

# COMPARATIVE RELIGION - 1954

Lectures 1-25

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## Lecture - 1

1. One of the heresies of today is that people believe that religion is a private affair - and this is not possible. Therefore, there is little religion today.

2. Greek thinking (i.e. analytical thought), treats religion as either history, or a comparison between religions. The problem is that things cannot be compared without any definition as to what they are, or should be. Comparisons sans definitions are unfruitful. **SO IF WE ARE TO SPEAK ABOUT RELIGION, WE MUST FIRST DEFINE WHAT IT SHOULD BE.**

Comparing religions one would hope to find one religion better in one respect, and another in some other way, or for some other purpose.

You must develop an understanding of what religion is and how the various phenomena which we call religions - with a plural - and what they contribute or how they fulfill this postulate, this necessity. (p.3)

3. It is very easy to compare things, but very difficult to know what to compare. Do we compare games, superstitions, superfluities, or whether you like it or not, or where different religions are practiced?

4. Why should we compare religions in America, a country which has abolished religion? America's religion would seem to be acceleration, to produce technical achievements, consumer goods, and physical stimulation. Our wealth buys adventure; and life now has no other meaning, it is just material (and sensation), and boring. Perhaps we will "throw the bomb from boredom. (p.5)

5. In sum, one cannot know about other people's religions, because you cannot understand them when you don't have religion yourself! (p.7)

Religion is not that one goes to church, or confesses - these are theology! They are expressions or superstitions of religion. The religion of yesterday we call "superstition," and the religion of tomorrow we call heresy. In between is the religion of today.

6. If we eliminate churches, customs, weddings, hocus-pocus, "...we are looking for that power which generates all these forms. **"So the first definition, I would suggest, is that religion is a power."** A power that is pervasive, that cannot be defined, "It is a power for which there is no private property. You cannot appropriate it, but it can have you!" (p.8)

7. The part of man that is most easily bypassed by religion is the brain.

a. Religion is not a philosophy - it is the opposite. In modern times the term philosophy has become a hodge-podge of meanings. Philosophy is systems of ideas, and is based on logic after a set of assumptions has been established. All philosophy must begin with one or two unprovable assumptions that appear to be true. It is the objectified world. Thus, philosophy can only exist within a religious system. (Most philosophers today in this country have science as their religion, but don't recognize their passion for science as a religion.)

b. **Religion is a power**, that creates superstitions, customs, churches, rituals, etc. Religion starts with the notion of what the social world should, or might be. In other words, we are to change the social world. And thus, "...the religious soul is the man who knows that from birth to death we have to keep an open mind and have to think differently every day." (p.11)

This is to say, that as we gain experience about ideas about society, we learn its meaning and may wish to change our social goals; "...the first religious experience...is that virtues become vices and vices become virtues." (p.12)

c. Theology, the science of religion, is not religion. Abelard, the founder of Christian theology was excommunicated for having theorized. All theology is part of philosophy, ruled by logic. One cannot know what Christianity is through theology. "Religion is a power, and therefore not a system." (p.15)

## Lecture - 2

1. In order to compare religions, we must first know what they are, and believe them to be necessary in society. [RF - this seems reasonable to me because, all intelligence is an attempt to bring order to our experience, and all systems of order begin with unprovable assumptions. The religious notion (or assumption) that we must shape our social world toward what a community ought to be would lead one to reason that religion is **necessary**.]

2. Three aspects of any activity: playing at it, making a business of it (either making money or managing), or being serious about applying it to social problems. Politics, business, sports, and religion are examples. But of these, religion is the most difficult to define. It is everywhere, as everyone has some religion, and it effects all activity. It is frail, easily corrupted, and the corruption is difficult to detect. (p.3)

Religion becomes corrupted when people use it for their own self-interest.

**3. RELIGION IS THE POWER THAT MAKES US CHOOSE TO ACT, OR NOT ACT.** Or forces us to action we never considered before. It is the power to place God above men, life above death, living beings above dead things. To obey only oneself is to use other people, seeing them as "things."

4. Prayer means to become aware of the existence of more than yourself, of others. "...a potent man is a man who can look down to who he really is and admit who he is." (p.5) ERH defines God as becoming manifest in the spirit of humans. Therefore, all human beings should be respected as having a potential to manifest this spirit. (p.9)

5. ERH defines religion also as "the ability to appropriate a new experience." [RF - I'm not sure what he means. I assume "social" experience, to understand another's actions toward us. "...there is no greater gift for any human being than to have somebody who cries for him...God is the power which makes us give a new experience a new name." (p.10)

6. There are many gods, and we cannot know God as a singular, we can only know parts just as with people. We can only say we have known some people, but can never know what all of humankind can be or is. Too cheap, ERH says, to think there is one and only one god. Even the concept of God, man, and world is of little use. (p.16)

Man is never singular He/she is son or daughter, father or mother, brother, friend, etc. We can never usefully think of any person in the singular

We tend to treat others and even ourselves as "things," the same as the next man. This tendency defines, in part, "the common man or common woman."

7. It is religious to **not** command any person any more than necessary. It is religious, respectful, and loving to allow and help others to think for themselves. Of course there are situations when people must follow rules and act with order. Also, we must accept commands from other authorities at times, but for the most part, we must be free to think for ourselves, to face our problems. We should not blame our problems on others, and should feel free to accept commands.

When we are drunk, drugged, hypnotized, or afraid we have to be commanded, i.e. treated as things. Thus, man may be said to be half subservient and half "divine," half required to take commands, and half free to command (himself at least), half natural animal and half god.

\*THE ISSUE IS, when is the individual one personality and when another? We are constantly changing. RELIGION IS A POWER THAT HELPS US DECIDE WHEN WE SHOULD LISTEN AND WHEN WE SHOULD COMMAND, and therefore it is necessary throughout life.

8. ERH asserts that American "religious naturalism" sees things as always the same: God is always God, man is always man, and things are always things. Contrarily, to grow, we must remain capable of acting differently as situations require of us - to command at times, or to follow at times. (p.21)

9. America has been founded on the notion that man is good by nature. THIS, ERH BELIEVES, IS NOT THE CASE! We are many things at different times, at one time perhaps a saint, at another a villain, at one time stupid, at another wise. [RF - ERH said to me once, "Be humbled by the thought that you are quite capable of committing the most heinous crime in the world, or the greatest deed."]

These three aspects of reality - God, individual, and things - are constantly changing. ERH provides a number of examples of these points here.

## Lecture - 3

1. IF you are not aware that religion is the most frail and the most delicate thing, you omit

the fact that religion tries to empower us, to realize our life as unique, irrepeatable, one singular event...Religion always invites us to realize that this moment -- like here in this class is unique -- now you know how difficult this is to realize. (p.1)

2.Nothing that can be numbered or classified is a religious experience. As long as we believe we can predict human behavior, whenever it is predictable, then it is by definition mechanical, repetitive, uninteresting.

The difference between philosophy and religion is really very simple. In philosophy your mind is stable...And in any religious experience, your mind is overcome, overwhelmed by an experience...you are bold enough to admit you have never made (the thought) before. (p.3)

3.Religion and superstition are closely related. **WE ARE ALL SUPERSTITIOUS.**

Superstition is a belief that has survived from some past experience. While we can easily recognize superstition in others, it is difficult to find in ourselves.

Superstition occurs whenever we are too lazy; when we believe we already know all about something or someone. In this state we attempt to solve today's problems by yesterday's maxims. A literal translation from Latin, "the left-overs from yesterday."

4.ERH insightfully explains in some detail the mental phenomenon which causes superstition. In sum, what he seems to say is that the tendency is to view experience in the present in terms of preconceived ideas (of reality), i.e. the act of living too much by reliance on formulas. By contrast, if we focus our thoughts on what is happening in the present, sans those preconceived notions we will respond much more wisely to present situations. Superstition unbalances our thoughts in favor of "living in the past.

5.We are all superstitious "...let me say, by 90%. That is, the full life is not granted us all 365 days a year." He repeats, that it is easy to identify in others and difficult to identify for ourselves. (p.7)

Paradoxically, being superstitious is precisely the foundation of religion, ERH avers. All religions are, by definition, dogmatic and prejudiced. **ONE'S WEAKNESS IS NOT IN BELIEVING IN A RELIGION, BUT IN NOT KNOWING WE ARE DOGMATIC.** When we are conscious of being dogmatic we can listen to others (hear their dogma), but to be without this self-knowledge precludes the ability to listen thoughtfully and discuss issues clearly.

Without superstition, nobody can live forward, because superstition is simply the former form of faith, the old form of faith. Without dogma, we'll find out, nobody can reason. (p.7)

Thus, superstition is a step to religion. Superstition means we still have something to learn about religion (in that our beliefs constantly need refining). To have a living (true) religion, thoughtfully, means we still retain the power to recognize uniqueness in situations and respond accordingly, i.e. more realistically, from greater awareness. It allows us to live a more "alive"

life, as contrasted with seeing all experience in terms of old ideas.

6. Philosophy (as are all formulas) is unrelated to time, and abstractions. To have religion is to live **in time, fully conscious of the present, sensitive to the nuances of the moment.**

\*Since the religious experience is by definition spiritual (inside us), it neglects the outside spacial world. By contrast, philosophy neglects time, since "principles" are assumed to be true for all time. "Religion is the power to neglect space. Philosophy is the power to neglect time." (p.8)

7. Understanding the divisions of labor between the brain (thinking rationally, describing, theorizing, philosophizing, creating concepts) and that of religion is crucial. Philosophy and science help us describe the world; religion commands us to respond to experience in a certain way. (p.9)

In order to grow, we must first stop doing something, then begin acting in a new direction. One follows commands. ERH asserts many people today are ruined by education that fills them with superstition, which they do not recognize. It precludes the ability to know ourselves.

8. Superstitions, unmediated by (true) religion, lead to ruin. Marriage cannot stand if it is not a unique encounter at each moment. To live this way is to be more conscious of life.9

We tend to live most of our lives repetitively - at lowered levels of "aliveness" - thus deadening our senses. Repetitive living and sensing uniqueness is the difference between the working bee and the truly-living human.

### **9. Here, ERH begins a new line of thought.**

All religions have a uniqueness, emphasizing different facets of living. All religions are only lived partially. At best, one lives only a partial "aliveness," and the rest tends to be repetitive (superstitiously). And by necessity, all life must (should) be both. WE LIVE IN THESE TWO WORLDS.

10. All religions are distortions in one way or another. ERH raises the question, "What is the American religion, and how much is it distorted from a truly living religion?"

He suggests that America claims a "natural" religion, after the concepts of Thoreau and Benjamin Franklin. This is the religion of most Americans, regardless of the denomination they espouse. A worship of "natural man" assumes all people are born good. By contrast, Europeans worship their nationalism.

The second concept of "natural man", is that all men are brothers. ERH is dubious about this term. A literal interpretation creates the wrong image. Here he refers to our social roles, which are many. We are fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, friends and enemies, managers and subordinates. Each of these roles calls for different and "unequal" relationships. UNITARIANS, HE DECLARES, ARE THE PRIMARY

NATURAL RELIGIOUS BEINGS IN THIS COUNTRY. Later he points out the great strength of this term. (p.22)

11. True to this notion, America was founded in protest against everyone being compelled to have the same religion, against European religion. Natural religion allows for individual beliefs. In another sense, Americans tend to live with this dogma (of independence). Therefore Americans "neglect time" in favor of the abstract dogma. This dependence upon individuality tends to keep people stuck in the present, "like the old-time town meeting." (People who are too independent tend to venerate their thinking process to the detriment of reflecting on what we have learned from the past, or of planning into the future.)

ERH concludes that the notions of natural religion and natural man are, at best, only a very partial religion, because the generations must be unified. That is, we must take from the past that which is vital and to be continued and forget what is no longer productive. Past and future determine the present actions.

## Lecture 4

1. Four points to summarize: 1) Europeans believe there is no religion in America and that going to church doesn't indicate much. 2) Religion is easily corrupted, a frail and refined thing. 3) It is difficult to have a genuine religion because there can be a false appearance, behind which are hypocrisies and heresies. Finally, 4) religion is "innocence restored" (reaching out to others), but people, weak at times, can easily corrupt good intentions. They can run around innocent looking, but inside are like wolves. ERH warns people how easy it is TO MISTAKE THE FORM FOR THE REALITY.

2. Because it is difficult to distinguish form from substance, it is difficult to understand other people's religion. It is equally difficult to distinguish superstition from thoughtful belief. For these reasons, religious belief is easily abused and corrupted. BUT IN SPITE OF THESE DIFFICULTIES, RELIGION IS SO PRECIOUS, IT IS WORTH THE EFFORT TO ACQUIRE.

3. Religion is not philosophy, or theology or psychology. MAN WAS PUT ON EARTH TO OBEY AND TO COMMAND - command the dead things and obey the living God. THE IMPERATIVE IS THAT MANKIND IS BETWEEN COMMAND AND OBEDIENCE ALL THE TIME. "Obey God more than man, and command things more than men." (p.3)

4. Parents act in place of God toward their children, and they do command dead things and people; people when they are "dead" morally (drunks, the greedy, criminals, etc.), when they seduce others. A dark fact of life is that people, at times must be treated as things. ON THE OTHER HAND, AT ALL OTHER TIMES THEY MUST BE HONORED AND RESPECTED.

5. IF GOD ONLY BECOMES MANIFEST THROUGH PEOPLE, WE CAN ONLY RECEIVE THE WORD (ORDERS) FROM OTHER PERSONS, BECAUSE THAT'S HOW GOD

SPEAKS. (Our own thoughts must be confirmed by communication with others). So at all times we must make the distinction between who is to be obeyed and who commanded. AND, OF COURSE IN DECISION MAKING, ONE CAN ALWAYS MAKE MISTAKES AT TIMES.

In sum, people can be things like sticks and stones, and the line between things and other persons runs right through us.

Religion is man's power to distinguish between persons and things."...We call the world of things "the world" and we call the unity of persons "God." (p.5,6)

6.The world of "social forces" is higher than our individual selves. The creation of freedom, the practice of science or medicine or other professions, the welfare of youth are examples of social issues that must command us. We breathe life into our religion by following commands from the right authority this makes it real, "the word made flesh," so to speak.

There are thus three entities in the world, the world of things, the world of people, and that of "spirit." (The latter forms a higher command than that of our personal welfare.) (p.6)

People are not "things", because memory of their vital spirit survives natural death. It is our "natural selves" that die and turn to dust. But our spirit can live on in memories of others, and thus influence the future. For instance.

Lincoln is not now a part of this world, of things. He is not natural. He is an historical leader, an historical gift to this country...he's an inspiration..." (pp.7,8)

People are part "natural" or of nature, and part spirit.

7.Religion cannot exist unless it divides reality between the world and God. In other words, between the physical world and the spirit of mankind. ERH asserts that, since America's religion is claimed to be "natural," it does not make this distinction. This is why Europeans believe there is no religion in America.

8.If all nature is "one," then man is inside nature and cannot be religious. Nature acts by physical forces, like gravity. Economics, the distribution of goods and services of this world, is therefore a figment of nature. AND AS A MATTER OF FACT, TODAY THIS SEEMS TO BE THE PRIMARY FORCE THAT DOMINATES OUR VALUES.

Helen Keller was great because she conquered her natural inheritance, she overcame it.

9.Usually people have two religions, one they espouse and one they practice.

ERH once again sets forth the criterion of revealing one's own biases (religion) as a basis of understanding why and how one comments about other religions. (p.14) The problem, he reminds us, is, "when another religion is superior to ours and when it is inferior; i.e. when to command and when to obey." [RF - his reference, at least indirectly, seems to be to get at what is



necessary (universal) in religion.]

10. To ask "why," he reminds us, is good for the method of physics (dead things), but not useful for social science. In social science we must ask "when" because we are constantly asked to decide between alternatives, and that decision changes with the circumstances. This point is consistent with the basic difference he describes between social and natural science; social laws change, but laws describing "things" do not.

For example he reflects on the story of Job, who, when he asks God "why," is never answered. WE DON'T KNOW WHY WE ARE HERE. But we must, to survive, decide what types of decisions to make and when. **Things are dead. Humans are part dead and part eternal, part natural and part God-like because they are capable of being creative and instilling their spirit beyond their death.** Nature can be measured by number, while God (spirit, creativity) cannot.

11. The laws of "Nature" are the same tomorrow as today and yesterday. Living, spiritual human beings can change. And extending this idea, in nature every moment is of the same significance. To change and grow requires the strength of the soul and therefore to be "only natural" would be soul killing. We would be unable to change. [RF - ERH's definition and description of the soul is a large subject and appears in another essay, THE PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL.]

For these reasons, consciousness of time is crucially different between natural science and social science and religion. Natural scientists apply one kind of time in their work, but live a different kind of time in their social life. (p.19)

12. Epoch-making events, e.g. causing new discoveries, marriages, deaths, or major political events, cause new eras thereby different directions.

13. Property (wealth) is natural; it gives us physical comfort, food, shelter - the necessities for staying physically alive. But this is never enough for us. Comfort by itself is soul-killing. If we are to grow toward a spiritual nature, we are fulfilled by service to our community. **THUS OUR GOAL SHOULD NOT BE A LONG LIFE PER SE, FOR ONE WHICH WE CAN REMAIN SPIRITUALLY ALIVE AND FRUITFUL.**

**Natural religion tends to over-value property. True religion balances this tendency with spiritual growth.**

14. **Natural religion says "All men are brothers," which isn't enough. We are also fathers, sons, daughters, mothers, etc.**

15. **Natural religion doesn't recognize that we can change our nature, i.e. that humans are different from things. Thus, one age must change from the preceding one. Each generation must become a new age and have some different goals than the previous age. (One age may**

**need to re-establish freedom, another may need to defend against oppression.) To create that new age is always our challenge.**

**Natural religion tends to define nature or natural forces superior to those of the spirit. Thus, property is more compelling than ideals (of course beyond the basic need for survival - although even survival under certain conditions may not be worth living. This is why revolution must always be the last alternative.) Also, with natural religions, the possession of property would take precedence over love as the reason for marriage. [RF - One is reminded of the sorry state of India, where the religion allows for dowries, and the man can even legally kill his wife to obtain another dowry.]**

16. Spirit means a unity between more than two people, and it breaks down barriers between ages, between times, between the sexes, social class, race, etc.

