

Puritans Are So Threatened By Pleasure!  
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There has always been a strain in religions from the beginning of time that has feared pleasure. Perhaps it is connected with a struggle between male and female power. Without wanting to push this too far, women can be a distraction. "Let's play!" distracts from the serious work of hunting with the fellows or thinking serious philosophical thoughts in the monastery. Female beauty makes men, even late into their dotage, weak in the knees. My sourpuss puritanical grandfather was pinching the nurses at ninety when his inhibitions finally failed him. Until then, he made his family miserable.

Moses was up on the wretched Mt. Sinai talking to God and getting the ten commandments and what were his pleasure-loving people doing? Singing, dancing, fornicating, and worshipping the Golden calf, who represented the pleasure-loving god of their Pagan neighbors. Several hundred of them were executed on the spot! Religion is not for pleasure! It is serious stuff!

Judaism with its food prohibitions always had problems with those foodies among them who, while living among the Romans, longed to eat Roman food. This certainly had to be a temptation. It would certainly be a temptation for me today not to be able to give up the pleasure of eating the best cuisines of the world----French and Italian foods----for food prohibitions that defied logic. But then, I am not that married to Puritanical values. I thank God (or the Great Mother) who gave us these pleasures.

Centuries later, the British gave up the pleasure-loving Catholic church and went through ten years of Puritan rule. No Christmas! No kissing in public! No colorful clothes! Long sermons in church! Even married sex was sin, in the dark with your clothes on! Ten years of that was more than enough for them. But Puritanical sourness never quite goes away. We have pockets of it even in America. Hellfire and Damnation.

But the prize for Puritanism goes to today's Islamists. Now they know how to be sour. They certainly do not like to laugh. They absolutely hate pleasure, any sort that does not come from anything other than murder: either close and personal (stabbing or decapitating), but also by blowing up women and children at marketplaces.

Some do love the pleasure of sex, however; very selfish sex. They like the idea of having a sexual garden filled with beautiful women and girls, and sometimes young boys, who are kept specifically for their own pleasure. Nobody else may play.

There are exceptions, of course. The Afghan warlords are particularly perverse. It appears that the Pashtoon tribe really detests women and would do without them if they could; but they need them to produce boy children. They really like boys better. The ancient Greeks did too. They like them as sons, and they like them as sex objects, boy-toys, whom they dress up as little girls who dance and entertain their men friends at parties and who assume female roles in traveling theatres. (Google this practice and see National Geographic archives.)

ISIS puritans persecute any other pleasures that are un-Islamic too. In Iraq, keeping pigeons is an old hobby much loved by young men. Now, Isis is rounding up and killing the youngsters and killing the birds. In Afghanistan, the Taliban did the same with the old custom of Kite running, an old pre-Islamic sport. Having fun (other than murder and flogging) just is not Islamic! For good fun, just go to an arena and watch a good decapitation or see an adulteress stoned to death. Now there is good sport for you!

The Ayatollah Khomeini really tried hard to get rid of the ancient Zoroastrian holiday of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, celebrated way before Islam was ever thought of. It is a celebration as old as the Chinese New Year, and celebrated over 13 days, beginning on the Vernal Equinox. The Iranians refused to give it up. It is joyous. It is sexy. It is a reminder that there was history before Mohammad. It defies everything that today's sour Islam resents: joy and saying yes to pleasure.

681 words

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