

SOME
Thoughts
ON
God
AND
OTHER
Things

J E R O M E G L E I C H

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First Edition

PREFACE

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*M*y purpose in writing this book is to hopefully have people look at God in a new and different way (and also maybe religion, government, our institutions, and hopefully even ourselves in a new perspective). There is so much hatred and discord in the world, and most of it is really about nothing, differences so slight as to be almost unnoticeable; but unfortunately, everyone has strong feelings about certain things, and they let those feelings rule their actions.

And also, there are many people who use this to gain power over us and manipulate us.

I am just tired of all the bad news and the bad things that go on every day and that people continue to do to one another.

It seems that we have almost accepted this as the natural state of things; it is not or at least it does not have to be.

This not really intended to be a religious book although I certainly discuss religion and things pertaining to religion.

And there is no intention to offend anyone's religion, religious beliefs, or lack thereof.

I would just like people to perhaps look at things from a new perspective and get back to the basics of being good, decent, and moral people and treating other people accordingly.

I am concerned that Americans are turning their back on God, and am afraid for our country and the ramifications of that.

This book is not about you becoming a more religious person, but in coming to believing in and acknowledging God and although that may lead you into religion, I will be happy if you just come to accept God and the reality of that, and my hope is that this book may accomplish that.

So I have tried hard to not make this an overly religious book; however, that is somewhat difficult when the subject matter is God.

What I really want is for you to give some thought to God and your relationship to God, and hopefully change that relationship for the better.

There are also a number of other philosophical, intellectual, and maybe even practical issues discussed.

While a good deal of the subject matter involves some obviously pretty heavy-duty stuff, I have tried to make this book interesting and entertaining, and hopefully you will enjoy it.

Also, please take no offense that I refer to God in the male tense.

God is not an animal being.

While gender is part of our animal nature, it is not part of his nature.

It is simply easier for me to write this book that way because that is how I refer to God, but in reality, it has no meaning as it pertains to God.

Hopefully, you will think better of God and maybe your religion too, if you are a religious person, and it may help you to enjoy your religion more; but even if you are not religious or have your doubts about God, perhaps this may give you pause to reconsider things or at least give you some things to reflect on.

I would also like people to realize that their religions, whichever ones they follow, have a lot more in common than what sets them apart.

As I have said, our current world could use a lot of help, and if enough of us can start to work at it, maybe we can start to get things on the right track or at least going in the right direction.

1

God and Religion

We are all just sailors on a ship beneath
the moon,

Whose time of living life, is here and
gone too soon,

The time to love, hunger, dream, so
quickly by,

That when we finally give our last adieu,
Oh no! Not yet! Not me! Not now! We
quickly sigh,

But this should all be no surprise,
For all on earth must surely die,

So live each day and catch your dreams,

Before like clouds, they float away,
 And live all never coming tomorrows,
 In the golden gleam of bright todays.

I think that there is a major problem in our societies and in our world with God and religion and that it is something we need to examine much more closely.

We get our perception of God from our religions, but the problem is that our religions are messed up in a couple of major ways.

First of all, the major religions have all been around for a long time.

What that means is that human beings have had a long time to corrupt them.

Also since the beginning of time, people have combined religion with politics and do so even today and that has added to divisions among religions.

Because we are all very imperfect beings, living in an imperfect world, religions like everything else (our governments, institutions, and even ourselves) are very imperfect.

Everything in our world is imperfect, decaying and dying (the moon gets a little closer to the earth every year

and the orbits of the planets in our solar system decay a little. Everything has a life span).

And the fact is that Science is just as flawed as any religion, and is political too and some people substitute Science for Religion because I think there is a basic human need to believe in something more perfect.

Basically, us, flawed human beings, have hundreds and in some cases, thousands of years to corrupt what originally started out as a good thing (it is what happens with everything in our world).

Most people are exposed to religion when they are very young and have it drummed into them.

Our parents force us to go to Sunday school, Catechism, Temple, Mosque, etc., and when we are older and then see the realities of our particular religion, we feel used, deceived, betrayed, and rebel.

As we understand the world better, everybody at some time sees the truth; we see all the faults, hypocrisy, and imperfections.

You need to get over it!

You are lied to every day, everywhere by a lot of people. Whether it is the government, the media, or just people around you, almost everybody is very into themselves and seems to have their own agenda.

The major problem is that religions have also become politicized, i.e., people are using them as a means of political control and power.

The Catholic Church certainly was politically involved for hundreds of years, and today, Islam is certainly being used for political means.

Some of this is barbaric.

It is the twenty-first century, and we still have people wanting to stone people, blow themselves and others up, and otherwise kill one another (this is just using religion to exert power and as far as I can tell, it is not what the starters of Judaism, Christianity, or even Islam had in mind).

And whether it is a church, synagogue, mosque or whatever, parents send their children there because Religion is where societies get their moral values and every parent wants their children to have proper moral values.

