

The Personal Meaning of Social Values in the Work of Abraham Maslow

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Abstract

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was, with Carl Rogers, the co-founder of what came to be known as the Third Force school of psychology. Considered a neo-Freudian in the post-psychoanalytical school, Maslow became a leader in the development of new modalities of treatment using psychotherapeutic techniques developed in his practice over many years and ultimately became a celebrated scholar and teaching using his concept of the hierarchy of needs and self-actualization. Where Maslow has too often and undeservedly been overlooked is in his exploration of the meaning and nature of values in the arena of public education. This essay is an attempt to correct this common oversight.

Keywords: Abraham Maslow; social values; personal meaning; interpersonal relationships

In the work of Abraham Maslow, the psychology of religion comes into its own for he, more than others before him, had a gift of taking the best from the best and combining it into a system of analysis making the combination greater than any one of its parts. Sympathetic but not susceptible to the religious urges of the common person, Maslow showed in his work that those urges are legitimate and real and can be addressed and nurtured without requiring an allegiance to a religious faith tradition, a church or synagogue with its religious leaders seeking to dominate and exercise power over an individual's authentic feelings regarding the transcendent reality of life. A strong supporter of the separation of Church and State, Maslow did not believe in the separation of the emotional feelings of awe, wonder, and mystery from science. "I am very much in favor of a clear separation of church and state ... I want to demonstrate that spiritual values have naturalistic meaning, that they are not the exclusive possession of organized churches, that they do not need supernatural concepts to validate them, that they are well within the jurisdiction of a suitably enlarged science, and that, therefore, they are the

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general responsibility of *all* mankind” (1964:3). In his system, religion and science go hand in hand even though religious establishments and science do not and cannot. The spirituality of the human person is not, must not be, defined by his allegiance to a faith community for both feelings of transcendent reality and spirituality are and must be exercised outside the perimeters of institutional controls put in place by religious leaders.

Maslow challenges the religious population who presume that only within the confines (and confinements) of religious institutions can the spiritual life of individual live and grow. More disturbing even than that imperialistic position, Maslow believes that the non-religious community has regrettably reconciled itself to relinquishing any rights to value-speaking to the self-styled religious establishment thereby divesting itself of both its right and responsibility to address issues of value and ethics within its own arena of work. “Very many people in our society apparently see organized religion as *the* locus, as *the* source, *the* custodian and guardian and teacher of the spiritual life ... Since they exclude values from the realm of science and from the realm of exact, rational, positivistic knowledge, all values are turned over by default to non-scientists and to non-rationalists (i.e., to ‘non-knowers’) to deal with” (1964:2). This divestment of responsibility for dealing with spiritual and value issues on the part of the non-religious establishment to the religious establishment is the great tragedy facing modern society today. Religious institutions are quite pleased with the relinquishment of oversight regarding values and spirituality by the non-religious community, thereby, by default, investing in the religious establishment sole authority in matters of values and ethics, spirituality and authentic feelings of transcendence. The religious right today exercises an unchallenged sense of entitlement to moral pontification while the secular left stands impotent to either defend itself or assert itself.

The divestiture of responsibility (and accountability) in matters regarding values and ethics, within the psychological community specifically and the scientific community generally, is a cause of great concern, explains Maslow. “It is almost *universally* true for the positivistic psychologists, the behaviorists, the neo-behaviorists, and the ultra-experimentalists, all of whom feel values and the life of value to be none of their professional concern” (1964:3). Though religious institutions and traditions do not have a right to exclusive dominion in matters of values and ethics, they have assumed such a

role and the scientific community has easily permitted it without protestations. Value-free education is a contradiction in terms, explains Maslow, and to allow the religious community to assume full responsibility for value education is a travesty and ultimately an abiding danger to the well-being of society. The ignoring of or even the abandoning of the legitimate and authentic experiences of awe, wonder, and mystery on the part of the educational and scientific community has left the religious establishment in complete control of defining and monitoring what it has chosen to call ethical and moral using its own confining and restricting definitions set by theologians and religious leaders. The discounting, by default, of true inner experience of spiritual value has left society having to choose between conforming to religious mandates or to a one-dimensionality to personal experience (Monte, 1987). To say that spiritual feelings are either the domain of the church or they do not exist is a failure of leadership on the part of the education establishment, says Maslow.

