

Panel 2 IFD 2004

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We are starting the second panel under the title of The Place of Religion in the Secular Society. The panel has widened. A few of us have been sitting here in the morning, but I'll ask those who are new to introduce themselves in a few words. Dr. Hoffberg, please.

Ron Hoffberg

I'm Rabbi Ron Hoffberg and I work with the Masorti Conservative Jewish communities here in the Czech Republic. I teach as well in various places religion courses, and we have a religious community that meets here in Prague as well.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Excuse me, I just learned to know that there are newcomers among the audience. Thus I ask everybody to introduce themselves. Please, Excellence.

Józef Zyciński

Archbishop Józef Zyciński, now Archbishop of Lublin, Poland, close to the area where Rabbi's parents were born, and now I am responsible for 1.1 million Catholics in the archdiocese of Lublin, and for the Catholic University where now 22 thousand students study. My specialization was philosophy of science; now I keep track of the dialogue between faith and reason at the Catholic University of Lublin.

Tariq Ramadan

My name is Tariq Ramadan, I'm Professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Philosophy linked to Notre Dame University in Indiana in the States. I'm also in charge of a project called Religion, Conflict and Peace Building. I'm trying to work at two different levels: in academia by writing and trying to work at the theoretical level, and also with the Muslim communities throughout the world at the grass-roots level. I try to think about our present and future, and mainly about the Western Muslims or Muslims in secular societies in Canada, the States and Europe.

Tomáš Halík

Tomáš Halík, President of the Czech Christian Academy, Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Sociology of Religion at Charles University and chaplain of the University's Catholic community here.

Colin Fletcher

Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester in England, close to Oxford. I'm here as the representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who asked me to send you all his greetings, representing him both as head of the Church of England, but also in his capacity as the First Bishop of the Anglican Communion worldwide in many countries around the world.

Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich

I am Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich, Emeritus Professor of Judaic Studies, Modern Judaism and Contemporary Judaism. I'm active in Christian/Jewish relations in Switzerland and other countries, and a member of the Central Committee of German Catholics, though I'm Jewish. We are working in this field for more than thirty years, and had quite a big success after the ecumenical council. I'm also the president of the Council of Christians and Jews in Switzerland as well, because I'm Swiss.

Kakuhan Enami

My name is Kakuhan Enami, and I'm the representative of Enryaku-ji Buddhist Monastery of Mount Hiei in Japan. Our monastery in Japan is called the Mother Monastery or Mother Mountain of Japanese Buddhism, because most of the well-known Japanese schools of Buddhism have their roots in our Holy Mountain. That is also the reason why our monastery is fulfilling the role of a place of inter-religious dialogue, not only among different denominations of Buddhism since the eighties, and also among the representatives of other world religions. They are meeting every year on our Mountain for prayer, for reconciliation and world peace.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Would you also introduce yourself?

Robin Heřman

My name is Robin Heřman, I am employee of the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. I research in the field of Japanese Buddhism, and I'm also monk of the Enryaku-ji Buddhist monastery at

Mount Hiei.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you very much. My name is Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz. I was born in South Germany, working now in East Germany. I have the Chair of Philosophy of Religion in Dresden, and I'm usually speaking in front of eighty percent atheists.

I will say a few words about the topic of the panel, the place of religion in secular society.

It has been repeated in the international discourse that in the present, we experience revitalization of religion. Instead of dying a slow death, as Marx predicted, religions today are important, maybe the most important factor of cultures worldwide. The only exception is Europe. In Europe, there is a certain resistance towards religion or even a kind of stagnation of this importance of religion; however, we have to discuss it within the global state of mind. Religions are not only remnants of old mentality, as they were called in the nineteenth century. They are newly opened to dialogue, to knowledge of each other. In this difficult tolerance we live in, we see that in the future there will come decisive moments in the world politics. Those who feel comfortable with the idea that religions are in the position of dying dinosaurs are learning a new lesson, and not only from 9/11.

I say now provocatively that we live in general renaissance of religion, in spite of the European stagnation. It is even doubtful whether religion was ever really dying. A Hungarian journalist in 1989 said that there is a strong "traffic to Damascus". I translate this metaphor for you: Saul went to Damascus as Saul and left it as Paul. It means that there's a strong interest in conversions of the atheists; in 1989 the atheist part of Europe started to travel to Damascus to convert.

