

Rainer Bruno Zimmer

Dasein and God

Essays and Other Texts

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Preface | 4 |
| 1. Essays | 5 |
| ... For Ye Have not Spoken of Me Right – about the notorious violation of the Second Commandment – | 6 |
| Cosmos, World, and All that Is | 11 |
| Our Best Ethics Are Deficient | 19 |
| The Absolute | 24 |
| 2. For the Reformation Anniversary | 32 |
| Religious Autonomy Today - The Heteronomy of a Christian - | 33 |
| ... hear ye him | 40 |
| The Parable of the Recent Prodigal Son | 45 |
| The Parable of the Virtual World | 46 |
| The Our Father Restored | 48 |
| 3. Other Writings | 49 |
| The Dasein Philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount | 49 |
| Adam, where art thou? | 50 |

Preface

Contemporary thinking has severe deficiencies and does not address them.

Philosophy limits itself to dealing with the inner-worldly only, whereas the fundamental disposition of our being, that has the inner-worldly occur to us, cannot itself be inner-worldly.

We consider our ethics of human dignity and human rights as exemplary, while it fails against systems, policies, and behaviors, that are holding down large parts of the human population.

Science promotes the view that the world were subject to the laws of nature, and practically everybody believes it, even though theories always depend on facts and not vice versa.

The monotheistic religions build on assertions about an absolute god, and all believers follow them in this, even though assertions about an absolute are logically impossible.

The diagnosis of all this is easy:

What is missing, is the insight into our Dasein, into the fundamental traits of our existence.

To fully describe all aspects of our Dasein is a good deal of work and has filled other books of this author.

In contrast, this collection offers various small writings, suitable to be read independently. One can take them as partial introductions and through them realize, that focussing on our Dasein yields an extraordinary benefit: an optimal Dasein stance.

1. Essays

... For Ye Have not Spoken of Me Right

– about the notorious violation of the Second Commandment –

Cosmos, World, and All that Is

An existence-focused critique of the natural sciences' faith

Our Best Ethics Are Deficient

... because they fail to recognize the fundamental disposition of our being

The Absolute

What of our being is absolute?

... For Ye Have not Spoken of Me Right

– about the notorious violation of the Second Commandment –

The Absoluteness of God and the Second Commandment

In the monotheistic religions, phrases are circulating like "God is absolute", "God is inconceivable", "the Kingdom of God is not of this world". They represent a common, while low-key, primal religious knowledge. Equally common however is the fact that the consequences are practically never being drawn.

If God is absolute, then he is detached from everything, that is, not in relation to anything; and then no assertion whatsoever can be made about him, as it would inevitably relate him to something. Every attempted assertion about God relativizes God. If God cannot be conceptualized, and if he is not of this world and therefore separate from all concepts of this world, then "God" is, in short, not a concept, and thus cannot be placed in assertions.

To come directly to the point: This is the very meaning of the Second – in other counts, Third –, Commandment: "thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain". It says that an assertion carrying the name of God is always in vain, void, a misuse. This can be seen without any exegetic efforts, just with a little insight in our own being, notably: Whatever we encounter in the world, we understand it, and our understanding is immediate and conceptual. Which means, our world is just the structure of all our concepts.

Usually, we understand the Second Commandment differently: We shall not put God in a negative connection, not utter something negative about him, not caricature him, not denigrate him, etc. And, by and large, we abide by this rule.

What could raise our suspicion, is, that the original of the Second Commandment from the Second Book of Moses (Exodus), Chapter 20, Verse 7, has been translated in very different ways:

Luther formulates: Thou shalt not *misuse* the name of the LORD thy God ("Du sollst den Namen des HERRN, deines Gottes, nicht missbrauchen"). The German Catholic Catechism has the verb (to)"misuse" replaced by (to) *dishonour* ("verunehren"). Buber and Rosenzweig translate as follows: Thou shalt not carry HIS, thy God's name *in an illusionary manner* ("Trage nicht SEINEN, deines Gottes Namen auf das Wahnhafte").

And the King James Bible, as cited above, says: "Thou shalt not *take* the name of the LORD thy God *in vain*".

"Misuse", "carry in an illusionary manner", "dishonour" and "take ... in vain" are so obviously different interpretations that one may get the impression that none of the respective translators seems to be in possession of the proper understanding. At least, a little help can be found in the immediate context. Only a few lines later, there is the Fourth Commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother ...". Thus, the same author cannot have in mind that, with regard to God, it might be sufficient, just not to dishonour or misuse HIS name. It would have been easy to write: "Thou shalt honour the name of God" or even "Thou shalt honour God". As the author does not write this, his point is not about the honour of God or His name, and thus the interpretations "misuse" and "dishonour" can obviously be discarded.

Still there remain the two other, rather more puzzling versions: "carry in an illusionary manner" and "take ... in vain". They point to some kind of erroneous and unavailing use of God's name, based on an illusion, and avoidable without such illusion. But the author does not write which error and which illusion he has in mind.

Anyway, we already know which erroneous use is meant. But it would not be bad if the same understanding could be found somewhere in the bible. Indeed a corresponding consideration exists in the Fall of Man tale in the First Book of Moses (Genesis).

The "Zeroth" Commandment

There, God commands Adam: "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die". That is, so to speak, the "Zeroth" Commandment. Its content forthrightly describes the existence of man after the fall: he has the ability of gaining knowledge, he can distinguish between good and bad, and he is mortal.

This reads like the little child saying: "Oh, these beautiful berries!" and Mom warns: "They are poisonous. You must not eat them, or else you will die". Our existence is as it is: unavoidable, without alternative, absolute. The serpent, however, re-qualifies God's words: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil". Hence God's words can be taken quite differently: not as a communication of knowledge about our existence, but as a commandment that is motivated by some hidden agenda, that is authoritarian, furnished with an arbitrary threat of punishment, and, for all that, open to violation. That man adopts this view: that exactly is the Fall, man's turn towards not seeing the absolute. All further extensions of this tale are just implementation and consequences.

Every human has the existence as described in the Fall of Man tale. We all have, so to speak, the Fall behind us and are now fixated on God's commandments. We would, however, be well advised to consider, whether what we airily take as God's commandments would not more tellingly and with greater benefit be understood as descriptions of our existence. In any case, the Ten Commandments are not particularly good as a list of commandments but pretty good as a lesson about human existence.

The "Normal" Misuse

How would the Second Commandment be read as a description of human existence? Our existence is such that we can take the name of God in vain, misuse it, dishonour it, carry it in an illusionary manner, and, possibly, do this most of the time. Before quickly dismissing this, we better realize that this is about our existence, and that we should rather not be mistaken about it. Let us therefore continue to look into this diagnosis.

Common uses of the name of God are, for example: *God is the highest*, *God saves man*, *God is love*, *God is full of grace*. They are meant as positive as imaginable, more than compliant with the Second Commandment. In the sense of the Second Commandment as a description of existence they are plain misuses of the name of God.

What is their common denominator? They are – attempted – assertions about God. If we said: *God is relative*, then probably all believers would protest. But the assertion: *God is the highest* clearly presents God as relative, specifically in a height-relation to other objects. The assertion: *God saves man* positions God relative to the concepts *save* and *man*. *God is love* relates God to the concept of *love*. *God is full of grace* puts God in relation to the concept of *grace*. As said before, every attempted assertion about God relativizes God. And as God is absolute, every assertion about God is void.

For the sake of conciseness, the preceding paragraph is imprecise, still with the hope to be well understood in spite. Strictly speaking, there cannot be any assertions at all about God. Even the preceding sentence cannot be an assertion about God. The sentence: *Every assertion about God is void*, taken as an assertion, declares itself to be void. What can correctly be said, however, is the following: In every assertion with the name "God", the entity denoted with this name can only be an inner-worldly – *relative* – object. And should somebody believe, it could, in an assertion, be possible to refer with the name "God" to the thus named absolute, extra-worldly, unconceivable God, then this belief is an illusion. –

As a result, we note: The true meaning of the Second Commandment can also be detected with the help of the bible. To those who may still not be satisfied with the preceding derivation, the Book of Job can be recommended. There, his friends are, throughout 34 chapters, formulating assertions about God, and finally God says that they have not spoken of him right.

At this point we are back to the question of the consequences: what follows from the Second Commandment, as it points out that assertions about "God" are void? Obviously, all tellings about God and all thinking and teachings based on assertions about "God" must be revised and, much of it, given up and discarded. This is the business of the institutions owning such thinking and teachings.

The Approximately Pointing Telling

On the other hand, the impression cannot simply be dismissed that, in certain cases, speaking about God has been, and continues to be, a somehow successful practice. Let us

therefore address the question whether, and if so, how it is possible to speak about God without using assertions.

In order to answer this question it is best to take one step back and ask why one should speak about God at all. It appears that, for some people, speaking about God is relevant to our existence, while for others it is irrelevant. If only to settle the question of relevance it is therefore necessary to speak about God.

Let us try this. In order to see the relevance for our existence, one has to focus on this existence. This is easier said than done. It is not about that which all the time occupies us most: the contents of our individual world, but about that which belongs to our existence beyond this world.

Now, many people hold that the world is all that is. How should anybody under this restriction focus on existential aspects outside the world! On the other hand, people have little difficulty, for example, to speak of a virtual reality. After all, this means: the virtual reality that, say, a computer game offers us by means of its devices – its computer, screen, speakers, joysticks and others –, is in some way similar to the reality proper that the world is offering us. Let us look a bit closer. The virtual reality has some presentation context, not only devices but also designers, programmers, players. They are outside the virtual reality. – What corresponds to this in the proper reality? Devices we do not need, we perceive directly, and we act directly. But the contents of the world occur to us as if produced and presented "live" from outside the world. And, in facing them, we find ourselves vis-à-vis to them, we play our life from outside the real world.

