

## **Foundations for the future Planetary Civilization: Spirituality**

**Dario Ergas.**

Dear Friends,

I want to thank the World Centre of Humanist Studies for inviting me to discuss "Foundations for the future Planetary Civilization" in the Park of Study and Reflection Punta de Vacas. I wish to emphasize how extraordinary it is to be discussing these issues seemingly so distant from political and social activities.

You assert in the invitation, that this planetary civilization will be a consequence of the trend towards worldwide integration, not a historical mechanical process but rather a deliberate construction, a human project. What is happening in these Parks of Study and Reflection – worldwide, people in agreement to influence the human process towards the establishment of a planetary civilization -- is indeed something very extraordinary.

Like many of us in these places, I have been formed by Silo's teachings and I have followed his message to go deeper into the search for meaning in life. I approach this work on Spirituality from this point of view.

Something prevents me from projecting myself into that new world. That new world is here, sometimes I seem to lightly brush against it, but I also see everything in me that keeps it from appearing. How can I overcome the difficulties that my consciousness puts to the future? My own consciousness has limits, the limits of my memory, my past, and my beliefs. To leap over the hurdle and see another human being. I fear you, what will you say about my writing, will you like it, will you think that it has all been said before, I fear you and I defend myself, and hide my fear with complicated words. Here I am before you, I do not wish to lie, I do not know what spirituality is, where do I search, where is it, it escapes me like the wind.

Within me, within each of us, there is something that is pushing, which words cannot convey and so they stick in my throat and my speech is lengthened, yet still unable to express it. This is happening with this talk about spirituality, something inside me is falling over itself trying to say let us open our eyes, everything has changed, something happened very fast, the world we knew no longer exists and the new one shines so strongly that we are dazzled and unable to see it.

Whilst the old world, once modern and postmodern, dies, and its ideologies and dreams dissipate, a faint signal lights up, yet not in the heavens, nor in books or objects. It seems to be happening to all of us, everywhere, something new is happening inside the human landscape and as I recognize it in me I also begin to recognize it in others.

Spirituality is expressing itself in everything that is talked about, but how do we talk about spirituality itself? The spirituality that nurtures the future civilization is just beginning to show its first rays, which shelter me with their weak morning warmth. But then again here I

am forcing the words, taking ownership of what does not belong to me, explaining, whereas what I wanted to do was to thank.

For a moment close to the warmth on a cold morning I touched the untouchable, or perhaps it touched me. What is this which I can only steal a look at, a furtive presence that fills the whole of me. My whole life to raise the value of the human, nothing is more important than human beings, but what is the human being? I look at you, you react. I show you gestures, I do magic for you, you react. I react; something is going on between you and me. I look at you again but now I see something of you in me, something inside me accepts me, something inside me rejects me. I look at you again you are inside me, I envelop you with my feelings, I am in you, you envelop me. Who are you? Where are you? We go beyond the limits; a great feeling traverses the moment.

My words are games, games in which we seem to be going in one direction and suddenly we are walking in the opposite direction and then a quick silence bursts in and something that invades and stirs emerges. I do it for you; if I did it for me it would not work; I do it for you and it is the greatest thing I can do for you and for me.

We are trying to express the experience of the transcendent; the experience of meaning that is in all of us and it is expressing itself. It is the new spirituality. We must make way for it, we need to clear the landscape so that it reaches all of us like a gentle wave that catches us unawares on the beach and stuns us, stirs and renews us.

If that experience is already here, if I recognize it, I would like to live in it, count on it, yet I shall not achieve it without you, nor will you achieve it without me. But if I force you, if I control you, manipulate you so that you fulfill my wishes, the light goes off and everything becomes grey again. More grey, more desperate, the more I force you the more that essence I once glimpsed hides.

