

Masao Abe) that the *sunyata* of later Mahayana be understood as the dynamic unity of fullness and emptiness (or *u* and *mu*) is constructive one—reminiscent again of Hegel. However, this a Yogacharya view is quite different from the Madhyamika of Nagarjuna, who never predicates fullness of *sunyata* or, as David Kalupahana has shown, in any way regards *sunya* (the adjective “empty”) as noun or subsistent. This seems reflected in Dr. Shimmyo’s closing strictures about the *anatman*, etc., but here again, I feel, he may go too far and fail to note the contribution of *early* Mahayana to an ontology of openness and freedom—one analogous to current deconstructionism: fatal alone, but indispensable in concert with Hegel.

## *Sessin IX*

# Denial of “Self” as a Religious Principle : Towards a Unity of Religions

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### I. Introduction

Let me begin by posing the question of what should be understood by the phrase “unity of religions”. In this paper I am not promoting a unity in the sense of a uniformity of doctrine. There are significant differences between faiths in terms of belief, ritual, and so forth. But there are also similarities. Some of these are very striking and giving these a certain emphasis certainly would not be detrimental. They are also general enough to have universal applicability. The world is experiencing remarkable changes and is in need of the kind of help which only religious wisdom can provide. As Geoffrey Parrinder has aptly stated :

The problem of today is how to avoid quarrels and wars, and turn world society into world community. The construction of a world-wide harmony is too great a task to be undertaken except with religious faith. For the necessary energy, vision and goodwill are available from no other source.<sup>1</sup>

We should be willing to utilize any kind or level of religious unity as a basis upon which to promote the common cause/s of a common humanity.

One dimension of religion having universal applicability, it seems to me, is the notion of a denial of "self". Denial of self implies a certain attitude to one's own self and a certain relationship with an "other" which is qualitatively different from that which holds when one's self is not denied. Denial of self is common enough among different faiths (even though it comes to expression in different forms) to warrant consideration as a "religious principle". This is what this paper is going to consider. The context in which this paper is written is that of *Unification Thought*<sup>2</sup>, a new philosophy which originates in Korea, and which is based on the teachings of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. Specifically, this paper focuses on the new view of human nature found in *Unification Thought*. This new view, I believe, can serve as a context in which a clearer understanding of the legitimacy of, and justification, for self denial can be obtained.

## II. The Traditional Meaning of "Self" in Various Religious Traditions

Religions generally see the human being as more than a mere material being. There is something about us which makes us qualitatively different from the animals. This something is conceived differently among the different faiths and it is generally called self, soul, spirit, and so on.

In Hinduism the individual self (Atman) is said to be eternal and immutable. "The Atman is birthless and deathless. It does not dissolve when the body dissolves."<sup>3</sup> The Katha Upanishad states that

the "Atman...is never born and never dies."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, "the Atman is one with Brahman: this is the highest truth."<sup>5</sup> The individual Atman is one with the universal self (Brahman).

In Islam the human being exists in relationship with Allah. "He created you as one soul, and as one soul He will bring you back to life."<sup>6</sup> The relationship one has with Allah is one of subservience, a master-servant relationship; one is advised to "submit to Allah"<sup>7</sup> and each person has the freedom to live in accordance with Allah's laws or go against them. Thus, "each soul is the hostage of its own deeds."<sup>8</sup> At the last day, "the day of immortality,"<sup>9</sup> it is said that "each soul will know what it has done."<sup>10</sup>

Buddhism is notable for its denial of any permanent soul or self. It is unique among the religious traditions of the world in this respect. It specifically denies the existence of the Hindu Atman. The idea of "no-self" (anatta) is both well-known and, for those of us in the West, rather difficult to comprehend.

