

The “homo religiosus” Religion as an experienced force.

Foreword

The oldest among us knew in their youth the last vestige of a Christianity that had existed for centuries. People wholeheartedly believed that as long as they were baptized, confirmed and kept to the commandments, they would go to ‘heaven’ after their death. These obvious certainties, which once gave people serenity and honest trust, have lost a lot of their strength today. The horizons of life are much wider and more uncertain, the world and life itself have become much more complicated.

The next generation often still had a Christian youth, they were baptized, and confirmed, but sometimes this was only for show, as part of the tradition. A number of them go to church only for special events in life: a wedding celebration or to grieve after the death of a loved one, possibly for Christmas or Easter, in a festive atmosphere and sometimes with music. However, in many cases deep religious devotion is difficult to find. Some of them even whisper that the pure and sincere faith of yesteryear has been reduced to a form of folklore and now belongs in a museum rather than in everyday life. Believing with conviction in our time? No, it's not easy. Perhaps it is, according to some, also a little naive.

What about our younger generation? Many no longer even know the most essential truths of the faith. And they are not concerned about that at all. Their interests lie in very different fields.

Besides, where does your faith fit into today's world? Many 'well-meaning people' are asking themselves that. In recent decades a number of issues have been revealed that, to say the least, do not always honor the believing world, so that young people in particular turn their backs on religion and seek other horizons. Nevertheless, the question remains as to whether they are not "throwing the baby out with the bath water" with this choice". Will you abandon the practice because of abuse? Or is this belief also the subject of too many painful questions? These are delicate questions that do not immediately find a clear answer. What does the life of Jesus mean for our rather secular culture? Indeed, some people want a belief appropriate to the needs of our rather nominalist and rationalist times. They contest the historical character of Christ's miracles, even His resurrection, His descent into hell and His ascension. These events are reduced to educational and fictional stories, nothing more. They contain too many unverifiable elements and are therefore unable to respond to the criticisms of contemporary scientific research.

But does that say anything about what faith wants to show or rather something about the preconceptions of our time? In other words, are we not in danger of trying to adapt the reality of faith to what remains of it in our contemporary mentality? And if we do indeed start from our rather profane axiom, do we still allow religious data, the “facts that do not lie”, as they were and still are being testified by many witnesses, to take on their full meaning?

On the contrary, shouldn't we leave aside our preconceived ideas, so that we are really in close contact with what we are studying and thus effectively give the data its full meaning. So it is the facts in themselves that inform us, and no longer our preconceived ideas that dare to distort the data, color it and limit it to what we only want to know. Only a realistic attitude allows what is 'real' to be 'real'. And it is only in this way that we reveal the 'truth'. At least, it seems that way to us.

Giving full meaning to religious data remains far from an easy task. Because indeed, what should we be aware of? In reality, what is religion? Is it something you learn? Is there a connection with the commandments? Is it linked to a set of rules and obligations? Is it a respectful attitude? Or is it in its deepest nature something else? Let us take the Gospel itself. *Luke 8:43*, where Jesus said that someone touched him, for He had felt a power coming out of him. However, it turns out that a woman who was suffering from blood loss had touched the edge of his clothing behind his back. She believed that Jesus' garment shared his special life force, and that if she could touch his garment, she would also share this high life energy. So, she thought, she would be cured of her illness. The Gospel text states that she has indeed been healed. Jesus added that her faith had saved her. *Luke 6:19* also quotes that an entire crowd wanted to touch Jesus because there was a force coming out of him that healed them all.

If these two biblical texts are based on reality, and that is what the Bible wants us to believe, then they testify of a belief in a high life force that that is also 'transitive', that can pass from Jesus who possesses it abundantly, to the woman who apparently lacks it, or even to a whole crowd.

In this case, religion acquires a strong dynamic character, where a form of energy transfer is involved. Moreover, the Bible speaks several times of these energetic functions, of what it calls the power of the 'Holy Spirit'. But there is more. If Jesus could feel that there was a force coming out of Him at the time of healing, then it appears that, to use a term from the paranormal world, He is supposedly 'sensitive'. Such a person feels many phenomena and events that remain hidden from the average Joe.

Anyone who knows the story of Abisjag of Shunem and King David, as described in the Bible in the *first book of kings*, knows that there is also a transfer of power there. The old king was suffering from a lack of energy and because of this could barely manage his administrative duties. That is why he could regenerate his energy to the powerful and etheric charism of the beautiful Abisjag. The Scripture even mentions that he slept with her, but did not 'know' her. This means in biblical language that he did not have sex with her.