**17. The true religion of America** described here is twofold: 1) consciousness of the natural unity of man and nature. Physical things dominate; property and long life are venerated over quality of life. 2) The passion to endow the next generation. [RF - I'm not sure of the meaning of this concept. (See (p.30) where he claims this quality is in direct contradiction to the former point.)

It is a wonderful quality which has kept the American soul alive, because it means that the miracle of conquering death or of overcoming the time limit set in one's own life span...that the miracle happens in man's heart....(it) endows other lives. (p.30)

\* All (real) religion consists of a reconciliation of what I think of myself in my own time and what I think should be the cause of events for all time...the real religious problem now we discover is not to be found in natural religion. (p.31)

18. Nobody can think accurately about oneself. Benjamin Franklin has identified philosophy of nature with natural religion. To believe one can know oneself is an anti-religious attitude. Natural religion obliterates the distinction between philosophy and religion. Natural religion believes that one's mind is stable, and things in nature come and go. Our mind is, in fact, fickle.

**FINALLY, IN THIS CHAPTER ERH ACCUSES MOST AMERICANS OF BEING PART NATURAL PHILOSOPHERS, AND THEREFORE, ATHEISTS OR AGNOSTICS, AND PART TRULY RELIGIOUS. (P.33)**

## **Lecture - 5**

1. Man seems to be in a situation with 3 dimensions, 1) He has a philosophy about religion. 2) He is part truly religious. 3) He values the natural (material) world over the spiritual world.

2. There are several universal dimensions of religion:

a. The living religion, which expresses itself by sacrifice.

b. Mental religion, which expresses itself by philosophy/theology (one's own ideas).

\* c. Institutional religion expresses itself by community spirit (authority); the institution articulates common values and thus is the authority.

\*All people have these three religions, and this makes comparison between religions complex. The universals between all religions are that (c) points toward the past, (b) the present, and (a) the future.

Clearly there is conflict here, and this means that at any moment one must decide how to resolve it, i.e. which consideration should appropriately dominate in a particular situation. To be vital and creative, all three attitudes are necessary.

3. Man has separated these parts into three separate religions, thus fragmenting his time sense. In life these parts of mental functioning are in constant conflict (memory, emotion, and anticipation). And they are manifest by different action - the future by sacrifice, the past by obedience, the present by reflection.

In another vein, the present is thought about, the past is listened to (and obeyed - for instance the ten commandments, in Hindu, Sruti means literally "what we have heard"), and the future is spoken in terms of prophecy. This is to say, although our speech is in the present, it is directed toward creating a future. We "propose" by speech. Actions do not speak for themselves, because one action can mean many things. They must be accompanied by speech to indicate intentions, attaching intended meaning to the act.

4. Natural religion tends to abolish certain actions regardless of intent. Spanking a bad child is out of vogue today. Today, in this country, children tend to be given too much freedom. TO SACRIFICE (POPULARITY AT THE MOMENT) IS TO CARE FOR ANOTHER PERSON, to be responsible for another person's life, and therefore one's own feelings may be less important at that moment.

Here ERH provides an example of "living" religion, where one person has intentionally (because his last words said so), sacrificed his own life for that of another, forgetting himself (forgetting his philosophy, the church, but being spontaneous).

**5. ERH indicates how a sense of time is efficacious, going much further in explaining one's behavior;** being conscious about assumptions from the past, about where he/she is headed, and conscious of what he thinks in the present. In truth one attempts to survive in the present under the conflict of the opposing demands of past and future.

This is instructive for maintaining a vital understanding of our experience.

a. Things from the past may be dead, having been proven false, but still lying around. Our imperative is to forget these things. ERH uses the metaphor of oil, which is the present state of once-living organisms, but which offers no basis for understanding the vitality and nature of past

life. Non-living things cannot die; living things can. Living things that anticipate death **RETAIN THE POWER TO RESTORE LIFE.**

We can do something about regeneration of human community, and about flora and fauna of which we should be the caretakers. Socially, one can write a book, reform legislation, create a piece of art. To know the difference between alive and dead is also to know the difference between past and future.

b.Living things enter time and beckon us to the future. **RELIGION IS AN ATTEMPT TO SALVAGE WHAT IS LIVING FROM THE PAST.** (p.18)

...if man must obey God more than men, it also means that he must find out whether the people in authority or himself are defending at this moment a corpse interest, or a future interest, or the interest of a future otherwise not possible, otherwise blocked. (p.18)

All of these ideas are symbolized in the notion of thinking, speaking, and listening.

6.All religions are institutionalized, even the Quakers who claim not to be. One cannot be born into a faith without an institutional presence. The tendency of Quaker and other churches is to prefer hereditary members over converted members. **IT SHOULD BE THE OPPOSITE**, for obvious reasons.

7.In Protestantism the "word" is the sacrament. Thus, the text of the Bible is a corpse until it is brought to life by the faithful - "The word made flesh."

In the text above we have said that to institutionalize is to live in the past, to endow is to live in the future. We must have the predictable order from the past in our lives, but also the freedom for a new future, and the present to act. Any religion that does not embrace all three timespans in its teaching is doomed to remain impotent.

We all live according to the three calendars: of the past, which is predictable and natural; of the business calendar, which is 24 hrs. per day and is objective and practical. Then a personal calendar for our own affairs, which is to decide on problem solutions and take action.

8.Natural religion thinks of time as a given, from outside man, from the beginning until the end of the universe, eternal in both directions. Time of living beings must have other dimensions, extending backward to re-examine and learn new things about the meaning of our experience; into the future, which should be created by us; the living present in which we act; and "time out" for rest and planning. The difference between natural religion and a living religion is that, while we can describe "nature," it does not tell us what to do about the problems presented to us. Of course, "naturally" we get food and shelter and defend ourselves against enemies. But to create a liveable society is a different matter. A liveable religion deals with what must be thought about and acted on to create a liveable society. And to do this, past, present, and future must be combined and lived in.

9.This unification of time is God's revelation (gift) to man, presenting a method for creating a liveable society.

## Lecture - 6

1.Here ERH describes his logic for believing in God, which he defines. The logic seems to be as follows:

a.The atheist believes that his logic, his mental powers are supreme, always dominant. He knows he can speak, but ERH asserts, that to speak is to have faith.

b.No one can speak and expect to be understood, accepted, approved, and believed unless he believes his word is true and that others will (should) respect it. The atheist therefore believes that others should accept his word that there is no God. [RF - I am unsure what he means here!]

c.ERH defines God as the power that makes us speak and listen and that others can understand. [RF -by inference, ERH suggests that even atheists harbor a part of a living religion, but appear to deny the formalities of religion. In another essay he calls much of what is said in Christian churches "stories fit for children," thus recognizing the dis-ease of atheists.]

As an aside he points out that IN AMERICA WE ASSUME THAT ANY PERSON HAS THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO ANOTHER AND ASK FOR HELP; EVEN ENEMIES HAVE THIS RIGHT. If you believe this you have the best of the natural religion, as assumed in the aphorism, "the brotherhood of man."

d.To speak means therefore to have faith, a trinitarian faith, 1) that what we say is meaningful, 2) that it is right and found to be true, and 3) that somebody will listen.

e.Whenever we speak we need three processes by which we institute God in our life: faith, love, and hope. Even the atheist hopes to be understood, he feels words are true, and finally by speaking (instead of clubbing the listener), he shows respect and therefore love. **THE PROCESS OF SPEECH IS ALWAYS BETWEEN THOSE WHO SEEK A UNION. "WE ALL HAVE RELIGION BECAUSE WE SPEAK."** (p.4)

2.To speak and to be listened to, we must have peace. When a situation breaks into fighting, there can be no communication by speech; to an enemy you cannot speak. Thus, "...to speak is always a decision on the timing of the act." Virtue is speaking at the right time; vice is speaking at the wrong time. As a matter of fact, all fruitful actions follow the same principle, to be committed at the right time.

3.In spite of the fact that atheists have "some" religion, generally they speak to and for themselves. Non-atheists are just the opposite, speaking to others in the name of their profession, or of a group. **NON-ATHEISTS BELIEVE THAT WHEN THEY SPEAK, SOME HIGHER POWER HAS ENABLED THEM TO CONTACT THEIR FELLOW MAN.** (p.7)

Obviously, to lie is to destroy speaking and listening, which is to say, the community. Speech is therefore essential for the survival of a growing social universe created together with others.

4. **"Your religion is not embedded in your ceremonies, but in your treatment of your own word."** Every act of speech in society testifies to our belief in God. Because God is not an abstraction, but the power by which peace, truth, and efficiency are united." (p.8)

\*Truth in itself is powerless. One must speak out and act on it; or must stick one's neck out and say, "This is true", for society to survive."

5. Everyone wants and needs power. We want to speak our minds truthfully, we want to be acknowledged for this truth, and finally we all hope for the power of our truth. And of course, we all have some fear and trembling as to whether we are right.

6. The term **Devil** is a metaphor for 1) lying (denying some act or some fact), 2) for being in a hurry (impatient, unwilling to take the time to make peace with enemies), 3) not loving enough to take the time (omitting speech). Somehow one believes that enemies are inherently evil and to be eradicated or controlled one way or another. **THE ATHEIST DOESN'T BELIEVE THERE MIGHT BE A HIGHER POWER** what may account for the point of view of one's "alleged" enemy. One has no faith that the intentions of others might be honorable. [RF - I wonder if he might, at another time, qualify this statement to, "the tendency of atheists"]

Practically speaking, of course some people wish to do us in,, and we therefore have a natural right to defend ourselves. But we must be patient enough to discover motives, and to keep trying to discover them even in the face of precipitous acts by others.

7. The nature of our speech, or lack of it, is a fundamental issue. True, intelligent religionists practice this universal relationship between one's speech and God. How we treat our own word, and observing how others do the same, is the only way to discover the religion of others, whether they might have the "religion of the devil."

8. The notion of sin is, of course, to lie. We all have the power to be either truthful or to lie. **THE NOTION OF ORIGINAL SIN IS THAT FROM THE BEGINNING, HUMANKIND HAS LIED.**

But sin can be undone by speech. We apologize. We stop wars so that we can speak. The advocate of **NATURAL RELIGION** looks at the jungle and concludes that "social life of human beings is a jungle." One of the miracles of human speech is that it renders former enemies capable of rising above nature and making peace. No animal society can do this!

Part of this process of making peace **REQUIRES OTHERS TO SPEAK FOR US.** That is, it is assumed that we would speak out in self-interest. But if some other says that "this person speaks the truth," then we can be believed.

9. In natural religion the assumption is that peace is normal, that all people are "naturally" good. Sin, then, is a question of will.

In natural religion, following the assumption of "naturally good," the lie means one has been possessed by the devil. ERH ASSERTS THAT TELLING THE TRUTH OR LYING HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH MORALITY ( intentions, acted on willfully), and much to do with the individual's condition of strength or weakness at that moment in time. When we feel weak we lie, and we have little patience. The natural religionist believes that being truthful or lying is an act of the will. TO HAVE THE COURAGE AND STRENGTH TO SPEAK THE TRUTH IS ONE OF THE MIRACLES OF LIFE.

10. Telling the truth may be dangerous to us physically. The martyr is not one who wants to die, but one who cannot stand to lie any more. He/she must speak out regardless of the consequences. The intentional martyr is neither Christian nor an advocate of a true religion. The true martyr has come to prize self-respect above personal safety.

11. We are free because we always have the choice to speak the truth or to lie.

12. To summarize, religion has everything to do with maintaining freedom and little to do with calculation. We fetter ourselves with calculations, to need our present standard of living, to embrace dogmas (free enterprise, the ethic of consumption, slavery to the timetable and to fads of all kinds, etc.). THE FUTURE CAUSED BY SUCH DOGMAS BECOMES A PRISON. Europeans often say America is a giant, but afraid to use its power, so it hides behind principles (of non-involvement). A freely religious stance would be to say, AT TIMES WE WILL USE OUR POWER AND AT OTHER TIMES NOT, it all depends. A true future in this sense is not calculated, but maintains freedom to make choices when consequences are apparent.

13. Freedom happens by breaking the chain of causation. When our acts constantly seem to work against us, we must regain our freedom through forgiveness from others. Everyone needs this.

14. In conclusion, NATURAL RELIGION BREAKS DOWN:

a. On the question of speech.

b. On the question of goodness (i.e. man is not eternally good, but neutral; he/she may sin or do good deeds all through his/her life.)

c. On the question of freedom (events occur by natural causation and humans have little choice over the matter, except for minor matters, of course).

Natural laws of cause and effect apply to dead matter, predictably. In social life we are unfinished, and therefore to some extent unpredictable.

In natural religion, there can be no difference between cause and effect on the one-side and freedom on the other. (p.26)

The notion of cause and effect seems subtle, as a distinction between natural religion and a living religion. For instance, we can explain any criminal act on the basis of cause and effect. It can be

caused by drugs, or by a poor home life, or by poverty, or some mental break-down, or passion, etc., etc. BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT MAN IS FREE FROM PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. If the individual is not assumed to make at least some choices concerning his behavior, we can never be held personally accountable. We train animals by stimulus-response, and of course humans to some extent, as well. Becoming human means moving away from that fact of nature. A LIVING RELIGION REQUIRES THE ASSIGNMENT OF FREEDOM TO ALL INDIVIDUALS. OF course our actions are caused in part by instinct, but choice allows us to rise above mere instinct. (p.27)

## Lecture - 7

1. Things "natural" proceed according to their nature, and nothing needs to be done by us. But human beings, if they are to rise above their natural animal nature must do things to intervene.

2. We are dominated by economic considerations:

The future of the economic order and the future of Christians are in conflict. This conflict seems to be decided at the outset in favor of the economic order. For the languages of Church as well as state, of the Bible as well as the Constitution, are losing their power in daily process of advertising...(p.3)

In the following pages ERH read part of an essay written to a class some time before 1954. From the present perspective of 1996, he seems to have predicted the turn of events. Gigantic corporations, the destruction of unions, layoffs and unstable labor conditions generally, increasing gap between rich and poor, greed, commercialism dominating both public and private decision-making, and with almost total disregard for environmental protection. Even the traditional churches seem to have these values as well as a considerable intolerance toward other churches and cultures (e.g. the increasing expression of isolationism in this country and an unwillingness to help keep peace in Bosnia.)

All of this bodes alienation between peoples, the lack of willingness, or ability to speak to one another.

3. In business, one isn't interested in speaking and listening and serving, as much as in selling.

ERH suggests that, in professions we should be setting examples, training successors. Moses is cited for leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, because they worshipped the golden calf. Our golden calf today is commercialism. All is sacrificed for the "bottom line." WHO WILL LEAD US BACK TO REGENERATING OUR COMMUNITIES, and getting us to speak meaningfully to each other? "The Great Society is not a good society." (p.10)

In dealing with things we follow the line of least resistance. In dealing with God, we always have to follow the line of hardest resistance. (p.11)



We do not grow when we follow our natural tendencies To grow we must rise above those tendencies, and this is always difficult, if not dangerous. We might get fired or begin a war by speaking the truth. There is no "profit" in doing good deeds, or in loving one, or in being creative in art or in the art of living, in the commercial sense. Or in sacrificing or volunteering for the community. **YET HOW ELSE ARE WE TO CHANGE OUR COMMUNITIES FOR THE BETTER?**

4. Why one is willing to so sacrifice, or to love is inexplicable. To change something in the world that needs changing is very difficult and seldom is commercially efficacious.

5. ERH cites the "secret" in drama, where in the play at the end we learn something new about the characters and thus change our opinion. A living religion, ERH suggests, has this same quality, in which the real character of a person will have its effect in the behavior of others. **THIS IS THEIR POWER, THEIR SPIRIT FINALLY REVEALED.**

6. We begin to regenerate the community by regenerating our speech. We speak to one another because we have something to say. (RF - that is, speech other than small talk over the back fence.)

...all living religion as against institutionalized religion, and against personal religion...where a soldier dies for his country, or where a daughter carries on the memory of her father, or where her father forgoes smoking and drinking so that his girl can get a dowry -- in all these cases, both people settle in a point of time between them...this is the secret relation to the next generation. (p.19)

All religious problems are between two generations. **TO BE RELIGIOUS, WE MUST SPEAK OUT TO HELP CREATE THE NEXT GENERATION.**

All religion is predicated on a relation through time. (p.20)

\*It is a religious problem to say, between today and tomorrow I haven't lost my reputation, my honor, I have some authority for tomorrow. Nature always threatens to ruin us by cataclysms, or temptation, and it is quite a miracle to maintain our dignity and honor through time. We strive for what should become "everlasting" in life, so that the next generation will have more life. To have the power to do this is to have God within us.

7. It is because unpredictable situations constantly arise that one must be prepared to "...recreate the world every minute...". Our children get sick, a natural catastrophe befalls the community and destroys our home, there is an auto accident, a transfer to a new job, etc., etc., these can change our lives, and these events call on us to readapt to the new reality. To "adapt" means to make choices, and to make choices that will be efficacious to both ourselves and the community can be difficult if not overwhelming. In these cases, it is the father (parent) who must lead and remain strong.

ERH suggests that God is in this same role vis-a-vis humankind. The loving father or mother forgives, offers a second chance, helps along the way. **BUT IN REALITY, ALL FATHERS AND MOTHERS ARE LESS THAN COMPETENT TO DO THIS JOB; HUMANS ARE WEAK AND MAKE MANY MISTAKES.** Our image of God is that he is the perfect father. We are a weak copy of that model, and all religions are based on this notion.

8. Natural religion says, that when a man dies he's replaceable, like any machine cog. "Jesus dies and we say he is irreplaceable. So he can't have died. He has risen." His spirit influences our behavior after his death. And, of course a living religion would have humans act the same way - that all of us live in such a way that our deeds and our spirit will survive in the next generation. **THAT IS THE MEANING OF ALL RELIGIONS, THAT THEY UNITE GENERATIONS AND THEREBY CONQUER DEATH.** Thus, a major reason we need religion is because we die. "If you believe it is good to live 150 years, religion is not for you." (p.30)

9. Greek philosophy (Plato in Phaedon) believes in the immortality of humans. At physical death we simply change our form and go on, just as the traditional Christian church claims - which is childish. But, from the standpoint of our spirit carrying on in others, that is a more sublime meaning. A religious act, then, is to live in a way that can be emulated in the next generation to create a better community life.

