HARMONY: CORE OF RELIGIONS

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Religion, as a key reality in human life, has both individual and social dimensions. For that matter, religions have several things in common and cannot be compartmentalized segments in the society. In other words, religion is like 'one body with many parts' and it exists together while the parts function separately. Similarities in religious traditions have to bring believers to the same platform and enable them to exchange dissimilarities or differences as enriching factors. No doubt, together they make larger and better sense to the humans.

A balanced combination of 'sharing in' and 'sharing with' is sure to usher in a culture of spiritual tuning and ethical living. The deeper and higher experience of the divine and the wider reach out to the humans beyond borders will open new vistas of spiritual nourishment with the feel of a mystical immersion. 'Sufism' is a remarkable case in point for celebrating the essence of religion in the spirit of harmony among one and all.

Religion is a major phenomenon in the civilization of the humans. It has been the central reality of life for the principal portion of the society. But, it does not make sense to a considerable segment of the society that pursues humanistic ideologies or entertains scientific pursuits, especially in recent times and increasingly so, as well.

For the most part, religion takes care of the theistic perception of life, while science and philosophies approach life from a non-theistic angle. A value-based and spiritual outlook to life is the elevated pedestal that is further than either point of view. As a matter of fact, such a pedestal is and has to be the ultimate and sublime objective of religion as well as human life that is worth the names.

Religion is characterized by diversity; there is a large variety of ideologies, cultures and traditions in the society. In other words, diversity is the mastermind of the Creator and religion is no exception to it. Several major and minor ideologies and traditions of religions emerged on the landscape of human history, at different times and in different places.

Several spiritually charged men and women conceived life in a holistic manner, experienced it in terms of a higher power and interpreted it for people around them. Their teachings took the form of scriptures and traditions in later times. These teachings and their interpretations, along with the way people followed them, composed the diversity in religious traditions.

The huge diversity of religious ideologies and traditions has never been meant to exist like lakes and islands that are cut off from similar units. They have never been supposed to remain like parallel lines. They are the gifts of the same Creator, in an equal manner. The originators or founders of the traditions, rooted in the experience of the same divine, celebrate a celestial spirit of timeless togetherness. They are the common cultural heritage of the human society, too.

Neither custodians nor followers of any religion have any business to divide the divine heritage into 'ours and theirs'. Doing so, is a crime against humanity as well as the Creator. That will amount to a total collapse of all faith in life. For that reason, recognizing the common origin, the common existence and the common destiny of one and all is the spiritual wisdom required of the humans to live for.

Religion is essentially a motivating factor and this factor is one and the same in all religions, even though there are variations in perceptions and approaches. Therefore, religions can never be one

against the other, but be necessarily one for the other, in a complementary fashion. All the religious traditions, major or minor, are partial, due to the inadequacy of the world and the frailty of the human person. Therefore, interacting with each other is the way to go beyond this dilemma of the humans. Besides, faith is the core of religion and that is an interactive reality in essence.

'Sharing in' the best of what the other has, while 'sharing with' the other the best one has is the heart of a culture of interactive and harmonious living. In fact, the humans are aspiring for such a development and progress, especially in the 21st century. Such a humane culture ensures value-based and spiritually-tuned living, which combines into one the vertical altitudes and the horizontal magnitudes, two-in-one.

Mysticism is a belief that aspires to establish an experience of mystical union with the divine power. It is a journey into the divine by way of absorption. It is the direct communion with the ultimate reality. In other words, it is the experiential knowledge of the divine or spiritual reality. Mystics transcend the physical and even the normal realm of religion and ascend to the hidden meanings of life and yet beyond. By and large, all religious traditions have the inner capacity to rise to that spiritually elevated domain of mystical delicacies, although only a selected few attain such tallness.

Most religions have certain dimensions of mystical experience. Some religious traditions are of exceptional merit in having lots of established mystics who contributed to the making of a better world, in addition to adding quality to the religious world. Sufism is the Islamic edition of mysticism that has captured the imagination of the world and is a case in point.

In conclusion, it could be stated that mysticism is geared towards the spiritual heights of life and it leads the human society towards harmony among religions and well-being of the human society. A more harmonious world for the humans to live in is its grand finale of life!

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