

Faith and Progress

Life under traditional agriculture is usually timeless and serene, enabling faith and fate to prevail, penetrate deep in the hearts of people, and perpetuate the forces of stability and continuity in society. Such a life reflects tranquility and peace of mind, breeds acceptance, causes collective stagnation, and limits individual imagination and curiosity. Where faith claims the truth, fate is predetermined, leading man to believe that he has little or no reason to worry about tomorrow or the day after because everything had already been determined. In fact, agricultural societies in general prefer feeling to knowing; people want to feel good and secure, even if they are relatively poor; they usually lack the desire to know more than needed to run their daily lives. As a consequence, people tend to have little or no interest in knowing what disturbs their traditional ways of life, particularly the inner life where faith and fate and contentment sleep together in peace. Because of such conditions, it took about ten thousand years, numerous scientific discoveries and technological developments, and countless ideas and wars before life under agriculture began to experience systematic and systemic change.

The German philosopher Nietzsche argued that humankind would not be able to develop its potential in the presence of God, because a belief in fate restrains one's ability to grow and dampens one's ambitions. One can argue further that human beings living under authoritarian rule, be it military or theocratic or traditional, are unable to exploit or even discover their talents and capabilities. Such a rule imposes on society a command system that suffocates freedom and vastly limits individual initiative and human imagination. People are required to obey orders, stay away from questioning authority, as well as from thinking and knowing. Thus, challenging the basic principles of authoritarian rule and theocratic hegemony is the first step toward change, freedom and progress.

Dr. Mohamed Rabie

www.yazour.com