

**Rainer Bruno Zimmer**

# **Dasein and God**

**Essays and Other Texts**

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# 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

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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 unpleasing 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 who 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 endowed 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-worldly, 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-worldly, 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

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– 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.

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**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].*

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

# 3. Other Writings

**The Dasein Philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount**  
A critical study

**Adam, where art thou?**  
A poem

# The Dasein Philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount

## A Critical Study

### INTRODUCTION – Critique versus Exegesis

The Sermon on the Mount has been ascribed to Jesus after his death and is apparently composed of materials that have been re-told several times. It is a fundamental lecture about God, the world, and man. It is hardly seen as directly convincing, but rather as radical and requiring interpretation. Its truth and its great importance are usually derived from its ascription to Jesus as Son of God.

This treatise is a critique. A critique is not an exegesis. An exegesis tries to extract some meaning from a not readily accessible text by consulting further materials from the same author or from his/her historical context. A critique requires the prior understanding of the matter. The matter at hand is our "Dasein", our being in the world, our existence, our rootedness in God, a matter about which everybody can, from his/her own existence, find out and know quite a lot. By applying such findings and knowledge, one can see what is meant in the Sermon on the Mount and, for example, recognize that Jesus has been outstandingly competent in this matter.

Knowledge of our existence is available from introspection, religion, literature, and the philosophy of existence. When consolidating their findings into a coherent picture, one can say the following:

The essence of our Dasein is, that "there is something". Phenomena are occurring to us and we understand them. That means: what occurs to us is articulated, and we can structure it. These structures of phenomena constitute our world. We usually differentiate it into an external and an internal world. In the external world, objects and relationships are occurring to us; in the internal world, thoughts, images, imaginations, memories, feelings, motivations. We recognize and understand all of them directly. They proceed like an interactive Dasein film. We are acting in it like a player in a virtual reality, but here actually in the *real* reality of our world.

*The* world is everything that we humans can, in principle, understand and live. God is not of this world, but extra-worldly instead. He can therefore, as a matter of principle, not be understood. For example, he cannot be ascribed an inner structure. Like the player in the virtual reality is situated outside of it, we are "playing in" our real reality from outside of it, but we can lose ourselves in it and fall to it. The subject, who is playing there, we denote as our Genuine or Authentic or Absolute Self. It is not of this world either. Since no

understanding nor structure can be conceived outside the world, the Authentic Self cannot be conceived as different from God. The extra-worldly God, our extra-worldly Authentic Self, and the extra-worldly Authentic Self of the other humans can at best be different "sights" of one and the same Extra-worldly.

Our understanding of structures of phenomena is *constructive*. With every experience, we continue to expand our already understood world, extend what we can live. This is the fundamental rule of our Dasein: expand world, enhance life, both, ours and that of the other beings of type Dasein, our fellow humans. Guilt is: not having enhanced life, or even having impaired or prevented life. By taking opportunities to enhance life, we leave other opportunities unused. So, we inevitably become guilty. Our challenge is to learn from our guilt to immediately, and better than before, continue to enhance life.

This has been a sketch of the "prior understanding of the matter", on which the following critique of the Sermon on the Mount is being based. If required, we will add further considerations.

The only *claim* of this treatise is, that God is absolute. And, therefore this claim is absolute, too. We cannot understand the Extra-worldly, particularly not with the same approach by which we understand the inner-worldly. The Extra-worldly is undefinable, one cannot attach attributes to it, one cannot grasp it in propositions, it does not have a structure, and it is not part of any structure. It is not a concept.

With respect to God, the *fundamental hypothesis* of this treatise is, that it is possible to get something like a "sight" of God, and that we can therefore try to point to him with approximately pointing tellings, and that such tellings and their focussed understanding constitute a competence of its own. An approximately pointing telling is always to be understood as if preceded by the clause "it is, as if".

As a consequence, it is not required to agree to the preceding presentation of our Dasein and to accept it as "knowledge". The key is just, whether one can see what it tries to point to, whether one can see the "it" from the clause "it is, as if" – or if one can even better point to it. After all, the preceding presentation has just along the way implied, that man is made as if an image of God (extra-worldly Authentic Self), that life is as if by God speaking (articulation), that sin is having and remaining fallen to the world, that trinity is plausible when taken as three sights on the extra-worldly (God, my Authentic Self, the Authentic Self of the fellow human).

The critique below is first aimed at extracting, in contemporary language, the existential aspects that the Sermon on the Mount – here in the version from the King James Bible, Matthew, Chapters 5 to 7 – is pointing to. On the other hand, we will also make clear, what it definitely does not point to. In addition, this approach will show, that the writer of the Sermon on the Mount is playing with the reader, and how competent and why he is doing it.

## MATTHEW 5

### *The Beatitudes*

1. *And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:*
2. *And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,*
3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
4. *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*
5. *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*
6. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*
7. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*
8. *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*
9. *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*
10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
11. *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*
12. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

The Sermon on the Mount starts with its culmination. While elsewhere in the bible, everything is about understanding, obeying, or violating the rules of our Dasein as God's children thrown into the world, the matter of the Beatitudes is the absolutely positive of our Dasein.

