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“...concise and entertaining....Selmanovic’s story goes much deeper while still being respectful of, and fair to, all faiths and beliefs.” —Publishers Weekly

New Book by Muslim-Jewish-Atheist-Christian Author Proposes Radical Rethinking of Religion Today: *It’s Really All About God*

Religions have become “self-serving God-management systems,” losing credibility and relevance for millions of people, says author Samir Selmanovic (pronounced “SAH-meer Sel-MAHN-ovich”). Monotheistic religions, and atheism, are failing to adjust to our newly interdependent world. The founder of Faith House Manhattan, Selmanovic proposes a radically different way to practice one’s religion in his new book, *It’s Really All About God: Reflections of a Muslim Atheist Jewish Christian* (Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, \$24.95, September 2009). It goes beyond usual calls to peaceful coexistence and tolerance to actual appreciation and acknowledgment of the need we all have for each other.

Selmanovic, whose colorful spiritual journey is woven through the book, offers a way to deepen one’s particular religious identity while discovering God, goodness and grace beyond the boundaries of one’s tradition.

“We are at the end of isolated Christianity, isolated Islam, isolated Judaism, the end of any kind of religion that poses as the ‘broker of the sacred,’ to the rest of us,” Selmanovic says. “It’s really not about any one religion or belief system. It’s really all about God, who is about all of us and cannot be owned by any of us.”

Selmanovic is passionate about his own Christian faith, but he believes that God must also be found outside the boundaries of one’s religion. The book recounts his journey toward a “fourth way,” in which the theology and practice of “finding God in the other” moves from the outskirts of religious experience to its center.

As he began to question what he calls “the Christian fantasy of supremacy over other religions,” Selmanovic became convinced that “a God who favors me over others would not be worth worshipping. To truly care for me, my God also has to care for you. I would rather sacrifice the way I interpret the Bible than sacrifice people.”

“I have adopted a simple question that helps me navigate the journey: Is a God who favors anyone over anyone else worth worshipping?” Selmanovic says. “To truly care for me, my God also has to care for those who differ from me.”

Selmanovic grew up in a culturally Muslim, though atheist in practice, family in Croatia and converted to Christianity as a soldier during his compulsory service in the Yugoslavian army. His conversion led to his being shunned by friends and family, and expelled from his home. Through

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these challenges he found strength in his Christian faith while learning to value the worldviews of other people. He went on to become a respected pastor in Southern California and New York. He is now co-leader of Faith House Manhattan, which brings Christians, Muslims, Jews, atheists, and humanists together to explore and find ways of living interdependently.

Selmanovic is not calling for one religion for all; rather he calls for every religion to find a way that is good for all people, refusing to reduce the other to an enemy. Even atheism is not the enemy of religion. "Atheists are part of the human household to which we all belong and without whom we would be worse off. What would the world be without those who doubt God?"

Selmanovic argues that "fundamentalists can only be defeated by passion that is greater than theirs. I would not have become or stayed Christian without the blessings of Judaism, Islam, and atheism. My hope is to add one more voice affirming how indispensable our differing treasures are—not just for ourselves, but for others, too. To maintain the breath of life in something as complex and beautiful as human experience, our mysteries need each other."

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***It's Really All About God:
Reflections of a Muslim Atheist Jewish Christian***
by Samir Selmanovic

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