The importance of religion does not diminish in a global perspective. If one calls it today by a new term, it means that we have to translate it. Today, we call our movement post-secular. We live in an era of post-phenomena: something is post-modern, post-everything; but we also live in the era of post-secularism. Does it mean a steady growth of religiosity? Does the mind of those, who always tried to predict that religion would be moribund independently from whatever we do, change? How deep is this renaissance of religion today? How deep are its roots? Is it a self-defeat of those who believe or make themselves stronger than they are? Or as in my opinion, is the project of modernity an incomplete project? Maybe modernity was in the state of self-defeat. Is rationality the only inheritance, what remained from the Enlightenment?

There's a famous sentence by Bertolt Brecht: Under a more precise microscope, God is disappearing. This was the moving factor in creation of natural sciences. Today, the modern generation is much closer to the statement of Wittgenstein, who said: "We feel that if we have an answer to all possible scientific questions, the problems of our life are not even touched yet." We solve problems, but the problem of our life is not even touched by natural sciences. Maybe "European Enlightenment" is even tragic sophism. Maybe it took away precious part of European culture.

In other words, is rationality an additional value, the paradigm for the future? Are we still at the very beginning? Or do we belong to a moribund item of culture? What will be the development of religion in a secular society? More questions than answers, perhaps, and I would like you to make simple answers. Anyone can start who prepared an answer for three to five minutes.

Józef Zyciński

I will start with the question of post-modern mentality and the role played by religion in our society. First, I would refer to Leszek Kolakowski, a formerly militant Marxist, who is now active at All Souls' College in Oxford as a philosopher. When he attended a panel discussion three years ago at the Catholic University, his duty was to reply to the question: do we live in post-Christian era? And his argument was: if someone is intellectually responsible, use of term "post-Christian" to the present culture would not be justified.

Christianity or post-Christianity does not depend on the decision of a group influential in the media; it depends on witnessing faith displayed by the people committed to their faith. I found the profundity of the insight of an intellectual who does not belong to any religious group, but now accepts the God of philosophers amazing. This statement is his intellectual commitment to the religion.

When we try to assess the position of religion in the present society and the consequences of the mentality of the Enlightenment, please let us remember that the British version of the Enlightenment was quite different than the French version. When Joseph Priestley arrived to Paris at the end of the eighteenth century, he was amazed that most of the French representatives of the Enlightenment were so critical towards the Church, while the French were surprised that the famous scientist believes in God of religion. There were different versions of the Enlightenment.

Now, when we discuss the role of religion, there are various proposals of the democratic society. I would refer only to one case. At the beginning of democracy in France and in the United States, quite a different approach towards religion was demonstrated in the United States than in France. After accepting the first version of the American Constitution, a meeting was organized in Philadelphia, and various religious groups were invited to this meeting, where the Jews were treated during the coffee break even with the kosher food. It was an expression of the recognition of their style and their traditions. Whereas three years

later in Paris, a similar meeting was organized, and the Jews, to keep them humble, were invited on Saturday. You see quite different approaches to the religious traditions. One in which there is inter-human contact and the relationship of friendly openness, and the second, a bureaucratic approach, in which we decide what is human. We tolerate religion in this and that version. It means that when we discuss the presence of democracy in the contemporary society, and the role of religion, we must know that there is not one model of democracy; various approaches to religious values are recognized. Religion is a part of our culture; thus it is important to discuss the role of religion in society, in culture, and in our life.

Ron Hoffberg

It's a wonderful privilege for me to be able to be here today, to share this dialogue, and to meet people who are involved in and concerned with this issue of religion in the secular world.

I come from the perspective of having lived most of my life in the United States, and only in recent years here in the Czech Republic. Therefore, I can apply the model of a society that struggles with religion having a place; but not a decisive role in government and in moral and ethical teaching to the government. There are the concerns always in the United States and it would be worth a discussion here today as well, of what the boundaries are, and where they exist, to what extent does religion play a role in the government, and can the government play a role in religion? Because they're related. The two go together.

As a Jew and a teacher of Jewish history, I have the perspective of religious roles in many different kinds of paradigms of religious government cooperation. Therefore I would note a word of warning that we need to be very careful about the role of religion in society in general. It's necessary to remind ourselves, I believe, that religion is the moral foundation. Even in the most secular of worlds in the last hundred years people had their beliefs and their religion, whether they were willing to call it that or not. At the same time, we need to preserve the openness of a society without interfering with the religious roles that are taking place there.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you. Prof. Ramadan.

