

Religious Intolerance is the World's Normal. Can it Be Fixed?
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The West has brought an amazing baby into the world: religious tolerance. The lesser developed world is still enmeshed in the ancient notion that there is only one religion and that all others must be not only avoided, but wiped out if possible. Religious fanaticism is an ancient human horror.

Tolerance does not necessarily mean love, but means that we can live and let live) with people who worship differently (within limits) or are female or homosexual. This tolerance demands a great deal of its citizens, for whom this sort of benevolence is not natural.

The limits to modern tolerance are becoming more obvious. One's religious views cannot trump secular law, as was recently noted by a French judge who jailed a French Muslim man who punched a midwife for taking off his wife's all-encumbering veil. The judge told the man: \223Your religious notions do not trump French law!\224 And in a current Canadian murder case, the judge told an Afghan man, his son, and his second wife, that there was no \223honor\224 in slaughtering their three daughters and the man's first wife for being too modern and disobedient. They are sentenced for life.

We see intolerance when religious fanatics who are a minority attempt to force the majority to follow their religious notions. In secular Israel today, Ultra-Orthodox Jews demand observance of their notions of propriety. They separate their own women and men in public (different sidewalks, back of the bus, covered-up clothing), which the government ignored.

Now Israeli police rightly arrested bigots who spat on a little schoolgirl for \223immodest\224 dress. The police also supported a young woman soldier who was being knocked around for refusing to sit in the back of a bus. The fanatics rioted, calling the police \223Nazis,\224 much to the outrage of the rest of the country. The latest outrage is a gynecology conference banning women doctors from lecturing (by order of the rabbis). There is now public outrage.

This issue will only end when the Ultra-Orthodox are deprived of their draft-free status and when welfare stops supporting their huge families. A secular constitution would also help.

Britain's ill-conceived tolerance of Islamist pressures is finally coming to an end. Muslim members of parliament are demanding that only halal meat (something like kosher) be served in Parliament. This is as bold as insisting that \223Pig N'Whistle\224 shops take down their signs or that nursery schools not have The Three Little Pigs read to toddlers. The majority of MPs refused to knuckle under.

When the Catholic-Protestant wars in Europe ended, Protestant England did not permit Catholics to hold office or vote. They only removed these impediments when the Pope removed Catholic intolerance toward Protestants (and Jews) in Rome. Tolerance requires two hands clapping, not one.

Today, Islamic intolerance is on a surge. In Muslim-majority countries, not only are other religions prevented from practice, but even dissident sects of Islam are persecuted. Jews lived in the Arab world for millennia, constituting a large minority, until ethnic cleansing either killed or drove them out. Now Christians, once the majority in what is today's Arab World, are also facing genocide or exile. Watch them flee Egypt and Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Nigeria is now at risk as Muslims wipe out Christians to become a majority.

Those sociologists (and Marxists) who believe that humans are motivated by economic issues alone need to rethink that sometimes religion is more powerful than just food. The Muslim Maldives Islands have just killed their economy by closing all \223un-Islamic\224 health spas and beaches, their main source of income from Western tourists. The same is happening in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, and eventually in the rest of North Africa as fanatics promote \223Islamic Virtue\224 over Western tourism money.

Some Egyptian Islamists want to dismantle the Pyramids, just as the Taliban destroyed the Buddha statue in Afghanistan. The model for both was the son of the great Saladin

(12th century) who also tried to demolish the Grand Pyramid in Gaza. Fortunately, his technology was not good enough.

These policies further their poverty and backwardness. Intolerance brings its own punishment.

678 words

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