

# **Back to Essentials: Rediscovering Human Nature. An Existential and Spiritual Dialogue.**

*Giovanni Patriarca – Jocelyn Thomas*

## Abstract:

A common sense of confusion characterizes the modern era, where an extreme *digitalization* of every public and private sphere confuses the individual, who does not favor any kind of reference-point or tradition considering all human history as a barbarian heritage to be hidden, removed or purified in a quasi-messianic secularized and deeply ideological positivistic outlook.

An impressive and uninterrupted flow of stimuli and information, in a context of technological opulence, causes a deconstructive process by affecting the formation of real ideas and concepts, obscuring the traditional channels of socialization, radically changing the collective identity and the perception of the reality in a strict contraposition with any spiritual or not-material quest.

In a cognitive perspective, all these immanent processes happen so rapidly that the individual is unable to grasp its deep influences and is transported, unconsciously and aimlessly, as if carried away downstream by a river in a sort of schizophrenic paranoia. One's personal identity becomes either submissive or that of a prisoner: Freedom itself seems fictitious function and runs the risk of being overwhelmed by the current.

In this continuous run without a destination, there is the threat to annihilate our being and to lose our internal compass of orientation. Faced with this omnipotent sense of fluidity, of superficial appeals and in a context of an exaggerated positivism, in which every thought beyond the material assumes the value of an empty tautology or a meaningless representation, the person seems to have no choice but the satisfaction of her/his basic *techno-needs* or appetites.

Beyond any strictly dogmatic and theological representation, one of the historical and educational roles of the religions was primarily to put the *human being* – with all her/his contradictions and paradoxes – at the center of a universal message as the core-question in a dialogical and interpersonal encounter with the *Divine*. If in all the mystical experiences it is possible to notice some surprising similitudes in the discoveries of the human depths, in the philosophical speculation of the monotheistic and Abrahamic religions there is – with a re-formulation and enrichment during the ages especially through the lenses of the Aristotelianism and Platonism – a deep analysis of the human nature. This methodology is still present in a common anthropological approach, which, *going back to the essentials*, is a perennial starting point for the development of a mutual understanding and respect, underlining the necessity of religion as a personal choice and a fundamental human right.