Tariq Ramadan

Two or three points about religions in secular societies. I think first that it's really important for us to understand that every country has its own model of democracy and its own model of how religions and the public sphere and state are to be organized.

You have to know, who are you first? Are you first an American, or first a Christian? Are you first a Muslim, or first a French or British? The Jews had to respond to this question of double loyalty and face it for decades in Europe. It's really important, because now the Muslims are facing exactly the same question. Who are you first? And I really think that we have to frame it in a new way. If I'm speaking about my quest for truth and I'm giving a meaning to my life and death, I'm first a Muslim with French or Swiss nationality; but if I speak about my social belonging, participating in a society, I'm first Swiss with Muslim background. It depends on the question and the field of reference. If we speak about truth and philosophical questions, I'm first Muslim; if we speak about citizenship, I'm first Swiss. Who are you first is the wrong question driving us towards wrong answers. When we say that we are citizens of a secular country, I really think that we have to be clear in the name of our religious teachings. We are bound by the common law, and the constitution of the country we live in. No differentiation or specific laws for specific groups. We are bound by the general rules.

Muslims as the minority question in France is also about general history of France, and it is a very difficult question within a very difficult and complex history. As Muslims in secular society, I can say yes, I'm a member of a minority religious community. It means that the Muslims are in minority in the country. When I am speaking about my religious belonging, it's clear that it should be understood that way. However, we have to get rid of this obsession by minorities. When I am a citizen, I am not a minority citizen. There is no minority citizenship in our countries, when you speak about secularism. Therefore the secular law should be applied and enforced equally strictly for all the citizens; there is nothing like minority citizenship or majority citizenship or older citizenship or more recent citizenship, which entice lesser rights. This is a point when we have to say: okay, let us apply equal laws for all the citizens at the same level. Don't - out of fear - re-assess this common law, because you are scared of one minority group, as it is the case in France, for example, with this headscarf affair. Muslims had no problems with the 1905 law, because it was open to freedom of worship. Now, because there is this great deal of fear in the French society, they came up with a new law restricting the freedom given by the old one. The point is therefore equal citizenship, equal rights.

The last important point is autonomy. Religious traditions should organize themselves from within according to their standards within the limits of the common law and the common constitution. This autonomy is the future. If now the states are trying to be involved in the decisions, it's not going to work. It will never work with Muslim communities as it never worked with the Jewish communities or the Christian communities, and I really think that we have to respect equal citizenship, autonomy of religious traditions, and at the same time, equal treatment of all religions in this common space.

Tomáš Halík

I just finished a book about it, thus my head is full of ideas. It will be a little bit hard for me to express them shortly. I think we must distinguish between secularity and secularism, as Friedrich Gogarten did. Secularity is a legitimate fruit, not only of the Enlightenment tradition, but also of the Biblical tradition of Judaism and Christianity. The Biblical peace is a process of secularization of nature and politics. Also in the Christian, especially the Western Christian history and philosophical tradition, there was also distinction between faith and reason; distinction between the authority of Caesar and of the Pope. These two poles are typical for the Western tradition, as well as the tension and dialogue between these two poles, reason and faith, or secular power and the religious authority. Thus on one side is this secularity, which is the fruit of emancipation, on the other side is secularism, which is the ideology supporting this animosity against the presence of religion in the public arena. I think the problem of the society today is to avoid two types of fundamentalism. On one hand, the religious fundamentalism, the misuse or instrumentalization of religious tradition in politics; on the other hand, we should also avoid secularist fundamentalism, the attempt to drive out religions of public arena. If secularism becomes dominant philosophy or the dominant stream in society, it becomes pseudo-religious. And this new religiosity of secularism could be more intolerant than the old religious tradition. I think it's a very important problem today.

My last point, I think that Christianity, and perhaps Judaism as well, has a great chance today to understand the two worlds that are divided. On one hand, there is the world of traditional monotheistic religions with traditional societies, such as the Islamic society; they can be understood on the basis of many values shared by Abrahamic religions. On the other hand, there is the secular world. Christianity, and Judaism have much in common with the secular world, because secular world was born from this tradition. I think we could understand both sides, and we have the chance to stretch the hands to both sides; perhaps we could try to build a bridge between these two parts of our world that are now in conflict.