When we play a computer game, our focus is in the virtual reality, we can get carried away with it, and even completely fall for it to such a degree that it will not easily relinquish its hold on us. But we can also back out of the game, for example, in case we fail to a greater extent, and then we see the devices again. Is there something similar in the real world, too? Most of the time, we are completely absorbed in the world, but also in the real world we may loose so fiercely, that we will be thrown back upon ourselves.

Already from these few paragraphs, one can see how descriptions of our existence can be successful. Using normal words – others are not available – one has to point somehow "near" that aspect of our existence, that is meant to be brought in sight. The means for describing human existence is *the approximately pointing telling*. Actually, one should always think it with the prefix "It is as if ..." and then try to see – with the "inner eye" – the "It" that is aimed at.

The truth criterion of approximately pointing tellings is, whether one does, or does not, see that which is pointed to. What is being seen, cannot be argued away or confirmed by arguments, and therefore approximately pointing tellings cannot be proven or disproven. But they can be objective, because it is possible for everybody to agree, or disagree, about the sight.

Entering the space of approximately pointing tellings opens up the whole domain of descriptions of existence and thus a comprehensive view of human existence. At the same time it becomes visible, that and how God is relevant to us: our existence is, as if the Absolute, Extra-worldly, God is playing a role in it.

Looking more closely, one notices that the meaning of our existence is to develop world, put in another way: to expand life and possibilities of life. Furthermore, from what occurs to us in the world, we are being coached and grow correspondingly, which is like as if it came from good, but extra-worldly parents. It turns out that our existence has dimensions, that offer various lines of sight to the Extra-worldly, among others trinity. It becomes visible how guilt, absolution, salvation, beatitude are functioning, and that they are impossible without the Extra-worldly. The fundamentals of science and organized religion become clear, and how they can cleanly be delineated. Finally, the overview shows how rich religious texts – in spite of their superficial challenges of reason – are in open and veiled descriptions of human existence. The Ten Commandments and the tale of the Fall of Man are just two examples of many, a good number thereof much more enlightening.

All this is commonly missed out by taking approximately pointing tellings about human existence as conceptual assertions; by applying arguments instead of looking.

Cosmos, World, and All that Is

An existence-focused critique of the natural sciences' faith

At first sight, we need not know *what* the world is. The *how* is enough. It is sufficient for life, that we can distinguish situations and therein act successfully. Beyond a holistic perception of situations, we can, more or less systematically, discern details and inner structures of situations and, accordingly, carry out structured actions. The more sophisticated the contexts, contents, and options for action are structured, the better will we be able to recognize differences between situations and act adequately. Such structures are fundamental for our life. They constitute what we understand and what we can understandingly do or desist from, that is: what is familiar to us in our life. They are the contents of our individual world.

This our world has started very small: with the sensations, perceptions, and behaviour that we have been born with. And ever since we have learnt, and not ceased learning, something new: by protected experimenting in childhood, by imitating other children and adults, by the acquisition of our language, and then – much quicker through the use of language – by copying structures, that other humans have already tried and established in the present and in the past. In this way, we have, in the course of our life, expanded our world, and have grown to the same extent. And we can – and must – continue this as long as we live.

This already does not pass as the common world view. In the common world view, there is an objective world existing independent of us: the cosmos. Among others, we find therein our fellow humans, and therefore we cannot but classify ourselves in the same way as the other humans, objectively, as beings in this cosmos – that would, in principle, be the same cosmos without us. The structures of this cosmos can be discovered by research, and the results can be converted into technical devices, processes, and usages. In consequence, the structures of humans can be researched and discovered, too, and the prevalent view has been for a long time, that the human perception works in such a way that man constructs, stores, and maintains suitable mental models, and that, in a specific situation at hand, he retrieves from his repertoire a matching model and behaves according to it. In any case, this is what it looks like when we verbalize how we perceive and in which way we act.

Recently, even the more detailed view has been developed, that these models and processes are all effected by our brain, with its inner structures and its activities governed by the laws of nature. The brain can do this, so to speak, all on its own, while our perceptions are just side effects of brain activity. In this line of thinking, all our life is being displayed to us by our brain.

Whereas hardly anybody has a problem with the view of mental world-modelling, the view of world-modelling as pure brain-physiology is controversial, because it reduces man to physical object.

Critical Questions

Instantly, the question occurs, what the instance is to whom or which the brain is displaying life? Also one may ask, how anybody could know of an objective world, if one does only have what the brain is displaying. Finally, one might like to know, how a brain scientist could undertake to prove, in a brain, the representations of thought structures that he does not understand. One need not even think of a specialist that is understood by only 50 people in the world. Just imagine a person that thinks widely different from the brain scientist – that is: most people. In order to prove the isomorphism between specific thoughts and specific brain processes, the scientist will have to know what the person is thinking, most of which he does not understand. Possibly, the person may not even be able to formulate it. Hence the scientist can, on principle, try to prove the isomorphism only for thoughts that he himself understands. Why should such a constraint be acceptable?

What we are perceiving

Still, the view is very useful, that our perceptions are displayed to us by the brain: in any case, we do not have anything but what is – seemingly or really – displayed to us; nothing but the perception of this display. Within this display of our life we cannot perceive anything additional behind it. Neither do we perceive our brain – usually we do not see it in our life, and we never sense it – nor do we, bypassing the brain, perceive another, "objective" world that influences the brain in what it is going to display to us. Such a claimed background structure of our perception is fiction – possibly useful, but not universally dependable. Our perception is primordial and direct. What we encounter therein, comes like out of nothingness.

The primary given in our life is, that there is something and not nothing. Something stands out from nothingness – it "exists". In this sense, our life is perceptible, "articulated". That something is articulated still does not mean that it is a content, a variety, or a structure. Where is the origin of what we perceive?

We tend to think that, what we perceive is not only articulated but also carries its structure and meaning with it. But it doesn't. Let us take the following example:

εν αρχη ην ο λογος και ο λογος ην προς τον θεον και θεος ην ο λογος.

To most people, this will occur as an unknown, foreign lettering; some will see a Greek piece of text; others will immediately see the beginning of the Gospel of Saint John. What occurs differently to different people cannot originate from the same articulation but must be contributed individually by people. Another example: Some sound comes from a

speaker. One person hears some classic music, to the second it sounds abhorrent, the third is directly in Brahms' violin concerto, the fourth equally quickly in a famous recording of this concerto by Menuhin and Furtwängler. The first one tries to ignore it, the second swears and leaves, the third one concentrates on it, and the fourth one is being reminded that he had already planned to digitize his old gramophone record of this very performance and now makes up his mind to do it. Relevance for action, too, does not originate in the articulated phenomena that occur to us but in our corresponding connotations, and in what we are currently having in mind.

We notice what is occurring to us, but what we recognize in it depends on the concepts that we are associating with the phenomena. The concepts and their structures are developed and confirmed through successful action – especially through learning and practicing – and they determine our perception. Every human has therefore an *individual* world, that is the compound structure of all concepts that [s]he can associate, in short: all that [s]he can individually grasp and live.

The world can then be abstractly defined as the superstructure of all possible individual worlds that humans can, in principle, conceptually grasp and live. This definition of "world" may appear relatively formal and abstract here, but the corresponding sub-worlds are familiar to us, for example, the everyday world, the world of work, the children's world, the world of fashion, the financial world, the world of art, the world of physics, the world of traffic, the world of crime, the world of animals, and many more. All such worlds comprise their objects, their know-how, their roles, their written and unwritten rules, their institutions, their careers, their economy, their history, their media, and many others – each of them being sub-worlds of their own.

Primordial Sub-Worlds

More primordial than the sub-worlds above, however, is a different subdivision of the world. Actually, we do not only perceive external situations and structures but – in the same associative way and equally effective – also inner ones: our thoughts, our recollections and imaginations, our body status, our feelings, our inner drivers, our inner speech. In our world, inner and outer phenomena occur likewise and in parallel, and classifying them in this way is the first fundamental structure we give to our world.

Our world has started small and, in the course of our life, grown to an extent that cannot be overlooked. We do all the time acquire new knowledge and new repertoire of action. With respect to the world of our thoughts we rather speak of "understanding" than of "perceiving". It is permanently growing in that we are having more and more thoughts that we understand – those that we have devised ourselves, and those that other humans have devised and communicated, and that we have then learnt. Understanding is constructive. Even when we fancy that we were proceeding analytically and into the details of sub-structures, the sub-structures must first have been constructed and added to our world of thoughts.

With the newly grasped world contents – and correspondingly with our forgetting and unlearning – our associations change, for example, from some "abhorrent sounds" to "Brahms' violin concerto" and thereby they may also switch between our inner sub-worlds. First, what occurs to us are sounds from the outer world, later possibly the musical thought object "Brahms' violin concerto" plus the feeling of musical enjoyment. The more world we explore for us, the more it occurs to us in this way: shaped by our associations – "shaped", because we do no longer care about our previous perceptions of phenomena of the outer world (for example, the sounds) and because, as a result, they do no longer occur to us. In the end, we fancy that the thought objects constitute the outer world.

Language and Culture

The communication of phenomena makes a big leap forward in that we learn symbol systems, first and foremost: spoken and written language. A young human practices to always associate with language expressions the same as her fellow humans, for example, with "8+9" to always associate "17". In this way, she adopts proven "pieces" of world, and need not explore them newly on her own.

