

Upbringing a ‘second nature’ of a Religious Practice in a Secularized World with Religious Teachings

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The Abstract

A merely single act of our religious practice would pave a highway for us to perform well in our bright and budding futurities of ours with a progressive success. One may for sure be shocked to glance at the aforementioned assertion or the dictum as of ‘How this would really do?’ As a point of departure for my paper work, let me record the cardinal argument of mine as follows: **Can an upbringing of a ‘second nature’ of a Religious practice or rather a Faith-centered act along with the respective Religious Teachings or Faith-Centered Teachings in a Secularized World pave a highway for a person to grow strongly and then to withstand everything courageously?**

The World where we live today gets changed so rapidly with a number of changes happening or rather occurring right around us. Some of them actually we may be able to see and then we come to understand. On the other way about, we may not know the speedy changes taking place right around us due to their very enigmatic nature within. Notwithstanding, the phenomena concerned visible and quite perceptible at our respective visions or sights keep teaching us the very nature of the place where we live-in by now.

Remaining in a constantly changing World then would not be that easy for someone to defend something without placing himself or herself in primitively profound ground on which the person concerned would be able to defend the Religious or Faith-centered Teachings with utmost reverence due to it. We, therefore, as rational beings come to understand vividly of the very nature of the World where we live-in and then how difficult and authentically challenging is it to defend a personal purview along with a sort of a critical analysis.

Here I would wish to draw my closer attention towards Thomas Aquinas’s Philosophy who grounded himself in the ocean of Aristotelian Philosophy. More specifically I am to concern ‘**Habit as a second nature** [*Habitus est secunda natura*]’. Then, to underpin the argument above mentioned I may also refer to some of the Selected Philosophical Insights of Parmenides and Heraclitus along with the changing nature of the Contemporary World.

Almost in all the Religions it is ‘Family’: the most fundamental unit in the larger network known as ‘Society’ which lays the uppermost foundation for one to grow in accordance with the Religious Practices. I, therefore, believe-in Family as an ideal place of upbringing a religious practice or rather a Faith-centered practice. Here, it is very important to see that there remains a possibility of creating a ‘second nature’ through a

frequent practice. To get cleared the idea is to say that a frequent act could lead someone towards a better practice.

If we consider a theist he may have something to tell of his first religious practices as he or she has inherited them from the family of the person concerned. On the other way about one could come up with an idea and say ‘What about atheists then who do not believe-in (a) God?’ Well. Even in the case of an atheist he or she might have learnt from his or her family what is supposed to be followed as a good person along with some of the fundamental principles in which he or she rightly believes-in.

Once a person is well-grounded on a foundation along with a religious practice as a ‘second nature’ on which he would be able to defend his or her Religious Teachings in secularized society would definitely underpin the person concerned to grow strongly and then to withstand everything courageously.

Key Words: *Upbringing, ‘second nature’, Secularized World, Practice, Teachings, Contemporary, Family*

The concept of Upbringing and its practicality

Here, in view of presenting the practical dimension of getting used to the initial religious practices, I have attempted to bring forth a ‘Transitive Verb: Upbring’ in the form of its gerund [i.e., Upbringing] which explains very vividly of how a parent or an elderly guardian of children brings forth a child towards a particular religious practice along with the religious teachings of a respective religion as they out-do them in and through their very lives more frequently.

Then the immediate thought that we will get to reflect or rather to think of critically would be: ‘Could a simple teaching we would get to receive from our families make a bigger affect as such to our lives in future?’ let us try to find for an answer to this question from the very place where it generates. In forming of a future and the behavioral practices of a person, family plays a bigger role in the whole process. In the other way about, it is through family a person practically learns the basics of practicing faith more prior to the official education garnered by schools or institutes or the religious knowledge come to know by their very religions.

