

Religion is Developmental

by Jaramogi Menelik Kimathi

The ***African Mystery Temples*** is considered the common birthplace of the major religious traditions in the world. The theology of the African Mystery Temple is symbolized by the Egyptian ***sphinx***. The sphinx has the ***body of a lion*** and the ***head of a pharaoh*** (who was considered divine). The Mystery Temples taught that ***personal development was a primary religious obligation*** and that through development of our potential we could rise from our ***lower animal nature*** to full expression of our ***higher divine nature***. The Egyptian system regarded the development of one's potential as the ***greatest and highest good*** and the fulfillment of human destiny.

"The ancient Egyptians had developed a very complex religious system, called the Mysteries, which was also the first system of salvation. As such, it regarded the human body as a prison house of the soul, which could be liberated from its bodily impediments, through the disciplines of the Arts and Sciences, and advanced from the level of a mortal to that of a God. This was the notion of the summum bonum or greatest good, to which all men must aspire, and it became the basis of all ethical concepts.

" Stolen Legacy, p.1 George G.M. James

This focus on human development is also reflected in the gospels as ***Jesus had developmental expectations*** of his disciples. Jesus recruited a motley crew of followers from ordinary backgrounds but with a heart to serve God and a passion to transform Israelite society. His unique message resonated with them and they committed to following him as his ***disciples***. During their three-year experience, he shared with them the spiritual insights of his teachings. His teachings not only revealed insights relating to moral, social and political and spiritual affairs, they also called for personal transformation that realized the inner potential that the disciples were not even aware they possessed.

Jesus taught a path or a ***way of transformation***. Through proverbs, parables and lessons from nature, he invited his followers to see differently, to reject the limitations of conventional perceptions of reality so that they could open their lives to a more evolved perception that enabled them to realize the vast possibilities available to them through God's grace and power. Jesus taught that social change must be accomplished from the inside out. Jesus demanded that they exercise their spiritual potential in ways that could become manifest in the physical world. Jesus actually expected them to do what he did. He became frustrated when they could not, or made excuses for their failings. He expected them to preach, teach and heal the same as he did. Jesus did not regard his own abilities to

be unique. He believed himself to be an example of the potential that God gave all human beings.

Later, in the Book of Acts, we see the disciples actually doing the same things that Jesus did. They are now preaching, teaching and healing. Through the way of transformation taught by Jesus, the disciples evolved to do what they once thought was impossible. They found a new life beyond the boundaries established by conventional wisdom – a new frontier, where, for co-creators, all things are possible. This developmental journey is what religion is really about; not calling on God to do for us, but making a way for God to do through us. The issue for the disciples, then, and for us today, is having faith that the animating force that gives us life is God, and trusting that this force is available for us to use in our earthly endeavors.