Representing the Third Force school in psychology, i.e., the humanistic school of thought within psychotherapy, Maslow is critical of Freud and the psychoanalysts who have totally abdicated responsibility for either nurturing authentic spirituality within an individual or providing counsel and guidance in matters of values and ethics. Moral behavior falls outside their domain as Freud would say. “Official, orthodox, Freudian psychoanalysis remains essentially a system of psychopathology and of cure of psychopathology. It does not supply us with a psychology of the higher life or of the ‘spiritual life,’ of what the human being should grow *toward*, of what he can become” (1964:6). Not condemning Freud outright for abdication of leadership responsibilities in this arena, Maslow believes that the substructure of psychoanalysis carries within it the components needed to foster a legitimizing sense of personal spirituality influenced, as Bakan would agree, by the Talmud and Kabbala of Freud’s upbringing.

Not ready to exonerate the Freudians nor even to let them off lightly for having abandoned what is rightfully their domain, viz., the raising of human life to a higher level of spiritual maturity, Maslow is tempted to dismiss the supposed “sublimation” phenomenon of psychoanalysis for there in lies the justification for their willingness to relinquish ethical counsel to the mentally disturbed and troubled. “This reductionism goes so far sometimes that the Freudians seem almost to say that the ‘higher life’ is just a

set of ‘defenses against the instincts,’ especially denial and reaction-formation” (1964:5). Not one to just castigate the opposition in psychiatric and psychotherapeutic practice, Maslow turns on his own kind, the humanistic school known as the Third Force, by charging them with a too ready willingness to divest themselves of moral responsibility in counseling the spiritually deprived. Humanists of all varieties have historically been both charged with the responsibility and capable of assuming that charge to teach the value of the true, the good, and the beautiful, and to do so without apology (Feist, 1985). It was assumed; it was expected; it was, in a word, demanded of society that those in leadership roles embracing the highest expressions of human culture were themselves charged with the responsibility and, indeed, obligation of passing that appreciation of the finer things of life along to subsequent generations. It truly went without saying in earlier times, but, laments Maslow, we can no longer make that assumption.

But, complains Maslow, those blissful days are gone. Tradition was not a solid foundation for much of what was held “by tradition” was not true, was blatantly false, was perpetrated by religious leaders who aspired, more than anything, to exercise power and jurisdiction over the lives and thoughts of the broader society. “We can no longer rely on tradition, on consensus, on cultural habit, on unanimity of belief to give us our values. Only empirical, naturalistic knowledge, in its broadest sense, can serve us now” (1964:9). Assuming themselves to be the arbiters and purveyors of truth, goodness, and beauty, they spoiled everything they touched -- they corrupted the truth with doctrines, they replaced goodness with fascist directives, and corrupted beauty with images of their own demented worldview. But now, says Maslow, the truth is out. Science has come and come to stay. It has taken up residence in the house that tradition built and religion managed, and is now in charge.

But Maslow is, at the end of the day, optimistic. A Jewish psychologist with hope is a refreshing sight and Maslow is just the fellow to fill that role. The dismantling of our modern tendency to dichotomize science and religion has led to the present miserable state of non- and mis-communication between the two schools of thought. It is religion that is of interest to true science, not religious institutions, not churches, not synagogues, not colleges of theologians arguing over manmade doctrines about this and that belief. Religious sentiment is real, Maslow proposes, for the sense of awe, wonder, and mystery

is endemic to the human experience and human consciousness. A mature science, a science fully cognizant of its social responsibilities, is a science that is eager to embrace these fundamentally human characteristics, needs, and aspirations. In the 19th century, science was eager to move forward and saw religion (defined almost exclusively as “the church”) as a restraint, a deterrent, a block to scientific research (Hall & Lindzey, 1957). And, thus, mistakably science chose to turn its back on its rightful duty in dealing with values and ethics, morals and conduct. The time has come for science to re-own its rightful place in this regard.