Colin Fletcher

Thank you very much. I found it fascinating being here this morning and hearing the word "Europe" being used in all sorts of contexts. I come from an English background, which is very much part of Europe; you will know that we have a somewhat ambivalent view on Europe as a whole. Certainly, some of the experiences being talked about this morning seemed far distant from what we've experienced in the history in my own country. I will, if I may, speak primarily from the experience of my country, and I hope that will contribute something to this dialogue, though I'm very much aware that I've got a huge amount to learn. The faith communities in England have a somewhat complex relationship with the rest of society. The census a couple of years ago found that over seventy percent of people define themselves as Christians. Another seven or eight percent define themselves as belonging to other faith communities, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Buddhist, pagan, and many others. Of the seventy percent, who define themselves as Christians, a comparatively small number actually ever go to church or worship with other Christians. That's just the nature of England today. It's also part of the nature that we have an established Church, the Church of England, of which I'm a member. But unlike many of our other European counterparts, we receive no state funding for our ministers. I am not paid by the government in any part. We do get some help for repairing our buildings, but all the running costs of the buildings and most of the costs of the repairs are met by our congregations. Again, that's unlike many of our fellow Christians in many parts of Europe. Our bishops do sit in Parliament, in the House of Lords, or at least, twenty-six of those do, but in day-to-day terms, the Church is often treated as being totally separate from the state, and some have argued that secularism has got further, or as far in England, as it has anywhere else in Europe.

And that kind of division between the Church and the state emerged in a very interesting way in the mid-1990s, when I was a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's personal staff. The question arose, what was going to be done to mark the year 2000? Initially, it was a major struggle for the churches to make their voice heard. At least one senior government minister had to have it explained to her in very simple language, that the year 2000 was significant for Christians, as it marks the two-thousandth anniversary of Jesus' birth. That thought had never struck her. In Parliament, when the question was raised about whether the state should acknowledge the year 2000, the secular lobbying within Parliament protested time and again that such an acknowledgement would offend those of other faiths, and therefore, nothing should be done about it.

There were, however, some other voices being raised at the same time, and in the faith communities themselves; and part of my job at that stage was to co-chair a committee that was co-chaired with government, but included Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu representatives on its number. And what we found, of course, was that our fellow believers fully expected us, as Christians, to celebrate such a significant date in our calendar. They had no problems whatsoever with the fact that we should have church services to mark the date. What they wanted, as we wanted too, was an occasion when representatives of our different faith communities could also meet to mark the start of what was a national time of looking forward. And so we had an event in the House of Lords on January 3, 2000, which brought

together members of nine different faith traditions.

I won't pretend that everything has gone from strength to strength since then. We do now have a Faith Communities unit in the Home Office; we've never had a Minister of Religion, a government Minister of Religion in England; this is the closest we've ever got to it. But I'm certain that a person's faith identity is now more fully appreciated in England than it has been for many decades. It was my privilege, as I say, to work on that committee, and the thing I discovered by working with those of other faiths was first and foremost to value our common humanity, to value that in new ways, and to discover in that encounter the joy of deep friendships. I also learned that what bound us together, the fact that we shared a belief in the vital importance of belief, of prayer and of worship, was a real meeting point. And that from it we could challenge together the debilitating secular mindset of others who questioned the validity and the possibility of what we were seeking to achieve by working together. I'm convinced, therefore, that the path of dialogue through friendship and genuine openness to each other is something the faith communities have to contribute to wider society in England at the moment. It's something we're seeking to do, and which enriches society as we do it.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you.

Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich

I would like to speak about Judaism. Jews are in a special position here. Judaism is not a religion only. Judaism means a people of a special kind, *gens sui generis*. Somebody would say, he is a Jew, but he has nothing to do with religion. If it's true or not is another question, but you would still say so: he is a Jew, but religion doesn't interest him. We have a special problem with religious identification here. The emancipation of the Jews started only around a hundred years ago. In these hundred years, Jews were integrated into the society the ways leading to the Shoah that changed a lot religious picture. It effected a third of Jews in the world, especially those who were deeply rooted in religion: in the Eastern countries, in Poland, for instance, where three million were killed.

