

VARIOUS AUTHORS short contributions on RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Raghavan Iyer

AUTHENTIC SOLUTIONS

Adepts, Mahatmas, and Universal Beings are not here to consolidate anyone's pet ideas Yet, many people, because of fears that are understandable enough, want to save something and therefore there is sectarianism. Coleridge put the problem very well in regard to Christianity, but it is true equally in regard to Theosophy. He who loves Christianity more than every other religion will love his own sect more than every other sect, and in the end love himself best of all. There is a logical and a psychological connection between egocentricity and claims on behalf of the uniqueness of institutions or of formulations. This much is by now clear in relation to each other's orthodoxies and isms, and every man is desperately wanting to get out of the problem within himself in some way. But there is no technique. Authentic solutions involve a redefinition of self, a breakthrough – from the realm of *kama manas*, the psychic self, with its elaborate and boring history of likes and dislikes, fears and personal memories – to the sphere of the noetic with its golden moments of freedom of awareness, which every human soul has and which may be threaded together on a single strand.

Raghavan Iyer Presidential Address given at North American Theosophical Convention in Toronto, Canada on October 8, 1971. (reprinted in *Hermes*, June 1976)

14th Dalai Lama

INDIA, MODEL OF PLURALISM AND TOLERATION

In today's increasingly globalized world, with its interconnected economic and environmental challenges, as well as the increasing proximity of peoples and cultures, many factors exert a pressure that tests the limits of our capacity for acceptance of others. Here, India truly remains a model of pluralism and toleration, especially on the religious level, and is a society where despite deep faith in their own religious traditions, individuals do not feel the need to bring the followers of other faith traditions into their religious fold. India, with its long history of tolerant coexistence, is a beacon for the rest of the world. In fact, when it comes to the wider world I see my own work as being a humble messenger of India's ancient teachings on ahimsa (nonviolence) and tolerance of religious pluralism. I see my efforts in promoting peace, nonviolent approaches to resolving conflicts, and understanding across boundaries of race, religion, and nations, all having their roots in the ancient Indian teachings. So, in every sense of the word, I remain truly a *chela* (disciple) of India.

Toward a True Kinship of Faiths p. 38

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama

J. Tepfer**PARA-RELIGION**

The Second Object of the Theosophical Movement is to encourage the comparative study of religions, philosophies and sciences. Gandhi was a Hindu — by choice as well as by birth. He was also an ardent student of the world’s major religions. Since he came to recognize that each religious tradition embodies a distinctive but profound set of spiritual truths, he declared that “Truth alone is God.” This statement parallels the Theosophical *motto* taken from the Maharaja of Benares: “There is no religion higher than Truth.” It is not surprising then that since Truth alone is God, Gandhi believed fundamentally in,

... the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one’s very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which continually purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself ...

This notion of a “para-religion” of sorts was compatible with, and supportive of, a diversity of religious teachings. Like the full moon simultaneously mirrored in many different lakes, each authentic religious teaching reflects some portion of Absolute Truth. This calls for not only tolerance of multiple religious traditions but a willingness to search for underlying truths beneath constricting dogmas and rituals. It is not surprising then, that Gandhi admired the universal and universalizing spirit of Theosophy. This appreciation was aptly and simply expressed in his Foreword to Sophia Wadia’s book, *The Brotherhood of Religions*: “And understanding of and respect for the great faiths of the world is the foundation of true Theosophy.” In this respect, Gandhi also noted that true religion, the *Sanatana Dharma*, not only transcends all formal religions, but also unifies them without destroying their fundamental, discrete integrity. This dialectical outlook is compatible with true *Theosophia*, is it not?

“Gandhi on Theosophy, Modern Civilization and Social Reform,”
Talk given at International Theosophy Conferences, 2016
Santa Barbara, California U.S.A. James Tepfer

Phiroz Mehta**THE LIVING PRESENCE**

That response which would rekindle the pure flame of religion today could come only from those who have themselves realized the Transcendent. The founders of the great religions of the past were such men. They all – Krishna, Zarathustra, Buddha, Christ – announced a second advent. Certainly a Teacher appears again and again, but never as a repetition of a past form which was a creative fulfillment for that specific living situation. Never again will Krishna, Zarathustra or Jesus come back as persons recognizable as Krishna, Zarathustra or Jesus, for the

movement of the spirit is non-repetitive, invariably unique in every manifestation of its single essence., The Teacher of today will draw afresh from the timeless spring of truth and he will fill a new cup fashioned by the need of the new world age. Whoso has the heart to lift the cup to his burning lips will be healed and, then only, live.... Great Teachers inspire and transform their devotees by the influence of their living presence.

Phiroz Mehta

(As quoted in *The Jewel in the Lotus*, Concord Grove Press, 1983, pg. 180)

Ibn Al-'Arabi

THE RELIGION OF LOVE

My heart has become capable of every form;
It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba
And the tables of the Torah and the book of the Qu'ran.
I follow the religion of Love: whatever way
Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

Ibn Al-'Arabi

(As quoted in *The Jewel in the Lotus*, Concord Grove Press, 1983)

Jalaluddin Rumi

THE TRACELESS

I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Gabr, nor Muslim.
I am not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land, nor of the sea;
I am not of Nature's mint, nor of the circling heavens.
I am not of India, nor of China, not of Bulgaria, nor of Saqsin;
I am not of the kingdom of Iraq, nor of the land of Khorasan.
My place is the Placeless, my trace is the Traceless.
'Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.
I have put duality away, I have seen that the two world are one,
I seek one, I know one, I see one, I call one."

Jalaluddin Rumi

(As quoted in *The Jewel in the Lotus*, Concord Grove Press, 1983)