The unanticipated and tragic cost of the 19th century scientific abandonment of morals and ethics, of values in education, was the setting free of religious ideologies from the truths being daily discovered by the sciences. When religion and its institutions and spokespersons were set free from accountability in addressing the truths being revealed daily in the science laboratories of the world, religion was left to its own devices, without science, without access to verifiable facts. “this dichotomizing of knowledge and values has also pathologized the organized religions by cutting them off from facts, from knowledge, from science, even to the point of often making them the enemies of scientific knowledge” (1964:12). Religion then became its own validation, without science, without authentication, and thus, “mystery” because the stock in trade answer when religious ideologies were questioned, when asked for explanation. Religion was a mystery and, therefore, beyond and outside the domain of scientific enquiry and investigation. The price has been severe for all of society as a result.

Ever the optimist in believing that truth will eventually prevail and that the human community is able to handle the truth, Maslow looks to a promising day of convergent realities where religion (not the church or its establishments) as the purveyor of the human emotions of awe, wonder, and mystery, can hold hands with science (not the positivists who dismiss the legitimacy of these human emotions) as the purveyor of demonstrable truth, verifiable facts, and validation of authentic human experiences of spiritual encounter with transcendent reality, a reality that does not require or demand a deity from “outside” the universe but a transcendent sense of the greater depth and height of human experience in confronting the great wonders and mysteries of the physical universe.

The decline, the inevitable and long-awaited, decline of religious establishmentarianism is predicated upon the dominance of scientifically verified human experiences of awe, wonder, and mystery, experiences not the domain of churches or synagogues or faith communities touting religious ideologies requiring compliance and obedience at the peril of one's everlasting soul. "When all that could be called 'religious' (naturalistically as well as super-naturalistically) was cut away from science, from knowledge, from further discovery, from the possibility of skeptical investigation, from confirming and disconfirming, and, therefore, from the possibility of purifying and improving, such a dichotomized religion was doomed" (1964:13). Religion of this kind with its institutional forms, is doomed in the face of a scientific understanding of the nature of human experience, human personality, human needs and the value of each in relationship to our understanding the universe in which we live. True science validates true religion for true religion is the purveyor of authentic human experience of awe, wonder, and mystery (devoid of the necessity of a deity found outside the universe as institutionalized forms of religious expression demand and promote). These human experiences are validated by science -- awe, wonder, mystery -- and they are the true expressions of an authentic religious encounter with the universe. This is true religion and true science.

Maslow is ruthlessly honest in assailing religious establishmentarianism, a religious institutionalization that is self-promoting and self-serving, that seeks to dominate the human will by demanding compliance with an ideology constructed precisely to stifle human enquiry, human initiative, human creativity. "We have seen often enough throughout history the church whose pieties are mouthed in the middle of human exploitation and degradation as if the one had nothing to do with the other" (1964:15). This kind of religion is to be denied, denounced, and destroyed with a science of human emotions which values enquiry, initiative, and creativity.

"But what the more sophisticated scientist is now in the process of learning," explains Maslow, "is that though he must disagree with most of the answers to the religious questions which have been given by organized religion, it is increasingly clear that the religious questions themselves -- and religious questions, the religious yearnings, the religious needs themselves -- are perfectly respectable scientifically, that they are

rooted deep in human nature, that they can be studied, described, examined in a scientific way, and that the churches were trying to censor perfectly sound human questions” (1964:18). This posture of Maslow’s is precisely what the scientific community needed in facing the criticism of the religious establishment, for the defensive or dismissive science of the past failed to address the legitimacy of human emotions and all of the weight was on the side of religion. Unfortunately, those defending religion were the purveyors of religious establishmentarianism, a religious entity built upon the foundation of ideology and the exercise of power. With the coming of Maslow and his re-definition of religion (rather than religious institutions and ideologies) as fully authentic expressions of human emotions, true science, a science of accountability and responsibility, was now in a position to respond positively to an encounter, a convergence of interests.