Then we read in this same *book of kings*, *17:17-24* that the prophet Elijah brought back the dead son of a widow. To this end he lay on the child, face to face, and prayed to God that her son would be able to come back to life. This is what happened according to the history of the Bible. If this is also a reality, then the belief in this transfer of life force is apparently much more general and also much more realistic than we might suspect in our contemporary Western culture. Dynamism and sensitivity seem to go hand in hand with religion. But also on this there is more.

In addition, we read *John 4:16/19* where the evangelist wrote about a conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. Jesus told her that she had already known five men and that her current partner was not her husband, to whom the woman replied, "Lord, I see that you are a prophet." The Samaritan woman's reaction shows that, for her, a 'prophet' was familiar with

what we now call 'clairvoyance'. Or: *Luke 22:8/13* mentions that Jesus sent two apostles forward to prepare the common Easter meal. Jesus said, "Look, when you enter the city, you will meet a man carrying a jug of water. Follow him to the house where he will enter. You say to the owner of the house: "The master makes you say:" Where is the room, where I can eat the Easter meal with my disciples? " He will show you a room from above. Make the preparations there. When they went there, they found everything as He had told them. They made preparations for the Easter meal. So much for this biblical text. Here as well, Jesus shows his clairvoyance. In a premonitory way, he 'sees' what will happen in the immediate future.

If the last two texts are also a reality, then the question arises as to whether religion can not only be associated with energy processes, but can also be linked to a form of paranormal observation. However, in our culture this is so contradictory to the achievements of pure science that at first sight it becomes very difficult to take such a thesis seriously. There have been so many absurdities in the world about the paranormal, and ever so many deceptions have been exposed, that such an assertion can rightly be received with extreme skepticism. We are faced with a choice again. Here we are again faced with a choice. Here the story about the use and abuse seems to repeat itself. Are we going to deny ourselves the use because of an abuse? Are we going to throw the baby out with the bathwater again? Do we really want to only see, for a second time, that which the assumptions of our time allow us to perceive? But if we do this, we judge again without having fully contacted these data? And then our vision is colored again by prejudice? Do we want to see the facts from the point of view of our preconceived ideas, or do we want to understand what is being shown and how it is being shown?

And what if, in religious processes, the hypothesis of dynamic vision, paranormal forces and clairvoyance is not a priori rejected but considered possible, at least for the moment, and see where it takes us? And only then, and with a logically strict mind, can we draw our conclusions? This is not only for what the Bible teaches us, but also for what archaic, ancient and classical religions have to say. Could this lead us to richer ideas? Anyone who engages in it in a minimal way, for example, quite quickly understands the idea that almost all extra-Biblical religions are filled with the concept of "life force", energetic, magical powers and mantic practices of all kinds. In this way, these many religions show an analogy with the biblical religion: there are certainly important differences, but we also find similarities and links. Isn't it worthwhile to go deeper? This may lead us to interesting notions, also and especially to our own biblical religion. Do we find many religious characteristics in the various mantic practices and magic's of the peoples? And vice versa, does our biblical religion have both mantic and magical characteristics? However, verifying all this requires us to be open-minded. Then we must indeed have empathy for these believers and listen to what they have to say to us about their religious experiences and practices. If we do not, there is a good chance that we will project our convictions into their customs. Then what they themselves have to say, escapes us and any understanding with their religion is lost.

We illustrate this with an example. In India, mating couples are represented in a number of temples. Here many Western Europeans could spontaneously claim that it is nothing more than ordinary porn. And yet the natives would be shocked by this particularly contemptuous judgment. For them it is a sacred act: the glorification of the sacred life force. Which is eminently concentrated in the genitals. They do indeed transmit this mysterious life. What seems to be 'sex' for a profane Westerner becomes a high religious act for the local believer: the cult of the sanctity of life. Indeed, we must share their religious convictions - not ours - to understand what they - not us - mean with these representations. If we do not do so, we risk misinterpreting them.

Pope Pius XI founded the Ethnographic and Ethnological Museum in Rome in 1922. He knew the religious sciences and ordered the seminaries to teach them and to respect other religions and their customs. "These are human documents that must not be destroyed," he said.

So with this tolerant and open mind we approach this vast, and far from simple, aspect of religion. And let us not neglect any subject in this area. We immerse ourselves in the paranormal aspects of the sacred, in the mantic practices and in the magic of the peoples, and we also look at all this from a paranormal biblical perspective.

We therefore inform the reader about many of the less known mantic and magical aspects of faith. And finally it is up to him or her to make a well-considered choice.

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