

THE MARCH OF PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AND ITS CRUCIAL PROBLEM TODAY

THE IDEA of the unity and homogeneity of mankind has not come to us as the natural product of a long and gradual experience and as a result of widening horizons and multifarious fate which granted to man a better acquaintance with his kind. If theoretically such extended experience seems to result inevitably in the conception of humanity as a whole, reality flatly belies this expectation. It is likewise inadmissible to look at the idea of the unity of mankind as an innate idea, a universal and imperishable possession of the human mind. True, in their cosmogonic myths all peoples speak of the creation or origination of man, but what they mean, and quite naturally are interested in, is the ancestry of their own tribe.

A product of religion and philosophy, the concept of the unity of mankind descended from the loftier regions of ideas. Such an idea must itself possess the characteristics of unity and uniqueness in order to impart them to mankind. Three times and in three different original patterns did the idea take shape: twice in the form of religion, once as a philosophical thought — the religious expression belonging to Asia, the secular one to Europe. The Judaeo-Christian creed — in Judaism at least since prophetic times, in Christianity with its birth — the idea of the one God, is mirrored in the idea of one mankind, this latter being created in God's image, distinct from angels and animals in nature and in the goal assigned to it. In Persian Zoroastrianism mankind is summoned by Ahura Mazdas to assist him in the eschatological fight against the forces of Evil, and in the common battle the hosts of man are led by the Persian king — this ethico-religious function being in fact the supreme legitimation of his sovereignty. The Greeks, on the other hand, divested the unifying principle of its religious character;