10. Greek philosophy, Hinduism, and other religions believe there is no death. Christianity is unique in that it holds there must constantly be new beginnings. Physically, life precedes death. Spiritually, death precedes life because the new life carries on from the endowment of the dead person's spirit. Our death should herald the birth of a new beginning.

The essence of Christianity is that we all say that we have killed Christ and therefore are saved, because His death opens our eyes to our right direction of life. (p.33)

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When we witness the death of an exemplary, loving parent, we are motivated to continue their example, to bring the parent's principles to fruition. Our relation to God and Jesus is the same, writ large. **IN THIS SENSE, THE AUTHORITY OF OUR PARENTS CONTINUES TO GUIDE US.**

## Summary For First Seven Lectures

To begin, Rosenstock-Huessy lays out two primary conditions that must be fulfilled if one is to compare religions with any understanding. This series of lectures is dedicated to explanation of these conditions. First, one must possess some definition of what religion is, what one means by the term. Second, one must understand one's own religious biases. The logic for the first point would seem obvious. However, he explains the inclusion of the second on the basis that our biases are unconscious, and that unless we become conscious of them, we tend to reject any

opposing ideas out of hand.

He also points out that the concept of God includes the notion that the universe is one entity, that heaven and earth are of the same piece. Our goal on earth is to evolve toward the idealized community (heaven). The method for achieving this is to live religious principles. The concept of devil is a metaphor for the opposite, separation of heaven from earth, of humankind from nature, or from God, of deeds separated from speech and moral values. **BY IMPLICATION, WHEN HUMANKIND IS INFLUENCED BY DEVILISH IDEAS, SOCIETY FALLS SICK AND DIES.** Different religions throughout history and throughout the world aim toward these universal principles (but all fall short of comprehensiveness. History offers the record of the consequences of our behavior. Furthermore, many of our "natural" or animal instincts such as greed, self-interest to the exclusion of consideration of others, lying, deception, thievery, wanton murder - attributes which we normally think of as "sinful," - weaken society. **THE GOAL OF ALL SPIRITUAL GROWTH (RELIGION) IS TO LEAD US TO RISE ABOVE OUR ANIMAL NATURE.**

He claims that 90% of the population of the U.S. has the same basic religion, regardless of their chosen denomination, This is what he calls in this essay "natural religion." It is the religion of commercialism, of over-consumption, of separating religion from business ethics, of exploitation of natural environment for the sake of profit (free enterprise carried to extreme). Finally, "natural religion" embraces the assumption that man cannot rise above his "nature," what one might call natural instincts, if these instincts are thought, not defensible they must be accepted as unavoidable, unchangeable.

Rosenstock-Huessy, on the other hand, notes that humankind **DOES INDEED POSSESS THE ABILITY TO RISE ABOVE NATURE**, that we possess the power to make decisions and to change our nature; in other words, mankind is yet unfinished. However, to metamorphosing our nature is agonizingly difficult: it requires discipline and the ultimate power we can muster. **RELIGION IS, BY DEFINITION, THE POWER THAT MAKES US CHANGE** and grow. That human societies have survived for some millions of years gives testament to the fact that mankind has demonstrated this power is worth noting. But what also must be noted is that most "mainline" religions do not seem to evidence the basic principles which can forge such resolve today. These principles existed long before any Christian or member of any other religion trod this earth and, by implication, one must conclude that humankind the world-over is, spiritually, the same. Skin color and cultural mores aside.

However universal are these qualities of humankind, there are many ways of achieving them, and these differences are marked by different names of religions and denominations with all their different traditions, theologies and liturgies. Comparing these different religions is tricky. We see that some are strongly consistent with the "universals" on some points, and not on others. The main part of the text in these lectures is devoted to indicating differences between the American "natural religion" and what he calls "a living religion" that is representative of universal standards by which one can draw comparisons. These points are summarized in the

numbered paragraphs below.

Finally, Rosenstock-Huessy identifies three basic aspects of religion. Categorizing them is helpful for our understanding of this complex subject. 1) There must be a formal church, this is by definition the institutionalization of each denomination, the formal authority. He points out that the membership and attendance at church "...does not mean very much about one's religion." 2), There is the theology of the denomination. This is the logical deduction that explains and follows from some event which engendered the beginning of the religion. Theology, ERH points out is not, or does not describe a living religion. It is a part of philosophy, which is logical and therefore little related to "living religion." For instance, we will, at times, make "the morale choice," because we cannot face ourselves otherwise. People are martyred, not because they are masochists, but because they cannot stand to lie any more. When we apply "logic," we usually rationalize in our own favor. In this sense, liveable religion is spiritually driven, as compared to philosophical logic. 3) Finally, there is the living religion, or personal religion. Our beliefs demonstrate their meaning when we have decisions to make about how to behave in crucial circumstances. Do we lie or not lie? Do we stand up (speak out in public) and be counted when required, or are we faint-hearted? Do we give fair work for our pay or slough off on the job? Most importantly, are we willing to sacrifice our personal welfare for the sake of helping others? Only when we act selflessly at the right time will we build a decent community.

ERH points out that morale action has little to do with willpower, and very much to do with our feelings of strength or weakness at these crucial decision points in our lives. It is the **POWER OF RELIGION THAT HOLDS THE POTENTIAL TO STRENGTHEN US AT THESE TIMES**, and therefore, religion is a necessity. Considering the three dimensions of religion, atheists eschew formal religion, but embrace a theology and usually possess truly moral (religious) values, as ERH defines them.

Differentiations between natural (American) and living religion are as follows:

**1. Philosophy & Religion: Natural religion** makes no distinction between philosophy and religion; in other words, it sees religion as theology only. Thus, choice is a matter of will. **Living religion** asserts just the opposite: "the moment of truth" is not acted on by logic, but rather by our strength or weakness at that moment in time. Thus, the religious judgment is based on our emotional state.

**2. Time & Religion: Natural religion** assumes time to be extending only into the future, and each moment is the same. Time is thus measured and given meaning by the clock. Each moment in time is thus a unit in itself. **Living religion** doesn't ask "why" as does the naturalist, but rather, "when." Time is given meaning by acting at the right time in the right way. We must be conscious of the "pregnant moment." Time here is united because we learn from the past. The authority of past values carried forward is followed, in the present we reflect on those commands, and take action anticipating consequences in the future, thus seeking to unite time. All religions unite the generations.

3. Speech, (the word) and Religion: With **Natural religion**, the word has a defined meaning. In **Living religion**, the word is given meaning by our actions, "the word made flesh."

4. Freedom and Religion: **Natural religion** binds our instincts. **Living religion**, frees us to choose whether to follow instincts or act differently. To act differently, in some instances, is precisely the necessity for surviving under liveable conditions.

5. Spirit & Religion: **Natural religion** makes no distinction between spirit (God) and man. Man's view of the world (his logic) dominates thought - which is his God. **Living religion** views spirit as a unifier between peoples; individuals can understand each other. Words by themselves are abstract symbols. When words are combined with behavior, meaning is created; thus they create common understanding, "the spirit of mankind." It is the spirit of understanding that unites generations, races, social classes, etc. This unites thought and the material world, but also makes a distinction between the two. This power to unite lies outside the individual, but can only exist in common with others. Thus, "spirit is a miracle, a "gift from God" to humankind.

6. Morality & Religion **Natural religion** holds that all people are basically good and that sin, or lying is a matter of willpower. One chooses to follow the path of the devil, so to speak truthfully. **Living religion** holds that we are not good, per se, but are at times strong and at times weak. Thus, moral behavior is determined by our state of strength or weakness at a given point in time. Freedom means that we choose, to be sure, but we cannot "will" ourselves to be strong or weak. THIS IS WHY WE NEED THE POWER THAT RELIGION CAN CREATE IN US.

7. Death & Religion: **Natural religion** believes that one does not die, but simply is transferred into a new realm and continues living. The Greeks, Hindus, and many other religions believe in some type of continuation of life; in a type of reincarnation. **Living religion** holds that we die physically, but our spirit is (can be) remembered and influences others (negatively or positively). We conquer death by our spirit living in others. The spirit of Lincoln, of Aristotle, of Bach and Einstein is carried on by others - as is the spirit of all those who develop strength during their physical life. Christianity holds that we grow through stages in our lives when our old ways are forgotten (put to death), and we take on a new direction in our lives, new beginnings. This is the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

In sum, the "living religion" forms the basis for a true religion. ERH holds that "natural religion" is truly the American religion, of perhaps 90% of all Americans, regardless of their proclaimed denominational allegiance.

## Lecture - 8

1. First, to lay out the criteria for comparison of different religions, religion involves "...this strange relationship between our powers to do wrong, and our (received) command not to do wrong...these were the 'mays` and the 'cans.`" (p.1)

2. For humankind to dominate nature, they must form associations. Our major dilemma is that our associations are a two-edged "blade," as along with the power they give us, they constantly mislead us. At any moment any family, nation, class, school, lobby, etc. can wrongly influence us if we allow it.

3. The church empowers us to choose between associations, and the state provides the opportunity for association. Association provides us with our physical needs for food, shelter, security, etc. It provides for the "cans." Opposed to this is the church, which deals with what we "may" do.

4. The church also gives us the power to dissociate ourselves from associations of the moment. The girl or boy who leaves home to marry, or leaves one church for another would be examples. The pilgrim fathers dissociated themselves from a state and came to America.

5. Religion deals with the problems of association and dissociation, to say yes and no at the right time, and to be willing to risk sacrifice in the process. (p.8) It deals with the question of personal power to maintain the freedom to make this decision, to stand alone or not to stand alone. "...every human being becomes human by having the power of dismissing associations and forming new associations..." (p.21)

6. The questions of "why" or "what" are questions about things, and are not religious questions. Yes and no questions are religious when related to association or dissociation. To ask why someone loves you has no answer. Psychology and other social sciences ask "why and what" questions, and therefore they cannot deal with a major dimension of the human psyche. The soul (the soul is the essence of what our spirit is, of what we individually are. Love remains a mystery. **THIS IS WHY THE TRADITIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCES ARE UNABLE TO REVEAL THE TRUE NATURE OF INDIVIDUALS OR OF SOCIETY.**

7. The act of saying NO to some significant temptation of life is the road to maturity, to developing a soul. **THIS IS HOW WE EXPERIENCE RELIGIOUS POWERS.**

We do not live by asking what and why, but by saying yes and no, thank you and no thank you. This we do each day of our lives, and at times, each moment of the day. **GOD IS THE SECRET OF OUR PROCESS OF BEING REVEALED BY HOW WE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS PUT TO US, REGARDING ASSOCIATION OR DISSOCIATION, BY SAYING AND ACTING ON YES AND NO.** (p.17)

We impress others by our record of saying yes or no, by our associations to which we have become dedicated, for better or for worse. This establishes that we have made decisions and that our life is not just drifting.

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8. Change is a painful process. There is no God outside us (God is part of us). We must learn that God is another part of ourselves. "There is no God outside....God must be discovered by you and

me in quite a different manner, as inseparable from yourself." The question, "Is there God?" is for four year olds. (p.22)

9. God is terrible passion; he isn't kind. Love is jealous and powerful. God is not enlightenment, but darkness, mystery. "God is the not-yet-revealed light. And in you, and in nobody else." God is the power that changes you, and that power is a secret. (p.26)

10. "Spirit" is two "wills" that have become unified. They may be of different generations, but always between two different people. No single person can have "spirit," but one moves within a spirit; spirit then unifies associations.

The secret of the Holy Ghost is that it is spirit recognized under the right name, "...as Baker's millions and Baker's books recognize each other in the title, 'Baker Library.'" (p.26)

I believe his point is that one cannot have a "good life" without "spirit," without some type of spiritual experience, and he cites several different situations that reflect "spirit" as an inspiration, as a source of creativity. 1) One problem is what becomes of us after we die? ERH cites Chinese ancestor worship as a response, one's relations to one's ancestors. (they believe they never die). 2) Greek mythology demonstrates the father/daughter spirit, the idolatry of daughter by father (Athena jumping ready-made out of the head of Zeus). 3) The family, the bride/suitor relationship, i.e. Christ and his church, and from the father the bride comes to a marriage and a family. William James Senior was a follower of Swedenborg whose philosophy proclaimed the sacredness of the family.

These intimate experiences become a spiritual source of creativity. (p.27) The religion of philosophers is "a change of mind," but mind-change, sans action, is impotent, and thus a very superficial religion. CREATIVITY AND ACTION ARE CRUCIAL TO REAL LIVING. SENILITY AND COMPLACENCY ARE TERRIBLE THINGS.

11. As we age our body deteriorates, and for this our mind must make up the difference. Our body changes every 7 years and at each instance our mind must change accordingly, as we mature. At each instance we physically die in a way. One who misses some needed change remains childish until the change comes. Some, for instance wish to remain young all their lives, and persist in acting as teenagers.

12. The more we struggle against death, the more intensely we live. THOSE WHO ARE INDIFFERENT OR LAZY ABOUT ISSUES FAIL TO BE FULL OF LIFE, BY DEFINITION.

13. What we really seem to seek is that someone will continue our spirit, our ideas, our direction, AND WHEN THIS MIRACLE OCCURS OUR WORLD FEELS FULFILLED, we know then that we could face death. But we may often not know this, as our ideas may be picked up only long after our physical death. Some religions attempt to put life into us, giving us strength to face death. THESE ERH CALLS THE ACTIONS OF NATURAL RELIGIONS. [RF - which seems to me would include most organized religions.]

## Lecture - 9

1. To come alive, to find fulfillment in life we must live a paradox; each day we must move toward re-inventing ourselves, we must change as we learn new lessons from our experience. However, we also remain the same in the sense of our spirit of freedom, our dedication to principles and carrying on commitments from the past which represent necessity. This is the process of deciding what from past behavior should change in the light of new knowledge. The crucial point is maintaining the freedom to decide. "God is freedom." (p.1)

2. Life and death is a mystery. However, many religions and philosophies deny death.

...never misunderstand Christianity. It's not an attempt to leave man in the lurch or to declare him to be a sinner, but it's an attempt to give man his share in divinity...a religion which tries to discuss this secret...So this is revealed religion, a power to withdraw the veil,...revealed religion. (pp.4,5) [ RF - Emphasis mine]

3. Revealed religions center on change. But most of us have 3 religions that are compatible, each emphasizing a different human need. 1) Be a stoic, buckle down and accept a new condition, such as weathering a storm. We are our own god in this mode, following our own direction. The force for change comes from outside us, however. 2) Another is, of course the revealed religion, which means our work and the fate of people must be changed to improve the social health of the community. [RF - An example that comes to mind today would be the need to recycle our waste. Another would be to persuade people to work toward reversing the destruction of the living environment.] THESE ARE RELIGIOUS DECISIONS BECAUSE THEY MAY GO AGAINST THE VESTED INTERESTS OF SOME GROUP. 3) Finally we must accept the need for change in our hearts, once the need is revealed.

These three sources of authority must command us to change, come from 1) God, manifest in events around us, 2) the authority of the groups to which we belong and revere, and finally 3) within ourselves. WE MUST REMAIN FREE TO MAKE THE CHOICE BETWEEN THE THREE AT ANY PARTICULAR MOMENT IN TIME, ACCORDING TO THE CONTEXT OF OUR SITUATION.

4. All of this may be understood as commands from God, to obey during our lives, made manifest in nature, in our communities, and within ourselves. Also, these concepts can be understood from their time perspective: 1) to obey authority from the past (identifying movements from the past that should continue, like justice, human rights, free press etc.; 2) - to attend to our social survival in the present; and 3) to found new institutions needed for a future. TO SO OBEY IS TO MAKE A RELIGIOUS DECISION. This is why religion is at the heart of our everyday activities, why it is therefore necessary, and why all religions are the same. They respond to the same basic problems of life at a general level, BUT WITH DIFFERENT ADMIXTURES, just as all governments deal with the same problems in different ways. (p.10)



5. ...the Bible is very careful to assert that long before there were Jews and Greeks, there is God and man in conversation. (p.13)

Jahweh is the God who speaks! Judaism and Christianity are trying to fight against the notion that there can be religions separate from the "universal."

The average person is religious. IT TAKES A SOPHISTICATED PERSON TO BE NON-RELIGIOUS. Academics try to separate religions, make them different. ERH refers to the story of the good Samaritan, who was neither Greek nor Jew, nor academic. Basically, he was a good man. Religion, at its root addresses to the basic question of "may" and "can." The Bible, in the beginning describes nothing but the universal humane condition necessary to sustain humankind.

6.The story of the fall of Adam and Eve is not one of temptation, as most believe, but rather of the unwillingness of Adam to own up to his acts; "the group [serpent and Eve], made me do it." Here is the typical "may" and "can" issue. Adam did not obey, and was too weak to own up to it. The notion of original sin (of Eve) "...is just silly."

7.Another definition of God is "He who can admit his decisions." In the Adam and Eve story, man makes the divine decision, (to part-take of knowledge and thereby participating in the creation of community), but doesn't want to be responsible for it. (p.16) Finally ERH points out that this situation is a classic demonstration of the behaviorist nature in man, where he is influenced (forced) by his environment (the situation). "...the difference between the divine life and your life is that you want not to be quoted. That's always the devil." (pp.18,19) It is a sign of sublime courage to admit your decisions, especially those for which one might have to sacrifice in making them public.

8.Humankind cannot be thought of in the singular. Another lesson from the Bible is that man cannot be thought of in the singular; it must be man and his associations all together. In the singular we cannot build bridges, or create language and change our nature. The whole center of the Bible teachings, ERH claims is that man is not singular. Individually we are trained, taught language, obey past authority handed down from others. This central Biblical question comes down to, "Who is man that God should be mindful of him?" (p.21)

9.Islam is a revealed religion, a universal religion "...inside our own.." (p.21)

10.Our lives are spent "incorporating dead matter into our lives." We shape material things into food, bridges, beds, houses, etc. BUT THE POINT IS THAT WE SHOULD WEAVE THESE "CORPSES" INTO MEANINGFUL LIVING.

