

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

By Bjørn Pettersen

In the innermost being of the human nature there is a deep longing, conscious or unconscious, for something we can call "existential perfection". This is given expression in the practise of, for instance shamanism, religion, ideology and philosophy. But it is also visible in all our daily work – in the urge to improve and perfect all things, and in the wish to secure a better future for our children. On the level of society this is called development and progress, or civilisation. But those who feel that life has to be something more than only material and mental wealth, devote themselves to religion or existential thought constructions of various kinds. Religion comprises as a rule an ethical codex whose essence – the principle of benevolence – is common for all the great religions. But can religion, as a system of salvation, give existential perfection? And what is really religion?

If, for instance, we look at the word "religion", it comes from Latin and means literally "re-binding". Figuratively it stands for the "re-establishing of the connection" or "the pact" with something which has to be understood as forgotten, lost or far away. No scientist of religion seems to understand either this word-meaning, or this logical deduction of the word. It is characteristic for the word that it has originated in our Western cultural sphere, because in all the Semitic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – God stands outside and above man, while at the same time there reigns a deep conflict between the two. In the East the case is completely opposite. Full harmony between man and God reigns, and the core of the holy scriptures declares that there really is no distinction between them – that they in essence are One. Therefore they don't call their teachings "religion", but "Dharma", which stands for "Universal Law".

But the one who wants to find the *Truth* behind all things – behind all phenomena, doctrines and ideas – has to leave all this. That one has to go beyond all man made limitations – made by society as well as self-made – and into his or her own depths – beyond mind, identity and ego. Only the one who has the courage to be completely alone has the possibility to understand what this life really is about... only the one who completely neutrally can *observe* a thing as a passive *witness*, can see the thing *as it is*.