

Humanity

An Essay by

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لطفاً نسخه فارسی این برگ از آلبوم را بیشتر در صفحه آغازین این فایل ملاحظه کنید.

As I turned 95, I fell ill with the Parkinson’s disease, as a result of which, these days I can neither walk, nor write. Sadly, about that time, I also lost my dear wife Mahboubeh Khanom, who was indeed “mahboub” and beloved by all who knew her.

We bore and survived the long nights of separation.

We’d hardly imagined ourselves to be that strong.

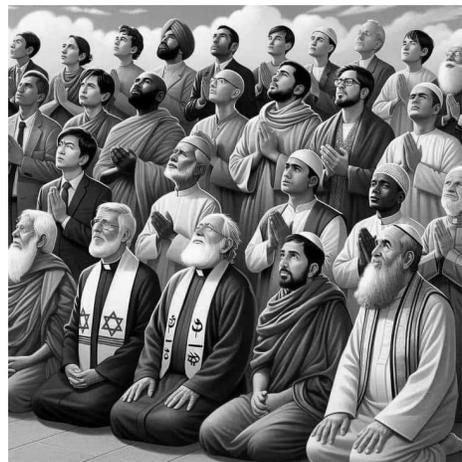
Yet I believe whatever condition or situation we find ourselves in, we should do our part, be what it may, to express our thoughts. As such, and given my sheer passion for writing, lately I’ve been recording my voice, saying what I wish to say; and with the help of friends, I have them edited and translated, which I then share with friends through my weblog at www.BabaNouri.com, in the venerable *Payam Magazine* of New York, and or via email. I’d like to point out to dear friends that, “writing” is a good and very much worthwhile hobby. Do not be afraid of writing. Just write the same way as you speak. In my opinion, writing is the best hobby for a lifetime, whether in the days of youth or in the old age.

But I digressed. Considering the daily news, and observing the kind of savagery that not even animals might do to their own kind, one is ashamed of being a human.

If to be human means to be like this, then there's no pride in being a human. We better call such pseudo-humans not the elite of the Creation, but the lowliest of all beings. For thousands of years, the religion has been given to humankind for the peace and welfare of human beings. But the word "religion", which was supposed to complement and improve upon our means, has instead turned into a means to murder people; as to this date, millions and millions of people have been killed in the name of religion. You may only take a look at the history to appreciate this claim. Alas, as long as the seditious content of the religious books remain out there, things will not change.

One root of the disappointments and failures that humanity has suffered is the hereditary aspect of the religion. Even before a baby is born, his or her religion has already been decided: the religion of the parents. That same baby grows up into an adult who will accept things without knowing about them, and who will act without an understanding of things — and the result would be what we see today, and has been so for centuries.

It's interesting that for thousands of years, to give hope and keep the people hopeful, all religions have promised them a Savior, who someday would come to save us all. As an illustrated text currently circulating the internet states, and I paraphrase, "For 3700 years, the Hindus have been waiting for a Savior. The Buddhists for 2600 years, Jews for 3500 years, the Christians for 2000 years, and Muslims for 1400 years, each in their own right have also been waiting for the coming of the Promised Savior. Our main problem on this planet is that instead of doing it for themselves, people are waiting for a Savior to do



it for them; that is, they're waiting for another power to arrive and solve their problem." The Persian poet Attar Neyshabouri (of Nishapur) puts it beautifully in his celebrated *Manteq-ol-Teyr*, known in English as "The Conference of the Birds": at long last, in their quest to find the Simorgh, the legendary bird of Persian mythology, a flock of birds arrives at a certain destination, where they see their own reflection, and...

Once those thirty birds looked intently, they saw that

No doubt, the thirty birds were the Simorgh himself. (*)

(*) The name *Simorgh* literally means *Thirty-Birds*.

Considering the above, we can see that it's better not to know something than to know it deficiently. For instance, it's better not to know how to drive, than to know how to drive but just a little bit! Humankind has often misunderstood the religion; and as long as such books are available to him and he agrees with them, the miseries will perpetuate. If only from the get-go, people had been bestowed with "absolute humanity" instead of the religion, or even if the former be promoted today, it could have much better served the humankind. But alas, there's no light in sight through this darkness.

Dr. Viktor Frankl was one of the few survivors of the Auschwitz slaughterhouse and crematorium in the occupied Poland, who is known to the world thanks to his important book, *Man's Search for Meaning*. There's a short and touching note, sometimes attributed to him, but otherwise credited to a school principal, which I'd like to share. In effect, addressing the teachers of all fields and levels around the world, including those who teach the religious subjects, the note reads, and I quote:

"Dear Teacher:

I'm a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by *learned* engineers.

Children poisoned by *educated* physicians.

Infants killed by *trained* nurses.

Women and babies shot and burned by *high school* and *college* graduates.

So I am suspicious of education.

My request is: **Help your students become human.** Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.

Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.”[*]

[*] Cited from: Ginott, Haim G., *Teacher and Child*; 1975, [New York] Avon.

In conclusion, if I were asked, “How did you like the world?” I would answer, “I was unripe. I ripened. Got overcooked.” As the great poet said,

We were less than nothing, running after nothing.

We saw nothing but nothing from this nothing.

Thank you.

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For free copies of this and other writings by Norman “Nourollah” Gabay, please visit his website at www.BabaNouri.com . The website is home to an archive of the author’s articles, essays, notes, and books in Persian and English, including *An Invitation to Reason*, *A Dictionary of the Kashani Jewish Dialect*, and soon, *Be Up to Date* (in progress).