

HOW DID WE
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HOW HUMANITY ABUSED PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION
AND SCIENCE TO BRING ABOUT PLANETARY
DISASTER AND TOTALITARIAN LOCKDOWN

SOHAIL SHAKERI



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*How Did We Get Here?:
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to Bring about Planetary Disaster and Totalitarian Lockdown*

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INTRODUCTION

What if I told you the roots of our planetary crisis were something more fundamental, more essential and more visceral than simply the fossil fuel industry running amuck? What if the source of our planetary destruction and colossal ecocide of species was about more than simply not using plastic water bottles, recycling and eating organic food? Humanity has not only failed to evolve to higher levels of existence in recent years; we have rather taken a step backwards, where a major segment of the population has chosen to live in anger and disdain which has, in turn, literally fueled the fire that is burning the earth and its species.¹

In order to understand where we went wrong as a human species when it comes to evolution towards higher ideals and social progress, we need to take a step back to understand the roots of our shortcomings so we can make comprehensive changes for the betterment of society as a whole. We often look at our dire state of affairs and ask Why? We ask what led us to this dire state of planetary ecocide, global warming and the widest wealth discrepancy

gaps in modern history. For context, the 21st century, as of 2020, has already witnessed several widespread calamities:

1. The 6th mass extinction of species on earth, which is the first one caused by humans²
2. An increase of chronic health conditions to the point of impacting over 50% of children in the USA³
3. 9% of the US population suffering from diabetes⁴
4. Materialism running rampant in society to the point where shopping malls have come to function as places of worship⁵
5. Fifty percent of the world's wealth is concentrated in the hands of eight people as of 2017⁶
6. As the US gets wealthier and wealthier over the last 40 years, its population is getting sicker and sicker⁷
7. The coronavirus pandemic and lockdown that has left millions without livelihood, thousands upon thousands deceased, millions with greater anxiety and depression and created more distrust amongst people worldwide.^{8,9}

Too often our analysis of what has led to such a divisive world with catastrophic planetary implications begins with the presidency of Donald Trump, the greed of the fossil fuel industry or with terrorism in the Middle East over the last four decades. What you will see in this book is that these issues stem from much further back, going back hundreds, even thousands of years. In order to be able to address our issues from a deeper, more holistic perspective, we need to take a more thorough and profound look at the causes of our current predicament.

When we are able to have a deeper understanding of our current state, only then would we be able to provide deeper solutions to heal the issues from the root as opposed to simply offering

band-aids and addressing the symptoms, only to see them resurface again so soon afterwards. Einstein said, “A new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move toward higher levels.”¹⁰ Society can only evolve when we make a *qualitative* change about how we respond to circumstance and not merely a *quantitative* change in our response. In other words, there must be a fundamental shift in the way we approach our current predicament; otherwise, we will merely see the same type of results we have been seeing throughout the millennia.

CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION

All great authentic leaders of religion expressed one universal message to their followers and humanity as a whole:

1. Each human being is Divine.
2. The ultimate aim of human beings is to manifest Divine Consciousness on Earth.
3. The way to manifest the Divine in Life is through deep, profound Love for all of Life.¹¹
4. All teachings, practices, and rituals are merely pointers to bring people closer to their own Divine Essence.
5. All of Matter and Spirit are Divine... Heaven (i.e., spirit) and Earth (i.e. matter) are both Divine.

This message has always been at the core of religion. However, this pure and inspiring message of religion has become corrupted

and polluted throughout the centuries, with the debris from priests, clerics, mullahs and pseudo-sages taking this powerful and inspiring message and using it for their own selfish ends. This has led to two distinct and drastically different understandings of religion.

TWO UNIQUE APPROACHES TO RELIGION

Religion has two different main frameworks of understanding. One is the common understanding which is what is taught in public schools when it comes to the subject of world religions. The way we understand religion in our mainstream Western culture is that it is a body of symbols, languages and rituals associated with a God or with a Higher being, to which we give our attention, devotion and worship. Furthermore, we typically classify different religions according to the language that they use; for example, the language of Islam speaks of Allah and Muhammad and the different rites and rituals associated with Islam. In Christianity, God the Father, God the Son, the Trinity and Baptism are symbols and rituals associated with the religion. In Judaism, religion is a set of rules and rituals associated with a specific tribe of people, namely the Jewish people, the tribe of Isaac.

