

JUSTIFYING SECULARISM

Secularism is ruling the nation without any specific religious or magical doctrine getting a say. It is a fundamental human right for it becomes unworkable if you try to please every magical view. Once you believe in magic there is no way to make one belief any more realistic or plausible than another.

Is secularism merely about the law of the land?

No. A culture of secularism needs to be established as well. A culture of apathy toward religion would be great. Apathy is religion's worst enemy.

Secularism advocates and stands for honesty in relation to history. For example, though it is proven that Peter was not a pope and not the head of the early Church, the Catholic Church gets away with lying that he was. If it is shown to be a fact that there is no God, then religion classes need to be banned from schools. Religion should not be given a monopoly on distorting facts and history.

When people of religion advocate secularism...

The believers say that God must take supreme importance in the world and in your life. Even when they support secularism, they teach that it is only acceptable in the sense that God gave the state a separate job to do from the Church. So even their secularism is religious at least in intention.

For the atheist, there is no chance of holding that the state should be secular for God wills it. The atheist is more secular than the religionist.

What is the justification of secularism?

Secularism is what we would have if no religion or religious belief existed. And its because we have so many different religious viewpoints and groups around that we need secularism. We cannot please even if a few of them all the time. Instead of trying to please any religion, we just keep it simple and try to please none. That is the only fair approach.

The state is to serve the people regardless of religious beliefs. If religious people attach too much importance to their beliefs that that is their problem and their own idiosyncrasy. The state cannot pander to every religious whim or spiritual addiction. Does the state permit a pharmacist to decline the morning after pill even to teenage girls who are victims of rape when the pharmacist has religious objections? In surety, the girls come first and the state must put them first and compel the pharmacist to give them the pills.

Politicians and rulers do not approve of everything they have to enforce in the name of the state. They have to put their reservations aside and do the will of the state whether they approve or not. The state cannot function if it gives too much respect to freedom of conscience.

The Christian may argue that the law must not penalise a printer for refusing to print invitations to a gay civil partnership for conscientious reasons. Disapproval needs to be clarified. Disapproval is the attitude - "You pair are gay and I do not approve of you or like you and I want to hurt you by expressing my disapproval. " Disapproval and conscientious objection are one and the same. The law can require that a young mother must be jailed for stealing a bottle of vodka. A prison warden cannot refuse to lock up her up even on the grounds that she is forced to abandon her two toddlers. The law is the law. She is ordered to approve of what has been done to her. Christians don't worry about the warder's conscience or her conscience either!

We are part of our country therefore let us do our bit to keep it secular.

Secularism and clothing

Secularism decrees that the state must try to cater for religious practice and codes of behaviour and dress. For example, Sikh policemen must be allowed to wear the turban. Islamic women must be allowed to wear the burka except when it affects security or how they do their job. For example, an older person in a nursing home would be very disturbed if his carer wore a burka! The woman can wear the burka but remove the face covering for security reasons. This will not be all that often for many.

It is argued that the burka turns women into things not people and robs them of their personhood. This oversimplifies. If a person sees a woman as a thing because she wears a burka or a bikini the problem is in the person. It is not the woman's problem. The law must protect women who are made to wear the burka by their religion or their husbands. It should be a matter of free choice.

Legislation must never ban the burka. What it may ban is the concealment of the identity of the wearer in public when security is a concern.

The state must see you as its citizen and not as a member or non-member of religion

The state should not recognise religious affiliation. It should see its citizens as its citizens and not as Catholics or Protestants or anything. The religion is an irrelevant label.

The state must not care if a child is baptised or not.

Thus just as the state does not ask you what Tennis Club you are in on census forms so it should not be interested in what religion you claim to be. Besides, if somebody who was baptised a Catholic and who does not believe in that faith or attend its worship ticks the Catholic box that person is lying.

It is not up to the person to decide if he or she is Catholic or Protestant or Mormon or whatever. It is up to the laws of his or her Church. For example, if one has never opened one's heart to Jesus as Saviour and Lord, one cannot be a genuine Protestant for one isn't even a Christian in the eyes of the Protestant faith. A checklist should accompany the census form. Also questions should be, "Do you practice any religion?" And, "if yes, what religion?" A religion with high membership but with low practice should not be taken seriously or considered to have clout by the state or by society.

Abolish blasphemy laws

RELIGION: The holy name must always be respected. Appropriate penalties must be established in the law to punish where necessary.

RESPONSE: If a person insults a holy name that is between the person and the being allegedly offended. You have no business sticking your nose in or getting the state involved. Nobody can ask God how he feels about somebody insulting him. Maybe he doesn't care. Why should people stick up for a God who might not have a problem.

Blasphemy laws must be abandoned for blasphemy is a victimless crime. Protect people not religion. It is the people who make up religion that must be protected not the religion itself.

Blasphemy laws seek to hurt people for the sake of protecting ideas. We know that it is people and not ideas that should be protected. Those laws comprise persecution on religious grounds.