Interestingly enough, a Japanese Buddhist scholar writes as follows:

...we may ask, which self (or self in what context) does Buddhism desire to rid humanity of? For the non-self language of Buddhism should not blind anyone, either non-Buddhist or Buddhist to overwhelming existential vitality of some sort of selfness in Buddhism...The increasingly "non-selfed" or "de-selfed" self acts increasingly like what the West has sought to designate by its terms autonomous, integrated, liberated, spontaneous, enlarged, or redeemed self.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, there is talk, especially in Mahayana Buddhism, of a true nature or Buddha nature which is realized in meditation, or when one achieves satori. Masao Abe, a noted Zen scholar, also speaks of "self-awakening" to one's "true self."<sup>12</sup>

The Christian notion of "self" or soul is well-known. John Hick, the recognized British theologian and philosopher of religion characterizes it well:

The Christian concept of soul undoubtedly includes this

conscious self, which earns rewards and deserves penalties, which becomes or fails to become aware of God by faith, and which is to enjoy hereafter the blissful life of heaven or to suffer eternal loss of heaven.<sup>13</sup>

In Taoism the reality of the self is clearly recognized for one is advised to "have little thought of self,"<sup>14</sup> and a self is taken into account in Confucianism inasmuch as our (moral) task is to cultivate its moral quality. "Heaven begat the power (te) that is in me."<sup>15</sup> This cultivation is not an easy one. "The Master said, I have never yet seen anyone whose desire to build up his moral power was as strong as sexual desire."<sup>16</sup>

Jainism, another of the faiths of India, holds to the notion of the person as composed of jiva (soul) and ajiva (matter). The Acaranga Sutra states: "...some know that their soul is born again and again, that it arrives in this or that direction, whatever direction that may be."<sup>17</sup> And, it is stated in the Nityanaimittika-pathavali that "one and eternal is my soul, characterized by intuition and knowledge; all other states that I undergo are external to me, for they are formed by associations."<sup>18</sup>

In Shinto, the indigenous faith of Japan, the notion that each person has a "kami" nature is well-known. Also, W. G. Aston speaks of "the human mitama or tamashii (soul)."<sup>19</sup>

In Unificationism there is an idea of "self," but since I will be considering this more in detail later in this paper, I will not dwell upon it at this point.

In all of these perspectives, including Buddhism, there is a common-sense notion of a "self" and this is usually held to be an "empirical" self, that self of which we are aware in our everyday experience of thinking, feeling, remembering, and so on. This self we experience as being endowed with various desires, feelings, and needs, both good and bad, pure and impure, selfless and selfish.

Nevertheless, there seems to be, in addition, a sought after "higher"

self which is variously understood among the world's faiths, and which is usually achieved/actualized/realized/etc. only through the undertaking of a religious Path of some sort and placing ourselves under some form of spiritual discipline. Such discipline usually involves a denial of the desires and needs of one's lower self. It is, in part, by means of such denial that one is able to make progress along the spiritual Path. It is, in part, this sense of denial, or self denial, that I am considering in this paper. But I am thinking of it in a different way and that will be made more clear shortly. The sense of denial just mentioned is found universally among the religious traditions of the world. We must now consider more carefully just what it is that is being denied. It is to this question that I now turn.

### III. What is it That one is Denying in the Context of a Religious Path or Discipline?

In all of the major world faiths there is a strong sanction against "wrong" thinking and "wrong" behavior. Greed, lust, immorality, lying, stealing, sloth, and so on are only a few of the things warned against. These things are strictly condemned because they are manifestations of the lower mind which keeps us enslaved to the things of this world. The various scriptures and religious classics of the world all caution against behavior which is spiritually defeating. Let us take a look at some representative passages.

The Buddhist *Dhammapada* exhorts us to "do not what is evil. Do what is good. Keep your mind pure."<sup>20</sup> It says "if a man does something wrong, let him not do it again and again. Let him not find pleasure in his sin. Painful is the accumulation of wrongdoings."<sup>21</sup> In perhaps its most famous passage, the *Dhammapada* states:

What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind. If a man speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him as the wheel of the cart