In each of these classifications of religion, an essential component to each of them is that God is *out there* in the Heavens and not here on Earth.¹² In the Abrahamic faiths, the *interpretation* that became the dominant note in society at large for thousands of years has been that God is a Male, a Father figure... a Patriarch in the Heavens. This perspective indirectly created, for their respective adherents, a worldview where the Earth is void of Divine presence. It created the groundwork for an earth that was devoid

of the Divine, devoid of Magic and devoid of Soul. As rightfully recognized by Carl Jung in the early 20th century, the essence of religion recognizes that the Divine lives here on Earth as Mother Nature just as S/He exists in the Heavens as God Almighty.¹³ Jung drew inspiration from the Early Christian Gnostics, who had this essential view of religion that saw the purpose of religion as reuniting one with his or her own Divine self. This is the same essential meaning of religion that is derived from the Arabic root of the word for monotheism. In Arabic, the word for monotheism is *tawhid*. However, in breaking down the etymology of the word *tawhid* in Arabic, we find the root of the word actually means ‘to make one’. Another way to define it would be ‘to make whole’. This is precisely what Jung describes as the goal of human life when he talks about people needing to experience individuation in order to evolve and tap into their Divine potential.¹⁴

The Early Christian Gnostics considered themselves the true followers of Jesus Christ. The texts that quote Jesus as making explicitly gnostic claims of all human beings being able to experience the Divine come from a canon of texts recently discovered in the 1940s in Egypt as being part of the original gospels. These texts are collectively known as the *Nag Hammadi Library*. They were named after the city in Egypt in which they were discovered. However, they date back to over 2000 years ago. In fact, scholars have recognized these newly discovered texts to be from the same corpus of gospel literature that were banned from officially being part of the canon of texts that came to be known as ‘The Bible’ or ‘the Book.’ This decision to remove these profound teachings of Christ was made at the Catholic Church’s Council of Nicea in 325 AD.

The Nag Hammadi Library contains a perspective of Jesus that shows the importance given to Feminine Wisdom and

Energy. Women were honored, venerated and highly respected. It shows that the closest person to Jesus was not Peter, but rather Mary Magdalene.¹⁵ Elite scholars of early Christianity, such as Elaine Pagels of Princeton University and Karen King of Harvard University, attest to this and demonstrate it with abundant historical evidence. Thus, rather than religion becoming infused with the Love of Feminine Energy, the Love of Mother Earth (an essential component of a historical Christianity and Islam), it became a tool of masculine domination and pillage of the Earth (through the canonical Jewish Rabbis, the Roman Catholic Church and the early Islamic scholars).¹⁶

This religion of forms, rites and rituals to put us on a path to reach the Masculine God after death is the way that religion has come to be understood throughout the ages. However, the word itself, 'religion', has nothing to do with such an approach. That may sound a bit surprising, but it is true. 'Religion' has nothing to do with these cultures of rites and rituals that we have created; it comes from the Latin *religio* which means to reunite,¹⁷ referring to reuniting the human being with the Divine, with the Higher Power. While these different religious cultures, these different religious traditions of Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, etc. have that language of the Divine within their cultures, their emphasis is not on this reunification. It is not about uniting the human soul, the human being, with the Divine, with God, with the Infinite, with whatever you want to call it. The name is not important here. It is that Higher power, that Higher energy.

This idea of reunification of the human being with the Divine is at the core of religion itself and is very different from what we see in the world today, with people associating religion to attending a church and one calling oneself a Christian, for example;

or, attending a mosque or synagogue and saying I am a Muslim or I am a Jew, and subsequently following the rituals associated with that particular tradition. The essence of the word 'religion' is something that anyone can adhere to whether or not they are associated with a religious tradition. Whether or not one calls themselves a Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, etc., one can be a religious person. One can reunite oneself with that Divine power within themselves. This is a drastically different approach from which we are typically accustomed. However, if we go back to the root meaning of the word, this is the essential meaning of the term and the original meaning of religion. It is for this reason that Mahatma Gandhi, while a deep and truly inspired sage of Divine Love and Wisdom, was very pluralistic about individual religious identities. He was of the belief that religions are simply merely different rays of light from the same source, the Sun.¹⁸

Regarding the religious cultures of identity that we see today, these are simply man-made cultures. These are just different identities or different associations that we make in our own communities and our own niches. The important thing, with regard to religion, is reuniting the soul with the Divine, and this has nothing to do with whether or not a person is associated with any of the major religions.

