

Religion Needs Emancipation

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The religions of the world have now to work together to redeem humanity from its present precarious predicament. We need to liberate humanity from the secular trap in which it has been unconsciously caught. Modern science and the technology based on it, as well as the political economy that undergirds it, have developed in a secular frame - work where humanity as dominating subject and the world as passive object have been the only two factors that mattered. God or the transcendent has become an unnecessary hypothesis in our science and technology, in our universities and schools, in our political institutions.

This is the secular trap from which humanity needs emancipation. It is not simply a question of bringing God in through the window. Philosophical theisms are all too Philosophically weak to stand. It is not simply at the intellectual or conceptual level that the Transcendent has to be reaffirmed.

The various religions of the world have honored and cherished the experience of the transcendent throughout human history, despite the scathing secular attack. We have done so through our doctrines and practices, through our prayers and rituals, through our mystic quests and experiences, through our compassion for humanity and our devotion to the Source and Ground of all being.

Of course, in religion, too, we have made a mess of things. We have made religion an instrument of our greed for political power and for economic advantage. We have allowed the most ungodly and inhuman practices in the name of religion. We have fought wars and destroyed each other in the name of God and religion. We have used our crusades and our *jihads* to plunder and pilfer the wealth of other peoples.

Religion, too, needs emancipation. We as humanity now stand alienated by our own evil practices from both poles of our existence, from the transcendent Source and Ground of our being and from the earth and society in which we have been placed.

The two redemptions, the overcoming of the two alienations, i.e., in the two realms of transcendent religion and humanitarian dealing with our earth - the double salvation for which humanity yearns - must become the top concern of the Global Concourse of Religions. The two emancipations can come only as a single package. It is only as our religions cease being negative and exclusive that our science / technology and our political economy can also become more human.

To me, this is the vision that beckons. We shall not abandon critical reason, but we shall go beyond it to find a kind of reason that is more compassionate, more humane, more acknowledging of transcendence. We do not abandon our national loyalties, but we shall go

beyond them to keep global human interests above our national interests. We do not abandon our own particular religious loyalties; but we shall deepen them in dialogue and concourse with other religions in order to find those deeper roots in each religion which affirm the unity of global humanity and which affirm the transcendent Love in which we all live and move and have our being.

As I humbly inaugurate this opening of the Centenary celebrations [of the Parliament of World Religions], let us also move to common prayer, that all humanity may be brought into a single concourse and all of us acknowledge together in various idioms the Transcendent Love, Wisdom and Power that really unites us.

(The problems of humanity: Building Right Human Relations, Ed. Alice Bailey, World Goodwill, U. K.)