the institution of *shariah*, or Koranic law, during class. Or that during a high-school history lesson regarding the Crusades, a Muslim student yelled: 'Anyway, the Arabs are going to kill the Christians and

### Commentator nails the myth of Muslim 'diversity'

FOUR days before the London bombing, *FrontPage* held a symposium entitled "Muslims in France: A Ticking Time Bomb?" It was chaired by the magazine's editor, Russian-born Jamie Glazov. During the course of the debate, one apologist for Islam stated that "the Muslim community was as diverse as any other group, culture and community".

Glazov exploded: "The Muslim community is as diverse as any other group, culture and community? Please. When there are Muslim women from the Muslim world freely competing in sports and in the Olympics, get in touch with me.

When they are free to become prominent intellectuals and critics in their own society and receive material and cultural rewards for being prominent dissidents, get in touch with me.

When they are free, if they so choose, to engage in Muslim beauty pageants, get in touch with me.

When Muslims throughout the Arab world start creating the most hilarious self-critical stand-up comedy routines, get in touch with me.

When Muslims create heated and controversial talk shows, books and films, where free opinions startle and provoke thought on all issues, and the creators are not hiding in desperate fear of their lives, get in touch with me.

Is there a fight happening for the soul of Islam? Yes. Must we support Muslims, like groups such as The Free Muslims Against Terrorism? Yes. But please spare me the absurdity of the Muslim community being as "diverse" as any other community.

When you can name me ten fatwas, off the top of your head, made by ten famous Muslim clerics against Bin Laden within this "diverse" community, get in touch with me. Yes, of course these fatwas exist, but why are they so few in number, and what effect have they had on widespread support for Islamic terrorists within the Islamic community worldwide?

Does this not say something about "diversity" in the Muslim community?

the Jews.' The teacher then asked him, "When?" and the child replied, "I do not know. It was not mentioned on the imam's tape." Or that on a course on the Holocaust, Muslim children demanded to be let out to ask their imams if what they were being taught was true.

"But school is not the only place in France where militant Islam is omnipresent. For example, in Avignon, Muslim extremists distribute loads of Koranic tapes in French and drive around town with their windows open and propaganda blasting through the speakers.

"In French hospitals, most Muslim women, sometimes under the family's pressure, refuse to be examined by male doctors and many Muslim men by female doctors. Many Muslim defen-

dants refuse to be tried by Jewish judges, and some municipal pools have different hours for women and men to accommodate the Muslim population. A number of supermarkets carrying non-halal products (food not permitted by the Koran) have been vandalised by Muslims and then surrendered to this violent blackmail by taking the products off their shelves.

"This is what France has become. Islamists have the clear goal of transforming France into the first Islamist regime of the West. Their master plan is clearly formulated and being implemented every day. And it is not a coincidence that the biggest wave of violent anti-Semitism in Europe is occurring in France, triggered by Muslims. This may only be a taste

of things to come; the next victims could be French Christians and then moderate Muslims.

"Passing a law that forbids the hijab is not going to change anything. A very aggressive policy against the Wahhabi influence in the French Muslim community and the arrest of radical French imams would be a good start. But the Chirac administration is not ready for that; in fact, it does not even recognise that Muslims are responsible for most anti-Semitic incidents in France.

"France has had its wake-up call; if it just hits the snooze button and goes back to sleep, then a Muslim *coup d'etat* is in the offing."

– Barry Duke

## Fanatics jubilant over London bombings

HOURS after the bombings in London, British Muslim extremists on an internet chat site were congratulating themselves on the attacks.

"It was crazy. They were talking about how they had won a great victory over the infidels as if they had just come back from a battle", said Abdul-Rahman al-Helbawi, a Muslim prayer leader in London.

Al-Helbawi was quoted in an article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, which ran a piece, "Britain's Defiant Islam" by James Brandon, on July 14.

Brandon also spoke to "Abdullah", a Muslim watch-mender and evangelist, who "was in a pugnacious mood".

"We don't need to fight. We are taking over!" he said. "We are here to bring civilisation to the West.

"England does not belong to the English people, it belongs to God."

Earlier this year Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammed, leader of the now officially disbanded Islamic militant group *Al Muhajiroun*, said that Muslims living in Britain are facing two choices; either to migrate or to join the *jihād*. Bakri told United Press International that as the covenant of security under which Muslims previously lived in Britain had been broken, Muslims must now consider themselves at war. "And I declare we should ourselves join the global Islamic camp against the global crusade camp," he said.

He called on Muslims to form a new coalition united behind *al-Qaeda* with Osama bin Laden as their leader. There is no place for "moderate Muslims" in his new world order. Those who did not wish to either leave or fight would not be regarded as Muslims

He condemned in particular the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) for urging the Muslim community to co-operate with the British government.

