The Christian Community

Perspectives

September–November 2018

Living with Death

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Ancients, Emil Nolde (1941–46)

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Perspectives

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At the end of the funeral service in The Christian Community, we hear a stern admonition from the spiritual world. We are asked to remember that we are beholden to the spirit in all that we do on earth. A funeral confronts us with the ultimate reality of earthly life; in such a moment, we are particularly receptive for what we can easily forget in the full flow of life: we come from the world of spirit and shall return there. Our time on the earth is only a brief sojourn. Our technological age continually introduces us to new possibilities and new challenges at the thresholds of birth and dying. Meeting these consciously in our own lives and those of the ones we love is a challenge we all face. We hope that this issue will prove helpful in meeting these challenges.

We are always interested to hear from our readers about their questions and suggestions. Some of these could flow into our choice of themes for forthcoming issues. Perhaps there are areas that we haven't covered for a long time that could be revisited; maybe there are things that could be deepened. We would be grateful to hear from you about your questions and concerns, which we would take into our thoughts when we plan the issues for the coming year.

We are also always looking for people who would be willing to review books. You could let us know areas that you are interested in.

Please contact the editor with any suggestions—contact information is on the facing page. Tom Ravetz

Glowing Sunflowers, Emil Nolde

A matter of life and death

Pearl Goodwin

The great advances in science and technology mean that it is now possible to probe into aspects of the human being that have previously been protected behind a threshold where science could not reach. This has now changed. At the moment there are two areas of research that not only break through these thresholds in order to manipulate them but could well affect us as human beings in the future. Both were reported in a recent issue of the *New Scientist* (April 14, 2018). The first field of research involves the brain; the second involves early embryology. These are two quite distinct fields, different from each other, but interventions in either would significantly affect the relationship between the visible part of us and the invisible soul and spirit, and therefore what happens on the one hand when we die, and on the other when we come into incarnation.

First, the brain: brain research has been carried out for many years and has produced great, valuable and necessary knowledge. But this new step seems to take us into a different realm, as it concerns memory, which is at the core of our identity both in this life and in the life after death. There are parts of the brain that are known to be involved with memory, which include the hippocampus and the amygdala, both right in the centre of the brain. Recent research shows that when an experience is 'held' as memory, brain cells (neurons) make new connections within the brain, which requires them to make new proteins, a process known to be under complex genetic control. These genetic processes can be 'read' since every protein has its own genetic script. This new research is conducted on mice—much could be said about this, but for the present we can take that as a 'given.' Each experience leaves its own readable pattern, and this is largely repeatable and stable, an important experimental necessity in empirical science. The ge-

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netic changes that allow memories to be stored can be picked up in the blood, so in the future it could be possible to change the nature of memories with a dose of the correctly engineered genes. This has been done in mice with 'positive' results.

What does this mean for us? Clinical applications have already been discussed, for example in relation to traumatic experiences that lead to such conditions as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); these memories could be changed or even wiped out. While no one wishes the pain and misery that people have to live with after such experience, what would be the significance of radically changing them or even annihilating them, with some simple procedure of targeted genetic manipulation?

Our memories are the written record of our biographies. They are the only things that we can take with us when we die, the only things that we truly own, can work with and reflect upon. Or it can be put another way—experience is the only thing we truly own, experience that becomes memory. Even the many experiences that seem to be forgotten, are retained in our organism and light up after death. In reality, we forget nothing. Experience can, of course, be changed, as it develops and is enriched by life. It can also be changed in a narrowing direction, with alcohol, drugs or life choices, or it can be enhanced with prayer, meditation, religious practice and positive relationships. Bad things do happen to us, for example in war, through accidents, illness and many other events. People are changed, inwardly and often also outwardly by these things. Help is often needed and often given, and it may or not be successful. But what would happen if our memories were to be technologically changed or even wiped out?

After death our memories, good and difficult, are part of our path of growth and the understanding of what our life on earth has been, including the 'forgotten' memories. If the traces of our experiences in our brains were changed or memories wiped out, would they be lost to us in the life after death? If that is so, we are severely hampering our own future and perhaps that of others. In the world of spirit, painful memories can be placed in a greater cosmic perspective, and beings of the hierarchies help with this. On the earth, the one who can help with traumatic experience is Christ. His earthly biography

is our earthly help. If someone is able to bring Christ into the inner struggle with certain experiences, then the pain can be lifted away without losing or negating the memory. Rather, it becomes part of our biography that has been 'digested' here on earth and so can become a positive influence in the future.

This kind of research usually has at least two intentions. The first, consciously held intention is to try to do good, to relieve suffering, and this intention is genuine. But this new genetic/technological approach enters areas that have a certain 'taboo' quality about them. We can imagine that this grants the adversary powers a certain deeper access to our souls. The adversary powers would like to go unnoticed, in the guise of help, because if you can recognise them, you can also recognise God, so for that reason we have to become aware of their influence behind such research. The spiritual always has a delicate, ungraspable nature and it is easily obscured by the more sense perceptible. The second aspect of research is that it has a kind of inner engine that always wants to discover more and more. It is amoral and seeks to discover the next point of power—as Francis Bacon said, 'knowledge is power.' In the case of this research it could have the consequence of annihilating part of our karma—of course not intentionally; after all, most scientists would not regard karma as something that they need to take into account. It is truly invisible and so it is ignored by empirical science which works only with what is visible to us or our instruments and is testable.

The second area of research affects life before birth, and here too we can see the same dynamics at work. This second area of research involves embryology, the development of the child from conception (or pre-conception) until birth. The technologies of conception are very advanced and becoming ever more so. The success of IVF treatment is widely acknowledged—it allows conception to occur in laboratory conditions, but only as far as the growth of a few cells, which are then implanted into the womb. They may or may not develop into a healthy child. Even with this there is a great but subtle difference compared to normal conception: it takes place visibly, whereas normal conception is invisible, which was always regarded as the sign of the sacredness of incarnation.

However, in their ceaseless drive for new technologies, scientists can now create germ cells (egg and sperm) out of stem cells (cells of universal potential that can differentiate into whatever is wanted). With such specially treated stem cells, an embryo has been created called an embryoid (think of Faust's homunculus!) This embryoid already has the three layers of cells characteristic of a two week old embryo in normal development. It is still illegal to go beyond this stage in the laboratory. Most of the work has, again, been done in mice but some has been replicated using human cells. It seems that these three layers organise themselves with great accuracy and speed, a testimony to the inbuilt abilities of the genes. But something very important is missing, what has been called the 'elephant in the room'. There is no placenta. During normal conception and gestation, the placenta in its earliest stages is created first, before there is any suggestion of a body. It is the 'house' which is needed for the body to grow, bringing nutrients through the close connection to the mother's blood, and many other physiological necessities, such as breathing, i.e. exchange of gases (oxygen and carbon dioxide), and excretion of waste substances. No doubt an embryoid can be given all these things to ensure growth. But something is missing—from ancient times until the present, the placenta has been seen as a sacred organ. The Pharaoh regarded it as his spirit twin, having it symbolically carried before him in all processions. Some cultures make clothes for the placenta before its ritual burial. In our time Rudolf Steiner gave us some insights into why this is so. The placenta is the place where the higher self has a home during pregnancy. It is a kind of heaven on earth for the nine months of gestation and it excarnates again at birth. It influences the growing embryo from the outside without directly entering it. It is clear that the embryo and its genetic component can do much to organise itself; genes should not be underestimated in their abilities, but the spiritual side, which is always more subtle, less graspable and invisible, has to be there for healthy development. Perhaps our only hope must be that this kind of research is not fully successful, even if it leads to great discoveries: it is hard to imagine how human beings would incarnate who did not have the connection to the sheltering placenta. The reality of the human being is much too multifaceted and rich, and we are not mice!

Once again, in an entirely unintentional way, there is a lack of awareness along with the best intentions, which could lead to a technology that excludes the spirit from the human biography: in this case, the spirit that carries our karma. What both these fields of research have in common is that the spirit that makes us who we are, connecting us to our existence before birth and after death, is threatened for the sake of improvements to this one life on earth. Medical advances are impressive, but at what cost will they come?