11.The changes demanded of us change our status vis-a-vis our intensity of life. When we admit that some change could be threatening, such as the bomb or an earthquake, then some aspects of our lives shift. The question we must address is, "Can we survive the change?" We cannot understand what these changes might mean until we have experienced them, until after the fact.

These changes dominate our consciousness for a while; we cannot understand their meaning rationally, as the outcome is always different than we imagined.

12. Each religion, emphasizing as it does different aspects of change, at the same time emphasizes a different intensity of life that results from that change. These different intensities become one of the scales for comparing religions.

## Lecture - 10

1. Degrees of intensity of change we undergo: change is perhaps the dominant experience in life, affecting our body, our soul and our mind.

a) The term "mechanical," refers to change brought about by physical forces. Driving in a car (movement through space is change), a machine changes raw material (fuel). Mechanics changes things, and **we are in control**. We control things, and this change is physical.

b) Organic change refers to physiological matters, of aging, and this is metabolic, a loss of form, not of position. All change can be either positive or negative. Illness, for instance, is usually thought of as negative, but it can have meaning, a warning. Illness in this country is treated as a more or less mechanical phenomenon, but more and more psychosomatic dimensions are being recognized. Thus meditation, imaging, biofeedback etc. are becoming accepted procedures. FOR THE RELIGIOUS PERSON, THESE OTHER DIMENSIONS ARE EASILY ACCEPTED, because the religious person knows both his weakness and strengths. An organic change must be accepted as a personal challenge, engaging the miracles of nature, and mind and spirit.

c) Change occurs through work.

d) Change occurs through love. [see para. #2 below]

e) Change occurs through politics. Changes in politics are most direct and easy to understand. During the American Revolution, identities and values were reversed in the extreme. Before the revolution, it was an honor to be a Royalist, and afterwards Royalists were defiled. We ceased to be one thing, such as a German, or Italian, and become American. Politics is largely beyond our control. It involves incalculable risk, and often surprise and disappointment. General Marshal, promoted Eisenhower, only to have his friend refuse to back him up. Hitler experienced unanticipated changes. Movements get out of our control, even, at times beginning inadvertently. They follow certain rhythms of life. HOW TO DEAL WITH THESE EVENTS IS A RELIGIOUS QUESTION. "The religious man always knows his weakness," and can therefore handle the political change in time.

Politics are part of community, forces outside us individually, although at times we can influence them. Political changes (the consequences of politicking) are beyond our control, so we must simply adapt to them, accepting any necessary sacrifice that is a part of daily life. Military life, for instance, demands sacrifice. We owe soldiers love and respect when they have died for us.

And some respect is shown by our willingness to be called and serve ourselves. ALL OF THESE 5 STATIONS OF "ALIVENESS" (mechanics, organics, love, work, politics) ARE AT THE CENTER OF LIVING LIFE FULLY.

2. We always live in-between right and wrong, ignorance and intelligence, life and death. THE POINT IS TO ATTEMPT TO BE A LITTLE MORE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. We tend to love and hate the same things at different times, whether those loves and hates are our gods, family members, ideals, or things around us. To do so is a healthy sign because it means they are not idols. It reflects the necessary quality of remaining capable of dissociation and reassociation.

3. Coming to be "alive" means we enter history by responding to different roles in life; we give meaning to the words love and politics and mechanics, etc.

TO RECAPITULATE - mechanic life is met by (power), organic life is met by rhythm (falling into the rhythm of the universal), conscious life is met by work, love is met by reciprocity, and politics is met by sacrifice.

## Lecture - 11

1. IN SOME INSTANCES WHEN WE KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING, WE CAN GIVE UP WHAT WE HAVE! When one doesn't know where one is going one tends to cling to what one has. Most people in his country have no spiritual direction, so they cling to their possessions, their toys. [RF - Today I suppose these would be exemplified by computers, and cell phones, new cars, stereos, etc. I'm not sure how to take this statement, except to assume it applies to a person who doesn't think for himself because it is neither my own experience, nor his. I would refer the reader to his chapter entitled METANOIA, in I AM AN IMPURE THINKER. In these instances one must be committed to change without knowing what the change might mean! The next paragraph seems to confirm this.]

2. Change requires us to first take a leap into the future, into the new life of change, even before we know much about the consequences. It is our faith that the move will be productive. Many people claim to be ready for change "when they can afford it." But such assurance never materializes.

Love is the first step that carries us over the barrier of fear of change. To hate anything that becomes a barrier is a necessary dimension of love. Love means we have the courage to be transformed. (p.12) All of this refers to #4) above. We need friends because we need someone to accept us in spite of our shortcomings. Someone who's love, faith in us and willingness to tell us the truth gives us the strength to take the risk.

Love and will are opposites, we can have one or the other, but not both at the same time. Love is a surprise, it is "discovered."

Passion gives us the energy to do things that we would not ordinarily be capable of. When we

love something, the difficult becomes easy. Love cannot be willed, it can only be developed.  
(p.17)

3. Time must not be understood as a sequence of moments whereby the past causes the present, which in turn, causes the future. This is the physicist's attitude toward time. BUT HUMAN TIME doesn't work that way; we must first anticipate what our future should be, then contemplate the past as the first step in taking action in the present to get there. THE STEPS TO CHANGE ARE 1) anticipate the future, 2) build a bridge to the past, and 3) take action in the present.

4. Life is built around five items; man dreads change, but he must produce change, impose change, and must obey God (authority); God is the power that makes us change.

"Mechanics" directs us to employ the laws of physics, controlling power but also falling under the laws of entropy "Organic life" retards entropic processes, and work does the same (slowing down the "fall" of entropy. Passion contrarily "defies the laws of gravity" (love overcomes hurdles),

ERH's POINT IS THAT, THESE FIVE BASIC FORCES OF LIFE, OF ALIVENESS, are the subject of every religion, because if man can shape them, he can exert some control on his life and death. (p.7) TO DO SO ALLOWS MAN TO RISE ABOVE HIS ANIMAL NATURE, and move toward divinity. Note, for instances the following table of the mythical gods:

- a. Mars (pure power) is the god for mechanics, the Roman god of war.
- b. Mercuri (Mercury) is the god for metabolism, rhythm.
- c. Athene is the goddess of industry, of work
- d. Venus is the god of passions
- e. Saturnus is Saturn, the god of catastrophe

These represent the 5 days of the pagan week, "What we live under these five influences, that is the common possession of the whole human race." (p.10)

5. The power of all of these forces is overwhelming, at times threatening us with life and death decisions and this power is, unavoidably on our consciousness, or we know of its presence intuitively. God is not a product of our minds, but of our experience; we know how powerless we are.

Our beliefs are fragmented among the five, or some combination thereof. But one seldom seems to be able to think of them as parts of a whole. Are any of the different religions superior to the other? Judaism, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian? Not a useful question to ask. All religions reflect a consciousness of power represented by the 5 Greek or Roman gods

6. The first change we are forced to experience in life is space; the second is the rhythm (the heart beat, the pendulum spaces of time); the third is the operations or working. Spans of time, cycles of time, stages of time, etc. are the measuring milestones in our lives, **BUT THEY CANNOT BE MEASURED AS IN PHYSICS**, as they are relative. Whenever we speak of associations of people, space is subordinate to time. Whenever we have mechanics, time is subordinated by space. (p.14) Things must be done in a timely manner, as a proposal or any influential speech requires that it be said at the right time.

7. Religion is the reversal of what we call "normal relations of space and time." For the physicist, space has three dimensions, and time is a fourth. **FOR THE RELIGIOUS BELIEVER**, time has three dimensions (past, present, future), and space has one.

The great riddle of human experience is how to create new times (changes), a new period in the history of the community, or begin a movement that lasts into two or more generations. To bring about such a change, ERH experienced a loss of friends, country, fortune, profession. To accept such inevitability is to make an asset out of a liability, becoming stronger in the process.

The other side of this issue is **THAT WE MUST DEFEND AND RETAIN EXISTING THINGS THAT MUST NOT BE OBLITERATED**. That the plants and animals have taken millions of years to evolve doesn't mean that we are free now to destroy them. **Then what?** It is the same with justice, human rights, the Declaration of Independence. We must not be so blase` as to think that something cannot be wiped out. One aspect of our eternal battles is to know and fight for these issues. Only sacrifice, work, and passion will keep these miraculous creations going.

8. New creations are miracles - poems, children, love, or sacrifice for a good cause. All of these must be preserved.

9. There is a great difference between creativity and work. Work is mere will and energy. Creativity requires passion for some goal beyond.

10. The first experience of our lives is that we were brought into existence by someone who cares for us and gave us a name. **THIS IS THE STARTING POINT FOR ALL UNDERSTANDING OF OUR EXPERIENCE**.

11. **EDUCATION**. The worst aspect of our present education is that it is dominated by the physical sciences, which teach us to describe the universe, but end with nothing to do with how we are to evaluate our personal experience.

Those who really love us wish us to be free to grow, not demanding we become carbon copies of themselves. The first thing that should be learned in schools is "...the spirit in human relations..."

...you must trust your nurse, your mother, your father, your teacher that he renounces all right to mold you in his image. (p.24)

First things tend to rule what follows. What we must learn then is that human experience and the

quality of our community comes before physics. We wouldn't survive and grow at all if someone had not helped considerably along the way, and sacrificed for us.

Laws of physics, of the natural sciences, are several times removed from our direct experience, so why begin with those?

...you and I, in our highest moments, live in a living universe in which all the voices of the universe talk. Everything has a voice. And you have...if physics is a questionable entertainment of the mind, then you don't have to throw the atom bomb. If physics comes first, then there is no way out. (p.16)

## Lecture - 12

1. One who has lived in a very abstract world - a world made from their mind, from their fantasies, their wishes of the way things should be rather than how they are - has a difficult time "coming to life," understanding what is being said here.

2. Change usually means values change their place, and what was once prized becomes useless. The Romans would fear Mars, the god of war as a demon destroying their fields and slaughtering them, then invoke him to come to their side and be a blessing. "All defined experience is a reevaluation of our ethics." (p.2) In war we defend our way of life by being asked to kill the enemy (who has done nothing to us). "Every defined process means that you have two logics, which are contradictory: one before and one after the appearance of the god." (p.2) Acting on these commands allows us to understand religious experience. **THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.**

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3. We should look at ourselves in relation to human history, as a light bulb is related to the electric power house. We live our lives, shine, then burn out and are thrown away.

4. In life we live in several contexts; in work, in home, in recreation, in study and learning, in many different associations including church. In each we may have a different role; each is essentially different and serves a different purpose with different meaning in our lives.

In any of these parts of our lives, our highest state is when we are un-self-conscious. Our normal state is to be self-conscious, to rationalize everything from this self-consciousness. From this self-conscious state we are attempting to control the situation. Un-self-consciousness occurs when our spirit moves us, when we do and say things regardless of the cost. When we make important commitments, we tend to be most creative. **SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS** therefore is a lesser state of living.

Quantity has little to do with importance. The important events in life are rare, and usually-short termed, but creative and defining.

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5. It would seem that what we know most certainly is that which we experience most often. Yet, ERH makes the case that those rare occasions when insight and creativity and decision occur mold us permanently, AND THEREFORE THOSE RARE MOMENTS ARE MOST CERTAIN in our learning. We are the only ones who can find the unique direction that we, individually must take and this direction represents an exertion of great and rare energy.

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6. These five dimensions of basic religious experience (mechanic, organic, consciousness [work], passion, and politics) can therefore be characterized as having an ascending or descending degree of warmth, of aliveness. (p.12) We live in these 5 rings of ethical behavior, and the problem is to know which ring we are in, or should be in, at any moment of time, requiring a decision from us.

Each of these dimensions has a quality of excitement from "white heat" to apathy. This, ERH asserts, is why so much advertising literally screams at us to get our attention because we live most of our lives in a state of "suspended animation." THE POINT IS THAT WE ARE FREE AT EACH MOMENT TO CHOOSE WHAT STATE TO BE IN.

7. Different religions deal, then with the same problems in a different way just as dictatorships, aristocracies, or democracies represent different ways of dealing with the problem of government. In each of these approaches, energy is differently placed.

Hinduism emphasizes the state of deep sleep, an organic vegetative state of low heat, seeking immunity from mechanics (the physical universe). Not to be confused with normal sleeping, it is a special "deep sleep." In Africa, the hunting society believes the mind can leave the body, travel thousands of miles, and kill an enemy. The Hindu attempts to achieve all 5 life processes by emphasizing only one. (p.15) Also, Hindus have no history - all is thought which is out of (the context of) time.

8. Two criteria for religions: 1) they must be true to their creed, and 2) they must account for all of life's basic experiences. (p.17) For instance, philosophy excludes love, sleep (the importance of death), or the importance of political decisions. Therefore it cannot satisfy logically, as it cannot fit many of our life experiences.

...religious idolatry -- would begin when any one of these necessary (5) elements of experience is arbitrarily, or voluntarily, or deliberately omitted and crushed. (p.18)

[RF - By these two criteria, most religions seem unrelated to our everyday life. Perhaps that is their problem or the problem of all religious belief in general. It is either narrow idolatry, or it is misunderstood and rendered irrelevant to life experience.]

This is an important concept - that is, any frame of mind, any attitude that omits any of the 5 criteria narrows one's view of reality, no doubt causing problems in life. For instance, if one says

to one's self that the only reality is one's own feelings, one feels free to ignore the law, or their debts, or differing values of others.

9. The expression, "the fullness of times," ERH uses to describe those attitudes that recognize all 5 of the states of life experience.

The hope for religion today is that we can bring ourselves to see the one God as a sum of the 5 gods of the Greeks, or the Romans. "...divinity is obviously he who can communicate and go back and forth between those various aspects and temperatures of life." (p.24) By exercising this freedom to decide, all have the freedom to belong to all the gods.

10. Religion is always ambiguous and never logical because it requires us (if it is complete with the 5 dimensions) to be different things at different times - a lover one time, a worker another, a patriotic soldier at another, a logician also. It argues for us to be always free to move from one to the other as the situation demands. One must maintain the courage to move from one to the other, to change, to end one era of one's life and enter a new period.

## Lecture - 13

1. "Religion describes a real experience of men, which we call the religious aspect of every man. There is no non-religious man....people have either a false religion or the true religion...they have their appetites. And they have their ambitions...So they cannot help being transformed in what they believe in." (p.1)

One of the main pillars of ERH's philosophy is that the world is one, that thought and concrete experience cannot be separated, one has no meaning without the other. This quote indicates his belief that all religious thought must derive from concrete experience, and it is because these experiences are universal among all peoples that there is a core of ideas common to all religions.

2. "...religion has been killed by the word "duty" and it has been killed by this separation of the religious man and the superior humanist, who has no religion. (that is, no true religion) The humanists have a very poor religion and I think they have played out -- the liberals -- because they denied their own prison. They denied their own captivity under the law of the unknown god. As long as the gods are unknown, you are under their law. Because you just carry it out. As long -- as soon as you admit that the gods rule, and we are in their hands, you can choose, you can free yourself from the gods. That's the meaning of false doctrine of the law and of grace. The man who is in grace denies them and says, "oh, I'm a free agent, I do what I please," doesn't know what he pleases -- what this pleasure is, that this pleasure is always one of these five. (p.2)

3. Time, in each of the 5 dimensions, takes on a different meaning. One experiences time, when in love, in an utterly different way than at work or play.

4. Play is important to understand because it means that which we play at, whether games, or ideas, or even life. Play is a mental construct in the sense that it originates with ourselves; we set



the rules and participate THE GODS OF PLAY ARE IDEAS, coming from inside us and therefore removed from God's creation of the world. We cannot say that whatever we like is true!p. (p.7)

Those who believe that reality is what the mind imagines believe that God is an illusion!

5. Being creative, bringing a new idea or an image into existence, is just like bearing a child, painful and requiring sacrifice. There is nothing playful about art! WE THEREFORE MUST NEVER JUDGE SERIOUS THINGS FROM THE RULES OF PLAY. "...if it is just a good idea, please don't do it. You can only do it if it is (ultimately) necessary and unavoidable." (p.10)

Life cannot be lived experimentally. True inspiration awakens us to a new world. (p.11) The primary function of the artist is to tell us what we are doing, and so make us conscious of ourselves. ERH uses the metaphor of the artist fertilizing the egg (creating new possibilities for seeing reality); ordinary people live unfruitful lives until they become conscious of reality. The artist, through his art, attempts to so fertilize our imaginations, attempting to tell us the truth about ourselves.

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6. The first decision we make, or should make if we are to come alive (live fruitful lives), is about death, ERH asserts. His logic is that we are created by way of the sacrifice of our parents, and we ourselves only "come alive" spiritually by living our lives in a willingness to create new life (meaning not only procreation but new communities, and fruitful change in ourselves). Fruitful creativity, with change is living. So the experience we have is that fruitfulness is created by sacrifice of all types, then we die. THIS IS THE FIRST RELIGIOUS DECISION WE MAKE, THAT WE CHOOSE TO LIVE HONESTLY REGARDLESS OF THE RISK, WHETHER WE KNOW IT OR NOT, AND WHEN WE RECOGNIZE AND PRACTICE IT WE OPEN OUR LIVES TO THE REAL FREEDOMS OF CHOICE AND GROWTH. Of course a choice may be to avoid the choice!

His aphorism is that the past is not dead and life is not in the future, but rather the opposite - the past creates life, and our future is always death. (pp.16-19) All past societies that fought wars for justice, scientists who sacrificed to create a more stable and better physical existence, and our own families - all of these forces created and regenerated life upon which our lives are based.