Sheikh Omar was speaking at a conference in London ostensibly organised by Women's Dawah UK., where around 600 attendees gathered to listen to his call for *jihād*.

The speakers, all leading members of the group, called for war against the *kuffir* (non-Muslims) and led chants as a projector screen showed images of dead American soldiers in Iraq.

As the infamous images of two planes crashing into the twin towers replayed again and again, the rapt watchers thrust their fists in the air and chanted "*Allahu Akhbar!* (God is great!)" And they issued a call to arms.

All the Muslim brothers and sisters, even the children, must now start their preparations, another speaker urged.

"Whether they be stones, whether they be sticks, whether they be knives, whether they be bombs, whatever they may be, prepare as much as you can," he said.

"It is our responsibility as Muslims to prepare, to fight," he said, calling on the crowd to "give up your lives for the sake of Allah." Muslim mothers must teach their children to have passion for *jihād* and to take martyrs as their role models.

The MCB, continued the speaker, even condemned the "beautiful" attacks in Madrid last year. The chants grew louder. Muslims must reject the integrationist calls of such people, said Sheikh Omar.

Instead, an Islamic state must be established here in Britain – an objective that is the duty of every Muslim, he declared.

## New web log set up to scrutinise the Muslim Council of Britain

"THERE are grave problems with the Muslim Council of Britain, and it is our considered opinion that the time has come for the organisation to be seriously and robustly challenged on a whole range of points. This we will seek to do over the coming weeks and months, drawing on the whole pool of statements, opinions and articles that the MCB has published since its inception eight years ago."

This is the basis on which a new internet blog – [mcbwatch.blogspot.com](http://mcbwatch.blogspot.com) – has been established, and in its opening statement it declares: "The MCB present themselves as the moderate face of British Islam, yet many of the ideas and doctrines they put forward are actually not that far removed from the radicals. For example, *The Quest for Sanity*, a book published by the MCB in the aftermath of 9/11, argues in several places for the restoration of the caliphate (= global Muslim state), a similar aim espoused by many radicals. This reduces the MCB's effectiveness, since it cannot challenge the radicals on ideology or theology, only on methodology.

The MCB was founded in 1997 and since then has grown to be the largest and arguably the most influential Muslim lobby group in the UK. Representing some 300 affiliate organisations, the MCB seeks to lobby parliament and represent Muslims on a wide range of issues.

### Quotable quote

If Christ were here now, there is one thing he would not be – a Christian.

– Mark Twain

AS a reviewer pointed out when I erroneously attributed to Julian Huxley a defence of evolution that had actually emanated from Thomas Huxley, such errors of fact enable upholders of indefensible beliefs to focus on the error and ignore the 99.99 percent of a book's content that they cannot rebut. That is why it is unfortunate that Hector Avalos made a similar factual error in *Fighting Words*, stating that Alfred Dreyfus was "unjustly convicted and executed" (p. 131). In fact Dreyfus was eventually pardoned, and awarded the Legion of Honour. At the risk of throwing stones from a glass house, I suggest that, if I could find that information in my handy supermarket encyclopedia, Avalos could have done likewise, and the 99.99 percent of *his* book that cannot be validly rebutted would not have been put at risk.

Avalos asserts that violence can be attributed to competition for scarce resources, and religious violence to competition for resources that are not really rare because they exist only in the eye of the beholder. "This means that disputes and claims are not easily settled by verifiable means, and violence is often the means to settle disputes and claims". The scarce resources Avalos cites are, "(1) access to divine communications, particularly through inscripturation; (2) sacred space; (3) group privileges; and (4) salvation".

On the subject of inscripturation, he writes: "Whereas we can verify that we decided to make the Constitution a privileged document, we cannot verify that a god decided to make any book his or her privileged mode of revelation ... Verifiability, therefore, is the key difference in differentiating scarce resources generated by secular means versus religious textualization."

Not only do proponents of any one religion hate all other religions' scriptures to such an extent that they resort to violence (eg., Osama bin Laden and George W Bush); hatred of alternative versions of one's own religion triggers similar atrocities. The Hebrew spokesman for Yahweh (*nabiya*), Jeremiah (8:8), wrote "How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us,' when, in fact, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie?" Avalos assumes that Jeremiah is defending the supremacy of oral tradition over the written word. In fact Jeremiah was repudiating the priestly Torah epitomized by Leviticus, because of its incompatibility with his own composition, Deuteronomy.

Similarly, competition for "sacred space" is the basis for the Jewish-Arab contention over Jerusalem and surrounding territory that is only sacred because each side claims that its god said so, because, "religion can manufacture the value of a territory that would have no value by other standards (eg, economics, food production, etc)."

