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**Genuine Religion**  
-  
**The Knowledge of Being**

**Towards  
Existential Competence  
and  
Religious Autonomy**

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## PREFACE

A: Religion is nothing to me!

B: But you have an existence, haven't you?

A: That's something I don't want to deal with.

B: Therein is nothing to fear, just to benefit.

The value proposition of genuine religion is to face God, individually and directly. A good religious *teaching* shows the way towards facing God. A good religious *community* is organized in such a way as to lead people towards facing God.

And if there is no God? This question is pointless. If there is anything that believers and non-believers agree upon, then it is the view that God is "not of this world". Our knowledge ends at the limits of the worlds that we understand and master. Of an entity external to these worlds, we cannot know anything, including whether it has any mode of being or not.

There still remains the other question: What if there is God nevertheless? If the extra-worldly has a mode of being that is fundamentally inaccessible to us? Could we then possibly perceive it in spite, even though in a way differing from how we perceive the realities of our world? Could we encounter an extra-worldly God? And could we thus potentially recognize that God exists?

First of all, there is rather nobody who *wants* such an encounter. Ever since "Adam and Eve" ate from the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" do people shy away from being before God, confronted with their "naked existence", and not passing the test.

And therefore we have a culture of avoiding God: For the non-believers, God does not exist anyway, and the believers consider it as practically impossible that they – normal, sinful, unworthy mortals – might encounter God at all. Accordingly, both groups do not even think of trying to face God, and therefore they never face God – and they feel assured and – tacitly – spared.

The religious organizations are the carriers of this culture: They keep their respective founder and his priests positioned between men and God, they engage their members mainly with the doctrines and rules established by their founder and his successors. And they point to the sinfulness of the outsiders and to the punishment in hell, which is in store for them, in order that even outside the group nobody should come up with the idea to go for, or even achieve, an encounter with this dreadful God.

Internally, the leaders of the religious organizations are busy to cultivate this position, to keep their members together by common experiences, to distinguish their organization against competing religious organizations, and to segregate "private religion". Externally, they care for media coverage, projects of charity, and a high ethical standing. Some are primarily engaged in power politics. All the time the word is about God but nobody works towards encounters with God, and the teachings are being

shaped in such a manner that the question of such encounters never comes up. Organized religion cannot accept that people seek and find God themselves.

But this renders it ever more interesting. Autonomous religious competence is in high demand and excessively valued.

There are good chances to acquire it, for three reasons:

1. Today, the kernel and origin of some religious organizations still consists of openly accessible tellings that are analogous worldwide, that lead towards God, and that have been uttered by men and women who personally had encounters with God and who have passed on authentic descriptions of their insights and stances. There is a reasonable access path to this kernel and origin, open to everybody.
2. Because God is not of this world, it is impossible to speak about God like we speak about an object in this world. To correctly speak about God is a different, special competence. This competence is such that everybody can acquire it on his or her own and independently. With this competence, one can understand – even very old – religious expressions, one can discriminate false religious expressions as false, and one can develop new, up to date religious language. Good religious expressions show how one can get a sight of God and possibly face him.
3. There is nothing to fear of an encounter with God and there is no test to stand before him, because "to fear" and "to stand" are concepts from this world. It is just impossible to apply them to an extra-worldly God. To the contrary: if encounters with an extra-worldly God are possible at all, then they cannot but be free and detached from all inner-worldly matters. This is the ice cold version of what is otherwise called the "Good News" of the New Testament. More accurately said: The look out of the world onto the Extra-worldly is, in every way, overwhelmingly positive and the absolutely best that can happen to a person.

No book can write into being an encounter with the Extra-worldly. This book provides fundamentals and hints for personally acquiring and increasing existential competence. It tries to direct the view to the Extra-worldly, at least approximately.

## INTRODUCTION

The basis of this book is the following:

Religion literally says "connection back" or simply "connection". What is meant is a connection to the roots of our existence. These roots cannot be found as objects in the world or worlds in which we are moving about.

We are here using the terms "world" and "worlds" in the following sense: There are the world of physics, the world of fashion, the world of politics, the world of automobiles, the world of animals, the world of crime, the world of computers, the world of the Phoenicians, various business world, the world of arts, the world of sports, the world of numbers, the worlds of our thoughts, and countless other worlds. Humans can almost indefinitely explore such worlds. And all of these worlds together, more precisely: the compound of all worlds that humans can, in principle, explore, we call here "*the world*".

We explore worlds by grasping them more and more, that is, we cumulatively conceptualize their contents. If we want to get familiar with a new domain then we let its objects, properties, interrelations, movements, changes, and possibilities of action occur to us, and they occur in the form of concepts. In this way, we explore the world of this domain and thus enhance our personal world. –

Let us sum up:

The world is all that we can, in principle, conceptualize.

As a consequence, the extra-worldly roots of our existence mentioned above cannot be conceptualized. Concepts of the extra-worldly are impossible. Formal assertions and conceptual precision cannot but fail the extra-worldly aspects of our existence.

We need not, however, be silent about the Extra-worldly but can – as this book does – try a language that approximately points to, and directs the view of the person addressed in a direction where he or she could see, what is meant. Such language is the only reasonable way in which religion can be communicated. And the thus aligned view is the only option how to imagine the connection to the Extra-worldly.

Note that, for all our tellings we have nothing but our usual words and concepts. In religious tellings, however they are literally invalid. Instead, religious tellings are about something that comes into view in parallel or in between the words. A religious telling should be taken with the implicit prefix "It is as if" and then one should try to see that very "It".

Some religious organizations still provide the framework in which religious tellings are being communicated, in which their understanding remains a permanent issue and task, in which their message is discovered at least by a few members and effectively presented by possibly even less of them. As we shall see below, good approximately pointing language about existential matters has successfully been practiced time and again, both inside and outside religious organizations.

The controversies around religious doctrine and religious organizations do not lie in their existential kernel but on the level of their public statements and positions. Religious expressions are notoriously being sold and accepted as inner-worldly assertions about concepts and relations. This is a primitive logical mistake. It has immense consequences.

As an illustration of this claim, let us take the public dispute about creation. Science says: the biblical Genesis is untrue because the world has not started a few enumerable generations ago but rather thirteen-plus billion years ago in the Big Bang. A subset of the religious teachers responds that Genesis is intended to mean something different. For science and ratio, it then ceases to be a target to attack and becomes irrelevant. Many religious teachers, however, counter scientific authority with superior, divine authority that, of course, need not be defined, but serves very well and successfully to justify Genesis. A further subset of religious teachers tries to contain science by putting testimony against testimony, claiming that Genesis were indeed literally true. This is aimed especially at evolution theory but it does not really prevail, because science successfully holds the position that one does not need God to explain the origination of the world. Now, as if they wanted to save God, the advocates of "Intelligent Design" enter the stage and argue that the giant leaps of complexity in the evolution of living creatures can only have been produced by a higher intelligence, which can only be God.

This is a situation in which one would normally assume that all those involved do not have a clue. Whereof? The book Genesis is a religious telling, dealing with the base of our existence. To understand and competently judge it requires existential competence which, in a culture of avoiding God, one cannot expect from anybody, particularly not from elites that are not existentially challenged.

But the primitive logical mistake should at least be avoidable: The book Genesis does not consist of factual assertions. Science can declare factual assertions as true or false, but it does not have any scientific means to classify as nonsense those tellings, that are not factual. Science is simply not part of the game here. On the other hand, teachers of religion must, in the long term, fail to present religious tellings as factual assertions. Similarly, attempts to furnish such tellings with higher authority, does not transform them into assertions and, of course, does not render them more intelligible either.

Accordingly, let us now concentrate on the acquisition of existential competence.

We are going to proceed in the following manner:

In the first 4 Parts of this book, we will address the most important aspects of our existence and test the aptitude of the language of our tellings by applying them to a number of challenging religious texts.

In Parts 5 to 7, we will test the perspective thus obtained against a prominent selection of controversial subjects between religion, practical reason, and science.

In Part 8 we will apply our language to some religious and generally existential texts. We will thereby get an impression of the coverage of our approach and, above all, we will recover the great importance of these texts.



Let us emphasize again: Everything really important in this book appears in approximately pointing tellings. To take them as assertions, that can be true or false, to read them with a perspective that they could confirm or contradict a truth or bias, cannot but impede the access to their contents. The point is to see what the tellings want to point at. And it may happen that one does not see that immediately but only after one has borne it in mind for some time – or even for a long time.

All this sounds a bit dry, but we will retain the prosaic style, because the matter is nothing less than our existence. Over the course, however, we may recognize that we can be glad that our being is as it is – regarding both, its predisposition and its potential.

## PART 1: FOUNDATIONS

### Chapter 1: Our Existence - not of This World?

How can we figure the extra-worldly root of our existence?

Nowadays, we best start with the idea of the "film in our head". This film shows us by way of our senses all sorts of external situations and successions of events. However, we do not only passively perceive this film, but we can intentionally interfere, like in a computer game, a simulator or, more general, in a virtual reality. In the real reality of this film, we own a body and a repertoire of knowledge and capabilities, that we can accrete, and we encounter and interact with beings, that we classify as of our kind or of other kinds. The real reality works without any screen, monitor, joystick, sensor glove or dress. We encounter everything directly, and we can act directly out of our will. There is just the film and nothing else.

Let us review the previous section. It is a very good example for the way in which approximately pointing language can be effective. There is no literal meaning in which we would have a film in our head, our being is not a computer game situation, and our reality is not a virtual one. But the section tries to point to something that has to do with us, that has structures similar to the objects, relations, and dynamics mentioned, something to which we have a resonance.

The analogy above does have its limits but as soon as we roughly grasp what is meant, we can continue talking about it: The film of our being – other than the inner-worldly media, like film or virtual reality – does not only display external contents but also, for example, the inner perception of our body, so that we are in it and can feel it from inside. The film presents our own thoughts in such a way that we actively think them, or that they come up unintentionally, and that we put them into words. It presents our mood, in which we keep ourselves facing the film, and it presents our feelings that influence our mood and will.

To clearly make the point: The film of our being presents our world to us so directly and immediately that the film effectively *is* our world. The film almost completely fills the "totality of our being".

As we will, in the following, frequently refer to this totality of our being we introduce here the term "Dasein" for it (originally German; literal translation: "being there"). In this sense we will, for example, speak of our "Dasein film" or of our "Dasein situation".

It is perfectly clear where the virtual world of the computer game or simulator ends and where we, the real players, are located: outside that virtual world. The game may present us a relatively large and complicated virtual world, so even many sessions may

not be enough to explore all its regions and beings. As players, we may play so long and concentrated that we almost merge into our game-internal identity and exhaustingly live nothing but our game-internal life. We may lose ourselves in the game, even persistently fall for it. Still, we will never be fully taken up with it.

As persons, we remain outside the game and perceive the game situation, follow it, plan it, and control our avatar.

Quite similarly we are playing – as an outside entity– in the *real* world of our game of being.

This situation is actually obvious to us from the very beginning. Our sight of it may be obstructed, when we merge into the world and its conceptual structures. And the attempt to approach it with the help of an analogy, like the one above, may fail. We have to somehow desist from the world, stop playing for a moment, in order to gain sight of the situation.

There are various possibilities to achieve this. One example is a certain type of meditation: one becomes silent, passive, free from all tensions, and repels all perceptions and thoughts until they stop coming, and then there is nothing articulate anymore: the world is gone, and oneself is still there.

