

SPIRITUALITY AND GLOBALIZATION: A MULTI-LEVEL EQUATION

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Abstract

The article focuses on the dynamics of human life patterns in order to underline the complexity of the issues of spirituality and globalization. It is a must of individual and social balance to bring forth the most challenging aspects of a universal transition towards a global society in order to positively interfere into the continuous polemics regarding the real nature of the human being and to decipher through communication its stable characteristics destined to evidence the unity present into diversity and to support spiritual life beyond the reductive tendency of ephemeral secular powers. It is essential to prepare our mind to go beyond apparent antagonisms, to pursue our self-achievement through the use of diversity and to understand that only a spiritualized globalization can fulfill us as human beings.

Keywords: *spirituality, globalization, human nature, development, self-achievement*

A. COMPULSORY REMARKS

1. Introduction

A scientific approach engages important principles in order to configure a strong and solid argumentation. In the present context, when we are analyzing the complex relations between spirituality and globalization, we need to imply two aspects - first the fact that any actual social process is a re-actualization of older ones (“there is nothing new under the sun”); secondly we have to recognize spirituality as a major constitutive element of the human being. From this point of view our investigation states firmly the repetability of the social processes and the inner being of human spirituality. These principles, as they reveal themselves in the particular areas of research – study of religions, history, politics, sociology and education, psychology, economy and medicine - can be considered as having an objective existence which has to be taken into account.

2. Defining notions

Spirituality can be defined as the totality of human (both inner and exterior) activities which are associated with the person’s need of achieving the absolute understanding of his existence and purpose of life, beyond physical space and time.

Globalization is, in fact, a historical process of communicating by any means, between human cultural paradigms, usually defined by the presence of at least two partners: the dominante element - as a stronger or higher paradigm; the dominated element - the weaker or the lower paradigm (not always the dominated element is a lower paradigm, from the contrary, but from the historical point of view, the military foreign power becomes prominent over it for a certain period of time). Always the weaker paradigm received influences and was modified by the stronger one (or vice versa the “weaker” military, economically paradigm transforms gradually its “occupant” because it is, in fact, older and stronger). It is a natural process of human expansibility that

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involves a cross-interaction of different levels of existence: spiritual, intellectual, moral, psychological, sociological, economic and physical ones. Usually, the expanding of a paradigm is realized on interest grounds being associated with globalization. The entire history of mankind is a permanent process of globalization between territorial structures or inside them.

As we have just defined the two notions, we can notice that, practically, the social structure is always forced to support globalization as a process of permanent transformation of values as they are accepted as “the new laws”. „The new laws” are always a result of globalization. Nobody says that they are better but they are newer and perhaps, more effective, in the vision of the dominante power.

2.a Social levels of spiritual activity

We can divide the spiritual life in a scheme which is connected to the concrete reality of human behavior:

(a) Inner life - is the psychological self-representation of spirituality and the inner call of our own conscience, activity that appears as a response to life and existence and goes beyond them;

(b) Family group - is the first associative spiritual congregation based on a blood relationship;

(c) Social group - is the common and general place of incounter between individuals.

These levels are placed in an organised religious, ritual or social scheme associated to a certain cult or movement. These are the levels in which the exponents of a certain spiritual doctrine are congregated in a social structure.

2.b Levels of globalization

Even if the globalization process affects in the same way the social structures there being no differences in its mechanism, it takes different forms correlatively with its manifestation level. In a spiritual form, we see it as syncretism which mixes different and heterogenous values in a “mixtum compositum”. From the moral point of view, it represents a liberalization or an open mind perspective applied in social decisions. Sexually, globalization brings the liberty of sex and liberty of transsexual relations, adoption of children by gay families, etc., moment in which we enter into controversial areas. It reveals itself in the economic processes as an international corporatism or off-shored companies and can have the form of an intellectual process of standardizing individuality towards a homogenous conception about life and existence. It brings also a massive fracture inside families whose members have to stay apart in different foreign countries to get more money for supporting their home relatives. Globalization is also a process of doubling the quantity of information at every five years. And the examples can continue.

From these mentioned above, we can notice that globalization is a paradoxical double faced phenomenon. On one side, peoples can communicate better, can come into a closer contact by improving their styles of life; but on the other side, peoples are facing a survival problem being absorbed into the globalization dynamics. Complex questions regarding the development, the regression, the degeneration or alienation of the human species can be put here. In another words we can say that globalization can be simply reduced to globalize or be globalized in the process.

