**TRANSFORMATION**

*Transforming past behaviour*

By Ntozakhe Simon Cezula

One’s behaviour is a choice made from different types of behaviour. For example, if one is unduly humiliated, one can choose not to respond, to respond verbally or to fight physically. However, it is not a choice free of external and unconscious influences. It is strongly influenced by one’s values (What is right?). Values in turn are influenced by one’s belief (What is true?). One’s belief is influenced by one’s worldview (What is real?). For example, people might be convinced that reality (worldview) is that God created different and unequal nations. It is also true (belief) that they were elected as a superior nation. Thus, it is right (value) to dominate other nations. In the process, dehumanising behaviour might be chosen vis-à-vis respectful behaviour (choice).

Under these circumstances, transforming past behaviour is more complex than some of us reckon. The above-mentioned is a collective/social dimension of behaviour. However, behaviour does also entail an individual dimension. This means an individual can reason about his/her worldview/belief and make individual conclusions. One therefore needs courage to question inherited worldviews and belief systems. By that s/he exposes him/herself to harsh criticism. Nevertheless, questioning is a characteristic of a sincere believer. It is through such believers that humanity is saved from unnecessary disasters. Each individual has a responsibility to take an initiative to better our living.

In reasoning about worldview/belief there are things to take into cognisance. One of them is identity. Identity is central in the formulation of a worldview. People have multiple identities, namely, racial/national/ethnic/gender/religious identities etc. They emphasise some and de-emphasise others. An emphasised identity is instrumental in formulating worldview/belief. If emphasised identity excludes many groups; worldview/belief/values/behaviour might carry discriminatory tendencies. If identity includes many groups the result might be opposite. Exclusive or inclusive identities highlight differences or similarities respectively. Such considerations might be helpful for a rigorous examination of a worldview/belief. An individual may choose which of his /her identities s/he wants to emphasise as a point of departure.

In order for transformation to materialise it should presuppose a living relationship with God. Hence, it is suggested in this brief discussion that believer-in-God as one’s identity be given special importance. Although not all-inclusive, it is an identity that includes many groups. Such an identity is compatible with a worldview that recognises only one Almighty God Who created everything and to Whom alone obedience should be shown. Such a worldview in turn diminishes destructive differentiation of humanity. It also helps to embrace the belief that God made all human beings into His own image. Such a belief guarantees dignity to all humanity. It also creates conducive conditions for values based on treating people the same way we want them to treat us. Such values actually should be the guiding principles or standards for our behaviour. A rigorous analysis of identities, worldviews, beliefs and values can further improve the quality of a process of transforming past behaviour. Group discussions can add value to the process.

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