One trace of this self we know from our everyday life: the point where our consciousness is residing, better said: our self-point, typically the point "from which we are looking", "in the middle behind our eyes". We can any moment concentrate on this self that, for example, is just having this text in front of it and reading it, in certain surroundings, in a room, in a building, in an outer world, in a context of notions and thoughts that altogether constitute our present world but do not constitute our self, rather everything around our self.

Moreover, we are able to arbitrarily move the self-point, to a remote location, even to an imaginary location, or into a world of thought, into a reminiscence. The self-point is, for our life-time, bound to the world but totally free within the world.

Let us then, with all due circumspection, put the following on record: We are in the world and may fall for it, but our instance of authenticity is being, and playing from, outside the world that we encounter in our Dasein film.

## **Chapter 2: And Where Is God?**

The approximative tellings of the Old Testament present God as, among others, the "creator of the heaven and the earth", and the legend of Moses' calling tells that God identifies himself as "I am that I am" and as "I am". There is no need to twist anything of this in order to harmonize it with our telling of the interactive film of our Dasein.

"The earth" is the world, and "the heaven" is the Extra-worldly because, in the times of the authors of the Genesis, the earth was the range of all things and phenomena that humans could possibly encounter in their life, and the heaven was the divine, transcendent, the range inaccessible to humans during their life or even forever.

So, God is the creator of both, the Extra-worldly and the world, that together constitute our Dasein. Thus, in our analogy, he is a kind of instance that has put us into the interactive film of our Dasein and is now producing and displaying it "live" and is letting us therein realize and act – with all possible insertions of happy and dire fate.

God is meant as extra-worldly and, therefore, one cannot grasp him conceptually nor talk of him using words for concepts. That, by the way, is the meaning of the Second Commandment in the Old Testament: Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain. As long as we care not to conceptualize God, we may use "God" as an identifier, and this book will continue to do so below, if not throughout.

The word "I" deserves special attention in this context. "I am", spoken by God, says something like: God is Dasein. In our analogy above, however, it is we, the humans, more precisely, our "authentic Selves" who have a Dasein – every human is his or her individual Dasein, *the* Dasein. The obvious question is then: Is "Dasein" meant to refer to God, or to humans, or to both, and does it, in the latter case, mean the same?

"God helps those who help themselves" is a saying. We have already noted that the Extra-worldly cannot be conceptualized and therefore not have a structure. If we speak of an extra-worldly Self and an extra-worldly God, we cannot conceptually differentiate them. What we can have, is different sights of one and the same entity. In this sense we will below speak of "dimensions of the Extra-worldly" and depending on the sight use different identifications: "the Extra-worldly", "God", the "Authentic Self", "the Others".

To come back to the initial question: Where is God? The answer is: directly in the situation of our Dasein. For example, if we manage to direct our view towards our Authentic Self then this directs our view towards God at the same time.

Isn't this already a respectable result? It is not a proof of God's being. But it is not easy either to deny the Extra-worldly if that means to deny one's own Authentic Self. And is there a better explanation of the famous, cryptic text from Genesis: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him"! Obviously, 2500 years ago, the author of that text has clearly understood the situation of our Dasein and been able to put it into a succinct religious telling.

### Chapter 3: And We are Supposed to Believe This?

No. In short: Basically, we know it. It is where we started. We can see it clearly, when we turn our view – again, back – towards it, and sometimes it comes to sight accidentally. Occupied in our everyday life in the world, we seem to be far away from it, possibly thus far that not only is our sight of it blocked but we also don't know the way back anymore, that is, our connection to it is broken.

How can we restore it with reasonably certainty, how can we, at first, find a corresponding lookout? In any case, people have at all times more or less credibly reported to have "seen" God or an impression of God, in situations that were by no means exceptional but rather open to everybody.

If, however, the inner-worldly methods of conceptualization and cognition are not available here, how can we find out, whether the tellings and descriptions in these reports provide effective guidance, and in which sense they can be "true"?

Let us bring to mind, what everybody knows: Fate may hit us in such a way that not much more will remain of our life than our "naked existence". If we haven't experienced it ourselves we could still imagine that not much would be left then that could obstruct our sight, and that we would then care little about inner-worldly truths. Rather, only "one truth" would remain, that is, the unquestionable sight of our existential situation. (We may then be lacking words to communicate our sight but somebody who loves us may understand us in this situation.)

This kind of truth, existential truth, is singular: there is no opposite that could be false, there is no way out. As such, we understand it directly and absolutely, as soon as it comes into sight: it has actually been familiar to us from the beginning.

Thanks God, the hard way is not our only option for reaching this truth. It may occasionally, without our action, hit us most positively as a sudden flash of clear-sightedness.

But even lacking such special experiences we can try to raise our own competence for the Extra-worldly, starting with the tellings that people, reportedly competent in these matters, have produced over the millennia. We already know: If there is real competence behind them, then they must respect the insight that the Extra-worldly cannot be conceptualized, and then these tellings cannot be incontrovertible, terminologically precise "truths" of faith. Rather they must be approximately pointing tellings that help us gain a sight on the Extra-worldly.

We can try to enter a virtuous circle: in discovering eligible tellings that successfully point, we can develop our repertoire of existential insights and thus improve our rate of discovering further such tellings. Apparent, superficial contradictions should not bother us here as long as the tellings do effectively point.

We best start with people who, based on a large experience of life and an elevated sensibility, authentically tell about human existence. Eligible may be: religious authors

of various religions, philosophers, tale-tellers and poets, and – last not least – personal friends or trustworthy acquaintances with some existential depth.

For a start, competence is available, not on the base of authority conceded without checking, but on trial until we will have accumulated sufficient competence of our own. If the words "belief" or "faith" can be accurate in this context then in the sense that, initially and temporarily, we believe in, and have faith to, some sources of existential starting competence. Till, in the end, after persistent searches and explorations, we will ourselves see and know.

It is our personal choice, which tellings by whom we use as a jump start for our search of existential truth. In this book they originate mostly from the bible and from Martin Heidegger.

#### **Chapter 4: First Partial Summary**

Obviously, this is not a scientific treatise, say, in the domains of philosophy or theology, even though it ties in with them. The citations are informal, the sources are not precisely identified – if at all –, the language is determined but unsharp. That cannot be different because, as we have said before, we cannot tell about existentials better than in an approximately pointing manner. What matters is not whether one can trust the tellings of this book but whether one can personally – and possibly even better – see what they want to point to.

On the other hand this isn't a sermon either. Deliberately avoided is the use of emotions, symbolism, mysteries, and pathos that might motivate us and push us in the right direction without enlightening us about why, about where we will find ourselves in the meantime, and where we will arrive in the end. The goal is not to achieve a particular feeling, however honest and valuable, but to reach the base of our existence. And here the journey isn't the reward.

What then should be the value of this book? To collect, in a rather businesslike approach, existentially guiding materials and derive the consequences. These are actually quite dramatic in that they get most of the usually alienating aspects of religious teachings out of the way.

Our view of our Dasein will thus get more open, and only this will enable us, in the first place, to avoid existential mistakes and to understand the "Good News" as something plausible.

And where have we arrived at this point in this book? We have encountered three challenges for our reason:

1. The roots of our existence are outside our world. Analogous to a virtual reality we are "controlling" the real reality of our life in the world from a point outside: from our Authentic Self.
2. The world is all that we can conceptualize. Accordingly, the Extra-worldly cannot be conceptualized. As we have nothing but our usual concepts and words available for our communication, we can at best try approximately pointing tellings to address the Extra-worldly. Such tellings still contain "objects" and "relations", but these can only help direct our view. By no means can they be depended on as concepts (for example in conclusions) – to the contrary: as concepts they are, strictly speaking, false.  
Nevertheless, approximately pointing language has, over the millennia, been functional in practice again and again. We have a predisposed intuition for it.
3. The above caveat regarding concepts is equally indispensable when the telling is about "God". But the telling of an "instance" that has put us into the situation of our Dasein and presents "live" to us what we encounter in the real reality of our life, is an obvious telling that will allow us to further build on.

## PART 2: OUR DASEIN

### Chapter 5:

#### The Origin of Our Dasein and the Start of the World

Now and then in our life we may have noticed that we are not only *in* the world, where other humans are next to us and share our experiences, but also somehow *in front of it* and being fully on our own, in such a way that there isn't a "next to us".

We do not possess any organs to sense this situation. All that we encounter is in the world. Somehow, we have to look besides, or through, or away from, the world in order to catch a sight of our Dasein situation. We have already mentioned some examples for how that may happen: when fate or other people are attacking our existence, or when we are meditating deeply.

Also, there are spontaneous "dropouts" of the world, when, all of a sudden, the world stops and pauses for a few seconds: in the world, in all we are seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking etc., nothing happens for a moment, everything is standing still.

And the feeling flashes up in us: that this is a special, perhaps captivatingly beautiful, moment. We never forget it. The report about Moses and the burning bush shows a situation of this kind. But it may also be the trembling of leaves in a sunny grove. Or a stunning impression of beauty.

In such an experience the world is "standing still", time has disappeared, the experience is timeless, there is a touch of eternity in it. At some point, however, our time has started.

Let us go a little more after traditional existential competence.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" – the bible is telling in its starting sentence – and the "earth", that is, the world that we encounter in our Dasein, was "without form, and void". And then God "said", this and that should come to exist, "and it was so".

"In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." – these are the first words of the Gospel according to John, and a bit further down it continues: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Some translations even have "it" (the word), instead of "him". That means: "All things were made by it; and without it was not any thing made that was made."

"A Tao that can be defined, is not the eternal Tao; concepts that can be conceived, are not eternal concepts! Inconceivable are Heaven's and Earth's Origin, it is conceivable as the myriad things' mother." – these are the first words of the Tao Teh King of Lao-Tse.



And this is the common denominator: The Extra-worldly is the inconceivable, structureless origin of our Dasein and our situation therein. By "saying" "words", it creates the contents of our world and makes them stand out of the formless void so that we encounter them. This constitutes the interactive film of our Dasein in which our extra-worldly instance – our Authentic Self – is proceeding in the world. Obviously, all this happens now, at this very moment.

If we concede that the Extra-worldly does not have a structure then it does not, in particular, have a time structure: we cannot know of a past "act" of the Extra-worldly, nor can we make assertions about it. The past tense "created" cannot therefore be taken literally; it can be relevant only to the obvious progression of the Genesis story but not to its existential content.

The time that we know is the time *in the world*. Our *Dasein*, rooted in the Extra-worldly, cannot have a beginning in inner-worldly time, rather it is just "being". If we tend to speak of it in terms of time then it is better to say that it is *always* beginning. In every moment of our Dasein film, God starts a new shot, and we are already in it and being challenged to master it. The current "scene" is always "live" and freshly produced, and this is the incessant beginning.

The interior of the world starts as a *tohu-bohu*, that is, a formless chaos, and then takes form in that the Extra-worldly is "saying" "words". As the words are standing for concepts, we can also say:

The world is the *articulation* of that which we encounter in our Dasein film.

(Articulation, in a narrow sense, is the formation of phonemes in speaking. We use the term here in the extended sense of the formation of an uttering in general, that happens against the background of the formless, out of nothing.)

Let us translate the above citations into this mode of telling:

Genesis: In the beginning God created the Dasein with the Extra-worldly and the world, and the interior of the world was formless. Then God articulated this and that which we encountered as our world.

