

WHERE SPIRIT MEETS SOCIAL CHANGE

I'M A DEEPLY SPIRITUAL PERSON, an ordained minister even. I'm also a political beast, news junkie, and activist. That might seem incongruous, but I don't believe politics and spirituality are mutually exclusive. In fact, there has never been a more important time for spiritually principled people to act, to shift policies and political processes, and to confront failed leadership.

In a world facing ecological crises, injustice, cruelty, and collective anxiety, there is great power in refusing to separate inner transformation from outer action. Sacred activism represents the marriage of profound spiritual practice with passionate engagement to stop harm being done to people, fellow species, and the natural world. It asks the profound question: What if our deepest spiritual work and our most urgent social action are not separate paths, but one integrated calling?

Many spiritual pathways teach that consciousness creates reality—our collective thoughts, beliefs, and actions shape the world we experience. If this is true, then spiritually dedicated people cannot afford to remain passive observers of injustice. We are cocreators of this world, and our withdrawal from public engagement abandons that creative power to unconscious forces.

Spirituality that's focused only on personal growth, at the exclusion of authentic political and social consciousness, may benefit the person but risks becoming an escape that ignores the suffering of our fellows. Similarly, activism not shaped by spiritual and psychological self-awareness, wisdom, and compassion only perpetuates the separation consciousness that's at the heart of so many of our challenges. As Albert Einstein is often credited with saying, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking used to create them."

Sacred activism takes many forms: speaking out when silence equals complicity; participating in organizations aligned with spiritual values; treating voting and civic engagement as spiritual disciplines; showing up with presence, not just opinion. It includes protests and marches, using our voices through speeches and writing, boycotts, prayer and meditation, and raising funds and resources for people, animals, and frontline organizations.

In sacred activism, prayer becomes protest; affirmation becomes advocacy.

CYLVIA HAYES is a speaker, author, and Unity minister. Her Substack, *Transcend*, is about raised consciousness, economic system change, and a world that works better for all. She's also the former First Lady of Oregon. Visit cylviahayes.com.



In sacred activism, prayer becomes protest; affirmation becomes advocacy; creating beauty becomes resistance against a culture of ugliness. Practicing gratitude counters the manufactured scarcity that drives consumption.

Cultivating compassion for those with whom we disagree—without compromising values or determination—opens possibilities for transformation that don't exist within hardened hearts.

Unlike actions fueled by fear or hatred, sacred activism is centered in compassion, animated by a vision of a better world, and anchored in resolve. It is not attached to outcomes but aligned with truth. As Gandhi is often credited with saying, "It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that

there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result."

In these intense times, sacred activism offers a path for those who feel called both to inner awakening and outer engagement, who refuse to choose between meditation and march, prayer and protest. It recognizes that the transformation our world needs must happen simultaneously in human hearts and social structures.

The world is beautiful, and the world is burning. Both are true. Sacred activism asks us to hold both truths and respond with heart, mind, and body. 🌱

ACTION IDEAS: Identify causes you feel passionate about and then get involved in working on them. Vote in every election—local, state, and national. Buy less, especially from companies doing harm to people or our planet.