

“HOLY ENVY” REVISITED – SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020

Chapter 6 of “Holy Envy” is entitled – “Disowning God”? I was dismayed!!

When considering this title I found myself aware of Barbara Taylor’s comment as she moved from classroom to the podium as a guest speaker and so I paraphrase that you, my friends, “rightfully expect me to say something both intelligent and complete” (Taylor – pp 102).

With emphasis on “intelligent” my remarks will, understandably, be brief.

To **disown someone** is to reject them.

I cannot accept this meaning of disown in the context of my relationship with God; rather, I believe there may be at least two very positive and important interpretations

- there is the message of **sharing God** with those of other faiths
- perhaps an even more important message is that **God owns ALL of us** no matter the faith we profess. **We do not own God – God owns us!!**

This latter message is, in my opinion, a positive message of hope for all humanity.

Ms. Taylor emphasizes to her university students the value of visiting the places of worship of persons of different faiths – providing her students an opportunity to learn from within.

Our visits to the BAITAN NUR of the Ahimadiyya Muslim Community and to the AVATAMSAKA Buddhist Monastery were both arranged by Brenda and were examples of those which Ms. Taylor engages with her university students.

At the mosque and the monastery we were met with warmth and friendship.

The visit to the mosque took the form of “observation” after which we took refreshments and at which time the Imam addressed us and answered questions.

I asked the Imam “**Do you think the God you worship and the God I worship is the same God?**” to which he immediately replied “**YES**”.

Think of the First Pillar of Islam -- The **first Pillar of Islam** is for the believer to testify, in Arabic, that “**There is no god but God and that Muhammad is His messenger.**”

This phrase, known as the shahada, (sha-HEH-da) or Profession of Faith, is central to **Islam**, for it affirms both God's oneness and the central role of the Prophet.

Thinking of **Christianity** is it not true that we express God as the “Father” and as we read the testaments does it not become clear that Jesus Christ – his only Son is also his messenger?

The Apostles Creed and The Nicene Creed both reaffirm this with the words “I believe in God the Father almightyand in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord”

As I continued my reading “**the oneness of God**” overtook my thoughts giving way to the joy of being one individual that is cared for by God as I stand beside God’s multitude which comprise all humanity.

At our visit to the AVATAMSAKA Buddhist Monastery we were engaged as “participants” in meditation. The “Dramatic Part” of participation was, for me, in **HEARING the “sound of silence”**.

Two words came to mind – **Peace and Tranquility** causing me to think of dissonance and discord in the sense that neither **dissonance** nor **discord** is possible within a peaceful and tranquil mind – **anger is not possible**.

Turning again to “Holy Envy” Chapter 7 -- “The Shadow Bearers” presents the many obstacles that we create in forging meaningful relationships with people we deem to be different from us. Ms. Taylor warns of the danger of reliance on opinions expressed out of anger or misinformation. She cautions us to not let expressions and actions of a few uninformed capture our understanding.

We should try to look at the “Goodness” in peoples rather than the “Badness” bearing in mind the “Evil Doers” are in the minority of people.

I found great satisfaction in our visits; time spent with old friends (SDUC ACTS Book Club) and the opportunity to learn from others.

During this month of January we have experienced severe cold – our Muslim neighbors and Bhuddist neighbors experienced the same cold. When our Muslim friends and Bhuddist friends are thirsty they take a drink when our Jewish friends and our Hindu friends experience physical hunger they take food – it seems to me we all do the same things and use similar remedies

The thought of “**One God**” for all humanity, beasts, birds and fishes is indelibly marked in my mind.

With the “oneness of God” being central in our minds, the idea that the processes of expression of faith should differ from one place to another should be embraced not challenged.