John: In the beginning was articulation ... All things were made by articulation; and without articulation, there was not any thing made that was made.

Lao-Tse: That which can be conceptualized, is not the Extra-worldly. Conceptualization is the myriad things' mother

Thus, in the tellings of these authors, the world is all that can be articulated or – more basically – conceptualized. The Extra-worldly is that which cannot be articulated and not conceptualized.

With regard to the temporal beginning of the *world*, let us try to remember how our own personal world started, subjectively and differently for everybody, but possibly in the following or a similar way.

Our memories reach back until some point of time in childhood; we may perhaps have several such reminiscences, imprecise but complete pictures or short scenes. We are no longer sure that we do not confuse them with photos, films, or videos that our parents may have shown us later, or with imaginations that we may have based on reports from our parents. We find it difficult to sort the reminiscences by time but it looks like they occurred at a time when we were already a few years old. We cannot probably remember our birth but, for later times, we do have reminiscences.

However we may have experienced it, at some point of time in our life the world articulated itself, and we may not have called out "there!" but we could have. Thus, with "being there" as its literal meaning, "Dasein" is a term that points quite well.

The older we are in our reminiscences, the richer and more coherent are they, up to the comprehensive view that we have upon most recent experiences and situations. Our world has started small and has since grown immensely.

## **Chapter 6:** **Our Mission: to Build the World**

We have noted before, that God has put us into our "Dasein film". Heidegger is saying in "Being and Time" that the Dasein is "thrown" – neither does he say thrown "by God" nor by whom at all. Thrown-ness does not have a negative connotation here, but in its consequence we now live in the world and know it is our part to continue living – whether we like it or not. Actually, we need just honestly expose ourselves to our conscience, and it will tell us that we have to *enhance* life.

Enhancement of life is a trait of human nature, opening up new world is an inherent quality, a dimension of Dasein. We are opening up the more world, the more we take in what is occurring to us. We take in the more of that, the more interested we are. And we get the more interested, the more we are taking in.

We may even, in connection with any most minor phenomenon, notice how much of well-conceived, rich and beautiful structure is behind it, in order that it can occur to us as it does. We may notice that there are millions of such small phenomena that constitute the Dasein film, individually made for each of us, and we may not get enough of it. Such is the character of the Dasein film, and God is presenting it to us personally, "live" – and at no charge. Notably children can intensely and strikingly enjoy it and, in consequence, will then develop especially fast.

Actually, all of us have walked long ways already in enhancing life. We just need to consider how little we were able to do in the beginnings of our Dasein film, and where we have arrived with regard to our insights and capabilities; how small our world had initially been, and how much it has grown since.

"Subdue it [the earth]", God says in the bible to the first humans and, taken as an existential telling, it pertains to every human from the start. Everybody senses and follows this motivation already from the first years of life, and this is the key to the proper understanding of the mandate to "subdue": "Earth", as already noted, stands for our "world". What every child is doing with the world is to draft an initial concept of everything unknown or new that it encounters, and then to try out, test, correct, change, discard, replace, refine, that is: to work on, the concept until nothing puts it in question anymore. Then the child has "grasped" it, and adds it to its capabilities and automatizes it. In this way humans enhance their world and explore new worlds. Our [individual] world is growing, and that means: we are growing.

To move within the familiar world that one has already explored, let alone in the narrow mode of subjecting that which is subject-able in this world, fails the essence of this development. The demand is for the exploration of new, unexplored world, that is, always to achieve, that one can live something that one has not been able to live before, that something becomes known part of one's world that had not been known in it before. "Subdue the earth" means: the disposition of your inner-worldly life is to explore ever more world(s).

This is also the sense in which the words: "be fruitful and multiply!" must be understood, and this interpretation does not stress them in any way. It is just the other way round: The common interpretation that refers to biological proliferation is too lowbrow, as it is missing the weighty existential content. We know that we have to enhance life in a quite comprehensive, total sense and, from this viewpoint, it is clear that these words from the bible are not a weak statement about a psychological drive but a strong telling about a fundamental given of our Dasein.

The same structure is also the subject of Jesus' parable about the talents, in which a rich man, before travelling to a far country, gives three servants some capital each and, after his return, rewards the two of them who have grown the capital and punishes the one who had just kept it buried in the earth. Translated into our language, this means: we are not only structured in such a way that we enhance our inner-worldly possibilities of life but our game of life does not work if we do not expand them.

Tolerance, "live and let live", humanism and human rights are definitely not enough. To enhance life is the rule of the game, the existential law of our Dasein.

The attitude to refuse the expansion of life, we call "the evil attitude" or just "the evil".

The consequences of the evil – if you so want: the punishment for it – are the shrinkage of our life, the deconstruction of our possibilities, and the depletion of our world – as if, in a computer game, we would handle the controls in a systematically wrong manner or even not at all: our avatar would then be lost.

## Chapter 7: Understanding

Let us look closer at the workings of our exploration of new world: In order to be able to understandingly act in the world it is necessary that we have conceptualized the world, that is: made concepts of its objects, their properties and relations.

How can we conceptualize, how can we come up with concepts? We can do it from our roots, our world starts with the capability already available. The world meets us in our concepts, and there is nothing between the world and the concepts.

The ability to understand the inner-worldly is an inseparable trait of Dasein, in other words: intelligence is a dimension of Dasein. The expressions "God *said*, Let there be ..." and "the *Word* was with God" refer to the fact that we usually understand language and words: God has equipped us, for the situation in our Dasein film, with conceptual understanding and acting. That film is downright our concurrent understanding of what God lets us encounter in the world. We can survive in it either through being already acquainted with what we encounter, or through "live" creating new concepts for it.

Let us put on record once more explicitly: Understanding – in the sense of exploring our world – is *constructive*, it is the progressive construction of the conceptual structure that constitutes our world.

Heidegger uses the term "design" to denote this feature. He represents Dasein as "thrown", and out of this thrown-ness, it designs ("un-throws") itself understandingly.

Our respective individual world is our design, we have personally designed it.

It is in this existential sense, that everyone is the architect of his or her own good fortune, not only in the sense that one can strive for something in the world and thereby achieve some wealth. Our world is as we want to see it.

Note that our understanding is constructive even if we are – as we use to express it – proceeding "analytically", in order to understand something. For analyzing something, that is, for discovering its structural components, any concepts for these components and structures must have been designed beforehand.

That which we encounter in the world mostly harmonizes with that which we already know, with the concepts available to us. If it harmonizes then we understand it immediately; otherwise we do not understand it at all, or not sufficiently. We do not observe that we were matching inner-worldly structures with mental structures; we do not handle a model of the world. All we notice is either that we understand, or that we have not encountered "something like that" before, and we do not rather perceive this as a momentary occurrence but as a kind of resonance or lack of resonance. That resonance can appear instantaneously, in virtually no time.

Likewise, a theory, that is, a mental explanation, is not a model of the world. We encounter a theory as an inner-worldly object, that is, an object in our personal world of

thoughts, or in its representation by communicable objects like words, formulae, graphics, etc. There are two object structures here to understand: On the one hand, we can understand a communicated theory in the sense above, that is we can be in resonance with what it is saying. On the other hand, we can understand its assumed and predicted realities, for example, measurement readings, colourings, patterns, etc. when we encounter them in the world.

This is all that we encounter in understanding a theory; in contrast, we never encounter the fictitious background structure associated with the designs of the theory. We never encounter an electron, but we encounter the written theory that is making statements about electrons, and the measurement data on the display from which we deduce a flow of electrons. We do not usually encounter the gossip among the neighbours, but we encounter other talk, from which we can reason back to some gossip. The electron and the gossip are small examples for the never encountered, fictitious background structure of the world. But, of course, theories are important tools for understanding the world, for predicting and effecting that which we will encounter under certain conditions.

Whether we understand what we encounter in the world, is beyond our control. Why do we all of a sudden understand something that we have previously tried in vain to understand, or of which we previously did not even notice that there was something to understand? Why are we downright blinded sometimes while, at other times, we begin to see?

Before we look further into this question, we will, after having just covered the receptive aspect, directly treat the active aspect of our Dasein.

## **Chapter 8: Action**

With our actions it is exactly the same as with understanding. They are beyond our control. From one moment to the next we are doing something that we did not do a moment before. In between, there is an impulse to act that may, or may not, appear considerate and based on a decision of ours, or may even ignore and counteract our consideration and decision. For, sometimes, we think that our impulse to act will come instantly, but it does not come. Or we want to refrain from a certain action, but the impulse to do it comes in spite. In the extreme, it may happen that somebody thinks through a matter completely, achieves absolute clarity about what needs to be done or desisted from, and then undertakes the opposite.

Nonetheless we perceive that we are the ones who are acting, that we can, at all times, do or leave undone every single action, and that we can therefore be responsible for our actions.

Actually, what is "action" in the context of our notion of the interactive Dasein film? Answer: to effect that we encounter something in the world that we have already learnt to understand, that is, we can re-call something to do it again. We do not only understand on an abstract level how that which we encounter is interrelated, we rather also understand – we have designs available for – what we may encounter next, and from the alternatives we choose a future – we are designing ourselves into a future.

Let us look at an example: Occasionally we go hiking, the world of easy walking-tours is something we are well acquainted with. We encounter a bridge over a creek. In this "encounter" we can recall all we understand about it: firm steps on a concrete bridge, careful steps on wet wooden planks, the stability of balustrades, the sounds of steps, the risk of accident, the expectable adversity if we do not cross the bridge and fail to reach our destination, the time required for the way back, etc. We hardly notice that we are making a choice, and next we possibly encounter that we are crossing the bridge.

Actually, there are many possibilities for whether and what we are choosing and what we will thereupon encounter. We may totally fail to notice the situation, absent-mindedly cross the bridge and, after some time, ask ourselves whether we have already come past the bridge. We can, in front of the bridge, check what time it is, consider whether it is not too late to go further, and then we cross the bridge and later know exactly at which point of time we crossed the bridge. We may decide to cross the bridge, it is built from wood, one of the planks is more rotten than expected, we brake through it, and thus we encounter something quite different from our "design" of walking over the bridge. Otherwise, the brittleness may be obvious to us, and then we do not encounter our normal walking over the bridge, but that we are checking the strength of each single plank before firmly putting our foot on it. Eventually, the bridge may be a widely swinging suspension bridge built using natural rope and spanning a canyon 100 meters deep. We take together all our courage and decide to cross the bridge, and then we encounter that we actually turn around and do not cross it.

The better we understand the situation, the greater is the chance that, what we encounter after our resolution, will be in line with our design, for we act understandingly and do not intentionally disregard what we understand. We even take into account what we know about our own, occasionally too cautious or too careless decision attitude.

We resolve to act in the frame of what we understand. We know what we want and understand, what therefore is best to be done next, and then that *is* our design and action. Understanding and action are two sides of the same coin. Even if our action is a seemingly passive letting-slide of the Dasein film, this is its substance, and we understand what we can expect to happen next.

And then we encounter what we have designed – or something else. Our action is mostly successful, we are acting understandingly, but the outcome may also be different, for example, because our understanding of the situation is occasionally insufficient. This different outcome opens up new world for us.

Moreover it may happen that, spontaneously, we do something different from what we have resolved. Our impulse to act differs from our decision because we have misjudged our own inner-worldly nature.

You can try a self-experiment with an insignificant movement, for example, with abducting a thumb, in an undisturbed setting, concentrated, and several times in succession – but read the end of this paragraph before doing it: adduct the thumb, then resolve to abduct it and observe, when and whether you do it.