Beatitude is *genuine* bliss, an exceedingly good Dasein situation. In the world, we can pursue happiness and find happiness. We then see that our affairs have gone well or are standing favourably. This is a transient reflection of beatitude. It is not our good times in the world but rather the incessant change of the world, that is permanent. Beatitude is actually regarding the whole Dasein, including the vicissitudes of the world, as a godsend: the world is right, interesting, rich, beautiful, an oversize present. In this, beatitude is not a naïve world-view that would suppress or euphemize all evil and misfortune in the world. Beatitude is a Dasein stance in which I can live at ease with myself and with the world,

including all its evil phenomena, live relaxedly, freely and gladly, even when the evil is hitting me.

Accordingly, beatitude is not something reserved to an afterworld, but a well-adjusted attitude towards the world, a consequence of the approximate sight of our Dasein situation rooted in the Absolute. If beatitude were something extra-worldly, say a mode of being there, then we could not make any propositions about it. It would not be a concept, and we could not expect anything from it.

Beatitude is not something that comes to us. The world is attractive, we care to play in its real reality, we get absorbed in it, possibly fall to it completely. In this, we are focussed on our situation *in* the world, but not aware of our Dasein situation *vis-à-vis* the world, as players from outside. Totally concentrated on our "avatar" and of his/her benefits in the world, it escapes us, what an absolutely grand "computer game" we have been given in form of the world, and which degrees of freedom are available to us therein.

In order to achieve beatitude, we must free ourselves, or get freed, from this situation of being "fallen". We can seek texts about beatitude and try to understand them. Or part of our world breaks down, and thereby its attractivity, because, more or less, we fail in the game of life. Then we are being thrown back – to focus – on ourselves, we become aware again of our Dasein situation as players, and may even ask ourselves, whether we should continue the game. If everything goes well, then, on the one hand, we learn from the loss, how much more valuable the world is than we use to think, and on the other hand, we learn from overcoming the crisis, that and how we can bear and master a partial crash of our world, and acquire new possibilities of life. And thus, we experience a smaller or larger piece of beatitude proper. –

How do the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount point to these traits of our existence? More compact, more poetical, and error free. Beatitude is being pictures as: possessing heaven, being comforted, inheriting the earth, being saturated with righteousness, having obtained mercy, seeing God, being called children of God. The reference to the "earth", that is: to the world, ensures that beatitude is not wrongly taken as reserved to an afterworld. "Seeing God" stands for the focus on our Dasein situation, with God as the creator of our interactive Dasein film. "Being called children of God" means on the one hand, that our focus is at the same time on our divine component: our Authentic Self, and on the other hand, that we best move in the world like children, who know, that their father is not asking too much of them, but is coaching them to master ever more variations of life. "Having obtained mercy" says that we are delivered from guilt. "Being comforted" and "being saturated with righteousness" means, that misery and evil in the world cannot dominate us.

All this is quite to the point, only a little less complete than our description of beatitude above. Important traits of our Dasein are not being looked at, for example, that beatitude is a Dasein stance perfectly oriented *by the focus on the Extra-worldly*.

Particularly striking is, how obfuscating, even badly, the beatitudes have been written.

This starts with small deviations from the systematics: The first beatitude ends with a promise for the present time: "theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven". Why do the promises of all further beatitudes pertain to the future, or what does count: present or future? The last beatitude (verses 11 and 12 ) deviates in its form from all the preceding ones, changes into the second person, additionally brings Jesus into the equation ("for my sake"), and, after the "reward in heaven", supplies the reasoning with the fate of the prophets, as if some evidence were required and could help. The ending of the Beatitudes is thereby made unassertive.

The worst oddity is the language construction: "Blessed are the X, for they shall Y". The first part has two possible meanings: "blessed implies X", or "X implies blessed". The text author leaves this open, although it could easily be made unambiguous. "For" always expresses a causality, so: "*because* of Y in the future, *therefore* the relation between *blessed* and X", or, put as an example: Because they shall be comforted in the future, they that mourn are blessed, or the blessed are mourning. Inconsolable but blessed? The text author refrains from formulating his insights in an unmistakable way. Should that be negligence – just, when it is about our existence, of all matters?

Furthermore, it must be noted, that the assignments of the Ys to the Xs is downright arbitrary. Why doesn't it say "Blessed are the pure in heart: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven", or "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be called the children of God"? And why do some get the kingdom of heaven, and others the earth? – It could be argued that possessing heaven, being comforted, inheriting the earth, righteousness, mercy etc. are aspects of beatitude throughout, and mutually interchangeable in this enumeration: If one is blessed, then one possesses heaven, has is comforted, etc. But why then are these aspects singled out at all, and, one by one, assigned to one X each?

And if the Ys are aspects of beatitude, then aspects of what are the Xs? From our prior understanding, we can say that the Xs refer to situations, in which access to beatitude is nearby, because the situation of being fallen to the world is somehow neutralized, and we are led to focus on our Dasein situation the world vis-à-vis. This comes in two ways: on the one hand, in the hard way, when a hard fate forces it upon us, and we have to suffer misery and injustice, and, on the other hand, in the soft way, when we take care ourselves to get a sight of the Extra-worldly and, to this end, free ourselves to some extent from inner-worldly, material and intellectual quests, for example, power, prosperity, intellectual strength, and correspondingly decide to be poor in spirit, meek, merciful, peace-oriented.