Religion plays a role, but a special role for the Jews. It is a different problem than as in the Roman Catholic religion, or the Anglicans; the Jewish people are divided in directions, in special groups. There's the Orthodox, there's the Masorti, the Conservatives, and there's the Reformed Jews. The differences between - not the Conservatives and the Reformed - but of these two towards the Orthodox are quite big. Then, you have a new phenomenon here in Europe, a group - I don't wish to say a sect, but they have a sectarian character - they are the Habbat, the Hassidim. They represent a form of a mission to the Jews, and they are quite successful. Thus the situation of the Jews, especially in Europe, is very difficult to describe. Whereas in the United States things are different because the diversions there, especially the Conservatives and the Reformed, are quite strongly oriented towards religion.

On the other side, you have in the United States, and now in Europe as well, much stronger integration into the society where religion does not play a role. In the society the birth, the parents, and perhaps traditions play a role, but not the religion. For instance, there are cities where the synagogues are normally quite empty; however as in Christianity, on high holidays, such as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the synagogue is full. People are coming to the synagogue not because of religion, but to show that they are still Jews, that they have not forgotten their Jewish origins. They are living as other people, too, in a secular society. They are not different at all. But on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, they wish to show themselves that they have not forgotten to be Jews.

And there's another problem that the Christians have as well in some countries their own way. Jews have this in a special way, and this terrible way is anti-Semitism. Even in a secular society, where the Jews are integrated into the society, there is terrible anti-Semitism, which has many different forms of all sorts. I'm very happy to say that one sort of anti-Semitism has almost vanished in most of the Christian religions, that is the anti-Judaism, which existed in the Middle Ages and was stopped at the Ecumenical Council in 1965 for the Catholics, and by many Protestant and Anglican groups later or earlier through many declarations in favor of Judaism and against anti-Semitism. Finally, it is anti-Semitism, which brings Jews in a secular society to some kind of a Jewish identity, because the others are imposing this onto them and linking them to the Jewish people by telling them that they are Jews. This happens even when they have no Jewish feelings anymore, or have nothing to do with a synagogue or with Jewish liturgy and rites. As you see, the Jewish situation is very different and even different in many countries. You have in the countries, which were under Communist governments, a society, where the new religions are now on the rise. It's not strong, but there are people, who feel that after what happened to them - the Nazis, then Communism - they need something more. In the Eastern countries more than in the Western, there is a new movement for religious feeling in the secular society, because the people suffered under the secularity of society; they are now looking for something that gives them a new identity as Jews. This happened even to people with one Jewish parent only, for instance, or of distant Jewish origin.

Thus we have in the Jewish situation today very different circumstances than we have in the Christian society in Europe. On the other side, you have in the United States something, which would not have been

possible twenty years ago. You have almost everywhere in the universities a chair for Judaic Studies. It was impossible to think twenty or thirty years ago in Europe or in The United States about having a faculty or a professorship of Judaic studies. I think this is a very interesting development now in Judaism, and we can't judge how deep it is rooted and we do not know its future development neither in the Eastern countries nor in Europe or in the United States.

However, in the United States, you have very strong possibilities as regards to religion, and very strong congregations, because there's a difference between state and religion. Communities are private organizations; you have very strong congregations of people in New York, where the synagogues on Shabbat are full. Full churches - that is something, which you'd find in the case of the Catholics in Poland on Sunday or in Croatia and Slovakia. This you have in the United States in the bigger cities, and that shows that there is hope for Jewish religion in the future.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you. Please.

Kakuhan Enami

I have to apologize that our introductory speech will be a little longer, but we will speak less during the discussion. I wanted to remark that when I heard the speech of Bishop Fletcher - even though in Japan the relation between religion and state was traditionally very strong - I realized in the present moment we are in the same situation as in your Church. We have absolutely no support on the economic level from the state or public organizations. The only income is from inside of the individual religious bodies.

First, coming to the subject of our panel, I will try to analyze the relation between secularity and religion, and place of religion in secularized society of Japan. But before making such an analysis I have to ask myself what the word secularity means, because we are not so familiar with this word as maybe you are. Looking at the opinions of different people here, I came to understand that different people explain the meaning of secularity in very different ways. If we follow the Latin etymology, secularity seems to be a kind of orientation toward current world or toward the present moment. This definition of secularity seems to be a very good characteristic of Japanese religion. Japanese religion does not only look at this world as a real one, but in many cases, it understands this world to be the Buddha's world. It understands the beings or the things, which are existent in this world, to be living kami-or, or living sacred forces, which are central to the Shinto, the second most influential religion force in Japan.