On group privilege, Avalos cites a biologist who "sees the idea of God as invented to 'extend the notion that some have greater rights than others'. Such beliefs, in turn, aid human beings in intergroup competition". Avalos cites Hebrew scholars who have established beyond reasonable dispute that "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18) is nothing short of a mistranslation:

***Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence*, Héctor Avalos, Prometheus Books, 2005, ISBN 1-59102-284-3, 444 pp, hardback, \$26, reviewed by WILLIAM HARWOOD**

"The Hebrew term *re'eka*, which translates as 'your neighbor,' is actually best understood as 'your fellow Israelite.' ... Again, this verse is premised on the idea of group privileging (Hebrews), and not a Universalist text".

As for salvation, all religions restrict it to their own mind-slaves. Both the current and most recent pope have made clear that salvation is restricted to Catholics, while the Quran makes equally clear that it is restricted to Muslims. "Muslim scriptural traditions have been held to be sufficiently valuable to kill others who may challenge their authority as indicated by the Qurayza massacre." In Judaism, salvation, in the sense of eternal existence in a metaphysical Cloud-Cuckoo land, is a quite recent innovation that did not exist when the Torah was written.

*Religion has been responsible for monstrous atrocities. Orthodox Christians massacred 8,000 Muslims at Srebrenica. Catholics massacred up to 70,000 Huguenots in France in 1572. A Jewish fanatic murdered a score of Muslims praying in a Jerusalem mosque. Mohammed massacred several hundred Jews at Qurayza (pp. 250-256). "Above all, Mohammed, who is held to be a paradigm of Muslim behavior, committed acts of unspeakable violence that are still imitated today" (p. 274). And Jesus preached that "I've come to set a man warring against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a bride against her mother-in-law. Members of a man's own family are going to become his enemies" (Mat 10:34-36).*

As Avalos makes clear, "Much of what the average person thinks about religion and war comes not from scholarly studies but from the media." Every time religious terrorists perpetrate another mass murder, some randomly chosen god-addict or pusher is recruited by the media to tell the world that religion is essentially a peace-loving institution, and suicide bombers or assassins of abortion providers are

aberrations who violate the true spirit of religion. Not so. The hatred of everyone outside of the terrorist's cult *is* the true spirit of religion, and is endorsed by the allegedly sacred scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and all other religions north, south, east and west. Avalos agrees. "Academics who defend a peaceful Islam do so on the basis of faulty historical premises, unclear definitions, and a lack of detailed attention to the perpetrators of violence."

Specifically, Avalos quotes Deuteronomy 20:16-18 (among other places) to show that genocide is specifically demanded in the Hebrew Bible, and is touted as a noble and godly enterprise: "But as for the towns of these people that the LORD your god is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them – the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites – just as the LORD your God has commanded." Avalos uses such biblical quotations to support his contention (and mine, let me add), that "scriptures that endorse genocide should receive no more tolerance than we would expect to grant Nazi textbooks".

"The fact is that not only are such attitudes of biblical authors quite parallel to Nazi policy, but Nazi policy can be seen as simply one of the most tragic applications of policies enunciated in the Bible. Indeed, Hitler saw the struggle between German and Jew as a cosmic struggle: 'Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator; by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.'" A BBC study that played down religion's role in Hitler's policies to the point of falsification led Avalos to observe, "Nor does the war audit note that Hitler's plan for the Jews was simply a modern version of the plan outlined by Martin Luther in 1543. In short, the BBC war audit minimizes the effects of religion and violence and is not very careful in its methodology."

He could have added that "news" media worldwide suppress the role of religion as the cause of genocide when they describe the homicidal psychopaths murdering one another in the Balkans as "Serbs", "Croats", and "ethnic Albanians", because calling them by their right names, "Orthodox Christians", "Catholics" and "Muslims", might have drawn attention to the reality that religion has been the cause of 90 percent of all man-made evil for at least 3,000 years. And that suppression of reality by the media has reached beyond mindless believers. "Even skeptics such as Michael Shermer seem to have uncritically assimilated the benign views of religion advocated by religionists ... that 'true' religion is primarily designed for peaceful and altruistic purposes."

Since the time of Marcion, a notoriously anti-Semitic Christian of the 2nd century CE, the Big Lie has been promulgated that "Christianity is somehow less violent than Judaism. As we shall demonstrate, the New Testament at times actually endorses a more violent form of religion." For example, Luke 14:25-27 puts into Jesus' mouth the words, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, even life itself, cannot be my disciple." Christians have been trying for decades, perhaps centuries, to rationalise that "hate" as preached by Jesus did not really mean "hate". *The Good News Bible* even falsifies the verse to "Whoever comes to me cannot be my disciple unless he loves me more than he loves his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers, and his sisters and himself as well." Avalos demonstrates in great detail that the Greek word *miseo* is the absolute antonym of "love" and cannot ever mean, "love to a lesser degree". He summarises, "Only a selective reading of the New Testament can yield a vision of Christianity as a religion of nonviolence." Even though all that is known about Jesus was written by idealisers who never met him, an examination of the gospels with an open mind cannot fail to recognise that he was the same kind of hate peddler as Ruholla Khomcini.

