

RELIGION 1. The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung said: 'Religion is a defence against true religious experience.' Who is defending and why? It is our mind. Mind wants to rule the world, it wants to control and enslave us - to do so it creates religions. Religion is a delusional game of entrapment mind plays with us.

Most religions are based on the same Truth. But while they may provide valuable social networks and strengthen communities*, religion and spirituality are separate. They do not exclude or oppose one another - but if religious people ever are spiritual, they are so not because of religions, but in spite of them.

To be spiritual we must go beyond our many antagonistic religious systems, which may claim to strive for spirituality but have instead decided in favour of legend and myth, pomp and circumstance, ceremony and ritual, intolerance and intrigue, irrationality and dogma, control and oppression, cruelty and violence.

The spiritual leaders of ages past are shrouded in mystery. Their teachings may have been relevant for their times but are now - misrepresented and misinterpreted - turned into religiosity. For job-security, current religious leaders adapt fundamentalism; some move their followers to violence in the name of religion.

Spirituality - true religious experience - is found elsewhere.

Religious leaders lie to their followers about the veracity or otherwise of their mythologies and keep them in a state of ignorance. This is necessary to keep a tight grip on their flock, which otherwise could indulge in free-thinking, with the result that they might abandon their inherently irrational beliefs.

Some religious leaders assure followers that if they murder infidels they will go to paradise and be subject to favourable circumstances. Innocent believers are brainwashed and misused as they are turned into fundamentalist, religious fanatics and their mis-directed piety becomes a base for terrorism.

**The social aspect of religion, where it may provide cohesiveness to a community, is not disputed. In a social, communal sense religion can influence people to help others. Religion often bonds groups of people (this is how it dominated the Middle, or Dark Ages) but this bonding occurs under the weight of superstition, dogmas and fear. Since the Enlightenment these processes were debunked and humans now are altruistic without fear of - or favour from - an elusive God.*