

Towards a Spring of Faith

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Introduction

With all of today's world achievements, and after the religions have gone through various steps, up and down, it has become mandatory for us to answer a number of questions that have imposed themselves on our actuality:

- What role must religion assume in the era of globalization and with the domination and leadership of politics due to the economical and military systems..?

-What is the way to spread advanced and enlightened concepts in the religions that go with the times, so that the journey of the religions does not stay behind the current culture?!

-What relationship must prevail between the religions of planet Earth now that all peoples are connected to each other by the advanced means of communications!?

-Does the need for religion still exist in our era, particularly in the huge progress in materialism?

Likewise, the questions and doubts about the religions' role and their future multiply.

However, first we need to admit that existential dangers - so to speak - threaten the religions, due to many factors, as if the religions - with all their experience - have not reconciled with the societies of our age! Their ways and literature are still behind our modern age! And religion has not stayed in its own domain, without injustice and violation, injustice against religion, or violation in areas that are not related to religion.. In other words, the work of religion has not been arranged in its own specified space in a spontaneous and a smooth way..; that's what explains the huge gap between the era and the religions.

The prospects for Religion in the 21st century

After the religions have accumulated rich experiences that they have learned during a long period of time, mainly those religions that came before Islam, and after spread of the bloody conflicts based on abhorrent denominational backgrounds between Muslims, and in the Arab societies, after what has been termed "The Arab Spring", and with the increase of the political Islam; it is time to speak objectively and frankly about the issues and concerns of religion, and about its required role in our modern world.

Therefore, reference should be made to a number of quick points:

- First: between "Faith" and "Religion":

In general, people focus on religious manifestations, including the rites that could be transformed into mere empty customs, without penetrating into the depth of the sincere faith that is required to take root in our souls.

There is a huge difference between "faith" in the Almighty God, who is the main foundation, the essence, and between "religions", their manifestations, their rites, that differ from one people to another, from one religion to another, they even vary due to time factors.. Therefore, the human influence is clear in all religious systems, if not to say that all the literature and thought of the religions are manmade.

Faith is then a common space between all believers in the Almighty God, contrary to the religious frames that differ, in form, between one religion and another, even between one denomination and another also.

Today, we have become obliged to increase our respect for believers, all believers, even when they don't agree on the ritual forms, the ritual ways, and other things that only represent the outer layers of religion.

If we manage to move our focus from the manifestations of the religion to the essence of faith, then the space of what is in common between the followers of the religions will be widened to its maximum.

- Secondly: Diversity, and its importance:

"Diversity" is God's norm in His creation, it is the source of the true value of humans, for repeated and similar copies of a human being don't make sense. The progress that humanity has reached was a reflection of the capacity for diversity and difference that humans have, since it is the way to change our reality and to come up with preferable ways to live life.

That's what we should realize at the intellectual, spiritual and doctrinal levels.. Diversity in these fields is also a source of richness and progress.. When we start from this constant, the annoyances between the followers of the various religions will disappear.

- Thirdly: Regression of the gap between religions:

The nature of experience and expertise that the religions have gained will make the gap between them recede, and the future will witness an inevitable rapprochement, given that things would be set straight, until all religions would be placed in the same boat, despites their differences in some visions and rituals, but the most important field that will direct its course is the circle of its concerns, as well as its perspectives and challenges.

- Fourthly: Towards a spring of faith:

After the "Arab Spring" has broken out in our region - with the aim to adjust the structure of the systems that suffer from many political illnesses, at the level of suppression of freedoms, absence of power alternation, and tyranny - I have called at that time to begin a different kind of spring, I called it "The Religious Spring", of course that spring is not subjected to any religious or geographical limits..

The reform of the spiritual aspects represents the essence of religion and its objective, and the righteousness of the human's spirit is the natural beginning to reform society. That can happen through a balance between humans' religious and material lives, and after the human being satisfies their spiritual hunger, and feed their mind with values and principles.. Then we could only expect goodness out of this person, and he will become like bees "putting only nectar".

How to bridge our divisions?

You did well choosing the theme "How to bridge our divisions?" because we really need to build bridges between all who are different intellectually, politically, ethnically and ideologically.. That difference - as we mentioned earlier - is God's norm in His creation, and a human concern that accompanies us in our journey on this planet.

And to comment on the theme - as you know - many things bring us together, rather too many things:

a - Human Brotherhood:

That's the main common denominator, we are all the children of Adam, therefore we are all brothers and sisters in humanity. There is nothing more honorable than this bond.

b - Successors of God on His Earth:

This planet, where we live in its vast spaciousness, is our big home; it is our responsibility to protect it and develop it. It has been entrusted to us and we all share in managing it.

c- Belief in the Almighty God:

Who created us, and we have differed on His description and teachings but we haven't differ on His existence and believing in Him.

d- Same Fate:

We will all leave this life and journey towards the Almighty God. Death is our fate, it unites us, since we are on the same journey, in the same train that will transport us to a place that we currently ignore, but where we will join each other again.. And meet there. Therefore, God, life and money bring us together.

Global Peace

To be short - and I took a long time - I end by saying:

After all human expertise during the successive past millenniums; it is time for us to realize that peace is the product of human goodwill, and it is the result of disciplining and training the soul which brings forth inner peace that will reflect as social and political peace.

Religions, as the political systems, are a reflection of the human work, culture, understanding and awareness.. These religions and countries don't give peace unless the humans, who belong to them, possess it.

It is man that imprints nations with his impression, and imprints religions with his impression; so it is more effective to ask for peace from man directly, in isolation from his religious inclinations, that may not have a magic recipe!!

True Life in God Pilgrimage

Finally,

I don't think we could find among us here deeper intellectual words other than this scene, because this common field "pilgrimage" is the best expression and is more effective than intellectual researches, in explaining the dimensions and the aims of the monotheistic and other religions.

To do this pilgrimage together means that we have overcome many social obstacles that hide often under the cloak of religion. Any obstacle in the face of such a gathering between those who are religiously different comes from an unreligious source. No divine religious system can contain other than the common good for all humans, without the social patterns that some followers of the religions may practice, and which contain some discrimination against the followers of other religions for that is far from the spirituality of the tolerant religions...

This "pilgrimage" is an act that God loves, it's all good for humanity, and our final (after death) wage for it is not less than the wage we will receive for the devotions and rituals that we practice, for this is a universal devotion not just a trip.

Our meeting is a responsibility, and our gathering alone gives us value, a human value, that imposes on us more human-religious responsibilities, so we can become messengers of goodness, peace, love and communication... between all humans, with all their cultures, religions, races...

With the hope to meet again in a new pilgrimage, and until then, this pilgrimage remains our own responsibility, in its spirituality and background, to translate the expertise of this recurrent pilgrimage and invest them in our societies.

I still have to thank the competent Mrs. Vassula Ryden and all the workers of "True Life in God" and the host country Russia.

Many thanks to all participants.

To Vassula, I wish her longevity and good health to remain a model for charity and generosity, and the best messenger of peace and harmony among humans.