In demonstrating the effectiveness of psychological enquiry into religious experience and behavior, Maslow was eager to promote the notion of a core experience which embodied a sense of the transcendent. Though all great religions of the world are adhered to by large masses of people, the core experience was that of a single individual, a person who had a peak experience which gave rise to a deepening understanding of the world and our relationship to its. “the very beginning, the intrinsic core, the essence, the universal nucleus of every known high religion has been the private, lonely, personal illumination, revelation, or ecstasy of some acutely sensitive prophet or seer” (1964:19). And, within each of these great religions, there are individuals who also have these peak experiences. These experiences constitute data worthy of and accessible to investigation and study. This is where the psychologist, says Maslow, can provide a great service to both religion and science (Hjelle & Zeigler, 1976).

With this scientifically sympathetic approach to religious data provided by the founders and their mystical followers involving the peak experience of transcendence, Maslow believes that the research psychologist can come to a better and deeper understanding of the meaning and nature of religious experience. Furthermore, if, as expected, these data all reflect upon and refer to a single reality of transcendence, then the commonality of all religions can be affirmed and confirmed. “To the extent that all mystical or peak-experiences are the same” (1964:20). This, in a sense, is the first example in the psychology of religion of a research psychologist proposing a kind of an

ecumenical psychology of religion wherein all religions converge into one reality.

Maslow's brilliance in his assessment of religious ideologies and institutions is no more clearer in evidence than in his characterization of the theological enterprise of established religions. Theology, at the end of the day, is an attempt on the part of religious leaders to verbalize the nature of the formative experience (peak) of the founder of the religious system to those who have not had and/or will not have such a peak experience. "Much theology, much verbal religion through history and throughout the world, can be considered to be the more or less vain efforts to put into communicable words and formulae, and into symbolic rituals and ceremonies, the original mystical experience of the original prophets" (1964:24). And, to make matters more difficult if not worse, the theologians themselves are too often members of that group of religious followers who have not had the peak experience themselves. It is like having someone who has never tasted ice cream trying to explain what ice cream tastes like to someone else who has also not tasted ice cream. It cannot really be done effectively, no matter the sincerity or genuineness of the effort.

Maslow would have us understand that as we come to a greater understanding of the nature and function of the peak experience in religious encounters by not only the founders of the great religions but those of a mystical bent who take up the peak experience as their own reality, we can anticipate growing in our understanding of this experience, its commonality among all religions, and how it functions in human growth and development. Diverting our attention from the non-peakers (!) such as theologians and religious establishment leaders and directing our attention to those who have had the peak experience, we are closer to the real thing. Though this may not please the non-peaking administrators of religious institutions, it may very well serve to better understand the true nature of religious experience.

Maslow is blatantly dismissive of the non-peak paraphernalia used by non-peakers to perpetuate the religions which have, as a matter of fact, been created and established by those who have had the peak experience. The motivation of the non-peakers to perpetuate a religion of which they themselves had not had the core experience is an interesting phenomenon within itself and may draw in sociologists and anthropologists as well as psychopathologists in attempting to understand who these non-peakers really are

and what is their motivation. “The evidence from the peak-experiences permits us to talk about the essential, the intrinsic, the basic, the most fundamental religious or transcendent experience as a totally private and personal one which can hardly be shared all the paraphernalia of organized religion -- buildings and specialized personnel, rituals, dogmas, ceremonials, and the like -- are the ‘peaker’ secondary, peripheral, and of doubtful value” (1964:27). To have had the core experience is sufficient grounds to justify the perpetuation of the experience, but for non-core experiencers to take up the cause constitutes another study all together.

The observation by Maslow that in his own researches he has found that often the non-religious person proves, at the end of the day, to actually be more religious than the purported religious person is quite a profound insight into the nature of religious identity, affiliation, and function. Allport, as we have seen earlier, spent a great deal of time identifying those central characteristics of religious people, finding often that what motivated them were social and personality issues rather more than specifically religious feelings. Maslow pushes this insight further in his own work. A person who is particularly responsive and susceptible to transcendent feelings of awe, wonder, and mystery but who finds that institutional expressions of religious feelings are rather outside their field of interest may, says Maslow, have been forced into a deeper cognizance of their own religious experience owing to this non-institutional affiliation. They have been forced to become more intentional in their religious understandings of the world and their experience in the absence of religious institutions which often tout pre-set explanations to confirm their authenticity.