You will notice that the movement will, in most cases, not come at once. If you concentrate very much on the intention to move, it may perhaps come in the moment when you ease off. Sometimes you may wait long for the actual movement, many seconds.

We are not fully in control of the impulse to act – by the way, this is also the current state of science.

## **Chapter 9: Basic Trust**

We do not control whether and what we understand, but we understand. We do not control our impulses to act, but we can act deliberately. Our actions depend on our understanding, but if the outcome differs from our expectation, then we will not be dead in the next moment, but it opens up new world to us. Above all, we can understand and act, because we can, in the world, rely on the continuity of the regularities in our environment and on the laws of nature.

And we do not pay a price, neither for understanding nor for the ability to act. They are presents for us, again and again, in every single situation.

We are not "unfairly" thrown in our Dasein, rather the world shows us dependably how it is and works. We are given the abilities to understand and act in the world and thereby to construct and develop it.

Here we are at a beginning of the Dasein, not at the beginning of our lifetime but at the root of our understanding and action. Each effort to understand or do something is accompanied by the hope that the understanding or the action, respectively, will actually occur, on no basis whatsoever, downright out of nothing. And they do occur, as if articulated out of nothing.

We can very well imagine basic trust as a fundamental attitude, without asking for a counterpart towards which it may be directed. But if we are not in control, where do the impulses to understand and to act come from? It turns out convenient that we already have a telling about an extra-worldly instance that has put us into the Dasein film and makes us encounter many articulate things therein. That says all. It is, as if God makes

us encounter the impulses to understand and to act. Or, in other words: our intelligence is rooted in the extra-worldly.

One of the most convincing demonstrations of basic trust is the famous Psalm 23. Its language is poetical, and it compares our situation with that of a sheep that is well tended by its shepherd. Because this metaphor may nowadays appear strange to many people we produce a transcription of the psalm into this book's mode of language. The claim is not to supersede the poetic value of the original, but rather to expose its tangible content. Everybody remains free to view the original as the stronger text.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

The extra-worldly makes me master my life. My own predisposition is to this end, and what I encounter in the world, is provided to this end.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

All I need for living is accessible and available to me: food, drinking, energy, knowledge, capabilities, judgement, will, sense of proportion, courage, hardiness. When I lose my orientation, I can retrieve it by sighting the Extra-worldly.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Even when I am badly off, when I meet a lot of hostility, when death is threatening me, I can master this and still enjoy the plenty of good and beautiful things that life is bestowing on me.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

The only condition is that I keep in mind my extra-worldly rooting and the same situation of the other humans. This sight can be gained by everybody. If one has it, then everything is alright and good.



## **Chapter 10: Second Partial Summary**

Let us at this point again review the challenges to our reason, which we have met so far. Beyond the findings listed in Chapter 4 we have collected the following:

4. We are ourselves constructing the world through conceptual articulation and structuring of what we encounter against the background noise of chaos.
5. We cannot control the corresponding impulses to understand and to act, because they are rooted in the extra-worldly. We get them as presents.

These challenges may not match the common and prevalent views, but they are relatively uncomplicated, they are rather not dependent upon belief, and it may thus not be too difficult to gain sight of their contents.

## PART 3: THE DIMENSIONS OF DASEIN

### Chapter 11:

#### Why "Dimensions"?

As the totality of our being, our Dasein cannot be an inner-worldly object or phenomenon, and we cannot therefore conceptualize it, nor attach attributes to it, nor put it in relation to anything.

In order to be able to tell something about Dasein, we are going to use here the concept of "dimensions" in the sense, that there may be quite diverse views of our Dasein, totally independent of each other, like a tin appears circular from the top and rectangular from the side.

Some dimensions of Dasein are divinity, worldliness, time, intelligence, truth, love. *In* the world, these dimensions extend, for example

- divinity: between being near to God and being remote from God,
- worldliness: between keeping a distance to the world and being taken up with the world,
- time: between time standing still and life dominated by time,
- intelligence: between courageous openness for new explorations and the burying of talents,
- truth: between honesty against oneself and self-deception,
- love: between existential relation and objectification of fellow humans.

Dasein can have many such dimensions and, in each of them, we can choose and adopt fixed or varying positions and orientations. We can refer to them collectively as to our (Dasein-level) stance in the world.

In addition, our telling about "dimensions" should take into account that the extra-worldly does not have any structure. Let us, instead of the tin, imagine a cube with its side faces differently coloured. Let us further image, that the cube is very small – actually so small, that we see it as just a point, that is, without any structure. Finally, the side faces shall radiate their colours with extreme intensity. If we then happen to get into the lustre cone of one side surface – into a line of sight –, we will see its colour. Over a great viewing distance, or near the fringe of the cone, we may see it just weakly. But if we come "near" to the point or into the very line of sight, then the light may be so intense that we can no longer tell the colour and will see nothing but absolute brightness.

In this sense we are here telling about dimensions of the Extra-worldly, that somehow reach into the world such that therein we have lines of sight of the Extra-worldly, with

attributes (analogous to: colour) that, in viewing the Extra-worldly, change over into something absolute (absolute light).

We want to pick out one specific dimension here, because it is easily accessible to everybody and therefore very illustrative for our present considerations, that is: beauty.

Everybody recognizes beauty, when facing it. Everybody has his understanding of beautiful and ugly. Arts are busy, among others, in this dimension. Some artists are gifted to create objects and events that we can experience as beautiful. Why they appear as beautiful, cannot rather be ascertained to some precision. "It has something" that can, at best, be put in an approximately pointing telling. Beauty cannot be defined nor systematically produced: intended beauty tends not to result in beauty. However, in nature beauty is superabundant.

The most beautiful that we encounter, strikes us to an extent that our mouth stays open, we are unable to respond, and we are totally swept off our feet. We perceive such beauty – even if subjective in individual cases – as absolute, "divine". With ugliness, encounters may be possible that overstrain our presence of mind, but there could not be encounters that were absolute and would switch off time and world.

It is, as if the inner-worldly dimension of beauty is, at one end, connected to the genuine, pure, opposite-less Dasein dimension: to absolute beauty – and not in an asymptotically-infinite distance, but in such a way that we can see it although rarely but then really near.

It is these connections of the inner-worldly dimensions of Dasein with the Extra-worldly, which render possible in the first place that we can, with tellings composed of inner-worldly words, approximate the Extra-worldly; that approximately pointing tellings can be effective at all: we can tell what is visible in the proximity of the inner-worldly lines of sight.

If we get into or near a line of sight of the Extra-worldly, then great, positive sensations will take possession of us:

- in the line of sight of the Authentic Self: the sensation of unity with God,
- in the line of sight of beauty: the sensation that the world stands still,
- in the line of sight of the extra-worldly root of the Others (the other humans): the sensation of absolute love,
- in the line of sight of existential emergency: the sensation of absolute determinedness.

But the sensation is not the same as the connection to the Extra-worldly, only a symptom. It is as if, in approximating the Extra-worldly, the sensation were losing its colour till, in the end, a pure and abstract essence of the sensation would remain, such that absolute unity, beauty, truth, love, determination are all identical: just absolute.

## Chapter 12: Trinity

As dimensions are mutually independent and compatible, we can without any problems accept as free of contradictions all tellings of the type: "I am the way, the truth, and the life", "I am the light of the world", "God is love", and the telling of the "Triune God". Together, they are not inconsistent and no more cryptic than any single telling about the Extra-worldly – anyway, consistency is not a criterion for religious tellings: they need just, singly or collectively, point effectively at the Extra-worldly.

Let us, for example, consider Trinity.

The Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit means, that Dasein has a parental dimension, a filial dimension, and a dimension of holiness. Using the preceding insights, we can easily interpret this.

The parental dimension can be understood in the sense that we are not simply thrown into the situation of our Dasein but well equipped to master it, that we are given the impulses to understand and to act, and that we can grow, not the least on the base of well-calculated, increasing challenges and also some failures which raise our prudence. That obviously looks like the action of parents fostering their child: to expose it well guarded to the next new experience that it is able to master.

The filial dimension can be understood by considering the basic trust that allows us to readily engage in everything that we encounter and to explore our world. It can be seen in the pristine joyousness of the child in this game of Dasein, especially the vibrating interest in new things that the world is offering for trying out. It is remarkable how children react with great joy to some actually unpleasing experiences. Imagine that a giant is throwing you 6 meters high in the air and then catches you again in his arms. In a comparable situation, Children will scream in excitement and will not get enough of it.

In order to visualize the dimension of holiness, we have to show first what may be meant with the "Holy Spirit". "Holy" says something in the direction of "whole", "unscathed", "good", a soul healthy throughout and viewing the world as equally healthy, a pure soul to which all things are pure. "Spirit" does not serve to differentiate from bodily health but rather adds a mental disposition: excitement. The core of the matter is thus an "excited spirit of a healthy world", a Dasein attitude in which we recognize the world as good. The inner-worldly dimension of this extends between constructing the world as "holy" and – at the other end – constructing it as a miserable vale of tears full of harm and suffering. The extra-worldly dimension is just pure salvation, apart from the world and without alternative or opposite.

The disposition of the Holy Spirit is an excited in-spiration with a distinctive component of communication, an aspect that we will resume and treat in more detail further below.

## Chapter 13: The Others

In the world, we encounter beings, which we directly understand as being of type Dasein – not as our own individual Dasein, but as Dasein with its own, different identity each. Obviously, the Others are not simply existent and more or less useful as other objects; they rather are like we are: Dasein thrown into a world to be explored; and they care to enhance their lives as we do.

My own Authentic Self can, in an unquestionable and inexplicable way, steer my Dasein in my world, and nobody else can. But it cannot steer the Dasein of the Others in their world. The Authentic Selves of the Others can apparently steer their respective Dasein in their respective world, but they cannot steer my Dasein in my world.

Their and our worlds are still overlapping somehow, partly harmonizing and partly irreconcilable. When we form a queue jointly with others, then all involved encounter the same queue, but it may happen that two or more involved have irreconcilable designs of the correct sequence.

We all have, in individual ways, learnt whether and how we may put through our own design, understand the designs of the Others, react on a "defeat", etc. More generally, we have, through education and praxis, learnt more or less to understand, and act in, the situation when encounter Others, how to seek or avoid such encounters, and how to deal with the outcomes.

Much of what we have learnt in such a way is objectified, that is, there are documented and unwritten rules which, in principle, everybody can understand and which, in case of irreconcilably overlapping world designs, channel the actions into manageable results. The rules comprise whole worlds of ethics and law, in which objectivity tends to be ensured by, preferably, precise conceptualization. The fervour of conceptualization may, however, often reach a level on which the humans addressed are no longer viewed as Dasein.

But what are the extra-worldly roots of the phenomena, that we encounter Others in the world? They are basically: (1) the sight of one's own ("my") extra-worldly instance that is understanding and acting in the Dasein film, (2) the sight of the analogous instance of each of the Others, (3) the sight of the instance that has put me and the Others into their individual Dasein films and is now playing it to us "live". In short: (1) my Authentic Self, (2) the Authentic Self of the Other, (3) God.

We consider the instances which are presenting to me and to the Others their individual Dasein films, as one and the same instance. That everybody had a different, exclusive God of his or her own, is something that hitherto rather nobody has thought or is thinking. We use to live together almost only with Others, whose worlds – due to centuries of objectification work – match ours to such an extent that we usually think that all of us are living in one and the same world, and that there is only a single world.

