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Back to the Ethic: Reclaiming Western Values

Diane Weber Bederman

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Today, we are up against tribal societies whose ethic is one of honor and shame and where blood revenge is in the veins, where violence begets violence that, over time, can lead to a sense of helplessness, hopelessness, and victim-hood. At the same time, too many of us born into freedom have become apathetic to, even neglectful of, the very ethic that underpins that freedom. It is time to go back to the founding ethic of Western culture, ethical monotheism, and reclaim our western values. Winston Churchill wrote that the ethical system we received from the Jewish people is “incomparably the most precious possession of mankind, worth in fact the fruits of all other wisdom and learning put together. On that system and by that faith there has been built out of the wreck of the Roman Empire the whole of our existing civilization.” Sadly, we stopped teaching this potent biblical ethic years ago because somewhere along the way to political correctness nirvana, God and religion became four-letter words. We must wake up to the fact that our way of life is under attack: Not only from acts of terrorism leaching into our countries but internal pressures of worshiping the false gods of absolute tolerance, inclusion, and accommodation to the point that we welcome beliefs, customs, and rituals that undermine our democracy—in the name of democracy! If we are going to preserve the freedoms we now take for granted we must return to that teaching, to words that bear great fruit, because the foundation of Western democracy is ethical monotheism, the 3500 year old ethic which began in the desert, was brought into Israel, then expanded outward with the spread of Christianity through the Mediterranean then into Europe where the teachings were translated into English and brought to the new world. Countries that are founded on the Bible became functioning and then flourishing democracies. This book of laws, gave us amongst other values, the fundamentals of our court and justice systems and business law. The Bible entreats us to be our brother’s keeper by moving away from tribal behaviors, to behave like Abraham who questioned God and protested on behalf of others, so that we develop, practice, and internalize compassion and empathy. These values are essential for democracy to function, because a just society must at times implement policies that disregard individual wants and needs. Within the leaves of Back to the Ethic: Reclaiming Western Values you will find compelling reasons; historical, philosophical, scientific, sociological and psychological, to reclaim our founding ethic, to make it your own, protect and defend it, so that you can pass it down to future generations. As Aristotle teaches us, “Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

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