Maslow’s profoundly insightful understanding of the relationship between sacred and secular would be of great benefit to the sociologists of religion like Peter Berger in fully appreciating the dynamic nature of the relationship, within an individual, of these two components of life, viz., sacred and secular or, in Maslow’s terms, religious and non-religious. “For most people a conventional religion, while strongly religionists one part of life, thereby also strongly ‘de-religionists’ the rest of life. Being religious, or rather feeling religious, under these ecclesiastical auspices seems to absolve man (most?) people from the necessity or desire to feel these experiences at any other time. ‘Religionizing’ only one part of life secularizes the rest of it’ (1964:29). Conspicuously religious people

(individuals defining themselves and being defined by others as religious owing to their behavior in relationship to religious practices such as worship, etc.) are able to differentiate their religious life from their secular life in a way that non-conspicuously religious persons (individuals who have a deeply abiding sense of the spirituality of life and their relationship to it as experienced in awe, wonder, and mystery but decidedly not institutionally expressed by “going to church”) are able to do. The former religious person knows when he is being religious and doing religious things -- going to church, etc. -- whereas the non-religious person, who is perpetually conscious of the spirituality of his life, does not. This is a profoundly insightful understanding.

Maslow is joined by the Protestant liberal theologian of the 20th century, Paul Tillich, in disallowing non-religious persons from being atheists just because of an apparent inability to identify their core experiences as religious. If they sense the spirituality of the world, its depth of meaning, the validity of awe, wonder, and mystery, they are, by Maslow and Tillich’s understanding, “religious” because they are having core or peak experiences of the meaning of life. “it would not occur to the more ‘serious’ people who are non-theists to put the label ‘religious experiences’ on what they were feeling” (1964:31). These “non-religious” people are often more religious than the religious people who never have such core experiences.

As the Church did in the Middle Ages, mystics were often incarcerated (referred to as being put into monasteries and convents) because of the danger the core or peak-experiencers bring to the established religious traditions. There is little control or governance over these mystics whereas those who are religious without ever having had a core experience can be controlled quite easily by the “teachings and doctrines” of the Church which are used by the establishmentarians as mechanisms of control.

The danger of religious institutions is that they persist without the core experience! The same may be said of all social institutions and the real danger in this phenomenon is the absence of the core experience which motivates the individual in the first place. Habit-forming religion is the worst kind for it does not draw from the source of its strength, the core experience. The same is true of all expressions of creativity and understanding, and in the world of value-based education, the danger of rote learning of values rather than experiencing the core of moral guidance leads to a susceptibility to

fascism, whether political or religious, blind obedience without the guiding experience of self-understanding (Fernandez, 1977).

Maslow is asking questions in 1964 which have been substantially addressed in the 21st century by such thinkers/researchers as the famous Harvard sociobiologist, Edward O. Wilson (Morgan, 2005). Julian Huxley, of course, addressed these earlier but without the full benefit of DNA and James Watson's work (Morgan, 2006). However, we do know that Maslow was then asking the right questions, namely, since there is an erosion of the security of religious dogmatism in the face of the advance of research science, why did these characteristics of human growth and development, both individually and socially, have to have religious approval and sanction back then now that we know they are endemic to human evolution. Where as religious institutions and their establishmentarians would have us believe that these qualities of moral behavior were derived from an outside source, namely a transcendent God of the Bible, we now know that this is not so and that the human community, in the absence of any knowledge of such an outside deity, has developed the same moral understanding of human relationships.

An outspoken and well respected proponent of the Third Force School of Psychology (behaviorism and psychoanalysis being the second and first type), Maslow contends rather persuasively that the doctrine of Original Sin is the culprit in demeaning our self-image. This Christian doctrine, a mainstay of the faith, teaches the total depravity of the human person. Our depravity is explained in the biblical story of the fall of Adam from the grace of God due to Adam's disobedience brought on by the wife God himself save Adam, namely, Eve. Because of this pervasive doctrine, coloring all of Christian theology and the western world's conception of humanity, the human community has paid a great price and continues to suffer considerably from its implications. This doctrine, more than any other, makes it absolutely necessary that there be a Loving God who forgives and redeems the depraved human community. This is a terrible state for modern society to imagine itself to be in and the rise of modern science and the new psychology has come to exonerate and liberate society from this religious oppression.

