

THEOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The search for God is religion. And the divine experience of it is called theosophy. Religion as a way of life is very much different from religion as an institution or organization. Likewise, theosophy and theosophical societies are not necessarily the same.

We may or may not belong to any particular religious sect and still live the religious or spiritual life. This inner life is of the nature of our own inherent goodness, Godlike and divine in every human being. From sinner to saint, the major difference is in the stage of manifestation or actualization of this divine quality that is the very essence of our humanity.

To be human is to be divine, to be spiritually self-willed. But we have the freedom to affirm or deny our own will to spiritual goodness. Nature, however, has a way of reminding us through pain, suffering, and even death. In fact, through many deaths, given reincarnation, until we come to the realization of that immortality of our divine nature.

There are so many religions, we say. Which one is the true one? Each religion makes an equal claim that theirs is the one and only true one. Some even instill fear and guilt if our choice is elsewhere. Then what is one to do?

We may first have to differentiate religion from religious organizations and public relations promoted religious preachers or leaders, with their claims and assertions of their links and approved successions from the original Teachers recorded in the various Scriptures of the religions of the world. In the first place, no original religious Teacher ever founded a religion. All, in fact, have stated in some way or another that, their kingdom is not of this earth, but of heaven or nirvana.

Many have asked, if religion is good and religious, spiritual and divine, God-sent

and Godlike, why do the different religions fight each other, depreciate one another, denigrate and swipe one another with negatively suggested statements? At its worst, religions even engage in horrendous wars. It goes on to this modern day.

There is an urgent need to examine and experience what is true religion. The word "religion" simply means "to reunite, to bind again or to re-link" ourselves with God or our divine nature. Most important of all, let us find out what constitutes the essential element of a religion or any particular religion.

The main essential that is the foundation of all religions is of the nature of the ideals and virtues (God's grace). These ideals and virtues find their validation in the lives of the Teachers of the great religions of the world. Each religion has given to the world a demonstration of those ideals and virtues by the lives of those Teachers that have appeared on earth to help our struggling humanity.

The rites, rituals, ceremonies and culture practices associated with religion are but the sociological and historical phenomena that have accompanied the emergence of powerful religious institutions. This is not to put down rituals and ceremonies, for they can be symbolic dramatizations or theatrical presentations of the divine order of the universe. Religious rites can teach and assist us in awakening our spiritual nature. Altogether, the truest religious practices are intended to help actualize the ideals and virtues that characterize our divine nature.

Live the ideals and virtues of selfless service, peace, love, compassion, understanding in the performance of our daily duties. Then religion will be more than a religious affiliation. It will be a realization of our divine nature that is the wisdom and oneness of the unity of all religions.

— Bing Escudero (c) 1988