

**RELIGION 3.** All religions are created in the mind - as are all beliefs and philosophies. Religions teach about heaven and hell - it's all in the mind. Religions give us commandments and rules - all created in the minds of prophets, priests and popes. **A**t best these rules are absorbed into the ethical principles of our societies, where they potentially contribute to the common laws that comprise the framework of our justice systems; they may spawn inspired, caring individuals and institutions. **A**t its worst the laws, dogmas and conventions derived from religious beliefs incite the mind to satisfy the all too human desire to control - religious rules that are presented as God-given are the strongest tools for manipulating believers. **R**eligions tell us God wants us to do certain things - or not. Believers follow these rules in an attempt to gain favours. They strive for salvation or absolution, for heaven or paradise - with penances, sexual abstinence or the murdering of infidels. **T**hese pursuits are signs of human gullibility and fallibility.

*It is often argued only religion can provide ethics. Peter Hitchens says in his book, The rage against God: How atheism led me to faith, "to be effectively absolute, a moral code must be beyond human power to alter." This claim fails in view of a religionism that time and again leads to mayhem and murder.*

*Incidentally, in the area of health, the mind that creates God and religions also creates the stimulus - by way of faith in God's grace - that alleviates grief, dejection and depression, as well as other medical conditions. This phenomenon - attributed to the 'placebo effect' - is scientifically documented.*

*How Faith can Heal  
TIME, 23 Feb 2009*