*The most insurmountable obstacle to rapprochement between religions is the conviction of each that its god is the only god, or at least the only one that must be obeyed. Avalos quotes a theologian who "criticises American Christian fundamentalists for insisting that 'Allah is not the same God.' However, this judgment itself presumes that a particular definition of God, in this case a homogenising one, is the 'truest' definition" (p. 84). He quotes biblical passages that leave no doubt that, while the Hebrew authors granted allegiance only to Yahweh, they certainly did not see him as the only god in existence. He quotes several passages that describe Yahweh as merely the most prominent of a pantheon of gods.*

However, he took me by surprise when he quoted *The New Revised Standard Version* translation of Deuteronomy 32:8, "When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the gods." That particular endorsement of polytheism does not reflect at least the printed versions I consulted of either the Hebrew text or the Greek Septuagint. The former says "number of the children of Israel" and the latter, "number of the messengers of the god". Avalos does correct one misleading element of that translation, pointing out that "Translations obscure the fact that 'the Most High' is actually Elyon, a god

superior to—and separate from—Yahweh. In fact Yahweh appears to be Elyon's son. Elyon divides up the earth, and Yahweh is simply one of the sons of Elyon—who receives the portion of the earth that came to be known as Israel." Elyon, or Ilion, is the god after whom the Trojan War city was named.

In seeking a solution to religious violence, Avalos points out that "many of the benefits attributed to religion are intended to reverse problems caused by religion itself". He concludes that there are two possibilities: either modify religion so that it does not create scarci-

ties, or remove religion from human life. He leaves no doubt which alternative he prefers: "Our job as biblical scholars is to undermine the value of scripture that endorses violence. We become complicit in violence when we attempt to maintain the value of a book whose main truth claims can never be verified."

Since my 1992 book, *Mythology's Last Gods*, is not listed in Avalos's bibliography, I was amazed at the enormous number of Avalos's conclusions that paralleled my own. Does that mean that he got (almost) everything right? I would certainly like to think so.

## France celebrates 100 years of Church/State separation

THE centenary of France's 1905 law formalising the separation of church and state was commemorated at two conferences last month in Paris. Both were hosted by the NSS's French equivalent, *Libre Pensée*, and the venues were at prestigious locations including the Sorbonne University and the UNESCO building.

At the World Congress of Freethinkers Conference, speakers from a number of countries including France and the USA summarised the history of separation of religion and state in their own countries. The French speaker was convinced that, at least in part, France's proud secular tradition had been inspired by the American Declaration of Independence.

The National Secular Society's Keith Porteous Wood wound up the conference by pointing out how far most countries fall short of religion-state separation and drawing attention to the growing attacks on what separation already exists. He concluded that this demonstrated the need for co-ordinated international action, and commended delegates who represented national organisations to join a committee to work towards this, set up by our French counterparts, *Libre Pensée*.

The International Humanist and Ethical Union's congress followed on, with powerful personal testimonies by a woman fleeing from Islam and a northern Nigerian who is not a Muslim but was effectively subject to the effects of the Islamic law practised in some states, such as the proscription of alcohol.

Terry Sanderson led a practical workshop on the media at which Keith assisted.

In the closing plenary session, former NSS president Barbara Smoker received a lifetime achievement award at the Sorbonne from the International Humanist & Ethical Union for "Distinguished Service to Humanism", embodied in an engraved silver plate on a varnished wooden stand.

After a felicitous build-up by the IHEU

president, Roy Brown, Barbara made a speech as follows: "I understand it is customary on such occasions for the recipient to acknowledge those who helped to make the award possible – and my first acknowledgment must be to the good nuns who indoctrinated me with such poppycock that, once I realised I had been conned, I felt impelled to spend the rest of my life decrying it and warning others against it."

"My second acknowledgment is to writers in the humanist tradition, from ancient times to the middle of the twentieth century, who helped to crystallise my emergent ideas. Among those who were still writing and lecturing in the late 1940s and early '50s was the charismatic H J Blackham; and whenever he was the advertised speaker at the quaintly named Ethical Church in west London I took to making the journey there to hear him. Then I followed him to Conway Hall – and those venues became my university.