2.c Novelty and efficiency

The main cause of globalization is the power achieved by a state or a nation which becomes bigger than the power of another state or nation. Becoming stronger, a nation tends to extend its interests over the weaker geographical areas in the purpose of controlling more territories. The “civilization” process which is by itself a controversial issue can be extended by globalization in the conditions in which the new “civilized” ones keep their originary identity and do not loose it

becoming a prospective image of the globalizing nation – just an island of the mother state/region. Another explanation of globalization can refer to the effectiveness of the mother-state or regional organization, to a better organization of its human and natural resources or to a political and economic expanding need in order to pursue self-supporting activities (getting more oil, timber or any types of primary resources) through methods of peaceful economic “war”.

The novelty is based usually on an ideological or political, even religious framework designated to be the cover-front of the expansion. Any expansion needs a moral cover and usually there are always present arguments like poorness, starvation, tyranic leaderships or anything else, which must be eliminated for the “general benefit”. In the last thousands of years of known history, no state or power was interested in fortifying its opponents but in weakening them in a process entitled “making of satellite nations” or “border nations” designed to protect the center of the “imperium”.

On the other hand, we have to understand that there is no good or bad globalization. The only element of objective judgement is the real fulfillment of the individual or social needs on a five level pyramid of values (physiological needs, security, social adherence, professional fulfillment and self-fulfillment). Unfortunately the most prominent aspect of globalization is represented by the economic side which becomes stronger and stronger everyday. Capitals become more important than people and people’s needs become lesser interesting for the corporative international societies. It is the place and time to say that globalization must be an achievement of better solutions in solving peoples’ problems not in creating new ones like the new type of social free will “deportation”, this time based on economic grounds in which people are obliged to leave their own land from economic reasons to prospect new alternatives in other geographical areas.

3. Power and submission

Both spirituality and globalization are connected to the notion of power.

In this context, we can say that spirituality has two facets – one oriented vertically as a natural process of developing human being towards higher levels of self-achievement – comprehension realized in a community of communion; the other facet is negatively oriented towards opportunism, mass controlling, ideological uniformity and towards enhancing mediocrity as a mean of maintaining the control over the social structures.

Globalization is present in both situations fact which implies a connection with the spiritual structures of the power. Any power needs to claim its authority from a representative structure to obtain its “blessing” in order to gain access in controlling the social subconsciousness. In this process we can observe on one hand, the refined relationship between power and politics and, on the other hand, between power and spirituality which, having a supernatural attribute, tends to contribute to the enhancement of the ruling structures in the eyes of masses. A decadent spiritual structure will always be associated to the political one and vice versa the political structure needs to be “blessed” by a spiritual structure even if that is moral or not. It is the unfortunate fracture between spirituality and religion that occurs during this process, the first one becoming gradually denied and the second one transforming itself into a simple philosophy of life with no possible social implication. In this vacuum of social direction, the political power will minimize them completely till their total annihilation. From the contrary, the individual and the social groups need a vertical relationship with politics mediated by spirituality because only from it they can resurrect their life motivations and avoid total nihilism.

3.a Fundamentalism and globalization

A normal society (there are also alienated societies headed of representative exponents and values) rejects any exterior pressure exercised on it in the absence of a certain lucid dialogue

of values. Fundamentalism appears as a natural reaction to protect the old values of society affected by globalization. We can observe two types of fundamentalism:

(a) a positive type – which enables people to create a proper answer to the challenges of globalization; we have to have some fundamental values to appreciate; what kind of dialogue is that in which nobody expresses anything and we have to make changes that are obviously erroneous?

(b) a negative type – which blocks any chance of dialogue and creates aggressive reactions of defense as terrorism and social dysfunctions.

3.b Continuity and changing tendencies

Every nation has to perform certain attributes to develop and expand its specific in order to join the table of dialogue with the other nations. It cannot overcome its own history excepting through a permanent learning process. So we can say that, if a change occurs, the learning process can be accelerated or stopped. This has effects on the continuity of spiritual and social development by consolidating or by dizolving the content of the existential meaning of life. Individuals are put in difficult situations and their lives are at stake because many of them have no educated ability or financial support to adapt themselves to the changes of the new system (the social effects are diseases, unemployment, violence, suicide, crime, etc.).