The religious practices done just for the sake of doing would be useless unless people do perform and practice them with proper conviction. Then only people those who keep practicing them be able to find for the authentic value systems behind all what they are doing? Therefore, one who practices the religious teachings along with religious practices and devotions must keep in his or her mind that it is with the fuller and complete conviction only they can find the authentic meaning behind all what they might do. We, therefore, could observe here then; on the one who do practice these religious practices with a complete conviction would definitely be able to see the value behind all what he or she rightly does with the religious practices. So, it is essential to learn the role of the family in the work of ‘Upbringing’ one in his or her respective religious teachings. Albeit, family be the smallest unit in the society it becomes the most influential fact of concerning of one’s upbringing. As an elderly guardian or parent of a child upbrings the child it is family who keeps upbringing human beings towards their respective religious teachings.

One could argue on the fact saying that those who do not have a religion: those who do not believe-in (a) God may not have anything to practice then. No, absolutely that is not the case. Here, what we are supposed to remember is that the very moral conduct of an adult who got to learn all those things as a child has been greatly influenced by a respective family.

To expound it directly is to say all our respective religions do teach us through their very teachings is the Formation of a Proper Conscience. Each religion in various capacities attempt to set a series of rules, regulations in view of creating strong and courageous men to the Contemporary World.

Habit as a ‘Second nature’

Here, what I wanted to bring forth is ‘Habit’. To help the main argument of mine let me include ‘Habit as a Second nature’. The idea I have directly extracted from the Teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas who had a great devotion to Aristotle.

The terminology ‘*Habitus* (Habit)’ derives from the Latin verb ‘*Habere*’, which means something different from being: one has if one is; to have is a possession coming after being. It is like a second nature (*secunda natura*). ‘*Habitus*’ rests between ‘nature’ and act, just as the hand is the instrument between the body and the object to be touched. They are acquired through the repetition of acts of the same type.

Habits are not easily lost, just like a pianist can play the Piano even after not having played for years. Thus, the virtues perfect beings and incline them to an action. Habit belongs to the general category of ‘Quality’ and is defined as a comparatively permanent quality disposing a thing well or ill in its being or operations.

One may wonder how and why habits are intimately related to our main argument. Because when an action becomes a habit, human beings continue to perform well. To get created a habit constant practice is highly required. Thus, this is the very area concerned of mine argument too. It is only and only through constant practice of religious practices the religious teachings becomes something very habitual in our very lives.

Here, we need to understand the fact that the practices could be differed according to the religions. For a Catholic it could be an intimate personal prayer with the LORD; for a Buddhist it could be a Buddhist custom; for a Muslim it could be an Islamic way of worship; for a Hindu it may be an act of worship; even for an atheist it could be a fundamental teaching learnt from the respective parents of whose religious belief might have had influenced him or her since the childhood.

Whatsoever, the religion and teachings along with the concerned would be, we need to understand the necessity and the essentiality of frequent practice, as a habit is in the actual potentiality of becoming second nature. In this way we come to understand the fact that what we have got to learn ever since our childhood along with our religious teachings of our respective religions would definitely pave us a pathway to grow strong and to withstand things.

This way any one of us could fathom the fact out that the constant and frequent practice of something could be a ‘second nature’ or habit.

Secularized World

The World where we live-in today gets changed so rapidly with a series of other changes. If we carefully observe what is happening right around us would show us how challenging it is to defend one's respective religious teachings along with a personal purview remaining in a more frequently changing World. To express the fact in a sound way would be the World in present day context is much secularized both in Reason and in Faith. When we keep reading this very passage we may be answer-less to the question arise with regard to the 'Change of the World'. It is also vividly perceptible to see the situations of the people undergo according to their very understanding of the World as such.

Let me have reference here to some of the Pre-Classical or Pre-Socratic Philosophical Teachings concerned of the 'Change'. Among them I wish to consider Milesians [like Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximanes], Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, Heraclitus of Ephesus, and Parmenides of Elea. Along with their Philosophical Teachings permit me to bring forth two gleaming philosophical Insights of Thomas Aquinas and Soren Kierkegaard who were well-grounded in Religious Teachings though they much concentrated on Philosophy.

