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Title: Religion's Challenge to Hallowed Secularism

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10/14/2007--The most serious challenge to Hallowed Secularism from religion is that Hallowed Secularism is just a sop for comfortable people to feel better about themselves and their world. It cannot serve as a foundation for radical transformation, either personally or collectively. I am not sure how to respond to this challenge. Radical transformation that is positive, rather than the demons of revolution, has been rare in human history. Where it has occurred, it has generally been the result of religious conversion in one form or another. Whether Hallowed Secularism can call us out of our personal comfort depends on the extent to which it becomes genuinely holy. It is from the sense of the holy that real change comes. By holy, I simply mean that we know our world and ourselves are not as they ought to be. The distance between the two suddenly becomes a personal demand. On the bus this morning, I looked around and saw broken humanity everywhere. The people on that bus were poor, tired and seemed without hope. My immediate response was that I had been very fortunate to have the life I have. That is a typical secular response. But, the typical religious response is not much better. The morning prayers in Judaism tell us to thank God that we are not in the situation of others. The response of the saints—the saints of any religion--would have been very different. They would have resolved to help mend the broken world by their own lives. Many is the time they have succeeded. Can you imagine a secularist, even a hallowed one, responding in that way? When you can, then you will know that Hallowed Secularism can be an answer.