BELIEF AND BELONGING

Nabil M Mustapha

When invited to present my thoughts on this topic, I had two notions: 1- This is easy. I can say a few words with very little difficulty. Or 2- What do I say about two very clear words that everyone understands?

Well, it seems I am wrong on both accounts. So let me say a few words about:

Belief:

Belief is an emotion, even though it is most commonly driven by an intellectual thought process to start with. Once reached on any aspect of a person's life, belief acts as the "comfort zone" that allows a person to fall back into or onto whenever there is any reason for scepticism, usually a result of some confusion reigning somewhere in one's surrounds.

We live in a cacophony of thoughts and cries drawing us hither and thither, and how often are we drawn to one or other of the sounds in that cacophony. The difficulty is that no sooner we do vear one way or another, than we are attracted to yet more of that cacophony.

It is only firm belief that acts as the "anchor" by which we stabilised ourselves along a safe harbour, or solid underwater rock, until the seas are clear enough of the storm, and we allow ourselves to venture afresh into the world of clear thinking and safe soul sailing. Without that anchor, our intellectual and emotional well being will be severely tested, and perhaps often compromised.

So what then is :

Belonging

Well, I spoke of the "anchor". I now have to speak of two other factors that we need once we are within the safe harbour of "belief". The first is the bedrock: that solid base upon which we can see ourselves safely in the company of either our kith and kin, or our like-minded community. We feel secure within such a setting.

However, we still lack our freedom of manoeuvre and movement as individuals. But to do that safely, we need that other instrument, the crucial "Compass". I choose compass rather than "Satnav", because with the compass we can discern the direction of our navigation. We do not need all the time the detailed directional instructions of a Satnav. With these two instruments, the anchor and the compass, we have the means of stability, as well as the assistance with movement.

So, with this humble description of my understanding of the two words, Belief and belonging, I feel I may have inadvertently advocated "intellectual inertia". If I did that, I apologise. Indeed, I believe I am giving each and every one of us the right, indeed the obligation, to keep striving in order to maintain a credible ability to evolve intellectually, emotionally, and ABOVE ALL, spiritually.

An integral part of my belief in Bahá’u’lláh is His statement that everyone must "individually search after Truth", and not rely just on fed or spoon fed information. In this way, I hope that each individual, myself included, will always look forwards to yet higher horizons of thought and "Faith", and not remain stuck in old worn out slogans, dogma, prejudice or false interpretations.

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I am a Bahá'í, a religion founded by Bahá’u’lláh who was born in Persia (now Iran) 200 years ago. Bahá'ís all over the world are celebrating the Bicentenary in more than 100.000 localities.

I have a regular local (Brooklands) radio "Sunday Viewpoint" and I published a book on "Economics, the Historical, Religious and Contemporary Perspectives"

 