B. Acting in the new reality

1. Spiritual globalization

In the perspective of a global spiritual communion, we have to accept the fact that every person is a human being who can define his own interest for spirituality. So we can observe the pre-existence of a positive direction taking the form of unity in diversity. Being a person is a concept that implies a cultural paradigm built around a specific spiritual horizon. The communication between such paradigms increases the possibility of improving your own paradigm or discovering new aspects of it. Anyway, the chase for discovering himself has driven man to a series of unexpected spiritual experiences which are worthy to be shared. The benefit of spiritual globalization consists in the possibility of seeing yourself from different potential angles, thing which is extremely difficult of being achieved through the use of a singular spiritual paradigm.

The variety of human believes can be associated with the new type of psychological expectations of social and individual reality seen as a multidimensional change. Being put into the dialogue position with another paradigm, we are obliged to know ourselves better, to obtain the power of expresing ourselves, of becoming understood by others who do not know us and themselves from the new side presented by us.

The spiritual globalization means above all the effort of communion into differences, an effort made by people who have different views about life and society but share the same goals (happiness, welfare, self-accomplishment).

We must fight for expressing better our own visions, for becoming more aware of our values and for living them at their real intensity and depth. Probably, this universal effort will bring us together at the table of common values in a real discussion about our global destiny. Nowadays it is clear for every serious researcher no matter his field of interest, that only a spiritual approach that would counter-balance the present economic and financial pressure can open new horizons of global social development.

2. Historical globalization

As we said before, all the human history is a permanent process of globalization but this process has got new particularities nowadays. There has never been a time like this when on one side, civilization, culture and science would be so developed, and on the other side, the level of spiritual individual development would be so low. Now the time of emergence between nations in the purpose of a global solution to our problems has come. Our historical experience contains many positive and also dark episodes (more than 40, 000 wars in 6,000 years) but we have to make an effort to overcome the bad side of history and to build a common future based on the respect of the positive experiences and on the global need for elevation from the social misery. We have to operate with the values recognised as universal and to extend their action into our lives in order to obtain a better satisfaction of our human needs that are, by definition, extremely complex. We have to make a true and sincere analysis of the deep mechanisms that can better our life and to eliminate the negative aspects derived from national egoism, destructive individualism or corporative imperialism.

As the facts show, history can go both directions: forward or backward; if we agree to continue in a common positive attitude of social and international development, we can obtain solutions to many global problems; if we do not agree to continue our fight for a better social and individual life, than we are condemned to a continuous suffering and to a return to a new era of technological dark age. Paradoxically, the greatest things discovered by science are still used to build guns instead of building cities for happier people.

We can observe that, even if the so called “cold war” is over, we assist to a new era of war – “post-cold war” – a more dangerous and dreadful time of underground conflicts developed on the territories of “boarder states”, supported by highly developed technology such as UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), intelligence satellites and information aggressions. The presence of this new type of war denotes the fact that politics has not understood yet that only by solving problems we can obtain peace and balance and not by supporting different wars to keep the world divided.

Another problem is that related to the enormous discrepancy between developed countries, countries in the development process and the so called countries from the third world, discrepancy that becomes a major cause of an international wave of insecurity which puts in danger the entire unstable balance of the international political and economic centers, simultaneously with the strong economic regression felt by all the world.

3. Political globalization

To unify the national powers in a continental or global center of power is a must in the perspective of an allied community based on common grounds. The problem which stands up is that related to the different views over the future destiny as it is seen by the different nations. Some groups agree to have a common future, some groups do not agree considering themselves potentially endangered or future centres of power.

A nation has to defend its interests according to the interests of its members. That is why the politicians must be elected on nominal lists in order to assure the access to the power of decision only for those fitted and tested to serve the social structure and solve its contemporary problems (but this means in the same time to have competent voters which is very difficult).

A continental political structure has to be built on a scale of social needs in order to present the common problems on the discussion table. The purpose consists in the prevailing of the best solution which has to be agreed upon accordingly after a thorough scientific investigation, the political aspect coming at last (but this means to respect the points of view elaborated by national specialists who really know the characteristics of their people).

