

FOUNDERS OF FAITH TRADITIONS

Dr M.D. Thomas

To initiate something new is to be new oneself. To pioneer a new way is to travel a new path. To forge a new tradition is to be a 'foundation stone' oneself. And that defines the singular greatness of a Great Man or Woman, may he or she be religious or social.

The human society was never short of Great Men and Women. They would emerge at any time of the human history. They would appear at any part of the globe. Nay, they did sprout where and when the world needed them most. And each one responded to the demands of the time and place they had their being.

Great Men and Women were capable of flowing even against the current. They revolted against the existing maladies of social as well as of religious life. Could anyone block his or her way? I do not think so. Those who tried to suppress them did not succeed. Those who attempted to murder them failed miserably. They rose again, not once, but again and again, in newer editions!

Great Men and Women are like poetry. They kick off a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. They are like music. The inner voice has its sway and a series of inspirational insights follow. They are like spring. A new flow commences and it goes on till it reached the eternal ocean. They are like breeze. Where it comes from and where it goes to, nobody knows. This is a supraearthily way. They are incarnate forms of the divine. Naturally, they proved to be the best human beings on earth, too.

Great Men and Women had deep experiential knowledge of the divine reality. They gave expression to the divine form in their own time and context. They brought 'life' into the lives of crores of men and women in the world, over the centuries. They filled countless lives with a new meaning in their search for heavenly sensibilities. They continue to do so. Each one of them stands out with a different character. Each of them keeps making a singular contribution to the human society through their disciples. They have merited the privileged honour of being considered 'Founders of Faith Traditions.'

Founders of Faith Traditions were role models of new traditions. They are qualitative traditions themselves. They uttered divine whisperings, which the diverse Sacred Scriptures cherish. They are known by the universal human and spiritual values they lived for. They do not die, even long after they have gone beyond the limits of this world. They are present in their followers and disciples, though in more or less

degrees. The world remembers them. But, they need not be remembered, because they cannot be forgotten.

The human culture is privileged to have had on this earth Baha'U'llah, Gautam Buddha, Mahaveer Jain, Jesus Christ, Krishna, Moses, Mohammed, Ram, Shiv, Zarathushtra, and the like. They continue to travel the journey of life with all of us. They are not yours and mine. They are ours. One is mine in particular and others also are mine in general. They are the common cultural heritage of the human society. They cannot be divided. They belong to the same human as well as divine family, where we all have to belong to. They have risen above the boundaries of religious and social sects. They have met each other at the spiritual plane. They are in perfect harmony with each other. They are in a non-stop celebration of the spirit of togetherness, which we could call 'heaven'.

Founders of Faith Traditions have pioneered new streams and paths. They are leaders in the true sense of the word. They have recognized common paths that are to be jointly treaded. If then, could their followers exist like islands? Can their disciples travel like parallel lines? Obviously not! The followers, as individuals and communities, lag behind, when private interests carry them away. Such a predicament would be totally unfair to the great Masters. The days ahead need a 'new human culture' that goes beyond divisive tendencies. The followers need to constantly learn from all the Great Masters of the world as well as from their own Masters. Could the humans walk together in life, in a spirit of being spiritually present to each other, toward a more harmonious society? That is the question 'Founders of Faith Traditions' are posing to us today!

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