A religious person, according to this essential meaning of the term, would then be anyone who seeks to go on this journey within one's self to unite with the Divine that is within themselves. A religious person, in this more accurate meaning of the term, would be a person who is yearning, is seeking, is longing for that reunification. This is something that comes only through Love. It should be mentioned that the Love that is being referred to here is not a romantic love. This is a Love that one can connect to within one's soul, psyche and being. It is only through that

Love, that longing, which would lead one to be a religious person. This has nothing to do with the degree to which we follow certain rituals. It relates entirely to that longing, to that soul connection, to that experiential connection, that experience of the Divine and seeking that experience of the Divine, because religion in itself is just that... the seeking of the reunification, aiming to reunite the soul with the Divine.

A religious person, as we typically understand it, is someone who attends church, mosque or the synagogue regularly and adheres to the belief system dictated by their religious leader. This is a person who says their prayers or performs their rituals for their place of worship on a regular basis. However, in the true meaning of the term, a religious person is someone who longs for that reunification or someone who has totally and completely reunited with the Divine. It is based on the longing within the heart and the love within the heart that someone is crying out for and calling for from the depths of their being. The degree to which we are longing for this reunification with the Divine is the degree to which we are a religious person. This love of one's self and awareness of the depths of one's self allows one to recognize that the Divine is here now. Thus, it makes one cognizant and conscious of the Earth, in the present. If one recognizes the Divine within themselves, then one becomes more conscious of how one treats others and how one treats the Earth, which gave rise to the human species and has fed us for millennia upon millennia. This longing within the human being, is a longing for the Infinite, a longing for something deeper than meets the eye.

The Divine nature of human beings and the Infinite-seeking nature of humanity can be seen in the way babies play with toys. They are given a toy, but simply playing with the toy, as it is,

is often not sufficient for the baby. They often need to shake the toy, bang the toy against a wall, or try to eat the toy. This is an indication of the baby always seeking more, looking for something beyond what meets the eye and, ultimately, seeking an Infinite being. The yearning for human beings never ends, ingrained into our nature and starting from infancy. As adults, we are constantly looking for more, whether we are seeking the Divine, just seeking and longing for more love within our hearts, or totally fixated on a multitude of other things such as prestige in society.

In this more accurate depiction of the essential nature of religion, we are constantly seeking for love, as mentioned, but sometimes we just do not know where to turn. This continues from infancy, into the teen years and well into adulthood. As a human being, it is normal to try every avenue that we can, in hopes of reaching that Infinite, reaching that Ultimate Bliss. It is something we strive for in a variety of ways. Some of us look for it in fame, others in power and some others in material wealth. Furthermore, another cross section of society seeks it in spirituality or in relationships with other people. We are all looking for the Infinite and it is simply the nature of being human to do so.

To illustrate this concept further, consider how we can get hurt by someone who is greedy and attempting to trick us in order to extract a few extra dollars from us. In such a scenario, we could do one of two things. We could either get angry at that person for what they did to us, or we could take another approach and also recognize that they are doing what seems best to them. They are just trying to accumulate as much material wealth as they can in hopes of reaching the Ultimate Goal, sometimes referred to as God. We all do what we think is right and it just so happens that some of the things that we try end up hurting others.

REMEMBERING GOD

The notion of remembering can be broken up into ‘Re-membering’ in order to better understand its essence. To ‘Re-member’ refers to the idea of reconnecting all of our parts into one integrated Whole. It is about connecting with all of the different members in our body and soul and channeling them into one integrated source. Thus, it refers to the collecting of all our fragmented parts, in the forms of emotions and feelings and energy that we channel in so many different ways, and simply integrating, channeling or ‘re-membering’ these into that one integrated path, into that one integrated soul, in order for us to be re-united with and ‘re-membered’ with the Divine.