A global political structure has the duty of comparing and making associations between nations in the purpose of solving conflicts and their effects as soon as possible because the major discrepancies involved by the different levels of national development are causes of new conflicts and without visible solutions, the international tensions tend to reappear. Another duty of the global political structure is to support the efforts of the local or regional researchers destined to present a deeper image of the social realities and to offer viable solutions to the aspects of social crises. As difficult as it would seem, international cooperation is the only key to solve the complex problems which affect our planet. Every nation is responsible for the life of itself and for the life of the others. Why? Because the technology is so developed that, on one hand, it has the role of improving all our work methods, and, on the other hand, a mistake of a nation can destroy the existence of many other nations (if we talk only about the nuclear experiences, to say nothing about the biological or electromagnetic warfare).

4. Juridical globalization

Every national juridical system has to adapt itself to the international changes determined by the new laws of cooperation. In the implementing perspective of the new European Constitution, all the fundamental laws have to be changed and after them, the entire set of organic and ordinary laws.

The process has to conserve the most important and effective behaviours which have been proven to be worthy and to change the absolute ones which are overcome by time and social new developments.

Invariably, the Constitution of a country contains the main values defended and publicly expressed by a nation. As the main values are internationally protected and recognised, we can put a good basis on the new European Constitution which is derived from secular experience proved as effective and complete with the condition that it would take into consideration the spirituality of man.

The only fear we must accept is that related to the manner in which the authorities of every state understand to apply the new Constitution. The European partners have to be sure that the conditions of application are equal and non-discriminatory by eliminating the social discrepancies presently existing between the western and eastern societies and nations.

The globalization of laws has to assure and make easier the commercial and civil circuits for improving the merchandise exchanges associated – I do have to underline this aspect – to social development.

The penal laws have to be improved in order to reintegrate into the work cycle persons who were sanctioned and to transform the execution sanctions into something fruitful both for those affected by them and for society.

5. Sociological and educational globalization

Young people have the opportunity to know themselves better by meeting new people, new mentalities. They are obliged to consolidate their identity by expressing better their ideas and ideals. A new type of learning process appears – an interactive dialogue based on cultural and spiritual resemblances or differences.

To achieve a better education in a globalized collectivity, young people have to improve constantly their perspective regarding life and its meanings. A new factor is added – the need for spiritual improvement as a means of continuing the social creative development. As the rationalizing process in society achieves its climax, the motion of spiritual renewal is a must. The most important fact is the new orientation towards inner experiences and inner development of the individual as a psychological response to the permanent exterior changes.

The first steps towards a better education are the improvement of the self-image and the completion of the world image by a multi-cultural dialogue. Any young person must benefit from the great scientific and social discoveries and also from the important cultural re-lightening of the old traditions and movements which enable him/her to have a wider perspective and a stronger sense of reality as means of improving himself and as an alternative to the simple consummation of his time and life.

New social perspectives are expected to appear as soon as young people join the experts in the effort of debating and fighting for a new social Europe concerned about the benefits and wellbeing of its members.

6. Psychological globalization

In the process of globalization, the individual is put under a lot of stress by the permanent changes. Globalization seems to be a certain type of social revolution but differently expressed by outside forces which are not interested in peoples and in the existence of nations (seeing diversity as a spiritual plus is something valuable, but seeing it as a further step of division and alienation can create many social adversities), but in power and capitals. There is a paradox – an international corporative economy destroys the old structures and mixes up the national society and even if it does not follow a positive benefit for the national society, it gives a free way to new potential benefits. In this fight with an unequal enemy, the national social group has the opportunity to strenghten its powers by giving a proper defence response to the globalization. This response consists in strenghtening individuality and in perfecting the specilities of its members. If the national society is ignorant and corrupt, the globalization process will dissolve it and transform it into in a homogenous suburb.

It is difficult to observe how a state gets weaker and its power transformed into ashes but it is healthier in the sense that we are no longer living with the myth of an almighty State which is taking care of us. The demystification takes place simultaneously with the disappearance of the old myths related to the power of State and its rulers. The State becomes just an administrative tool and the social structures have now the opportunity to express themselves better than ever (with the condition that they have something important and concrete to bring into the public attention) and if they loose the moment, they will be condemned to silence, the possibility of expressing global viable values with national source being lost.

