

38. Religion and Spirituality

The big problem with religion is its abuse of power. Sets of beliefs define religions; religions insist their followers adopt those beliefs; and they work to convert followers to those beliefs. Followers create a base for power. Power corrupts. Religious leaders and their allies control and exploit followers for gain. Conflict and competition between religions become about power. Spiritual experience and growth are subjugated as power is aggregated and exercised. Originating spiritual questions, quests, experiences, insights, growth, teachings and achievements are lost. What it was all about disappears under egos.

At its core, religions' sources are spiritual experiences. Age-old questions stimulate thinking beyond ourselves, like: what is the meaning of life; where did we come from; what happens to us when we die; what is greater than we are; what was that profound and rewarding experience of awe, wonder and joy that I just felt, and how do I get more of that? True spiritual experience is very personal and subjective. We feel them deeply. They open us, give us the profound state of love, stimulate growth and creativity. Seeking spiritual meaning and purpose provides spiritual meaning and purpose. That is fulfilling.

Spirituality is not about what we think and believe, dogmatically, abstractly and statically. It's about what we experience, think and feel, deeply, personally, subjectively and energetically, and what that does for us. It's about what we know, because we have deeply and personally felt and experienced it.

Everything is energy. Energy is something we can feel and experience internally. Spirituality is about working out in the domain of deep, personal feeling of energy. It is inherently mysterious. It defies reason, because it is not merely an intellectual experience. We feel with our entire bodies. A gut instinct is a way of knowing that can be as valid as an intellectual conclusion. What we feel in our hearts is at least as important as what we think in our heads. The gut and heart have sensory networks as important as those of our brains. Learning to use them is as important as learning to use our intellects.

We can activate, learn to use and trust mechanisms for direct knowing that many have not experienced. Great mystics, sages, gurus, shamans and other spiritual adepts have achieved amazing abilities and knowledge by working with subjective feelings of energy. They report experiences of union, resonance and harmony with greater energies, experiences of "God." They realize profound states of love, joy, bliss, and transcendence, beyond duality, entirely different states and experiences of being.

There have been many great spiritual explorers: the Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus, Mohammad, Neem Karoli Baba, Yogananda, Eckhart Tolle, and many others... These are great heroes, explorers who ventured out and in from the status quo and were transformed by fantastic experiences, returning home to try to share wonders and great opportunities for growth with others. They passed through the gates into other worlds of experience, tried to describe them, and help others have their own journeys. Thank you all for your courageous undertakings and generous attempts to share them!

What is absolutely not true is that they were the only ones who could do it. None ever said that. Each encouraged others to try, wanting to share those experiences. They had great hopes for better futures when many would exist in higher states like theirs. Many become teachers, devoted selflessly to helping others raise consciousness. Anyone can. The glories and rewards of heaven are available to all on Earth if we go inside ourselves, explore, feel, experience and evolve in spirit and consciousness. If we tune to higher energy frequencies, we transform. Everything changes and gets better. That is spiritual growth.

It's not about intellectual belief. It's about personal experience, transformation, and how that feels and affects our lives. It changes everything. It's profoundly rewarding. Go for it! It doesn't matter what anybody tries to say about it. The only way to know is to experience it personally. Then you know, not with your brain, but with your entire being. You know it, because you are it. That's what it's all about. In the end, all journeys lead inward, where truth resides. Feel the buzz and watch what it does for you!

Christianity has committed an egregious crime against humanity by making people believe Jesus Christ was a unique historical figure, that he was the only son of the only god, what he was no other can be, and only the church can mediate between our lives and God, or higher spirit. That's heinous bullshit. It's profoundly, absolutely false. If there's such a thing as evil, that's evil. Having personal spiritual lives, working to realize personal spiritual experiences and to evolve in the dimension of consciousness is our birthright, the birthright of all beings. Don't let anybody or anything get in the way of that!

For the Christian church to layer on top of that the crime of making Christians believe we're born into guilt and should live in fear because a mythical couple got kicked out of a mythical Garden of Eden or other people killed Jesus 2,000 years ago is evil. Fear and guilt are lower energies that hold us back from spiritual growth and experiences of higher energies. The effect of these beliefs is to suppress spirit and oppress human lives. To then make us believe the only way we'll experience good energy, after death, in a mythical heaven, and avoid horrible, endless torments in a mythical hell, is to do what those in power in the Church tell us to is a straight-up power grab. It's stealing spirituality and power for gain.

Jesus is rolling over in his grave about these crimes against humanity and life committed in his name. Jesus was a human spiritual explorer, a hero who ventured out, and then in, and realized glorious higher states of being, like many others have, before and after him. He tried to bring that back to help others. His teachings boil down to one word: love. Love is the gateway to higher consciousness, available to all. Feel love, deeply and personally, not just for your lover and family, but with all! Feel love even alone! When you do, everything changes. Take off from there!

Cultivate love in yourself. Cultivate love in others. Behave as if in a state of love, even if we're not yet, or always. In a state of love, we treat ourselves, each other and our environments well. Virtuous values and behaviors emerge naturally from that state. Fake it until we make it! From a state of love, other experiences of higher consciousness emerge naturally: joy, bliss, compassion, union with higher being, sensing spirit and energies within and outside of ourselves, finding balance and harmony with nature.

Islam was corrupted for power. Mohammed didn't teach people to kill those who don't submit to Islam. That just increases the power base of those who control Islam. It's a power grab. It's no different than one country going to war with another. Kill lots of them, so there are more of us than them, then we have more power. Nothing about that is spiritual experience. Mohammed would have had no part of it. It serves only to raise anger, fear, resentment, hate, ugliness, close-mindedness and mean-spiritedness, and to give power to a religious elite driven by ego and greed. That's not spirituality. That isn't anything like the loving, deep personal prayer and spiritual experiences Mohammed bravely championed.

Don't let religions control your beliefs. Figure it out for yourself. Open! Be in nature! Watch the sunrise, sunset, waves, river or wind in the grasses! Stop and be quiet! Still the mind! Stop thinking! Just be! What do you feel? Feel quiet! Feel empty! How does that feel? What else can you feel? Don't think. Feel! Feel with your heart, with your gut, with your being! Can you make those feelings

more intense or better? How? What is that? How does it affect your being? How does that make you want to live your life? Do that! Work out on it, alone and with others! Repeat, repeatedly!

That's direct, personal, deep, subjective, spiritual experience, our birthright. It leads to growth, happiness, satisfaction, love, fulfillment, evolution and a better life, which we personally know to be true because we feel it in our being. That's what the Buddha, Jesus, Hindu gurus and Mohammed did. That's what all great spiritual heroes do. We are all meant to be spiritual heroes. We are all meant to evolve in the dimension of spirit, energy and consciousness. Let's do that! It's extremely important.