

COMMENT

Away with all Religions

The word liberal is rooted in the word liberty which means 'exercising freedom'. So the religious scholars are the ones who have liberally exercised the freedom to interpret and prescribe religion as they see fit. Among the Sunnis, the Shiahs, the Wahhabis, the Druzes, the Sufis, the Tablighis and a thousand other sects they all very liberally exercise their own way of thinking and doing things.

So to the people who so liberally interpret and practise their religion in the so many divergent ways and sects, who guarantees anything for them? Do they have any pledges from God that what they have so liberally decided is indeed correct? Or do they have another book or other books which justify for them anything that they desire? Do they uphold other books? How do they judge? What is wrong with them? Where did they learn to be so liberal with their beliefs and interpretations?

It is clear that those religious scholars who uphold a thousand different books are the real liberals. Each one follows his own sect and his own school of thought.

Before the resurgence of science and the Renaissance in Europe, the Europeans had to get rid of religion. Today India and also some Islamic countries are trying to duplicate the success of Europe and the West but they have only imported Europe's scientific method without importing the other vital component - people in this part of the globe must get rid of religion just like the Europeans have done. Science is like the pump that pumps out water from the leaking ship and saves humanity but religion is the leak that must be fixed or it will drown everyone. If one does not get rid of the leak, then when the pump breaks down or slows down the ship will still sink. Or if the leak becomes bigger, the pump will be overwhelmed and the ship will ultimately sink.

China is a good example of an Asian country that has successfully imported both components of the European success story ie getting rid of religion and superstition and using science to rebuild their civilisation.

Despite India claiming to be a secular nation, Indian stockbrokers still place little idols by their computer terminals and Indian engineers invoke the blessing of their idols upon their trains. In the Islamic countries it is even worse. They want to reinvent science in the Islamic mould. Hence there are ideas like Islamic science, Islamic medicine and once upon a time even Islamic English. In his book "Crisis in the Muslim Mind" Dr Abu Hamid Abu Sulayman even talks about Islamic economics, Islamic communications, Islamic social sciences, Islamic international relations, Islamic political thought and Islamic political systems.

The purported reinvention of things in the religious mould supposedly involves the spiritual element.

The word "spirituality" is derived from the word spirit. This word is found in the Bible. But in reality there are no such things as spirits. Other than Hollywood's "spirit in a bottle" no one has ever seen a spirit or communicated with one. So how can there be spirituality when no one knows what a spirit is?

Some say that the soul is a spirit. Again soul is a Biblical concept.

Islam is a 'deen' or a way of life. So is Hinduism. Islam is not compatible with religion especially organised religion. There cannot be a clergy in Islam. A true

Muslim is answerable to God. He does not answer to any clergy. He prays to His God for help, guidance, to give thanks and so on. He does not go through the intermediary of a priest. But unfortunately this simplicity of Islam has changed over the centuries. In Shiah Iran there is a full blown priesthood. And surprisingly in other Islamic countries the idea of a religious priesthood is catching on fast too. Often the religion based political parties are at the forefront of promoting the leadership of the religious priests. The saffron brigade in India is inclined to start priest-craft course in universities. This is a sure recipe for disaster. *[contributed]* □□□