7. Economic globalization

The globalization process has to change its coordinates when it reaches the economic area. Why? Because poorness and unemployment are too expensive to continue, if the human being still has a value anymore, and we think it has. To keep a high rate of profits, a corporative firm has to offer new jobs and to support the development of complex economic infrastructures in order to maintain a fluid cycle of money. Otherwise, the profits will go down, unemployment will rise and if nobody works, who will pay and buy all the merchandises?!? To cut the national concurence is one step for an international company, unorthodox but real an effective, but to maintain people out of jobs it is a policy that can ruin an entire global economy.

If technology can produce more with smaller costs, why people who where initially involved in the work process are threwn into unemployment and are not redistributed towards areas where technology is not capable of making a difference (such as creative areas) and why the prices continue to get higher and higher if the declared intention is to sell more? Because there is no plausible explanation for the permanent growing of their capitals and profits from the point of view of social general benefit; this reveals that the international corporative firms are excludesevely interested in the growing of their capitals and profits, putting peoples at work without solving their

real problems. This is the logical explanation for the fact that even if a person lives in a civilised country she has to work three or four times more for the same amount of money.

Economy has to realise that intellectual mediocrity will have terrible consequences in the work process because without ideas and ideals, who will continue to work if unemployment can be a payable offer?

The disappearance of the middle classes in the Western Europe and in the most important countries which is near a global motion nowadays, must be an alarm sign that the discrepancies between wealthy people and strong nations, on one hand, and poor people and nations, on the other hand, are not only unsolved but they also tend to aggravate. Supposing that technology will replace completely man's work, what will man do? The only alternative is creativity and culture as means of maintaining the functions of man upgraded to the social needs.

Economy has to sustain culture and science in order to ensure its own future existence. Only if culture sustains man's interest for his existence, economy will be able to maintain a higher rate of selling. Other problems are those regarding the necessity of production and its quality. It is cheaper to use chemicals instead of natural ingredients but if people get sick and die, who will buy anymore? As corporative firms are interested in profits, they have also to be interested in the quality, with a closer interest in food quality which is the basis of a healthy consumer who can consume for a long time only if he is healthy (the expected food lack is caused by the underused potentials of local agricultural areas).

8. Medical globalization

The biological factors are extremely important in the motion of renewing a society. Thus, education has to be oriented to a global improvement of health. Europe, confronted now with sterility, aging, physical decrepitude, decay of the birth rate, has to impose a new orientation by protecting life. Life can be protected by being associated to the spiritual renewal of inner and communion life, in a strong social preventive discipline. We have to cultivate health and we can use globalization to do it by implementing the best and the most effective health habits revealed in the international dialogue.

Two types of medicine have to emerge: (1) a self-educated medicine by the means of science, culture and spirituality; (2) a general medicine applied and popularised by specialists united in an international dialogue, to pursue the most important gift – human life. The globalization has to point out the most important and healthy behaviours in order to be implemented by everybody.

Conclusions

As we have seen, globalization and spirituality can be fruitfully associated to accomplish a better life for people. Also we have learned that globalization is not good or bad. Its status and effects depend only on our courage and self-commitment to react being prepared with proper answers to its challenges.

For an individual and a society well prepared (well informed and educated) and well defined as spiritual and cultural identities, globalization has to prove itself beneficial driving us towards new accomplishments. For an individual and a society not properly prepared, globalization brings uncertainty, instability and more discrepancies than ever, creating a deforming pressure in the already degenerated social structure.

We do not have to be stronger than globalization, we only have to be wise and take from it only the elements that are proper to us and which enable us to reach new points of development. We need spirituality to help us inforce and filter the effective aspects of globalization, in other

terms we have to decide how and till where we are globalized. For these aspects, we have to be prepared with arguments and social experiences in such a way that we would absorb the significant parts of globalization as means of developing our own competent inner and social structure without being simultaneously standardized into its global mass.

Expressing our identity and developing its multi-faceted dimensions through globalization: this is the key towards a balanced attitude in a matter of so much complexity. For this, we are obliged to reconsider our standards, to be better, to be more expressive and inspired than ever and to work hard to regain a profound and universal dimension of Christianity capable of administering the religious diversity and able to gradually decrease the effects of the unstable waves inevitably produced by the dynamic changes.

In the dynamics of globalization, we have to underline the dignity and uniqueness of all human beings, supporting the idea of creative diversity as emerging from that of powerful unity of the human species.

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