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"Religion and World Peace." Two sermons. undated.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

One - There are two kinds of religion - one real and one pseudo. Pseudo-religion negates life and asserts that death is the only reality. This is done as a means of overcoming man's fear of death. Such a religion, with its emphasis on other-worldliness, and its consequent lack of concern with the problems of this life, is the type of religion attacked by the Marxists as an "opiate". Such a religion, which makes of the world merely an illusion, is necessarily obscurantist, reactionary and harmful, and must be extirpated.

Two - Real religion deals with the problems of life squarely. The moral foundation of true religion can solve many human problems, including war, poverty, inequality, etc. But in order to do so, the morals and ethics of real religion must be concretized in political and economic terms. A moral economics and a moral politics are the only possible bases for a just and durable peace. If this translation of morals into economics and politics does not take place, however, then even real religion remains ineffectual and confined to the sphere of moral pleadings and pulpit exhortations. Religion, in order to influence the building of the new world, must become concretized.



①

Religion is The expression of community.

The assertion That There is only one God
is the assertion That There is only one community
of mankind. True religion is Thus universal.

There is difference between ideal & real.
The reality is That religions are still tribal and
exclusive, and not universal.

But religion is also (above community)
the effort of the human consciousness to deal with
the knowledge of death and to overcome the fear of it.

Fear of death means fear of life, because
life is the source of death. Thus fear of death
isolates man from nature (which is life) and isolates
man from his fellow-men (who may destroy his life, or
at least suggests That his life can be destroyed.)

The task of religion is to reintegrate
man with nature and all other life (men).

Function of religion is to close the gap which reason (by perceiving death) has introduced between man & life; to overcome the feeling of isolation which hinders development.

By religion man has sought to assure his community with nature & with his fellows - his participation in a common stream of humanity, which is his immortality.

The fear of death is the fear of isolation. The development of religion, in its realization of community, is thus the development of love and the triumph of love over fear.

This is true religion.

(3)

Pseudo-Religion

Fear is negative + inhibits action.

Life is activity, + depends upon positive actions.

Spiritual death occurs when fear overcomes

life-activity. Thus the body, which is the cause of

the fear, often imprisons the soul (or personality)

by restricting its actions + isolating the being from

other beings. It is from this spiritual death,

this death-in-life through the dominance of fear

that religion offers a salvation - namely, another life

which can never be destroyed.

Thus a religious lie develops - whose
illusion, in order to overcome fear, is the denial

of the reality of death. One way of dealing with a
fear is to deny the reality of that which is feared.

This device substitutes illusion for knowledge, for to

deny the reality of death is to deny the reality
of all human knowledge + reason

Thus This illusion actually delivers man ④
from the realities of life. The effect is to
persuade man that life ^{as we know it} is not real & is not
important - but that the only real life comes after
death - Therefore why fear death? In embracing death
a man is choosing life, he is told.

And This religion of illusion has other
connotations. In the course of human development man
necessarily grapples with all kinds of new fears. If man
is permitted to escape from fear through illusion (through
a rejection of reason) he will always return to the
pre-rational state of animal existence - instead of
tackling his new fears & trying to solve them. Pseudo-
religion will always allow a man to prefer the
known and the familiar - and will assert the
reality of the familiar & the established, while denying
the reality of the unknown. Thus pseudo-religion
becomes reactionary & obscurantist (cf. Galileo)

It is one of the hall-marks of the religion of illusion that it maintains the reality of the past, against the enlarging reality of the present and the future. Pseudo-religion is always reactionary + backward-looking. It seeks to escape fear by withdrawing from the new knowledge which is the new source of fear.



This religion of illusion is called an "opiate" and attacked by the Communist, for example, because he sees pseudo-religion, which doesn't really deal with fear but ^{merely} pushes it into the unconscious and leaves it in actual domination of life, cause men to remain in isolation and in opposition to the "community" which he is interested in. Real religion agrees with the Communist in this attack.