This could all seem very negative, but we live in an age where such thinking is common currency, and it can only be met with a thinking, equally rigorous, that makes room for the spirit, a thinking that is at home with both the empirical, sense perceptible and the more invisible, even ephemeral, spirit. There is a way of thinking about the life before birth and the life after death that may be able to begin to bring some resolution to this, even if it is not proof in the empirical sense. Thinking is also a kind of truth—mathematics is entirely built on it and is considered reliable (planes can fly because of it!).

It is not enough today simply to believe in reincarnation, the passage of the soul from one life to another. Belief like that will not stand up to scientific scrutiny. However, the following thought experiment, which anyone can conduct, leads from observation and comparison of the human being and the other kingdoms of nature to the idea of an existence that transcends this one earthly life. It belongs to the essential nature of the human being that we are never completely satisfied with what we have achieved. Most of us will carry across the threshold of death unfulfilled hopes and concerns. When we look at animals, we sense that it is different. Could we imagine a cat, a dog or even an elephant with its amazing awareness, thinking as it died 'I should not have done that' or 'I wish I'd done that better.' Of course, we cannot be totally sure, as we cannot ask them, but it seems more than unlikely. The animals are complete in themselves, within their own kind of consciousness. Here Darwin is correct—an organism evolves towards its own perfection and completeness, and that allows it 'the fitness to survive'. Domestic animals relate beautifully to human beings. If the dog does something that the owner thinks wrong (like eat the Sunday dinner) it learns that that was not wanted; such training is not the same as developing a

conscience and it is not carried through the gate of death. There has to be an ego for that to happen. Only we, as human beings, can carry conscience or consciousness through death, seeking completeness in the future. We could see this as an extrapolation of the Darwinian principle that every organism must find completeness in its evolution. Even the hope that we will find greater perfection in a world to come allows us to live a richer life, which could be called an appropriate gesture of evolution. It is life-enhancing to have a certainty of a life after death and before birth, even if the complete fulfilment of this belongs to the far future.

This certainty should not be allowed to slip away from us. It needs to be real and present and part of the lives of all human beings here on earth. Beginning to think in this way—not excluding current thought, but giving Darwinism a greater context where it can have its rightful place but does not dominate, can give us greater certainty in our lives today.

Evening Landscape, N. Friesland, Emil Nolde

On death, dying, and the priesthood

Luke Barr

Recently, I read the life story of the eminent early anthroposophical artist, Eleanor Merry. At the end, there appeared an extract of a letter from Kaethe Wolf-Gumpold, who was one of the first Christian Community priests to work in Britain. In her letter, she says: 'the task of the Priest is to watch over the processes of dying'. She was alluding to the many sacred rites that envelop and protect our dying, those who are finding their way in that fragile time of life. But perhaps she also meant more: that the priest is inexorably bound up with dying processes in every way that they manifest.

'Dying processes' are more than just the end of life. They are the archetype of everything which belongs to death. They include all our failures. They are found in every moment that we feel inward, that we 'go into ourselves;' that we turn from the outer world and feel the unfathomable depths of our inner life. Dying processes are found in the phenomenon of silence. They are in our thinking, which transforms us from a dreamy being into an alert witness of the world, burning brightly and briefly away[1]. Death leads to consciousness—which is the pain of the Fall. I have written elsewhere (*Perspectives* March–May 2017) that we find dying in all 'living' phenomena. There I gave the particular example of how they are found in the process of forgiving. Dying and death are an important part of our everyday lives. We die many times every day, as St. Paul famously remarked (1 Cor 15:31).

I feel that our sacraments are a way of framing and honouring this neglected part of our lives. They are a way of befriending and integrating death helpfully into our lives, which is a task of our time, as the recent proliferation today of death cafés and death doulas demonstrates. When we enter the space created for the Act of Consecration, we find that it is minimally

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decorated. Colours converge into a dark violet. There are none of the elaborate trappings of what the Baroque or Gothic soul required. The modern soul, outwardly overwhelmed by the manifoldness of consumerism and choice, is actually minimalist: everywhere we find the principle of *reduction* in modern art; many spiritual paths offer to help us 'clear the clutter' of our souls. There is a craving to be a 'beggar in the spirit'. The spirit can no longer enter into human life in pomp as it once did (pre-Golgotha times). It is found in the poorest places, by the spirit-beggar, the one who has renounced the usual comforts and accoutrements of life, the one who knows of their transience, the one who has 'died' to their everyday identity.

Our sacraments can offer us this. To the casual observer, they reveal nothing—indeed, they may seem to be a senseless charade. But if one has been able to turn around, to turn within—following the Baptist's call—then we find ourselves within the life-stream of the sacraments, and within a more abundant life. We practise renouncing our everyday life—we practise dying—in order to awaken to the life within. Our intention in doing this is not to flee the pressures of life but rather to strengthen ourselves so that we may become more effective in our everyday lives, bringing the abundant gift of the spiritual world with us back into life. We seek to find our way again and again to the source of this life-stream, and of our being.

Blake famously wrote in his poem, 'The Garden of Love':

> *Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds*
> *and binding with briars my joys and desires.*

Blake's experience of the traditional church and the faith it preached was that they were moribund. The established notion of 'God' was being kept alive, although it had long outlived its time. The God whom Blake experienced as a living 'garden of love' had become a dead abstraction. In this regard as in so many others, Blake was before his time. And so the priests of that time represented the black forces of death that Blake felt so keenly. The late nineteenth century radical philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche felt that priests liked to live 'like corpses'. And yet his philosophical protagonist Zarathustra says, 'their blood is related to mine.' Why is this?

Nietzsche's hero represents not some obscene supremacist. Rather, he is the representative of the modern human soul as it must become, if it is not to be crushed by the superhuman forces which now threaten it. Zarathustra's blood is related to the priest's. This is because both wish to help midwife the birth of the new, whilst overseeing the dying of the old. The processes that bring about death in us create at the same time the conditions for the birth of the new. Whenever we turn inwards, we create the pathways into new life. The priest is not the agent of a dead religion which would dull our 'joys and desires'. Priests are temporary *doulas*[2] to the spirit, accompanying birth and death in all aspects and processes of life. They are not the thieves at the gates of life whom Jesus spoke of; they are 'good shepherds' whose purpose is that we 'may have life and have it in its abundance' (John 10:10).

1 We may see that John the Baptist's task was to make us aware of these forces, as he too was a brief light and witness (John 5:35).
2 A Greek word, meaning servant.

Powerless in the face of cancer?

Bart Maris

Unprepared

Ms A. was 45 years old, very healthy and full of life, successful in her career and well able to work under pressure. She played sport regularly and had a healthy diet. One day she felt a lump in her breast quite by chance while taking a shower. She went to her gynaecologist the same day who confirmed the findings and referred her to a breast clinic. Then everything happened very quickly: a mammogram and a biopsy were performed, which confirmed the diagnosis of breast cancer. Following further investigations, four days later the doctor from the breast clinic informed her that the clinicians had discussed her case and recommended chemotherapy first, after which surgery should be performed. Unfortunately, this could not be delayed:

Bart Maris works as a gynaecologist in Krefeld.

the therapy would start the day after next. Ms A. was completely unprepared for this diagnosis; she felt overwhelmed and was also taken by surprise by the suggested treatment and the urgency of commencing it. If she had not woken up in time to take the reins into her own hands, she would have been drawn into a situation completely outside her control. The famous writer and neurologist Oliver Sacks had a similar experience, which he wrote about it in his book *Gratitude*. He learnt that he had multiple liver metastases of a melanoma which had been successfully treated nine years before: 'A month ago I thought I was healthy, indeed, very healthy. At eighty-one, I still swim one mile a day.' He died a few months later. Perhaps it was a blessing for him that a scan of his liver had not been made earlier.

When does cancer make us ill?

All cancer screening tests, such as mammograms and colonoscopies, are based on the assumption that people who feel healthy may turn out to have cancer. Often, early detection of cancer (that is, before symptoms occur) does indeed allow for better treatment options. Early detection means that people who feel healthy will be confronted with their diagnosis far sooner than if they had only noticed the cancer later, once its symptoms were apparent. For those affected, it is the knowledge of the cancer in whatever stage it may have reached that turns them from a healthy person into a patient threatened with sickness and anxiety in one fell swoop.

