

## Essentials of Religion

*Be assured, men have no prediction for absurdity. So neither has they for malignity, nor selfishness, nor gluttony* (Emerson, 1862)

The increasing pressures of work and society in the lives of people have led to many people neglecting the issue of religion or faith. Gone are those days when people would flock Churches and be part of the congregational singing and worship. There is a general sense right now that religion plays no important part anymore in the lives of the people (Editorial Reviews). The question indeed is that is religion something of a passé or is it still alive in the lives of the people?

The lines above have great implications on the question of the location of faith and religion in the lives of people. Emerson (1962) has breathed into the article the essence of religion in the present time. Despite the differences in the context and social setting where the article is situated, the basic grains of its claim is very much important and significant in the light of the

Indeed, Emerson (1962) perceived humans as naturally and innately good. For him the moral person is natural and not something that is formulated by an external force through doctrines, principles and teachings and is rather a deeply rooted nature of human.

The problem therefore of people who tend to violate the individuality of the others is a question of a person's ability to see through himself and to the nature the moral law that is within us. There is a tendency to move towards behavior that disregards the otherness of people surrounding them because there is no transcendence and reflection of the "beingness" of humans (Emerson, 1862).

Emerson proposed a different religious vision that makes the religious life and spiritual life closer to the people. He opened the door towards greater acceptance and thus allowed the reader to actually view spiritual life in a different way (Editorial Reviews). It allows the human being to actually see again the paradoxes that affect humans and the underlying ideas of spirituality and living in the spirit is still as significant today as it was when he wrote the essay. It asks us once again to view the self and transcend the “I” in recognition of the otherness of our fellow human being (Editorial Reviews).

One should recognize that despite the fact that the individual is highlighted to be highly responsible for his recognition of the moral principles, but this inner recognition of truth is actually in reference to the universal recognition of the spirituality of the universe. This means that these moral decisions are at the core of our being human and not intricately woven to the society’s norms and moral conventions (Spiritual Emerson).

In addition to this he developed what we can call a strong force that caters to the general moral action that is deeply rooted still to the nature and inner force of humans. There is a spiritual recognition that is lived and experienced. There is a need to experience these essential morals and transcend ourselves and recognize them as “our” experience (The Spiritual Emerson).

For Emerson therefore, religion is viewed as something that is under “pure ethics.” This does not merely abound in the confines of sects and other religious affiliations but rather defines itself to the underlying essence of living what Emerson advocated as an ethical life. Emerson clearly advocated the issue of the innate individual moral sense that is the foundations of a universal moral philosophy. Despite the tone of the article that is leaning towards cultural relativism, there is an innate misunderstanding of the text and the morality issue that springs forth from Emerson’s article (Spiritual Emerson).

There is a need therefore to refocus religion towards that which is within us. One should be able to recognize that no amount of books or traditions would bind us towards our ultimate morality. The truth abounds in us and the recognition of what is moral is process of rediscovery rather than invention. The cure to the increasing skepticism in religion is not really calling for a change and modification of the doctrines, creeds or discipline. There is a need to see within us and in our hearts what it means to moral, ethical and spiritual (The Spiritual Emerson).

The true spirituality and religion is manifested in the law of nature. There is an ever presence of God in our everyday lives and people never notice them. We are bound to these laws as well and hence our spirituality is to be rediscovered in them (The Spiritual Emerson). The nature can manifest to us the true religion. The provision of God at all times and the basic grain of participation of what is good only show that what is inside us is the basic law of morality.

This can be seen in our actions that we are usually unable to recognize immediately as manifestation of our inner morality. When we flush the toilet after we use it, when we try to take care of books, these are all manifestations of our recognition of the other. The action of doing “good” without an active consciousness in these simple situations is a proof of the existence of the universal religion that is within us. It is not written on the books nor is it written under religious manuals. It is within the heart of humans.

As a conclusion, religion plays a very important role in sharing our experiences in a community of believers. However, the religion that is deeply rooted in our heart is very important because it will teach us the way towards our “being human” and eventually will help us rediscover the universal moral law that governs us all.

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