follows the beast that draws the cart.<sup>22</sup>

Shankara, in his *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*, says to "cease...to dwell upon sense-objects: that is the root of all evil."<sup>23</sup> In the *Upanishads* we see that "who follows pleasure reaches not the End."<sup>24</sup> The Buddhist *Sutta-Nipata* says that "discarding attachment to sense desire"<sup>25</sup> cuts the round of rebirth. It also says that "in this world those who are...excessively egoistic...this is stench."<sup>26</sup> Finally, it says "there is, in taking things, a thirst, a clinging, a grasping. You must lose it. You must lose it altogether, above, below, around, and within."<sup>27</sup> In the Confucian *Analects* it says "let there be no evil in your thoughts."<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, in speaking of a particular individual, it is stated that "he is at the mercy of his desires. How can he be called steadfast?"<sup>29</sup> More explicitly it is said that "pleasure got from profligate enjoyments...is harmful."<sup>30</sup> The *Bhagavad Gita* claims that "it is greedy desire and wrath, born of passion, the great evil, the sum of destruction: this is the enemy of the soul."<sup>31</sup> The *Koran* says that believers, who "restrain their carnal desires" are the "heirs of Paradise."<sup>32</sup> Also, "those that transgressed and chose this present life will find themselves in Hell; but those that...curbed their soul's desires shall dwell in Paradise"<sup>33</sup> and "those that preserve themselves from their own greed will surely prosper."<sup>34</sup> The *Tao Te Ching* tells us to have "as few desires as possible"<sup>35</sup> and that "the sage avoids excess."<sup>36</sup> Explicitly, it warns that "there is no crime greater than having too many desires"<sup>37</sup> and that "there is no misfortune greater than being covetous."<sup>38</sup>

Clearly, to become too attached to the things of this world, with the many sense pleasures available on every hand is not encouraged by the world's religious traditions. "Enjoin believing men to turn their eyes away from temptation and to restrain their carnal desires."<sup>39</sup> Consider the implications, not to mention the depth of wisdom, of the following:

If a man should conquer in battle a thousand and a thousand more, and another man should conquer himself, his would be the greater victory, because the greatest of victories is the

victory over oneself.<sup>40</sup>

This passage might remind us of another meaningful statement, that is, "for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, the different Paths of the world all encourage certain patterns of thought and behavior that history has shown us to be conducive or supportive to spiritual health and progress. In short, those things which are encouraged are diametrically in opposition to all of those things which are cautioned against. There is exhortation in support of morality, purity, truthfulness, compassion, and so on. Again, representative passages abound throughout the scriptures and religious classics of the world. These are too well-known for me to have to quote them.

The question must be asked as to why the "world" and its sense pleasures are such anathema to the spiritual journey. I will address this shortly, but first I want to consider the striking dichotomy which I have tried to bring clearly into view, using the quotes above, between those things encouraged by religious traditions and those things cautioned against.

All of the behaviors or attitudes above, I think, can be considered in terms of selfishness or selflessness (unselfishness). These are certainly diametrically opposed to each other. If I am a selfish person I might act immorally because I want to satisfy my own personal desire, usually at the expense of everyone else. I might lie because I want everything to go the way that I want it to go, the way that is good for me alone, whether it is true or not. If I tell the truth I may, in certain situations, be hurt or made unhappy, and I do not want that to happen. I might steal because I want to possess something, even if it belongs to someone else. All of these behaviors are an expression of my selfishness, the attitude I have of seeing the world as centered completely upon myself, without any regard for others. Most people express varying degrees of selfishness, and even different degrees at different times. On the other hand, if I am a selfless person, I act morally because I care about my relationship with someone else and I care because I care about that

other person, and not just about myself alone. Likewise, I am truthful because I really care about the well-being of the whole, which includes other people, and not just about the well-being of my own personal situation. Again, I do not steal, because I care about the feelings of other people. All of these behaviors are an expression of selflessness, the attitude I have of seeing the world as a whole, and those in it, as more important than my own small, personal world. Especially, as I have emphasized, I see the world as containing other people besides myself.

In speaking of "denial of the self," let me clarify a little further what it is that we are denying. First of all, taking into consideration the scriptural references quoted earlier, I think we can distinguish two distinct stages in human activity. First, there comes into the mind an idea, a desire, an impulse, etc. Second, I act upon this idea, desire, or impulse in order to realize or fulfill it. Therefore, when we speak about the "self," I think we can correctly focus our attention upon the mind itself as the locus of our ideas, desires, impulses, and so on. Furthermore, when speaking of the mind, I suggest, as mentioned previously, that we think in terms of our having a "higher" mind or self as well as a "lower" mind or self. Both are aspects of the human mind, of course, but such spatial imagery is often used in religious writing. Certainly we should consider such imagery as being used in a metaphorical sense. Otherwise, we fall victim to the absurd image of one mind being on top of another mind. Metaphorically, a "higher" mind can be considered as one more godly in its inclinations, desires, impulses, and so on. Likewise, a "lower" mind can be considered as one more worldly, the kind of mind that is usually associated with the tendencies of the body or flesh. The great religious traditions of the world are unanimous in encouraging us to act in accordance with our higher mind, and to deny those actions which would be made in accordance with our lower mind. Consequently, the "self" that is being denied is the self which is informed by this "lower" mind.