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To face the fact that we will die frees us by teaching us the miraculous values and possibilities of life. We are then motivated to live more meaningfully. ANYTHING THAT IS NOT WORTH DYING FOR WILL EVENTUALLY DISAPPEAR, AND SHOULD. (p.22)

7. Another decision (within the 5 dimension paradigm), would be to choose nature, (physics, the universe of laws). When one begins with nature, one can never derive a logic for

love or sacrifice (and all social rules for building a community). Hormones, sex, glands do not create love. "...sacrifice is a form in which man is deified,..." (p.20)

8. There are many gods, of course, the god of sex, of greed, of learning, of work, of play, automobiles, gambling, sports (exercise), vanity, etc. The 5 dimension paradigm (nature, organic, consciousness, love, politics), are generalizations summarizing all basic life experiences. The point is that we must be conscious of that which we worship at some given time **SO THAT WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF WHAT WE DO**. Play, for instance, is useful, but not adequate for meaningful life.

9. "Where," ERH asks, "...does America worship?" Of course, America worships the god of space, of things, of speed, (half the fuel used in the country is to get somewhere faster, and more than half our income is spent on things we don't really need! (p.26,27)

10. **THE SECOND GOD WE WORSHIP**, after mechanics (death), is organic (dance), which informs many of our ceremonies, our play, "...it means we should bask in rhythm, in harmony." (p.30)

Worship means to enter the roads created by the gods. The original name for Christianity was not Christianity, but "the way".

## Lecture - 14

1. ERH claims to provide a precise measure for discerning the quality of particular religions around the world. The Greek meaning of the term "mathematics" is exact knowledge that can be taught. He claims, contrary to some humanists who believe we cannot know anything, least of all about religion, that if this were so, human society would have self-destructed long ago.

He lauds the Jehovah's Witnesses, who claim to wish to know the truth and act on it. (p.2)  
Where we worship we want the real thing - truth - regardless of what is worshipped. And we all worship some things, or behaviors, or people (idols), or some evil, or some deserving cause. To march into war is a religious act. **THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF RELIGION IN OUR SECULAR LIFE.** (p.5)

2. Life and death: The ancient Egyptians worshipped eternal life, imperishable things like pyramids and gold. And they thought they had an eternal soul that never died. To worship dead things and living things at the same time is a paradox. Living things die. We all die.

Just as we have no peace without war, or no love without danger, there is no life without death. The course of life runs out.

The Hindus tried to prolong life by seeking suspended animation, but that state is hardly living, in our estimation.

3. All living cells give up their lives to produce new life. It is the same with human society. That we are always in danger is also a fact of all life. In danger from natural disasters, from disease, from ignorance, from greed and lack of courage.

"Good works" are the acts that reduce or reverse these dangers. But remember, ERH admonished, good works can always be corrupted.

4. The Bible announces all of the corruption of ideas that impede the discovery of truth. (Read St. John's Apocalypse, or Revelation). ERH claims a modern example would be social science, especially psychology, whereby everything is explained from the psyche (that is, truth is to be found only through rational thought. Much of our experience would tell us, if we listen, that truth often evolves in exactly the opposite direction from our (previously mistaken) logic.

"...as soon as you don't read the New Testament, all these irreligions come up again...It is written as the inventory of the stupidities of the human race." (p.11)

ERH repeats once again, to go to church isn't much, and certainly not a religious act. But to seek truth, and be willing to sacrifice and change...!

5. We are pitted against a worship of dead things (space). Of idiotic fantasy, space story, new cars, etc., of liberal ideas. The world of physics is the world of dead matter. "The only purpose of matter is to be told that it doesn't matter." (p.16) The profoundest religion you can have about matter is that matter is a means, not an end. We must seek to make dead matter less dangerous, less enticing, less hypnotizing. (p.20)

6. The first natural religions of the sky (having astronomy and worshipping the deities of the heavens as living beings), were those of the Egyptian, Babylonian, Incas, Chinese (to some extent). They thought gold was the source of life. (p.17) They worshipped the imperishable, and the way for humans to enter that world was to have statues made of oneself. This was not decorative art, but a conduit for the living to enter the dead world of imperishable things.

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7. We are nothing but dumb animals in the beginning of our lives, and the great goal of growth and development is to "come to life," spiritually. This is to say, to seek the truth about living, and how to live and what is of value. To see reality in social relations as well as in spacial relations, and to be willing to create new life. Those who are only self-serving remain at the animal level. To come to life is to live so that those who succeed us will be instilled with the method of regeneration of the spirit. That is our protection against death.

8. Those who "come to life" as described above, are always in the minority, and must therefore be protected against the majority. Unfortunately, the majority always governs the quality of life for all.

9. The 5 elements are representative of the more frail, more delicate, more perishable and more

endangered elements of life. The vote of the majority is, by definition, a vote for death. Without a religious foundation, no democracy is possible. "The meaning of your life is that you become the man who deserves the lifesaving by the minority." (p.26)

One evidence of this is to strive toward the highest standards in one's profession.

This country, for the last 50 years has dismissed everything which has been known about the human's place in nature. ...And they call this the era of natural science...it has totally dismissed the real relations between a scientist and his nature. (p.27)

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10.To be a minority is always more difficult. Hatred is always easier than affection. To recognize dead things is easier than bringing them to life. RELIGION IS THE POWER NOT TO CONFORM TO THE MAJORITY. It is easier to conform to orders, and more difficult to - say no, conform, to be unique, or be a minority. (p.29)

11.The Greeks knew all of this. To them the cosmic order meant to create a decent community, to influence others to do so, to control living things less than dead matter.

## **Summary of Lectures 8-14**

During the first seven essays ERH defends the notion that one can compare religions only if one has a clear definition of religion, and is conscious of one's own religious bias. He also asserts that, basically, all religions attempt to address the same questions. In this series of chapters he takes the next step for comparison, which is to ask, "What might be these common denominators for different religions?"

One of the fundamental assumptions found throughout all Rosenstock-Huessy's thought is that we can understand our experience only in terms of ideas that correlate with our experience. In other words, if abstractions such as gravity or love cannot be experienced directly by us, we simply have no notion of their meaning. It is the same with all abstractions, including religion. For instance, concepts about a heaven or hell as places of total good or total evil, where either there is no danger or suffering, or just the opposite, are pure fantasy, since we cannot experience them except in our minds. And to the extent that such ideas prevail in religion means the perpetrators are simply maintaining a religion for the four-year-old mentality. While ideas of heaven and hell are useful metaphors describing our experience, taken literally they are really fantasy.

Therefore, the basis for comparing religions is not to look at their churches, ceremonies, liturgy, and theologies, but beyond these to what all of these are intended to represent to their members. If all meaning comes from human experience, and humans are essentially the same the world over, then there must be fundamental similarities based on how humans have responded to that experience. For instance, all societies suffer from natural disasters, disease, failed crops,

invading armies, etc. and the gods they conjured up represent their belief in where power lies to resist or placate those gods.

An examination of five core experiences of all humans is the primary thrust of this series of lectures. These are intended to occur in sequence from birth, but the increasing complexity of our experience as we grow means that these five accumulate and become interrelated as our experience. These are as follows:

1. **Mechanical experience**: This is a recognition that the first experience we have is that of the laws of nature. We fall to the ground, or things fall on us. This can create pain in one way or another. Also, we unavoidably experience day and night, heat and cold, up, or down, and other spacial and natural phenomena. The primary quality of nature is raw power, moving through space, exerting energy to maintain our body temperatures; we build machines to do our work, and spend a great deal of time creating fuel for our machines.

Science is devoted to describing objects in the universe and in discovering the laws that explain how these objects may be manipulated. Science, is perhaps the main "religion" of modern industrial countries, from which is derived a technology to empower us in our endless quest for forms of material Laws of nature Because these laws are inexorable and repeatable, they define the mechanical elements of our experience. These laws are representative of our first experiences of life.

2. **Organic experience**: Organic experience defines the processes of living cells, which seem to be dominated by rhythmic patterns. All cells take in food from other living cells. Basically these patterns are defined by such experience as hunger and satiation, seasons of germination, growth, fruition, and sleep (spring, summer, fall, and winter), of stages of aging and all its changes, stages of the healing process, metabolic changes tied to seasons of the year and also to day and night. Examples of religious ceremonies abound in terms of the winter solstice, of planting, germination, harvest, etc. But at an individual level all of these rhythms have their counter-part.

One of the most basic elements of organic experience is the contrast between life and death. We tend to fear death and must learn to be conscious of living beyond the most basic emotional and energy responses to life. Life and death are opposites. Life is unique in the universe where it exists. There is perhaps no more clear element of all religious life than explanations about life and death. Consciousness of our state of health when we fall ill or suffer injury dominate our thinking, beginning with our earliest memories.

3. **Work experience**: Work dominates most of our waking life, and in this effort we strive to plan and predict outcomes. From an early age we are confronted with various types of survival problems, cleaning and washing, food getting, shelter-building, play, learning, and the like. In this experience we consciously attempt to solve the various problems that confront us.

4. **Passion**: Consciously or not, emotions dominate much of our thought. "Our passions give life to the world," ERH wrote in another essay, driving us to frustrations, despair, creativity... We

seem capable of developing a passion for almost anything - property, power, love, hate, but essential significance of emotion lies in the energy it creates. This energy allows us to do things not ordinarily possible. Art is the method by which we attempt to understand our emotional response to experience.

**5. Catastrophe:** This is a force outside our individual or social life, about which we have little or no control. These are social or natural events, such as war or earthquake, which overwhelm us and to which we must learn to adapt and change. Catastrophe can represent turning points in our understanding of reality, or, if we seem incapable of learning from our experience, we continue to fail in forming any appropriate response. For instance, our despoiling of the environment is leading to disaster, and if continued it will force us to pay a heavy price. And war, when it fails to inform us of its meaning threatens endless repetition if not the very end of society. ERH also uses the term "politics" as representative of forces beyond our control. The sheer inertia of public power is overpowering to the individual. This is why the individual must associate with others, in one way or another in groups.

ERH contends that all religions derive from the basic needs to respond appropriately to our experience, and that experience can be categorized into these five elements. The power to face problems posed by these experiences is essential to survival, and therefore the focus of all true religions. This is to say, all humankind have sought to control the elements of these five forces. The forces that drive segments of our life he would also define as our lesser gods. For instance, sex, or hobbies, or our profession. Our problem of survival, both individually and as a culture, is to become conscious of what controls all aspects of our experience, so that we can respond to that experience in the most efficacious way. Through the ages, religions have identified and attempted to explain or control these five categories of forces.

Some religions emphasize only one or two of these elements, believing they are the most important. For instance, the Hindu religion attempts to eschew the force of nature (mechanics), by ascending into a state of suspended animation, deep sleep in a way, so that the physical forces cannot reach the psyche. Psychosomatic medicine is one manifestation of this power of the mind. Some of the mystical religions maintain that mind is the ultimate power of the universe, and thus they believe in telekinetics and the inhabiting of people's minds by others (for which the antidote is exorcism).

An ideal religion would then be comprehensive, addressing all five categories, just as would a complete and balanced comprehension of reality. The goal of all religions seems to be that which is necessary to create an ideal community, one where individual growth of human potential would be maximized. This, of course, can only be realized by recognizing what humans "can," but may not, do. But our sins seem to lie in not attending to what one "may not do" according to the moral commandments from "God's authority." Modern industrial cultures seem to err in believing that whatever can be done is all right to be done. The Nazis, for instance, in their plan for the "final solution" of the "Jewish problem."

Since putting true community-building (as contrasted with community-destructive beliefs) into practice can be difficult if not life-threatening at times, religious power is intended to propel one to confront and overcome such danger. That is, to have the power to bring about change that will regenerate community, to empower willingness to sacrifice for our fellow humans, and the courage to act accordingly when required. These are what ERH calls religious decisions. It is because to act this way requires extraordinary power that religion is a necessity.

In the succeeding essays, ERH expands on the meaning of these five "spheres" of experience and offers examples of how different religions emphasize one or more of them.

## Lecture - 15

1. One of the biases of the Greeks was to settle on the notion that the father/daughter relationship was comprehensive; "...a typical pagan, settling on one divinity, one superhuman experience." (p.2) Paganism then, in part means artificial isolation (from the whole).

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The American, for instance, believes in the dominance of science in all things, in analysis, the business cycle, the standard of living, "...these are his gods." (p.2) People yearn for comprehensiveness for unity, but they don't seem capable of paying the price to have it. It is easier to fragment problems, to simplify them.

2. Since the beginning of time there have always been those who are satisfied with a less vital life (pagans) on the one hand, and those who sought the divine inspiration and genius on the other. One makes us smaller, the other, bigger. One only becomes "bigger" by way of sacrifice.

3. The lower life can see the larger life only when it (the lower) kills it. "You can't make the embryo understand how wonderful this young mother is." (p.3)

The difference between atheists and believers is not that one is better than the other, but that the latter knows of the existence of something better than now exists. "Believers" sin and are faint of heart just as much as are non-believers. All men are born equal, and then become unequal.

4. The purpose of the formal church is to codify the standards for life (not of living, but of life). ERH predicts a backlash in America, because our technology has dominated our living, but we yearn for something deeper now. We can't continue to drift through life acquiring property. We have outproduced the world, with our "fragmentary religion."

5. Man's tendency is to drift toward, or remain in paganism, polytheism, fragmentary religion.

The Christian creed is the trinity - the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The theology of the first 1,000 years was a belief in Christ as God (or in the representative of God the father), a belief in praising an "ideal" individual. God was met in the form of a suffering son who

"...sacrificed for his enemies." (p.8) In the second 1,000 years A.D. have been characterized by a belief in nature, in natural laws, in Plato and Aristotle. In seeking the order in the world.

This present millennium is coming to believe in God as the Holy Spirit, IN THE CREATION OF SOCIETY. "Spirit" in this sense means commonly held values, which we settle on by communicating with others. It is the stuff of forming association. God is thus called by 3 different names; God is more than one, he is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Holy spirit is the understanding between people, that which allows for people to live together in peace voluntarily.)

[RF - THIS IS A DIRECT CONFIRMATION THAT ALL OF ERH'S THOUGHT IS UNIFIED BY THE IDEA OF BUILDING A GOOD COMMUNITY.]

6. In the beginning of the 3rd millennium (now) God is met (experienced) in the form of the group.

If you haven't lived in a family group, if you haven't lived in a fraternity, if you haven't lived in college, in a youth camp in summer, you don't know what the Spirit is....

The logical order in the church was, "I believe in God the Father, and God the Son and the Holy Spirit." But practical experience was, for the people who were Christened, "I love Christ." The second step was, "I have faith in the order of the world as created by the Father." And now, "I have experienced the Spirit." (p.9)

One could experience (vicariously) the crucifixion and have faith in Christ's love. In the second millennium, one experiences the application of the power of science and technology.

7. Having experience is crucial. One does not convince by merely speaking. That comes later. One must first provide experience. [RF - Given the present degrading of social forms, the family, the work place, war between nations, it is easy to conclude that one experiences precious little "Spirit" of cooperation. In short, there is precious little unity of peoples and therefore, we tend to worship its lacking (paganism). When one doesn't see the whole, or experience the unity, one gets stuck in partial gods.]

One can experience love of friends and husband and wife, one can experience having hope for one's children, and one can have faith in one's country. And thus have something useful to say to all three. Thus faith, hope, and charity (love) is also another description of the Trinity. To speak out truthfully this way renews speech. These three articles of faith engender eloquence.

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8. THE NOTION IS THAT IN EACH OF THE LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE - mechanic, organic, work, love and catastrophe - at different ages and cultures, each of these is worshipped. The worship of the golden calf and of the heavens was #1, the worship of organism, of investing life in all things, the animistic and totemic religions would be #2. Religious manifestations here



would include living sacrifices to the gods, customs of behavior of people at each age they pass through, rites of passage, etc.

The church in this country is the most irreligious institution I know of. It worships just tradition for its own sake, because it doesn't tackle your own mysterious changes. (p.19)

We experience all 5 of these levels, to get through life as best we can, to live it fully. It is the unifying power of the single God that represents all 5, which frees us from getting stuck in seeing life in distortion, as being dominated by only one or two of the five. We, for instance, need to recognize the rhythm of the organic plain (#2), where we age and disintegrate and don't try to stay young all our lives. We live in a succeeding set of stages and roles. The stages are both physiological and social. One cannot live (and be accepted) the same way at age 30 as one did at 20. IN SUM, LIFE IS DESCRIBED BY CONSTANT CHANGES TO WHICH WE MUST ADAPT APPROPRIATELY. To enter one stage from another, things must be given up, and new experiences confronted.

9. Our mind seems to be a barrier to these changes. We are not trained to see them. Our mind can stay at 20 which our physiology is at 40. Rites of passage recognized as religious experiences remind us of the changes in our lives. Thus, courtship, marriage, becoming parents and grandparents, birthdays, baptisms, promotions and retirements, etc. necessarily change our roles, necessarily must be recognized, and this is another reason why religious ceremony is necessary.

Here is religion. It isn't so far away in any one, big heaven. Religion overtakes you, or your irreligion...It just happens to us, that we undergo these changes. And to have religion means to receive them with an open mind, and throw your mind into these changes, and to say they are important. After all, religion is the sense of the important, of what matters...You remember, the first religion was: matter does not matter. The second religion is: physiological change does matter. (p.26)

## Lecture - 16

1. Religious beliefs help us maintain some identity, a modicum of stability, unity and permanence of in our lives in an environment of a need for constant change. We change during life stages, we change roles as we grow, we might need to change nationalities where it may be necessary to migrate, and most of all, we change during the day as we go from one basic life experience to the next. For instance, one hour we may be a scientist, the next a group member, the next, maintaining our health (perhaps doing exercises, or guarding our metabolism by getting proper rest). In each of these different situations we respect a different god - the god of nature, of politics, the god of life (organisms), etc.

In the light of all of these changes, our religion helps maintain our personal sense of identity. Religion thus rises above the need to change, not getting stuck in any one mode. It frees us to change, helping us to live life more fully and fruitfully.

2. Each of these five elements of experience is essential and must be respected. Work, the 3rd level, needs to be planned, organized, it is mainly a daytime activity. These first three, natural laws (science), organism (the rhythms of life like sleeping and eating), and work, (the getting of food, shelter and clothing), are all outside activities over which we have much control. For instance, we have discovered many of the laws of nature and can use that power.