"In 1952 Harold Blackham co-founded IHEU; in 1963 he finalised the transformation of the Ethical Union into the British Humanist Association; and in 1974 he was honoured with the very same award with which I have been honoured today. He was then 71; and as he is still quietly enjoying life, at the age of 102, I am wondering if the award actually confers longevity.

"My third acknowledgment is to the National Secular Society, whose members elected me president some 35 years ago, and put up with me in that office for the next 25 years – an office that opened many doors to me.

Finally, I would like to thank those of you who selected me to receive this award – for merely enjoying myself all these years and doing just what I wanted to do. Thank you so much."

### Quotable quote

"Where knowledge ends, religion begins"

– Benjamin Disraeli

## Incitement to Religious Hatred

THE government's objective in eliminating religious hatred seems to be directed at the wrong target. The main cause is the nature of religion and in particular the so called holy books that are held in such awe by believers and can be interpreted to justify the most barbaric of crimes. You don't have to be an historian to appreciate the part religion has played in our own violent past.

References in the Koran to other religions are hardly intended to create friendship and harmony; indeed, as it is the inspiration for the majority of the world's terrorists the evidence that it incites hatred would appear to be overwhelming. Other religions also have their violent extremists but at the present time Islam has a clear lead in the field. It is religion itself that incites hatred not those that comment irreverently upon it.

In spite of this, our esteemed leader is intent on providing yet more schools for indoctrinating the young in various faiths and in the case of Islam sowing the seeds of more violence. It seems certain there is no possibility of avoiding hatred as long as religion remains to shelter bigots and psychopaths. The only long-term answer is for humanity to grow up and treat these holy books for what they are; the writings of mere mortals which reflect the times and cultures of the authors.

A WATMORE  
Gwynedd

I WROTE to Tony Blair in February opposing the proposed religious hatred laws, which I maintained would stifle legitimate criticism of the Bible and Koran, and actually got an acknowledgement. I don't know if it made any impression though.

Below is an extract.

"Without doubt the greatest incitement to religious hatred in the world are the Bible and Koran, and below I give a few examples. These books should contain a 'health' warning. I know responsible teachers will not dwell on the violence, but the fact that the violence is there is sufficient for people with evil

## Intelligent graffiti

THE other day when I was on the bus going home just outside Madrid I saw a piece of interesting graffiti. Perhaps it could serve as a new National Secular Society slogan? "*La única iglesia que ilumina es la que arde.*" Translation: "The only church which illuminates is one which is on fire!"

I thought it might amuse other National Secular Society members.

— Jane R Welsh, in a letter to the NSS Newline.

motives. I think a commission to investigate the religions represented by these two books is long overdue.

"It would need to be dominated by reasonable and sensible people, however, and not 'holy' men with vested interests who disengage that part of their brain which controls reason once they open the pages of their favoured book.

Bible quotes:

Exodus 15:3 The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.

Leviticus 24:16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.

Koran quotes:

216 Warfare is ordained for you, though it is hateful unto you; but it may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knoweth, ye know not.

41 Go forth, light-armed and heavy-armed, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the way of Allah! That is best for you if ye but knew.

"If these verses, and there are many more, are not promoting religious hatred and violence I don't know what is.

"You have only to go to <http://www.skeptics-annotatedbible.com/> and look up violence etc to locate all the relevant passages in the Bible and Koran without having to trawl through pages of text to show the scale of the problem.

"I think the point needs to be made that before any new laws regarding religious hatred are considered, the offending religions should be made to clean up their own holy books."

PETER RAGGETT  
Surrey

IF, as looks likely, the Incitement to Religious Hatred Bill becomes law we must look for ways to fight it.

It has occurred to me that, ironically, the best way to undermine it may be to use it. As the Bill is a sop to appease Muslim voters, why not use it to target Muslims?

As Islam is such an intolerant religion, complete with foaming at the mouth mullahs, it should not be too difficult to find hateful Islamic propaganda, preaching hate against this or that group and thus inciting religious hatred.

If it is Muslims who find themselves at the wrong end of this law their support for it will quickly vanish, and the pious New Labour government will be left suitably embarrassed.

DR STEPHEN MORETON  
Warrington

## Suicide bombings

THE best way of precluding the enticement of Muslim boys into suicide-bombing would be to promulgate the correct translation of the ancient Syro-Aramaic word for houris in the promise of 72 of them after death to every martyr for Islam. The word can, indeed, mean "virgins", offering paradisaic bliss to sex-starved youths, but the same word (according to linguistic scholar Christophe Luxenberg) also meant "white grapes" – 72 of which makes more sense. A promise of a bowl of fruit, however sweet and succulent, would hardly merit early death.

BARBARA SMOKER  
Bromley

THE invasion of Iraq was both illegal under international law and wrong in principle, but it neither justifies nor explains the indiscriminate murder of Londoners by Islamic fanatics.