The fruits of the religious life have virtually proven that a life in accordance with the higher self or mind is more enduring, more meaningful, and spiritually more uplifting in the long run, with

Heaven, Nirvana, or Paradise as a reward. At the same time they have shown that a life lived in accordance with the lower self or mind is self-destructive and leads us into Hell.

Now, the lower and higher minds cannot in reality be separated. We experience our mind as one, a mind which is caught up in a moral struggle, as the religious traditions demonstrate. Depth psychology has shown us that there are dynamic psychic activities occurring in the mind. These are usually considered in part to be subconscious and that is true to some extent. But depth psychology is lacking in that it treats the mind on a scientific level and does not stop to consider any religious perspective. It does not consider those elements of the lower mind, for example, as in any sense "alien". It would have us believe that everything in the mind, psychoses and selfishness included, as a perfectly normal aspect of the ontology of the human mind. Psychology does not take seriously the ideas of religion or theology. On this point it is clearly limited. It puts little credence in theological ideas such as God or Satan, as found in Christianity, or functionally similar notions in other Paths. Recognition of such ideas could give a needed philosophical basis to the alien character of the lower mind and suggest a reason for wanting to deny the lower self. I suggest that we must begin to take seriously the principles of good and evil and, more specifically, the agents behind them. In *Unification Thought* the existence of God and Satan are affirmed. More importantly than this, however, I want to argue that the human mind, as it is at the present time, is seriously disordered. This is the kind of conclusion to which we come when we study carefully the moral exhortations of the religions of the world. This notion of being disordered will be clarified shortly.

When I speak of "denial of self" what I am speaking of is denial of the lower mind, as just mentioned, with all of its selfish and impure desires, inclinations, tendencies, and so on. Religions of the world, I think, would agree on this point. Thus, the *Analects* urge us to "set your heart upon the Way."<sup>42</sup> Most people, religions recognize, are not wholly committed to a religious Path. We are not all monks by nature. "...most men care for the outward show of this life."<sup>43</sup> Very few are those who seek, and far fewer are those



who find. "Few men know me, and therefore I am highly valued."<sup>44</sup> Matthew 22:14 says "for many are called, but few are chosen." This means that in most people the lower self (mind) is dominant in the sense that it supplies to them their guiding principles in life. Their life is centered around the desires and impulses of their lower mind, the impulses coming from the higher mind being virtually absent and having very little influence in their life. In some people the higher self has begun to make itself heard, and in a very few, singular people (Jesus, Buddha, etc.) the higher self has developed a certain dominance such that it is able to supply to them their guiding principles in life. Their life is centered around the desires and impulses of their higher mind. "In his every movement a man of great virtue follows the way and the way only."<sup>45</sup> In the case of most religious people the experience is that of a conflict between the "higher" and "lower" minds. In fact, the more determined one becomes in following a religious Path ("higher" mind), the more distracting an influence from the "lower" mind one seems to have to struggle against.

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am!<sup>46</sup>

Thus the necessity for spiritual discipline and self-dominion. "The greatest of victories is the victory over oneself."<sup>47</sup> Shankara says "renunciation is the giving-up of all the pleasures of the eyes, the ears, and the other senses..."<sup>48</sup> Let it simply be said that "he who overcomes himself is strong."<sup>49</sup>

Why is there such a difference between these kinds of people (Jesus, Buddha, etc.) and most of the rest of us? Why do people like Jesus and the Buddha have a dominant higher self? Why do most people (those not on a religious path) have a dominant lower self? Why does one on the religious path experience such a struggle

in the religious life? It has to do with the denial of self. In order for the higher self to develop, denial of self is an absolute necessity and self-denial is not an easy thing to do.

