



Fasting for Climate Justice

Spirituality versus Advocacy?

Spiritual fasting versus advocacy fasting? Is it a contradiction? I don't think so. On the contrary, a spiritual approach could initiate and empower an urgent ethical and political global journey towards climate justice. Faith without works is dead, according to James, Chapter 2. Personally, I find prayer and spiritual fasting to be a source for a praxis-oriented commitment for climate justice.

Most of our fellow human beings belong to a faith-tradition. But it's not obvious that faith and social attitudes and commitments are interlinked. Not in a Lutheran context either. A possible pitfall for a church is to be *only* a spiritual or a ritualistic church. Or on the contrary, a church *only* engaged in activism and political engagement. Both are false representations of who and what we are as a church. However, I think there is an empowering dynamic between these two. An important bridge has to be established between the spiritual fasting and the advocacy (political) fasting. For me the prophet Isaiah provides a strong message in chapter 58, on what proper fast is all about.

*Is it a fast that I have chosen,
A day for a man to afflict his soul?*

*Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush,
And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?
Would you call this a fast,
And an acceptable day to the Lord?*

⁶ *“Is this not the fast that I have chosen:*

*To loose the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the heavy burdens,
To let the oppressed go free,
And that you break every yoke?*

⁷ *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?*

⁸ *Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before you;
The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.*

The increase of climate change is a direct result of our fossil fuel driven economy, as well as egocentric consumerism. The negative effects of climate changes are already felt around the world. In Norway and other rich countries as well. But most problems and even deaths are appearing in the most vulnerable societies, countries with a minimum of excessive emissions. This is what the prophet Isaiah named as *yokes and bonds of wickedness*. And this is what we today call *Climate Injustice*.

A fasting-praxis, such as not eating or not using fossil fuel for one day, does not make a big difference in and of itself. But it is a kind of *bodily language*, a symbolic language, with a potential to enable a redirection: See more clearly. Listen more carefully to the voice of God. And the voices of the most vulnerable. Maybe they represent the same voice. Take action.

In our Norwegian context, a fast for Climate Justice, should lead to a *fossil fuel fast* in the years to come. We urgently need radical mitigation, a green energy shift, necessary divestment and green investments in our huge national pension fund. This is the urgent political approach. But also a journey towards a simpler life, and a fair distribution of wealth and resources. Fasting is about redirection and justice.

On the first of each month I will fast for climate justice.

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