

in the near future? How about the rest of the unfathomable wisdom in the teachings of other prophets and sages?

Stating that science and religion are complementary—not rivals—to each other, Dr. King had clearly defined such complementarity: “Science keeps religion from sinking into the valley of crippling irrationalism and paralyzing obscurantism. Religion prevents science from falling into the marsh of obsolete materialism and moral nihilism.”⁷⁰⁰ Incidentally, a closer observation of today’s world shows evidence of both paralyzing obscurantism and moral nihilism—leveraging each other to worsen the intellectual and spiritual impoverishment of the human race. This understanding further promotes the importance of reflection and discernment in our thinking patterns, not blind adherence to the belief systems that various institutions or individuals promote, whether in the name of religion or science.

As Zen Master Dogen Zenji clarifies in his *Genjokoan*: “Those who have great realization about delusion are buddhas. Those who are greatly deluded within realization are sentient beings.”⁷⁰¹ And Lao Tzu (*Tao Te Ching* 41:5-8) expressed it this way:

When the inferior man hears the Way,
he laughs at it loudly.
If he did not laugh,
it would not be fit to be the Way.

The Ethical Calling of Faith

In religion, as in other facets of the human phenomenon, to understand and be understood offers us all the best path for growth and evolution. Our refusal to understand others, however, also creates the risk that if we choose not to exercise our God-given critical faculties, we open ourselves to be psychologically exploited by opportunists.

A dispassionate look tells us that the scriptures almost universally have man’s conduct as their primary aim. That statement definitively applies to the *Qur’an*. In religions where the absolute centrality of God in the entire system of existence is evident, it provides another

powerful beacon in the journey so that one's conduct may become fully commendable—even in God's eyes, so to speak.

The relationship between God and man is that of the Served and the servant, respectively. And it is this acceptance that informs the human's connection to the rest of the creation. If all the creation has been created to serve, then that places a special responsibility on humans to understand the interdependence that is needed for coexistence. In other words, the human being is not in service if the human race keeps upsetting the natural balance for the rest of the creation. This understanding is the catalyst that cannot be replaced by science, or the state, or rationalism, or even philosophy. And that realization, when we have clarified the difference between authority and power,⁷⁰² is what allows man to pursue his interests without becoming autocratic, blithely selfish, and hazardous to his own well-being.

Faith, in its deeper meaning, therefore, is not about a blind set of beliefs or a thoughtless disregard for what is *prima facie* evident or scientifically irrefutable. Quite to the contrary, faith can bring authority and agency in our lives that is otherwise almost inconceivable. Faith (with or without institutionalized religion) can therefore be looked upon as:

- surrendering to what we do not have the capability to understand
- accepting what is not within our control
- allowing perceptivity, imagination, and inventiveness to go beyond physical or other constraints imposed by the prevalent orthodoxy of other systems of knowing
- being in the world with a purpose; acquiring an internal mode of thinking, feeling, and acting meaningfully (instead of merely following external regulations)
- serving without the expectation of recompense; being hopeful when facing desperate circumstances

RADICAL REVOLUTION OF VALUES

- finding the meaning in existence and in the transcendence of our own existence
- learning how to respect the rest of the creation
- developing the courage and willingness to give one's life to save that of a complete stranger
- looking in the eyes of someone from another continent and feeling the connectedness of mutual respect, of commonality, indeed of oneness that the material world cannot feel

Our concept of what we call science simply does not offer the benefits as enunciated here. Most other current fields of knowledge do not offer any such guidance. To find that “something else” that is needed to fill the vacuum, we have to look for a system of moral and ethical principles such as culture, philosophy and religion. No other social institution can meet this need. Culture in today's “legal” world is arguably a devitalized, if not a decommissioned, concept—except for some indigenous societies who have not gone through the conversion to extreme materialism and substitution by legal systems. Thus, all we are really left with is philosophy and religion. The two fields are not mutually exclusive at all—even within the orthodoxy of Enlightenment thought—and can work together. As Dr. Pfau's example in Insert 16:1 illustrates, there are certain domains where religion becomes a unique and singular force in the motivation and agency we humans need to work for our collective interest.

A HUMAN BEING WHO DEFINED HUMANITY⁷⁰³

On a Saturday in August 2017, Pakistani soldiers carried the flag-draped coffin of Dr. Ruth Pfau, a German-born Catholic nun, to a state funeral.

Born in Leipzig, Germany, Ruth Pfau studied medicine and subsequently joined the Order of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary. In

CHAPTER 16: FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS

1960, she visited the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Center (“MALC”) in Karachi and decided to stay and help. She stayed there the rest of her life. Leprosy is now under control in Pakistan; the country is on its way to becoming leprosy-free—thanks to the work done by Dr. Pfau.

“Not only did she treat the leprosy patients, she also gave them back their dignity ... a human being who defined humanity.” said Adibul Hasan Rizvi, a well-known physician, at her memorial. According to journalist Zubeida Mustafa, “She visited patients’ homes to speak to their families about leprosy and raise awareness about it. This was how she changed people’s thinking [about leprosy].”

Honored by various states, Dr Pfau received numerous awards, including the Order of the Cross (Germany), Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Pakistan), the Damien-Dutton Award (USA), Albert Schweitzer Gesellschaft Award (Austria), and the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service (the Philippines).

As described by Mutaher Zia, a physician at MALC, “Her day used to start with her attending the early morning service at the St Patrick’s Cathedral when there would be few people there. When she died, the St Patrick’s Cathedral was filled to brim with people from all faiths. She was a unifying force in life and death.”

Insert 16:1

Dr. Pfau’s example would move any human being, religious or not. Given how human ideologies are driving the human race into inexplicable misery, is there one ideology we can name that is

RADICAL REVOLUTION OF VALUES

capable of producing such an example of selfless service? Is there any human construct that is likely to move a human being to manifest the immense ocean of love as Dr. Pfau did? The agency exercised by one person, Dr. Pfau, far outweighed the non-agency of millions in society.

Religion, perhaps more than some other constructs of identity, can create an unusual human bond of kinship even among strangers. Through this bond, religion can create a multiplier effect that is unusual in the power it generates. And this is in addition to spirituality being a rather potent source of agency within the human heart and mind—as we see in Dr. Pfau’s example. Chapters 17 and 18 clarify the central role of human heart in manifesting the human-Divine connection, and how this connection is the key to manifesting human agency.

The collective human goal should be to realize the vitality of the force that can move a human to extraordinarily positive decisions and actions. The human agency can then be leveraged for our collective benefit. And that is the fundamental thesis of this book.