

A prominent figure in the news lately has been Dinesh D'Souza. Dinesh is best known as a hyper-conservative political commentator. His most recent book is *America*, and this week it is #1 on the New York Times bestseller list for non-fiction. It has a companion documentary film. If you're politically very-right-wing conservative and despise Barack Obama and everything he stands for — this is the book for you! Dinesh was a policy analyst in the Reagan White House as a 20-something Wunderkind; he has served as John M. Olin Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. The New York Times Magazine named him as one of America's most influential conservative thinkers. Newsweek listed him as one of the country's most prominent Asian Americans.

Dinesh has also been in the news for several other things in the past two years, in connection with his (former) presidency of Kings college — a conservative evangelical institutions that trains conservative Christians in business and finance so that they can get high level places at Goldman Sachs- and more recently because of issues involving campaign financing for senatorial candidates that he supports. He has had some high peaks and deep valleys in recent years, the best of times and the worst of times. I mention this only because he is very much a public and prominent figure, unlike most of the other people that I have debated over the years, and that — for me at least — adds a bit of interest to my public disagreements with him. (Though his political views and the news items connected to him have no relevance to the quality of his arguments in the public debate that I attach here.)

I have known Dinesh for maybe five years now. On three occasions we have had public debates — not on public policy and the relative merits of Obama but on another topic of interest to him and certainly to me: the Problem of Suffering. Our second debate was on November 11, 2010 at the conservative evangelical Gordon College. (The first debate was on my turf at Chapel Hill; the third was on neutral territory in NYC). Dinesh is obviously an unusually smart fellow, and he is fantastically quick on his feet — a real challenge for anyone who wants to disagree with him. He strongly thinks that the existence of suffering in the world should have no effect on a person's faith in God. My view is the opposite. And so we have debated.

Here is the debate at Gordon College, for your viewing pleasure.

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