



Esoteric Spirituality

Peter Jones

Esoteric (hidden) spirituality is going public. The website of The Secret announces “a new era for humankind,” kick-started by the sale of two million books and six million DVDs. The Secret, kept since Babylonian times, is now available on Amazon.com. What’s the rush?

Money?

The Secret continues a series of best-selling spiritual volumes, from MacLaine’s Going Within, to Redfield’s “The Celestine Prophecy,” to Brown’s The DaVinci Code. They have all done very well, thank you. But money is not the only motivation.

A Sense of (Manifest) Destiny?

We are, says The Secret, “the generation that will change history.” That generation is particularly American, as Australian editor, Rhonda Byrne, admits. Good ol’ US of A pragmatic, positive thinking, (as developed by New Thought and Norman Vincent Peale and as marketed now by multi-millionaires Dyer, Robbins, and Dr. Phil) is joined to “Nature spirituality,” and includes occult channelers like Neil Donald Walsch (who appears on the DVD version of the Secret). It promises to make spiritual and material millionaires of us all. New Age researcher Tony Schwartz calls such spirituality “an emerging American wisdom tradition” that will fill our pockets and save the planet.

A Major Change of Spirituality?

On his private island with his new wife, Tony Robbins must be kicking himself. His brand of positive thinking never produced such a successful spiritual product. The Secret is the power of positive thinking on spiritual steroids—actually a new hybrid religion that:

joins the self-indulgent materialism of the West with the Hindu/Buddhist spirituality of the East; takes principles and quotations from all religions; and reveals that guilt is passé and that the “law of attraction” is neither good nor evil; whatever you desire and attract to yourself “you deserve.”

Such “revelation” arrives on the scene just in time. Sociologists tell us that modern society has made a “subjectivist turn” away from understanding life as “established roles” and “given order,” toward life as a state of consciousness that considers the inner self as the norm for behavior and that values “subjective wellbeing.” Material and spiritual well-being is just what the modern gurus ordered.

A Choice of Worldview?

The Secret is not just a unique commercial success or the latest version of the human potential movement. It is another proof that, since the Sixties, the “Christian” theistic West has been turning back to pagan, pantheistic monism. The vocabulary of this ancient pagan religion abounds in the glossy pages of The Secret:

*“You are the master of the universe”
“You are eternal energy... which can never be created or destroyed”
“We are all One”*

"Everything is One universal Mind"

"We are the creators of the universe"

"You are God manifested in human form."

Notice what is happening. Human potential has become divine potential, monistically adopting the unique attributes of God the Creator. This is classic Nature worship, which eliminates God, the transcendent and separate Creator.

Scholars of religion identify two types of spirituality:

1. esoteric (inner) religion, the God within, finding truth within the human heart (since humanity is divine).
2. exoteric (outer) religion that finds truth beyond the sphere of Nature and humanity in the person of God, Creator and Redeemer, whose being, as Creator, is outside of created things.

A classic text from the Christian scriptures said this with surprising clarity two thousand years ago. This is no secret! There are only two kinds of religious people, those who worship and serve creation and those who worship and serve the Creator (Romans 1:25). These two kinds of spirituality describe the only two religious worldviews. They both require faith and service. They are mutually exclusive, and everyone must choose between them—but you would not know that from reading *The Secret*.

The age-old esoteric option, presented with such brilliant marketing skill in *The Secret* offers power, money, human "divinity," the elimination of all things distasteful and the promise of a humanly-realized earthly utopia. However, it fails to take seriously huge issues that we ignore at our peril—human evil, physical death and the reality of God as separate from us, demanding our allegiance.

The exoteric option, found in the Bible, faces squarely the present reality of evil and the ugliness of death while finding final hope only in the Creator as the loving Redeemer.

The options could not be more clearly presented: hope in the dark secrets of humanity or hope in God, who declares to us the real secret we need to know:

"Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret"....Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go" (Isaiah 48:16-17).

CHRISTOS KURIOS: CHRIST IS LORD.