This constitutes the base of culture and of the objective world. One's own, individual world is best enhanced in the way that ancestors and fellow humans have shown and are showing to succeed, that is, by building a copy of their proven world. One seeks to expand one's capabilities of living, and the most direct method is, to imitate the capabilities of others.

The portfolio of all such capabilities of living, world building-blocks, and -recipes in our social environment can be understood as our culture. That we are copying from one and the same source of capabilities has the effect, that most humans whom we usually meet show the same basic repertoire of all-day modes of life – "that's the way to view and think and feel and act" –, and that there are large and small groups of fellow humans with identical special repertoires, respectively, for example, all women, all truckers, all photographers, all soccer players, or all porcelain collectors. At the outset, what occurs to people will not be the same throughout, but their worlds overlap in many instances, and those parts that overlap among many people are collective. This kind of collective-ness is easily recognized, when other people behave in the same way we ourselves would behave, or, when we find agreement in communication about behaviour. In this context, objectiveness is a special case of collective-ness, with additional – collective – criteria for universal confirmation.

We are now well equipped to review our prevalent world view.

The Objective World

Let us first put the question whether the cosmos can be the objective world. We have already established that, what occurs to us, is all that we perceive; that it is single-layer.

Something possibly more real behind it, an independent, non-illusionary, primary world of facts cannot logically occur to us in addition. We perceive only one – our – world, and there is no doubt about what occurs to us.

What then is the cosmos, what the objective world? First of all, our external world objects that, according to our experience, occur – or would occur or would have occurred – to all humans in the same way. A supermarket is a supermarket, a child is a child, a cloud is a cloud, coldness is coldness, now, in the past, and in the future.

The major part of the cosmos, however, is part of our internal world of thoughts and consists of mental objects. An electron does not occur to us in the external world, but rather as a mental object, and likewise the theories of electrostatics, -dynamics, and -mechanics, of solid-state physics, etc., are all mental objects and relate mental objects that do not occur in our external world. What we can perceive in the external world are the experiments, by which we assess whether the theories are good for predicting occurrences in the external world; furthermore the occurrences which can be explained with the theories; and finally, the devices which can be build according to the theories.

The same is true about the astronomic cosmos. In the external world, we perceive sun, moon, and stars as lightish, varying, moving forms in the sky. Astronomic bodies, fireballs, radio sources occur to us only in their theories. Even when we see them in a telescope, they do not really occur to us, but we perceive pictures displayed to us by an image-generating device based on a theory of optics, which we trust – on grounds of collective criteria of universal confirmation.

Likewise, the world of microbiology is predominantly mental. The features of living beings occur to us, but their cell structures, physiology, and genetics are purely mental contents of theories.

All these theoretical objects are usually viewed as external objects constituting a reality, the cosmos, that exists independent of us. Actually, the cosmos does not at all occur to us in the external world, but exists purely mentally. Not just fictitious but objective, and thereby independent of us, it can only be because humans can communicate about it, and do agree that its theories are by and large reliable.

This does not mean that we had to dismiss in practice our prevalent view of the cosmos as objective external world. It continues to be useful as a practical, also figurative, notion but we must not overstress it as if it were an absolute truth. A theory is only valid as long as nothing in our external world contradicts it. The cosmos can change, that is, when a theory is replaced by a new one. Laws of nature are theories. They cannot enforce facts, but depend on facts.

Brain and World

The brain is a largely mental object, its function is pure theory. What it cannot is, to model an independent, objective, cosmos-like world, because such a world does not exist. The cosmos is almost completely mental, and it does not make sense to conceive it as once

more mapped mentally, that is, upon our mental model of the cosmos. What we can do is to associate, with our perceptions in the external world, other objects in our internal sub-worlds – with the tree: the beech, the beechnuts, their taste, the forest, the cool air in its shadows, the destination of the forest walk, etc. We can associate and are doing it all along, and that fact should probably play the main part in a theory of the brain.

Least of all can the brain model *the* world. The cosmos is not everything, by no means, but only a small part of the world that humans have acquired so far. The world of natural science is one, certainly not a particularly big one, among the sub-worlds that we have above started to enumerate. There are further examples: the worlds of economy, finance, sports, gastronomy, architecture, psychology, medicine, mathematics, religion, trade, politics, philately, communications, media, computers, the internet, shipbuilding, circus, tourism, and many more. Each of them is a giant sub-world that contains the plenty of respective capabilities that many humans have – in life-long efforts and through many generations, building on top of one another – explored and passed on.

Even in case a human acquires for herself just sections of a limited number of sub-worlds of this kind, she will not be able during a lifetime to detail all the contents thus available to her disposition. It is hardly imaginable how somebody could fit such a human world into a formal representation and then prove a corresponding structure in a human brain. And it can hardly be seen, why the world, as it occurs to us, should once more be constructed into a mental object, the brain, where it would then, theoretically, in the best case, occur to us once more in the way it already does.

The World of Science and the Marvels of Creation

Above, we have already made some statements about theories, for example, that they are mental objects aimed at making predictions. There are everyday-life theories, for example, about the mindset of a dialogue partner; and there are scientific theories. With the former, we are used to expect that we may occasionally be wrong; for scientific theories there are agreed methods of reproducible confirmation, for example, experiments regarding the predictions, that will guarantee to some extent, that we can rely upon a thus confirmed theory.

A key trait of scientific theories is therefore that they are formal, that is, that they consist of assertions about defined objects, relations, and transformations, often in mathematical form, and that they have parameters and are open to falsification through measurements of these parameters. Though theories cannot be verified but only tested in finite numbers of cases, there are a plenty of reliable theories that are frequently and routinely being applied.

They are then directly considered as laws, the predictions of which are inescapable, and that do not only explain but rather enforce the course of things – including the past. Of course, they do not enforce anything, their confirmation is always finite, and that, time and again, outcomes differ from predictions is no surprise – and in no case a miracle. Miracles are not at all special. After all, we cannot destine what occurs to us in the world,

and we can deal with that only by relying upon our everyday-life and scientific theories, and by judging to which extent we can trust them. And so we trust that the ground beneath our feet does not disappear in the next moment, and that we will not, in the next second, be without air to breathe.

By the way, we can practically use theories only if they are not too complex. Something that occurs regularly – think, for example, of cloud forms – can be so widely varying that the shortest possible theory for it would have to describe individually every configuration it is aimed to cover. There is no law of nature ensuring that laws of nature be simple.

Many people consider theories about the origin of the cosmos as extraordinarily important because they hope to thereby fundamentally understand the world. There are some such theories, but even the best ones are still insufficiently confirmed. A prominent one – insufficiently confirmed, too – is the big-bang theory. Basically it says that our universe is the result of an explosion starting from one point 14 billion years ago. That event is then understood as the beginning of the world, the creation of the world, more precisely, of the cosmos, that is: of the outer world that is independent of us and that we more or less inadequately perceive.

But we have already shown that *this* world is purely fictitious. It occurs to us solely in the theories of our mental world. In our individual external world, no expansion of the universe occurs to us, nor any background radiation, gravitation, dark matter, dark energy. Their creators are the humans who have, in the course of time, designed the corresponding theories.

The conceived beginning in time of the conceived cosmos is not a creation in the sense of the origin of our world. Our world is being created "live" in the way that something articulated occurs to us that we understand; it is – as we have seen above – a giant structure of related sub-worlds that sum up to our life, each of them so large and complex that a single person can hardly master it fully anymore. And this world is really like – if you so wish – created from the extra-worldly, that is, articulated out of nothing in the world. It constitutes our life, it begins and it ends with our life.

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"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". One need not be Christian to understand here that, already two thousand years ago, humans have seen what the world is and how Dasein is functioning: namely as the continued perception of articulated phenomena that occur to us as if they were coming from the extra-worldly.

Today, rather nobody has a view on his or her Dasein, and therefore some scientists can easily make the public believe, that they were modelling the world; that the world were the cosmos; that everything therein could be explained on the basis of elementary forces and particles; that the cosmos were existing independent of us, independent to an extent that our brain could truly or falsely display our life therein, even fake our self. To uncritically accept this, is analogous to the behaviour that scientists often criticize: that people believe religious statements just because authorities have always asserted them.

Natural science claims to be particularly exact and critical, and that is what it should also be with regard to itself. Natural science should indubitably know which existential givens enable its operation, and what it can actually assert on this basis.

Our Best Ethics Are Deficient

... because they fail to recognize the fundamental disposition of our being

Human dignity, human rights, humanity, social standards, organized and individual help: these are the paradigms of the best ethics of our time. They have been hard-fought through centuries, and we appreciate and advocate them as highly valuable achievements. However, their worldwide acceptance and implementation are wanting, and even in states recognized for their rule of law, behaviours and systems remain unchallenged that restrict humans to drastically lagging, up to unendurable conditions of life, or even rob them of their existence.

That is something that good ethics should actually not leave without response. That such evils can persist is due to a fundamental deficiency of our common humanistic ethics as it is focussed on the autonomy of man. This deficiency exists relative to a fundamental trait of our being, namely to advance life. Accordingly, the direction is clear into which our ethics is to be advanced.

For conceiving ethics, one is better familiar with the human Dasein (those aspects of our being that are independent of the contents of the world) and with the world. From the philosophy of being, we do not need more here than a small extract that can be presented in a few paragraphs. The point is that our Dasein is disposed in such a way that we continuously extend the possibilities of our life in the world, and that our life intrinsically includes the possibilities of our fellow humans.