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But our inner life, our strength to think new thoughts, our courage to make difficult decisions, our sacrifices for the group are where the creative and major power of religion lies.

3. Thus, we live in two worlds which are compatible, but different, and in some ways opposite. In the outer world, more is better. In the inner world, less is better (we must learn to depress the intoxication of acquiring worldly possessions beyond basic necessities). In love and politics lies our spirit, our faith that we can be self-reliant.

4. Religion and philosophy are opposite, one relating to the outer world and the other to inner world. Philosophy is the result of being self-reliant and self-assertive. Religion (faith) helps us create by way of our spirit.

So the great question mark for every modern man with regard to this third phase is, "What can I do purposely?"...you can't breathe purposely. You can't sleep purposely. You can only sleep when you no longer have purpose (for the moment). (p.12)

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5. ERH asserts that one cannot rely only any one of the five, not on science only, not on our health only, on work, love or on politics only. Not even on God only. We need all of the above, and this is why we must be capable of change. By extension, ONE CANNOT RELY ON "SELF" ONLY. We need knowledge of nature, we need health, we need work, creativity, and politics. "...the faith of a scientist consists in that he says, 'There must be science' before he can prove it. That's an act of faith."

Thus, half the content of our acts is rational, and the other half is always based on faith. (p.15)

6. Creativity is high on the list of needs because we need to do things we have never done before, in which case we are never sure of the outcome of those acts. One of the definitions that separates humans from animals is that humans are capable of doing things where the outcome is completely unknown. No animal does this!

"...the experience of novelty is the highest religion of the human mind...As long as you are rational (only) you can never experience novelty." (p.27)

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ERH goes on to suggest that purposeful living is important, but insufficient for living a full life. When there is no clear way for action, one must simply change, get out of a situation, perhaps establish a new purpose in life - in order to maintain sanity.

...dead things cannot die. The rationalist is always the deadest element in any family, and so he doesn't fall sick. But he, on the other hand, doesn't live. (p.23)

7. The scientist acts as a god in that he can control things when he learns the natural laws that describe their processes. It is therefore natural and necessary to worship this power, and it gives one self-reliance (within that sphere of activity). But, because of this, it can never (or should never) be more than a partial worship. (p.27)

Thus, in addition to self-reliance, we all know that humility, a recognition of one's weaknesses and limitations (and the faith that one can change and persevere) is also a necessity. ERH believed that the propensity for Americans to over-value self-reliance is a sickness. They (Americans) are stuck worshipping at the first mechanic (scientific) level of experience. Hindus', on the other hand, became stuck worshipping the second (organic) level. They believe divinity is achieved by descending into a deep sleep of meditation. SO THE TWO RELIGIONS ARE OPPOSITES, one all for action and purpose, one to eschew the concrete world. One worshipping conscious living, the other unconscious living.

8. Americans, because they worship science and purpose, and control, and willfulness - believe that they can "will" love and creativity and therefore be captains of their souls, and of spirit. Thus, "...modern man has lost anything that transcends the first and the third sphere." Idolizing work, he fills the asylums or psychiatrist couches because he cannot understand his inner emptiness. (p.33)

## Lecture - 17

1. ERH coins the term "spheres of reality" to denote the 5 classes of experience. 1) At the outermost is dead matter, "the space world of stars..." of metal and water, Imperishable things. 2) Next comes the sphere of life, of all living organisms, of which humans are a class of animal - "animated." 3) Next is the sphere of will, of work (which is to say organized time) - here dead matter (and lower animal life) is incorporated for human use. 4) One should make a distinction between those who create ideas and put them to use, and the worker (who is at level 3). Love, passion, sacrifice, and affection are the essence of level 4.

More on relationships: Each level is more important than that before it, in the course of human society- building. Level 3, (work and the power of will) is capable of combining levels 1 and 2. Each of these levels is a religion. Those who seek money worship level 1, and everything (including people) is valued in terms of its monetary value. They make no distinction between the different levels. Prince Hal (Henry IV part II) just fooled around when a youth, but knew the difference between play and serious business - and was therefore great.

2. In sum, we all come under the spell of these minor gods, BUT THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT ONE KNOWS THE DIFFERENCE between the "spheres of reality," and can step into the appropriate one when called upon. We pay a price for worshipping each god. The lesser gods are serious business, because we always pay a price for whatever we worship.

3. In the 4th sphere, people are **not** seen as one of many, but as unique beings; "...everybody has a personal name." (p.14) In the 3rd sphere, "workers" are seen as the same, a commodity, where one is the same as another. In the 4th sphere, one cannot replace another - one's wife or husband, friend, children, or family members are irreplaceable. This is the sphere of the personal, of love, of passion and compassion, and also the love for one's work, or one's country. Species have a name (not numbers). Thus, species represent a naming (by category) which is still contained in science (sphere 1).

4. People seem not to understand, today, that since the Renaissance they have lost their understanding of what it means that every human individual has a different name. Our tendency is to grant everyone inside our own nation, or class, the right to have a different name, but "outsiders" we call by a classification; e.g. Germans, French, Jews, terrorists, etc, implying that it is all right to kill them. If they die in some catastrophe, we view it as a lesser loss. PEOPLE WHO DON'T SEE MAN AS THE CUSTODIAN OF THE EARTH care little for the extinction of plants and animals.

"...remember that where there is a name, there is affection." ...And people will blow their heads out and kill each other for a name...What's in a name? ...a love story...identity, belonging...being a member of reality. (pp.18,19)

In the old times, after a child was born, it could be destroyed with impunity before it was given a name.

5. ...the condition of a name is that the person or the living being, addressed in this manner, turns around and comes to you, and knows that it is meant, or she is meant,...A name must always enter this field of force. A name is that term or that expression by which somebody recognized himself, is spoken of, and is spoken to. (p.20)

Affection means that one name stands for all situations. To call someone something behind his back differently than to their face signifies a lack of love or respect. A name is physical, someone hears it. Thus, names are just as real as things.

Names have consequences by way of addressing people with an admonition, or command, or response to them.

"Every religious person believes that God can hear. Otherwise we couldn't pray...IF a name suddenly is heard for which you have waited inside yourself, from the mouth of another person, you have entered a new sphere of life." (p.23)

6. The whole of religion is built around the sacrament of love-making, of declaring your love. That's why love according to the Gospel is the greatest manifestation of the divine power...Romeo said, "it is my soul that calls upon my name."....your real birth. That's your soul that's born at that moment. (p.24)

ERH goes on to point out that the difference between living in sphere 3 and sphere 4 is that, in sphere 3 (work and will power) one declares him/herself to be self-made; while in sphere 4, Romeo's statement exemplified the essence of love, by hearing that someone else defines who one is by calling his name.

7.To be loved means that all past sins are forgiven, and we are born again - made over, so to speak.This gives one the power to face the world and in the end, perhaps the world, will call you by the same name.

We are made by the recognition of others. This is what politics is vis-a-vis the 5th sphere. Love is not necessarily agreeable, or perhaps not very often agreeable. One frets, strives to provide for, feels pain for those loves. But love is something one cannot escape.

Love saves you from despair in your own power to be recognized by the world. That's the best definition of love I know....You need somebody who sees in you what you hope you can be. (p.29)

8.The 3rd sphere, that of the bureaucracy, will turn you into a rubber stamp. You are viewed as a commodity of labor, it encroaches upon your sense of self-respect. No doubt with only rare exceptions, the bureaucracy has an enervating effect on one's soul. This is why the 4th and 5th spheres are so important. They provide an environment where one generates the power to rise above and beyond mere "work."

9.Love "annihilates" the past because it is only interested in the future.

The lover calls you by your name as part of your future. And enemies call you by your name as part of your past. So love makes the present. (pp.31,32)

## Lecture - 18

1.To call the person by the right name - friend, lover, admiral, garbage collector - creates social order in the world; social order means communication, and the foundation upon which all association (community) is based. Organization (the 3rd sphere) tries to make all relationships impersonal. Passion, love (the 4th sphere) is just the opposite, and therefore more alive.

2.We live in a highly impersonal world. Politics, which is another word for organization (the 3rd sphere), MUST HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL'S NAME ASSOCIATED WITH IT. Organization intends to exclude the 4th sphere (love), and thus, it should never be loved. Respected, responded to, but not loved.

3. THE GOOD LIFE is peopled by a world which, as far as possible, lives in the 4th and 5th spheres - where everyone should be loved by someone and can be unique. This means a world where people are an end in themselves, rather than a means (as they are in spheres 1-3).

4. In the 4th and 5th spheres we really achieve humanness, as distinguished from mere animals. One can say, we begin to acquire a "soul." WE ARE PART, OR HAVE A PART IN, ALL 5 SPHERES.

But the more careful you distinguish what part of yours has to stay within these rings, the more free you will be for being also a member of the fourth and fifth sphere, of where the man (person) only begins to exist. (p.7)

Where creativity and prophecy occur, engendering the ability to change toward growth.

5. The advent of almost all professions requiring specified formal educational certification is an example of over-organization. There is little improvisation. This is a manifestation of praise of method over content, for formal schooling is more important than demonstrated competence. Why do we channelize our efforts toward organization?

Because you don't dare to love. That's too vulnerable, that's too exciting, and too dangerous. And there you can go wrong. (p.8)

All order is an attempt to be predictable. Predictable never leads to innovation, or creativity. One cannot love a predictable person. The only person who is interesting is the incalculable person, because you can't calculate her by any standards of organization.

6. Where one loves, truly, one quiets their desire for sex. ERH tells the story of the priest who was excommunicated and had to marry because his congregation could no longer love him. He had to belong to something. What is love? SEEING ONESELF INSIDE A LARGER BODY. Love therefore is not idolatry - one should not idolize a husband or wife, or friend. But one has a common faith with those one loves.

Love requires speech. We tend to get stuck on understanding communication in terms of the content of the message - BUT ANOTHER CRUCIAL ELEMENT OF SPEECH IS WHO SPEAKS TO WHOM.

All of these comments about love are an attempt to have you understand the implication of the 4th sphere. By "work" (3rd sphere) we incorporate dead matter into our lives. By love we incorporate organisms, that otherwise die, into the life of the race. (p.14) Love is therefore the process by which we really overcome death. One can save the United States from decay, one can save the environment, or reverse degeneration of the culture.

By their fruits you shall know them. That is the important rule of the Fourth Commandment. (p.15)

6.The fifth sphere is "love to the square, or life to the third power. ..without spirit, no great nation can live." (p.16)

7.The order of importance of these spheres is for a good reason. Dead matter is just there, we cannot avoid attending to the laws of nature. Metabolism likewise has a rhythm we must pay attention to or fall sick. Organization (work) represents production. BUT WHAT TO DO WITH THESE METHODS? These are largely if not completely described by quantitative measures. The fourth and fifth spheres must guide and control all the others. They are qualitative, unmeasurable by quantitative means.

8.**Selectivity** is the heart and soul of spheres 4 & 5. It lies at the heart of love, of art, of all creativity. Every new theory demonstrates a different method of selecting elements of the universe, and therefore creating something new, or not-before noticed. Selectivity is qualitative, not quantitative.

To get one's wishes does not improve one's happiness, because it would reduce our power of selectivity. Neither the 1st, 2nd, nor 3rd spheres have any criterion for importance (except within their sphere). LOVE IS THE ONLY POWER THAT IS SELECTIVE.

9.When one lives in one of the spheres only, one confuses the richness of the others for its own. To differentiate the spheres is a selective process. When we pass through different roles in life, youth, young adulthood, middle and old age, we have different abilities and privileges, as well as different metabolisms. Life only becomes interesting by selecting, by making these distinctions, when we separate the generations.

Selection is not organized so much as it is recognized. Therefore, to be selective is above and beyond mere organization.

The businessman can only speak the language of regulations, and of organization, and of production. That's not the language with which you bring people together. (p.29)

## Lecture - 19

1.ERH sees a necessity to differentiate willful love from real love. Willful love is want of eros, "just sex," it requires no deep relationship; it is playing. Love for which one will sacrifice is deeper, but one has no control over it. "...much nearer a disease than to a free act of your will." (p.1)

2.Serious life has that aggravating quality of not being amenable to being called on at the beginning or off at the ending. Play, on the other hand, is completely controlled by will. The issues of serious life are necessity, beyond our choice.

True love is not luxury, it is the only way we have of overcoming death, and it is not sentimental.

3. These 5 spheres, in sum, describe comprehensiveness. They arise from our fear of change. These five spheres arise from a number of questions: 1) What does this change mean? 2) Where can I hold onto something that lasts, across this chasm of change? 3) Where am I before, and where am I hereafter? (That is, what reference points do I have in life and what do they mean?)

One leaves behind the sphere of mutual recognition and enters the sphere of fate, of war, of catastrophe. The Roman god of catastrophe is Saturnus. And the Jewish god who raised Saturnus says, "I am he who comes." (p.5)

4. Two conceptions of catastrophe: in one case, as the end of an era, and the other, as the beginning of the next era, as a new beginning.

Our (American) initial response to deep change is that of fear; that is how the 5 spheres were derived - from our fear of deep change. Jews faced this fear and took the opposite view - that any change is better than the present tyranny. Doing God's will is better than doing the will of the rich. Jews believe that today is not good enough. Saturnus (Americans) believe that "the devil we know is better than the devil we don't know."

5. One can understand the temptation to believe that deep change will make things worse, (especially if one is rich at present.) Satan is a metaphor for hatred of the uncontrollable. Here we tend to value (worship) the ways of flesh rather than what is necessary to create a good community; it is the way of selfishness, of seeing ourselves and our logic as god.

6. It is easier to understand the first 4 spheres than the 5th, where questions of the existence of God arise. All personal and social life must bow to the natural power of the catastrophe, of war and pestilence, of earthquake, of incurable disease, of the atomic bomb and its consequences.

When these things happen, when blindness or crippling disease occurs, when war comes, all of our plans and loves and possibilities must change before such awesome force. The earthquake means that the earth is still being created. Forces of creation continue. It means as well that the nature of humankind continues to evolve and our goal is to shape that evolution toward an ideal. A momentous insight, that earth and heaven are yet unfinished.

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7. All of this means that our whole view of the meaning of different religions must be reassessed, because the universe is still in the process of being created. It means that humankind can participate in this creation as agents of divinity; the creations of humankind are social, in community and in all our roles. **WE THUS EXPERIENCE CREATION IN OUR LIFETIMES ALL AROUND US.**

In this way, we become, or have the potential of becoming reborn, that is, with violent change. At these times we must decide whether to live a selfish life, or be concerned with the future of the community. One's individual life, or the life of one's small group associations, as against the



rest of the world.

**8. The question between the secular and the religious lies in sphere 5.** For instance, to judge that Russia and America together must address something bigger than their national survival. **THE GREAT QUESTION IS, DO PEOPLE SEE CATASTROPHES? How much of their experience do they understand!?** (p.15) Every sphere realizes change in different ways, but more importantly, how do different groups address catastrophe?

The Jews prophesy catastrophe far ahead, and imagine, today, "It smells fishy." (p.15) The Pagan down-plays future dangers. The Christian takes a stand in between and asks, "When must we let go?"

The Jews try to create a future, and have few loyalties to kings. Pagans have too many loyalties and don't wish to change. Christians accept the notion of creating a social future "kicking and screaming in protest", but seek, at the right moment to let go of the past customs. Thus, the Biblical quotation "They have ears and don't hear, and they have eyes and don't see." (p.16)

9. The primary source of meaning in our lives is fighting for a cause. One doesn't know beforehand which one is likely to be the right cause - it depends upon what others wish to dedicate themselves to, what catches their spirit. But commit we must, and sacrifice for the cause we must, in order to create a future, with no guarantees of success.

ERH likens the individual decision to a leaf on a tree, which asks, "Do I live my own life, or do I drop and fertilize the roots of the tree (of society)?" There is so much of the universe that is non-living - dead - and so the life that exists, including humankind and the animals and plants, must fight for its existence. **EITHER ONE SACRIFICES TO RENEW LIFE, OR LIFE WILL NOT BE RENEWED.** "The solidarity of all life against all death -- that's the problem of level 5." (p.19)

As long as one denies this question, and this battle for life, and withdraws, one denies the value of religion! It is humanity committing genocide. War is life against life, not life against death.

10. War is death against order, and against sphere 4. War is a battle between associations, not between individuals - this is why war is in sphere 5 and against sphere 4.

The individual life is less important than the life of the association (unless, of course the association is too corrupt and not worth saving). Individuals must fight for the association (the nation) because it protects individual freedom in many spheres with law and order.

11. A CATASTROPHE forces us to confirm or restate the religious question. The problem is always the survival of the human race against a material universe. Religion presents the standards for values that allow the race to become unified, otherwise it tears itself apart through anarchy. The problem, at first, is whether or not we recognize an impending catastrophe brought about by human action. The environment, for instance. A blind society is caught off-guard.

Jesus was said to have addressed the Jews about the impending doom of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple. He gave a warning and proposed a plan of change - to inform the Jews they must live in a different way. And he thus allowed the Jews to survive. He anticipated this destruction by 40 years.

12. Those who cannot anticipate such a future are enslaved within the first 4 spheres, and thus unable to see what is going on in the world.

Catastrophes require us to change our character, our ways of living, our hearts, our interpretation of what is important in life. Social catastrophe indicates an ignoring of social truths that unify society. Anticipation of the catastrophe creates time to adjust and formulate a plan, like providing for a life boat on an ocean-going ship. **THIS IS WHY PROPHECY WAS VALUED BY THE JEWS.**

13. This change is not just an adaptation to a new circumstance. It is much more fundamental to change one's heart and character. **IT IS A REBIRTH.** The Fundamentalists seem, as they do in most of their philosophy, to misunderstand the momentousness of this act. To change is no light matter. They seem to worship the forms and miss the meaning. Just as do scientists and others who are imprisoned in a misinterpreted faith, with no freedom to change their minds about its meaning.

To anticipate the emergency, as said above, is to prepare to meet and survive it somehow.