We suspect that due to certain circumstances of the times the consciousness is preparing to be flooded by a new meaning stored deep within itself and a big change is brewing in the world today. The meeting of cultures, the weakening of beliefs, new discoveries such as synthetic life and extraterrestrial life, a crisis in churches, states and banks, a general atmosphere of non-meaning, all show a dying world, but at the same time show human beings cleansing themselves of their masters to recover their freedom.

So we are faced with an experience that is emerging and expressing itself within us. What do I have to do to make that experience grow in me, what can I do to bring it closer to the people I love the most, what can I do to bring it closer to all people? This experience can be the most important of my life and become the centre of my actions.

There are some things to observe in the development of this spirituality.

Violence, the control of other human beings through various means, blocks contact with that experience. Violence is not just any aggressive or passionate behavior; violence has to do with actions which control or manipulate the freedom of another human being or human groups. Violence opposes liberty and meaning.

All concentration of power is a form of violence. In our social system power is a value; the meaning of action is given by the attainment of position and power. This mental direction neither facilitates the search for the Profound nor access to meaningful experiences. In this context we have to work for social transformation and the decentralization of power through non-violence. The search for Meaning and the need to make contact with the experience of Meaning, direct my actions towards non-violence and the transformation of violent situations.

We are open to the world through our desires and we consider them to be the meaning of our actions. This mechanism of consciousness is well studied in our psychology and is at the root of mental suffering. The meaning of action is not to obtain the consciousness' desired object confusing that desire and sometimes the object itself with the Meaning. Meaning is an experience that colours every representation of the consciousness and the actions it impels.

Action is the link between consciousness and the world. The consciousness translates its impulses into representations that end up mobilizing the body in the world. All impulses come from the external and internal worlds. But in the depths of that inner world, at a limit that borders with nothingness, in a void filled with silence, in a suspension of any flow, a meaning arises from these depths enveloping the consciousness which translates this absence of impulses into representations laden with Meaning, and transfers them into the human world through action. Actions possess meaning if driven by the Meaning.

But this experience of meaning that gives foundation to all this development, needs the other to be awakened, more specifically it requires a type of action or a type of inclination towards the other that allows me to communicate with that experience of Meaning. Therefore a moral act is one intended to release others from their violence and suffering and is experienced by the one that carries it out as giving unity and meaning. *"When you treat others as you would have them treat you, you liberate yourself."*

The other factor to be observed is the progressive loss of fear of death as one deepens the experience. In the non-meaning one lives identified with the body, with desires, with everything; I live clinging to the I. Death is terrifying because as the body dies and the I dies, there is nothing left, I die. It is so terrifying that I live without the awareness of my finitude, knowing I will die but believing I will not. Consciousness is always deluded, oblivious to death and acting as if it did not exist. The consciousness numbs itself with entertainment and consumerism, forgetting that it exists.

Something happens with the experience of meaning as something, another, an observer or a witness, appears to be here with me, and which is not me; this presence moves me and makes me doubt death more and more.

These three factors I describe, the theme of violence, the theme of action and the theme of death are completely disrupted by the experience of meaning. This experience of meaning changes the direction of my life. It turns it around softly and the slight twist induces major changes in my psychological structure. Nonviolence is no longer an aspiration but becomes

a deeply felt need; the other and what I do with the other is recognized in me as my real possibility of liberation, and death is an interesting and happy experience.

If this is so, if there is a door open to the Profound, if the disintegration of the system accelerates, as we expect, if large groups direct their gaze to their interior by necessity, we could indeed be facing a psychological change projected towards the first planetary civilization.

The Parks of Study and Reflection are places of work to facilitate access to these experiences of Meaning. They make available to everyone, without clash of cultural traditions, without discussing one's religion or irreligion, an experience that fills the consciousness with light. An experience which without colliding with our beliefs, may flood us with a new meaning and lead us in a worthwhile direction. An experience that may lead us to communicate with Profound spaces, with something that is in here, behind the thoughts, a silence that speaks to me, behind the silence, further back beyond the calm ...

Thank you very much

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(Translated by Silvia Bercu)