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The New Freedom Fighter

Tasneem Project

11 December 2005

In the current eco-cultural crisis, the peoples of the world face a multitude of complex problems, the greatest of which is the growing likelihood of serious and irreversible disruption to the global climate. Slotted into this pending catastrophe is a myriad of human experiments gone awry, which one way or another are contributing to our impending demise — US imperialism, consumer capitalism, mega-urbanisation — to name but a few.

Indeed, some of those in power, who have much to gain in the short term from these experiments, are busy trying to convince their subjects/customers that the whole thing is a resounding success, or at least worth the short-term eco-human cost. Leave it to the experts, they tell us. Forget about it! Pray, have sex and watch some more TV. It'll all be fine, in the end. The result is what I call the great somnambulism.

The new freedom fighter is awakening. Eyes open, she starts with the understanding that few of the problems we face are divorced from the big problem, which is the failure of humanity to agree a coherent plan for its own future. This is not a matter of politics, or justice, or strategy. This is a question of purpose.

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The question of why we are alive is only meaningful when such a purpose unites us all.

The freedom fighter asks, what can wake my friends and neighbours? The power of the Transcendent has made itself felt in the world many times, from Buddha to Muhammad (aws). Neoliberal capitalism is proving no better than state Marxism in addressing humanity's woes. The notion of aggressively propagating an exclusive belief systems has yet to reach violent climax, but is a defunct notion nonetheless.

Our call must be to a consensus, but for this to happen, it must take place under a clearly defined universal ethic which decries compulsion, hegemonic domination or manipulation. Truth may be a problematic concept, but honesty, empathetic-kindness and humility are not. Yet within this creeping crisis, we need much more than a face-to-face morality to oil the wheels of negotiated settlements.

The purpose itself must equally define our ethic. We must plan beyond a generation and we must plan for more than our material wellbeing. The playground pragmatism which coldly rejects the peacemakers' idealism is proving disastrous for our societies. We need to discover a meta-narrative by which we can define a planet's progress. Human rights are simply not sufficient to the task.

The first step, sisters and brothers, is to stop and think. Stop to learn. Stop, then pray for guidance from The One. What can we ask of our friends and neighbour? What can we demand? What can we do and what are we sure needs to be done?