Religions are how we approach God, show him we respect him and accept his will.

But as I have indicated, the problem is that religions like governments and everything else in our societies are run by human beings, and human beings are fallible, emotional, corrupt, politicized, or possibly even worse things.

Unfortunately, this has affected people's relationship or even belief in God, and part of what I want to accomplish in this book is to change that.

I would like you to separate God and religion in your thinking and look at them as two separate and distinct things.

Religions are no less flawed or corrupt than any of our other institutions such as governments, but they are definitely messed up to a certain degree.

And a lot of what goes on in them nowadays is far afield from their original intentions and what they were about.

Stop blaming God. He knows what he is doing and has got it right (the people running or administering your religion, maybe not).

But please be a little more forgiving of them (and God too) but also more demanding of those in charge of whatever religion you are practicing.

God is all perfect, all-powerful, all intelligent, all loving, all merciful, and all everything else too (basically everything they told you he is).

Religions are not *any* of those and the problem is that because they are dealing with God, we expect them to be.

And because they are all messed up in at least some ways, if not major ways, we begin to feel that there is something flawed about God or even if God exists.

The other problem in all of this is free will (which I will discuss in greater detail in a later chapter), that we so often use in response to our emotions and ego rather than our intellect or common sense.

So again, I want you to look at God in a new way separate from religions or ideologies, those being seriously corrupted by mankind.

There is also a major problem with people's perception of religion.

The purpose of religion is to deal with our soul or spirit and to prepare it for the next existence and not things that pertain to this world.

Religions are here to get our souls or spirits prepared for the afterlife and to be with God.

In religion, we believe in another plane of existence or being or afterlife and the purpose of religion is to prepare us for that other plane of existence.

So that is why Religion downplays the things of this life and especially things that pertain to our basic animal instincts like sex, our other animal needs and desires, and material things in general.

So we have problems with religions not only because they are run by imperfect human beings, but because

people continue to seek from them fulfillment of their human needs and are thus frustrated.

Unfortunately, just like the early Greeks and Romans, who personified their gods and thought of the afterlife in earthly ways, we continue to think of heaven in human terms, but that is not what it is like.

We need to start thinking of God and heaven in a different manner.

God and heaven is simply another more perfect plane of existence.

Heaven is the true home of our soul, our spirit, and those are really nothing like our human body with all its physical desires and needs.

Heaven is simply being with God and thus in the presence of infinite love, beauty, understanding (you name it), perfection.

But we are so caught up with our human needs and desires that that concept is somewhat unappealing to us (and I doubt that you will ever hear any religion term it that way).

It is really difficult to accept that (because we are so caught up in our animal being), but the alternative is being banished from all that love, beauty, and perfection, once we meet God and are exposed to it.

Now part of what God wants us to do is love one another and help one another, just as he loves us and takes care of us.

You may think that he does a poor job of loving and taking care of us, but again, we get back to that nasty problem of free will.

God has given us everything here on earth to make it a paradise, but we apparently choose to make it a hell by collectively letting our egos and emotions (our animal instincts and free wills control our decisions) instead of our spirits or souls.

So let's talk about religions.

The two largest religions are Christianity, followed by Islam. Judaism ranks number twelve, but if you combine these three religions, you are talking about close to 3.5 billion people.

And here is the most amazing thing, these three religions all believe in the exact same God, the God of Abraham.

In looking at world events every day, that is hard to believe.

They also all believe that one of the primary means of salvation is through good deeds.

In fact, they all have a lot more in common than what sets them apart (and even the Muslims accept that Jesus was a prophet and Christians follow the Ten

Commandments given to Moses and conduct similar to what is required in Judaism), although what sets them apart are some major tenants in each of these religions.

So how then do we find ourselves in the situation that we are in the current world (it is really hard to believe)?

They all believe that human nature has both good and evil, that we need to do good on this earth and in almsgiving to help those less fortunate.

All believe in the need for prayer, concern for the needy, and self-purification.

But this gets back to my original premise that they have all been corrupted to some extent or another for reasons of power or politics or simply human fallibilities.

The answer is perhaps just getting back to basics and ignoring the power and politics and practicing those core aspects of our religions, which are still pure things, but we also need to take our religions back from those using them for power and politics.

The situation with these three Religions is kind of like the Cold War that went on between the United States and Russia for almost fifty years except this Cold War has been going on for close to a thousand years going back to even before the Crusades.

And all religions have been guilty of being involved in politics and earthly matters to too great an extent both in the past and in the present.

I am not sure how to solve this, and it certainly is not something that will be solved in any short order, but perhaps little by little (the new Pope is a definite breath of fresh air), hopefully, more rational changes may occur for all.

And again, God (this exact same God for many of us) is telling us to do good deeds (help one another and support one another and watch out for one another (basically love one another and take care of one another).

Even Buddhists have the Eightfold Path, which is a similar moral code of conduct.