If Freud is acclaimed to be the most insightful social critic of modern times as a

psychotherapist, Maslow cannot be far behind for Maslow has identified the core of our social malaise in the modern world. When once we had nothing except our belief in a better world, now we seem to have everything except a belief in a better world. We are driven to get and hold and keep and hoard but to what end? Maslow would have us move towards seeking meaning akin to Viktor Frankl's "will to meaning" (Frankl, 1988). Maslow suggests that we are in a spiritual slump, a wasteland of possessions without meaning, world (for western modern man) of affluency without value.

Skepticism, cynicism, despair, have not, says Maslow, expunged our deeply abiding need for a spirituality of self and relationships. We have, as intellectuals are all prone to do, created a whole vocabulary of descriptive terms to characterize our present plight, our having everything while feeling as if we have nothing. That traditional religious institutions have now lost their attractiveness is confirmed by all statistical studies, but where to turn in a world of affluency yet full of spiritually starving people? Help, suggests Maslow, is on the way.

The Third Force School of Psychology, in a word, is going to be the answer, a kind of psychology broadly defined and sensitive to the human eagerness for a spiritual depth to life's experiences. Religious institutions have failed in continuing ineffectively to promote their canned responses to deep and new questions about life and its meaning. A secular spirituality, one that values deeply the eagerness modern society feels for the nurture of awe, wonder, and mystery in their lives, seems to be on the horizon. A spirituality that does not deny the core of religious need and experience but which affirms and nurtures it -- feelings of creativity, initiative, justice, spirituality, beauty, etc., all bespeak a spiritual depth not dependent upon an external deity but reliant upon an appreciation for the endemic qualities of the human person. This seems to offer promise to the modern world.

Modern liberal thinkers have fallen victim, says Maslow, to the baby and the bath syndrome, having thrown over as ineffective and blatantly dysfunctional the institutional expressions of religious sensibilities, namely, the churches and their institutional cognates, modern individuals have embraced a naturalistic science which provides answers to the functional questions of development and advancement but which has, unfortunately and unnecessarily, disregarded the spiritual depth of the human quest for

meaning in the world. Science has the capacity, when employed within the context of a value-based agenda which values the “core” experiences of the human person encountering awe, wonder, and mystery to speak to our condition. Technology-driven science is good but it does not do the whole job -- it gets things done but does not nourish the soul to use a phrase from Otto Rank (Rank, 1950). The modern person has fallen victim to a reductionistic perception of the benefits of science. To elevate science to a level of sensitivity to the hunger driving the human quest for meaning is what is called for now.

Antiseptic is the term Maslow needs to describe what modern science has allowed itself to become. And it need not have done so for a scientific understanding of the human personality will bring into play an appreciation for emotion, an appreciation for the depth of human experience of the good and the beautiful. The loss of spontaneity in human relationships and creative endeavors need not be lost in a scientific world. Rather, spontaneity needs to be fostered, nurtured, and encouraged.

Organized religion, the religious establishment, the institutionalization of religious sensibilities, has always attempted to own and govern these emotions of reverence and devotion, of awe, wonder, and mystery. And, up until modern science came onto the scene, institutional expressions of religion maintained dominance over the majority of individuals, particularly those who were devoid of the core experience and were mere satisfied followers. It seems to have worked for a very long time and the institutional church has benefited immensely from it. However, those days seem to be numbered now as those with core experiences of deep spirituality who are outside the organized institutional expressions of religious awareness are beginning to outnumber those without the core experience who continue to patronize the church and its cognates. A true psychology of religion, Maslow points out, will embrace and affirm this experience of secular spirituality. It is already doing so in many ways (Lundin, 1985).