Accordingly the most natural view is that there is only one instance that has put us all into coherent situations of Dasein, that is, only *one* God.

The relation between existential instances is what we call *love*.

As a precaution, let us recall that something like the previous sentence, as well as the preceding and following sentences about extra-worldly instances and the connection to them, cannot be relational assertions to be taken literally, but are approximately pointing tellings. One can only try to see, what is behind the sentences.

Of course, there are inner-worldly concepts of love, on which we are building here. We associate some of its positive attributes: in the end, it is stronger than all other human motivations and gets over all human limitations. But it has inner-worldly counterparts, the reification of, and contempt for, humans. In contrast, what we call love in an existential sense is unambiguous, structure-less, without alternative or opposite.

Speaking of love as an existential relation may surprise, but it is not new. Christians will at once think of the telling of God's love for all humans and the pre-eminent commandment of Jesus, that he is offering as a replacement for the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself". Jesus' words are just relating the above three extra-worldly instances: my own Authentic Self, the Authentic Self of the Others, and God. Obviously, one can independently reach this view of love, and the corresponding existential competence has been available already 2000 years ago.

How can we possibly enter into such a relation, can we quit it, can we avoid its loss? For our acting understandingly, the extra-worldly is unconceivable and unavailable, that is: not to our disposal. What we can, is to achieve an approximate view of our Dasein situation, and therein we find God, our own and the Others' Dasein roots as the one, single Extra-worldly, that is, in an absolute identity relation that does not have a start nor an end in time.

If one lacks, blocks, looses, or refuses the sight on the Extra-worldly in the Others, then one is acting as if there were unrelated-ness between God and humans or between two humans. It is this attitude against which the following telling is warning: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (and rather not the separation of an inner-worldly bond), because this attitude unavoidably damages the development of our own world, and with this attitude we could never view our Dasein with a clear conscience and peace of mind.

Our predisposition to enhance life includes the Others. The most yielding source for the enrichment of my life and my possibilities are the Others, more yielding than any objects. The Others: both, in learning from them how to build my world, and in effectively developing my world and offering them my experiences for their use. Even by enhancing our own life in the world we may contribute to the expansion of the life of Others: we may demonstrate and test new possibilities showing that they are practical, we may entrain people in our proximity; we may pass on to them something – possibly

quite much – from our achievements. Problems will arise only if we try to expand our life on cost of Others. The result will then usually be that we lessen our own life.

At the end of this chapter, we consider a quotation from a work of Friedrich Schiller, that shows the Extra-worldly in the love to the Other – and that shows that love, beauty, and divinity are dimensions of the same Extra-worldly:

"Then--oh! then was the first dawning of my soul! A thousand new sentiments arose in my bosom, as flowers arise from the earth when spring approaches. I forgot there was a world, yet never had I felt that world so dear to me! I forgot there was a God, yet never had I so loved him! "

## **Chapter 14: About the Tree of Knowledge**

Why is the knowledge that humans gain by eating from the "tree of knowledge", just the knowledge of good and bad, of all knowledge? What is the relation between the knowledge of good and bad and being "as Gods"? Why should anyone, for this knowledge, be thrown out of Paradise? What actually is Paradise, and who are the "Cherubim" with the "flaming sword", that won't let anybody in again?

Such questions may have puzzled us in early religious instruction, if they have touched us at all. For, such are tellings from Genesis, and meanwhile we have reason to assume a good measure of existential competence behind it. Good explanations in contemporary terms are rare, and the author has, so far, not met any complete explanations. But in this book, we have already sighted Dasein sufficiently for working out a consistent understanding.

Accordingly we may answer these questions as follows:

Paradise is the Extra-worldly. Angels always stand for the Authentic Self. The whole troop of Angels with flaming sword, who block the return to Paradise, therefore stand for a fundamental predisposition of Dasein: To retire into Paradise is not an option for us. We do not have an alternative to being in the world and building it.

The words of the serpent about being "as Gods" could be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand inner-worldly, as a seduction into the attitude that we can do everything and that this were our personal merit, that we were in control, that our inner-worldly ego-subject could treat the Others like the "godlike" player can treat the figures in a virtual reality, free to mistreat, ignore, or destroy them at will. In the real world this attitude is, though dangerous hubris, not "the evil" in itself.

The more plausible interpretation is that, with the exodus from Paradise, man has obtained a Dasein with an extra-worldly root – the divine Authentic Self –, and thereby has become "as God". And that anchored therein is the ability of conceptualizing the world, on the base of which we know very well what serves to enhance, and what to

lessen life. And then, evil is what our conscience with the flaming sword has forever been telling us: each attitude and action to lessen life, and each life in this attitude.

Our mission is to enhance life, our own life by building our own world, but also the life of the Others. That does not least include that we let the Others build their worlds. Since we cannot, however, hide away at the paradisiacal end of the space of good and evil without piling up failures against Dasein, we cannot escape moving in the "evil domain". We lessen life, we interfere into the Dasein films of Others, we let our predeterminations occur to them, we oppose them, often as if we were God. Even when we choose an option to enhance life, we fail to enhance life along the alternative options.

Why don't we talk about a Dasein *dimension* between good and evil?

Because the ability to build our world opens up, in each single Dasein dimension, possibilities to enhance or lessen life:

- In the dimension of intelligence, we can be on the lookout for, or we can clamp up and shy away from, new insights and new types of action.
- In the dimension of love, we can support and stimulate people, or we can humiliate them.
- In the dimension of time, we can remain fixed in the past or fixed in forgetting the past, or we can entertain ever new approaches and grow with them.
- In the dimension of the divine, we can bring into play our divine talents or confine ourselves to the present capacities of our own inner-worldly ego-subject and wear it out.

In inner-worldly terms, the structure that best characterizes the domain of good and evil, is the space of all inner-worldly Dasein dimensions, in short: the world.

Note well, that evil is not quite the same as evil intention. We are not in control. What we do to others with evil intention may turn to their good account, and what we do to others with good intention, may do damage to them. But when we lessen any life, then this is always also lessening our life.

Let us sum up these considerations: Here we are, put into our Dasein and encountering a world, that is a space of good and evil, in which we are not in control of whether our insights and actions cause good or evil? Not quite: thanks to our Authentic Self, we know, what is good and what evil; and thanks to the intelligence dimension, we can ever better explore our world, so that our concepts become more dependable; and with all this, we should be able to really enhance life. Actually, it is bound to work, because the extra-worldly instances involved are absolutely good: God, our Authentic Self, and the Authentic Selves of the Others.

We take the opportunity, to treat here shortly the otherwise not very productive concept of "sin". Sin is not the same as evil or doing evil. The usual definition of sin is "being remote from God". That's what we all can only be, outside paradise. It is



therefore pointless, to be concerned about our own remoteness from God, or to reproach others with their sinfulness. In contrast, it is really important to maintain, or even regain, across the inevitable distance, our connection to God.

## Chapter 15: Third Partial Summary

Chapters 11 through 14 have again raised new challenges for our reason:

6. In the world, we encounter the Others as beings of type Dasein – like ourselves. We are connected with them – like we are with God – through love: a relation between existential instances, the inner-worldly correspondent of which is the dimension between love and the objectification of the Others.
7. Dasein has many dimensions: pure, without alternative, and without opposite in the Extra-worldly; extended between positive and negative extremes in the world. The compound of the inner-worldly extents of all these dimensions is the space of good and evil.
8. Evil is every Dasein attitude that is not out to enhancing life.

These tellings are definitely complicated. We can easily identify with other persons, and it is also easy to follow the idea of the inner-worldly dimensions of Dasein. But that these dimension should, in the extra-worldly, at the root of our existence, in our Authentic Self, have *purely positive* counterparts, is a great challenge for our mind – and almost too good to be true.

This allows us to end our fundamental descriptions of Dasein.

In Part 4 of this book, we will apply them to some important religious texts, hoping to understand these texts better than before – or even for the first time.

## **PART 4: INTERPRETATIONS**

### **Chapter 16:**

#### **The Ten Commandments**

We are all going to end up in heaven, if we only comply with the Ten Commandments?

Considering all we have presented in Part 1, that cannot be. We cannot conceptualize the Extra-worldly, including heaven; we cannot bind it in inner-worldly conditions; we do not in any way have it to our disposal in our life in the world. Accordingly, we cannot hold the contraposition either, that we do not end up in heaven if we do not comply with the Ten Commandments.

And if we violate one of the Ten Commandments, can we then by some compensation, penitence, indulgence recover our chance to get into heaven? This cannot be claimed either. In theology, it is nothing new that we can neither ensure nor miss our entering into heaven or eternal life on grounds of our inner-worldly doings or failures.

What is it then that the Ten Commandments are saying? It is somewhat misleading that they are formulated as directives. If they are meant to be from an absolute, extra-worldly God, then they must be absolute rules of the game of our Dasein, then there is no way around them, and compliance with them is not an open option, that could be ordered, followed or transgressed.

Let us again try a transcription:

## Bible

1. I am the LORD thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.
3. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
4. Honour thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill. 6. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Is this reformulation allowed?

In a certain respect, it is actually required. By all experiences over the centuries, this biblical text is predominantly, and contrary to all warnings, being misunderstood as a body of inner-worldly rules, in line of this pattern: If we just comply with rules 1-10 then our life is alright in the face of God. But this is obviously false. Or should our life be alright in the face of God if we demolish the car of a neighbour, or deal in human trafficking, or bully a colleague, or leave an injured without help, or do or leave undone many other things abundant in our law codes and missing in the Ten Commandments? That this misunderstanding has lasted can only be due to the widespread attitude of people not to question a divine text, and to the equally widespread practice of taking implications in the wrong direction. If the Ten Commandments make sense as implications at all, then in the following direction: if my life is alright in the face of God, then I remember the holy day, refrain from killing, stealing, etc.

There is, however, another source of great existential competence, who has already 2000 years ago, proposed the same reformulation: Jesus. We have cited this already in Chapter 12 before: Thou shalt – and we add: according to the first table of the Ten Commandments, containing Commandments 1-3 – love the Lord thy God with all thy

## Telling in the style of this book

1. I am the Extra-worldly, the origin of what you encounter in the world. There is only one Extra-worldly.
2. I am not inner-worldly and not amenable to your conceptualizations.
3. You can achieve and maintain salvation only if you do not lose yourself in the world but refresh your connection (re-ligion) to me on a regular basis.
4. Your ancestry and past are essential parts of your Dasein: you are what you have lived, that is, to a great and formative extent with your parents.
- 5.-10. The Others around you, their lives, connections, reputations, belongings, and families are, exactly as they are, essential parts of your Dasein. You cannot enhance your live on their cost.

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and – according to the second table of the Ten Commandments, containing Commandments 4-10 – love thy neighbour as thyself. And we remember: This is a most natural, approximately pointing telling about the structure of all thinkable existential bindings between God, myself and the Others – a structure that everybody may in principle find out on his own.

Hence, the constellation is not that somebody has, in the distant past, formulated the Ten Commandments, and then Jesus came and invalidated them and replaced them by something different, both authors acting *ex cathedra* without any supporting groundwork. Rather it is about progress in the quality of tellings approximately pointing to the same fundamental Dasein structure.

## **Chapter 17:**

### **Job**

We all know what Job's news are, and so we know Job as the model for absolute misfortune. But actually his story has a happy end, and the story describes exactly how Job achieves it. By our standards, the story is quite verbose and, even if we only sketch its progression here, that impression will remain.

