

## Secularism and oaths

Religion might say that an oath that does not mention God or appeal to God as witness is not an oath at all for it is purely based on respect for man-made authority and opinion. Such religion enables the problem of perjury when secular oaths are made.

The following form of oath is ideal, "I promise very sincerely to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and I understand that if I fail to do so I will be committing an offence for which I will be punished and may be sent to prison."

It does not involve calling on God to witness what you say. The oath reminds one of the consequences of perjury. Even believers know fine well that God is not going to function as a witness and he will not necessarily expose their lies. Only a religious fraud takes the religious oath. Merely taking it is perjury. The fear of divine punishment for perjury cannot apply to an Evangelical who thinks that only Jesus gets punished for her or his sin.

Having a secular oath alongside the religious one must surely imply that the religious one is more authoritative. An oath including God cannot be equal in value to an oath that does not. God by definition is the best there can be. The only answer is to allow secular oaths only.

True secularism would have oaths taken not on holy books, for example Bible or Koran, but say on the constitution. However, taking an oath is not going to make anybody tell the truth. The only thing that may help do that is the possibility of being punished for lying. The religious person should take the oath if they wish, on both. The secular person cannot use the holy book. They can only use the constitution.

RELIGION: You make oaths binding by calling on God to witness to them.

RESPONSE: But God allows deception to happen for his own purposes. Oaths are really attempts to oblige God to show the truth of what you say. They are superstitious blasphemous nonsense. No intelligent person would take them seriously. Indeed it is no wonder perjury is so rife! Oaths are unnecessary. They are no guarantee that the witnesses is telling the truth. It is better to simply tell the witness that he will be punished if he is found to be lying and to exhort him to tell the truth. Oaths are totally unnecessary. A threat of punishment would be a better incentive to tell the truth than the taking of an oath.

Should the oath taken by a president-elect have no religious references or should the religious references be optional? They should be optional.

The law must never sanction victimless crime. Blasphemy laws and perjury laws (only when the law states the problem is not the lying but how God has been invoked to witness to a lie) must end.

You cannot make God function as a witness. If you take an oath to try and force him then you are a bully and cannot be trusted so what is the point of the oath?

## COMMENT ON A WEBSITE ON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR OATHS

'I promise very sincerely to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and I understand that if I fail to do so I will be committing an offence for which I will be punished and may be sent to prison.' This oath is ideal for it reminds the person of the possible consequences of lying. It is more important to have that in than to mention God. And as for most people in Britain being people of faith, it does not follow that they have any real faith in the Bible as a book authored by God. So why retain holy books during oath taking? And there are many Christians who say the Bible says that is a sin to take oaths! Furthermore, everybody who lies during an oath is not necessarily a bad person. We must not underestimate the influence of Moral Relativism among us. This teaches that something is made true by persuading yourself that it is true so that what is true for one is not true for another. A relativist may not intend to do wrong by lying under oath. But he or she has broken the law and that is what we need to focus on.

To Daily Mail about the traditional oath "I swear to Almighty God etc!" needing a substitute.