The motive of these people isn't revenge for some wrong, real or supposed. It is part of a long-term strategy to impose a worldwide Islamic dictatorship.

Kamikaze attacks were instigated by the Ayatollah Khomeini during the Iran/Iraq war in the early 1980s. Children, laden with explosives, were sent into the battlefield to blow up Iraqi tanks (not even Hitler stooped that low). The technique was then adopted by Lebanese Shiites, who deployed it against Israelis and Americans.

Kamikaze is now the preferred methodology of Wahabi Sunni fanatics, and is used principally against Shi'ites in Iraq (whom the Wahabis regard as apostates whose blood must be shed), but also against Israelis and infidels in the West and Far East.

Wahabi Sunni fundamentalism has nothing to do with poverty, oppression or victimisation. It is a triumphalist creed dominated by Saudi plutocrats like the Bin Laden family.

Wahabi fundamentalism originates in Saudi Arabia and is actually funded and promoted by the Saudi government. Millions of dollars of Saudi oil money has been pumped into the construction and maintenance of religious schools in Pakistan and elsewhere (including Britain), where children are indoctrinated with the triumphalist Wahabi ideology. Many of the mullahs operating here in Europe were trained by Saudi Arabia.

Initially, the Americans actually encouraged the Saudis to do this, because they saw Islamic fundamentalism as a force capable of undermining communism and the power and influence of the Soviet Union. Only now are they beginning to appreciate the terrible character of the forces they unleashed.

Bin Laden couldn't give a stuff about Iraqis, Palestinians or poor and oppressed people. He turned against the Americans because he objected to the stationing of US forces in Saudi



Arabia: foul-mouthed, alcohol-swilling infidels with dirty bottoms urinating and defecating in the sacred desert whose sands the Prophet once trod.

Bin Laden's followers are killing us quite simply because they want to take over the world.

ANGUS J HUCK  
London

### Operation Spanner

RELIGION is not always a defence in cases of ABH with the victim's consent ("Parallels with Operation Spanner in Muslim Flagellation Investigation", July). One Good Friday in the 1960s, the mystic David Farrand had himself nailed to a cross on Hampstead Heath. He was found not guilty of anything, but some of his disciples were jailed for wounding.

DONALD ROOUM  
London

### Honesty and Atheism

MAY I just say how much I appreciated reading the brilliant article "Honesty and Atheism" by Denys Drower in the July issue, particularly as a couple of days before I had been expounding very similar reasons for my being an atheist to a "born-again Christian" preacher, bent on persuading me that I "couldn't be an atheist" because I was such a "nice" person!

During a coffee break at a tennis centre I attend regularly, I happened to be at a table where for some reason (I now know the reason!) the subject was whether there was such a person as a true atheist. The preacher claimed that all atheists faced with a seriously life-threatening situation turned to God for help and comfort.

When I advised him that I had been an atheist all my life and had yearned only for my mother's comfort on a couple of occasions in Korea when the situations were to say the least, frightening, he said that he would like to discuss the subject further with me sometime. He rang a couple of weeks later inviting me over for a cup of tea and a chat, and I assumed that the invitation also included my wife. It quickly became apparent that he had intended that only I should have turned up (I had mentioned to him earlier that my wife was a Catholic and that I had always respected the rights of others to believe in whatever helps them through life).

We were quickly whisked through a tour of the garden, and I was subjected to an examination of why I couldn't believe that Jesus ("Whom I love more than my wife and whom my wife loves more than me") wasn't the son of God ("the most perfect man who died in the cruellest way

for my sins"). When I told him that I no more believed in that than in the concept of original sin, he really started to rave: "Look at babies' faces. All that wickedness when they lie screaming in their cots and prams. Original sin!"

My wife and I were astounded and left as quickly as we could after the tea and biscuits, but not before I had clearly, but diplomatically, stated that I was pleased for him if believing in such absurdities made him happy.

The tragedy of it all is that I liked the man, knew he was a preacher (but did *not* know that he was of the "born again" variety), and knew that he was genuinely interested in the welfare of his fellow human beings (he has worked all over the world in Seamen's Missions etc). I still like him (he plays a really good game of tennis) but you can guess that he and his wife won't be receiving a return invitation to tea and biscuits.

DERRICK KROLL  
Exeter

### Piety a charade

GRAHAM Capill, a leading religious bigot in New Zealand, has been exposed as the sexual abuser of a girl of eight (*Freethinker*, July). Yet again we have a demonstration that the piety, moral outrage and condemnation of others by these preachers is often no more than a charade.

As the American experience has shown, some of the most extreme in their views betray their wives, seduce their secretaries, abuse children and swindle their gullible followers, while ranting against the sins of others. The charade is profitable, attracts fame, respect and authority, and provides a platform from which to hector the rest of us.