Initially, Job is the richest man far and wide: he has 7 sons, 3 daughters, 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, furthermore 500 yoke of oxen, 500 she asses, and a very great household, "so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east". But then the fatal day comes, on which the shattering news arrive one on top of another. The Sabeans rob the cattle and asses, and also slay the herdsmen; a major fire burns the sheep and their shepherds; the Chaldeans rob the camels and slay their herdsmen; the sons and daughters die during a wine party as the house collapses.

Then Job's health comes under attack: he gets sore boils from his feet up to his head, and suffers with no end in sight.

In his God-fearing attitude, Job accepts the loss of all his possessions and of his children: "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD". But after his disease has come as a final blow, he almost gets beside himself.

His friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar visit him – in view of Job's status they were probably men from the political and theological elite of the country –, and with them he has an endless dispute. We reproduce the contributions of these persons here only as extracts of a few sentences each. It is advisable to pay special attention to how "knowingly" Job's friends are talking about God.

Job, looking at his situation, curses the day on which he was born and says he would prefer to die. Eliphaz refers to Job's godly character, and asserts that God does not let the righteous perish. Job, unaware of any guilt on his part, complains that God is doing

all this to him in spite. Bildad comforts Job asserting that God is not unjust. Job should just beg God's forgiveness and mercy, and then God would give him a better time again. But Job remains at a loss with the fact that God, the almighty, is pinning him, the powerless, down so implacably. Zophar instructs him: if he subordinated himself as a sinner before God, then he would be in a position again to raise his head, and all his suffering could not dominate him any further.

Job rejects all their foul arguments pro God and asks, why God does not let him see his misconduct. Eliphaz asks back, where the foul argument is when the godless cannot enjoy their lives anymore, because of their permanent fear that God will punish them. Job protests, that he is a broken man in need of consolation rather than reprehension. Bildad responds that the world still does not change, and he insists that the godless are doomed to suffer. Job questions the right of the friends to look after his faults and thereby aggravate his God-given misery. This time Zophar answers: Job's fate were nothing special. The same happened to all godless people who were great, rich and famous. In the end the misery of the poor and suffering has visited upon them.

Job says most of the godless are having a good life, certainly much better than his, and that up to their end. Eliphaz reminds him, that he had been rich but had allowed poverty and misery in his vicinity, and that, if Job has not seen that himself, then still God has noted it and is now punishing him for it. If he, however, converted back to God, then God would restore him. Job responds that all would become clear if he only could come before God and hear what God had against him. It is not him, Job, who is the bad one but those people who rob people of their belongings, their health, and their lives. Bildad rejects this: before God there is no justification, before God, man is a nothing.

Job does not want to give up his claim of righteousness and asks, where the friends would have their seemingly superhuman wisdom come from. His own wisdom was his godliness. And now, in a last attempt, he presents his case, if not before God, then before his friends: He has been known for helping the poor and fighting the evil-doers, and he has been revered for his wisdom. He has not let himself be tempted by women, he has respected the rights of his servants and maidservants, fulfilled the demands of the poor, supported the widows, fed the orphans, conveyed comfort wherever he could, distributed clothes and blankets, never taken up arms, never been eager for gold, never prided himself on his success, never prayed to sun nor moon, never been gleeful or boastful over misfortunes of his enemies, never said anything evil, well accommodated his staff, always been hospitable, never had anything to hide. If there existed a bill of indictment against him, then he would tie it around his head like a diadem and willingly atone for all its contents.

An "angry young man" named Elihu, who has all the time listened to the dispute, criticises the arguments of the friends and, on his part, responds to Job's "final speech of the defence":

Firstly: Arguing is not the right way to address God. God cannot be called to account. God's approach to protect the life and soul of a person is such that he speaks to her in

various ways, be it in dreams or by leading the soul – through pain and distress – into the proximity of ruin and the life into the proximity of death, where suddenly an angel appears who tells the person how to live rightfully, and who intercedes with God on behalf of the person. And then God bestows his mercy on the person and let her become young again. God is doing this twice or thrice to every single person.

Secondly: God pays every person exactly what she deserves. He does not wrongly condemn anybody, he does not pervert justice. The correct attitude before God is to say: I have expiated, I do not want to do evil. If I did not succeed, then educate me to do better; if I acted wrongly, then I will not do it again.

Thirdly: By being good or evil, man cannot influence God. Man cannot by lamenting provoke God's judgement, nor escape it, but it will inevitably come.

Fourthly: God's action is perfect, because what he is doing is grand. Discover the world wherein you are living as God's wondrous work and you will have the right perspective.

Finally God himself answers Job "out of the whirlwind": "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" He refers to the phenomena of nature – earth, sea, weather, light, death, stars, animals, and asks Job whether he could manage all this, too, and control it to the least detail. He asks Job whether he could control all evil including the leviathan.

Job concedes that God can do all this while he cannot, and he submits to God. He blames himself for having accused God of obscuring his resolutions through incomprehensibility. He, Job, has spoken unwisely about something beyond his understanding. He repents in dust and ashes.

God then declares that the three old friends of Job had not spoken rightly of him, but God lets them, after Job's petition, get away with some burnt offerings. Job, however, is given twice as much as he had previously possessed, 14000 sheep, 6000 camels etc., and also again seven sons and three daughters. So, he lives for another 140 years and dies old and satisfied with his life.

The major thread of this legend is as follows: Job loses all his possessions, his children, and his health; almost nothing remains of his world, and he ends up at the edge of his existence. In this situation he faces God, and from God he is given a new sight of his Dasein and, consequently, his ultimate, twofold bliss.

Interestingly, at this turning point, no reasons are given, why God condemns the friends' statements about him. This deficiency is an important hint: the reasons are missing because there cannot be any, because it is impossible to explain God's "behaviour". Therefore, this verdict cannot be explained either.

What is being condemned is the counter position to Job's attitude. The key lies in Job's last words before God, in which he confesses that he cannot understand God. The arguments of the friends are full of explanations of how God was being, and how events and developments in the world would allow understanding God's system of action. Thirty-three chapters (in the King James Bible) of theological discourse about the

logic of God's work, with special consideration of justice, righteousness, and suffering, are outweighed by the five verses of Job's confession that man cannot understand God and becomes culpable when trying to conceptualize God. This insight is the foundation of Job's bliss.

Therefore, in essence, the book Job is a broad illustration of the Second Commandment.

## **Chapter 18: Jesus and Us**

So far, our religious citations have been mostly biblical and, furthermore, predominantly words ascribed to Jesus. Certainly, this book could equally well be written using texts from other religious teachings, the contents of which point to the same Extra-worldly. The use of biblical and Christian texts is just a consequence of the author's religious context. It is not pivotal here, nor is the question of whether the texts are authentic and credible. We are looking for texts that are effective in approximately pointing to the Extra-worldly. The selection criterion is their suitability for an independent development of religious competence.

In this direction, Jesus is actually very productive. We select here a number of misunderstandings about him or his words, respectively. As we usually accept that we cannot interpret them, it may be the more worthwhile to resolve them here.

Let us, for example, take Jesus' word: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". Jesus is saying this after weeks in the desert, close to starvation, in response to the idea, how it would be if he could transform the stones into bread. The usual interpretation is that spiritual hunger is more important than physical hunger, and is being satisfied by the Word of God, that is by faith. For a person who does not have a faith, or who can, in spite of her truest possible faith, only hope that her spiritual hunger will be satisfied some time in the future, this is not very promising. However, what Jesus is saying here, is not relative: it is Genesis in one sentence, which can easily be seen, if we translate the sentence into the language of this book:

Bible	Style of this book
Man shall ... live ... by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God	The most fundamental condition of our life is the articulation by God of our Dasein film (see Chapter 5),
not live by bread alone	rather than the satisfaction of our inner-worldly needs.

Jesus is citing here a word from the Old Testament but, out of the great many other citations available to him, he selects just this existentially absolute word in order to counter the existential fear of starvation. This is strong evidence of his existential competence, and also an illustration of how hard it may be to reach such an insight. – Two titles of Jesus appear more frequently than all others: Son of God, and Redeemer. Jesus has obviously seen himself as a son of God – but not only himself. He has addressed God as his father, and on the cross called him "dad", but he has also, as a prayer for *all* people, established the Lord's Prayer:

Bible	Style of this book
Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.	The Extra-worldly is like a father to <i>all</i> of us, although we cannot conceptualize it. It is, as if he would govern our being in the world by making us encounter and understand an immensely rich world and, on the other hand, enabling our Authentic Self to act voluntarily in it.
Give us this day our daily bread.	He manages that we find in the world everything that amounts to our life.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.	If we reduce life, he always allows us to return to our life enhancing attitude; likewise, we better allow Others, who have impaired our lives, to again enhance life.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:	He is not the one to make us fall for the world. Rather, he is the one who offers release from it.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.	He is the Absolute of all dimensions of Dasein, among others: richness, power, quality, time.

Equally, Jesus has told the story of The Prodigal Son as a parable of the Dasein of *all* people, and he has instructed his disciples: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet *your* heavenly Father feedeth them ... for *your* heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things". That means that Jesus has seen all people like he has seen himself: as children of God, and he has tried to give an example in living this attitude throughout his Dasein.

In addition, he has – taking the Rich Young Ruler as an example – advised all people to follow him, that is: to adopt this same Dasein attitude, because we can, in this attitude, feel like the "fowls of the air" and the "lilies of the field", first and foremost: without a care in the world. And this is, because the disposition of our Dasein is such that we can master it, as if an extra-worldly father was coaching us. If somebody only follows this advice, then he is already delivered, and a person who thus advises and motivates us may rightly be called a liberator. More precisely: "delivered" and "liberated" mean



"freed from the world" and that is the same as "absolute" – unbound to anything in the world. Therefore, adopting the "liberated" Dasein attitude means coming off the world and approaching the absolute, as Jesus has again and again tried to point out.

How is Jesus moving people? By his great treasure of parables, that is, his large repertoire of ingenious, effective, approximately pointing tellings about the Extra-worldly – better pointing than every intellectually probing theological treatise, better than every emotionally stirring sermon.

Jesus says "our father" and with that he is definitely not standing between God and man. The episodes with the apostles at Emmaus and with doubting Thomas emphasize this more than clearly. The former meet Jesus after his resurrection on the road but do not recognize him. He "expound[s]... unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" until they reach their destination. He obviously tries to show them how they can, with the help of the bible, get a sight of God. The text then says, that during the meal, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight". Why, of all things? As soon as they recognize him, Jesus disappears! – Thomas does not believe in Jesus' resurrection until he has seen and touched Jesus' wounds himself, whereupon Jesus says to him: "because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed". Jesus in the centre of Christianity and then: blessed without seeing him!

Obviously, Jesus thinks as follows: If we have understood him and adopted the same Dasein attitude, then there is no longer any need for him to prove anything to us – no need for miracles, resurrection, ascension – rather we "believe" out of ourselves. Then we are facing God directly, and Jesus has "vanished".

This is not, however, a rebuttal of the many and various tellings that try to show Jesus in a special position between God and man, as God's one and only son, "our lord", born from a virgin, resurrected from death, therefore higher than all human beings, having effected miracles, and having vicariously atoned for all sins of all people and thus cancelled all our guilt. Tellings like these are religious as well, which means they try, in their way, to approximately point to the Extra-worldly and thus are irrefutable. They seem a little helpless but they certainly have given many people an orientation on their way to the roots of their existence. And when you arrive, then all these tellings are no longer needed, anyway.