Eighteenth century Deism will not do it. The intellect is only half of the reality of the core experience. For a new day to dawn, the scientific community will need to affirm the whole person, mind and spirit, body and soul, and by doing so elevate an appreciation of the core experience of encounter with the spirituality of life. The liberal expressions of religious awareness, Maslow points out, is so very ineffective owing precisely to its

failure to address the whole person's sense of both rational explanation and emotional affirmation. "Any religion, liberal or orthodox, theistic or non-theistic, must be not only intellectually credible and morally worthy of respect, but it must also be emotionally satisfying" (1964:42). Reason and emotion are the combined components of the human quest for spiritual meaning.

Maslow is fully aware of the problem of language for if the liberals (modern non-religionists) are allowed to redefine the terminology employed by the conservatives (traditional religionists), then how is a conversation to occur when both sides using the same words but with different meanings? Julian Huxley attempted a glossary of old terms defined in the new way and little came of it. To speak of God as the "God of the Bible" is quite different than speaking of God as "the principle of integration" in the universe. Whatever might be said in such a dialogue between a liberal and a conservative in which reference to God is central would, of course, be completely valueless if not counter productive.

Maslow is humble as a psychotherapist and this is not a common phenomenon. He has suggested that the psychologist functions as a philosopher in asking the key questions without proposing to provide the right answers. "I think it best to define a psychologist, not as one who knows the answers, but rather as one who struggles with the questions" (1964:44). It is in the questioning that we find our way -- do I go this way or that; here or there; up or down -- and in the asking we seem to have the capacity to move forward. Religious institutions have too long proposed the answers to all human questions, even when it was clear they had no answers. The result has been the decline of religious institutions as meaningful contexts within which to seek for meaning and purpose in life.

That religion can be defined as a naturalistic phenomenon is liberating in that it brings religion and its experience into the matrix of being human. It is not an alien and foreign phenomenon which has to be interpreted by duly designated individuals appointed and approved by the institutionalized forms of religious establishments. With this understanding, those groups that have for so long thought of themselves as outside the religious discussion, protesting the domain assumptions of the religious establishment, may now think of themselves as full participants in the exploration of a

viable spirituality for the entire human community based upon what is natural to us rather than foreign.

Maslow is the avoid enemy of a naïve concept called “value-free education,” for, says he, all things of importance imply a value system. Making established institutional religion the keepers of the value system of society, separating, intentionally, scientific knowledge from religious ideology, proposing something as preposterous as a “value-free” science, and even trying to create a kind of value-free educational system all bespeak a simplicity of thought bordering on the irresponsible. “These dichotomizing trends -- making organized religions the guardian of all values, dichotomizing knowledge from religion, considering science to be value-free, and trying to make it so -- have wrought their confusion in the field of education” (1964:48). The current problem in American education, explains Maslow, is that it is singularly devoid of an identifiable sense of purpose -- goals are conspicuously absent, especially long-term goals which affect the way an individual establishes priorities and the way a society envisions its future. Technology is a good thing but can quickly turn evil if there is no sense of an abiding value-system operative in the decision-making process of social development.

These far-reaching goals which are so desperately needed and so conspicuously absent are no secrete, they are not mysterious, and they do not elude a reflective thinking society (Feist, 1985). The goals are to enhance humanity, to foster social responsibility, and to nurture well-balanced individual personalities. The intent of every society in the formation of its far-reaching goals is to aspire to actualize what it perceives to be latent virtues and gifts within its people. By identifying these principles of well-being, for individuals and society at large, there is a measuring rode for determining social and public policy, implementation of virtuous initiatives and stifling negative ones.

Social pathology is the result of a wrong-headed notion of a value-free technology and value-free educational system. Confusion reigns as to what is the right thing to do and why is it right to do it. Far-reaching goals and “end-values” should be the agenda for a well-balanced society and to rely upon an antiquated religious entity or a naïve scientism devoid of a sense of ethics and morals is the recipe for disaster, for individuals and for society at large (Millon, 1983). Fascism, both political and religious, is the alternative to a well-thought-out value system designed to foster creativity, nurture

individuality, and encourage social responsibility.