The Fundamental Disposition of Dasein is, to Advance Life

In our Dasein, we proceed time-wise from moment to moment. In every moment we find ourselves in a situation; from previous experiences, we know our options to act in it, and what the results would be in the next moment; and on this base we decide and act. And then the next moment is present, and we are proven right or confronted with something unexpected. This experience is inescapable, and it influences what we know and can knowingly do. Our possibilities of life are thereby becoming a little confirmed or extended.

Over the many moments of our life we thus experience a vast increase of the possibilities of our life. That can easily be seen by looking back: we have started with virtually zero knowledge and options to act, and today, we understand a giant, complex world and can conduct our life therein without ever becoming able to fully describe or exhaust our possibilities.

Our progress in advancing our life depends very much on our decisions from moment to moment, which in turn are determined by our stance. We can, as a matter of principle, act in such a way as works for all people of our culture, and then our possibilities of life grow "only" through the smaller or bigger surprises that fate is imposing on us. Or we can, as a matter of principle, act in ways that we have not previously tried, and then we gain new experiences, and our possibilities of life grow because we want it.

In the first place, this is true for ourselves. Of course, a number of people jointly command a greater potential for enhancement and expansion than individually. Our fellow humans account for the largest variable part of our world and are thus offering by far the greatest wealth of opportunities for extending our possibilities of life and for growing. Again, our experiences with our fellow humans are the richer, the stronger their possibilities of life are growing. The most productive approach to advance our life is to advance the life of our fellow humans.

If we do not advance the life of our fellow humans when and where we actually could do it, then our conscience signals guilt: that we fail at something that we owe to life. In other words: Advancing life is good, not to advance life is bad – or as a stance: evil.

References to Philosophy and Religion

These considerations are not new. In "Being and Time" Heidegger defines being-guilty as "being the cause of some not-being", and this means, that we have to enable being and to advance the possibilities of being.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus proclaims, by means of his "But I say unto you"-teachings, that we are to make peace with our brother, not to suppress women, not to resist evil, not to hit back, to see and treat the enemy as God's child, to accompany somebody two miles when asked for one, to give the overcoat in addition to the coat. The common denominator is, that the opposite behaviour does not advance life. This is certainly not about specific rules, not about ethics in particular cases; Jesus rather outlines a *Dasein stance* that is in sync with the fundamental disposition of Dasein, to advance life. This is also the direction of his Parable of the Talents.

Already the Old Testament has God say: "be fruitful and multiply" and "subdue it [the earth]", which means that our being in the world is disposed in such a way that we advance life, extend our world and explore new sub-worlds, and that ultimately we cannot elude this. The Tower of Babel is a depiction of the human trait, to pile up new possibilities of life on top the ones available, as if building towers – to such heights that the towers of individual people diverge and people do not understand each other anymore. The tale of Kain and Abel says, firstly, that we are positively in charge to advance the life of our brother, and, secondly, that "God is saying it", that is: that it is fundamental for our being.

As we now know this, what are the consequences for our being-in-the-world?

Nothing can be deduced from it. From the intention to advance life it cannot be inferred which action or inaction would indeed advance life, because this depends upon how our world is, and, in the objective world: upon the commonly accepted facts and our knowledge of these facts.

We might possibly wish to develop ethics to end all ethics for advancing life, but we know from previous attempts, that ethics cannot be formulated in such a way that they cover all situations without detrimental side effects – what may advance here, may impair there –, and that ethics are notoriously falling back against the general progress of the world. The great lawgiver – like the universal genius – has long been left behind by the growth of the world. More than the general paradigm, to advance life, cannot possibly be conveyed to the world.

However, what can be done for the implementation of this paradigm in the world, is twofold:

- One can individually assume a Dasein stance to advance life, and then conceive what one would in this sense do and not do.
- One can from this Dasein stance, in a political process, carefully and circumspectly evolve ethics.

Considerations Regarding a Good Dasein Stance

That our life can be advanced only in a limited way or even not at all, if we do not advance the life of our fellow humans, that appears strange to us. Every man is the architect of his own fortune, thus we think, and we have to concede that to our fellow humans, and the same they have to concede to us as well.

Of course we do not keep to this rigour, when it comes to our relatives, friends, and selected other persons, that is: our in-group. We are even used to advance the life of strangers, when we act as coaches, service providers, helpers, donators, tax payers. The problem is not that we would not have the competence for it, but how we define our in-group.

In view of the basic disposition of Dasein, all people belong to our in-group. This does not mean that we would, for all of them, have to accomplish something that advances their life. That is not practicable in the world. But it imposes on us to be particularly careful, if our means to advance life are powerful, or if our behaviour has a price that others are to pay.

Action or inaction can fail, also if intended to advance life. Their result can be that life is impaired. If we want to have life advanced then there is no way other than to not only compensate but over-compensate the impairment. Nothing frees us from this obligation, neither a good intention nor a lack of awareness of the impairment. "Being the cause of some not-being" is totally objective, independent of our best intention and knowledge. We are liable.

In most cases, we have more options to advance life than we can possibly carry out. If we choose some of them, then we fail the others. In this sense we always become guilty. However guilt is not an instrument for pinning down humans, but a given of every Dasein. If we set out to advance life then we must not be stopped by guilt. Wallowing in guilt does not advance life. We must learn from guilt how to advance life better next time. Apart from that, we are forgiven.

This is also true for any guilt of others against ourselves. If we focus on the impairment that we are suffering, strive for retaliation, seek revenge, then this binds our capacity, and we are lacking it for advancing life. If we even take revenge "successfully", then we add to the impairment of life. If we really want to advance life, then we cannot but bear the impairments and, starting from the impaired condition, again advance life.

Autonomy sets a limit to advancing the life of others. We cannot against their will advance the life of others. If their life is stagnant, then it may even not be possible to motivate them to advance their life themselves. Of course, we must help fellow humans whose situation restricts their autonomy so much that they do no longer have any options of their own to advance their life, in particular, people who are seeking help.

To effectively advance life requires the corresponding skills. It requires knowledge and capabilities that we first have to learn and advance until we surely command them as our own possibilities of living. Advancing life is itself a possibility of life that has to be advanced. Much of it can obviously be copied and learnt from others, but there can also – like elsewhere – happen setbacks which must be overcome.

Considerations Regarding the Further Development of Ethics

Ethical rules cannot be derived from the fundamental traits of Dasein, because these are independent of the world, absolute. It is impossible to relate something with the Absolute. Specifically, texts in the world cannot be claimed as absolute, for example, as divine. Therefore such texts cannot be the basis for ethics.

Which action or inaction will advance life, that fully depends – as already said – upon the facts in the world, on its givens and on its future. For the development of ethical rules, we must therefore draw on the best, newest, relevant knowledge available. And the development requires a political process, because the actions and inactions, that are to be regulated, may have different effects on different groups of people concerned.

The prevalent ethics models completely fail to cover the advancement of life, and therefore give plenty of room for improvements. They have all been guided by the *Ten Commandments* which only prescribe that life must not be impaired. This is being carried forward in the *universal human rights*, the rules of which are equally constrained to not impair life. This is clearly insufficient. – That *human dignity* is seen as inviolable, has indeed the effect that the autonomy of humans is being preserved, but that, for the rest, they are being left to their own. The principle of human dignity leaves behaviour ethically unchallenged that impairs or violates people, even very many people. As an amendment

to current ethics, it should therefore be required to pay attention to the humans who may be affected by any action or inaction, with a view to offer them options to advance their life and thus live their life in dignity. – Also the *love of thy neighbour* is a deficient principle, for its pragmatic limitation to the nearest humans determines the ethical facts in such a way, that already the second nearest humans, let alone more distant humans, are left unprotected. It must therefore become an additional standard that we consider ourselves in charge for all humans, the lives of which we can somehow affect, and that we think about advancing their lives.

Some supporting ideals and paradigms might help to promote improvements of our common ethics, for example, that people should coach each other locally and globally, or, that the powerful people are in danger of impairing their own lives at the expense of others.

Also, a better culture of guilt should be pursued. There is much room for strengthening and spreading the insight that guilt is inescapable, and that forgiving and bearing are absolutely necessary. If this would enable a more open dealing with guilt, then we all could better learn how life can be advanced with less undesirable side effects.

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At long sight, we need not be pessimistic, for our Dasein is fundamentally disposed towards advancing life, and because this does indeed work as can be seen from the advancements in the world, even if they are unevenly distributed. The question still remains, whether we want to continue patiently experiencing and witnessing impairments of life, or whether and how we could possibly expedite the advancement of possibilities of life for all people. The first and primary prerequisite to this end would be to establish the insight that the very meaning of Dasein is to advance life.

The Absolute

What of our being is absolute?

1. What the Subject Is, and How It Can Be Talked About.

"Absolute" means "detached" or "separate" – just as the Latin adjective "absolutus". If the word "absolute" is standing alone, this detachedness or separateness is understood to be total, that is "absolute" as the opposite of "relative" or of "in relation", and, by the way, not as a superlative. The Absolute is not detached from, or separate of, something – because that would still be a relation to this "something" –, but it is detached from, and separate of, everything and cannot be put in any relation.

This requires some special care in communicating about the Absolute. Because assertions are always about relations, it is impossible to make assertions about the Absolute. Of course, this consequence applies to the full content of this very essay on the Absolute. As this essay is meant to be relevant, we have to show first, that and how its statements could be valid in some way.

Above all, nothing can be said about whether the Absolute is somehow "being" at all. This does not exclude that we humans may be able to perceive something as absolute, as different from all – relative – contents of our world.