It is possible to have cancer for many years and be quite unaware of it, suffering no discomfort, no pain, no fatigue or reduced resilience. One can feel completely healthy and still have cancer. Is one still *healthy* in that time if one feels that way—or is one *sick* even though one doesn't know and doesn't notice it? Only when the cancer has affected the organs in such a way that symptoms occur, do we feel ill. Or, if an early diagnosis of cancer suddenly changes our life, our life changes before any symptoms appear.

Today we understand that cancer knows the immune system of the person concerned so well that it can disguise itself completely. The surface structures of cancer cells react to the activity of the immune

system in such a way that it does not perceive them as foreign enemies to be fought. If the immune system were able to take massive action against the cancer cells, the normal symptoms of illness such as fatigue, pain and fever would occur; they are an expression of the body's efforts to heal itself, when the immune system confronts the foreign 'invader'. As long as the cancer cells are able to camouflage themselves from the immune system, the affected person will have little or no idea and will be a helpless victim of the aggressive activity of the cancer.

Unfortunately, the way in which patients are told about their treatment options is not calculated to boost their capacity to decide for themselves, which in turn has an effect on the immune system. 'Based on statistical studies, we have to recommend the following treatments for your cancer. Any other course would be irresponsible—you must do this now!' This or something similar is often the main message of the 'treatment planning session'.

Change of perspective: Mistletoe

What does adapting to slowly changing circumstances mean? Is it an expression of strength and power, or of powerlessness? There is a plant, Viscum album—mistletoe—that grows in Europe. It is quite unusual and not very adaptable in relation to its environment. It has a completely different relationship to time and space compared to other plants. Mistletoe flowers in the fading winter from January to March; its berries do not ripen until almost a year later in December. Their leaves remain on the branches for about two to three years before they fall off, with virtually no discolouration. Mistletoe grows very slowly, as it were at a different tempo to other plants. Most plants grow in the vertical axis between sunlight and gravity; they grow from the earth towards the sky. The individual leaves also have different upper and lower sides. Not so with mistletoe: it forms an almost perfect spherical shape without top or bottom, front or back. It is neither embedded in nor adapted to the terrestrial laws of space. The mistletoe leaves do not have different upper or lower sides; even in their cell structure, the two sides of the leaves cannot be distinguished from each other.

Mistletoe seems to be able to resist the laws of time and space that obtain for other plants, and to obey its own laws. This ability to defend oneself against adaptation and to remain true to oneself can even be seen at the level of the DNA. Mistletoe has a very large genome, that is, there is a large amount of DNA in its cell nucleus. There are much more complex plants, but their genome is a hundred times smaller. Plants with a smaller genome are generally more susceptible to mutating influences on the genome from their environment and are therefore more adaptable and variable. Plants and animals with a large genome have a relatively stable genetic make-up. In such organisms, hardly any modifications of the species occur, because any spontaneously occurring mutations are balanced by the large amount of genetic material. The plants that adapt optimally to their surroundings and the course of time can be beautiful (beauty is not necessarily a characteristic of mistletoe), but they are not usually powerful and strong. Many medicinal plants are not particularly beautiful in the sense of having an abundance of splendid flowers (for example nettle, celandine, lovage); instead they can assert themselves with a certain one-sidedness or peculiarity.

Overcoming powerlessness

This capacity not to adapt is one aspect of what makes mistletoe therapy helpful for treating cancer. The immune system has to stop adapting weakly to the manipulative effects of cancer; it must be challenged to resist. Mistletoe challenges the immune system to be more alert and to react more strongly. The same applies to the soul and its handling of the therapy suggestions dictated by statistical studies and case conferences: patients who meekly obey what the doctors say, have a different relationship to their life and the course of their cancer than those who determine their own path, also in therapy. They may also decide after thorough discussion to undergo chemotherapy or radiation therapy, of course. This is not intended to imply that cancer can always be defeated with sufficient willpower instead of giving in to our powerlessness.

As we saw at the beginning of the article, most cancer patients are confronted with their diagnosis completely unprepared, so that their

basic confidence in their own body and their attitude to life is severely unsettled. The foundations of their life are shaken; they fear that the end of life is approaching. They are forced to ask themselves what they want to do with the rest of their life—whether this will be shorter or longer—which therapeutic path they will take and what help they will need. The cancer, which is growing autonomously, metastasising and undermining the patient's life, can affect the patient's attitude to life and mental state in such a way that feelings of weakness, depression or resignation spread. Patients can also be seized by the will to live and a fighting spirit; they want to do everything to defeat cancer, dedicating their lives to this fight and seeking out as many therapies as they can find.

But patients can also take this seeming setback as an opportunity to look back on their lives as well as looking forward, taking stock of their lives whilst avoiding both paralysis and seductive promises of a miracle cure. Such a moment can be an occasion to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, to set different priorities and to weigh up what one wants to do with one's life. For such work, therapeutic support with mistletoe can be very useful, as can psycho-oncological therapy, biography work or art therapy, to name a few possibilities. The goal need not be to identify traumatic events that caused the cancer, or possible karmic events, nor do we need to set out to defeat the cancer through an act of will. Two questions stand in the foreground: What do I want to do with the rest of my life, bearing in mind what I have done so far? Which cancer therapies make sense for me with this cancer and in my life?

In this way, our powerlessness in the face of cancer, or the question: 'What can I do *against* this cancer?' can be turned into: 'What can I still achieve *with* cancer?'

Is there such a thing as a natural death?

Jörg Ewertowski

In 1957, when he was in his late sixties, my grandfather had a stroke. He was cared for at home by my grandmother and a doctor, where he died quietly in bed three days later. My grandmother told me this story several times in great detail. She went on to suffer a stroke when she was nearly ninety; she could no longer eat or speak and turned her head to the side whenever she was offered food or drink. The doctor left it to my mother to decide whether to have her admitted to hospital or to take care of her at home for about seven days until her death. My mother chose the latter. Later, my mother spent some years in a nursing home suffering from dementia; after a mild pneumonia, she started to eat and drink less and less and the drip in the nursing home could no longer supply enough nourishment, leaving me to decide what should happen.

If I decided that she should be cared for at home and not taken to hospital, she would die. Would that have been her natural death, or would I have been responsible for her starving to death? Conversely, would going to hospital save her from starvation, or would the fear and disorientation in an unfamiliar place be a kind of torture for her, prolonging her life unnecessarily? Three years earlier she had spoken repeatedly about how she had now lived her life; she was satisfied and wanted the 'good Lord' to take her away. Several times she said that he probably had greater faith in her than she had in herself. Later, she didn't speak like that any more. Did I now have to decide what she could be expected to endure?

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Looking at these stories, there is an unmistakable development: the need for decisions grew. With my grandfather everything took its 'natural' course; with my grandmother decisions were needed, in which she

was involved. In the case of my mother, I had to decide myself. Even more: I could not 'not decide' and let a supposed 'natural course of things' take its course.

Birth and death used to be beyond our control; morally, they still are. The reason for this is that birth and death are not merely natural phenomena; as threshold phenomena, they transcend the normal moral world. It seems that our right to self-determination only applies between the thresholds of birth and death and not at the threshold itself. This goes beyond the questions around the increasingly technical nature of therapeutic interventions, and it is not about the difference between natural and technical medicine. There has never been a natural death for human beings. It is different for plants and animals—they do not die so much as come to an end.

Mortality and what we could call 'natality' belong uniquely to man. The animal species are immortal, and angels do not go through birth and death. The fact that we human beings are individual comes from our being threshold beings—'natal' and mortal. Natural beings are instances of their species, which appear and disappear without changing the species itself. This means that using the yardstick of what is natural to guide our decisions about how to die is not possible. As beings who incarnate from a world beyond the threshold of birth and who excarnate into a world beyond the threshold of death, we are not 'natural'. What should take the place of the 'natural' here? A general law that dictated what to do in every circumstance would not do justice to the individualized realities of human life; any consequentialist ethics, which makes the minimization of suffering or maximization of happiness the yardstick, is also inadequate.