The structure of the Beatitudes would then be: *Access to beatitude can rather be found in situations X and then experienced as Y.*

Still, this lags far back behind the utter consequence of our description above, according to which, in the Dasein stance of beatitude, we accept even severe fate as good. This self-restraint of the text author may be understandable. After all, he proceeds as far as to relate beatitude with some severe fate at all, but even this is an association that is likely to provoke almost all readers, and that one should therefore better cover, milden, if not, as a precaution, straighten or hide. For that purpose, the reported "defects" of the text are just right: to hide something in a text requires sufficient length of the text; enumerations of innocuous, low profile contents can serve to inconspicuously embed some more problematic content and let it appear less pointed; the mystification of the logic deprives the hard message of its apparent certainty.

The confusing form of the Beatitudes, therefore, has four possible reasons: Jesus did not understand existential beatitude, the text author did not understand existential beatitude, the text author has written negligently, or the text author had reasons to express himself with great care and has therefore deliberately written in such a way as to appear lacking skill.

The latter is most likely, but we need not come to a final conclusion here as to which alternative does apply, and we also need not answer this question with regard only to the beatitudes. For, in the further course of this critique, the text will again and again confront us with this question.

### ***Salt and Light***

13. *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*
14. *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*
15. *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*
16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

As this paragraph is separated from the preceding one, it appears to be unrelated. However, it directly continues the thoughts of verses 11 and 12. Who has a sight on the Extra-worldly, will be compelled to, and unable to act otherwise, pass on this sight – this "light" – to his fellow humans, and then he will experience the same as the prophets – and Jesus himself. After they have been murdered, they are, on grounds of their true or fictitious "good deeds" – not their insights – set up as shining examples for life in the world.

With the positive words around light and salt, the text author redirects the view away from the brutal fate of the prophets, and, to ensure that this works, he uses two pictures (salt and light) where one would suffice. He thus respects an inner-worldly trait of human nature: to avoid clear questions of existence, even if the message is bright. Still, the end of this paragraph does not bring fears but an appeal. If a person has a sight of God, then he/she is obliged to show his/her fellow humans, where to look in order to see God.

### *Jesus' Position regarding the Law*

17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

18. *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

19. *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

20. *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus' position regarding the law is unambiguous. He understands and adopts the "laws" of our Dasein from the Old Testament without reservation, and further advances the communication of these laws.

We know, and Jesus knew – as can be concluded from his use of parables -, that Dasein can only be talked about in approximately pointing mode, and that the word-by-word, even overly precise, understanding, as ascribed to the religious elites, totally misses the Extra-worldly. The precision required is not measured by letter, word, or detail. The "laws" of Dasein are not commandments, that can be obeyed or not, but they are absolute givens that cannot be evaded. If verses 18 and 19 are meant to express this absoluteness of the Dasein laws, then they are insofar pointing correctly. But who would read that out of these verses!

Verse 20 can only come from somebody who does have a sight on Dasein, and does penetrate the predominant manner of construing Dasein laws as inner-worldly doctrines and maxims. This verse, therefore, also proves the existential competence, both of Jesus, and of the text author.

The latter, however, appears like inhibited. He links the last verse, that has *righteousness* as its theme, to the preceding two inconsistent verses – precision to "one jot or one tittle" and precision to the "least commandments" are well different types of precision –, and the link

must cause irritation, as the scribes and Pharisees are just renowned for being particularly accurate, up to pedantic. Thus, the reader is twice being led to question and rethink the matter, and inevitably gets caught in the – kind of dutifully cited – last verse, that has been wrongly placed and related by a seemingly overstrained text author. If our assumption is correct, that the author wanted to write in a calculated manner, then we are here led to the further assumption, that he was competent to do so, that is, to credibly feign such overstrain.

Whether the author was really overstrained, or he just feigned it in order to avoid asking too much from the reader: What is really asking too much, is Jesus' declaration that the religious elite "shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven". Even today, rather nobody will accept this.

### *About Killing*

21. *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time (Exodus 20,13; 21,12), Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:*
22. *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*
23. *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;*
24. *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*
25. *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*
26. *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

This section follows up the preceding one and clarifies what is meant by "precision" there: to correctly grasp the signification. Superficially, it now looks as if Jesus himself were overshooting the mark. To *be angry with* somebody is not by far the same as *killing*, but should here be taken as *a little killing* and therefore severely punishable? However, the commandment isn't here being taken more accurately word-by-word, but what is being grasped more accurately is its signification, and that is wider (to not at all impair life).

In fact, the second part of the Ten Commandments fails to cover quite many kinds of bad actions or inactions, and cannot, therefore, be meant as complete. As a Dasein law, it can only be meant as covering all aspects of our relations to other humans – in Jesus'

summary: love your neighbour like yourself, that is, as a being with an Authentic Self that is an image of God, as we all are. The Dasein law says, that we have to advance life, that is, our coping with the world, and not less that of the other humans.

To advance life is not possible on the base of a few or many, however detailed or comprehensive prescripts. Life doesn't lend itself to codification. Like with the Beatitudes, the proposed aim is an optimal Dasein stance: the stance to advance life. In this stance, one will not cause, or let pass, even *small* impairments to the life of fellow humans.

The consequence of failing this stance, with its systematic violation of the Dasein law, is unresolved guilt. The corresponding repair is the making-just of the stance – rather than a "judgement" of the deed – and will obviously be beneficial and result in a better life.

