

Dear friend,

I want to invite you to sign up for a very exciting weekly newsletter, which will summarize for you the amazing insights that have crystallized from my lifetime of growing up in a multi religious society, soaking in the rich intellectual environment of Harvard as a Fellow (at the age of 62!!!), and deep independent research over the last four years into the subject of **“universal themes across all religions.”**

I am so pleased that the research has not only confirmed what I intuitively thought—that we as humans are more similar than we are different—but also amazed me in that we have found over 50 universal themes across all religions! Each week, I'll be sharing with you some beautiful quotes and insights, one universal theme at a time.

Why should we care about religion?

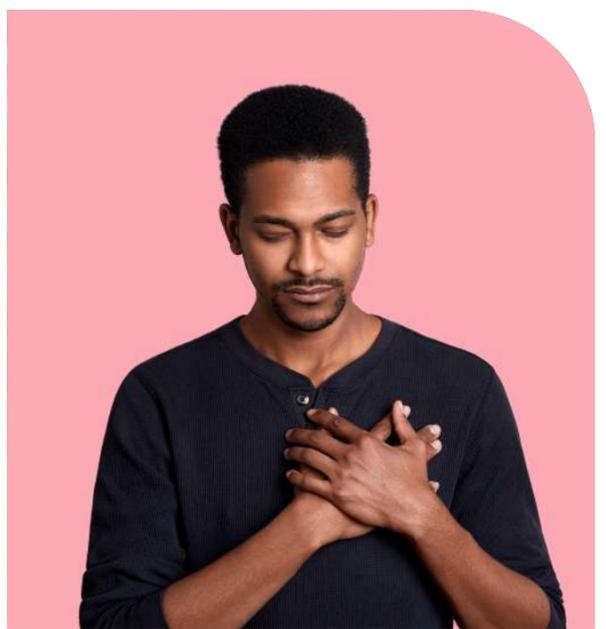
There is a reason why I chose this subject. When I retired from Blackstone, I asked myself, “How can I serve humanity for the next twenty five years? ”I wanted to focus on an issue that is urgent, important, and on which not as much attention is being paid as it should be. My three-year stint at Harvard, which allowed me to reflect, provided me the answer.

I came to realize that Religion is one of the most important and enduring institutions that we all need to have a better understanding of, whether we are religious, atheistic, or agnostic. To live harmoniously in a diverse society, we need to understand where the other person, who has a different belief system, is coming from.



What makes religious identity so divisive?

We share a common human urge to understand ourselves in relation to our environment, seeking answers through the why, what, how, when and who questions. Religions have provided inspiring answers to these fundamental questions, but Religion also remains as one of the major fault lines which can impact the survival of our human race. Most of the problems arise out of the institutionalization of religion, when it also becomes a highly potent political tool in the hands of vested interests, often leading to violence between fellow humans.



What makes us similar?

One of the most precious insights that emerges from our research is that religious differences exist mostly in the realm of beliefs and minute details, which are largely attributable to differences in culture and context in which a particular religion was born and politically mediated. But if we focus on the realm of Praxis - the kind of ethics and practical ways of life that each religion promotes – we can't help but see tons of commonalities!

I hope you will enjoy the newsletter, please share with your friends and also give us your feedback and comments. It is our project together.

Akhil Gupta

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