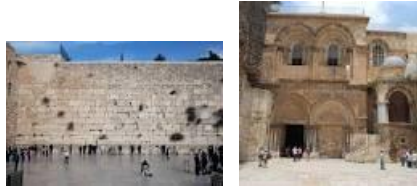


Reviewing the premise: “No Society has existed without Religion”

Soul Beliefs; Causes and Consequences

What more can be assumed along the passing of the centuries, ages and cultures that have been studied, discussed and researched by so many, to support the views of learned men and lately also women, whose opinions matter far more than this mature student who felt compelled to take up this subject and see if her views correspond with other learned men, like Profs. Ogilvy and Hamilton. Nick Wade even goes as far as to suggest that the need for Religion – in whatever shape or form; polytheism or monotheism – is one of the Universal genetic common denominators¹. To state that No Society has existed without Religion, needs to be modified firstly, in No Known Society....., as the premise expresses the immodesty of the presumption that we possess knowledge of all societies; nothing to that effect can presently be proven conclusively.



Robert Wright gives an explanation of the development of Religious Thought and Practices in his book, “The Evolution of God”², it’s an interesting exposé on how people came to find answers to totally inexplicable phenomena in their daily lives. Most of these phenomena people felt overruled by were due to natural forces; earthquakes, floods, epidemics, draughts and all the life-threatening consequences that could not be tempered with.....

I would like to take it a step further in so far that I feel Human kind was engaged on yet another level, if we consider the Darwinist approach on its predecessors, and found that it was rather lonely at the top. Animals were put at man’s disposal and their tasks, daily routine was simple and straightforward. Animals killed when they were hungry, mated when it was the season to mate, and died... they never were caught wondering what on earth they were doing there, and who put them there in the first place....., and they certainly never caught asking the crucial question: “WHY”?, nor having sleepless nights over the fact that they didn’t receive a satisfactory answer.

Humans however, were compelled to look for a way to explain why it was that babies died, crops were destroyed and some other clans found it necessary to attack them. By being able to refer to someone “higher” in the stratosphere, they were able to share, confide and seek counsel for their problems. These “higher” entities could then also be blamed if something went totally wrong and no mortal could be held responsible for the loss of wars, wealth and property. A simple concept was born that in worship ceremonies, incorporating music, dance and invocations the trancelike state that was reached, could be shared in a group process and those who would transcend to almost mystical oracles, would be appointed by the group as shamans or priests; ergo, the mediator was born, and another step in the divine hierarchy was established.

It is with a specific lists of common characteristics; rules and rituals, that Religious trends can be viewed as Universal by Wade, and it is exactly in that shared history of the founding fathers; Abraham, Isaac and Jakob, that the main arguments are firmly embedded. It is also the basic

¹ N. Wade – “The Evolution of Human Behaviour” - The Faith Instinct: How Religion Evolved and Why it Endures (2009),

² Robert Wright – “The Evolution of God” <http://www.evolutionofgod.net/>

reason why Buddhism cannot be given the label Religion; even though Hinduism³ is practicing a form of Buddhism that approaches religious practices, i.e. offerings, rituals et al, Buddhism should be regarded first and foremost as a philosophy and in its practice a way of life⁴.



Whereas old civilizations in Egypt, Greece, and Iran⁵ disappeared through defeats of war and conquests due to support of – most likely other Gods – their original religions were replaced by others. The variations of men’s relationships with their Gods developed, and consequently these could also be categorised, as the American psychologist W. James explains in his work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*⁶. In time we also see the character of God evolve; from the vengeful Old Testament figure to a more reasonable “Father” figure, who is willing to send his only son down to earth to live amongst humans and become one of them to take away their sins (!), and offering immortality. However, if this relationship is given the opportunity to develop into a dynamic exchange of spiritual growth and moral awareness, it encourages taking ownership for actions, thoughts and attitudes. Ultimately, it will enable us to lift us above matter and progressively change us into human beings we are intended to be, and actively add value to society at large.



There is evidence in abundance gathered from all corners of this world that Religions have been an extremely important factor in binding groups, societies and dominate cultures throughout the ages. The social control that this exercises on the followers, and its progressive biases towards other religions and groups are painfully evident in our world today, and its application and manipulation to control the masses has proven to be hugely successful throughout history . As long as mankind is not able to use their intellect⁷ to distinguish and value what the primary purpose of Religion was intended to be, and degrades its God’s experience to joining up with the “right” religion compared to joining the “winning football team”, it will offer these very same groups a powerful tool to justify the very actions that are forbidden by the basic principles of this Religion, and will offend anyone who values the worth of any spiritual experience at its best.

Akke M. Draijer-de Jong
Delft, 15.05.2015

³ D. Ogilvie – Soul Beliefs; Historical Foundations #2, Part III

⁴ <http://akke-myrielle.tumblr.com/post/61301296372/final-paper-social-psychology-wesleyan>

⁵ Zoroastrianism - <http://www.religioustolerance.org/zoroastr.htm>

⁶ “There is religious fear, religious love, religious awe, religious joy, and so forth. But religious love is only man’s natural emotion of love directed to a religious object; religious fear is only the ordinary fear of commerce, i.e. loss.

⁷ D. Ogilvie: “education offers a chance to learn to think...” – Soul Beliefs, Causes and Consequences: