

Ernstraud Magazine

volume 4, number 4 :: 20 July 2015 :: Written by the publisher
happiness sharing as a way to peace

Publisher: Kent V. Busse, 1660 W 104 Street, Chicago, IL 60643-2823, USA

Free distribution: www.ernstraud.org ; ISSN 2164-4926

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§1 Peace, not war, through religion

Does one kill in the name of religion? The Old Testament recounts great genocides and encourages capital punishment. Even the jealous God himself slaughters those who yield insufficient obeisance.

"Religion" that promotes chaos and mayhem substitutes domination for rational behavior. Even as mythology, these passages become tools for mind control, rule by fear.

After liberation from this human error, I am left with the peaceable portions of religion, which teach human cooperation and reverence for life.

Scaled up to the world level, this logic suggests that people who obstruct universal shared happiness have failed to purge their irrational belief systems and corrupted mythologies. Contenders in strife and warriors of all stripes find no true justification coming from religion. Indeed, they have corrupted their religion and debased themselves through that religion.

Setting aside the myths, purging the doctrines of war, is a happy journey into the light.

§ 2 Old Testament Pacifism

1. The overarching story of the entire Old Testament tells of a people who fell into decay because they relied on the arm of flesh instead of on the Lord. [Note, unfortunately, that in 2 Chronicles 32:8 the Lord preserves his people by fighting their battles--how much better if that were only a metaphor!]

2. When there was fighting to be done, the Lord made it clear that it succeeded on His strength, not on the strength of man. This is the story of Gideon, where too many volunteers showed up for a military campaign. The Lord went through almost-random selection processes to send most of them away (Judges 7) so that they would not boast that they had accomplished the task on their own strength (Judges 7:2). [The fighting they did was sickening genocide, but that is another story (Judges 8).]

3. Do you remember when King David was severely chastised by the Lord and given a choice among three very heavy penalties (1 Chronicles 21:9-17)? Do you remember the sin? He had taken a census (1 Chronicles 21:1-4). In those days the first census number was "men who draw the sword" (1 Chronicles 21:5-8). It was clear that the Lord did not want the military strength of the kingdom to be measured, for the same reason cited above.

4. Do you recall when the women sang "Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 21:11)? This was foundational to the extreme jealousy Saul felt toward David (1 Samuel 18:7). It was also the reason that David was denied the blessing of building the temple. Although David wanted very much to build the holy structure, he was allowed only to gather

the precious materials for it, which he did (2 Chronicles 5:1). It was explicitly left to Solomon to build "Solomon's Temple" so that it would not be associated with a man of war (1 Chronicles 28:3).

The sins of adultery and murder were a private matter between David and the Lord. The above numbered points had social significance: the man of war is in disrepute before the Lord. To the sensitive reader who ponders more than the guided tour, these Old Testament texts are cracks through which pacifism can sprout.

§ 3 Motivation other than Fear and Greed

It has been said that Nobel laureate Karl von Frisch primarily studied the wiggle dance of bees (instead of the sound accompanying the dance) because of his own hearing limitation. (See, for example, the photograph at <http://advocacy.britannica.com/blog/advocacy/2008/07/t-hree-pioneer-observers-of-animal-behaviour/> possibly showing a hearing aid.) If valid, this observation supports the proposition that we are inclined to investigate the world around us according to our own capacities. We see the world through our own colored glasses, or through our own perception matrices.

It is said that people are motivated only by fear and greed. Deprivation, lack of privilege, punishment and suffering all speak to fear, while appetites, materialism and power all speak to greed. Some people casually assert that all human behavior occurs as a response to one of these powerful motivations. However, making this claim demonstrates total deafness to social values such as empathy. In other words, failing to recognize, acknowledge, or account for motivation by higher social values results from deficiency: if you don't possess those capacities, you don't search for their role in human

behavior.

Looking beyond a purely mechanistic model of human behavior, one eventually recognizes other motivating influences. To start out, one might regard the primitive human being as comprising seeds for good and seeds for evil so that human behavior emerges from watering the good or the evil. This reasoning posits a multifaceted nature influenced by selectable nurture. It results in a less simplistic, more developed understanding of human behavior.

While a spiritually dead researcher studies only fear and greed, an idealistic researcher studies the higher motivation that activates stronger and more important human capacities. Politicians and other advertisers need this fundamental truth:

Distinguishing between negative and positive motivations enables overcoming both fear and greed instead of pandering to them.

We choose every day between self-centered materialism on the one hand and genuine happiness (the public good) on the other. Let us as a society set the tone of public relations by blocking out base appeals and acting energetically on a vision of the good we can do together. We are wise enough and strong enough to extinguish the profit motive everywhere. In doing so, we will encourage and uplift instead of competing against; we will be constructing rather than opposing.

I call on every person to be sensitive so as to appreciate and address the empathy, not the greed, of every other person.