

Psychological Healing in Reconciliation

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Rec date: Dec 28, 2015; Acc date: Dec 31, 2015; Pub date: Dec 31, 2015

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Abstract

Human beings are fascinatingly gifted with freedom and will power. Responsible freedom is a fundamental faculty, necessary for the emancipation of humanity in its holistic character. Man is endowed with multidimensional-personality, rationality and bundle of paradoxes. Down through the history, there has been a steady growth of freedom and responsibility and psychological enhancement. By and by, the abuse of freedom and mistaken-values has brought-in degradation in humanistic aspects and discord in interpersonal-relationships thereby psychological-dissipation. In this perspective confronting the conflict through reconciliation is a dire need for psychological well-being. In the olden days the concept of "reconciliation" was primarily used in religious context, but in the present time it is extensively used also in psychological and sociological and political contexts as well. e.g., Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa 1994).

Keywords: Psychology; Reconciliation; Healing; Relationship

Introduction

Of all living beings, mankind has evolved into a great complexity of consciousness and freedom. Responsible freedom is a fundamental faculty [1], necessary for the emancipation of humanity in its holistic character. Man is endowed with multidimensional-personality, rationality and bundle of paradoxes [2]. Down through the history, there has been a steady growth of freedom and responsibility and psychological enhancement. By and by, the abuse of freedom and mistaken-values has brought-in degradation in humanistic aspects and discord in interpersonal-relationships thereby psychological-dissipation.

Psychological freedom is what you are born with and what you lose as you enter more and more into bondage by identifying self as: labels, names, terms, characteristics, memories, styles, descriptions, successes, failures, talents, abilities, interests, roles, masks, experiences, titles, degrees, occupations, possessions, knowledge, hurts, pleasures [3].

We don't have total control over all the decision we make because some of the decisions are made on the spur of the moment with intuition [4], and sometimes not with conscious thought. Hence it's at times like a dice thrown at the mercy of human spontaneity and non-definability [3]. In this perspective confronting the conflict through reconciliation is a dire need for psychological well-being. In the olden days the concept of "reconciliation" was primarily used in religious context, but in the present time it is extensively used also in psychological and sociological and political contexts as well [5]. also e.g., Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa 1994).

Individuality, communal-discord and psychological crisis

Psychological symptom of Self-centeredness is a refusal to grow out of oneself. It is a risk to come out of oneself, to commit oneself to the other. Self-centeredness is alienating one from the other, "...it alienates us from our true selfhood, by self-blinding. It involves a refusal to go

out to others in caring concern; it blocks attainment of the power to love that is essential to mature selfhood" [6]. This world, which is torn apart by violence, caste, colour, sex, creed, oppression, injustice, inequality, war and destruction, we cannot be complacent with selfish interests. Instead, growing up is a tremendous task and responsibility. It does not take place all within oneself, but in collaboration with others.

In the process of the interaction with others there sprouts also constant psychological tussles and disagreement, misuse of freedom, communal-discord between one another in taking responsibility and shirking responsibility [7], between goodness and evil, between true-selfhood of relating with the other and selfishness, between harmony and alienation, between maturing and stagnating, churning hurt feelings and thereby tumbling into psychological crisis [5].

In our day-to-day relationships we face conflicts in various sectors of interactions; conflict between personal freedom and restrictions, conflict between individuals, conflict between the collective social entities and institutes, between families and civic structures [8]. Hence everyday conflict in every sphere of life is a great psychological challenge for all human beings to combat with. But conflicts should be converted into constructive forces of growth in relationship. It can become a psychological gift if rightly confronted and reconciled by one another. "When we talk about reconciliation, we are by definition talking about individuals or groups who intend by choice or necessity to remain in relationship with one another" [9]. Therefore, the faculty to confront conflicts is the ability to reconcile conflicts fair and square, thus construct a bridge of psychological strength, healing, mutual peace and good relationship [5].

Responsible freedom and reconciliation

Responsible Freedom is an involvement of the whole person, for oneself and for the others, which means taking risk. "To be a person means to be for others in order to become myself" [6]. Man's growth and development certainly involves his freedom and responsibility. Through irresponsible abuse of freedom, man has brought about

corruption, frustration and psychological destruction and discord. "Over the course of these years, we have witnessed an increase in the frequency, intensity and deadliness of deep-rooted conflicts not across the national borders but between ethnic or other identity groups within a single political unit" [5]. Therefore the remedy to this psychological dissipation is not just political or diplomatic solutions but taking responsibility to one's action and consciously reducing conflict [7], and reconciling the broken relationships.