At this point I would like to modify the spatial imagery and, rather than considering "higher" and "lower" minds, think of them in terms of Subject and Object. Subject and Object are terms taken from *Unification Thought*.<sup>50</sup> I believe that *Unification Thought* can clarify many of the issues I am discussing in this paper. The mind, whichever one it is, which is functioning in the subject position is going to be the mind which dominates our life. For most people, as mentioned earlier, that is the lower mind. What I have been calling the lower mind is functioning as subject to the higher mind as object. Thus, the ideas, desires, and impulses of the lower mind have been dominating the lives of most people. Such a life is characterized by what I have called selfishness. For Jesus and Buddha, what I have been calling the "higher" mind functioned as subject to the lower mind as object. This is the proper relationship. Thus, the ideas, desires, and impulses of the higher mind dominated the lives of these religious founders. Such a life is characterized by concern for others and by selflessness, in short, by love. For the person on the religious path, there is a severe struggle between these minds, each trying to take the subject (dominant) position; more accurately, we place in subject position whichever mind, the impulses and desires of which we daily choose to follow. To live the religious life takes self denial.

What I have been calling the subject, *Unification Thought* calls the "spirit mind" and what I have been calling the object, *Unification Thought* calls the "physical mind."<sup>51</sup> The proper order (or relationship) between them, as mentioned, is for the spirit mind to serve as subject and for the physical mind to serve as object. It should be noted that both minds have their appropriate position and function. They are both important. When the proper order is maintained our life is in harmony and balance. This manifests our higher mind. But when this proper position and function becomes disordered, problems result. This manifests our lower mind. Self denial is necessary to ensure that the spirit mind is functioning as

subject.

More importantly, perhaps, self-denial affects the quality of our interpersonal relationships. Here we must consider the notion of "purity of heart." A pure heart is perhaps the most important criterion as to whether or not the spirit mind is correctly functioning as subject, and thus as to whether or not our life is in spiritual balance.

#### IV. The Notion of Purity of Heart

According to *Unification Thought*, that which functions, in part, to make the spirit mind and the physical mind maintain their proper positions with respect to each other is heart.

The original man has the ability to maintain the correct relationship mind. His heart has grown to become centered upon, and united with, the fullness of the Heart of God. The give-and-take action...is harmonious and perfect, because it is centered upon Heart.<sup>65</sup>

Since this is the case, the idea of heart must be looked at more carefully. It is one of the most important ideas in *Unification Thought*.

*Unification Thought* maintains that human beings exist as reflections of the Original Being (God). Since the most fundamental aspect of the Original Being is heart, heart is the core of the original nature of the human being. Heart is what makes a human being a genuine human being.

Heart is the starting point of love. Without heart, love cannot appear. And love is the source of life; namely love makes man live. However rich a man may be materially, without love, his life will be lost and the individual, home and community will fall apart. Love is the source of life and makes man what he should be.<sup>66</sup>

But heart is not a static ontological reality. It is dynamic and changeable, especially with respect to its quality, that is, its purity. Heart can be defined as "the emotional impulse to seek joy through love."<sup>64</sup> Love originates in heart and we know that there are different levels, qualities, and kinds of love. There is self love, altruistic love, selfless love, etc. Nevertheless, "true love is what pleases the other first before pleasing oneself."<sup>65</sup> Let us contemplate the wisdom of Buddhism: "Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so, let him cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings" and "let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world."<sup>66</sup> By loving oneself one cannot be truly happy. Life has shown this. But by giving love to an "other," one is able to receive joy of the most fundamental kind. The saints of all traditions have experienced and taught this spiritual law, this rule of life. A pure heart is oriented to others. A heart of purity maintains the proper relationship between our spirit mind and our physical mind. Because we are loving an "other" we place a higher priority on this "other" than we do on our own personal desires.

Such a concept was expressed by Jesus when he said, "greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his friends."<sup>67</sup>

As just pointed out, purity of heart is indicative of the quality of one's heart. Because heart is part of the original human nature, all human beings are endowed with heart. But, merely being endowed with heart is no proper criterion, because one needs to grow, to cultivate, to develop one's heart. There are many selfish people who, by definition, are endowed with heart. Their hearts might be said to be very impure. Purity of heart, therefore, is that which enables us to maintain our mind in the proper balance. "Only when our heart is perfected will the originally intended direction of give-and-take action between our spirit mind and physical mind be perfectly stabilized."<sup>68</sup> This stability means that the spirit mind, oriented towards values (trueness, goodness, beauty, love) serves as subject, and the physical mind, oriented towards the maintenance of our biological existence (food, shelter, etc.) serves as object, that is, it is in the position to be controlled by the spirit mind. Obviously, purity of heart is a goal worthy of striving after. "That terrible

tiger called an impure mind prowls in the forest of the sense-objects"<sup>60</sup> but "a man whose heart is pure realizes the supreme Atman."<sup>60</sup> Jesus said, "blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."<sup>61</sup> The person who is pure in heart has sincere (true and genuine) love for other people, and in the experience of loving, one can experience ("see") God or realize the supreme Atman. Associated with a purity of heart would be a clarity of purpose and a balance of our intellect, emotion, and will.