If we want to communicate such a perception then, as said before, assertions are ineligible, and therefore it is getting difficult. Still, we have our vocabulary and can try to use it for talking "around" the perception or to otherwise induce associations and thereby approximately "point to" the perceived Absolute. And, by any chance, the addressee of the communication may start to "see" it – not optically, but with the "inner eye".

Approximately pointing language can indeed be effective, as the preceding sentence may already demonstrate. Most people readily "understand" what is meant with the "inner eye", even though nowhere inside the human body there is an eye in the literal sense of the word. And so we can hope that this whole essay can be effective as an approximately pointing text; that it can successfully point.

2. Why We Should Actually Concern Ourselves With the Absolute

To begin with, we offer only one example here, more will follow below.

Without the Absolute there is no salvation [in German: *Erlösung*]. This is almost a tautology: Salvation is detachment from strain, here in the existential meaning:

detachment from the fundamental burden of our existence, that is the strain to meet the incessant demands of our being in the world. As the Absolute [in German: das Abgelöste] is literally detached from everything, it is also detached from the world. It offers the only possible "position" towards which one may possibly detach oneself from the world – in which one may be saved [erlöst].

This should be sufficient reason to deal with the Absolute.

There are two ways for this: We can directly have an absolute experience, or we can focus on our being and try to "see" what of our being is absolute – in other words: any aspects of our being, apart from the world. (For the totality of these aspects we use the term "Dasein" below.)

3. Experiences of the Absolute

In view of all that we have so far said about the Absolute, we cannot have any control about whether, if, and how we may possibly experience it. But if we do experience it, it must in any case come as absolute, unmistakable, compelling, ungraspable, indescribable. The noteworthiness of the experience will urge us to tell it to other people, but we will have no better than more or less inapplicable words about the situation in which it happened, mainly the inner images und feelings directly after it.

Experiences of the Absolute have been reported at all times: facing God; mystical unification with God, nature, or nothingness; a deep stage of meditation; standstill of time; a burning bush that is not consumed by the fire; the sun crashing down. Such reports fit the pattern above, but the reference to an experience of the Absolute cannot be proved, not even stated as an assertion. Whoever has not personally had such an experience, will tend to view it as impossible; and whoever did have an absolute experience of his or her own, will say: in my case, it was different. Experiences of the Absolute may happen to everybody, but they can hardly be objectified.

4. What of Our Being Is Absolute – the Pursuit of the Primordial

The second way to deal with the Absolute, is to focus on our being and to look whether we can see something absolute in it. Phenomena in the world are out of the question – that is, all perceptions from the senses, thoughts, feelings, motivations, memories, inner images, inner words – because everything in the world is relative and conceivable, so that it can also be said: The Absolute is the Extra-worldly.

Below, we offer a number of candidates for sights of the Absolute.

Note well: This is not a matter of assertions that might be true or false, that could be proved or refuted, for or against which one could argue. Rather the offered sights are either suitable, or not: either one can see what is shown, or one cannot.

Absolute: That There Is Something, and That We Are Being; the Authentic Self

What we are certain about is, above all, our existence. There is not just nothing, but there is something. Everybody knows this for himself with absolute certainty, because it occurs to himself.

This is a given that does not lend itself to inner-worldly critique, for example, to the argument that it were an illusion, quite possibly produced by our brain. In order to build a structure of concepts – my world – and to move therein, for example, to understand and speak of illusions and brain capabilities, there must first and primordially be a framework enabling that something articulated and *conceptually graspable* can occur to me. To this end, I have to be, and *to me* something has to stand out from nothingness – *to exist* – that I understand.

Therefore, we can say: it is absolute, that there is something and that it refers to myself.

This "self" does not occur to us but we know that we are "it". To discriminate it from other meanings of the word "self", we speak here of the Absolute or Authentic Self.

Absolute: That We Understand

What occurs to us primordially is changing phenomena. Above all, they are always understood. We understand them directly and in such a way, that we "can live them".

Our individual world consists of those phenomena that we understand whenever they occur to us. *The* world is everything that humans can and could in principle understand.

In order not to leave this as abstract as it appears, we should enrich it with some context:

Our understanding is conceptual and corresponds directly to our concepts. Primarily, the phenomena are complete situations, possibly with some characteristic highlights. The situations can be unstructured, for example, we perceive them merely as comfortable or uncanny. But if we have already encountered them repeatedly, then we can structure them conceptually and understand their details and relationships.

For everybody, individually, the phenomena and the corresponding concepts are the same. The discrimination between phenomena and concepts is not existentially primordial, but an additional analysis. Let us, for example, take a certain piece of text: Depending on the individual understanding of the person encountering the text, it will occur to him as unintelligible text, as unintelligible German text, as understood but otherwise unknown German text, or perhaps as a German text of a Beatles song, that he may even be able to sing. Only from the communication with Others we see that everybody has conceptually different phenomena, and that the individual worlds therefore differ. And only by communication can we match worlds among each other, and copy world contents from each other, and thus establish a common, objective world.

Back to the primordial understanding. It is not the same as being able to explain. If our television set abruptly ceases to display any picture anymore, or when, out of nothing, we

see everything laterally inversed, or if somebody is suddenly healed from an objectively incurable disease, then we may not be able to explain it, but we do precisely understand the direct facts; otherwise, they could not irritate us.

We understand everything that occurs to us in the world. Our understanding is absolute.

Absolute: Our Intelligence, the Steady Momentary Growth of Our World

From one moment to the other, we understand something new that we did not understand before, and of which we did not even know that there was something to understand. We are not in control of this. New understanding is a given that we do not understand in that it is not completely predictable, but ceaseless as long as we live.

The following analyzes, so to speak, microscopically, how our life is proceeding:

We are, at the moment, in a situation that we understand. We know that the next moment comes. We understand from our previous experience, how we can, through our behaviour, influence the situation in the next moment. By choosing from this behavioural repertoire, we take the step to the next moment. It comes, and the situation is as we have intended, or it differs. Maybe, we ponder why it has turned out this or the other way, and learn our lesson from it, such that our understanding of situations and behaviour is confirmed or changed.

All that is certain and inescapable, it is absolute: the current moment; the inevitably coming next moment; the past moments; our contribution to the coming moment through our will; the disposability of the past for competent willing; the growth of our understanding that results from the step to the current moment.

Like our understanding, the steady growth of our understanding – the steady growth of our world – is an absolute given of our being.

Absolute: Our Free Will

Every moment, corresponding to our will, we choose from our repertoire of understanding behaviour, the step to the next moment.

Our choice depends on our view of how the world is functioning. If we feel restricted in our freedom in the world, then this is not a matter of our free will, but of our possible choices, as it were, our degrees of freedom. They, in turn, depend upon our own knowledge and capabilities, and upon many inner-worldly factors, from our own drives and inhibitions unto the impositions by other people. In our world, we are bound to the learnt laws and rules, to causality and chance, and therefore, scientifically, there cannot be a free will.

To will freely, we can only if absolved from all inner-worldly laws and rules, that is being detached from the world. It follows, that the only position, from which one can freely will, is the absolute position of the Authentic Self.

It is therefore impossible to make any assertions about a free will, neither about where it might come from, nor how it could have an effect in the world. However, we know by ourselves, that it is effective: that we can freely intend something of our choice and, depending on our possibilities, pursue and attain the intended.

Absolute: The Signification of Our Being

We have noted above, that our world is growing in small steps as we continue to understand more and more. In a greater perspective, this is even more obvious: We all did not understand anything, initially in our life. Then we made our own experiences and learnt from others, and today, our understanding and our capabilities are so voluminous, that a human lifetime would not be enough for documenting all of them. This is true for everybody individually as for all mankind. From zero world to a very large world: this shows, that our being is essentially disposed in such a way, that we advance our possibilities of life. This is absolutely so.

Accordingly, the signification of our life is, to advance life. In other words: to advance life is *good*, not to advance life is *bad*; the mindset not to advance life is *evil*.

5. Related Considerations

Forgiveness

We always have many chances for advancing life. Taking the ones we miss the others. With those that we are taking, we are in line with the fundamental disposition of our being: to advance life. With those that we are missing, we are not in line, we come out guilty, owing something to our being.

Guilt is therefore a fundamental trait of our being. For advancing life, it is productive to learn from guilt how to possibly advance life better in the future. Counterproductive is to otherwise deal with guilt, to wallow in it, to maintain a fixation on it, to allow oneself to be absorbed by it. Above all, we have to overcompensate impairments to life possibilities that we have done to others, to at least advance life in the overall balance.

If other people impair our life, then this does not offset the fundamental disposition of our being. We must not contribute further impairments by returning like for like, or by taking revenge. It may be tough, but from the guilt of others we have to learn how to advance life better, and, apart from that, we have to bear the corresponding burden on us.

From all this, the following is evident: Whichever kind of accounting of guilt and condemnation on the base of guilt may be thought of: they are not reconcilable with advancing life. If the question of forgiveness can be raised at all, then: our guilt is forgiven.

The Attractive World

We have found ourselves in the world without any contribution on our part, we have been "put" or "thrown" into it. And we engage in it, we even fall for it, lose ourselves in it. What we thereby actually lose, and have already lost, is our sight of the Absolute. We may never have had a sight of it, and it did not occur to us at all, that we could get a sight of it. But even when we get the opportunity for it, we tend to avoid it – like everything that has to do with questions about our existence. Our being has, so to speak, a downward slope into the world and away from the Absolute, and this slope is fairly steep.

We fully engage in the world, in order to participate in the advancement of life there, and in doing so, we ignore the Absolute. Without help, we will not get a sight of it, and we do not know anyway what that should be good for. We have no bearing on it.

