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Room for Sacred in the Secular

The modern world is a fickle place when you think about it. We are becoming more educated than any of our past generations, yet this is ironically leading to more irrationality than ever before. Why is this? Typically, education should lead to reason, reason to understanding, and understanding to a more open dialogue between parties, powers, and individuals. Instead, it seems we're merely shouting over each other to show how smart we are. This is because we're in the process of neglecting a critical aspect of our education, that is the element of the sacred.

Education and the western world are becoming increasingly secular, meaning we are denying the value or serious consideration of sacredness. In short, sacred means spiritual or God- related. We shy away from it in Western circles because sacred isn't something objectively observed or testable. Instead, it's informed by spiritual practice, tradition, and feeling. These are elements we'd sooner leave out of modern discourse, but I believe by doing so we're blinding ourselves to a critical realm of human experience and education.

To deny serious observation and engagement with sacredness leads to an educational disadvantage, assuming that we agree that education means being informed or well-versed in a variety of topics. There is a whole range of human experience, history, and culture that becomes obsolete should we deny the sacred. At the surface level, denying the sacred aspect of humanity to focus solely on the physical will essentially de-educate us in two ways.

First, to assert that human endeavors are best dedicated to things that can only be observed with reason and tested with the scientific method would alienate us from a vast amount of cultures. A large amount of African, Asian, eastern-European, and Latin-

American cultures base their way of life, wisdom, and existence around what they perceive to be spiritual realities. If we limit our serious engagement to merely the physical, we forfeit our chances to glean and learn from the history, experience, and philosophies of cultures such as these.

Second, limiting ourselves to only physical realities disconnects us from our own historical narrative. For Americans, our brief history was founded on spiritual and religious doctrines and movements. We're a nation of immigrants because these immigrants were spiritually motivated to migrate. If we turn a blind eye to all things sacred, we disengage from our own historical narrative.

If education is a serious goal of ours as humans, then we cannot deny engaging cultures, history, and existence on a spiritual level as well. To ignore the spiritual means to limit our observation of humanity in such a way that would actually leave us ironically more ignorant and educationally lacking.