

Theosophy as Religion

From a student

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“There is no Religion higher than Truth”
(Motto of the Maharajah of Benares).

According to H. P. Blavatsky and her teachers, one of the greatest sources of human divisiveness and one of the fundamental factors working against the purely natural feelings of brotherhood and solidarity between peoples, nations, and races is what is commonly called *religion*. We see examples throughout history of how institutionalised religions can misinterpret, mistranslate, and even invert the original teachings of their founders, while at the same time demanding rigid and unthinking adherence. For those who dogmatically cling to religious doctrine with fanatical, blind belief, even minor religious differences can provoke intolerance and condemnation. To this day, we find distorted creeds actively feeding distrust, oppression, and hatred towards others of differing views, even leading to terrorism and war. In addition, religious doctrines that perpetuate a belief in the separation between humanity and nature help to justify the rampant destruction and abuse of the natural environment that has reached a critical stage. Therefore, if we wish to affirm, as H. P. Blavatsky taught, that Theosophy is not a religion, but is religion itself, we must be extremely careful to understand and examine what her statement means.

We can begin with definitions. The word *religion* is derived from Latin *re+legere*, “to gather, to be united,” or *relegare*, “to be bound fast together.” It is the opposite of divisiveness and separateness. In an article entitled “Theosophy as Religion” H. P. Blavatsky defined the essence of religion as “that which binds not only all MEN, but also all BEINGS and all things in the entire Universe into one grand whole.” If we accept that definition as our