**...sacrifice is, of course, nonsense if it isn't the condition for surviving emergencies, catastrophes. That's what sacrifice is by definition. (p.24)**

14. There were attempts in the past to avoid real sacrifice in the form of change of habits by way of offering of human and other animal sacrifices on stone altars to false gods. These cultures tried to find a scapegoat, "...to buy off the emergency." And certainly this seems to be basic to human nature - to attempt avoidance of pain by cheap methods.

15. One of the differences between Christianity and Paganism is that one says, "I must volunteer to sacrifice (as we all must)." And the Pagan says, "Who, beside myself can I find to sacrifice?" Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, but Jesus volunteered himself.

16. Agamemnon claimed to believe in the gods, but his action belied that belief. Jesus proclaimed an impending catastrophe; it was not his speech, but his actions that empowered his belief. He was willing to die for them - and thus impressed much of the world with the power of that belief.

## Lecture - 20

1. We need to learn to climb up gradually from the first sphere of material things, to a sphere of more life, and eventually to conquer each sphere it by making it easily accessible. This is the importance of production, to rise above spending all our time consuming and attend more to the

quality of social life. THIS IS ANOTHER WAY OF STATING THE PURPOSE OF RELIGION. "...nature is that which has to be treated in the opposite way from all living beings." (p.2)

2.ERH next tries to make the case for seeing our individual selves as a speck of dust, in contrast to the whole of humankind. Our individual lives are less important than the group; our language is inherited from them, our knowledge, customs, art, institutions - everything that makes us human has been given us on "loan" for our short lives.

The point is, individually we can overcome death only by love, by dedication to others or to causes or professions - we continue to live in memories after physical death. This is accomplished by accepting and living by the requirements (laws), and fulfilling the purposes of each sphere. Each sphere represents a higher form of living from the previous, and all are essential to survival. Realize and recognize this as the method by which we achieve the fulfillment of humankind. And of course, this is the purpose and method of religion.

3.'The term catastrophe needs more definition. In this essay, catastrophe does not include natural, cataclysmic events such as earthquakes. Rather it derives from the Greek Katastrophein, TO TURN WHOLESALE. In short, it refers to social events, to the management of affairs.

4.Another interpretation of catastrophe is that it is something that is terrible to live through, but necessary for the future of the society or race. The English, French, American, and Russian revolutions were terrible to survive in the short term, but fruitful in the long run. As was the Reformation brought on by Luther.

5.RELIGION IS THE POWER TO BOW, ALTHOUGH WE SHUDDER. (p.12) "He is outside the religious sphere who denies this unity of the necessary and the terrible." (p.13). Philosophy is on the other side; it attempts to emphasize what should and should not happen, what is logical. It reflects the wishful thinking of fantasy, it assumes that it can command the forces that created the universe. The fantasy is that good can exist without evil, not recognizing that one always becomes corrupted with the power of knowledge and self-importance.

Religion, on the other hand, should force us to recognize the social catastrophes we have created and act to survive - and be willing to pay the price (of sacrifice) for solutions to social problems.

6.As one goes from sphere 1 to 5, the issue of time and timing becomes ever more crucial. In the cosmos, a specific physical event is not important, say a volcanic eruption, which could happen at any time. In sphere 2, the rhythm of the organism demands attention to "when-ness." With the organization of work, time schedules are at the center. With love, declarations are effective only when they come at the right time, which can only be felt or intuited, but certainly not willed. And finally, with politics, the right moment, the moment of opportunity, of truth, all are crucial to success or failure.

ERH points out that for the last 400 years philosophers have constantly missed the importance of time. The coming of Christ is that He came when the times were fulfilled. THIS IS THE NEW

ELEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, compared to other religions. (p.15) In prophesying the catastrophe, one is being prepared to act at the right time.

Christianity comes into the world to say, "You have forgotten one element, the element of timing." ...The Christian problem is to recognize which (social) catastrophe is indispensable, and then to go into it by voluntarily stripping yourself of the privileges of the old order, which makes the break so much harder if the privileges still stand up. (pp.16,17)

French nobility, in 1789, offered to give up their privileges (August 4), but it was too late. They had to have been given up before July 14 in order to influence a catastrophe. No sacrifice done under pressure is a real sacrifice. Jesus certainly could be called a political rebel; however, because he sacrificed himself on the cross before the catastrophe of the taking of the Temple, he was a "savior." Nietzsche, likewise pronounced "God is dead!" Man must now become superman. He, likewise suffered persecution. Most people tend to function in the sphere below their best self, below the highest level of receptivity and understanding. RELIGION IS PRECISELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AWAKENING US TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER LEVEL.

When there is not a strong force driving us we tend to slide down into the next lower sphere. [RF - In modern times someone put it this way, "We are as lazy as we dare to be!"

7.Love, spirit, inspiration "...I call "breathing together" - a shared sense of the world at that moment. Spheres 4 and 5 are to be looked up to because they leave us open to new experiences (and to growth through change). And, of course, these are the realms of religious experience. That which we look down on (spheres 1,2,3) are materials which we manipulate to higher ends (the building of community). To recognize only material reality is to omit the other half of experience. (p.23)

The religious experience, or religious issues, are where we decide in favor of action that moves us to spheres 4 and 5. These are the highest experiences of life, serving the community.

8.The very beginning of our lives is in an environment of speech from the authority of our parents, people we must look up to for all our needs. Only by being led by higher authorities do we live more in spheres 4 and 5.

A child is plastic, and can be trained into almost anything. This is the positive aspect of being said to be "childlike." One can still learn. To be childlike also means that we listen to an authority. Having learned what is believed to be necessity frees us to know where the realms of freedom might be, and therefore to be creative - to think for ourselves.

This means listening to the authority of the dead, of our ancestors. This, ERH claims, is why all religions embrace issues around death. CREATING A GOOD COMMUNITY IS BY DEFINITION A PLACE WHERE COMMANDS (FROM REAL SPIRITUAL AUTHORITIES, I.E. ALL GREAT FIGURES IN HISTORY AS WELL AS OUR ANCESTORS) ARE LEARNED. A good community is one that has the power to regenerate itself (teaching citizens

to be plastic, changeable).

9. ...worship of the dead is simply a way of remaining childlike. (p.28)

To renew ourselves is the central problem of religion. It is the power to decide when to follow orders from "authority." This is the only route to human survival and growth.

To lose parents means that we are no longer protected by someone else against death. Death projects survivors forward into a position of the next to die. Perhaps for the first time, one is forced to face death and the question of what our living has led to. RELIGION DEALS WITH THE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF CHANGE (all things in life resist death and change), empowering us to face down death.

10. An authority is, in part, someone who can face us down, who can criticize us with validity, who can laugh at us without our resentment.

## Lecture - 21

1. Thought is inferior to speech. The real power for humans is the words that are spoken to him(her) and what he speaks in response. And the meaning of our speech becomes manifest only in our actions. We are forced to think because somebody speaks to us. (p.2) "And that first layer of speech is an invocation, the name-giving."

To speak to another person helps us know who we are. "Thinking is a storage room for speech...the first connection of men with real life is speech." (p.2)

2. The society is in trouble when there are no great authorities to look up to, no Lincolns or Roosevelts - and parents to a great extent have lost their authority with their children, or the respect of youth in general. It is chic today for young people to eschew all authority. No wonder there is so much de-generation. NO DOUBT ONE OF THE CRUCIAL JUDGMENTS ONE MAKES LIES IN CHOOSING A PROPER AUTHORITY TO LOOK UP TO.

3. One of the important elements of community is integrating groups with different approaches to thought and mores. In order to include people in our circle, we must understand our own values and religion - only then can we learn to accommodate theirs.

Prayer means invocation, the willingness to learn from the other fellow who you are. (p.7)

The first layer of speech invokes names whose "tone" of utterance is ripe with meaning. Hindu, Sanskrit, Old German, Latin and Greek are the full flowering of grammatical forms (speaking about something). Syntax, as in Beowulf and Homer, produces long sentences. Grammatics and syntax reduce tone and increase "...estrangement from the people being spoken to."

This is why the Protestant service has, as a backbone the reading of the Psalms, which intones fully by invoking the name of an authority (the lord). All of this discussion exemplifies the need to look up to an authority as a fundamental religious act. ERH GENERALIZES THIS EXAMPLE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL NEED FOR AUTHORITY IN ALL SPHERES. This need seems to lie at the base of the method for growth.

4.ERH makes the point once again that all activities are specialized, e.g. the scientist, the government worker, the banker and carpenter and watchmaker ---. But, as humans, we also have other experiences outside our means for making a living. ONLY RELIGION HAS THE PURPOSE OF BEING UNIVERSAL, of teaching us and giving us the strength to integrate all our experiences into our thinking so that we can understand interrelationships between ideas and one another..

The point is that invocations (names) are the universal language of mankind, because they are the one part of our language that really is universal. And invocation is the bedrock of religion. It is not music, as some assert, that is the universal language. And in spite of the fact that there are hundreds of languages, names are still their only universal element. Names do not belong to Latin or German. "The only connecting link between the Siberians and American is the name, Lincoln." (pp.9,10,11)

5.The reason for the requirement of the Liberal Arts in college is the need to be in touch with the universal names in history. The names of Jesus, of Moses, of Buddha and Lao Tse exemplify universal names of religion.

In Christianity, Jesus invoking the name of our "father," implies that he, and we ourselves, are mature enough to "take over" the management of our affairs. And Jesus' words on the Cross, "Father, why have you forsaken me?" is the first step in this invocation process. "Names are the way of incorporating ourselves into each other." (pp.14,15)

6.The religious service requires that we recognize the ultimate power that created the universe. It is praising this power, allowing us to participate in it. In THE ORIGIN OF SPEECH, ERH points out that the first language was that of invocation. The first act of all cultures was to name all the animals, land, plants around them. This was also an act of invocation. The rest of our language followed from this.

The importance of our feeling "attached" to the universe could not be more real. For only those persons who are attached to the community have any value to it.

...whom you praise -- you can praise the gods, you can praise the spirits, you can praise anybody. But you have to praise the power, otherwise it becomes oppressive. (p.18)

7.It is important also to understand that this praise is not because God or the universe is large. That is very abstract and perhaps unimpressive (to ERH). But what is praised in the end is the enormous power to change and to change the world when we are included in the community. The

Puritans exercised their power to reject powerful government in Europe, as did the underground that opposed Hitler. WHAT WE ACTUALLY PRAISE AND GLORIFY IS THE POWER WE HAVE WHEN WE CAN UNDERSTAND AND ACT ON ALL 5 SPHERES OF EXPERIENCE.

The declaration of one's faith is part of faith itself, as a declaration of love is part of love itself, as the declaration of war is part of war itself. Great is what forces us to speak of it...this universe, it is so much alive that every one of us wants to participate by having his say about the universe. (p.21)

The point is, when we do not so praise the source of our power and thereby do "His" bidding, our alternative and strong tendency is to become self-centered.

8. The meaning of atonement lies in the fact that since God created life, and in order to live we must take life, we feel that we must give something back to pay for the gift of our lives. All primitive societies made offerings, at first, of the most desirable parts of the animal. In general, this is a symbolic meaning of the offertory in the church service. (p.24)

The most primitive phases of religion are incorporated in all of the parts of universal religions. So aspects of this universality are **praise, invocation, and offertory all of which go together,** his place."p.21-29

9. To invoke names, to include in praise of life is to speak **to** all living things. To speak only **about** them is to put them outside our living universe. No doubt this is why we seem so casual about exterminating animals and whole species with our technology. IF WE ARE TO BECOME THE STEWARDS OF THE EARTH and accept this burden seriously we must understand all our experience, including all life we can dominate. IT IS ONLY IN THE POWER OF RELIGION that this becomes possible, because by definition, religion includes all elements of the universe, not just some of its parts, like science, or our bodies, or our search for gold, or our institutional life.

## Lecture - 22

1. The 5 spheres of existence are largely a matter of "looking up and looking down." 1) Matter is just there, regardless of our existence. Beginning then with 2) organic, which is our "half existence," 3) to work, and 4) on to loving and finally 5) catastrophe, we progress in stages of "aliveness." The final sphere, catastrophe, calls for a necessity to be our most conscious of who we are in order to face the most difficult issues of our lives.

A catastrophe, that you have to be asked to stand up and testify for the truth, or that you have to die in battle as a soldier, or that you have to rescue somebody from danger or from oblivion, or that you have to sacrifice yourself for your children, that is not to be known before it has happened. (p.1)

Other stages are there most every day, and can be planned for and anticipated. Love, creativity, and catastrophe can be anticipated, of course, but not really planned for in the sense that we know when they will happen.

2. One problem is that catastrophe happens seldom. We get the feeling that we cannot or do not ever meet the extreme case. Another problem is that people tend to believe that #3, work, or those levels below (#s 1 and 2, science (matter) and the half-alive experience of organism) individually may account for all our experiences. In other words, the sphere in which one lives most hours of the day (work) tends to incorporate standards of explanation that dominate all life experiences. PEOPLE OFTEN FIND IT DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN WHAT IS LOW AND WHAT IS HIGH, WHAT IS MERE DESCRIPTION AND WHAT REQUIRES DECISIONS ABOUT SIGNIFICANT PARTS OF LIFE.

3. In sphere 5, "To embrace the darkness of your own death and to affirm the end of the United States, or to affirm that we mustn't go to war now against Russia... This takes the acceptance of a will that is not your and my will." (p.4) In other words, the will of higher authority - in these examples, either the creator of the universe, or our government, both of which must be higher than ourselves individually.

One may not agree with these higher "wills," but one needs to accept them. For example, the Civil War general, Lee, didn't wish for the defeat of the South, but he accepted it.

THE POINT IS THAT IN SPHERES 4 & 5, IN LOVING AND IN CATASTROPHE, WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE SITUATION. WE DO NOT WILL IT, IN OTHER WORDS, AND TO THE EXTENT THAT WE DO NOT ACCEPT THOSE WILLS OUTSIDE US, WE OBSTRUCT OURSELVES.

**4. It is precisely this decision, whether to recognize and accept as inevitable the will of powers beyond us, - to accept that which has already been decided - which is the question of religion.**

...how many people will look up to catastrophe and love, to things that are bigger than your own mind, and accept the verdict that is expressed by the fact that some people love you and some people don't love you, and that some certain states of the world come to an end, and certain other states begin?... Why couldn't the South say, "Thy will be done" for 90 years?... 95 out of 100, they pray for all other things except for the one thing they should pray. That is, that their will be not now recalcitrant and obstructive to what has already happened. (pp.7,8)

ERH saw those who exclude themselves from the common will (or common need, or community interest) or common catastrophe, or "...any judgment of God," as having a "black soul". To reverse this tendency one must first become conscious of how one has excluded oneself from this personal isolation from the world.



5. There is a necessity to accept this higher will, and ERH defines prayer as an attempt to find out what higher spirit should grip you. And, he points out, this spirit is always represented in only a minority. Individually, it grips one only occasionally. What often passes for prayer, the asking for personal help or for some fortune to come your way, is not real prayer, but merely an expression of desire. True prayer is an attempt to reach beyond oneself. And one seldom, if ever, can understand it and should not assume to do so. If one wishes to be a member of the "creative and fruitful minority", it is a necessity. Otherwise prayer is pointless, or "just nice."

Any nation and any individual who does not pray doesn't complete his existence, because he does not bring into his life those spheres for which he has to wait, or which have already passed away and which are not with him at this moment. (p.16)

Because we cannot always be at our best, at our peak, "...we must make room for the entrance of the big life. That's prayer....Many people who think they don't pray, do pray." As one attempts to get into this higher spirit, "God's spirit," real prayer is always reciprocal. A Sufi prayer expresses this: "Wherever a man says, "O Lord," he also says, "My Dear Son."

Prayer creates an association. To bestow a title on God establishes that we are also a reviver of the spirit. A title is bestowed on us, as son or daughter. Thus, the essential of the prayer is the invocation (in both directions), just as one does in addressing his/her sons and daughters. And just the same as we bestow our love and wisdom on our children when we invoke their names.

To find out "who we are" to know ourselves we can be reinstated in the universe, we find our reference point through this type of prayer. Saying son, or daughter, means the speaker is father or mother.

6. This grand "spirit" is the basis for building a decent community. It is not building new churches, which is merely mechanical convenience. It is not grand buildings that reveal a strong faith, but the spirit of the congregation. No one is self-made, except in the 3rd sphere, that is, one can will to work. But creativity, the power to love, the power to face difficult issues (catastrophe) comes from outside us. In these endeavors one can never be "self-made." **Thus, functioning in spheres 4 and 5 helps create a future and lasts more than one generation.**

7. One never learns anything unless one feels gratitude toward one's teacher whoever that person might be - parent, school teacher, etc. Most of the student's experience is immediately. to forget almost all of what is taught. Those who do connect with students have connected with the times, and taught students to do the same.

You cannot learn without a personal relation to the men (and women) from whom you learn. (p.13)

All teaching is guided by the spirit of the level of the 4th sphere, and lasts beyond one's generation.

8. The 5th sphere deals with principles geared to last for ages, for hundreds of years. "The civil war has made law for centuries. Slavery has been abolished, for good." (p.13) Each of the spheres below the 5th is intended to last for shorter time periods - centuries, generations, a year or more, days or months, - and matter, of course for eternity (out of time).

Prayer is a necessity for those who wish to avoid being trapped in a single sphere; those who wish to be creative; those who need the courage to risk; those who wish not to be trapped in their own "time," as would, for instance, those who deny the civil war happened (many Southerners for 100 years, and some even now). "Prayer completes man, because he is always incomplete in the spheres in which he has to move." (p.18)

9. One's own purposes, which is to say one's own will, is always smaller than the community issues, such as slavery or corruption in public office. One cannot build a complete life out of one's own will. One must be open to one's higher potential for the community.

Prayer is the power which links us with what's really going on at this moment,.....The power to find his surrender to a will that isn't his own. (p.22)

Prayer is not something done in church...Prayer is a public act....your exposure to the power takes you back into full life. And full life is neither public nor private. It's just life. It's open life....only work is done privately, because it's under your own purpose...Religion is either cosmic, an attempt to get in touch with the cosmic order, or [it isn't] religion. (p.24,25)

Differentiating expressions, open from private, is important. No event concerning the community is private. Prayer is not for private purposes despite popular beliefs. "...in any lecture there is also prayer. (p.26)

10. Of course, in our everyday experience we intertwine private and public, with personal and public affairs, and therefore function within different spheres of experience.

In order to cover the 5th sphere there are certain institutionalized forms, "liturgies." Religion lives by liturgy, "...by forms in which man is all the time kept alert to the 5 challenges of his existence...liturgy is an attempt to make the power to change spheres available to you."

All liturgy has 5 qualities in order to bring about this power within us. 1) It must oppose superstition about the natural world. 2) It must say that any catastrophe can be a blessing in disguise (e.g. a crucifixion can lead to a resurrection). 3) One passion must not obstruct the rise of another passion. No passion must be self devouring. Otherwise one would go to pieces. 4) It must empower you to give up one type of work for another. For instance, Judaism tries to emphasize that men's will must have an end, that even the greatest purpose of men may need to be abandoned. 5) Liturgy regarding the organic sphere (the Sabbath), is to remind us that we always move out of our natural rhythms of life, and must slow down and get back into them.

...you can see suddenly perhaps that the liturgy is very elaborate and very eloquent. A

liturgy works itself into you by the calendar. Liturgy comes to men not by a system of thought, and not by books, and not by philosophies, but in the form of taking you through experience over the years...an attempt to make you participate in the full life of the human race when you are in great danger of being sunk into one of these smaller grooves. (of a single sphere). (p.30)

11. Any acts that cause us to risk our lives are acts for the public good, but are logically inexplicable. We expect uncritically that all people **should** act humanly toward us, should assume we have rights to live. Where does this come from? It is God's law.

All religious acts are stupid in the eyes of the men of the world...If you are not stupid you will consider your own advantage...To rescue another man's life,...is not clever...But the whole problem of religion is: is your purpose good enough? (pp.32,33)

## Lecture - 23

1. What is "true" is at first agreed upon by one or two, then it may be recognized by a few more, then, eventually everybody.

This meeting will deal with animism, then the astrological (sky) religions, then Greek, then Jewish, and finally Christianity for the next 5 meetings.

2. Animism assumed that not only all plants and animals are alive, but also things like water, stones (such as the remnant is the Holy Stone in Kaaba, Mecca). Animism is a religion that attempts to address the issue of "aliveness" (vitality). It does not deal with the great gods of catastrophe, or of a means to rationalize, "or recognize that which we have to give to the golden calf,....," or idolizing of the sun, the moon, or iron & steel. . It was an emphasis on the first experience of life, that is, staying alive.

I must warn you, that it isn't primitive, but it is only limited, which isn't the same...you and I must be animists. But we cannot be only animists. So my criticism of this first tradition of the human race, animism, is not that it is wrong, or primitive, but that it restricts the universe's perceptions, and our means of dealing with the universe.. (p.3)

ERH warns that we must not supersede basic religious ideas, rather we must advance to take one step of development at a time, while advancing, retaining the previous concept. In this case, the first idea is that life is one, and "...primitive people had this glowing desire to unite with all life." (p.5)

3. This notion of inclusiveness is important, the declaring of something being either alive or dead, vital or nonvital. When we speak, we use the terms "is" or "was," betraying the faith of our (ERH's) belief. "We either consign a present and future to the individual or group or idea, or we consign it to history." [RF - Consigning to history means, pronouncing it dead. ]

Defining "Heaven and Earth" will also help our understanding of "aliveness." Earth is all things

that can be measured and counted by mathematics. ERH asserts:

Heaven from now on ...in the New and Old Testament, and in the traditions of mankind is a membership inside that world in which everybody has its own name. And earth is everything which can just be mentioned by counting it, by analyzing it. (p.8)

4.The enigma for animists was that, while animals and plants were alive, they had to be taken for food. So their response was to sacrifice in their own lives for this gift from the gods. [ RF - Interestingly ERH cites the example of the WW II, when the government of Germany had to be destroyed, our leaders killed or imprisoned, then we sent CARE packages to help the German people - as a modern version of animistic sacrifice.) Likewise, in primitive times, they had to supplant or increase the plants and animals taken so that there would be a future for the tribe.

5.ERH points out the weakness of modern science lies in its inability to help us understand our experience. An example is that our encyclopedias define animism as a philosophy (meaning something outside our experience rather than part of it, everyday). The issue today persists, "What is alive and what is dead and what do each of these mean?" All through our lives we cannot avoid making this distinction. ERH goes on to give a number of examples of religions today that are largely based on this distinction between life or death. Hinduism, for instance, addresses the problems of living by seeking divinity, nirvana by way of rejecting materialism in the form of deep and persistent meditation. Similarly, in the USA, our values focus on dead matter; acquiring property, on organization and work, on poisoning our environment with pollution. What is all of this other than preferring life-destroying actions, to being stewards of the earth!?

We live, for the last 70 years in an atmosphere of prohibiting life...of saying that life is better when it is predictable, organized, coordinated, registered and measured, measurably under control...(p.15)

...our religion of America, that no life is better than life...as soon as you want to control life, you deprive yourselves of life. Because by establishment...life is that which cannot be controlled. And death is that which can be controlled...The pursuit of happiness will always lead you to keep everything under control, because happy is that which you think happy now. And bliss, or life, or reality, or however you call your real destiny, is that which happens against your will and desire only later showing you that it was a blessing in disguise....**The power to realize newness, you remember, we called the power of religion. ...Now the animists were able to realize newness, because these migrating, migratory tribes learned new climates, new animals...**(pp.16,17) [RF - emphasis mine.]

6.To recognize newness means that one is forced to decide that which must be revered as indispensable and that which can be pruned, cut out. In America and other industrial countrys the advent of pollution means that water and air and clean soil are of little importance. It is only a minority that recognized who recognize these are essential resources that must be regenerated.

Heads of large organizations as well as a majority of our elected officials the world over, through short-sighted greed, allow this condition to prevail over the life and welfare of the community.

WHAT COULD BE MORE OF A MORAL AND RELIGIOUS PROBLEM?!

7. In sum, ERH points out how fundamental to all religion, yesterday and today, the assumptions and guidance of the principles of ANIMISM are. Animistic tribes recognized two fundamental human experiences, the differentiation between live and dead things, and the consciousness of reality through naming. For example, ornithologists working in New Guinea after WW II identified 137 species of birds, and were amazed to find that the natives had names for all of them. Primitive prayer "...very often only consists of names...giving a string of names under which you place yourself....There is nothing more real than something you have to give a special name." (p.21) They give us orientation - reference points to who we are in the universe. [RF - Throughout many of ERH's essays he emphasizes the importance for us of having reference points by which to judge the nature of some situation, so that our response will be appropriate.

8. Naming creates our consciousness of reality; it also "...completed creation." It recognized the right of those 137 species to exist.

The recognition by animists of distinguishing living from dead is equally fundamental. The recognition is two-pronged, recognizing the dead ancestors and incorporating their wisdom into the present and future. These profound insights represent a judgment as to what should be preserved from the past. Anticipating the yet-unborn, recognizes that a future must be established for our children.

You cannot meet in any town in America anybody who will make a sacrifice for the year 2050, because nobody in this country believes that this is his concern...That's why the government had to take over all the holdings and conservation, because no individual cares for the future of the soil of this country....And therefore America has no future. (p.27)

But the animists of past times would know this! Thus, they knew the problem of reproduction. ERH goes on for several pages giving examples of how important the issues of production and reproduction are. Not uncontrolled population, but continuing the life of the species on this planet.

9. Great people are a species by themselves in the sense of examples which, if followed, will help the future of civilization.

Lincoln is a breed completely his own...he is the most religious person of the 19th century in America and that he didn't belong to a church. You can't read his second inaugural without feeling that he has a new revelation." (p.30)

A saint is somebody who must be succeeded. And in the saint you have the original hero of antiquity...the animistic religion, is still vigorous and we can't be without it. The animistic religion expresses itself by creating species. (p.31)

**10. We have no instance above religion which can tell us what it is to be a religion. You have either a religion of the Devil or the religion of the living God. That is, you have a religion of fruitfulness, or a religion of destruction. (p.32)**

Joseph McCarthy and Hitler represented religions of destruction!

## Lecture - 24

1. A theme throughout this and other essays is that modern social science has not presented us with anything close to an adequate power to interpret our experience. BUT CONTRARILY, RELIGIONS, BEGINNING FROM PRIMITIVE TIMES, HAVE HAD AS THEIR FOCUS PRECISELY THIS, and have accumulated much more wisdom, much more comprehensiveness than our social sciences (which are stuck in sphere 1 mainly). Albeit, all religions are incomplete in the sense that they emphasize different aspects of the necessities defined by the 5 spheres as he describes them. The animists, for instance, got the idea of wishing to regenerate their tribal life (forever), but didn't realize that change must occur, and as new events challenged them some decisions needed to be made as to what should be kept and what should be consigned to the past.

2. ERH speaks often in these lectures of the importance of the group, of the species, but little of the individual, except to point out that the group is always superior to the individual. [RF - In other essays he qualifies this statement by pointing out the shortcomings of the Russian and Nazi states, which sacrificed the individual, supposedly, for the state. Dictators left out the restraints that religion puts on all human behavior, such as personal sacrifice for the welfare of the group. Something which the "leaders" of devil states failed to apply to themselves.]

The importance of the individual is recognized by Rosenstock-Huessy, but individual importance gains its status in terms of what it does for the group, and as a representative of a group.

3. Meals are, or should be first, religious ceremonies exalting the group. One doesn't eat alone normally, but all must have food. Celebrations around meals give thanks for sustenance for the day. Ulcers, over-eating and drinking result from too much eating alone.

The life of the spirit is also part of community, which by definition is a group of people with similar values who wish to live together in peace, voluntarily. Celebrations, meals, etc. exalt this spirit of the group.

Church buildings are nothing more than a pile of stones, if they are not under-pinned by a common spirit of its members. He points out that in any situation the meal becomes an opportunity for communication, where "...the unity of humanity begins to sprout." Where one can make friends, where the foundations of humanity can be revealed. The meal can be an opportunity where the catastrophe of not having food can be felt, at least intuitively. If one cannot understand these things, one "...cannot understand the ritual of the whole Christian world, as to Communion supper...the sacrament of the Communion makes Christianity into more than

an accidental club." (p.16) [RF - Certainly people working together may accomplish much of the same.]

4. Progress is not mere change. It is where everything from the past that remains a necessity to perform is retained, in addition to the new necessities. Mere change is running in circles, if what is lost is equalled by what is gained. New inventions, and technology which goes today for progress, is a blind alley. Mere change can be destructive if the implications of the change are not thought through.

The future is built upon the vital foundations from the past. In addition to imagining what the world must be like in 2050, we begin to plant the seeds of actions which will realize that dream.

5. Animism emphasized the 2nd sphere (through maintenance of life) , and the 4th sphere (through loving relationships of the group). The religions of the 3rd sphere were an attempt to break out of the "organic" 2nd sphere and into the universe. Thus the "sky" religions, those who worshipped the laws of nature first revealed by the cyclical movement of the stars. Contrary to popular belief, the primitives and the "sky" empires never worshipped the sun and moon. The stars, sun, and moon didn't die, but always returned. They were eternity.

Where as the animists worshipped life, and life was unstable, it always died and was unpredictable, the sky empires (Egypt, Mayan, Inca ) worshipped that which was stable and everlasting. This was the dead matter of the universe whereby laws could predict events and calendars could be created. The two religions, the sky empire and ancestor worship, were opposites.

...man puts his foot outside his family life, his tribal life, his bush and jungle life in which he was only interested in living things, and tried to look away from dead things. (p.25)

6. With physics, man is master of dead matter. The sky empire or calendar religions were the beginning of this utilization of knowledge of natural laws. Animism created superstition regarding the live sacrifices. The sky religions eliminated this need and erased these superstitions. They created celebrations for the entire year; animism had only a six month calendar (half the year inside the hut and half outside).

Furthermore, the star religions lead to permanent settlements. "The great idea of the Incan is settlement." These led to a faith in the power to develop and order the use of multiple, incorporated communities, expanding the limits of the outer world (as contrasted with the world of the single tribe).

## Lecture - 25

1. To summarize, Religion empowers humankind to instate ourselves into our real home, the community on earth and the life experiences which must be understood and mastered (in so far as we are able to respond). The first step of this method is to recognize powers beyond us that

possess authority and wisdom for guidance; ultimately, the power that created the universe (God).

The second step is to place ourselves inside the basic spheres of experience that humankind must confront. These are:

a. Organic sphere, whereby we recognize the rhythm of our metabolism, breathing the air around us, digestion, rhythms of natural physiological functions in general, (rest - healing, shelter, clothing) adapting to the rhythm of the seasons.

b. We must attend to consciously taking action to survive. This we can will (or control), our need to work, where we are capable of gaining control over the lower living and dead matter (sticks and stones) of the universe. For instance, the producing of food and other necessary goods and services needed for physical survival.

c. The sphere of free association, friendship, love, passion, and affection describe the next higher stage.. Love is the power which leads us to sacrifice for something or someone outside ourselves. We are capable of selflessness toward true friends, our family, our country, our profession, causes. This is the binding force of all vital communities, necessary for survival.

d. Finally, a recognition that we live under the impact of tragedy, both physical (such as earthquakes, or floods.) and social, (such as war).

2. The first religion revered the organic, the perpetuation of life (one's self and other life). The ritual of the communion supper represented this concern, recognizing life is everywhere, that it needs to survive off other life and therefore must destroy life. In animism one believes that higher life can take only life-forms below it, while preserving those species (thus, it is sinful to kill for sport or eat your own species). The aim of animists is to concentrate on the evolution of higher life. **JUSTIFICATION FOR TAKING ANY OTHER LIFE IS WHAT IS NECESSARY TO PERPETUATE THE SPECIES.**

ERH points out how, in modern times, we have lost this reverence for lower life, in the sense of conservation of life forms. Pollution, over-grazing, over-plowing, poisoning of air, water, and land, destruction of animal and plant environments, is the evidence around us.

3. Another religion was the so-called astronomical or sky religions, which sought to describe the eternal cycles of the universe, and eventually the laws of nature. Their momentous discovery was realizing some order in the universe. They worshipped the eternal, which they observed were the cyclical nature of the stars. God did not reside "in any space," however, but was the eternal cycles.

As an aside, ERH asserts, it is a misreading to say these people worshipped the sun and stars. It is also a misreading to suggest (contrary to common Catholic belief) that God is "in heaven." Jesus, St. Augustine, and Paul said that God resides in the hearts of humans.



The sky religions are considered great because they try to reach out beyond immediate human experience to comprehend the universe and place humankind in some relation to these. Egyptian, Mayan, and Incan are examples; they built temples intended to be a focus point for the universe. In their astronomy they counted in terms of eons, of centuries and millennia. The concurrence of the Pleiades they discovered to be 1460 years. Their observations spanned three cycles, from 2780 BC, to 1320 BC to 140 AD, each cycle is an "eon" and they discovered the solar year of 365 days. Modern industrial society, especially America tends, to look at experience in terms of short cycles, weeks or months.

This penchant for seeing only short timespans, adds some fuel to the destructive belief that pollution doesn't matter, or that a clean and regenerating environment is too costly. This bird-in-the-hand religion destroys the future for a community; but long time-spans are bad for business.

4. The sky religions believe in a world without end. **Christianity**, on the other hand, does not believe this, and ERH claims that the King James version of the Bible is wrong in using the term "world without end."

The real belief of any Christian and any Jew is that the world has seen many ends and many beginnings, that there are eons. And if you say "world without end," you abolish the power of God to end and to begin. (p.19)

5. Herein lies the difference between the sky religions, great an advance as they were, and Judeo-Christian beliefs. While science discovered star tracts, it has nothing to say about what all this (the laws of nature) mean to life on earth - other than, of course, the impress of natural cataclysms and our knowledge of growing food and shelter.

Many of the churches in America today do not distinguish between these differences in religions. The Animist wants to keep in touch with what is near and dear; the sky/scientific religions wish to keep track of what is distant and eternal. In all these religions God created the heavens and earth and established laws eternal, and humankind were the pawns reacting to these powers. **THE PROBLEM WITH THESE GREAT RELIGIONS OF SCIENCE WAS THAT THEY FAILED TO BE AN INSTRUMENT TO ANALYZE HUMAN SOCIAL EXPERIENCE. THEY WERE OVER-RUN BY HORDE OF MEN.** Egypt has been ruled by foreigners since 900 BC. (p.30) These conquests brought to light the unresolved problem, "How were people of different religions to live together in peace?"

6. The Judeo-Christian approach came along to address this problem and incorporated humans in the continuing creation of the earth, asserting that humans could be creative in terms of emancipating human society from iron laws of nature. What is more, that humans could change. That humans, in contradiction to the eternal laws of nature, were the repository of God on earth in the sense that they could change, could think for themselves and participate in creation of society.

Clearly humankind, to survive, needs a reverence for life, including social life, and it needs science. Our experience would also tell us that we need to learn to live together, voluntarily in peace. The Greeks believed (see the lectures on Greek philosophy): 1) in the superiority of men over women, 2) in the necessity for war (peace was not possible), 3) in creativity as engendered by a homosexual relation between men, and 4) progress in social conditions was not possible - life was controlled by the gods and social life occurred in terms of endless cycles already experienced.

Judeo-Christian religion believes the opposite from the ancient Greeks. the great problem now, in addition to that solved by Animism and science, is to evolve human society to take charge and be responsible for our behavior. We must learn to live together in peace, lest they destroy themselves, and all other life on earth. In sum, 1) all religions evolved to solve a problem related to human survival. There are inadequate religions. 2) A vital one, which Rosenstock-Huessy believes was the intent, all along, would be Christianity, which represents an inclusion of the bedrock of all religions and is thus, universal. The other religions failed because they stood for an incomplete set of guides for the maintenance of society. [RF -Was Jesus trying to say all along that, "It is all of the above.?"] 3) One can conclude, looking around the world at social conditions, that all alienation, including shooting wars, are religious wars.

## **COMPARATIVE RELIGION - 1954**

Lectures 1-25

Feringer notes

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