A well-balanced educational system, driven by a deeply abiding sense of values, will inevitably produce a “spiritual” society of deeply valued individuality and social accountability. The fundamental questions of life, for individuals as well as for society at large, derive from a well nurtured sense of spiritual depth within the culture, a depth which values the ultimate questions of the meaning and purpose of life, the goals and ambitions of a responsible society, and the destiny of all peoples committed to service to others. The answers, no longer produced or tenable from religious institutions which have abdicated their responsible commitment to the maturity of individuals and society, must now come from the naturally endemic source, the human spirit itself. It is within humankind ourselves, Maslow points out, that our answers must come. “the final and unavoidable conclusion is that education -- like all our social institutions -- must be concerned with its final values, and this in turn is just about the same as speaking of what have been called *spiritual values* or *higher values*” (1964:52). They will not come from an imagined external source called God. The God of the Book is no longer operative in a scientific worldview where facts rather than myth and fiction are the controlling ingredients in human decision-making. That humankind is naturally good has been established in the face of a religious ideology that played upon the false notion of human depravity (Morgan, 2005). Now we know. We hold the answers to the meaning and purpose and direction of life ourselves. We are to determine the outcome of our efforts, not an external force conjured in the minds of would-be power brokers in the religious establishments of by-gone days.

Nature provides the answers to our dilemmas of how to live and why. We need not look to tradition or myth or concocted potions to produce the answer. They have been tried and have been found wanting. Power is no longer brokered by those running the religious establishments (Morgan, 2006). It is science, a science of accountability and responsibility, a science of facts, a science which recognizes the spiritual depth of the human personality which is now in control.

The commonality we all share -- religious and scientific alike -- is so much greater than our differences. And, when we define religion as the natural human propensity to pursue our spiritual depths through the fostering and nurturing of awe, wonder, and

mystery, there is little room to distinguish between those who prefer to seek this spiritual depth truth traditional forms of religious institutionalism and those who prefer the freedom of scientific enquiry. The goal is the same -- fullness of life and purpose for living. That religious establishmentarians are eager to promote their worldview must be countered by the scientifically attuned members of society who seek personal freedom and liberation from institutional oversight. The road eventually diverges, but not nearly so soon as many would think. We all, both groups, share the same long-term goals of fullness of life and service to others. Only at the end of the day must we part, with one claiming a scientific worldview while the other adheres to a theistically-driven view of the world and our place in it (Morgan, 2006).

For those who truly seek the well-being of human society and our responsible place in the universe, whether theologians or scientists, whether religionists or secularists, both groups can travel together. Only those who would have it all their way, allowing for no divergence of worldviews, are to be excluded from this journey. They must go it alone, abiding in their demented sense of the worthlessness of the human person in the absence of a salvation provided by an alien being called God (Morgan, 2006). The rest, those who seek to know and serve to the best of their ability, while believing in science or in an external God, their work is clearly laid out before them. That work is progress and well-being for the human person, society, and the earth itself. Few recent explorations into the value-based assessment of human responsibility as relates to accountability in scientific research as applied to the physical environment, human genetics, and the psychological wellbeing of the human community have done as much for the subject as has the work of Hayes, Strosahi, and Wilson (1999) where both “acceptance and commitment” as therapeutic modalities converge in human behavior.

Spiritual values, those values that nurture the human spirit by feeding our aspirations and ambitions, our desire to foster justice and to seek new heights of understanding and service, these are the values which a responsible education system must embrace and perpetuate. Education is more than facts; it is more than mere information; it is certainly more than technological skills for building and doing. Education is the mechanism whereby the human community becomes and remains human, becomes and remains responsible and accountable for our individual and

corporate actions, and the medium through which we foster these goals and aspirations for every forthcoming generation of well-meaning people in society. Education is the core and embodiment of our value system and it is the means whereby we prove and validate our humanity.

From William James to Abraham Maslow is a sixty-year span of time commencing with a call to investigate religious experience and concluding with a clarion call for theology and psychology to converge upon the phenomenon of religious experience with scientific integrity and theological responsibility. The ten books considered in this essay are all iconic and epic in the contributions they have made to the subjects they have covered. That eighteen of the top theological institutions in the United States were asked to collaborate in identifying just what ten books would be credited with contributing to the development of the discipline of the psychology of religion was, itself, a unique event. It is hoped that the task set before us at the outset has been met and discharged with integrity and credibility.

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