

SOME FAITH & RELIGION BASICS

< extracts from E-Mail on Subject to former client who was dealing with faith issues >

Hi B. : Sounds like your going through some form of a crisis of faith.

If you feel comfortable sharing with me, it would help if you told me a bit more of what's going on. I could perhaps more effectively address your concerns. But as a starting point I think it is fruitful to walk through some basics. So here goes.

(1) Recognize that all Religion - all Faiths and all Philosophy - seek to explain human existence in the context of the Earth and the Universe. It addresses three questions basic to our existence : (a) Why are "We" here ? (b) Who put us here ? (c) Where are "we" going (that is, what is mankind's ultimate destiny)?

God - or the Higher Power / The Supreme Being - is the ultimate "Authority" and ultimate "Explanation" in the absence of a Scientific explanation. (the tendency to resort to the 'Act of God' explanation when all else fails). God (or gods in the Greco-Roman tradition) then is synonymous with Nature, Fate, and Chance. God becomes the Ultimate Final Force or Authority we appeal to when we have exhausted all our options or run out of choices.

(2) Understand that We - as humans - also need a sense of identity; to have some sense of uniqueness and sense of "belonging" , a belonging to community, to family and to the greater Universe.

(3) Religion provides a "Moral Glue" to civilized society. The "Laws" , in all Faiths, define morality (good vs. evil or sin) for that particular culture.

(4) Then there is the fact that the idea of "Immortality" has appealed to human kind since the dawn of Man. We are cognizant , conscious creatures with a mind (a highly developed brain) that can conceive the concept of time, space, eternity and even "Infinity".

(5) Lastly, remember that all Religious teachings have developed from Oral folk traditions. They are morality tales incorporating elements of Myth and Fact having their roots in pre-scientific, mostly agricultural societies. Their purpose is give the people a cultural heritage and a sense of a special, purposeful relationship with their God (or gods).

So is there a God ? I would have to say that Yes , there is. I don't believe this existence is an accident. God is the Spiritual Force behind His creation and is the Unseen Force that works in and through His creation . The issue then becomes : How deeply involved is God in our affairs ? To that issue , I would have to say that He is probably NOT as involved as many

would like to believe. I feel God works through us , our actions and our involvement with each other. It is manifested through Agape Love - giving without expecting back. It is demonstrated by the extent to which we care for each other, help each other, and show compassion. It is not in how many Words of Prophecy one gets (God can use a donkey if he wants to (see the story of Balaam)); it is not found in how powerful one prays or speaks in Tongues (tongues being a disputed thing in theology at any rate); nor is it found in God answering our prayers precisely to our liking. We are here, so it is said, to serve God , not the other way around. He (God) is not our Sugar Daddy or Santa Clause. There is no "Prayer Formula" or "Keys" to getting prayers answered. God examines the heart - our motives - and responds accordingly based on HIS TOTAL KNOWLEDGE of our Life History - from start to finish. He disciplines those He loves, and sometimes discipline includes NO as an answer to prayer.

Hope this has been helpful and I look forward to hearing back.

Ron H
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