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Yes, Richard Dawkins, a Muslim baby is a Muslim baby.

Because that's just how it works

by Tim Stanley

*A few days ago, Richard Dawkins wrote to the Times to complain that they had referred to "Muslim babies". Because, in his view, a baby isn't a fully developed human being so it can't possibly be conscious of being a Muslim.*

*Sigh. Richard Dawkins is just an Angry of Tunbridge Wells with a PhD.*

Tim, nice insult. I hope you didn't exhaust your ammo on your opening salvo. Because if that was your best shot ... then you are in deep trouble.

*Let me define that. He is a prejudiced pedant who goes through newspapers looking for small things that irritate him greatly.*

Tim, what evidence do you offer that Dawkins is prejudiced; and prejudiced regarding what, specifically?

Tim, before you answer that, I would advise you to review the definition first. That may save you some embarrassment.

And why would Dawkins waste his time searching the papers for small, irritating things, when there are so many large, and far more important irritating things for him to address? That doesn't make much sense, Tim.

Also, the use of the insult 'pedant' usually occurs when someone has been caught in an error, and rather than admit they are wrong, they attempt to distract attention away from their mistake by insulting the one who pointed it out. So the insult 'pedant' isn't actually demeaning to the person who is being accused, but usually to the one using it as an insult.

In this case ... that would be you, Tim.

*On this subject he is – yet again – wrong.*

Tim, the phrase 'yet again' implies that you disagree with Dawkins on many things. That made me research your background to see if there were reasons for your antipathy towards him.

Lo and behold, what did I discover?

You are a Ghost Worshiper, Tim. So the source of the antipathy has now been established. Your shorts are burnin' because Dawkins makes fun of your imaginary friend.

*I'd prefer to ignore him but then my wonderful friend and colleague Tom Chivers decided to write a blog saying he might have a point. So, because Tom is my buddy and I want him to get good with God, I have to offer a brief note of correction.*

Tim, so if Tom writes something that agrees with an Atheist then Tom is no longer "good with God?"

My, your invisible ghost has quite a temper doesn't He?

And Tom is so lucky to have a condescending friend such as you, who is willing to set him straight when Tom expresses an opinion that you don't agree with.

*A Muslim baby is a Muslim baby for two reasons. First, because that's how Islam works.*

Tim, intellectually brilliant!

I don't see how anyone could survive the powerful logical argument you just presented.

Is there even any need to go on to reason #2?

*Dawkins might not believe in Islam but Muslims generally do,*

Tim, what do you mean Muslims "generally" do?

Can you name a Muslim who does not believe in Islam?

Isn't that the definition of a Muslim? A believer in Islam?

Tim, you're getting ready to defend yourself with the word 'pedant' - aren't you?

*and they think that all humans are innately Muslim and that life is a process of submitting to that state of grace.*

Tim, most of them think that adulterers should be stoned to death. So maybe you shouldn't grant so much weight to what ignorant groups of barbaric people believe.

*This is common to most faiths, the hope that all humans belong to God whether they can truly comprehend Him or not. As a Catholic, I believe that Christ died for all of us – including children.*

Tim, what about the millions of people who died before Christ came down to Earth? Did He die for them?

What about the billions of people who have lived their lives without ever knowing of Christ's existence? Did He die for them?

And Tim ... what about all those Eskimos?

*Ergo, because the baby is a gift from God, because it has been baptised with water and because Jesus died for it – that baby is, in some way, a Christian.*

Tim, why does God give the gift of life to a fetus, and then change His mind and murder it ... 50 million times a year?

And Tim, why are so many of them, the fetuses of Christian parents?

Do you think that maybe they shortchanged God when they passed the offering basket around?

*The baptism reminds us that salvation is a favour from God, not something we can 100 per cent determine ourselves, and it is vital to save us from sin.*

Tim, but baptism and salvation have not saved Christians from sin. Christians continue to murder, steal, commit adultery, and commit all manner of evil, just like everyone else. So your claim fails miserably.

*Of course, the child isn't confirmed or confessing. But it's one of us. Welcome to the family and seventy years of feeling guilty about stuff.*

Tim, thanks for pointing out one of the many horrors of your vile religion. Filling little kids with guilt for something they never did, just because you believe in an ancient book of fairy tales, should be codified ... as child abuse.

*Second, a Muslim baby is a Muslim baby because that's how culture works.*

Tim, another stunningly brilliant answer!

Again, I don't know how anyone could stand up to your powerful, almost coherent arguments. Bravo, Tim ... Bravo.

*When a baby is born it inherits more than genes. For instance, we call it British, which by Dawkins' logic is a silly thing to do.*

Tim, the baby is British by law. If it is born in America, it is American by law. Religion is a belief. Beliefs are not conferred upon babies by law. So you have committed a false analogy fallacy.

Beliefs are mental conclusions that an individual arrives at through various means. When any of those means result in *religious* belief ... then you have a mental disorder.

*After all, it cannot possibly drink tea, hate the French or laugh at Carry On films.*

Tim, you committed the logical fallacy of Generalization. Not all Brits engage in the activities you listed.

*Yet by dint of its parents being British and living in Britain, it is British.*

Tim, asked and answered ... move along.

*Because it will be raised so, it will only become more British as it gets older.*

Tim, there are countless examples that prove you wrong. Take Christopher Hitchens for example - he became an American citizen. I would hardly describe that as becoming "more British."

*Likewise, if your parents are Jewish and you are circumcised and raised in a Jewish household … you are Jewish – even if you cannot technically be aware of the fact.*

Tim, as in the British example above, by law it is legally a Jew, and will be likely raised culturally as a Jew.

But religiously (which is the context of this debate), it would be the child of Jewish parents, with part of its penis removed. At some point later, when the child becomes more educated, it may decide to accept Judaism or it may not. If it does, it's Jewish - if it doesn't ... it isn't.

*Does Dawkins imagine that children can somehow be protected from all identities until a certain age of reason: given no nationality or, for that matter, no surname?*

Tim, you have created a straw man argument. Dawkins never said what you are claiming. He was speaking only in a religious context. If you can provide a link where Dawkins stated they should be given no nationality or surname, we would all be quite interested in reading it. But you can't ... can you?

*Of course he doesn't – he's not that foolish.*

Tim, then why did you waste our time with that straw man?

*But he does get very excited about people being labelled by religion because – if you hadn't already noticed – he has an irrational hatred of religion.*

Tim, this essay is proof that you couldn't recognize rationality if it kicked you in the balls.

What evidence do you offer that his feelings on religion are irrational?

The reason you have resorted to this attack is to distract your audience from the fact that it is *your* beliefs that are irrational.

In 2,000 years of desperate efforts, 'you people' have been unable to produce even one ounce of evidence to prove that your imaginary friends are real.

And no Tim, pointing to storms and volcanoes may have worked on ancient, ignorant peasants and modern, ignorant Ghost Worshipers, but most educated people who aren't blinded by religious idiocy understand the science behind those natural phenomena.

*As if being raised Anglican will turn you into a monster.*

Tim, another Straw Man fallacy. It's obvious that logic isn't one of your favorite hobbies.

Being raised in any religion does not turn one into a monster. However, worshiping an invisible, evil monster, like the God you worship, makes it possible for otherwise normal humans to behave as monsters, as Christians and Muslims have been proving on a daily basis, worldwide, for thousands of years.

*What kind of person attends a Christening, observes the toothy vicar, cake, jelly and drunken aunts and thinks, "This is pure brainwashing!" Richard, if you really are creeped out by infant baptisms then you don't have to go to them.*

Tim, what makes you think he needs you to tell him that?

I'm pretty sure Dawkins has already figured out that he is free to attend whatever ceremonies he wants to attend, and avoid those which he doesn't want to be part of.

*We'll just bore you with hundreds of photos afterwards instead.*

Tim, you should stick to your areas of expertise: history and politics. When it comes to logic and reason, and their polar opposite - religion, this essay has proven ... you really suck at it.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

New Doping Substance May Be Circulating in Sochi

As the Winter Olympics open today in Sochi, the race is on between athletes who try to get an artificial advantage from banned substances and the anti-doping experts trying to catch them.

A new substance may be in the mix: television reporters for the German WDR network broadcast their undercover investigation of a Russian scientist willing to sell them 100 milligrams of something called “full-size MGF” for $100,000. The reporters brought a sample to anti-doping expert Mario Thevis, a forensic chemist at the Center for Preventive Doping Research at the German Sport University Cologne. He confirmed the sample contained mechano growth factor (MGF), a variant of the human insulin-like growth factor-1 protein (IGF-1), which can prompt muscle growth. It would be undetectable by current testing methods.

Here is an excerpt from the interview between the reporter and the "expert."

Reporter: What is the substance you found in the journalists’ sample?

Expert: The closest way to describe it is human IGF-1 isoform 4. It’s a splice variant of the IGF-1 gene. The reason it’s called MGF—mechano growth factor—is that the messenger RNA of isoform 4 is elevated when mechanical stress is applied to muscle tissue.

Many gray market manufacturers offer something called MGF, but that usually refers to just a short peptide at the end of the full protein. That was claimed to be biologically active 15 years ago, but more recent studies have shown it has no biological effect. The full-size MGF is a molecule that according to the literature is biologically highly active, similar to IGF-1, but with different molecular weight and different size.

Reporter: Can current doping screens detect it?

Expert: Since we are using antibody-based or mass spectrometer-based detection assays, it has been more or less invisible. It has been under the radar of the doping control methods. Even though we’re looking for modified IGF versions, and we can detect many of them, this particular version was not included with its particular structure and molecular weight. So if it has been misused, it might have gone undetected.

Reporter: How were you able to tell what was in the sample?

Expert: We have been looking into the literature—trying to keep track of what might come up. When we were confronted with a substance which should be related to IGF-1 but whose authenticity was not certain at all, we could deduce from the information we got from our analytical methods that we were dealing with a highly pure and therefore probably highly dangerous substance.

Reporter: Highly dangerous?

Expert: There has been no clinical trial. There is no scientific data on long-term risks associated with injection or other use of this substance.

Reporter: What might the side effects be?

Expert: We don’t know. There could be immune reactions. It could cause any of the side effects associated with IGF-1, such as cardiovascular issues. Some of the growth factors also have cancer-causing effects. We can’t prove or rule out any of these. As far as the scientific literature goes, it has not been investigated in that regard.

Reporter: Now that you know this might be in circulation among athletes, why can’t you add it to your battery of tests right away?

Expert: Practically we can, but we have to demonstrate that our test is fit for the purpose. We have to evaluate and assess whether our detection limits are in the range for physiological or therapeutic amounts, even though we have no idea how much that would be.

Since we do full-scan spectrometry on all our samples, it might well be that we have already captured it in some samples, but we have to go back to our data and extract the molecular mass and see whether we see an indication for the presence of that molecule or not.

Reporter: Could it occur naturally in athletes who are exerting their muscles to the extreme?

Expert: No, at least not according to the scientific literature that is available. It is a potentially naturally occurring substance, but it has never been seen in blood or serum, and you wouldn’t expect it to be in urine as it’s naturally produced.

But it’s true that if we see something that is positive, we would have to rule out that it could be a natural artifact.

Reporter: How clean will the games be?

Expert: The only thing I can say is that we have exceptionally good conditions here. The things we’re aware of, that we are testing for, can be very well detected. Any substance that would be known to provide an advantage and be misused in competition can be tested here on site. \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

FAMOUS QUOTES

ANONYMOUS

"Christianity is the belief that a walking dead Jewish deity

who was his own father although he always existed,

commits suicide by cop, although he didn't really die,

in order to give himself permission

not to send you to an eternal place of torture

that he created for you,

but instead to make you live forever

if you symbolically eat his flesh, drink his blood,

and telepathically promise him you accept him as your master,

so he can cleanse you of an evil force that is present in mankind

because a rib-woman and a mud-man

were convinced by a talking snake

to eat from a magical tree."

(my comment: hey, sounds logical to me)