In this respect, the extensive threat produced by this section about killing, is most misleading – as if unresolved guilt were not impairing life, and not enough evil. But the text is again calculated with regard to the normal reader. In the best case, the threats will make him try to be more pleasant-natured towards his fellow humans in the said situations. Above all, the excess of the threats will deter him from addressing the – so drastically negatively loaded – existential question of the right Dasein stance, and that will spare him a possibly greater fear.

The fulfilment of the Dasein law is, of course, above all religious forms. It is, therefore, remarkable that the text author, and probably already Jesus, have considered necessary to explicitly highlight this in verses 23-24. There must have been plenty of insuperable, formal religiousness at that time.

### ***About adultery***

27. *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*
28. *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*
29. *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*
30. *And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*
31. *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:*
32. *But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

This section, using the example of adultery in the context and society of its time, continues the logic, that it is not sufficient, to formally fulfil individual commandments, but that the

benchmark to apply is the Dasein stance of advancing life. The section is even more furious than the previous one. The sporadic violations of the Dasein law in human collectives are bothering Jesus, but even worse to him are the systematic, legalized impairments to the life of women.

But which rationale to offer to the listeners? That they had to advance life in the reach of their behaviour? Strongly emotional comparisons may have the greatest effect: The feeling of guilt vis-à-vis his wife is damaging the life of the husband more than the loss of an eye or of the right hand. This is a well comprehensible, psychological reasoning, and in this way, one need not confront the listeners with the thought that the – worldly – feeling of guilt is actually based on an existential guilt.

### *About Swearing*

33. *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:*

34. *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*

35. *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

36. *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

37. *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

Apart from its juristic form, swearing is an inner-worldly tactic to impress the addressee of an assertion. Whether, when, and how to best swear is, in both cases, not an existential question, and rather doesn't fit into the Sermon on the Mount.

Of course, to swear, directly or indirectly, by the Extra-worldly is nonsense, but is also a symptom, that cannot be cured as such. The person swearing wrongly in this way would have to be led to the insight, that the Extra-worldly isn't a concept and, therefore, cannot reasonably be related to anything inner-worldly, including any inner-worldly truth. A couple of forbidding rules would not, by any stretch of imagination, be suitable for such relation.

Also it is not less nonsensical to swear by something inner-worldly. Our Dasein situation is such that the stream of phenomena that occurs to us, isn't our creation, and that we, therefore, cannot guarantee it.

With our previous knowledge as initially sketched, it is easy to see, that the second half-sentence of verse 36 does mean that. With the same previous knowledge it is not to be expected, that it were possible to get a sight of the Extra-worldly and its "role" in our Dasein, by trying to fully *think* through, what man is able and unable to do. The text author could not re-*think* Jesus' sights. He must have had the sight of Dasein himself for being able to ascribe it to Jesus.

### *About Vengeance*

38. *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*
39. *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*
40. *And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.*
41. *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*
42. *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*

The signification of the words about eye for eye and tooth for tooth is, that we have to fully restore the life that we have impaired. If we have deprived a person of an eye, we have to really make good for this to such extent, that the person can thereafter thrive as if she still had this eye. Of course, this is difficult enough – and all too often impossible.

The setup of our Dasein is not at all being fulfilled by not impairing life; rather we know, that we have to advance, that is, to improve and enrich life. Jesus consequently stands for this, and clearly contrasts it with the prevalent view. The latter considers as quite naïve, to receive a personal aggression without resisting. But, in line with the fundamental disposition of Dasein, we just don't have a right to impair life of any person, even not if the same person has culpably impaired our life before. Instead we have to advance life in *every* situation.

So, Jesus isn't radical here, nor naïve, nor inscrutable. For somebody who understands Dasein, his words are nothing particular. Strange they are only to people who are missing out on this understanding, because they never openly face their own existence.

### *About Loving Your Enemy*

43. *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour (Exodus 19,18), and hate thine enemy.*
44. *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*
45. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*
46. *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*
47. *And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*
48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

We have to advance life, ours and that of our fellow humans – as best we can, but without restraint. We all – *all* humans – are basically in the same situation as players in our real realities, in which we may be doing well or badly, in which others may have easier or harder, more comfortable or less comfortable times than we are having, and in which everybody may, as a just or an unjust, in a right or false Dasein stance, succeed or be overstrained. This is sufficient to show, that the life to be advanced includes the life of enemies.

But, the key word is "love". Therefore, we are going to supply here the existential definition of love. In inner-worldly terms, love is a bond with a specific quality, and the acting out of this bond. Existential love is then a bond to the Extra-worldly, and the life shaped by it. An existential bond of ours can only be an approximate sight: of God, on the own Authentic Self, and the Authentic Self of the fellow humans.

The Authentic Self of each and every fellow human is, so to speak, equally extra-worldly, absolute. This quite easily explains what appears so apodictic in this section of the Sermon on the Mount: that we are existentially linked with all fellow humans in the same way, and that we have to indiscriminatingly, including our enemies, take them as God's children, and that we have to live our bond to God in the same way.

All this is being described spot on by this passage, and using suitable images. The phrase "be ... perfect", as God is perfect, may not be obvious. It does not only say "love everybody like God is doing". How can we be existentially perfect? In a Dasein stance that is perfectly oriented by a sight of the Extra-worldly.