We can only meet the challenge of deciding about the ending of life by seeking to do justice to the unique quality of every life story, which is never to be repeated. We need to align ourselves with this individual's life story and then *act*. An action is neither 'natural' nor 'technical'. This is already the case within life; as we approach the thresholds that bound our life, it is more so. Before we have acted, the individual story is not fixed. However, our actions may also fail to do justice to this individual life. We will only know in retrospect. Our freedom lies in this tension.

Water as a messenger and reflector of morality

Richard Goodall

The Khoi-San people of Africa had a wonderfully rich concept of water. She was experienced as an all-imbuing, all-permeating, all-embracing, selfless divinity who gave life to all living things and to the very earth itself and sustained their life. This being of water was greatly revered and treated with the utmost respect. Never was water wasted or used without a sense of deep gratitude and joy. Because all living things were the place where water worked, they too were respected and revered. The concept of water embraced everything else in creation. These wonderful people would never have been able to relate in any way at all to the modern scientific concept of H2O as an inert but very convenient substance which is there to be used and abused willy-nilly as a means of attaining our own narrow aims and objectives. Quite clearly the modern scientific view is a highly impoverished one which is totally removed from reality.

Modern research into water began with the Austrian naturalist and forester Victor Schauberger at the beginning of the 20th century. At the beginning of his book *Living Water,* Olaf Alexandersson quotes Schauberger:

> *They call me deranged. The hope is that they are right. It is of no greater or lesser import for another fool to wander the earth. But if I am right and science is wrong—then may the Lord God have mercy on mankind.*

Many serious scientists have since then dared to challenge the scientific theory of water and have suffered the same ridicule and discrediting by their peers. One by one, the views of Schauberger, which were attained by pure observation in the manner of Goethe, have been proven to be true.

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The tide of public opinion only began to change in the nineties through the more recent research by Dr

Masaru Emoto, Alexander Lauterwasser and others who discovered radically new ways of making visible through empirical research the true qualities of water. What they discovered opened up a new and higher dimension of understanding about the behaviour of water and more importantly the relevance of how what human beings do, think and feel has an effect on water.

Emoto was fascinated by the idea that every single snowflake has a unique crystalline form. He wanted to photograph snowflakes but was unable to do so before they melted. He decided to freeze water droplets and photograph them. It took months to figure out how to do this successfully. Eventually, with the help of a young lab technician, he developed a reliable method. He then began to expose the water to different influences before freezing the droplets to see if it made any difference to the structure of the frozen crystals.

The results were astounding. Each crystal had a basic hexagonal form (something that Kepler had discovered 400 years previously). But the way the molecules arranged themselves around this basic form varied immensely depending on what the water had been exposed to before freezing. What stunned Emoto more and more as his research progressed was that extremely subtle influences had huge effects on the crystals' formation. Putting a glass of water on top of a picture of jumping dolphins resulted in a crystal form which manifested the same gesture as the jumping dolphins. Sounds affected the form, words affected the form, thoughts affected the form and even intentions affected the forms. Good thoughts brought about beautiful crystals. Bad thoughts resulted in ugly formations similar to those of polluted water. Music by Mozart created exquisite crystals whereas heavy metal music created crystals which weren't even able to form a hexagonal structure. These experiments were all repeatable and produced the same outcomes each time.

Lauterwasser's results were no less staggering. He picked up on the knowledge that water in and of itself is in continuous motion between form and chaos in its molecular structure. This is what makes it so immediately sensitive to the slightest formative influence around it. He exposed water droplets to sound whilst they were under a powerful microscope and was thereby able to photograph

or film the droplet as it rearranged itself under this influence. The droplet was first thrown into a state of complete chaos before organising itself in a standing wave with a very definite fixed form. This meant that the form remained stable as the water continuously moved through it. By shining a light onto the droplet from above, he was able to photograph it so that the crests of the waves were lit up and the troughs of the wave were dark, thus revealing the form of the fixed wave. Extremely complex geometrical forms emerged. If he changed the sound by a single hertz, the whole process was repeated and a new form created. His water sound pictures showed all the forms that we find in the natural world in a miniature format. Creation through the Word—through sound—could now be demonstrated in a laboratory!

All of this shows us that water is an extremely selfless, sensitive being which is affected immediately in its very structure by all outer influences, no matter how subtle, which continuously stream back to it from the world and predominantly from human beings. It has the possibility to purify itself on its journey up through the atmosphere and to enrich itself on its journey through the depths of the earth. However, all of this wealth of life-giving potential can be and is nullified to a disastrous extent by that which flows towards it from humanity. We have the possibility to purify or to pollute water simply by what we think and what we feel and how this informs our actions.

With all of this in mind, and given the fact that our bodies consist of upwards of 70% water, is it at all surprising that humanity is so ill? The functioning of every organ in our body is compromised when it is imbued with self-polluted water as a result of wrong thinking and feeling. Water has morphogenetic qualities—that is to say, it is a being; when it is changed for the good or healed then this healed structure will be shared by other parts of the water-being in the vicinity; therefore, the polluted water in us works beyond us out into our environment all the time, affecting the watery world around us. More simply, my thoughts can heal the water in my own body which in turn can have a healing effect on the water in my vicinity or in other people's bodies, if their negative thoughts don't undo the healing influence. Health in water is 'contagious'.

We are beings of water: we are largely made up of water and we live in the hydrosphere of the earth. We are totally dependent on water. We also have the possibility to influence every single drop of that water by taking responsibility for what we think, feel and do. This reality has given birth to the new world of Psychoenergetic Science, which can show on every front that there is no such thing as pure objectivity in regard to human beings' relationship to the world around them. We affect everything all the time. We simply cannot abstract ourselves from the world equation. We are always an active part of it.

Climate science has demonstrated that the water body of the earth and therefore the entire climatic and weather pattern of the earth is in a state of complete imbalance as a direct reflection and result of the imbalance that exists in human souls today. The problem with water is Man! The state of the natural world—imbued as it is with water at every level—reflects our moral state; it is the messenger that tells us to get our house in order and to change our hearts and minds.

It is a truly a task of our Michael age to become aware that in every waking moment our relationship to the water in and around us is a reciprocal one. We are called upon to consciously play our part in giving to water positive Christ inspired thoughts, or at very least thoughts and feelings of profound gratitude. We all need re-examine how we relate to the watery world around us and to rediscover the instinctive wisdom of the Khoi-San people through our own effort and inner discipline.

The Squirrel

Like a small grey coffee pot sits the squirrel, he is not
All that he should be. Eats up all his red brown cousins
Acorns from the trees in dozens
Destroying oaks and many woodlands.
The keeper, who shot him, was a Christian
And loves his enemies, which only shows
The squirrel was not one of those.

Irene Simpson-Roy

Male, female and the experience of being human

Florian Davyn Burfeind

The topic of gender and gender equality seems to have made a comeback in our news cycle, with many stories focusing on the disadvantages women still face in our cultural life and in the workplace. Underlying these stories is the notion that there are two genders, male and female. Although shining a light on injustices is a necessary first step in tackling any social problem, the juxtaposition of male and female may actually hinder our progress towards gender justice because it lacks a spiritual understanding of gender and of our humanity, while also obscuring a movement towards a new understanding of gender which is already happening in our culture.

In recent years emerging cultural and scientific research have begun to challenge our collective understanding of sex and gender as strictly binary, as two separate and mutually exclusive categories of male and female. Television shows portray transgender characters more prominently and favourably than ever before, and transgender and gender non-conforming artists and public figures are met with increasing levels of respect and understanding in popular media. In our own lives we may know of children and young people who come to us and tell us that they are not the gender we thought they were; that although people around them said they were a boy, they are really a girl, or that they are neither a boy nor a girl. Academic disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, most notably the subject area that is called Queer Theory, also question the binary paradigm of gender as well as the socially constructed nature of this old paradigm. In the natural sciences, including the fields of neuropsychology and medicine, biological sex is now understood as a conglomerate of bodily traits such as internal sex organs and hormone levels that all exist on a continuum. In this shifting

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landscape of sex and gender, we may find ourselves reflecting on our own relationship to these complex realities. How can we understand these new experiences and insights from a perspective that views the human being as a unity of body, soul and spirit?