Blasphemy must not be a crime. People who choose to be offended when their doctrines are laughed at or refuted have to realise that their upset is their own making. The people must not tolerate or desire laws against blasphemy. Christians think the Muslims blaspheme for saying that Jesus was not God. The Muslims think the Christians blaspheme for saying he is. Blasphemy laws endanger freedom of speech. Secularism is blasphemous for if there is a God - God means the Great Spirit who is to be Number One for he is great while we are not great like him - it takes no account of him. We must not protect ideas but people. For example, we do not need to punish people who condemn freedom of speech but we do need to stop those who prevent freedom of people such as by false imprisonment or something similar.

Those who wish to censor comedy and critics when they feel they insult their religion plainly do not have the confidence in their faith to live and let live. And they are the ones who claim to believe that truth will prevail for God is truth.

If somebody says something mocking about God or says Jesus was a homosexual this is the sin of blasphemy. The Church has succeeded in keeping the illegality of blasphemy enshrined in the laws of many countries. Though the countries agree with freedom of speech nobody has the legal right to advocate an assassination of the head of state. Religion says that God is more important than any head of state. Jesus said that we must love God with all our hearts and that we must not love others with all our hearts but only as ourselves - that is less than God. Religion says that God is ruler and king of the universe and its maker. It says no country has power to rule unless God gives it power. Thus blasphemy must be high treason of the worst type. God cannot be known adequately without revealing himself in the true religion so it follows that to contradict that religion is to work against God and to insult the truth by calling it false. All heresy is blasphemy. The God concept implies that free speech is wrong - it allows it so restrictedly that it might as well not bother. It demands that religion and religious belief be supported by the state and be placed legally beyond all criticism.

Blasphemy laws should be abolished for they imply that nobody should speak of the defects in any religion for if one religion is protected by such laws then all should be. This cannot be done for every religion is at best an unintentional insult to the rest if guessing that other religions are wrong can be called an unintentional insult! The truth that God is the devil if he exists is considered blasphemous by religionists so such laws are irreconcilable with the fact that people have the right to say what is on their minds. If people are offended when God is mocked that is their problem. Religion hurts truth and decency with its obscurantism and cheating. Reason is more important than God even if there is a God and they do not mind it being mocked and insulted and maligned. Every religion blasphemes itself! For example, Christianity says that Jesus was God but they cannot prove this alleged truth as well as they think they can prove God or the existence of J F Kennedy so that is an insult to God. To foment this hypocrisy, the Devil is doing the miracles in support of Christianity if the miracles reported by that faith are real. Some forms of Buddhism and Hinduism hold that contradictions can be true but if that is so then there is no truth and it is not wrong to blaspheme their gods.

Religion asks the state to protect it from people who mock it and to punish scoffers. Catholics for example take offence at those who might say the mother of Jesus was dissolute. Yet their religion says they should be more offended about people who call themselves Catholics and who do not support the teaching of Jesus that God's rights matter and human rights don't count in comparison. Jesus said the greatest commandment was to love God totally and to share no love with anybody else and you only value yourself and your neighbour because God commands it. So it is really God that is loved and not others or yourself. Love of neighbour means only that you love what you see of God in them. Christians are quite arbitrary in what they choose to be offended about. God made animals for us as food according to the Bible but that is a far cry from the Church approved practice of rearing animals in awful conditions as if they were things. If the law is going to limit freedom of speech through blasphemy law, surely it should be concerned with what religion should find the most offensive which is not necessarily the same thing as what they are offended about. The only solution is for the state to ignore religious sensibilities. The possibility of the state only acting against critics who urge that Churches be burned down or who attempt to incite people to commit some other act of violence is separate from all this.

Persecution of religion is wrong and ineffective

The state should tolerate religion but not let it control it. We have to let religion be free because people cannot help what they believe and it is up to us who know better to cure them if they are wrong and if they want to be cured. Church and state must be separated. Information and good example and the promise of happiness and inner peace without God and religion are better antidotes to religion than persecution and history bears witness to that.

Religion says that no matter how free we claim to be, we submit to some authority or authorities. So it says we should submit to its teaching and its God to keep up order and avoid chaos. That kind of attitude urges people to say nothing critical. It has led to most of the religiously inspired bloodshed of the past and the present.

We know that persecuting any religion is wrong. It is simply useless for the only thing that can deal with religion is information and encouragement to those who want to be free from it. We secularists are the cause of the evil in religion for we have not done enough to inform, we have not informed properly or with understanding. If all who contradict the truth are silenced there will be no progress or peace of mind and there will be bloodshed and the suspicion that the censoring is really about stifling the truth. Though error has no rights the people that err do. People who err have the right to be corrected.

If you, as a secularist, respects people's freedom, you will not be afraid to ask them questions through which they will think about their beliefs and challenge themselves as believers. Indeed, not doing so implies that you disrespect them and regard them as shallow believers and hypocrites or that you have nothing to learn from them. The secularist does not get converts. The secularist becomes the occasion upon which a person has to think for themselves.

Many think that we have the right to err because nobody can make our minds up for us. We can only make up our own minds - nobody can do it for us. If we obey somebody else, we are really obeying ourselves. It works like this, "I want to do my will which is what you want me to do." You are still obeying only yourself. It does not follow that we have the right to believe what we want just because nobody can stop us. Rights are based on the concept of deserving. You cannot deserve to be wrong. Error demeans.