Again, this section on loving our enemies, sort of redecorates the existential content. It does not openly expose it, and thereby just does not help to get a sight of what is basically meant, but rather covers it with a fig leaf of inner-worldly rationales: what publicans are doing, is not sufficient; for a reward, we have to do more than others. – That means, that, even though the existential content can hardly be extracted from the relatively short text, the text author wants to protect the reader against this content. Whether already Jesus has tried to spread his existential knowledge with that much caution, that we will discuss further below.

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What can we, at the end of the first section of the Sermon on the Mount note as an intermediate result?

The presentation is existentially competent and consistent, its images are clear. Still it is too compact and thus fails to render the existential sights easily accessible to the listeners and readers. On top of that, it systematically diverts the focus from these sights.

## MATTHEW 6

### *About Giving Alms*

1. *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*
2. *Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*
3. *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:*
4. *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

This section, as well as the beginning of the subsequent section, are saying that, by giving alms in the public, possibly even as a show of religious practice, nothing can be gained beyond public attention. But if somebody is giving alms, or is praying, in secret, then it will be God to reward her.

The text does not carry any insight about which reward will be given in which way. The text author may want to suggest, that this would turn out in time. Still, in secrecy, the external reward would drop out, and therefore a good internal motivation must be found for giving alms and praying. One could easily set such motivation as a personal intention, for example, to experience the feeling of being pious. But, disappointments could not be excluded here, and then there would be nothing like a reward from God.

If, on the other hand, somebody is anyway praying and giving alms in the right way, that is, with a sight of the Extra-worldly within herself and within the others, then the motivation is a given beforehand, namely the well-oriented Dasein stance: I can always advance life, and the need of the poor is a win-win-situation to this end.

The question remains how to get into this Dasein stance. The sight of the Extra-worldly produces the right Dasein stance, and in this Dasein stance the sight is on the Extra-worldly. This is a cyclic relationship, and the question is actually, how to get into this "angels circle".

Not only is the answer missing, the question is not even being asked. Yet, the question is highly significant because it is equivalent to the question: how to effectively enable people to get an approximate sight of God. Jesus has obviously been driven by this question, otherwise he would not have invented so many parables, and would not have preached a Sermon on the Mount. The text author, however, was no longer aware of this question, or

it appeared too difficult for himself or the readers. He is writing as if a few inner-worldly instructions were sufficient.

***About Praying. The Our Father***

5. *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*
6. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*
7. *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*
8. *Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*
9. *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*
10. *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*
11. *Give us this day our daily bread.*
12. *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*
13. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*
14. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*
15. *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

The Our Father is an existentially profound summary of our Dasein situation. In order to show this, we reformulate the verses here:

9. ... The Extra-worldly is for us like a father. We cannot conceive it.
10. It is, as if this father were guiding our life in the world by letting us face and understand an immeasurably rich world, and then again by enabling our Authentic Self to deliberately act therein.
11. Our Dasein is set up in such a way, that we can master it. It is, as if the father were managing it in such a way, that we find in the world all that constitutes our life.
12. By impairing life we become guilty. Guilt can dominate us. We can get rid of it by learning from it and, as a consequence, proceed to again, and better, advance life thereafter. This we must equally concede to our fellow humans, who may eventually impair our life. We have to forgive them, otherwise their guilt will dominate us.
13. We can fall for the attractivity of the world. What can always save and deliver us from this falling, is the connection back to the Extra-worldly. It is absolute in every Dasein aspect.

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This adds much and weighty new substance to the preceding texts of the Sermon on the Mount:

- the basic trust, that our Dasein is as if set up and managed by a caring and considerate father,
- the insight that the Extra-worldly is absolute and not conceivable in worldly terms,
- the extra-worldly root of our (free) will,
- that our guilt is forgiven,
- the diverse "sights" of the Extra-worldly, its dimensions: kingdom, power, glory, eternity.

As Dasein laws, all of these are givens. To pray for them is meaningless, they are as they are from the outset. What one could, at the most, pray for, is this clarity, that is, to get a sight of what the Our Father is existentially pointing to.

Indeed, we are living on basic trust. We trust on the regularity of the phenomena occurring to us, as we understand them, for example, that our floor will not disappear in the next moment, and the chair, on which we are sitting, will not hang freely in empty space, and all lights of the world will not be gone in 5 minutes.

Humans do understand that God is not a concept, and they are exploiting this insofar as, in the world of concepts, they will not meet him.

We know that, in the world the laws of the world apply, and that, for optimally living in the world, we must well understand these laws and conform to them – but then everything is going to develop in the direction of increasing entropy, and that means decreasing life. In the world, there is no room for free will. As a subject with free will, only the extra-worldly player in our real reality comes into consideration: our genuine, Authentic Self.

Because the Extra-worldly is not a concept, no guilt or absolution thinking can be attributed to it. Our Dasein is, by itself, such, that guilt and the being forgiven of guilt are inescapable givens. If we do not advance life, then our absolute conscience will give notice, and it does not allow any discussion. It remains our duty to advance life. We cannot fulfil it by either ignoring it, or by staying fixated upon one's own, or extrinsic, guilt. We have to come to terms with it, that is to understand its cause and its trigger, in order to instantly be able to advance life better, not least the life of the others that we have culpably impaired. Existentially, nothing more remains to be done with respect to guilt, it will then have been converted into an advancement of the own life. And, existentially, nothing remains left: guilt is forgiven. Of course, we always have to live with the inner-worldly consequences of guilt.

