How to Make Your Own Religion

By : kristofferson

A brief and simple monotheistic framework termed Religious Minimalism.

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Religious Minimalism is a simple religious framework based on the principle that the more complex the set of beliefs the more likely it is to reflect the wrong assumptions of the various and often unknown people who have contributed to it (but this does not mean that another religion is necessarily wrong).

It is a framework rather than a religion because it sees religion as being about our personal relationship with the Divine, so the minimalist framework aims to provide some uncluttered space for that personal relationship to develop. Religion does not come in a book.

1. *At its heart is **reverence for a divinity**. This is a single being for, as the medieval philosopher William Occam said, why multiply entities (or assumptions) unnecessarily?*

We may pray to this divinity for guidance or assistance in serious matters (why shouldn't we?).

We should avoid giving attributes (either limbs or supposed qualities) to the divinity because the more we attribute, whether by imagination or inference, the more likely we are to make mistakes. As we don't really need a portrait to revere God, mystery seems preferable to misconception.

2. *Secondly, it notes that ethics, whether about personal virtues or behaviour towards others, should reflect what we are as human beings. And because we are social animals, this means treating others the way we like to be treated (hence avoiding lying, stealing, killing etc, not being cruel to animals, looking after our earthly home etc).*

When the mind knows what is right for itself, it knows what is right for others. So there is no need for complex or inflexible and comprehensive moral rules.

3. *Minimalism notes that life will have more meaning if we can establish satisfying relationships or develop our talents to pursue an activity that is satisfying and/or worthwhile (in the sense that it serves the future or our community). Again, this is practical and is based on our natures.*

Thatâ s it: no big book, no priestly class, no ritual, no church, no mythology and no money.

As for explaining the cosmos, minimalism considers that this is not a matter for religion (which is about our relationship with God and ethical living) so we should let science and philosophy serve as best they can for those who are interested.

Similarly, for advice about food, health, personal problems etc, professional experts rather than religious advisers or dogmas are recommended if available. Wouldn't God want us to look after ourselves as well as we could, and isn't that guideline enough?

And notably minimalism says nothing about an afterlife, even if there is one. We should simply live the way we should, given what we are. (And if we were created, would a revered Creator really be unhappy with that?)

Reverence for the divinity should not be based on selfish motives such as the promise of an afterlife.

Minimalism is not associated with an authority or personality. Its words speak for themselves.

It does not aim to drive out existing religions but rather to supplement them.

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