

## THE SEDUCTION OF SPIRITUALITY

It doesn't matter if I have a spirit or not. It is dealing with the needs that allegedly come from the spirit that matter. Spirituality is a mental disorder. Despite books such as *The Book of Atheist Spirituality* by Andre Comte-Sponville (Transworld, London, 2008) an atheist can't be called spiritual if he or she has no belief in the supernatural. Religion is defined as coming from a Latin word *religio* meaning to bind and many take this to mean that it binds people together. But there are undoubtedly individualistic expressions of religion and every faith has its loners. Some say like Andre that the word religion comes from *relegare* and means to contemplate. I would converge the two and say that religion means belonging to a system of contemplating the supernatural. Religion is based on the supernatural. And so is spirituality. Spirituality is mixed up with finding emotional and intellectual fulfilment. It is separate from these. Finding such fulfilment with supernatural beliefs is spirituality. Finding emotional and intellectual fulfilment without them is just being unspiritual.

Fact 1. All the benefits we have come from material things and material perceptions. Alcoholic drink can make you feel happier than you have ever been and even make you a kinder sociable person so happiness is a material force. Spirituality is the denial of this and is to be condemned for that. Spirituality is finding strength and growth from an unearthly source. We reject spirituality for we find fulfilment in our own earthy resources. We have no need to believe that we have any spiritual constitution and we should stop saying that because we cannot explain how we can be aware of things we must have a soul. We don't understand matter itself or how it does what it does. Spiritual people and even atheists may not act like materialists but that is what we are.

Fact 2. People who have no belief in God or an afterlife can be very happy. Therefore these things and spirituality are not necessary and are going the harder road to happiness so they are disorders. To depend on what is not necessary for happiness to be happy is to have an addiction.

Fact 3. Religious people are into spirituality and religion because they want to feel that their life is serving some useful ultimate purpose. Since your life is the most important thing you have, it follows that you must have very very good evidence that you are right about the ultimate purpose, if any, it serves. That is commonsense because you are saying that you will or should use your life to fulfil that ultimate purpose and your life is your most important possession. This tells us that if religion and not commonsense gives you a sense of meaning then that is a disorder. The evidence for any religion is terrible indicating that the meaning people get from religion is an illness. There is no need for thinking you have an ultimate purpose. If you go to a party you just enjoy being there instead of worrying why you are there in terms of an ultimate eternal reason. Looking for such a reason shows a desire to believe that you are as essential in the scheme of things as matter is. It is arrogance.

Fact 4. Different people get a feeling that their life is purposeful in different ways. Religion dictates to you how you should get meaning but its way cannot suit everybody. It tries to create a need where there is none. You do not get meaning in life from believing that you will go to some big heaven when you die for you could believe that and still feel that your life on earth is a chore. Indeed if you really believed in Heaven you would be very unsettled on earth if you were sane. You get meaning from moment to moment by doing things that you see the importance in.

Fact 5. God is said to be all-powerful and all good. Prayer cannot change God for whatever good he is going to do he will do it whether asked or not. Some say that God inspires you to pray for things because he intends to give them. But such prayer is not an influence on God. Is prayer just you trying to change yourself by communicating with God so that you become more like God? If it is then it shows that you can change yourself without it. You can talk to a fictitious god and still seem to get results. If you pray to change yourself then God is secondary. Prayer is idolatry for its about changing yourself and not about God. You are an egoist anyway and you cannot really care about God's will so prayer is insulting what you are for it is in essence: "Father, your will not mine be done".

Fact 6. Prayer is evil for it signifies dependence on a superior power while you should be drawing happiness from your own inner resources by reducing your needs and expectations. After all it is your natural powers and how you deal with your fears that produced your faith in God in the first place. It is all you anyway so that proves you can be self-sufficient and don't need your crutch. Your crutch is a sign of insecurity and that can make you a danger to anybody who undermines your faith. Prayer may give thrills at times but its purpose is to make the ego dysfunctional so that you become a slave to religion. To give God the credit for the good you do is really to give the creators of the belief the credit. It is giving religion the credit instead of the goodness that exists in yourself and by implication other people.

Fact 7. The person who prays is expected to put all his trust in God. It is fanatical to put trust like that in a being that may not exist when you pray for the protection of others for that implies that that is the best possible thing you can do for them. Would you be doing what is best for others if you injected them with a fluid that could be poison?

Fact 8. There are only two emotions: love and fear. We have seen that spirituality is not needed so it is caused by some level of fear. The level may be so weak that it might not be noticed but it is real fear.

You will only have a sense of meaning in life if you stabilise and nurture the ego and the ego is the drive towards rational self-interest. The religionist who finds meaning in self-sacrifice is really practicing egoism anyway though they will not admit it and then try to detest the ego. The religious view that egoism has to be crushed before we will be satisfied with life is incorrect. Egoism is atheism in practice for it infers that atheism is true. The only god is yourself so God and spirituality and religion have to go. The Gospel According to Atheism shows how to become your own god. When you find inner peace, it is nonsense to spend time casting spells or praying for what more do you want? You can't have any greater success than that.

## SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality is really just religion without the pressure to conform that is exercised by organised religion. Spirituality is dangerous for mental health as there is nothing stopping the person from thinking they have apparitions from Heaven or are divine and doing all sorts of bizarre things. Religion is the same psychological mess but more controlled. For example, Catholics imagine that the communion wafer is really a man Jesus Christ. This religion says it has been turned into Jesus. Catholics are intolerant towards "spiritual" people who want to believe that their dead loved ones can be turned into keyrings or wedding rings or whatever! See the point? With the social pressure applied by religion and its fondness for a good reputation, it follows that adherents will hide their most bizarre religious experiences and beliefs. Spiritual people are honest enough to let the strangeness be seen. A weirdo in a religion will feel less depressed than a weirdo who is spiritual for he or she has a support structure that the spiritual person does not have.

### AMAZON REVIEW OF DISPIRITED

<http://www.amazon.com/Dispirited-Contemporary-Spirituality-Selfish-Unhappy/dp/1846947022>

I like this book. My view is that emotional health is what is ultimately meant by spiritual health. The priests and clergy need to pretend that there is such a thing as spiritual health as such so that they can get away with acting like counselors and therapists without having any right to. Echos of Scientology anyone? Watered-down Christianity is fairly harmless but the real thing will only leave the vulnerable person worse off. This book has confirmed my view that there is no real difference between spiritual and emotional health - my view is commonsense but there is little of that around these days.