

You do not have a right only to follow God's opinion.

All world religions are defined as such by their doctrines and teachings about the supernatural. Even if a religion seems disinterested in the supernatural its belief that it has the way to ultimate truth is supernatural. Sometimes the magical is hidden and its the religions actions speak not the words. The notion of supernatural infallible knowledge is there at least tacitly.

When religious believers say their beliefs and opinions should not be challenged for they are sacred, it clearly proves they are more concerned about getting offended than they are about anybody offending God. Or do they care about God at all? God is supposed to be a God of absolute truth so to use, "I have a right to my opinion" to silence the truth or possible truth is anti-God. They need to be told to get thicker skins.

We object to other people's views on loads of things and will tell them that and we will try to persuade them to think differently. When it is religion we try to persuade them out of we may get a hostile reaction. People root their faith in stupid reasons and when it is challenged they see no option but to form battle lines and try to scare the challengers into silence. If people think debates about religion and whether it is true or false are dangerous because they lead to hatred and persecution then they fear religion even if they profess to support it. They are intending to support something they see as dangerous tribalism.

Nobody seriously suggests that as it is traumatic to give up your religion or religious belief that nobody should encourage you to do so. If you adore your local clothes store you could be traumatised by finding out that the clothes are made by slave labour. The person who challenges us is not to blame for how it makes us feel. And we should be used to having our precious ideas challenged. Any grown-up person would be.

It is ONLY over religion that many people say, "Let people believe what they want. Even if two religions contradict each other both are right." Religion creates a hostility and antagonism towards truth and slanders those who challenge its truth claims as bigots.

Christians have succeeded in making many people think that the Christian religion should have special rights in relation to freedom of speech. The critic of the religion can be silenced or condemned or socially frowned upon while the Christians can preach all they want.

Many Christians though do not evangelise or try to attract others to the faith. But if they are Christian, they will believe that they should. The Christian then who says, "I have a right to my religious opinion", upon hearing something that challenges the truth of the religion should be told that they have given that right up by claiming to be Christian. A religion is about giving you the opinions and beliefs it wants you to have. It is up to it not you. If you have to promote your religious faith, you simply have to let yourself be exposed to challenges and you cannot run away from them.

Suppose you believe that God forbids abortion even when its needed to save the life of the one doctor in the world who can cure cancer - there will never be another like her. If she is a believer, I will respect her right to refuse the abortion and die. But I will not respect her if she tries to stop others having abortions to save their lives - say if she rams an abortion clinic with a lorry.

If you believe in the Sabbath day, stay in the house resting but do not start trying to use legislation to force stores to close on that day etc.

I will respect you if you believe that the communion bread is actually not bread but the body of Jesus Christ. I cannot however respect this belief. Even if it is not silly, it certainly looks silly. I cannot be blamed for ridiculing it.

Dismissing is a form of rudeness where you ignore the truth that a person has spoken

An example of dismissing is the following.

A - I challenge belief in Catholicism for people are better off without that religion. B - but many Catholics are good people, leave them alone. Good people claiming to be in a religion or to believe in it has nothing to do with the question of whether the religion is good or not. And B is not dealing with the core of the issue - your right to challenge a view you find unhealthy.

Another example. A - the Church should do gay marriage because the Church in marrying provides a service for the state

and the celebrant of marriage - religious or otherwise - represents the state when he or she officiates at a marriage. B - the Church is a big thing in society so the Church should be exempted from performing marriages it does not approve of. That is not dealing with A at all. Its off-topic which is the rightness/wrongness of the separation between Church and state. And as far as B goes, you don't argue that the Church is big in your country therefore the state should collect taxes for it or that other religions should not be allowed their own schools!

What if the vast majority of people took the opinion that religion is a form of schizophrenia and religionists should be incarcerated? What if the vast majority of people took the opinion that science was fraud including medical science? And religion itself is often missionary and has an ethos of sharing the faith in the hope that people will enjoy the benefits of adopting the beliefs and opinions of the religion? To say people should be let believe what they want denies that religion should teach religion. And it is intolerant towards the fact that belief should be about what you think is true and not about what you want. A religion that is concerned about what it wants to believe and not the truth will turn into a cult that abuses its members and be afraid of critics. Consider how the Jehovah's Witnesses are like that and leave death and broken families and a deliberately mistranslated Bible in their wake.

If opinions deserve respect, then the more they have been thought through and the more evidence they are based on, then the more respect they are entitled to. The opinion or view of a person who honours, seeks and carefully evaluates evidence is the one deserving of the most respect. Take miracles. The miracle beliefs of most Christians do not deserve much respect if any for they make no effort to reasonably substantiate the beliefs. They make serious allegations about miracles happening. You need excellent evidence if you are going to say a miracle is a true miracle. It is a matter of being respectful to the persons you invite to agree with you and a matter of respecting evidence and truth and its a matter of integrity. Even if the miracles reported by the Church are true, that does not mean the belief of most Catholics deserves the same respect as that of the expert believers. They are superstitious in their attitude.