Still, many people believe they know, what it is good for, say, to pray the Our Father. We want to follow this up now and demonstrate that, what has been said before, coincides with the existential content of the Our Father, in other words that we have just had a walk through the Our Father.

6. The Absolute in the Our Father

That the Our Father has an existential meaning is fairly obvious. Whenever the authors of the bible want to say something essential about our Dasein, they tend to present it as God's words, or as Jesus' words, as they use to ascribe divine authority to him and his words. Accordingly, Jesus' words are predominantly Dasein descriptions, above all the parables and the Sermon on the Mount, and therein, the Our Father.

However, the Our Father consists mostly of petitions, and petitions are not the same as descriptions. But the author of the Gospel according to Matthew has Jesus explain, a few verses earlier, that God knows and gives us what we need before we pray for it. Therefore it is perfectly legitimate to read the petitions of the Our Father as God-givens, that is, as statements about the Absolute. This is what we are going to do now, and in doing so, we will recognize exactly that, which we have laid out above.

Our Father which art in heaven shows this from the very beginning, as heaven stands for the Extra-worldly, the Absolute. God in heaven is thereby declared as absolute. The aspect of fatherliness will be covered below.

Holy is thy name repeats the Second Commandment and means that God's name is holy or sacrosanct – untouchable – insofar as it is impossible to relate it and form assertions about it.

Thy kingdom is coming refers to two major aspects of a "kingdom": governance and richness, which can be taken as the headlines of the two subsequent petitions.

Thy will is being done in earth, as it is in heaven points to two God-givens: What happens "in heaven", that is: extra-worldly, is rather invisible to us. Still, we have recognized our free will as absolute – in old language: as "heavenly" or "divine". "In earth" can confidently be understood as "in the world". We have shown above what "comes" towards us in the world: steadily and unavoidably, phenomena are occurring to us, and we understand them as the contents of our world. But which phenomena actually occur to us, is beyond our control. They occur to us fate-like, as if willed by some extra-worldly, absolute entity: as if willed and given by God.

You give us, all the time, what we need to live is the deeper meaning of the petition for our daily bread, if we take into account Jesus' answer to the devil's first temptation. Accordingly, man does not live by bread alone, but "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". Here they are again, the phenomena that occur to us from moment to moment: "spoken" by God, that is, absolute and articulated, so that we directly understand them, and they constitute our being-in-the-world, our life. This world is utterly rich and for free, a present.

You forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors says, in its first part, the same as our first "related consideration" above: that our guilt is absolutely forgiven. The second part says that we must forgive if we want to stay in line with the fundamental disposition of our Dasein, to advance life.

You do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil corresponds to our second "related consideration": it is the world that attracts us, that is, "leads us into temptation", not the Absolute. But already in the beginning of this essay we have seen, that the Absolute can deliver us.

Let us come back to the first line of the Our Father, to the question left open: what about God is "father", or what about the Absolute is fatherly or parental. Some indication is that, compared to our elaborations above, the Our Father text seems to miss the intrinsic meaning of life, that is: to advance life. As we have seen, the latter is tantamount to the growth of our world, to the increase of what we understand and can act understandingly. It depends primarily upon the phenomena that occur to us, particularly the new ones. Obviously, the new challenges posed to us during, and up to the end of, our life, are such that we can master them and grow with them. This is analogous to the manner in which good parents raise their children: by giving them consistently new, manageable challenges – not sparing them occasional displeasing ones. Behind the denomination "father" in the Our Father there is exactly this view: that the phenomena occurring to us are, as if devised and measured in such a way that our life is being advanced.

7. Summary

What have we accomplished now? We have taken a look on our being and thus shown that certain traits of it are absolute. The results are far from the common view. The Absolute is so alien to us, that some billions of people can for two Millennia pray the Our Father without the least idea of its existential content. That we could very well live with that, is a view, that ignores our worries.

People are complaining about the badness of the world, after they – themselves – have subdivided it into what suits them and what does not. People complain about the general decline of religiosity, and at the same insist on assertions about God. Scientists have started to presume that the cosmos were all that is, and that it obeyed their laws. A part of mankind lives on cost of the others, unopposed by our ethics of humanity which only confirm the Others' dignity and rights, but ignore the responsibility to advance the life of the Others.

If everybody knew how Dasein is, and what is absolute about it, then these problems could be addressed effectively. But nobody knows it, and the situation is self-stabilizing and would not even change, if somebody would give his life for it and, after death, resurrect to life again.

There remains the benefit for the individual. After all, with knowledge about our Dasein, we can optimize our individual Dasein stance. If we know what is absolute, we can spare the effort to struggle with it. If we know, what is absolutely given, we can consciously accept it and enjoy its richness and beauty. And if we know what is absolute, then we know the meaning of life, which always holds us, even in the deepest loss. To permanently sustain this knowledge and this stance versus the world, is possible. We have to refresh them on a regular basis, by focussing on the Absolute again and again.

2.

For the Reformation Anniversary

Religious Autonomy Today The Heteronomy of a Christian

*If somebody really wants to enter the "Kingdom of God",
then no human, no system, no circumstances will be able to stop him.*

... hear ye him Questions to Christians and Others

The Parable of the Recent Prodigal Son He doesn't arrive

The Parable of the Virtual World A view of our existence

The Our Father Restored **... partially, for praying in sync with the Christians**

Religious Autonomy Today

- The Heteronomy of a Christian -

*Whoever wants to enter beatitude
can achieve that now, in this world, freely and easily.
Help from organized religion cannot be expected in this.
But if somebody is determined to effectively enter the "Kingdom of God",
then no human, no system, no circumstances will be able to stop her/him.*

Luther has translated the bible into German language. This looks as if he had, for some length, paved the way towards religious autonomy for all people. For, at latest with the spread of the Luther bible, the Germans have, in principle, no longer been dependent on being told what the bible is saying, but have been able to read it themselves, and to scrutinize what they are being told about it. Today, the same is true for virtually all people and all languages.

The 500th anniversary of Luther's Reformation provides good reason for reviewing whether this direction has been taken further, and how far it has led us since. Do we have religious autonomy today, or at least more than back then? And is it an issue at all?

Basics

Autonomy, with respect to a stance, means to be able to take and keep it on grounds of one's own potentials, of one's own knowledge and competence. Accordingly, with respect to genuine religion, that is: the individual connection to God, autonomy means to be able to achieve and sustain one's connection to God on grounds of one's own knowledge and competence. One can bring oneself before God, and be there. We guess it already: Rather nobody is living this, and it is rather not an issue. Very well an issue is the search for God, but rather nobody has ever reported to have found God definitely, and in which way he can be found. Christians may possibly counter that they believe to have found God in the person of his son Christ. But that actually means that they are not seeing themselves directly before God. If there is real searching for God then it is obviously not effective.

Furthermore, autonomy means that one can freely decide about one's stance, including to leave it. It is clear that one cannot have a stance vis-a-vis a being without any kind of perception of it. The mode of our connection to God can be circumscribed as a kind of "seeing with the inner eye". And as we don't decide whether, what we are seeing, is a car –

for we just immediately see the car –, so we can't decide to see God. Either we are seeing God, or not. If we have seen God once, we cannot annihilate the experience. If somebody cannot see God, then this person may be autonomous, but not religiously autonomous.

Connection to God from one's own knowledge and competence does not mean that we are left to acquire them by our own efforts. Fellow men can, in principle, help to achieve them. Nevertheless, in the end, one's own religion is not dependent on any other human, rather we are ourselves knowing and seeing God. This should not be mistaken as religious subjectivism. It is not sufficient to construct a personal scheme of religion and be enthused about it. Warnings against "private religion" are appropriate insofar. But everybody warning against religious autonomy is actually striving for religious dependency.

Understanding the Bible and Systems of Religion

Actually it may be a long way to go from understanding the language of old Bible texts – or other religious reference texts – to understanding the connection of man to God. It cannot even be taken for sure from the outset that the latter understanding can possibly be extracted from the texts and, if so, in which way and to which extent – after all this has been tried for two millennia –; and it is not obvious how to get on, should the texts not lend themselves to reach the goal. Then one may still follow ideas to look into oneself for the kingdom of God, or to see God in nature, and there are paths of meditation. But these approaches may only carry for a limited distance. A really comprehensive understanding must cover and integrate both, these approaches and those of the Bible, and then quite some more.

On the other hand, Luther's – questionable – claim has been that the Bible alone is already saying everything due to be said about the justification of man before God, and that this justification is the bottom line of man's connection to God.

The question remains: Where are we today in understanding the Bible? The Christian denominations have, from the bible, derived large systems of teachings about the one God and his kingdom. Each of them is claiming to have the truth, but their teachings are diverging as widely as to expose plain contradictions. The differences are even being actively maintained and highlighted, and, in this way, each denomination tries to distinguish itself from the others.

Now, this is just how life is: If we have before us many propositions about the same matter, that are irreconcilably contradicting each other, then we *must* hypothesize that none of them is true. The members of the denominations of religion apparently are not the least taken aback by the fact that different "truths" are being held about God. As it has been impossible over millennia to resolve the issue of the "truth" of God, a layperson will not dare that either, but end up following some "truth" from the environment and swim with it – and then the want of clarification is gone. Religious autonomy looks much different.

The denominations of religion are large systems consisting of hierarchies of clerics; of teachings based on reference texts, that usually are glorifying a founder; of commandments, rules, ritual forms, buildings, works of art, sub-organizations, specialized departments, administrations, educational and social institutions, regular organized events, laymen, all with inner structures, external relations, goals and histories. Decisions about the teachings are reserved to the clerics. The theologians are their experts knowing what has been written about a specific "truth" of God during the last tens of centuries.