Interesting, isn't it, to consider that the religious bigot, whose views you so abhor, may no more believe what he is preaching than you or I? Furthermore, his own behaviour may be far worse than anything he is condemning.

DENIS WATKINS  
Pembrokeshire.

### The problem with 'holy' books

JUDAISM, Christianity and Islam are based on how their sacred books deal with the concept of religious belief.

The Bible reveals the word of God. The God of the Bible is a perfect God who cannot and could not make mistakes. From a theoretical point of view a perfect God is superior to the pagan gods who, though very powerful and immortal, make mistakes, love and hate, like we all do.

People have to obey without hesitation the revelations of a perfect God and for many to be religious ends up by following as much as possible the letter of what God has revealed.

The problem starts when religions claim that

the word of the perfect God was revealed through the words of especially appointed intermediaries.

These intermediaries, be they Moses, or the Pope or Mohammed, take it upon themselves to claim a special rapport with an entity the existence of which they fail to substantiate.

The consequences are that believers' behaviour ranges from almost unimaginable stupidity to utter, horrible criminality.

DAVID IBRY  
London

**Editor's note: David Ibry is the author of *Exodus to Humanism: Jewish Identity without Religion*. Some discounted copies are available from Amazon.com.**

### Imbeciles on wheels

GEORGE W Bush's competence at bike riding seems to be second only to his competence as leader of the Western World.

JOHN HEIN  
Convenor  
Liberal Party in Scotland

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## Events & Contacts

**Blackpool & Fylde Humanist Group:** Information: Ivor Moll, 6 The Brooklands, Wrea Green, Preston PR4 2NQ. Tel. 01772 686816.

**Brighton & Hove Humanist Society:** Information on 01273 461404. The Farm Tavern, Farm Road, Hove. Tuesday, September 6, 7.30pm. Bob Gwinnell: *Broadcasting and Technology*.

**Bristol Humanists:** Information: Margaret Dearnaley on 0117 904 9490.

**Bromley Humanists:** Meetings on the second Tuesday of the month, 8 pm, at Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley. Information: 01959 574691. Website: [www.slhg.adm.freeuk.com](http://www.slhg.adm.freeuk.com).

**Central London Humanist Group:** Contact Jemma Hooper, 75a Ridgmount Gardens, London WC1E 7AX. E-mail: [rupert@clarity4words.co.uk](mailto:rupert@clarity4words.co.uk). Tel: 02075804564.

**Chiltern Humanists:** Information: 01494 771851. Summer programme available.

**Cornwall Humanists:** Information: Patricia Adams, Sappho, Church Road, Lelant, St Ives, Cornwall TR26 3LA. Tel: 01736 754895.

**Cotswold Humanists:** Information: Philip Howell, 2 Cleavelands Close, Cheltenham GL50 4PZ. Tel. 01242 528743.

**Coventry and Warwickshire Humanists:** Information: Tel. 01926 858450. Roy Saich, 34 Spring Lane, Kenilworth, CV8 2HB.

**Devon Humanists:** Information: Roger McCallister, Tel: 01626 864046. E-mail: [info@devonhumanists.org.uk](mailto:info@devonhumanists.org.uk). Website: [www.devonhumanists.org.uk](http://www.devonhumanists.org.uk).

**Ealing Humanists:** Information: Secretary Alex Hill Tel. 0208 741 7016 or Charles Rudd 020 8904 6599.

**East Cheshire and High Peak Secular Group:** Information: Carl Pinel 01298 815575.

**East Kent Humanists:** Information: Tel. 01843 864506. Talks and discussions on ten Sunday afternoons in Canterbury.

**Essex Humanists:** Summer programme available. Details: 01268 785295.

**Fens and King's Lynn.** New group being formed. Information: Edwin Salter on 01553 771917.

**Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA):** Information: 34 Spring Lane, Kenilworth CV8 2HB. Tel. 01926 858450.

**Greater Manchester Humanist Group:** Information: June Kamel 01925 824844. Monthly meetings (second Wednesday) Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester.

**Hampstead Humanist Society:** Information: NI Barnes, 10 Stevenson House, Boundary Road, London NW8 0HP.

**Harrow Humanist Society:** Information: 020 8863 2977. Monthly meetings, December – June (except January).

**Havering & District Humanist Society:** Information: Jean Condon 01708 473597. Friends Meeting House, Balgores Crescent, Gidea Park. Thursday, September 1, 8 pm. Peter Gardner: *Supporting the Victims of Crime*.