In two studies that were conducted in Rwanda... it was found that the participants have articulated conceptualizations regarding the nature of reconciliation sentiment. These conceptualizations are consistent with the way the genocide victims personally experienced reconciliation ... one corresponding to a renewed capacity to live together, hear each other, work together, and to forge compromises on a daily basis was associated with mental health [10].

Therefore psychological healing cannot be fully achieved only in an individual and in isolated context but it's a collective and personal reconciliation that involves entire psychological dimensions of the total human being, "Psychology is the study of the human mind and the motives and reasons for human behavior" [3]. It is a global and universal endeavour to exercise freedom as well as attain liberation from all that hinders this fundamental option. Hence, an individual psychological freedom should be reconciled with all. "The basic principle of pedagogy of liberation is that nobody can preserve his own freedom and integrity without inserting himself in the common effort to create liberating structures and a more humane environment" [10]

John Navone sees repentance as the first step to reconciliation, which is followed by conversion and personal transformation within the community. This occurs in four different ways: Metanoia: Conversion or human transformation. Kenosis: Generous self-giving. Diakonia: Serving others, and Koinonia: Friendship, communion, community. Through these four ways the individual integrates himself in the community in all its activities, that is, reconciling oneself with the others. Responsible freedom that paves the way to reconciliation and enables the individual to become an integrated person, transforming himself, without selfishness or self-centredness. He extends his service to the others as a sign of recompense, which leads him to friendship and communion [11].

Psychological healing in reconciliation

Human beings are endowed with capacity to attain wholeness and perfection and are meant to grow to the fullness. However, growth involves risk-taking and venturing into all dimensions of human faculties. "Don't go into hiding, don't be neglectful, but take up this journey and do not be afraid of the loneliness of the desert... It is better for the one who seeking the perfect life to die along the way than never to have started on the search for perfection" [12].

Taking risk calls for an involvement of the whole person. The purpose of becoming an adult is to be able to face life with deliberate determination of one's actions, to be able to face the responsibility, for oneself and for others. "To be a person means to be for others in order to become myself"[5]. Refusing to grow and take responsibility is in a way 'sin of omission', because, with the possibility of being responsible comes the possibility of neglecting or refusing to live in that way. As a matter of fact omitting to take responsibility and healing the hurt feelings is equally damaging relationship. This aspect invites to recognise the important role of reconciliation. Reconciliation as liberating element. Reconciliation as communion. "Past traumas do

not simply pass or disappear with the passage of time. Psychological restoration and healing can only occur through providing the space for survivors to feel heard and for every detail of the traumatic event to be re-experienced in a safe environment" [13].

Psychologically one feels a sense of security after an act of reconciliation. This psychological self-assurance can become a stepping stone toward better communal harmony and freedom that liberates one from damaging human relationships. "Any individual person or group can truly become a sacrament of salvation by a whole hearted commitment to the growth of freedom and liberation" [14]. One has to work his way through the obstacles in order to be liberated. There is an imminent tension between captivity and liberation. It is a continuous process, "... an act of genuine freedom is always directed towards the growth of freedom and liberation of all..." [6]. Such an ongoing process is kept in its motion without being broken through the act of reconciliation. Thus reconciliation is necessary for psychological integration, which leads one to an unconditional openness to one another and to oneself. It is in and through reconciliation, that one can overcome every obstacle that blocks the way towards psychological freedom and total psychological healing.

Conclusion

It's apt to acknowledge 'psychology of reconciliation' as a salient feature of human nature which is ultimately a strong tool to manoeuvre personal and social life. It is a global task, and should be inserted into individual and communal agenda to get involved in the throes and hopes of the whole human race, nay, the whole cosmos.

By being involved in the whole human race and in the entire environment, we develop an attitude of tolerance and sensitivity to every being; an act of "support for survival", an act of allowing the entire cosmos to live in harmony with every animate and inanimate being. In doing so the parameter of reconciliation would extend to the sphere of the divine and infusion into the whole creation. In this sense mankind is a privileged entity, a vibrant element in the whole of creation that touches both the nature and the divine.

Hence, reconciliation seen in psychological aspect is rich with human healing and cosmic balance. Reconciliation is global, universal and multidimensional reality. Reconciliation brings about healing in spiritual, psychological, social, interpersonal and intrapersonal realms.

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