Within a system of this type one may move for a lifetime and never encounter God. It is inevitable to get lost in it and thus to forget to search for God and to guide people to God.

Religious "Truths" and Reason

As a layperson, one cannot but take what the system is offering. Let us look at some Christian propositions meant to be "truths" of God – other denominations of religion are showing comparable propositions. Their common claim is that they are higher truths, taking precedence over and, as the case may be, overruling inner-worldly truths.

Everybody knows that no human can be born without an impregnation, that no human can revive after death, that no human can enforce any deviation from laws of nature, and that a certain teaching cannot be trusted as long as many deviating and contradicting alternatives are being perpetuated, and the controversy has not been resolved. In order to gain or be granted access to the "truth" of God, we are being asked to give up, to some extent, our own, proven knowledge of the world.

One must also give up logic to some extent, because a virgin birth does not imply that the baby is divine; a resurrection from death does not imply the divinity of the resurrected; and generally, from the occurrence of a miracle one can never derive that it had a divine cause – because a coincidence just isn't the same as a causal relation.

Likewise, one can plainly forget the demand for structural transparency: how a petitionary prayer can lead to its claimed effect; why any code of sins should be valid; how the absolution from sins for other people through the death of Jesus should be functioning; what eternity should have to do with infinite time; how the resurrection of the dead should happen in all detail: for all this, plausible explanations do not exist, and aren't usually asked for.

Finally one should rather not expect contemporary language. Predominant is the exegesis of old texts and pictures as if there couldn't be any current ones matching the purpose. One is invited to put oneself into a well-herded sheep, that is, into a gregarious animal of limited intelligence and rather strange to most people. For our modern, dynamic society, a code of ethics is being propagated, that had been developed for a static society at a time when most of the current fields of ethics were far from existing. God is being positioned as a kind of wise and good lord or king – a long past role that nobody knows anymore today – and thus is not only being presented through an inept picture but moreover as an unknown and inaccessible figure which, on top of all, requires unconditional obedience. –

If their respective reference texts would be taken away from the teachers of organized religion then nothing would remain that they had to say about God.

Our proven knowledge of the world, logic, our legitimate demands for structural transparency, and contemporary language: these are aspects of our common, personal – if not religious – autonomy. We are being asked by the denominations of religion to give up autonomy in the above, and thousand other, cases if we want access to the "truth" of God from them.

Many people, who aren't willing to give away reason for the Christian religious offering, take this as sufficient reason to turn away. The Christian responses to this are of the following kind: that you cannot find God through reason; that many of the texts are to be taken as metaphorical or as legends. They may be pointing out that we should rather do something for our salvation than risk eternal damnation; that their communities are offering safety and love. – That is sufficient for the members, but not for those how turn away; to whom the metaphors don't carry anything and the legends do not appeal; who take eternal damnation as an empty threat; and who find security and love themselves.

Propositions about God

But let us continue to look at Christian propositions offered as "truths" of God, and now directly referring to God. Common are propositions like: God is great, the highest, almighty, full of grace, or to be feared; that God is the originator of commandments and interdictions, and that certain texts are originating from, or inspired by, him; that God has a will, but still allows evil in the world, but is punishing evil as well; finally – and of outstanding importance for the Christians – that he has one and only one son, sent him into the world, etc.

The Christian, as well as the other abrahamic denominations of religion are unanimously proclaiming that God is not graspable, but they are nevertheless maintaining all kinds of propositions about God, as if it weren't God who is not graspable, but only and occasionally his decisions and actions. They are proclaiming that God is not from this world, but they are still making propositions about God, as if our ability to conceptually grasp something weren't restricted to the world. They are proclaiming that God is absolute, but they are making propositions about him in spite, as if the absolute could, as propositions are inherently doing, be put into various factual relations, that is: relativized.

To believe that one could, with conceptual propositions, relate to a conceptually non-graspable, extra-worldly, absolute God: that is a delusion, as the Second Commandment has been knowing long ago. And if one tries to grasp the connection of man to God in the scope of conceptual propositions and, to this end, reads the religious contents of the Bible as propositions – note: the critical-historic method is doing this, too – then one cannot understand either of them, neither the connection of man to God nor the bible.

As mentioned above, it is no new idea that the contents of the Bible must not be taken as propositions, but that they are meant "symbolically", as legends, like myths or fairy tales;

as texts that one can only get into if one finds a resonance in one's own life. This may possibly lead forward, if the symbolic opens itself up to a person, but as soon as one uses them in any logical or practical deductions, for example, draws conclusions, or produces reasons, then one has already taken them as compositions of conceptual propositions and thus discarded any possible symbolic meaning.

One may consider the Ten Commandments as appropriate, one may meditate on them, and understand them as fundamental. But if one is saying, they are from God, and must *therefore* be obeyed, and everybody transgressing them is acting against God's will and has to fear God's punishment and can only hope for his grace, then one is already moving on the level of conceptual logic, and the subject is no longer the non-conceptual, extra-worldly, absolute God.

The representation "son of God" is an apposite and highly valuable picture for the divine aspect of man. But to project this divinity exclusively onto one single man, Jesus Christ, means, at the same time, to deny all other humans this very divinity. And saying even that this Jesus Christ were the one and only one son of God, "anointed", that is endued with God's authority, *therefore* our lord, whom we are bound to obey, notably the orders he gave according to the New Testament, etc., then all of these are inner-wordly, truth-claiming propositions, and such propositions can never have anything to do with the non-conceptual, extra-worldly, absolute God. They are void talk.

The monotheistic denominations of religion are believing that they were standing on a safe fundament of propositions about God, while they are depending on a conceptual, inner-wordly, relative "propositions-God", that is: a mental fiction. With every single proposition about God, they are missing the absolute God. And nobody raises his voice against this, or only notices it. People take it as sufficient connection to God, if they belong to a group that defines itself by a set of propositions using the word "God".

But if God is that massively being missed then this means: nobody perceives how the Bible is pointing to God; nobody "understands" the connection to God as shown in the Bible; nobody is "seeing" God. And this renders entirely meaningless to insist in the principle "sola scriptura", that already the Bible alone be sufficient and authoritative for our connection to God. A Bible not understood by anybody is of no use at all in this respect.

The Culture of God-Avoidance

All this is intentional and systematic, though, and the system is prospering. The religious elites have been guiding billions of members towards the propositions-God, and billions of members have been believing in this propositions-God for millennia. That a system of this type and size can endure implies that there must be a giant demand for it. That is: God proper is not being missed unawares, but everybody wants to avoid him safely and permanently.

It seems likely that this could be explained by a fundamental trait of human being. Actually, there is a very old reference to such a trait of God-avoidance, namely in the

Genesis book of the Bible: in the episode in which Adam and Eve are hiding from God after recognizing that they are naked. That can be read in the way that man, in his/her naked existence, is inherently shying away from being before God. The Dasein philosophy is describing this trait of Dasein neutrally and unemotionally: We are falling for the world, we are allowing the world to occupy our attention that completely, that we do not even want to know that and how we could get a sight of something else – the extra-worldly. And therefore we do not know anything about it, cannot get a sight of it, and do not want it.

To avoid God: that is zero religious autonomy. That is total religious heteronomy. That is notorious ignorance of the teachings of Jesus – if not treachery against Jesus. And that is the situation today, organizationally consolidated over past millennia and, as it appears, for further millennia or even for all future, because it is the – if not cogent – expression of a fundamental trait of our Dasein, that is indeed unalterable. All people are all the time dancing around the Golden Calf, today no longer golden but made of propositions. And thus they are obviously proceeding on the wrong path.

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Utopian Supplement

Taken precisely, the problem is not that we would not have any chance against the fundamental disposition of our Dasein here, that is, the strong attraction of the world. We can indeed surrender to the world, but we can also be thrown back from the world to ourselves, or we can by ourselves step back from, and keep a distance to, the world. The problem is that, practically, all of us are having negative associations attached to this, shying away from it, or even fearing it, and that we are confirming each other in this attitude. Still, no individual is bound to take part in this.

In principle, everybody is free in striving to get a sight of God and, in principle, everybody can get and maintain such a sight temporarily – and subsequently refresh it time and again (as the Third Commandment is advising to do). Above all, this pays off. One will then see how it is to be before God. One will see how Dasein is laid-out and how to best position oneself in it – and, in particular, avoid wearisome stances. One will see the inherent purpose of Dasein, and realize that one has so far tried to persist in the "Dasein game" without knowing the purpose and the rules. And one will see that there is nothing to shy away from or to fear, but rather that our Dasein situation is exceedingly good, and that we can be glad about it.

Still, rather nobody manages to get into this stance. And if somebody succeeded, then he be warned: He is solitary, and then it is futile and dangerous to advocate religious autonomy against the established, pervasive God-avoidance of the general public. One really has to leave it to God to open their eyes.

Perhaps a new Luther will, nevertheless, show up some day to progress mankind one step forward again – who will, with all cleverness and prudence, convince many people, that there cannot be "truths" about God but that God can be perceived. Then everybody will see that religious fundamentalism is without fundamentals. Christians would have to give up many propositions about God, too, but most important, the teachings of Jesus would remain, and Christology could be newly read – relectures are fashionable today – in the sense that all propositions about Christ are pointing to the Divine Self of man. Christology would thereby actually become upvalued. It would regain its existential meaning and its connection to the teachings of Jesus.

... hear ye him

Questions to Christians and Others

So, hear ye!

I am saying:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

So, I ask you:

You are billions. Do you see that you are the many, and not the few?

