

An email response to a high-ranking Orthodox Jewish commentator.

Dear Sirs,

Please excuse my brevity - expediency, not disrespect.

Having read your comments on the 'disturbing trend' of Jews trying to assimilate Buddhist thought and practices, I feel obliged to counter your stated belief that partisan religious traditions, however rooted in culture and history, can (or should) compete with the push towards a universal, collective spirituality which will undoubtedly contain many sacred truths from various religious traditions (as well as from science and existential reality of course).

God, or Jehovah, or Elohim, or Allah, or Ultimate Reality, or The Way, or Whatever.. must, by principle, be a Universal God of Truth and causal reality. Our various religious traditions, when viewed apart from their nostalgic, cultural, and (therefore) emotional traditions, are at best a limited attempt to grasp a Universal Reality in theory, practice, and tradition. Inevitably; if mankind is ever to fulfill its Golden Rule potential (as true brothers) in the eyes of God.. we must somehow move beyond the sectarian limitations of denominational thinking. This is not to suggest that we immediately abandon that which furnishes spiritual support and guidance.. but rather; that we all come to realize that religion, if it is doing its job properly - will, like medicine, eventually put itself out of business. The big question of course is whether or not our religious 'doctors' are aware of this. Unfortunately, the dynamics of corporate survival encourage our rabbis, priests, and ministers to first pursue the course of (safe) partisan religious traditions before the unpredictable (but perhaps ultimately more Godly?) quest for Universal truth? More than any - (we) spiritual 'doctors' hold the responsibility for the health of the community before God and before history.

We would do well to remember that there was no religion in the Garden of Eden.

Peace and goodwill brother.

Stephen Manning.