We all consider as natural that we are falling to the world. We have, so to speak, been born into this process and do not know anything apart from the world which is engaging us with its attractions, and in which we unavoidably, sometimes intentionally, impair life. Evil is every attitude which does not advance life. We have to learn and, for a start, have to

be shown that our Dasein is as if everything depended on an extra-worldly component that, with some special effort, one can even get a sight of. And that, in such a manner, we can get a sight of our Authentic Self as positioned outside and *vis-à-vis* the world – and in no way fallen to the world. The remedy for the falling, including falling to the evil, is the sight of the Extra-worldly. This is the structure of salvation. The Extra-worldly is absolute, literally *dissolved* from the world and its preoccupations.

"Kingdom", "power", "glory", "for ever" are linked to the text of the Our Father with the word "for", saying: we pray to the father, "for" he always has all lordship attributes required to fulfil the prayers. All this is void. God is not a concept, we cannot expect or hope anything from him, we cannot place him in a petition, nor in a rationale for expectations and hopes. – We have already corrected this above with our interpretation as sights of our Dasein. A few short explanations: "Kingdom" means that God is ruling, and existentially, this rule means that we do not have any control, and the Extra-worldly is having total control, over what is going to occur to us. "Power", as an additional and different aspect, rather refers to the power of our Authentic Self to enhance life against the increasing entropy in the world. "Glory" is closely related to "kingdom", that is to the phenomena, and only a little meditation is needed to see that the totality of all phenomena occurring to us, the world that we understand, is rich beyond imagination. "For ever" does not mean "for infinite time", but "outside inner-worldly time". –

These explanations are just to show that is not implausible, that Jesus, with his sight of the Extra-worldly, is likely to have spoken of kingdom, power, glory, and eternity ("for ever") himself. But the composition of the Our Father as a sequence of petitions rather doesn't originate from Jesus himself. He knew, what the author of Psalm 23 knew, that God is anyway giving what, according to the text of the Our Father, we should first ask for. And he has, in the subsequent verses about earthly and heavenly treasures and about the thoughts for the morrow, expressed this again more than clearly.

With the wording in form of petitions, and with the "for"-conjunction to a worldly argument, the author again hides the complete existential content to all but insiders. This now appears to be intentional, including exactly this fine-tuning. Because he again presents it in such a way that the reader must stumble across it: In verse 8, directly preceding the Our Father, he qualifies petitioning as futile, because God does beforehand know what we need. And then the author writes petitions in spite.

Obviously, at the times and in the milieu of the text author, it was inopportune, to communicate the teachings of Jesus openly.

At the end, he adds the not-understood verses 14 and 15, saying that God forgives us exactly if we forgive all our fellow humans. Such a God calculus is void. Our Dasein is such that we already *are* forgiven, I and my fellow humans. But, *in the world*, guilt is obsessing me, mine, and the guilt of others towards me, as long as I cannot find access to this existential absolution. Then I cannot forgive myself, because I cannot forgive at all. The best training of the ability to forgive is, to forgive the fellow humans because they are in the same Dasein situation as myself, and because, therein, they are already forgiven.

### **About Fasting**

16. *Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*
17. *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;*
18. *That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

These verses appear like an intermezzo inserted here. They actually continue verses 1-6, and offer nothing but another example of public exercise and exhibition of religious practice. So there is nothing new to add here to the discussion above. In the end, it is all about getting into an angels circle, that brings us into the right Dasein stance.

### **On Collecting Treasures and on Anxieties**

19. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*
20. *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*
21. *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*
22. *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*
23. *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*
24. *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*
25. *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*
26. *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*
27. *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*
28. *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*
29. *And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

30. *Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*
31. *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*
32. *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*
33. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
34. *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

This part is about what we need for mastering our Dasein situation, and how we are equipped for it. According to verse 33, we need the kingdom of God and a Dasein stance aligned to it, and then everything will be given to us. "Kingdom of God" means, that it is our Extra-worldly component that reigns: our Authentic Self, that is, we are perceiving and acting authentically, free of inner-worldly influences and valuations. This stance we can reach through the sight of the Extra-worldly, which will relativize and properly – righteously – rank everything in our world. A mechanism to move the Extra-worldly to give us all we need, if only we fulfil the conditions of these verses, is impossible. We just see then with a pure – "single" – eye, what we did not see before: that everything is given to us.

How then can we attain the "Kingdom of God", "righteousness", the right Dasein stance, the sight of the Extra-worldly? We have to strive for it – "lay up" –, to set our heart on the Extra-worldly, as suggested by verse 21.

Conversely, we will not find anything of this, if we keep concerning ourselves with the treasures inside the world. By the way, it does not matter in this, whether we lose ourselves to material or to immaterial goods, to "mammon", intellectual gains, or even to minor advantages. We will then all the time be governed by the needs in the world, and will have no time, no awareness and no eye for the Extra-worldly.

In addition to the finding of the pure eye, that everything that constitutes our life, is given to us, two more qualities are mentioned. On the one hand: beauty. The most primitive grass is beautiful. One has just to look at it calmly and carefully – and perhaps imagine that one had to replicate it, not as a model, but precise down to the cells, living, and above all: not from available material but from nothing. The other quality mentioned is contingency: all our pursuits in the world cannot add the least span to our lifetime. When it ends, it ends. But, as long as we live, we can live throughout, we can master our Dasein, take the next step, enhance life, even starting at a very low basis, and even if it may be very strenuous.