I am saying:

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

*Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind.
And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*

So, I ask you

about today's theologians and preachers: aren't they – even quite eager – scholars of the scriptures, too? Aren't they working to extract truths from the scriptures and to disseminate these truths?

Do they, besides all their knowledge, also have a connection to God?

I am saying

in my speeches and parables, what can be said about God and the Kingdom of Heaven, what the meaning and purpose of our being is, how beatitude can be achieved in this life, what it is all about guilt and absolution, temptation and redemption.

So, I ask you:

Do you believe there is *anything* more important than my teachings?
Why is your credo saying "*He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.*"? –
Between birth and death, nothing worth mentioning?

I am saying

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth... But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...

No man can serve two masters: ... Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

So, I ask you:

Do you see that mammon is just an example, or do you let money pass for the opposite of God? Aren't all inner-wordly treasures "upon earth" in opposition to the extra-wordly treasures "in heaven"? Isn't it obvious anyway that one cannot, at the same time, focus on both, God and the contents of the world? Aren't intellectual and spiritual riches, for example, capabilities, knowledge, doctrines of faith, religious systems contents of the world? Why should they be exempt from this irreconcilability? How could one, with these "treasures upon earth", possibly find God?

I am saying

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

*Except ye be converted, and become as little children,
ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

So, I ask you:

Are you blessed? Do you know blessedness from your own experience? Who, and how many of you, have ever made a turn towards heaven and beatitude?

Most of the time, you are completely absorbed in the world.

Couldn't you, at least occasionally, detach from it and focus on your being?

And then even see God? And show him to the others?

You are concerned about membership numbers.

How many people have you led into the Kingdom of Heaven?

Where is your track record?

I am saying

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

So, I ask you:

Don't you understand this as an advice to those having already passed the strait gate?
Whom do you see as the dogs and the swine?

I am saying:

Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

So, I ask you:

Why are you praying the Our Father as a set of petitions and not givens from God?
Have you fallen behind the psalms?

Why are you praying that God's will be done, as it is being done anyway? Why are you praying that God's Kingdom come, while it is here? Can't you see it? Why are you praying for your daily bread, while you are living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, that is, God is throughout your lifetime creating for you, and letting occur to you, all that constitutes your life – your whole film of Dasein? Why are you praying that God forgive your trespasses, while you are forgiven anyway? Can't you forgive yourselves, because you can't forgive others? Why are you praying that God may not lead you into temptation, while it is the world that is "tempting" and challenging you, and only focussing on God will redeem you?

And how hallowed is the name of God to you? Do you agree that God is not of this world, not conceptually graspable, absolute? Why then do you all the time make propositions about Him, and suggest that they can prove something? Why do you permanently pin on Him inner-worldly attributes and relations to inner-worldly objects, and thus try to relativize Him? Don't you know that all this is void?

Why, do you think, do I speak about God and the Kingdom of Heaven in parables? Don't you understand the Second Commandment?

I am saying

*Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge:
ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.*

So, I ask you:

The clergymen and theologians are working on exegeses, that is, interpretations. In which other area of expertise is it common practice that an expert does not simply read and understand a professional text? In which other area of expertise is it accepted that the experts are controversially struggling with 2000 years old writings, instead of having and progressing a common, current state-of-the-art knowledge, in this case about the divine aspects of human existence?

Where is the key?

I said: God knows our needs before we ask? Isn't that the key to the Our Father
– not even hidden under the doormat but openly lying in front of the gate?
Does actually anybody want to make it through the strait gate?

I am saying

The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

They seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

So, I ask you:

How do you see this? The Kingdom of Heaven has been farther away but has now come near, not quite here though, but to definitely come at some point?

At hand is at hand. Are you in it? Or are you missing it because you are not looking?

I am saying in a parable:

He [the father] said to him [his elder son]:

Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

So, I ask you:

Isn't that near enough? What is it, for each of you, that is from God and "thine"?

Is that invisible? Can anybody ignore it? Refuse it?

I am saying

to my disciples, that they should tell no man that I was Jesus the Christ.

So, I ask you:

Don't you agree that the people are aghast at my teachings, which are to show them the narrow way through the strait gate and lead them before God,

and that the people want God's Anointed, instead. Aren't you of the same kind?

And that the "wise and prudent" are giving them Christ in reponse.

Where are my followers today who understand and follow my direction?

I am saying in a parable:

If they hear not Moses and the prophets,

neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

So, I ask you:

What sense does it make that you position me as resurrected from death?

Because my teachings don't matter to you in the first place?

I am saying

Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

So, I ask you:

Don't you confess "Jesus Christ, ... our Lord", too. Don't you understand that we all, yes all, can live like patronized children of God, and can view God like a good father raising us? Does it defeat you that all humans are God's sons and daughters, me among others?

Do you consider it honest and ethical to deny every single human this divinity and instead to project it as virtually unattainable exclusively on one figure?

Do you still fear to be in the likeness of God and before God,
even though nothing better can happen to a human?

Don't you see that Christ is figuratively representing the being of man: put into the world by God, with the mission to advance life, with a divine, that is, timeless Self not affected by death? And isn't this image, as a key to the strait gate, infinitely more precious than a lord-figure for the broad way?

I am saying:

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

So, I ask you:

Did I say: let him hear somebody else? Did I say: let him obey me?

Did I say: Let him look onto my life, my deeds, my body?

Did I say: Let him impute something to me?

How do you want to follow me, if you do not hear me?

I say unto you:

I do see the divine in your being. And you are forgiven, anyway.

But to go into death for you again, that I wouldn't.

The Parable of the Recent Prodigal Son

He doesn't arrive

A son had his portion of inheritance paid out in cash from his father, then set off for the world with all he had, squandered it in wild living until he ended up starving and completely at a loss.

Then he remembered the well-being of his father's servants and resolved to return to him and to say to him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But could you please hire me as one of your servants?"

No longer knowing the way back home, he went into a church to ask for directions. The people there told him that, to their knowledge, the father had only one son, namely Christ, and he was the way.

But they comforted him, helped him in his misery, and offered him to join their community. And so he stayed with them.

The Parable of the Virtual World

A view of our existence

Our Dasein resembles playing in a virtual world.

The players are outside the virtual world, as are the creators and presenters. The players are facing the contents of the virtual world. They directly understand the contents and can respond by acting or abstaining.

Usually, the players are so intensely and steadily concentrating on the virtual world that they are completely taken up in it. They are identifying themselves exclusively with their avatar and its well-being in the virtual world, and it does not come to their mind to leave the game. Their basic playing situation "from outside" is something they are not aware of.

That the players nevertheless gain this external view onto the virtual world while playing, is a rare exception. Normally, it occurs only when they get called from outside, or when they fail in the game: then they may get thrown back on themselves. But this happens infrequently, for the virtual world is systematic and its system can be intuitively explored and made directly understandable. Once a part of the system is understood, one can normally trust it and will not fail in it.

A player may also gain the external view on amicable terms by managing on his own to surface from the game in the virtual world. Still, during the game, rather nobody is doing this. To concentrate both, on the contents of the virtual world and, at the same time, on the situation outside and vis-à-vis the virtual world, is impossible.

What is different in the real world:

To play in the real world, the players don't need any devices, no screens, speakers, headphones, microphones, computer mice, keyboards, joysticks, motion sensors. Instead everything in the world comes to them directly, and they are acting directly with their determinations and automatisms.

The perception of the players in the real world has more channels. In addition to the channels to the "external" world, there are those to the internal, that is, bodily and mental worlds. Besides the perception of the external world through the senses, there are inner perceptions of the positions and movements of the body and body parts, of the bodily well-being or pain, and, finally, the perceptions of the mental world: the thoughts, ideas, procedures of thinking, remembrances, the inner images, inner language, feelings, moods, emotions, motives, inhibitions, the purposes, and the will. All this we perceive, it occurs to us in the real world.

A virtual world may be very rich, if it has been developed by a large team with a large budget. Even richer can a virtual world be, if it is conceived in such a way, that all players

– possibly millions – are given the possibility to build, within a framework of rules, individual, partial worlds; and if it is furthermore conceived in such a way that every player can perceive what the other players have built, so that they can copy from them and build on their achievements. Such a world is permanently growing, and that is not different in the real world.

What is different in the real world, is the absence of rules. There is no limit that may not be transgressed or circumvented in exploring a new piece of world – at the risk of failure. And so, billions of people – all mankind – have for millennia contributed to building the real world, and every human has been in the position to choose parts, copy them for building and extending his own world, and thereby in return enrich a little, or advance by a large step, the world available to everybody. As a result, the real world appears to us as downright infinitely rich – a richness for free.

The Our Father Restored

... partially, for praying in sync with the Christians

Our Father which art in heaven,

Holy is thy name,

Thy kingdom comes

[permanently in everything that occurs to us every moment],

Thy will happens in earth, as in heaven.

You give us this day our daily bread

[actually everything that constitutes our life].

You forgive us our debts, and we forgive our debtors.

You don't lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

[For]

Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever

[beyond time].

Amen

[thus is our being].

For a rationale, see "The Absolute" in this book.

3.

Other Writings

The Dasein Philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount

A critique.

(Full translation from German original not available. Greater parts embedded in the same author's book: "The Deeper Value", CHAPTER FOUR

Adam, where art thou?

A poem

Adam, where art thou?

The window: a glass wall
down to the floor,
aligned to the facade.
Behind it the gaping abyss.
Keep a safe distance.

And at the world's end?
No wall.
Keep a much greater distance?
Existential fear?
How far from blessedness!

Sure, some day,
my world will come to an end.
But until then:

Whenever I move my foot
beyond the rim,
there grows, under my step,
new firm ground.