In Western society gender has been viewed as a binary affair, based on a particular reading of the Judeo-Christian creation story. God created male Adam and female Eve, and the human race is thus divided into these two categories based on outer sex characteristics. A child's sex is determined or assigned at birth and with this comes a whole set of expectations and rules for acceptable gender expression and social behaviour. Whereas a person's biological sex has to do with internal and external sex traits, gender expression can be understood as everything that is close to the physical body but that isn't the physical body itself: hairstyle, clothes, posture and body language, gestures, even speech and intonation. A physicality that is associated with maleness is traditionally assumed to line up with a gender expression that is considered masculine, for example short hair, clothes with simple straight cuts and in darker colours, a posture that takes up space and body language that expresses confidence. In the social sphere, where we bring our individual gifts to the community in our family and work life, maleness and masculinity are associated with the soul faculties of thinking and willing, and femaleness and femininity with nurturing and feeling. In the UK some women got the vote just a hundred years ago, and still there are many more male than female elected officials. Universities and most professions only opened their doors to female candidates gradually and not that long ago, because of the assumption that women are inferior beings both physically and mentally and therefore unfit to fulfil the tasks of a doctor, lawyer, pastor, or CEO. That these ideas are pervasive and still active today, despite a changing narrative about what women are capable of and laws that prohibit sex discrimination, is shown in statistics of gender representation and the gender pay gap across different industries.

It is perhaps because our capitalist society values vocations that are associated with maleness and masculinity more than those that are traditionally associated with femaleness and femininity that the shift that took place in the twentieth century in terms of gender expecta-

tions was mostly in the direction of masculinity. In a century that saw two world wars it became acceptable for women to wear trousers and study and have a career even after getting married and having children. More recently a debate has started about how boys are socialized in our society not to talk about their feelings, and countries such as Sweden are fostering equality in the realm of nurturing and family care by extending their parental leave after the arrival of a newborn to fathers as well as mothers.

We have seen that there seems to be a steady movement towards more equality between the sexes, in step with what can be described as a widening of our concepts of what it means to be a man or a woman. Qualities that are traditionally associated with one gender are beginning to be incorporated into the opposite gender and are more and more viewed as human qualities everyone has access to whatever their anatomy. At the same time we encounter individuals whose gender expression or identity questions the very concept of gender itself as it is rooted in a dualistic understanding of human anatomy. These individuals may cross-identify, have sex characteristics that are associated with one sex while their gender expression and the experience of their gender is of the opposite sex, or identify as a gender that falls outside of the binary altogether. Some non-binary gender identities are, for example, gender-neutral or androgynous (neither man nor woman), bi-gender (man and woman at the same time or alternating, with certain gendered qualities and experiences being more prominent in certain settings than in others), and genderqueer (combinations of masculinity and femininity). Here we see a movement away from what could perhaps be described as an over-identification with the body, a separating of the expressive and experiential aspects of gender from physicality. Gender is changing in two ways, revealing two movements or gestures: firstly as a widening of our traditional understanding of man and woman, masculinity and femininity and secondly as a lifting up of our experience of gender out of its bondage to the physical body.

Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian philosopher and visionary who helped to found The Christian Community, made it clear from the onset that a movement for religious renewal would allow for the ordination of both women and men into the priesthood, a notion quite radical for

his time. In his lectures for teachers of the first Waldorf School he also stressed the importance of equality between the sexes, stating that boys and girls should be educated together and not in separate classes as was still the custom. He felt that separating people based on outer sex characteristics was based on a materialistic view of the human being that had no regard for the spiritual, eternal core of the individual. In this time of our consciousness it is becoming ever clearer that as soon as we divide and categorize people based on outer characteristics we don't see their individuality; it recedes to the background and gets harder to manifest. At the same time we meet individuals who sometimes from a very young age express their individuality and are quite clear about who they are, thereby opening the door for all of us to view their spiritual individuality beyond gender.

Children and young people (and those who remain young at heart) bring in the new by virtue of their proximity to the spiritual world. Having come into the earthly world from the realm of spiritual laws and ideas more recently, they bring new forms into living reality. Steiner described how our angel implants these new imaginations from the spiritual world into our soul during sleep. The part of our being that can take impressions from the outer world into itself so that it becomes our inner world, also is able to receive impressions of a spiritual nature when we are naturally asleep to the outer world at night or as a conscious exercise in meditation. The pictures that the guardian of our higher Self, our other Self as opposed to our workaday self, guides into our being are intentions for our human development. They are threefold, namely: to see the individuality or higher Self of every human being, which will mean eventually that no-one can be at peace as long as others are suffering; to see the divine core in every fellow human being, which necessitates freedom in religious life; and to access spiritual truths through a thinking of the heart, which leads to insight into the spiritual nature of the world around us. These three capacities ripen in those who devote themselves to developing the consciousness of our time.

We are aided in this development by a spiritual event Rudolf Steiner spoke about a number of times in 1910. He described how in the nineteenth century souls who had permeated themselves with materialistic

thoughts during life brought this materialism into the spiritual world after death. This led to Christ being crucified a second time, this time in the realm of the etheric or life forces where He has dwelt since the Ascension. In the twentieth century, most notably starting in the 1930s, a second resurrection would follow and was indeed already happening when Steiner spoke in 1910. It was a resurrection of the Christ in human hearts. Destiny would lead some individuals to encounter the Christ as an angel in the face of great suffering and death. This communion of the individual, the higher self, with Christ took place amidst the destruction wreaked upon the world by adversarial forces that were trying to prevent just this type of communion. We know that the twentieth century saw great destruction, with two world wars and the collapse of the great empires in Europe. Nationalism and Bolshevism threatened to drown out the individual, and this included persecution and indeed the intended extermination of human beings who showed individuality in thought or expression. In 1933 Nazi government officials shut down the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (Institute for Sexology) in Berlin, which had studied and supported marginalized sexualities and gender identities beyond the binary for over a decade. Many of our emerging ideas about sex and gender were already expressed then. A certain suppleness or flexibility started to announce itself but was met by an overwhelming wave of hardened materialism.

Rudolf Steiner expressed the necessity for humanity to develop organs of perception for the etheric, the realm of life forces, rhythm and our collective understandings.

We know that when Christ came to earth the life body of the human being had become almost one with the physical; it was brittle and barely able to sustain life on the earth. Christ's resurrection gave new life forces to the human being; it quickened us. Continued communion with Him changes our constitution intimately. As Christ is lifting us up to the etheric realm and renews our life forces, we may experience an increased flexibility and widening of gender as a direct result—announcing not just a changing landscape of gender but the emergence of the new, spirit-led Human Being. Living out of the spirit and striving to relate to others as beings whose spiritual essence is beyond gender, neither male nor female but human, may help us overcome social injustices based on gender inequality.

Bringing consciousness to our own unique relationship to the forces of masculinity and femininity may give a sense of freedom to our everyday self and invite in our higher Self, that part of us that is safeguarded in the realm of the angels. On this path we may feel accompanied by Him who, as Adam Bittleston put it, goes Himself as angel through the world.

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An eye for an eye

Edith Lutz

'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'—this is the usual translation of a decree in the Book of Exodus (chapter 21). It is widely held that it is an instruction to a victim to avenge an injury 'like for like'. However, a change can be observed in its interpretation, especially amongst Christian theological faculties. As well as concerning itself with the eye, the tooth or other things as 'revenge-objects', the discussion has centred especially on the question of who is to carry out the 'act of revenge'. Who is being addressed by the following: 'If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot …' (Ex. 21:23–24)? Is this aimed at the perpetrator or the victim? The question is of interest. It has played a role in the politics of Israel, but its relevance goes far beyond this.