All that produces a clear picture of the rules of our Dasein game. They are correctly addressed in this section of the Sermon on the Mount. The text author even allows the rigour in verses 24 and 27, and only entertains to outshine them by some figurative and poetic language – and to wad them with plenty of inner-worldly rationales as if this were not about Dasein givens: collecting inner-worldly treasures does not pay off, because they are going to expire anyway; if the eye is evil then the whole life is evil; the birds and the lilies are living without any concerns – so humans can do the same; we should not trouble ourselves, because that would mean to follow the pagans; we should not worry about the future, because the worries of today are already enough. These arguments could confidently be omitted, and the text would not lose the least of its existential substance.

If it had not been fully clear before, whether the text author could not, or did not want to, write more explicitly, it becomes obvious now that he was able indeed to write everything: write the truth, obscure or twist the content, deflect attention, let show his manipulation. He commands a high existential competence. And as he ascribes it to Jesus in a synopsis like this Sermon on the Mount, we must conclude that Jesus himself had it, and attempted to spread it, not without success.

## **MATTHEW 7**

### ***On the Habit of Judging***

1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*
2. *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*
3. *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*
4. *Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*
5. *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*
6. *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.*

This now is about inner-worldly judgment and not about the adjustment of our Dasein stance. That everybody uses to virtually favour her-/himself over the fellow humans, is well-known – if normally suppressed. We know that we tend to sugar-coat our own image, project our own faults onto the others, condemn others for that which we do not dare to live.

Still, what is the existential aspect of judging? It proceeds along inner-worldly criteria, more specifically, along the criteria of the judging person. It can be said, that judging *is subject* to these criteria, that is, to the "laws" of the world. But then also the judging person is. If somebody relies, in his standards, only on the laws governing the world, then they govern him, too. Therefore, our system of judging falls back on us, as verse 2 is saying. By the way, this is true also for our judgement about the world as a whole.

Some further important aspect comes along here: the inherent defectiveness of judging by inner-worldly criteria. The prerequisites for judgements are propositions about facts, more precisely: objective, theoretical, relational propositions, for example, person A has, at point of time T, in location L, spoken sentence S to person B. In this, everything is problematic:

- objectivity, because one and the same situation will be perceived and understood differently by several persons involved;
- the theoretical character, because A's motivation, what A may have meant by S, and how B may have understood S, do not occur to an observer as phenomena, but must be inferred from experience-based concepts – theories – while our experiences may possibly not even cover the situation in question;
- relationality, because it cannot in principle cover everything that may belong to a situation; which phenomena and connections of phenomena we perceive in a situation, will always be refinable; 10 years later we see more in the same situation.

Even if we may think, that we are taking these limitations well into account, and are judging fairly, these limitations will not disappear. And beyond that, the absolute error remains that, in the context of our inner-worldly substantiated judgment and of the consequences that we derive, we do not proceed with a sight of the Extra-worldly, neither of the Authentic Self of the others, nor of our own Dasein situation with the live-author of our Dasein film.

How does the text author of the Sermon on the Mount cope with these interrelationships? He just offers the result that we shall not judge others, and the hint that our way of judging falls back on ourselves, the latter without argument, but he illustrates it with the picture of the mote and the beam. This is appropriate in comparison with the other texts around which, all in all, are rather terse and economical of arguments. In this critique, we had to omit arguments, too, in order not to extend the text too much. The text author, therefore, did not have to bother about attenuating or hiding anything. To fully present the existential kernel is so laborious that, in the short text at hand, nobody will hit upon it.

Finally, there is the last verse of this section, apparently quite unrelated, a warning against the danger of life, if one might give the *holy unto the dogs*, and the *pearls before swine*. This is written to stumble over and compels the reader to analyze why. No section without perplexing tripping points! This verse precisely explains, what the author wants to achieve with his permanent twisting of the semantics, while always angling for the attention of the insider: he wants to protect himself. He does not want to be hurt or killed for his holy insights.

The Sermon on the Mount is a summary of Jesus' teachings about existence. He had professed them openly and, for that, the religious leaders of his time had put him to death. He had seen the danger and warned against it. No text author can be asked to expose himself to the same danger. This text author is very skilled: He dresses the same existential teachings up as teachings of inner-worldly rules, and sort of apologizes to the reader who still understands the kernel message, and gives him a possibly life-saving warning.

### *About God's Answers to Our Prayers*

7. *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*
8. *For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*
9. *Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*
10. *Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*
11. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

A section without the least roughness, downright smooth. Once more, it is about praying. To this section still applies – like to the prayers of the Our Father – the qualification from Matthew 6,8: "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him". Accordingly, this section says: without asking we will be, or are already given, namely, what is *good* for us.

This is very much in line with the previous section on judging. What God is giving us and what constitutes our life, the real reality, which the extra-worldly creator has occur to us, is good. Our inner-worldly judgement of the world as bad, evil and unjust is wrong. This is, what it says, dressed up as a parable, but absolutely confrontational in its existential kernel message: we all are misjudging the world.