And as I have said, religion is where we get our moral conduct and without moral conduct, our societies would cease to exist or at best be in chaos.

And we are kind of getting to that point now.

Everyone to a large extent, just looking out for themselves, greed, corruption, over inflated pride (ego), all seemingly almost out of control.

The American Founding Fathers stated that our system of government could not exist without a moral people, and that is why there are references to God and the Ten Commandments to give people that moral imperative.

But we have been turning away from God and those moral imperatives, and it is going to lead us to ruin.

So I would like for us to embrace the moral imperatives that there is a higher power, we will be judged for what we do here on earth and we need to try and act in the best moral manner that we can.

To divorce ourselves from the excesses and corruptions of religions. To celebrate the common aspects of our religions and get back to the basics of those religions.

I am not saying that you need to be a practicing participant of a religion to have moral values, just that when we are educated in religion, and it's moral values when we are young, we carry those moral values with us into adulthood whether we actively continue to pursue our particular religion or not.

And society as whole gets a goodly part of its moral values from the religions that are practiced within it.

Animals have no choice, they simply follow their instincts and they are not free.

But we are free, that is, we have free will and can choose to overcome our animal desires and imperfections.

Unfortunately, we are so hung up on our physical wants and desires in today's world that we find it hard to look beyond those.

Instead of bringing ourselves down to our animal natures, let us lift ourselves up, our souls, or spirits to a better more perfect place .

While we can never really accomplish that here on earth, it is something we can strive for and it would make the earth a much better place if we would try to do so.

Another problem with religions, which may have actually gotten somewhat better in some instances in our time, is that they are all competing with one another for our souls and our allegiance here on earth, and every religion believes that they are the true and right religion.

I think that God in his perfect wisdom gave all of us a path to him and that necessitated having a number of religions.

But again, if you read the initial history, the origins of Judaism, Christianity or Islam, and look at the base tenants of all of these religions, you will see some similarities even in Christianity and Islam.

There is currently at least some more tolerance being practiced in many religions.

Maybe if we have different views on God and how to approach him, we can simply agree to disagree and recognize that others may have different perspectives that have value.

People in authority, politicians, CEOs, etc., are reluctant to admit mistakes and maybe even somewhat more so is true for people in religious authority.

After all, they are supposedly acting on behalf of God, and I am sure that they therefore feel that God is guiding them in some way.

But the fact is that they are just human beings like the politician or CEO, and are just as prone to make mistakes as anyone else.

The problem is that all the aforementioned are not very likely to admit or accept their mistakes, so it sometimes hinders us making any progress.

There is also a misconception here in the United States regarding the separation of church and state.

This simply means that we do not want to have a Theocracy.

Remember that our founding fathers had a theocracy in the ruling British Government, where the king was also the head of the church of England.

And simple acknowledgement of God or praying as part of public institutions is quite far from a theocracy.

There is also criticism of religion getting involved in such things as abortion and alternative marriage, but again remember that our religions are *traditional* organizations and our moral compass, so their positions are not surprising.

There is a recent movie out called 42, which is the Jackie Robinson story (it is actually a fantastic movie and one that you should see).

In the story, the owner of Cincinnati Reds calls up Branch Rickey (played by Harrison Ford), the owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and informs him that the Reds will not take the field if Robinson is with the team when they visit Cincinnati for the game the next day.

Branch informs him, that while that is his prerogative, the Dodgers will be taking the field with Robinson, and if the Reds do not take the field, then he will consider it a forfeit.

The Reds owner then asks Branch what his problem is, and Branch in reply asks him if he believes in God.

The Reds owner asks Branch, what exactly does that mean, and Branch replies that "someday, you are going to meet God, and when God asks why you did not have your team take the field against Robinson, the fact that he was Negro may not be a sufficient reply."

So it is with us too. Whether men or women, we frequently face serious moral decisions.

And if you are a moral person, there is no way that you can avoid taking a side in these political issues. If you believe there is a higher authority, then you believe that you will ultimately be held accountable for those decisions.

And hopefully then you have had some religious instruction to help you with such decisions (I believe that

our conscience may to some extent be part of our soul too).

This is a lot about education and unfortunately, we seem to be becoming dumber not smarter, more shallow, and superficial than substantive and more thin-skinned.

I am not equating college with higher education, and there seems to be a lot more political indoctrination going on at colleges nowadays, rather than learning or teaching people how to think for themselves, and many young people are forsaking college because it no longer has a reasonable guarantee of leading to a job and has become very costly.

But you need to become educated. You do not have to go to college to take some college courses, at say a community college or just take some courses in things that interest you or maybe to acquire some new skills or specific knowledge.

You can certainly read and educate yourself, and if nothing else, please read and become knowledgeable about history.

First of all, at some point in time, when current events have become long past events, the truth comes out, washed of any propaganda, posturing, or hypocrisy.

Bill O'Reilly has written a serious of books—Killing Lincoln, Killing Kennedy, Killing Jesus, and Killing