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Faith Vs Blind Faith

Without reason in our religious outlook we let the clergy manipulate us



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The urgent reform that the idea of religion needs to undergo is a re-orientation from life-after-death to life-before-death.

For long we have criticised religions. This has been done almost entirely to prove one's religion right and other religions wrong. Meanwhile, religion, per se, has inched closer to degradation. It has become imperative, therefore, to take stock of the state of religion itself.

Four priests in Kerala reportedly blackmailed a mother of two, using the prurient stuff gleaned from her religious confession, which is mandated to be inviolate. If so, they have not only committed a heinous crime in the eyes of the law but also broken the very foundation of the vocation and the religion they practice. A bishop has also been accused by a nun of sexually

assaulting her. Not long ago, a priest in Kerala impregnated a teenage girl and, when she delivered a baby, bribed her father into admitting the blame for the atrocity. For long, scandals of priest-perpetrated pedophilia have rocked the church globally. To his credit, Pope Francis has ordered the removal from office of 34 bishops in Chile for sexual offences.

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No one thinks that hypocrisy, sexual perversions and criminal propensities are peculiar to the clergy only of one religion. It is regrettable that members of all religious communities have been brainwashed into believing that they are being pious in justifying the most unthinkable offences within their folds, and protecting the perpetrators of such crimes. They also believe it is incumbent on them to attack the aberrations in other religious communities. The truth, however, is that this order needs to be reversed. One must be more intolerant of the rot in one's own religious community and less eagle-eyed about the muck in other religious communities. As Goethe said, if only each man would keep his own door-step clean, the whole city will be clean. If, on the contrary, each one is busy watching the garbage at the door of his neighbour, the city will be choked with accumulating rot. This is the state of our current religiosity.

If there was a spark of reason in our religious outlook, we would have required our religious leaders to maintain a higher level of morality and spiritual nobility as compared to ordinary folks. We are to be led by them. How can the blind lead the semi-blind? It is this simple logic that we pretend to not know. That's perhaps because we fear that if we stand by the anti-clerical truth, we will incur the wrath of god. This irrational fear has its roots in a pernicious lie: God requires us to disown truth for the sake of priests. The truth is just the opposite. We insult god by betraying the truth. If cheats and criminals abound in religious folds today, all of us are responsible for it, even if by default.

The most crippling lie that religions have smuggled into us is that priests are the mediators and retailers of supernatural blessings. Take life after death, for example. It's strange how readily we believe that people, who are inferior to most of the laity in their moral and intellectual stature, are experts in what pertains to life after death.

The urgent reform that the idea of religion needs to undergo is a re-orientation from life-after-death to life-before-death. The second is hospitable to rational thinking. The first is a realm that lends itself to myths, misdirections and manipulations. For millennia, human beings have been fooled with the pie-in-the-sky-when-you-die sort of bait. It was this that Karl Marx condemned, very appropriately, as the opium of the people.

The opposite of faith is not reason, it is blind faith. Faith without rationality is blind faith, a fertile breeding ground for crime. The holy criminals who are now being exposed are stockists and retailers of blind faith. Everyone who peddles blind faith is, from a spiritual standpoint, a criminal. Irrational religiosity is a crime against humanity. Women and children are its most visible, vulnerable victims. But irrational religion makes a victim of everyone, including its salesmen. We need to discern the hidden links between the priestly perpetrators of crimes, like the sex-scandals. But we should also be aware of the links between our religiosity and the cheapening of humanity as a whole. It's no good to let religion, meant to be a purifier of our species, to be a source of pollution and moral bankruptcy. Why should the remedy be the malady?

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