Very initially they paid their closer attention towards the World where they lived-in in a highly personal manner. **Thales** proposed the *Arche* of the Cosmos (First Principle of the World to be 'Water'). **Anaximander** posited a source for the Cosmos which he called 'bound-less (*Aperion*)'. Both Cicero and Aetius report that, for **Anaximenes** Air is God. Air, then, changes into the basic elements, and from these we get all other natural phenomena. In his *Cratylus*, Plato quotes **Heraclitus**, via the mouthpiece of *Cratylus*, as saying that: "You could not step twice into the same river". Further, expressed that everything is in flux. **Parmenides of Elea** was a pivotal figure in Pre-Socratic Thought and he came up with the idea saying life and world are at a standstill.

If anyone of us carefully observe each of these philosophical thoughts or teachings are seemingly in an obstinate condition if not in a quite pessimistic nature. Because all these individual philosophies have been only on a single direction. In my personal point of view I firmly believe-in they have lost something whereas they focused on Reasoning. It is none-other-than 'Faith' they have lost I believe-in. I feel personally some of these teachings or philosophies seem to be ending in an abrupt condition. Notwithstanding, the some of the great philosophers who have had recognized 'God' clearly would have been successful than these 'Reason-alone philosophers' I feel.

Great philosophers like **Thomas Aquinas** in the Medieval Period and **Soren Kierkegaard** in the Contemporary period could be set as exemplary philosophers who rightly understood the power of human reasoning as well as the real presence of a True God in whom a person could wholly and truly depend on. Being remaining in a changing world Thomas Aquinas presented the idea of an imminent world along with the Teachings of Aristotle. Thereby, came to a conclusion we do not live in two different worlds like ideal dualism. Notwithstanding, we live in a World which is already and not yet. Here, we see man longs for the absolute goodness of God. In this sense, we strictly come to know that all the more life became difficult for human beings there the human being searched for God.

To understand the world in its respective reality, we may have to understand it very apparently with its respective changes. This is where I personally believe-in the Philosophy of Contemporary Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard as a sound example for us learn the contemporary changes of the world as he had to encounter with a number of changes in his life. Albeit, the Faith experience the Philosopher [i.e., Soren Kierkegaard] has received, inherited, and acquainted with as the religious formation from his very family might have had influenced him a lot to stand very strongly as a person who served the community well and then to withstand all what was challenging for him from the side of the Mundane World.

Not only for the Pre-Classical Philosophers [viz., Milesians [like Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes], Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, Heraclitus of Ephesus, and Parmenides of Elea] but for us also this could be the reality in our lives too. At times we also attempt to understand the world in a very shallow manner with all what we perceive. Rather we be lost at times with all our imagination through which we keep secularizing the World.

How ever much the realities they focused-on [Water, Fire, Air] there remained an ultimate cause or first cause. They, therefore, well considered the Ultimate Cause or the First Cause as Primary of Everything. Though they explored very many things in the mundane realm they kept trust in an unmoved cause [God]. In our contexts today, we too may find a number of ways and means to make the World secularized. For instance, High Technology, Globalization, Development of Science, modern experiments, etc.

As some of the august philosophers like Thomas Aquinas and Soren Kierkegaard kept reflecting their respective faith aspect of the religions, we must also be determined to observe them with proper conviction. Having got caught to the current if we continue to do so then that particular place itself, we may lose the purpose of our faith aspect which is more and more strong in our respective reasoning.

If we more carefully observe the World right around us, we may surely be able to fathom out the Original Design and Beauty of the World created by God. The next fact then becomes seemingly apparent that the World today is losing its original shape, form, and the order due to some of our careless work. All the more the World become secularized the Religious Teachings get distant from the people in general. Thomas Aquinas says: "He who does not embrace the teaching of the Church does not have the Habit of Faith" (*Summa Theologica* 1265-1274). Someone might say this is only for Catholics or only for those who believe-in the True Religion. No absolutely not. Because if we take the religion out here the august and bold assertion of Thomas Aquinas strongly expounds as of how one is morally obliged to embrace the Religious Teachings.