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The quoted passage is one of a series of judicial directives in which arbitrators are told which lawful instructions are to be given to the perpetrator ('he must give', 'he must replace', etc). So these instructions refer to the perpetrator, not the victim. There is no mention of acts of revenge. And although the personal 'you'—'then you shall

give'—stands out as unusual in this context, the verb 'give' indicates that the directive is intended for the perpetrator, otherwise it would make no sense. If it were addressed to the victim, it would need to say 'he must take'. It is likely that this sentence (vv. 23–25), whose structure is distinctly different from the adjacent sentences, has been inserted—and may possibly derive—from another legal code. In the context, its interpretation is not affected by this. The Jewish interpretation of the Law in post-biblical literature regards these decrees, including this famous 'eye for eye' saying, as rulings concerning reparation. Thus Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig translate as follows:

But if the worst happens,
Then give life-compensation for life –
Eye-compensation for eye, tooth-compensation for tooth,
Hand-compensation for hand…

But if it is the case that this much-quoted ordinance unambiguously calls upon the perpetrator of the injury to make reparation, and that it is not addressed to the one injured, the question arises: why does the opposite view persist so stubbornly to this very day? A brief look at the following aspects will suffice to clarify this:

- *lexical similarity to a foreign Code of Justice (Codex Hammurabi)*
- *related passages in the Torah*
- *the reference in the Sermon on the Mount*
- *its application by the Jews in the political context*

'Eye for eye' in the Codex Hammurabi

The *Codex Hammurabi* is a collection of Mesopotamian legal decisions from the 18th Century B.C. In this collection, many of the decrees are characterized by the so-called *talio-principleii*: there has to be equivalence between the harm suffered by the victim and the damage to be inflicted upon the perpetrator. Thus, in §196: 'If a free-born man destroys the eye of a free-born man, his eye is to be destroyed'; or, in §200: 'If a free-born man knocks out the tooth of a man of equal birth, his tooth is to be knocked out.'

In an age of widespread blood feuds, the Codex Hammurabi served to modify the thirst for vengeance. Biblical scholars differ about whether, and to what extent, the codes have influenced the Old Testament

or Torah; be that as it may, the principle of proportionality is also to be found in the biblical ordinances. However, here the proportionality is linked to the reparation demanded of the perpetrator, and not, as in the Codex, to an act of vengeance by the victim.

'Eye for eye' in the Torah

In addition to the passage from Exodus already mentioned, the quotation occurs in two further places in the Torah. In Leviticus 24, the RSV translation reads:

> [18]*He who kills a beast shall make it good, life for life.*
> [19]*When a man causes a disfigurement in his neighbour, as he has done it shall be done to him,* [20]*fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has disfigured a man, he shall be disfigured.*

Whereas verse 18 unequivocally calls upon the perpetrator to make reparation, the next verse might appear to be encouraging the victim to exact revenge. However, the expression 'it shall be done to him' is what theologians call a *passivum divinum*, a passive construction that suggests God as agent without naming him. Thus the Leviticus passage implies: God, not Man, is regarded as the 'agent' of justice. However, the rabbinical interpretation does not in essence differ from the cited laws in Exodus, the tenor of which is that the perpetrator is to be sentenced to perform an act of appropriate compensation.

The third instance of our quotation is in Deuteronomy 19,21:

> *Your eye shall not pity; it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.*

Within the context, the quotation is also here an instruction to a legal authority—not to a victim. Here, too, it is not a question of a code of revenge; it is a matter of a judicial means of counteracting perjury and of supporting the victim of slander.

In the Hebrew Bible there is no sign of bodily punishments being meted out according to the *talio*-formula. The 'Commandment to love' in the centre of the Torah (Lev. 19,18) precludes acts of vengeful retaliation. The same sentiment comes to expression in the admonition: 'Do not say, "I will do to him as he has done to me"' (Proverbs 24,29).

We can assume that reparations for bodily injury were of a financial, not bodily nature. Even the ancient oriental legal text *Codex Eschnunna*

from the Second Millennium B.C. stipulates that recompense be made in the silver mines. Post-biblical Jewish scholarship interprets 'an eye for an eye' as standing, symbolically, for equivalence. The rabbis of the Talmud discuss, at length, the form reparation should take (tractate *Baba Kamma* 83–84) and conclude that it can only be meant in a financial sense; the ruling should not be taken literally, they declare, otherwise it would be contrary to the innate justice of the Mosaic code of law. The amount to be paid in compensation is to be equivalent to the degree of injury or damage.

'An eye for an eye' in the Sermon on the Mount

'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, "Do not resist one who is evil; but if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also"' (Matt. 5:38).

Reading or hearing this excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount, one may be inclined to interpret the way that the Nazarene rabbi Jesus uses the phrase: 'But I say to you' to counterpoint his teaching with what went before as a repudiation of the teachings of the Mosaic Law. But in fact this is not about abolishing the Law; otherwise, indeed, Jesus would be contradicting himself, having begun his Sermon on the Mount with a declaration upholding the Law (see Matt. 5:17–18). Rather, he turns the attention from the perpetrator to the victim: the victim can also contribute towards a peaceful solution of a conflict, viz. through forbearance. In less pictorial language, we today might perhaps say: the victim can raise his or her individual threshold of tolerance, or increase the level of his or her frustration-tolerance, and in that way contribute towards the de-escalation of conflicts.

'Eye for eye' in the Jewish-Israeli political context

It is striking how often the media employ this biblical quotation, which by now has become a cliché; but this also includes Jewish writers. The Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* published two articles by Yoel Marcus, both headed: 'An Eye for an Eye'. In 2005 he wrote: 'We will avenge, like-for-like, every shot fired at a civilian target. We will pay them back, good and proper. An eye for an eye.' A year later Ha'aretz circulated a similar article, in which retaliation according to the principle 'eye for eye' was announced.

A writer's use of the quotation should by no means be taken to mean that he agrees with Israeli power politics. In 2009, the Israeli historian Avi Shlaim, for instance, wrote in *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror:* 'The biblical decree "an eye for an eye" is cruel enough. But Israel's crazy offensive against Gaza seems rather to be according to the logic "an eye for an eye-lash"'. And in the *Washington Post*, under the headline 'An Eye for an Eye—for all Eternity?' the well-known Israeli author David Grossman protests against the disproportionately great Israeli force used in response to suicide attacks. When in 2002 the Israeli daily *Maariv* reported on vendetta actions by Israeli soldiers against Palestinian police officers—that the soldiers had described as 'an eye for an eye'—some readers certainly did demand that the supposed revenge-commandment should be adhered to, or even extended, but numerous readers reacted with shock to the use, or rather misuse, of the biblical quotation.

Nor is this bible quotation missing from Israel's third largest newspaper *Jediot Acharonot*. Alex Fishman calls Israel's air-raids in 2001 an 'act of revenge—an eye for an eye'. And he adds: 'But revenge-politics is a sign of weakness and frustration'.

These examples and indications may be sufficient to establish the insight that interpretations and misinterpretations of this Bible quotation cannot be consigned to either a 'Christian' or a 'Jewish' pigeonhole. Whoever does so is employing the very stereotype that he is wanting to do away with. Rather, what is needed is more shared work on the interpretation of the quotation, taking into account newly won insights from biblical scholarship; an interpretation that everyone can appreciate and understand. It could be headed: '*"An eye for an eye" is a provision for compensation.*'

The violent settlers in Israel might also be challenged with this newly-won—or rediscovered—insight. Increasingly, their 'price tag actions' with the 'slogan' (in this instance that seems the appropriate word) 'An eye for an eye' play a role in everyday Israeli-Palestinian confrontations. For example, Israeli settlers set fire to a Palestinian vehicle and left behind the message in spray paint: 'An eye for an eye—we never forget'. 'An eye for an eye,' is also used to justify the burning of Palestinian olive groves, the destruction of Palestinian houses and mosques, and even murder. Often, it is not even the instigators that are being targeted by these revenge

actions and who become their victims. Sometimes a government decision to clear a settlement is enough to spark off violent 'revenge actions'.

Misinterpretations of a biblical quotation and its misuse can mean that the essential core of Jewish religious teaching, the 'Commandment to love', which is central to the Torah, is not recognized or is disregarded; and that it is in danger of being lost through the violence of Israeli settlers and their supporters.