The Tendai Buddhism, the Tendai Buddhism theory of original enlightenment speaks about enlightenment as something what is inherent to all beings of this world. Also in the esoteric Buddhism, there is a way opened to reaching Buddha-hood, the highest goal of any Buddhist, in this moment or in any moment of the present life, and in this body which was born by one's parents. Accordingly, the master Dolgan taught that Buddhist nature is best understood if you look at the phenomenon world around you; for example the flower, which is vanishing in front of your eyes. It is clear explanation of Buddhism or Buddhist spirituality. It seems in a certain sense that in Japan secularity and religion are not two distinctive identities, but that secularity is a specific trace or a specific characteristic of Japanese religion. An important form of religious practice of our Tendai Buddhist school is the so-called practice of four samandi, four self-meditations. These four samandi (of not going around and not sitting) is a form of practice, which is most clearly explaining the characteristic of Japanese religion as a whole. In this meditative practice, every act of your daily life becomes a religious practice. Based on this concept, for example, the most typical form of ascetic practice of monks in Japanese monasteries is to tidy up their monastery. Actually, if you look at the system of education of monks in Japanese monasteries, you understand that not only tidying up the monastery, but also the acceptance of food and etiquette toward other people inside and outside the community, the care of your body, of your dress, and so on, these all are the fundamental to religious education. Even for example, kitchen, lavatory, and bathroom are understood to be sacred places, to be temples, and all of these have their own patrons and religious rituals.

In the Buddhist sutras, it is written that the pure land can be found only in the impure world, and maybe in this practice. This also explains that you have to look for the pure land in your own heart, regardless of what you are doing. Actually, the life of man itself is the religious practice par excellence.

If you are thinking about the role of religion in a society, first you have to clearly distinguish among faith and religion. Faith is an individual question, but religion does not exist without community. Religion is often born from individual, very strong mystic experiences, but if it comes to practiced in an organized way not every member of this group shares the same mystic experience, which was at the founding moment of the religion. Thus, there comes a tradition, which is replacing this mystical individual experience. The bigger the number of groups of individuals, who have their own faith, the stronger or more solid is the society, which they found together. In history, the religion started to widen, and went from supporting smaller groups to supporting huge civilizations or huge cultural complexes. But to eliminate the competition of other less influential cultural groups in many parts of world, there was clear intention to make religion as uniform as possible. In Japan, the same tendency appeared mainly during the second half of nineteenth century, when there was very strongly felt danger from the outside. To make Japan more easily defendable,

Japanese government decided to unify the nation by one unified religion, so-called national Shintoism. If you look at the religious symbols in the society, there are many different kinds of religious symbolism. The symbolical meaning depends on intention of the user of the symbol. I think that what is very important for a religious symbol to be a real religious symbol, is that the intention of the user of the symbol corresponds with the original meaning of the entity, which is used as a symbol. You should not use religious things as symbols as you please.

I would like to conclude with my private opinion: I think that the more authentic religious symbols are present in our world, the better. Religious symbols have the ability, if they are authentic, to nurture man with quality, which is desperately needed in today's society. Without them the mankind will be a very sad society.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you very much. We have now a whole basket of ideas, and for the first time, we stretched it also to the Asiatic tradition. Now, I think we have a few minutes left, and then I would like to open floor to the audience. If I put it together, I heard from most of your contributions that secularization is by itself not so bad; it means and it gives a kind of course. You stressed the Biblical tradition, but also the Shintoistic tradition, where this world is considered itself as something holy. I don't want to speak for the others, but I think that, maybe, it is one of the consequences of this thought that there is a new freedom for religion also in the secularized world. With many sacrifices during its development, but at least there is a new freedom. Maybe some of you would like to support this, or to warn against this development? How can we get further? Some of you would like to answer?

Józef Zyciński

I would like to continue a little bit what was already said by Professor Halík in his distinction between secularization and secularism. In French *laïcité* is regarded as something positive in our culture, while *laicism* is regarded as an expression of it, a logical ideology which is to be introduced to replace religion. The problem for me is the question of when is it *laïcité*, and when *laicism*? Religion is very often seen in this approach as something private: privacy is needed, but no presence of religion in public life. It is important that in our hearts, we express the essence of religious feelings, but let us remember, on the other hand, that in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus introduced the public reference, "Blessed are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as a criminal". There is a public reference, and religion cannot be reduced only to private feelings.