Such a mind as just described has many implications for the kind of values appropriate to "self" and for "other". Those for the "self" would involve personal values such as patience, endurance, honesty, sincerity, and so on, as exemplified in the lives of the saints of all traditions. To the extent that a person was not possessed of a pure heart, these values would likely be less central to one's life orientation. The implications for the "other" are quite significant and we must consider them in more detail.

#### V. The Meaning of the "Other" and How One Really Benefits the "Other"

In *Unification Thought* there is the notion of a "connected body."<sup>62</sup> Fundamentally this means not only that all things are connected to each other through relationships of giving and receiving, but that each individual person cannot survive without being in relationship to others. We are continually involved in relationships with the people around us. If this is the case the quality of these relationships is an important issue.

There is a potential danger here of psychological manipulation. We often "use" other people even though it seems, on the surface (even to ourselves), that we are being selfless. As Edward Conze has pointed out :

A very high degree of sanctity is necessary to do good to others without harming or irritating them. Only the pure in heart can have the vision necessary to decide what is really beneficial to others, and only they have the purity of motive.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, we must consider what the "other" really means and, more importantly, how one really benefits the other.

*Unification Thought*, in connection with the connected body, speaks of dual purposes. These are the purpose for the individual and the purpose for the whole. The physical mind is concerned with the purpose for the individual and self existence and the spirit mind is concerned with the purpose for the whole. If the spirit mind is in a subject or controlling position, our life manifests a healthy balance between these purposes because it emphasizes the whole purpose and the whole guarantees the individual purpose. If the physical mind is subject then our life manifests an unhealthy balance because it tends to place our own physical desires central in our life orientation. When we are relating to other people this can be very destructive. Thus, "self-denial", in the religious sense in which I have been using it in this paper, means to deny our own, personal desires, not for the purpose of making our life difficult, but to allow for a greater emphasis on a concern for others (which is easily "hidden" otherwise). This is the proper order (priority) of concern in any case. This self-denial has been necessary because in our disordered life the common human tendency has been to focus on our own personal desires, often more or less at the expense of others.

Fundamentally, then, the true meaning of self-denial is not a kind of asceticism, but love. It means a life of loving service to others. By living for others we create a loving atmosphere and this makes for prosperous interpersonal relationships. This can be very supportive of a unity of religions. I must emphasize again that by living for the sake of others, placing the emphasis on the purpose for the whole, we are not detracting from our personal growth at all, since the whole guarantees the individual. By serving the whole, the whole, in turn, serves and protects the individual and allows for growth, development, prosperity, health, and unity.

#### VI. Conclusion



In conclusion, I want to summarize some of the points I have made in this paper and state some implications. I began with the idea that every major religion speaks of a "self," although the way of expression may vary. I distinguished between a "higher" self and a "lower" self and outlined some of the characteristics of both. I then categorized these according to the general traits of "selfishness" and "unselfishness". I drew the interim conclusion that "denial of the self" refers to a denial of that self which is associated with the lower mind, a notion that can be discerned in all traditions. I pointed out that the terminology of higher and lower can be expressed, in the terms of *Unification Thought*, as "spirit mind" (akin to the higher mind) and "physical mind" (akin to the lower mind). I further noted that these can be understood as subject and object. This is significant inasmuch as most people have a certain "disorder" in their mind. That is, the proper order should have the spirit mind serving as subject to the physical mind, controlling and guiding it, and the physical mind responding as object, receiving the guidance of the spirit mind. The spirit mind, with its emphasis on values, and the physical mind, concerned with biological drives, if relating as subject and object result in a balanced and healthy life. In such a life all biological needs are adequately met. More importantly, however, it is a life centered on actualizing love in relationships. Thus, with the proper order one lives a meaningful life of love and values. When there is disorder one's life tends to be focused on oneself. Thus, I further defined denial of the self as a denial of the subjectivity of the physical mind. That is to say, a denial of the subjectivity of the physical mind in order to allow the subjectivity of the spirit mind to manifest. When this occurs, one's life is characterized by unselfishness.