But if one wanted to take these tellings at face value, that is, as conceptual assertions, then – and this cannot be repeated often enough – they would be rendered void by the Second Commandment: the Extra-worldly cannot be conceptualized and is, for our inner-worldly understanding, absolutely unstructured.

All that can be said about the existential connections of Jesus with God and with other humans – the "neighbours" – is equally true, in principle, for the existential connections of every one of us with God and with the Others. We only need to take up these connections. In other words: If, in the bible, Jesus is telling about himself or something is ascribed to him, then the most productive access to understanding and following him is, to replace "Jesus" everywhere in the text by "our own Authentic Self". And if, in the

bible, God is speaking to a human, directly or through an angel, then we should look what happens, if we let our own Authentic Self, instead of God or the angel, tell us the same.

Let us, for example, take the phrase "our Lord Jesus". We have already noted that Jesus is not standing between God and us, that he is not "our Lord" in the sense that he would command us and we would have to obey. If we make the proposed replacement we get the more precise result that our Authentic Self is our lord. That is quite a claim considering the often wilful, up to intractable, souls and bodies that we are given for inner-worldly subjects, and considering the strong attractions and repulsions of the world, that can dominate this subject.

In summary:

When seeking existential tellings that point to God particularly well, then Jesus is an abundant and felicitous source. That does not only pertain to the tellings ascribed to him but also to his positioning in the New Testament.

His advice that we follow him requires that, for getting some sights of God, we enter his very positions. The most important position is the one as a child of God. Accordingly, you, dear reader, and generally all humans are no less God's son or daughter than Jesus has been. And besides: If you are a mother then you are, as every mother, no less a Mother of God than Jesus' mother has been.

## Chapter 19: Fourth Partial Summary

The last three chapters about the Ten Commandments, about Job, and about the position of Jesus relating to our existence, are in line with all preceding chapters. They do not carry any new challenges for our reason, but very big ones for the common Christian interpretation of the bible.

9. The Ten Commandments, and Jesus' general advice to love, deal with exactly the two connections that are possible in principle between existential instances, that is, the one from Dasein to God, and the one from Dasein to Dasein. The book Job is a drastic illustration of the Second Commandment: It is impossible to conceptualize God.
10. Jesus has positioned himself *on our level* as our brother, *not between us and God* as an intercessor and redeemer, and also *not as our superior* as a Lord and Judge sitting "at the right hand of God".
11. To follow Jesus means: to adopt his Dasein stance – not to walk after a divine superman and to unavoidably remain behind him forever.

These insights contradict well-established Christian propositions. But, as said in the beginning, established Christian teachings are always feeling strange when presented and taken as factual. If our sights of Dasein, as uncovered in Parts 1 to 3, do now overturn such strange teachings then this is evidence of having achieved something significant: we are no longer helpless when facing such strangeness, but have gained the instruments to analyze what is wrong in each case.

We will extensively exercise the use of these instruments in Parts 6 and 7. Before that we will, in Part 5, try to answer in general and in principle the question of what are the consequences of the preceding Parts.

## PART 5: CONSEQUENCES

### Chapter 20:

#### No Consequence at All Is a Consequence in Itself

We have untiringly emphasized that the Extra-worldly cannot be grasped in inner-worldly concepts, and that there cannot, therefore, exist any conceptual, and conceptually stressable, structures of the Extra-worldly.

Thus, it is absolutely impossible to derive from the Extra-worldly any inner-worldly consequences

At first sight, this appears disappointing but, on the other hand, the preceding sentence has far-reaching consequences of great importance.

As far as one can think back, systems of religious teachings, rules, and forms are misrepresented as intended and established by God, that is: misrepresented as correctly derived from the Extra-worldly. God and the world are, wrongfully but incessantly and pertinaciously, being disputed and judged, and for the sake of religious assertions, there are murder and warfare.

In Parts 6 and 7 we will deal with typical, contemporary examples of the common error to conceptually relate the Extra-worldly to the world.

A special case is ethics. They are, for the same reason, not derivable as inner-worldly consequences of the Extra-worldly; that is, there are – other than always proclaimed – no moral rules from God. Still, in a unique way, ethics are related to religion, for the sight of the Extra-worldly causes a positively ethical stance in the affected person. Dasein stance and ethics are, therefore, the subjects of the following two chapters.

### Chapter 21:

#### Stance Is All That Matters

From the Extra-worldly one cannot derive any inner-worldly consequences. But the sight of the Extra-worldly has dramatic inner-worldly consequences.

We have already above tried an approximately pointing telling about the Extra-worldly by circumscribing it as a point with several or many dimensions. In the world there are kind of "lines of sight" on it, mostly blocked by our inner-worldly constructs, but in spite, the Extra-worldly comes into sight occasionally as absolute, opposite-less clarity, freedom, beauty, ease, love, vitality. This sight then has a great effect on us: We are becoming "ad-justed" by God – not judged, punished, least of all condemned forever,

but made right, straightened out, like a car chassis deformed in an accident, is being re-jigged on a repair-bench. Thereafter, everything is – for a start – alright again.

With our view directed to the Extra-worldly we can thus gain insights for a life that is right, a life in which we are at ease with God and the world. This is obviously such a rewarding approach that we do not want to abandon it anymore.

How do we ensure that we are not, with this approach, violating the Second Commandment? What we must not do, and what this book is therefore not doing, is to state assertions along the following lines: From the sight of the Extra-worldly, it follows that we have to see the world in a given way and must not see it in a different way, or that we may do some things and must not do other things in the world. So, if we say: the Extra-worldly shows itself as absolute truth, beauty, liberation, etc., and that we therefore have to strive with all our energy for truth, beauty, liberation, etc. in the world, then we have already made the error – and we know from history, how much evil such pursuit has brought over the world.

Our "sight of the Extra-worldly" is purely extra-worldly, and we can only try to talk about it with all due care in an approximately pointing manner. The subject that is gaining a sight of the Extra-worldly is our own Authentic Self. As, for our understanding, the Extra-worldly is structure-less, we must quickly forget the structure exposed here (A sees B); but we have to somehow save the idea beyond the forgetting. Perhaps that is more easily achieved with the following words: What we experience in the sight of the Extra-worldly is a flash that illuminates our Authentic Self, God, the Others, love, beauty, liberation, etc, all homogeneously united in one.

With the sight of the Extra-worldly we let our Authentic Self sort of illuminate the path of our life and the paths of the Others' lives, so that we can enhance our and their lives.

That almost is it. We just want to elaborate it a little bit further for better understanding.

If somebody has a sight of the Extra-worldly, of his Authentic Self with these fantastic, divine dimensions, of this Self that can, from everything that it encounters, build its world, he will not gamble with it. He will not spoil the game by trying to enforce his personal designs *against* life, *against* the Others, *against* nature – with the only perspective to inevitably fail in the end. He will take into account, that he cannot govern what he may encounter in the world, and that the Others are in the same situation to design their worlds; and he will take his successes and failures as valuable "outcomes of the game", valuable for understanding the world, and therefore as presents. He will not be unconcerned, or even live out, his contempt when Others, for which reasons ever, are having a difficult time in the world.

Having a sight of the Extra-worldly as described, he will not envy Others who are having a seemingly better situation in the world, but he will see these perceptions as aspects of his own world and therefore try to improve them and thus expand life, his own life and that of the Others. It will happen by itself that that he will obey the Ten Commandments and Jesus' advices to love. He may not be able to win the "In-the-World" game – and not at all finally. He will suffer misfortune, and he will remain

responsible for not fulfilling some, possibly many, demands of life, but he will learn from it and, on the next day, continue trying to enhance life.

He will enjoy the ingenuity of the Dasein situation, the inexhaustibility and diversity of that which he encounters therein, the possibility to ever enhance his own world and thereby grow himself, in short: that the creation is *good* – as the biblical Genesis is repeating seven times.

This is the description of a Dasein stance.

In it, one may go to such lengths, that one easily takes inner-worldly misfortune, difficulties, misery, blows of fate, as "good", endures them, and grows with the challenge. The feeling then is a kind of near-absolute happiness, an emotionless being-struck by the thought that, about oneself and about the world, everything is perfect.

The true sight of the Extra-worldly is the sight of an absolute entity without alternative. It effectuates, equally without alternative, the right stance towards the world and life. The Extra-worldly carries its consequence in itself. Once we have a sight of it, we need not care for anything further – except to maintain that sight under the pressure of the attractions of the world.

## Chapter 22:

### **Ethics, the Power of Man, and the Almightyness of God**

The Extra-worldly does not logically give any reason for anything, particularly not for any concept that one must or must not act in a certain way. There are no absolute ethics.

This also pertains to the case that a person has a sight of the Extra-worldly and thus gained – as discussed just before – an absolutely perfect stance to the world. The person may then try, for the best of her fellow human beings and ensuing ages, to pass on some of this highest good in form of descriptions and rules. This cannot but absolutely fail, because they are inner-worldly descriptions and rules and cannot be related to the Extra-worldly. The sight of the Extra-worldly is something that everybody has to seek by himself or herself. The acquirement of inner-worldly descriptions and rules is of no avail to that end.

We are free to act.

We may act differently from the ways that have been presented above as consequences of the sight of the Extra-worldly, and there are no systematic inner-worldly consequences for us. But in this way we cannot maintain the sight of the Extra-worldly.

The price for the missing sight of the Extra-worldly is not an event-type punishment. We will "just" no longer see our world as right, good, beautiful, clear, free, liberated, a gift, etc. but as false, unjust, evil, ugly, adverse, full of coercions, all has to be earned and fought for by the sweat of one's brow. And we conclude that, in order to persist in such a world, we have to have capabilities to survive, to stand up to the adverseness of

nature, of the others, of systems. Furthermore, we recognize that it is not enough to stand up against present adverseness, but that we better build up some safeguards for the future by accumulating reserves and enhancing our means for prevailing. In short: we strive for power.

Part of the adverseness of our world we see as caused by the others, who may impair our life. A certain number of them usually does impair our life, may be not on purpose but still factually, for the resources that *they* require for their lives are not available for *our* safeguarding. Power helps to acquire even these resources for our own life, and then it is not only about our safeguarding, but we want comfort, also, without further ado, on cost of the others, and also up to the limits of their existence. If we have them in this situation then we can even bring them to mainly work for increasing our safety and might.

Thereby, the intended gain for the life of the mighty will always be missed. Safety requires that the set and type of people and the space in which one may move must be massively restricted, because it is impossible to protect them otherwise. Thus the world of the mighty becomes very small, and it does not help, that his power may reach very far into worlds in which he does not and cannot live. He is all the time forced to defend and boost his position of power, that is: to build his safe world – and the capacities used there are unavailable for building the world that he would actually want for himself, and thus unavailable for enhancing his own life.

Power corrupts people. The mighty impair their own lives on cost of the Others. The really deserved medal goes to the simple person who masters, with limited means, a life, that is difficult from the outset and then even aggravated by the mighty, and who thus exemplifies that man has strengths to even live such a life.

The superlative of all kinds of power then is the almightiness of God. Suffering under nature or under the power of others may easily lead us to dream of an almightiness that would be greater than any power that people could experience or accumulate in the world. Using that almightiness, God – if he is just or if one prayed to him –, should call back nature and the overly mighty, evil people and thus alleviate our sufferings, possibly even against the laws of nature.