Can we really relate to this? Yes, but again we can give only short hints here, in order not to not to extend the text too much. In the context of Matthew 6,30 we already had the little mental exercise, to rebuild a grass plant from nothing. We can extend it to the whole world. There are people who design and implement virtual realities, for example computer games, that are attractive to an extent, that millions of them are being sold and played. Just imagine a virtual reality that represents the whole world, and then consider that all humans are *actually* playing it in the real reality of their Dasein, that they are continuously losing themselves therein and do not want to stop playing, that is, to die. So, it cannot be *that bad a "game"*. – Another approach is to recognize that all and everything available to us in the world are gifts for free: We have contributed nothing to the availability of fonts, language and media, by which we can read this text, or to the fact that there exists a chair

or other seat on which we are sitting meanwhile. And of course, we have not done anything to the facts that there are wood, steel, textile, and transport, etc. industries, without which the chair would not exist, etc. All this need not exist in our world, but it does exist and is available, and we do not have contributed anything to it, it is given to us for free. – What we have described here, is a Dasein stance, into which we may be aligned through the sight of the Extra-worldly. Note: The text author does have this sight. How else could he write in his roundabout way, that the world that God makes occur to us, is good.

### *About Doing the Will of God*

12. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*
13. *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:*
14. *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*
15. *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*
16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*
17. *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*
18. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*
19. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*
20. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*
21. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*
22. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*
23. *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Apparently, the law then is, that we do to other people what we want them do to us. This "leads unto life" but is inconvenient, because the way is narrow and found by only few people. These formulations may barely pass for telling that it is the Dasein law to enhance life, that the great majority of humans prefer to proceed in proven tracks rather than taking the trouble and risk to open up new possibilities of life, and that only few people do actually get a sight of the Extra-worldly. However, without prior knowledge, nobody would ever understand the formulations in this sense.

And then false prophets are accused for their more comfortable way of life. Instead of bringing good fruit, namely enhancing life, they claim a special authority by maintaining that, in the name of God, they would prophesy, cast out devils and perform miracles. Actually, this has absolutely nothing to do with God.

Jesus has later furiously taken on the pharisees and scribes. The text author is less courageous. He barks up the wrong tree. To publicly preach down a few false prophets, exorcists, and miracle healers, should not have been particularly dangerous but rather conformant to the system.

This section offers hardly anything new, and is as harmless as it appears. Primarily, because, in the end, nobody can write into being the reader's sight of the Extra-worldly.

### *About Housebuilding*

24. *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*
25. *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*
26. *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*
27. *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*
28. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:*
29. *For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

The first four verses qualify the preceding existential discourse as safely dependable, and any other dealings with Dasein and the Extra-worldly as untenable. This could be explained in more detail, but the text author doesn't.

And then the penultimate verse tears down the whole elatedness that can be expected from a valuable, eye-opening, insights-creating sermon: the crowd is astonished ["shocked" in Luther's version]. That is dangerous for Jesus, he has given the holy to the dogs. And for the text author, this is the reason to present the Sermon on the Mount in such a way as to avoid the astonishment of the crowd, and also keep the existential content detectable. This he accomplishes with great competence. The biblical text of the Sermon on the Mount has never shocked anybody.

There also is no exegesis available that could explain, why the crowd should have been shocked by a sermon that does not ostensibly offer anything shocking. Our prior existential knowledge explains it without difficulty: Humans fully engage in the world

and do not want to be pulled out of this, even not discuss their being in the world. It is a fundamental trait of humans – that one should better not test -, that they dread, and avoid dealing with, questions of existence. Adam and Eve hide, in order not to get confronted with their naked existence before God.

The last verse just means that Jesus has spoken competently, and the scribes incompetently, about the Dasein and the Extra-worldly – we have already shown that any propositions on the Dasein and the Extra-worldly are categorically void – and one might like to add: the more academic and sophisticated, the more void.

Christological exegesis arrives at a different result here. The mentioned authority is interpreted as a personal authorization by God for his one and only son Jesus Christ. This is already not in line with the preceding text which 10 times says "your father", 5 times "thy father", once "our father", and once "my father". Jesus wants to make his audience understand that, for *each of them*, God is their father in the same way, as he is for Jesus himself and for all other humans. As we have, in this sermon, found so much evidence of Jesus' and the text author's existential competence, it would anyway be quite surprising if the text author would, in the last verse, disprove this. It cannot be (said) that God has one single son and gives him an authority, effective in the world, because these are conceptual propositions about the Extra-worldly, and therefore void and incompetent. Just by focussing on the Dasein, it becomes obvious, that our Dasein is as if permanently fostered by good parents.

## CONCLUSION

The Sermon on the Mount is a very comprehensive lesson about our Dasein. It is ascribed to the highly competent Dasein teacher Jesus by an equally competent author. This author has consequently and successfully fitted the text in such a way that, over the centuries, exegesis did not come across its radical contents. With prior existential knowledge, these appear openly visible, the more as the text author does not withhold conspicuous hints.

In the end, this exposes a deeply sad perspective. The Beatitudes are telling that, just by dealing with our Dasein and the Extra-worldly, we achieve beatitude. It is absurd and perverse, that, of all things, the fear of this dealing should be stronger, and that therefore the Beatitudes and all other knowledge of the Dasein and the Extra-worldly need to be hidden. Still, this is reality, back then and today.

## 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.