That which maintains the proper subject/object order between the spirit mind and physical mind is heart, specifically a pure heart. One's mind can then be considered as an original mind. This mind emphasizes love for others as a way of life. Now I can define the notion of denial of the "self" most fully, not negatively, in terms of mere denial, but affirmatively, in terms of living a life of service to others. By living for the sake of others we create a warm and

loving atmosphere in which all can receive benefit.

Although it is not spelled out so explicitly in every case, the fact remains that all religions touch on this idea of living for others. For example, it is asked in the *Analects*, "in acting on behalf of others, have I always been loyal to their interests?"<sup>64</sup> The *Tao Te Ching* says that "the sage puts his person last."<sup>65</sup> It also encourages us to "have little thought of self"<sup>66</sup> and holds that "the sage has no mind of his own. He takes as his own the mind of the people."<sup>67</sup> Jesus said to "love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."<sup>68</sup> He also stated, in a classic passage, that "greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Finally, from Buddhism: "what then is a Bodhisattva's compassion? It is the selfless desire to make others happy."<sup>69</sup>

The idea of living for the sake of others is the essence of the thought of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. Rev. Moon believes firmly in the unity of religions. For him it is not only a hopeful desire or belief, but also a practical belief. He actualizes the principle of living for the sake of others in his own life as can be seen in his sponsorship of the Assembly of the World's Religions in 1985 in New Jersey, at which he delivered the Founder's Address. It can also be seen in the great number of conferences sponsored by the Council for the World's Religions, another of the many projects he has founded or inspired. Rev. Moon himself says:

I want to work to help the unity of the Muslims. Likewise I support the unity of the Buddhist world. Have you ever heard of a religious leader who supported the unity of other religions?<sup>70</sup>

I have argued that this principle of living for the sake of others is the true meaning of "denial of the self." Rather than a negative connotation, which we might associate with the term denial, used as it often is in an ascetic context, I propose we use it in an affirmative and positive sense to refer to the principle of living for the sake of others. I believe that it can serve as a religious principle with universal application, and that it can help lead us all towards a unity

of religions.

#### NOTES

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5. Prabhavananda, p. 66.
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10. Ibid., p. 67.
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24. Mascaro, Upanishads, p. 57.
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27. Ibid., p. 127.
28. Waley, p. 88.
29. Ibid., p. 109.
30. Ibid., p. 205.
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33. Ibid., p. 52.
34. Ibid., p. 90.
35. Lau, p. 75.
36. Ibid., p. 87.
37. Ibid., p. 107.
38. Ibid.
39. Dawood, p. 216.
40. Mascaro, *Dhammapada*, p. 50.
41. Mark 8:36.
42. Waley, p. 123.
43. Dawood, p. 193.
44. Wing Tsit-Chan, transl., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 172.
45. Lau, p. 78.
46. Romans 7:21-24.
47. Mascaro, *Dhammapada*, p. 50.

48. Prabhavananda, p. 38.
49. Lau, p. 92.
50. See *Unification Thought*, pp. 153-55.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 100.
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54. *Explaining Unification Thought*, p. 105.
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57. John 15 : 13.
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60. Ibid., p. 55.
61. Matthew 5 : 8.
62. *Explaining Unification Thought*, pp. 76f.
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### *Session IX : Comments*

## Denial of "Self" as a Religious Principle : Towards a Unity of Religions

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For more than a decade I have been involved in several capacities in many academic, educational, technical and political activities sponsored by the Unification Movement. However this is the first time that I have had the opportunity to examine in depth the philosophical and metaphysical principles on which the Unification Movement is based, for which I am most grateful to the organizers of this symposium.

I am pleased to recognize that I have found the Unification Thought (UT) a well structured and coherent doctrine. Starting from some fundamental principles or axioms, a line of thought has been developed that covers practically all aspects of the relations of an individual with God, with himself, with his family, with other individuals and with the universe as a whole, a plan that is both ambitious and important.

The way I perceive the UT is that it starts with the notion of God, also called the Original Being or the Original Image, which is a "spiritual reality" and to whom several attributes are assigned. One of particular importance is called "Heart", defined as "the