**Humanist Association Dorset:** Information and programme from Jane Bannister. Tel: 01202 428506.

**Humanist Society of Scotland:** Secretary: Ivan Middleton, 26 Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5QH. Tel. 0131 552 9046. Press and Information Officer: Robin Wood, 37 Inchmurrin Drive, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. Tel. 01563 526710. Website: [www.humanism-scotland.org.uk](http://www.humanism-scotland.org.uk).

**Humanist Society of Scotland – Dundee Group:** Contact secretary Ron McLaren, Spiershill, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8NB. Tel: 01334 474551. E-mail: [humanist@spiershill.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:humanist@spiershill.fsworld.co.uk).

**Glasgow Group:** Information: Alan Henness. Tel. 07010 704776. E-mail: [alan@humanism-scotland.org.uk](mailto:alan@humanism-scotland.org.uk).

**Edinburgh Group:** Information: 2 Saville Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 3AD. Tel 0131 667 8389.

**Perth Group:** Information: [perth@humanism.scotland.org.uk](mailto:perth@humanism.scotland.org.uk)

**Humanist Society of West Yorkshire:** Information: Robert Tee on 0113 2577009.

**Isle of Man Freethinkers.** Information: Muriel Garland, 01624 664796. E-mail: [murielgarland@clara.co.uk](mailto:murielgarland@clara.co.uk). Website: [www.iom.freethinkers.co.uk](http://www.iom.freethinkers.co.uk)

**Isle of Wight Humanist Group.** Information: David Broughton on 01983 740421 or e-mail [davidb67@clara.co.uk](mailto:davidb67@clara.co.uk)

**Leicester Secular Society:** Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB. Tel. 0116 262 2250. Website: <http://homepages.stayfree.co.uk/lss>. Public meeting: Sunday, 6.30pm.

**Lewisham Humanist Group:** Information: Denis Cobell: 020 8690 4645. Website: [www.slhg.adm.freeuk.com](http://www.slhg.adm.freeuk.com).

**Mid-Wales Humanists:** Information: Jane Hibbert on 01654 702883.

**North East Humanists (Teesside Group):** Information: C McEwan on 01642 817541.

**North East Humanists (Tyneside Group):** Information: the Secretary on 01434 632936.

**North London Humanist Group:** Monthly meetings. Information: Linda Wilkinson, 0208 882 0124.

**North Yorkshire Humanist Group.** Secretary: Charles Anderson, 01904 766480. Meets first Monday of the month, 7.30pm, Priory Street Centre, York.

**Norwich Humanist Group:** Information: Vincent G Chainey, Le Chene, 4 Mill Street, Bradenham, Thetford IP25 7PN. Tel. 01362 820982.

**Reigate & District Humanist Group.** Information: Roy Adderley on 01342 323882.

**Sheffield Humanist Society:** Information: 0114 2309754. Three Cranes Hotel, Queen Street, Sheffield. Wednesday, September 7, 8pm. Barry Johnson: *The Pharmaceutical Industry*.

**South Hampshire Humanists:** Information: 11 Glenwood Avenue, Southampton, SO16 3PY. Tel: 02380 769120.

**South Place Ethical Society.** Weekly talks/meetings/concerts Sundays 11am and 3pm at Conway Hall Library, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Tel: 020 7242 8037/4. Monthly programmes on request.

**Somerset:** Details of South Somerset Humanists' meetings in Yeovil from Wendy Sturgess. Tel. 01458 274456.

**Sutton Humanist Group:** Information: 0208 773 0631. Website: [www.slhg.adm.freeuk.com](http://www.slhg.adm.freeuk.com).

E-Mail: [BrackenKemish@ukgateway.net](mailto:BrackenKemish@ukgateway.net).

**Welsh Marches Humanist Group:** Information: 01568 770282. Website: [www.wmhumanists.co.uk](http://www.wmhumanists.co.uk). E-mail: [rocheforts@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:rocheforts@tiscali.co.uk). Meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Ludlow, October to June.

**West Glamorgan Humanist Group:** Information: 01792 206108 or 01792 296375, or write Julie Norris, 3 Maple Grove, Uplands, Swansea SA2 0JY.

**West Kent Secular Humanist Group:** Information: Ken Allen. Tel: 01892 863002.. E-mail: [ken@kallen14.fsnet.com](mailto:ken@kallen14.fsnet.com).

**Ulster Humanist Association.** Information: Brian McClinton, 25 Riverside Drive, Lisburn BT27 4HE. Tel: 028 9267 7264.

E-mail: [brianmcclinton@btinternet.com](mailto:brianmcclinton@btinternet.com)  
website: [www.ulsterhumanist.freesevers.com](http://www.ulsterhumanist.freesevers.com)

Please send your listings and events notices to:  
Bill McIlroy, Flat 3, Somerhill Lodge, Somerhill Road,  
Hove, Sussex BN3 1RU.  
Notices must be received by the 15th of the month preceding  
publication