To explain why secularism seems so strong in many centers, I would refer to post-Communist countries, where religion was eliminated from public life. But how to explain it in democratic countries? My reply would be that there are many factors, but among them, there is political correctness that tries to reduce religion only to the private sphere and to present it only as a form of private feeling, which is not to be demonstrated publicly. Professor Ehrlich emphasized that in the United States, we have quite different public expression of religion, even in the synagogues. In Europe, we do regard religion at least as a cultural phenomenon - why then to be silent about our commitment to particular culture? If someone asks me, what kind of music I prefer, I can publicly declare that I prefer Mozart and Handel to Grieg and Wagner. Why to keep it in silence? In my opinion, we must be consistent enough and consequent enough in presenting the role of religious values in contemporary culture, in contemporary society, to counteract this form of secularism that would like to reduce religion only to the privacy. Thank you.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Who would like to answer? You put a few questions.

Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich

Maybe I should answer, because you spoke to me. I think, in the United States, there is a different situation. You find rabbis who can attract people, and you have there the flexibility of the service and of the rites. In Europe, you have a very strict and, I would say, not very spiritual orthodoxy, which keeps the rites as they were done two hundred fifty years ago. They don't appeal to the people of today. And I think there should be a development to challenge this even in orthodoxy. There's a name for it already, but it is not done. It is called modern orthodoxy. When you look at the modern orthodoxy there is hardly any difference from the old one, but the modern orthodoxy is getting more attractive for people. I think we could this way come to a situation, which we have now in the United States, though there are less people here today. I give you an example. In Paris, which is a very lay country, the Reformed synagogues on a common Friday evening in Shabbat, are full. People are standing almost on the streets to get in. And this is because of the flexibility of religion and of the desire of people to have something, which is different from the every day. I think in Judaism, the cult and the art of those, who are doing it, the hazan, the cantor and the rabbi, have very important role in religion.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Can we have a second, quite short round of answers?

Ron Hoffberg

First of all, Professor Ehrlich is referring to what has really been quite successful in the United States, not only in the synagogues, but in the churches as well. It is the openness in many of the synagogues today - you can even find three or four different services going on at the same time on a Sabbath morning. The rabbi is not requiring or dictating a particular style of service. People can come into the synagogue for the fellowship of the community and express in different ways or different styles, even through a singing service or a meditation service. I'm finding, because of my work here in Europe, that there is an interest in a more open approach. To relate it back to what we're speaking about - the secular society - it is the same kind of place of religion in society that it teaches. It offers opportunities of community and moral and ethical stance. And those are then open for people to come, to study, to learn, to participate in the society, and to develop their own sense of place, rather than a dictated religious approach or secular approach.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you. Who still wants to communicate some ideas?

Tariq Ramadan

Just one point. When you mention secularism as something, which is perceived as "not so negative", from the Islamic viewpoint the perception remains that there is a problem with this statement. I think that there are two points, which are really important, and you made them. There is a great difference between a secular system and the ideology of secularists. The ideology is sometimes using secularity or laïcité as a weapon against religious presence. And we have to be very cautious there, because this is creating a new dogma against another dogma; at least religion is perceived as dogma.

The second point is that, in the Islamic world today, secularism has not the same meaning as it had in the Western societies. Why? In the Western history, it was perceived as a process of liberation and pluralism. Thus if you go to the Islamic world, and you look at what means laïcité or secularism, it is understood as something imported by colonizing power, as imposed by dictators.

The way it was done in Turkey was not democratic. It was very harsh for the Turkish people to understand that this is the freedom of worship, this is the new freedom we want, – it was an imposed model. Exactly the same perception is in Iraq, for example. If this is a secular state, it's secularism minus democracy. This is a state, where there is no democracy, but at the same time, we say to them, this is the way you are going to be free. Whilst it meant freedom in the West, it meant more dictatorships and oppression in the Islamic world.

The perception of the Islamic world is that the secularism you speak about means less democracy or less freedom and less religion. This is why the Western Muslims living in secular society could come with new perception and new understanding within the Islamic world that secularism is not against religion, it's not against religious expression. From this pluralistic system, we can help and teach people to live in religious pluralism. Thus some real positive results could come out of this. So, I think that we have to put it all into the relevant contexts.

