

Dear Dr Faust and Dr Mike Smith

George Washington, the first president of America said," I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it".

Today, religion is abused as a political weapon. The decision at Harvard to sack Dr. Subramanian Swamy for writing an article that appears to be against a minority group is a case in point.

This article was written immediately after the Bombay blast. It has been misread without understanding the larger context of his rhetorical submissions. India has suffered more terrorist acts than any other country. This is only a survival strategy and not intended to provoke the minorities.

Dr Swamy's solutions can be compared to Ramakrishna Paramahansa's parable of a hissing snake: a poisonous snake promised Ramakrishna that it will not harm the villagers. So the villagers took advantage and stoned the snake. Then it was told that it was never advised against hissing to keep the villagers away . Swamy is saying that Hindus should not become soft targets and be exploited. *If they blast our temples and kill Hindu devotees, then remove the masjid. Otherwise the snake will be killed.*

Though Swamy has been promoting Hinduism, he always supported religious minorities when they were persecuted. In 1987, during the Hindu-Muslim riots in Meerut city in Uttar Pradesh, 42 Muslim youth from Hashimpura were taken to the outskirts and shot dead on the banks of the Ganges . No one was willing to take it up due to the tense atmosphere. Even a request for an enquiry was turned down. Dr Swamy took up a fast unto death and after seven days, the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi ordered an inquiry into the death of those youth.

Swamy's supporting both Hindus and Muslims is not odd . It is like a salad bowl; with each religion retaining its identity and living in harmony. That is called Hinduism. He has to be judged from the large body of writings that establish his views and to brand him as a fundamentalist is short sighted.

Finally, an individual's error does not have many repercussions. But an institution should be neutral, impartial and objective; otherwise history will put a blot on its reputation.

I humbly request the president of the university, the faculty, the staff and students to reintroduce these courses and reinstate Dr Subramanian Swamy to teach these courses. It takes courage and integrity to correct the wrong, reverse the decision and restore the credibility and prestige of Harvard.

Your sincerely,
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