

It seems that the days of humanity living in a dream world with myths and stories serving as spiritual guides have passed away. For weal or woe truth is king. Combined with the queasiness of uncertain existence, this can mean latching on to belief for dear life. So if unsubstantiated truth is a requisite of religion, I propose three things to keep the butchery and the bizarre at bay:

1. Ask science if your truth is healthy. We have bodies and minds that allow science to do this. If believers are pumped full of stress hormones or found in piles at the bottom of ravines then someone should bring this up for discussion.
2. Rituals and customs are fine for binding the tribe, but at one point in time such things did not exist and there may come a time when they need to go (see #1). Example: animal sacrifice.
3. If God wants you to do something, let God tell you in person. If there is no message then assume God wants you to figure things out on your own. Never ask someone or something what God wants you to do. We have seen how that plays out time after time. If your holy book has some good advice that stands on its own merits (see #1), then by all means proceed, but that is very different from God telling you personally to do something.