

Searching for Answers in the Holy Book

told by Ven. K. Sri Dhammananda in *How to Live without Fear & Worry*

Do not become slaves to any holy book. There was once a man who formed a religious cult and people regarded him as a very learned person. He had a few followers who recorded his instructions in a book. Over the years the book became voluminous with all sorts of instructions recorded therein. The followers were advised not to do anything without first consulting the holy book. Whenever the followers went and whatever they did, they would consult the book which served as the manual in guiding their lives. One day when the leader was crossing a timber bridge, he fell into the river. The followers were with him but none of them knew what to do under the circumstances. So they consulted the holy book.

"Help! Help!" the Master shouted, "I can't swim."

"Please wait a while Master. Please don't get drowned," they pleaded. "We are still searching in our holy book. There must be an instruction on what to do if you fell off from a wooden bridge into a river."

While they were thus turning over the pages of the holy book in order to find out the appropriate instruction, the teacher disappeared in the water and drowned.

The important message of the story is that we should take the enlightened approach and not slavishly follow outdated conservative ideas, nor resort to any holy book without using our common sense. On the face of changing circumstances, new discoveries and knowledge, we must learn to adapt ourselves accordingly, and respond to them by using them for the benefit of everybody.