Joseph Stein, the librettist of the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, was also aware of how the Bible quotation was being abused. In this musical, he gives an unnamed character the line: 'We should defend ourselves, an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth.' But Tevje the milkman responds with a casual remark which, below the surface, combines rabbinical wisdom with the wisdom of the rabbi Jeschu: 'Oh great! Then the whole world will soon be blind and toothless!'

Then dialogue is better, preferably with empathy: eye to eye, and ear to ear.

Translated from Die Christengemeinschaft *by Jon Madsen*

Review

Walking with your time
Christine Gruwez
paperback, 128 pages
published by lulu.com
(August 19, 2011)
Review by Luke Barr

Today, as never before, we are subject to an incomparable exposure to what we might call 'evil'.

Whether it be through the strange cultural genre called 'horror' which taps into our subliminal (and very real) fears, or be it through the reading of the daily newspaper with its cold and neutral reporting of horrific events, we are now all crossing a threshold on the back of these phenomena.

If we are now unprepared (which we invariably are) we will manifest symptoms of trauma: denial, anger, bargaining, despair—the first four phases of 'dying' that Elizabeth Kübler-Ross drew attention to.

When we read of terror attacks, kidnappings, cruelty, hatred, torture, or the abuse of victims—especially children—what do we *do* with all of that? Where does it all go to in us? All that cold information, the detailed reports of abuse, images in horror films of the destruction of the human form—where do we put it? How much of this can we store up and carry within ourselves, without being negatively affected?

It is most probable that the consumption of horror images gleaned from 'innocuous' horror movies has a terrible, debilitating and dark effect on the human psyche. It may even implode within the soul, undermining our healthy psychic structures and leading to a breakdown, or worse.

What can we possibly do with all the horror that in our present day is unavoidable? Indeed, not only is it unavoidable, but arguably it is the very substance with which we *must* work in the modern age, and into the future. It appears that we all have a journey into the 'heart of darkness' that Joseph Conrad alluded to and foresaw.

Christine Gruwez published a book on the contemporary relevance of Manichaeism in 2011. She is a Waldorf teacher from Holland who has a deep interest in philosophy, cultural trends, and comparative religion. She evidently also writes out of meditative practice and experience. Her book, *Walking with your Time,* looks towards the sources of strength in Manichaean spirituality, in order to be able to cope with our times, and to live constructively as a contemporary.

The theme of her book is the theme of modern times: 'evil.'

Evil has successfully camouflaged itself in modern times. One rarely dares to use the word unless to effect a sense of drama. 'Evil' is confined to the cinemas, or to the rhetoric of politicians that no sensible minded person would take seriously. Certainly, it has barely any academic currency at present. As such, evil has hidden itself—ingeniously so, as it is right before our eyes. This book is an attempt to raise evil out of the shadows and once more into consciousness in a way that is both bearable and constructive.

Our own Act of Consecration explicitly refers twice to 'evil,' and also to the 'adversary' of humanity. It does so, because an encounter with these is necessary in the act of consecrating what it means to be human, as consecration means bringing us into connection with our destination, our true purpose.

Manichaeism was an early form of Christianity which spread from Persia throughout the then known world, eventually reaching from China to France. It originated in the third century with Mani, its founder. It eventually died out in the seventeenth century in China. It was particularly concerned with acknowledging the forces of darkness as a necessary cosmic principle. They challenge human beings to use them creatively, positively and constructively as tools for transformation. Manichaeism did not seek to eradicate evil, but rather transform and 'redeem' it.

It was consequently a non-violent, non-aggressive form of Christianity. Perhaps, one should say, Christianity as it could have developed. It was ruthlessly extirpated by its enemies, amongst them, the mainstream Roman church.

Manichaeism had the virtue of merging with the extant religions with which it came into contact, including Buddhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and bringing the impulse of Christ to them, without necessarily naming it Christ. To the Eastern psyche, where Manichaeism particularly flourished, the name of Christ was of less value than the authentic experience of his being. In a similar vein, this book does what very few books can offer: it produces an authentic experience. Reading the book initiates a process in the reader. This, in the post-modern West, is what we long for most: authentic experience. This can only be acquired by going through a process.

The starting point of the book is the common experience of being compelled to be a contemporary. We are aware of what is going on in the world

and we are angered. We blame others. We live our lives subject to the indefatigable pressures of modernity and we suffer. We find all sorts of ways to cope with this almost unbearable stress. Being a contemporary begins, argues Gruwez, when we no longer seek coping mechanisms, but enter into the experience of horror, terror and fear. She says that this 'initiation' into evil is the unavoidable initiation of our times. To turn away from it is commensurate to a refusal to evolve, or one might say, a rejection of Christ.

Christ and the spiritual world are now only to be experienced in the west in a conscious way through the modern experiences of separation and isolation (traditionally called 'sin'), and an awareness of evil. These worrying experiences prove themselves to be the preconditions for attaining true freedom and developing love for one's neighbour, whoever or whatever they may be.

In this sensitive and meditative book, the author explores the ways by which we can approach evil using modern faculties of soul, which is the only way possible to speak of evil to the modern adult mind. We come to appreciate that the many fantasy films that depict the archetypal 'battle' between good and evil such as *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings*, do not provide modern consciousness with the necessary sophistication to understand the existence and purpose of evil. Rather, they drag us back to earlier, more primitive ways of looking at it.

Evil is a difficult issue to address. One is either fully gripped by the horror of it, or one may speak of it in a way that is too detached—which ultimately leaves us unmoved. As Hannah Arendt said of the horrors of the Holocaust: "How can one speak of it? How can one *not* speak of it?"

Gruwez has produced a book which uses words to prepare ourselves not only to speak of it, but to think on it and to feel it. The book requires the full participation of the reader. Thus, it is a book that one 'eats' in the sense that John's Apocalypse speaks of (Revelation 10:10). It is not only apocalyptic in content, but also in essence. Its style is meditative but also anecdotal, combining deep contemplation with everyday experiences, helping us to approach the threshold that we call 'evil'.

If this book were written in any other way, we could easily be deflected from approaching the central mystery of our times—evil—by its overwhelming horror. This we cannot afford to do. This book carefully builds a space in the place of the human heart by which we can learn to bear seeing into this existential darkness.

It leads us, as the seasonal prayer for Michaelmas states, into 'the depths of soul'. Only from these depths, where evil also resides, can we access the source of the healing power of Christ. Only in these depths can the heart of man be 'prepared for the light' of the Spirit. It is only when we follow Michael into the presence of the evil that we can truly enter a 'higher divining' of the deed of the Christ.

Grower's book is a deed which, like our own Act of Consecration, is a child of the best forces of our modern age, which has the task of working with and transforming evil. Like the Act of Consecration, it may help us to stand as contemporaries in our times, and become a source of affirmation and of strength, so that we may bring a steady light of redeeming consciousness into the 'heart of darkness'.

Joanna Jemmett

September 9, 1933 – May 11, 2018

Ann Herbert was born September 9, 1933 in Brookmans Park, near Hatfield, Hertfordshire. She was the second of four sisters: Jane, the eldest, and after her came Liz and Sarah. Ann had a very difficult relationship with her father, and when her parents emigrated to New Zealand and the sisters all went with them, she, at just 16 years of age, decided to stay behind and tried making a living as an actress. She first met and married Lord Anthony, 3rd Baron Moynihan. He lived a rather wild life, and with ups and downs they managed to stay married from 1955 to 1958, until he ran off with a Malaysian dancer and converted to Islam. Later, performing in a play, she fell in love with co-actor Tony Jemmett, and married him. From then on she was known as Joanna Jemmett. She had a deep wish to have children and after a while the couple had two: Danny, born in 1966, and Sadie, born in 1970.

