

RELIGION 1. The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung said: “Religion is a defence against true religious experience.” Who is defending and why? It is our mind. Mind wants to rule the world, it wants to control and enslave us - to do so it creates religions. Religion is a delusional game of entrapment mind plays with us. **M**ost religions are based on the same Truth. But while they may provide valuable social networks and strengthen communities,* religion and spirituality are separate. They do not exclude or oppose one another - but if religious people are ever spiritual, they are so not because of religions, but in spite of them. **T**o be spiritual we must go beyond our many antagonistic religious systems, which may claim to strive for spirituality but have instead decided in favour of legend and myth, pomp and circumstance, ceremony and ritual, intolerance and intrigue, irrationality and dogma, control and oppression, cruelty and violence. **T**he spiritual leaders of ages past are shrouded in mystery. Their teachings may have been relevant for their times but are now - misrepresented and misinterpreted - turned into religiosity. For job security, current religious leaders adapt fundamentalism; some move their followers to violence in the name of religion. **S**pirituality - true religious experience - is found elsewhere.

**The social aspect of religion, which may provide cohesiveness to a community, is not disputed. In a social, communal sense, religion bonds groups and can bring solace, comfort and charity to people. But this sense of communal cohesion comes at a terrible price: It occurs under the weight of dogmas, superstition and fear. Since the Enlightenment these processes have been debunked; now we are altruistic without fear of, or favour from, an elusive God.*

Religious leaders lie to their followers about the veracity or otherwise of their mythologies and keep them in a state of ignorance. This is necessary to keep a tight grip on their flock, which otherwise could indulge in free-thinking, with the result that they might abandon their inherently irrational beliefs.

Some religious leaders assure followers that if they murder infidels they will go to paradise and be subject to favourable circumstances. Innocent believers are brainwashed and misused as they are turned into fundamentalist, religious fanatics and their mis-directed piety becomes a base for terrorism.

There is a much-debated aspect of religions and God: How can one say they are ‘true’ and ‘real’? This proposition requires proof - without proof religion is irrational and God is not real. A common retort now is: ‘I know my religion and my God are true and real, because I can see the positive effects they have.’ However, what is observed there is the effect of a belief, and the rationalization proves the veracity of that belief - not the veracity of a religion or God.

*I’ve heard it said, “I know God exists because I can see the good He does”. Dear pastor, the good you see done is due to people’s **belief** in God (and, I may add, so is much of the bad being done); it is **not** due to an imaginary interventionist God.*

see blog 958 and the appendix