Contemporary Religious Teachings and Frequent Practice of Religious Teachings

Though the Teachings vary right according to the Religions it is a prime responsibility of man a Rational Being to perform good as much as possible at his extent. We, therefore, must have to differentiate the very fact that whatsoever a religion to which a person belongs to, is morally duty-bound or rather obliged to perform good in his or her life. Even in the case of a person who is not believing-in a God or in a Religion is supposed to do at least two things I believe-in. On one hand, could live up to the religious practices he or she might have seen ever since childhood at home in and

through the very lives of the respective parents of the person concerned. If not so, the other way about in an extreme point of view could follow the very fundamental Non-Religious practices or rather the Customs in view living a morally accepted way of live with the basics learnt since the childhood. This manner, anyone of us can understand the fact that whatsoever the Religion of a person is, there remains a greater impact thereby.

This could be understood much clearly with an argument presented by Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae Prima Secundae Partis* Question 50[i.e. on The Subjects of Habits]. I quote: “Virtue of Anything must be expressed in terms of the good. Hence, Human Virtue, which is an operative habit, is a good habit and productive of good works” unquote. Further, in his work called *Summa Theologiae* he expresses ‘Habit as a significant component of spiritual life’.

Conclusive Remarks

For a person to be nurtured according to his or her very religious life ‘family’ indeed plays a wider role in this holistic process. Especially, the little practices we come to out-do through our beloved parents most probably becomes habits and more specifically they by a constant practice become ‘second nature’ like. This manner we come to know the fact that all what we come to learn since our ever-cherishing childhood along with an effect at large will affect our habits which are in the actual potency of becoming a ‘second nature’. As I aforementioned someone could argue that of the demeanor traits and habits of an atheist. Here, we come to understand the fact very clearly that the fundamental learning of moral practices at least could cause a pathway towards a morally accepted way of life.

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- Class Notes: Ancient Western Philosophy (*Pre-Classical Philosophers*) Academic Year 2023-2024; Rev.Fr.Jeyaraj Rasiah, SJ.
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- **Rev.Bros. Sashindu Vinod, Aravinda Dilshan, and Thushan Sumedha:** Fourth Year Theology, National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, Ampitiya, Kandy.
- **Mis. Nethmi Madhushani Hettiarachchi:** Checking Officer, Omega Line, Irabadagama, Sandalankaawa.
- **Mrs. Ganga Nilmini Weerawardhana:** Music Teacher of the Berawatte's National College, Ampitiya, Kandy.

Acknowledgements

- Special and Heartfelt Thanks to Dearest **Rev. Bro. Romen Sadeepa Sandaruwan Fernando of the Second Year Theology for the Diocese of Chilaw** for all the troubles taken in underpinning since a quite longer period of time having desired the complete success of the paper and assisted in getting the proposed theme formed along with the sources concerned.
- Dearest **Rev. Bros. Sashindu Vinod, Aravinda Dilshan, and Thushan Sumedha of the Fourth Year Theology for the Diocese of Chilaw** too deserve my gratitude for their words of strength and courage.
- Thanks to **Bro. Gihan Ishara of the Second Year Philosophy for the Diocese of Chilaw** for assisting in search of the academic stuff needed.
- **Dearest Fr. Prasad Ruwan, the Procurator General of the Diocese of Galle** is to be much appreciated for teaching how to defend the arguments and how to accept the feedbacks consist of room for growth.
- Ever-cherishing special thanks to **My Beloved Father and Mother** for their love shown throughout the work.
- **Mis. Nethmi Madhushani Hettiarachchi: My Beloved Younger Sister** for all the Financial Support rendered.
- At last, but not least, a very special thanks to dearest **Rev. Fr. Shashika Manoj Rodrigo** who very patiently showed me the path to take part in this golden opportunity.
- Heartiest thanks to **Bro. Leo Madhushan of the Third Year Theology for the Diocese of Galle and Bros. Shanil Asintha and Channa Dinith Perera of the Second Year Theology for the Archdiocese of Colombo** for the life-giving encouragement.

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