Joanna and Tony had a little cottage in Cambridgeshire, and Tony gave up his acting dream to earn a living for the family as an English teacher in Cambridge. Joanna also gave up acting, when she realised how unfulfilling this life was; although she longed to escape the real world and had tried to find what she needed on stage, this was not it. There had to be something else, something better. She tried staying at home, and to be a good mother, but she was unable to. She spent long days in bed, depressed, and the house was a mess. But one thing she could still do: she was an eager and fast reader. The neighbours had a lot of books and Joanna devoured many of them. Here she first came in contact with the works of Rudolf Steiner. She had been involved in the Anglican Church, and was fond of all the hymns, but now through anthroposophy she discovered The Christian Community. The Act of Consecration became her home. Now the wish formed in her to work at the altar, and she decided to train for the priesthood at Shalesbrook, in Forest Row.

For the family this was very difficult. Her husband Tony had to provide for them; he wanted to create a safe and warm home for the children but he had to work hard and got terribly depressed by the situation. Joanna left Danny with his father and took three-year old Sadie with her to Forest Row, struggling to be a mother and a priest-trainee at the same time. Not everyone believed that she was really fit to become a priest, but still, on December 9, 1978 she was ordained by Rudolf Koehler

in London. She had hoped that after this everything would be fine: there would be a home for the family in Kings Langley, where she would work as a priest and the family could be together again. This did not work out as planned. The housing was inadequate, she could not take care of the children properly, and her husband could not cope with the situation. He did not find the connection to anthroposophy and The Christian Community, and although he wanted to support the family and keep them together, in the end he could not. To Joanna's great sadness, they divorced. Joanna fully immersed herself in her work as priest and the children had to live in quite a few strange and strict anthroposophical foster homes close by, Joanna being in the Priory around the corner, or they were even sent off to boarding school. They were unable to understand this and it made them suffer greatly. They felt abandoned by their mother. And whenever Joanna tried to be more 'on the earth', to take care of things in the right way, she found herself incapable of doing so. Her quest to redeem her own troubled childhood by taking refuge in the spiritual world, that realm out of which she wanted to work as a priest, made it impossible for her to provide what her children most needed: motherly love.

Joanna was sent to work as a priest in Botton Village, a Camphill Community. She was famous for her flamboyant, colourful and joyful clothing, as well as her habit of damaging cars and spending money without being able to account for it. Her celebrations bore the mark of her dramatic past, with a tendency to declaim the words. Talks and sermons contained wise insights and humour but were delivered in a flowery style.

Joanna wanted to have a life that went beyond the borders of Village life and was away quite often. But she was a wonderful, open-minded and empathetic counsellor. Her most impressive skill was in relating to the Villagers, for whom she ran a weekly religion study session which was always filled with participants. She had a way of evoking questions and responses that made the sessions feel alive and truly interesting. There was always laughter.

After Botton, Joanna was sent to work in Edinburgh. It was during that time that Tony died and as he had truly been the love of her life, she suffered tremendously, both mentally and physically. Having struggled with her health and weight problems in the past, this all now really became a problem. She spent time in Park Atwood Clinic. Her last congregation was Forest Row, where she arrived in a fragile state in both physical and psychological health. This was soon to be made worse by interference with her medication by a 'friend' who was supposedly taking care of her, and who was at the same time stealing large amounts of her money. She suffered considerable disorientation through this and

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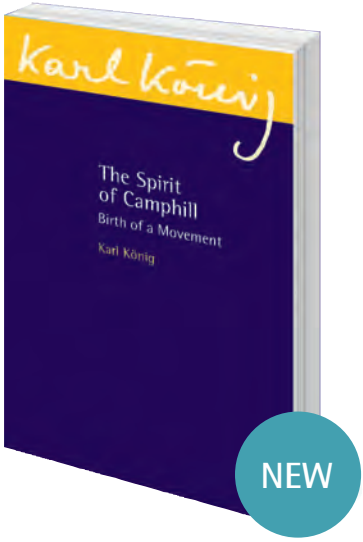

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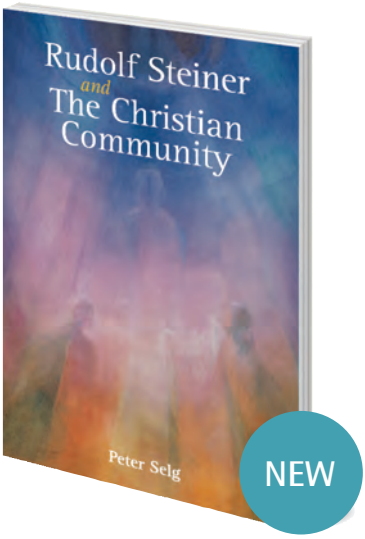

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she was unable to accept that he had done her any wrong. Her early time in Forest Row was coloured by this, as well as her ongoing struggle to 'get into shape' adequately to celebrate again. But she never gave up and mostly remained cheerful. She had an impressive capacity to plough vigorously but gently through life, chaotically but with intent.

After her retirement, Joanna lived in a small flat in East Grinstead. During her last years, Vincent Gordon, a member of the Forest Row congregation, faithfully visited her and took care of her affairs. In the end she was admitted to a nursing home in Crawley, where she received the Anointing on Ascension Day and crossed the threshold the next morning.

Joanna's greatest wish was to find freedom. She struggled her whole life with rules, whether as a child, as an actress and dancer, as a parent, or a priest. She did not feel at home in this world with its boundaries and constraints. So she strove to live in the spiritual world while she was still on earth. This choice meant that she was not able to succeed fully in either world. Her choice of priesthood meant that she had to leave her children behind. And at the same time, there was a sense in which her many illnesses and her inability to deal with earthly realities meant that she did not become fully part of that other family, the circle of priests. This meant that there was a tragic component to her life. However, her capacity to reflect on her life meant that many of her experiences ripened in her to wise insights. She looked at the world with interest and compassion as a fellow-sufferer and a witness to the reality of Christ.

Willem Boonstoppel

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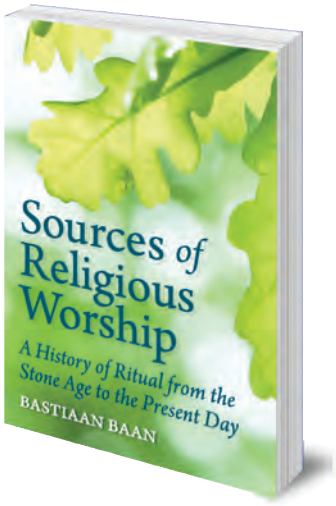

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Temple Lodge Club

a quiet oasis in the middle of London

Temple Lodge—a Georgian Listed Building in the middle of Hammersmith—was once the home of the artist Sir Frank Brangwyn. Whilst his studio has been converted into a chapel with a **vegetarian restaurant** on its former mezzanine floor, the house itself is given over to accommodating bed and breakfast visitors. They come from four corners of the world to enjoy the quietness and tranquillity of the house. Many have described it as a really peaceful haven, despite being a stone's throw from the centre of Hammersmith and its busy traffic interchange. The absence of a television in the house and rooms adds to this atmosphere.

There is a quiet secluded garden. Most rooms look out over this large and sheltered garden. Two rooms look out over the front courtyard and garden.

Upon becoming members of the **Temple Lodge Club** (£1.00 annual membership) visitors seeking Bed & Breakfast accommodation may share in all the facilities the house has to offer. Breakfast is served in the ground floor Dining Room looking out over the quiet, secluded garden. A library provides a space for relaxation or quiet reading. All the rooms are well appointed and comfortably furnished, the two double rooms being deluxe rooms.

All prices include breakfast and are per room:

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All rooms have hot and cold water.

For any further information or to make a booking, contact:

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Guest Rooms

The Christian Community, 23 Chapel Street, Buckfastleigh TQ11 0AQ

The Christian Community in Devon is situated in Buckfastleigh, halfway between Exeter and Plymouth. It is located on the edge of Dartmoor and is 40 minutes drive from the coast and South West Coastal Path. The attractions of Cornwall, including Tintagel & the Eden Project, are within 1 to 2 hours away by car.

There are four small guest rooms at the top of the building. Three of the guest rooms have a wash basin; toilets and shower are separate. There is a kitchen for self-catering needs.

Unfortunately we do not have disabled access and there are steps and stairs inside and outside the building.

Suggested contribution
at £20 to £25 per person per night.

Further information and reservations:
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sabine.hauslakeman@gmail.com

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