The last point is about the States. There is a space for religious expression, and in other countries as well. We have to be careful not to understand secularism as disrespect towards religion, which marginalizes the discourse about public ethics at the same time. We can remain in our religious community, we need respect towards religious expressions, but at the same time, we need the right and the responsibility to come up with ethics in the public sphere; I mean, in order not to impose dogmas on people, we need to propose ethics.

Colin Fletcher

The dogma of secularism is something beyond my experience, because it doesn't seem to be part of the British characteristic. What is very much part of the British characteristic is the privatization of religion - the perception that religion is something for you, it's your private belief, and it doesn't impact on the public realm. The problem comes when in fact there is an impact of religion on the public realm. This discourse at the moment in Britain has been energized in part by the coming in of a number of other faith communities. We'll talk about that in the third panel.

We can't divorce a religion from the public realm. Two examples at the moment. One is in schooling, where traditionally we've had Jewish schools, we've had Christian schools or church schools in Britain, but some of our church schools may have seventy, eighty, ninety percent Muslim children in them, which is quite an interesting phenomenon. Then, quite properly, Muslims are now saying, we want our schools too, and how do you work that in with the demands of being part of the citizens of the state? It's a question we are having to wrestle with and it won't go away.

Another area is that of discrimination, where we have laws against racial discrimination, sexual discrimination and, very high up the agenda, particularly from, again, the Muslim communities, has been religious discrimination. We've had a blasphemy law for centuries that's hardly been used, and we're now

trying to wrestle with the issue of religious discrimination, which clearly goes right across the religions. But in order for it to be a law, somebody somewhere has to define what a religion is, against which someone is being discriminated and that's going to be a fascinating debate. The government has now said that that should be on the agenda, and we're going to see how on earth we work it out over the coming years.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you. And now, I think, Doctor Halík, you want to have another sentence now?

Tomáš Halík

There is a very important question. Why this complex of values we are used to as a part of our Western identity, such as culture of law, democracy, tolerance, pluralism, religious freedom - why were these modern or secular society values born from the ground of the Western religiosity? From this complex of Judaist tradition, Catholic and Protestant traditions? There is nothing like that in the Byzantine tradition of the Eastern Christianity, and it is a problem in the Muslim context as well. I think it's not accidental that it was born from this context. It's very true what one German lawyer said that democracy was born from some postulates and values that democracy itself is not able to cover by the democratic mechanisms. Thus there is some common ground of values, which is a part of American identity from the very beginning. Religious pluralism and freedom was from the beginning part of the American identity. I think this complexity and complementarity between the Western religious tradition and the democratic or secular culture is the problem of today. If this tradition of Enlightenment and secular tradition are to emancipate themselves from their roots, it's a problem for the future of democracy. And it's also a problem for the world of religion if it loses the relation with this tradition of political freedom.

The two aspects of the Western identity, the religious tradition and the democratic tradition or liberal tradition, don't represent one tradition. There are two traditions, but they shouldn't be enemies, but sort of complementary. It is the task for both to ask for this complementarity and cooperation.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you very much. You would like to speak?

Robin Heřman

Thank you.

Kakuhan Enami

For me very important was the remark of Bishop Fletcher concerning the role of religion in education. Now I'm also a member of a committee, which tries to introduce religious values into education. As you know, after the World War II, in the Japanese constitution and Japanese educational system, religious beliefs were excluded from public educational system. After fifty years of this system working, we can see the results. The result is disorientation of people who are not able to find values that can anchor their lives. In our daily news, we see almost every day news about suicides, collective suicides of young people, and the reason they give in their letters to their relatives for their suicide is „We don't have particular reason why to die, but we also don't have particular reason to live, and to die seems to be easier for us.“

I am today ninety-eight years old, so I can still remember the education, which was in Japan before the war. Even though I know about the militant aspects, which were included in it, which had some relation to the state religion before the World War II, I cannot help myself to think that re-introduction of religious values into education is the only way how the Japanese society can survive.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

Thank you very much. I apologize to the audience that I cannot now give you the chance of asking questions, but please save them for the next panel. I just wanted to close with saying that this was a different type of dialogue now than in the morning. I wanted to close the panel with pointing out that we were working in a secularized church. Maybe we should think for a moment about this metaphorical surrounding, where we are. What does it mean? Thank you for your patience, and for listening. Up to three o'clock there is a small coffee break, and then we come back here.