

The Cosmic Religion: Love God, Love Neighbor, Love Self

Ralph Calabria

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Calabria's thesis brings together ancient teachings and contemporary thought to open the door to an unencumbered relationship with the cosmic being whose heart beats at the center of all faiths.

Ralph Calabria's engaging handbook on cosmic universal teachings reveals the "golden thread" that unites the world's major religions. Calabria brings more than fifty years of research, writing, lecturing, meditation, and guidance from various sages to bear upon his study of the three-strand thread of unity, order, and truth that has been taught by Jesus, Krishna, the Buddha, Lao Tzu, Guru Nanak, Moses, Zarathustra, Muhammad, Yogananda, and other masters. He also explains the differences between religions and how the claim of each to be the only "right" path to the divine has caused much suffering throughout human history.

The author's thesis is that the reason for the disunity lies in the inability of religious adherents to discern the "golden thread" that would unite them. Within each religion, he writes, there are three different types of followers: exoteric (a dogmatic adherent), mesoteric (a discerning seeker), and esoteric (a devoted meditator). His discussion of each type is clear and convincing and does much to enrich the understanding of why religion can be either the path to realization or the source of grave conflict.

Of the three types, Calabria declares that it is only the esoteric who will find it easy to discern the golden thread of unity, and he shows how the tendency toward fanaticism (displayed by exoteric followers) distorts the very message they claim to uphold. "Perfected messengers," like Jesus, the Buddha, and others, he writes, "did not desire to establish an external empire or convert or conquer people. They only desired that devotion be directed toward the spiritual, duty be directed toward the social, and discipline be directed toward the self." This three-fold instruction, beautifully and simply stated by the author, goes to the heart of the matter and summarizes the teachings of the masters.

The cover design is appropriate but lacking in subtlety; the back cover is comprehensive, but the biographical information (professional and educational) that would enhance the author's credibility is limited.

There are frequent errors in grammar, syntax, spelling, word usage, and punctuation. Dropped letters at the ends of words are especially prominent: "Most individual are not secure" should read "Most individuals are not secure"; "to become aware of one real spiritual nature" should read "to become aware of one's real spiritual nature."

The charts that showcase the characteristics of each of the three types of believers and the failures of the major world religions to grasp the message of their spiritual founders are especially helpful, as are the notes at the end of each chapter and the references on Kriya meditation given at the end of the book. These elements will especially benefit those who want to do further research.

Calabria's thesis is well reasoned and tends to avoid the judgmental approach that might be taken when looking at the

messy conflicts religions have foisted upon the world. Instead, his approach is lucid, rational, and passionate, bringing together ancient teachings and current thinking to open the door to an unencumbered relationship with the cosmic being whose heart beats at the center of all faiths.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January 23, 2014)

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