Remembering the Divine, the Higher Power or God, is not an intellectual notion of re-collecting something in one’s brain; rather, it refers to the existential process of gathering one’s self into a united Whole and channeling the entirety of one’s being for the Divine with each and every breath. In other words, it is a heart-based process, not a head-based exercise.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN TODAY’S CHALLENGING ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Most of us have mortgages or rent payments and overall expenses for maintaining the standard of living that we have built up for ourselves and loved ones. Some of us (okay, most of us) have relationship troubles. All of these can occupy a great deal of our time, attention and energy. Due to circumstances and priorities, religion just does not matter to many of us. Considering all of the hardships around finances and relationships, it makes sense

where people are coming from. If we cannot pay the bills and maintain our basic financial needs to stay afloat, we will not have the energy to explore the deeper topics of spirituality and religion to find more profound meaning in our lives. These facts, coupled with the fact that people look at the history of religion as being one of plundering, manipulating, guiltting and tricking people into maintaining the status quo,¹⁹ makes religion a tool that many have abused in order to accumulate personal gain. The importance of understanding the origins of religion is that religion has greatly impacted our thinking, worldview and perspective, whether we are adherents of a particular religion or not. It impacts the way we behave and act whether we consciously acknowledge this or not.

CONCEPTS OF RELIGION AND THE CURRENT PLANETARY DESTRUCTION

The distinction between religion as a set of rules and religion as an existential endeavor to reunite with the depths of one's self is one so stark that it triggers an entirely different set of behaviors towards other people and towards the Earth herself. If religion is a dry set of rules and rituals that merely give a person a particular identity that is different from others, then one's focus in religious terms would be to perform these rituals and note how one is different from the billions of people in the world who do not perform these same rituals. However, if one takes the view that religion is an existential journey towards reuniting with one's essence, then not only would we treat ourselves differently, we would treat other people with more understanding, empathy and respect. Furthermore, we would treat the planet, our Mother Earth, with more

understanding, empathy and reverence for serving as our home and as the one who nourishes us in so many ways on a daily basis.

Religion is an important aspect of every culture in the world, including here in the United States. In the West, the Secular West as we like to assume, irrespective of our secular identity, we nonetheless have had religion imprinted upon us since we were young, whether we were taught a specific religion or whether religion as a whole was something we were taught and encouraged to stay away from.

Personally, growing up as a child, I had conflicting influences on religion. On the one hand, my nuclear family and certain segments of my extended family were completely secular and did not want anything to do with religion. Some of them openly mocked religion as a whole. On the other hand, there were certain segments of my extended family who were very religious. They were the type to strictly follow the religious ordinances given by the clerical authorities at both the local and national levels. It provided for serious tension amongst family members in different family gatherings and served as a foundation to explore a topic that is already loaded in so many ways with family allegiance ramifications.

In school, religion plays a role, though it is not always taught in the public schools. There is this idea that certain topics, such as those pertaining to religion or conflicting with science, are off limits. We draw lines for ourselves in our culture, in our society, in our heads, and in our minds. We have this idea of what we feel God is and that definition of God will most often shape how we feel about religion.

Some of us like to think of God as being in the sky. While many of us self-proclaimed rational folks try to think about that for a second, we say “of course I know that there’s not an old man

in the sky waiting for me, judging me or looking to make a decision about my life.” In times of pain, in times of need or in times of triumph, we open our hands and lift them to the sky as we look up, either calling out or saying thanks. We do this because ever since we were young, we were taught that the Divine is up there and is out there. Whether we consciously choose to believe in a religion or not, these types of images are well ingrained into our consciousness and into our psyche. Thus, it is important for us to have a more refined understanding of what religion is, if we are to truly choose one, to create substantial change in our lives.

If we truly want to create a situation where we can create unlimited wealth potential for our lives, then we must dig deeply into our unconscious and transform our beliefs; many of those beliefs pertain to religion. For example, many of us, if we have ever been associated with a religious culture or community, will feel that the only way to approach God is through the guidance of our pastor, rabbi, cleric or local religious leader, and this is something that many of us have grown up with. This mindset, that we need someone else to help us reach our final destination, is something that has plagued humanity for over two thousand years. This is something so ingrained into the human consciousness that it permeates the rest of our lives.

As illustrated above, many of us think that we need to go through the guidance of our local religious community. We may feel that there is just no way around it. Several times in life we come across situations where there is a death in the family or a tragic encounter, and though not particularly religious, we at these times of crisis turn to a religious center because we say, “When it comes to life and death, this is it. There is no other source that can provide me with nourishment in this desperate time of need. This is all there is as far as religion or spirituality