These however, are again sentences that conceptually relate the Extra-worldly with inner-worldly objects, and that is just fundamentally impossible. It does not make any sense to think of moving the Extra-worldly to cause or prevent something in the world, nor does it make sense to try to evaluate or judge the Extra-worldly.

*Our mission is to enhance life. As there is a world of powers, the mission for all of us is to develop this world, too, and in such a way that life is being enhanced.*

## Chapter 23: Fifth Partial Summary

In this Part, we have observed that the Extra-worldly and the inner-worldly are, so to speak, dramatically unrelated.

12. The most important consequence of the structural condition that the Extra-worldly is absolute, and does not therefore have any consequences, is *the voidness of the many claimed "consequences" of the Extra-worldly*. In particular,

- it is impossible to imply from the Extra-worldly that the world, or parts of the world, must be understood in certain ways, or that one must act in certain ways, and
- it is impossible to prove or disprove any approximately pointing telling about the Extra-worldly; rather, one can only see or not see what it is trying to point at, and at the most, tell whether it is pointing successfully or not.

13. What is positively effective inner-worldly is the sight of the Extra-worldly. It has an aligning effect and brings us into the optimal Dasein stance. Without this sight, the world is just desperate.

14. The Extra-worldly does not lend itself as a base of ethics.

The following two parts will now deal with a greater number of representative cases of incorrect utterings about the Extra-worldly and will assign them to the appropriate category, either as inner-worldly assertions to "Caesar" or as approximately pointing tellings about the Extra-worldly to "God".



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## PART 6: RENDER UNTO CAESAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S

### Chapter 24: The Soul

The soul is the subject of various philosophies of being and of sciences ranging from theology over psychology to brain research. The soul is, therefore, a promising object for clarifying the competences of these disciplines with regard to the soul, and for illustrating the relations between theology, the humanities, and natural science.

Let us briefly review how these disciplines view the soul:

In theology, the soul is the spirit; that which God has "breathed" into the nostrils, of "man", such that "man became a living soul"; a gift from God, that he has entrusted man with, and that he may possibly request back, that one may, however, also sell to the devil. Or the spirit is directly a part of God. The soul may be sinful and lost, but also delivered and saved. In the end, it is immortal, continues to live after the death of the body and returns to God, like the prodigal son. Possibly, the soul will several times be allocated to various beings and, in these incarnations put into the world, until it has finally achieved to be unflawed. In any concrete situation, it is part of the corresponding human or other being: all of it that is not body.

Psychology covers, with theories of the psyche, all structures and processes of the soul that can be observed from outside and objectified, be the subject conscious of them or not. There is psychic energy, originating from structures of psychic drives, processed – in ways common to the human species or specific to the individual – by various psychic instances, switched, filtered, amplified, redirected, etc., and finally expressed in behaviour. And there is an initial configuration of all these structures including mechanisms for this structure to change, learn, unlearn, and lock.

Brain research works under the hypothesis, that the psyche is a function of brain structures. For many mental and psychic processes, the brain areas are known that are correspondingly active. Furthermore known are the basic structural details as well as the major structures of brain cell and area connections, and there is some knowledge about the information flow among them. From the resulting picture it appears plausible that it will become possible to largely and, in principle, completely, map psychic processes to brain processes.

How does all that fit together?

The least problems will exist between psychology and life science. If it will once be possible to lay open the brain structures and processes that enable a tennis player to calculate, in real time, the trajectory of a 200 km/h serve of the opponent and to organize a complex of physical actions suited to produce an unreachable return into the field of the server, then this will not contradict any psychology. Likewise, it will not

contradict brain science results if the return was out and, immediately thereafter, the same tennis player produces an unforced error that can be explained by the yet unprocessed anger about the failed return.

But what is the use of theology still describing the soul, if the sciences from psychology to human biology can do that more objectively, precisely, and ever more complete! The more, as obviously absurd claims are being maintained like the soul were something transcendent and would live on after death, while everybody definitely knows from the results of science that the individual soul is downright an expression of its individual body and cannot absolutely be without it. What can philosophy contribute to the knowledge of cognition, which could be better than the results of cognitive psychology, neurophysiology, and artificial intelligence with its neuronal networks!

The answers seem to be obvious: none and nothing!

Still we are uneasy about these answers. And rightly so. Our sights of the world and the Extra-worldly, as developed above, help us to clarify the situation:

We encounter the soul predominantly inner-worldly, be it in our internal perception or indirectly in its effects that we encounter in our external perception. Accordingly, it is, above all, an inner-worldly structure that we have conceived ourselves. We encounter its objects – memory, thoughts, feelings, energy, motives, intentions, etc. –, its interrelations, and its moves in basically the same way as the other inner-worldly realities like warmth, colour, path, obstacle, force, resistance.

For the Extra-worldly that comes into sight when we look into the depth of the soul, we have already introduced the term "Authentic Self".

With this terminology, religious and scientific utterings about the soul can be differentiated very clearly, and their scopes turn out as disjoint.

Religious teachings may use the term "soul" in approximately pointing tellings about the Authentic Self, seen as an Extra-worldly constituent of our Dasein. But these remain approximately pointing tellings and cannot even be taken as formally valid, conceptual assertions about the soul or the psyche.

Valid and true conceptual assertions about the psyche are exclusively a matter of the sciences. On the other hand, anything that the sciences may assert about the psyche can never describe, nor even pertain to, our extra-worldly Authentic Self.

## Chapter 25: Free Will

There is a German saying: Man's will is his heaven. While this is usually taken as ironic, we may after all our preceding considerations be quickly tempted to exclaim: How true! The instance of our free will cannot actually be other than extra-worldly.

The will is that which determines the direction and strength of our actions. Inner-worldly, there are many instances that come into consideration, for example, others who exert power over us, coercions from facts and social systems that we encounter in the world, our psychic drives, autonomous complexes, and finally something internal to us, that makes all decisions whether and how we act.

At first sight it may appear strange that, in order to get to the bottom, we need not discuss all these phenomena in detail here. They are indeed subjects of our world exploration, in particular of sciences. However, the essence of the latter is the law of causality: everything has its cause, and if we can control the causes then we can control the effects. We might, sooner or later, become able to explain within our conceptual and scientific systems, which instances and functions are the ones that determine our actions, and by which logic they do that. Every action thus derived will either be inevitable, in case its inner-worldly causes are completely determined, or otherwise it will be at random, and thus not shaped by our will either. Inner-worldly, there is nothing like a free will.

We may protest here, because we know about ourselves that we do have a free will and can, in principle, decide against all reason and necessity, and anytime do something completely non-expectable – at all times there are people who sometimes act in this way. Our choice then is to either accept that our feeling of our free will is always a systematic self-delusion – which would not be an uncommon phenomenon: just mind our visual illusions; or we assume an extra-worldly instance of ourselves, as we have already above circumscribed one as "our Authentic Self".

Is it reasonable to assume that we are deceiving ourselves about our – then merely pretended – free will?

We can be fully absorbed in the world and completely fallen for it, such that everything we do is objectively "right" by inner-worldly criteria, and no will of our own can come to bear anymore. By the way, it does not very much enhance life if *everything* is going on in ways that are thought through up to the very end and hence inescapable. In the world, all causal processes proceed in the direction of increasing entropy, that is, of decreasing organization, chaos, death.

We do however live successfully, exactly against this tendency. We can mentally assume a sufficient distance from every factual necessity, such that we ask ourselves: "What am I actually doing here?! Do I really want this?", and starting from these questions we may develop a new orientation of our own.

It is reasonable, that we may on the one hand be very much determined by the circumstances, but that we may on the other hand rise over them and free ourselves from them, that is, rise over, and free ourselves from the world, if we want it.

Of course, again we cannot name a mechanism, by which our Self as an Extra-worldly instance could make its will happen inner-worldly. But we can tell of it in an approximately pointing way, and we have already done that above, so that we need only refer to it here: In Chapter 1, we have, for the relation of our Self to our world, used the analogy of the player in a virtual reality. We have said, that we are "thrown" into our being-in-the-world and are "designing" ourselves there, such that we now could say: our authentic will effects such design. Finally, we have in Chapter 21 tried to show that this design has much to do with our stance vis-à-vis the world and with getting into the corresponding lines of sight of the Extra-worldly.

We note in passing here the regained understanding of a well-known, but always insufficiently interpreted, word of Jesus:

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for *without me ye can do nothing*" (John 15,5).

If one takes this telling just as an advice that and why a person should connect to Jesus, then it remains unclear, why the person could otherwise not accomplish anything or even do nothing at all. Obviously, the Non-Christians are, in principle, all able to do and achieve much.

If we, however, replace, in the spirit of following Jesus, the vine or Jesus, respectively, by ourselves – by our extra-worldly Authentic Self –, and the branches by our inner-worldly subjects, then the result is a plausible, existential Understanding of this telling:

The connection back – the re-ligion – to our Authentic Self enables us to enhance life. Without the Authentic Self, we are powerless against the entelechy of the world and cannot act by free will.

## **Chapter 26: What Else Is Caesar's**

The following arbitrarily compiled list of theses shall give us a concrete impression of the kind and size of the problem of misplacing the Extra-worldly in conceptual relationships. Every single thesis has extensively been disputed in the past but none of the disputes has been finally resolved, and the uncomfortable feeling with them has persisted. Here we will clearly expose that theses of this type are *absolutely void assertions*.

- *That religion could be dogmatized. That the church should not allow discussions but proclaim the word of God.*

The second sentence actually has a valid kernel: The Extra-worldly is absolute and therefore not discussible. However one cannot conclude thereof that precise assertions about the Extra-worldly could be absolute. To the contrary, they are always void. Depending on them, religion would be reduced to a package of irrational, pseudo-factual statements.

By the way: There cannot be a word of God in the form of a book. It is impossible relate the Extra-worldly with an inner-worldly object like a book.

The essence of religion is the sight of our Dasein situation as rooted in the Extra-worldly. What comes into sight here cannot be precisely expressed. It is possible to proclaim the Extra-worldly but only by trying circumscriptions and hoping to thus help the recipient to get a sight of the Extra-worldly. Such tellings need to match the context of the recipients and cannot succeed more than temporarily.

In the world, we easily recognize when religious tellings are factually false, when the authority with which they are proclaimed is unsubstantiated, when authors are just parroting without understanding, when they try to counter critique and denial with causing bad conscience, and we recognize on the other hand how well the proclamations of a religious community are pointing to the Extra-worldly, and whether they help us clearing the view of our existence.

If religious communities are setting themselves apart from each other with full intention and emphasis, and even aggression, then this does not have more than an inner-worldly meaning. Even the tolerant competition among religious communities for the ultimately true teaching, that G. E. Lessing has proposed, is non-productive, because such a teaching cannot exist. The best that religious communities can do is to develop tellings that approximately point to the Extra-worldly and therein stimulate each other.

- *The pope might, under specific conditions, be infallible.*

As said a few paragraphs earlier: A telling is not already absolute because it is about something absolute. If it is about something absolute, then it is telling about something that cannot be conceptualized. Such telling can therefore neither be proved nor disproved. That does not exclude the possibility that it may be highly valuable in the context of a specific religious community. But exactly then it is the more probable that it will not have any religious impact in other contexts and will there fail in the competition with other successful tellings about the Extra-worldly. Whether and whom which approximately pointing telling brings to sight the Extra-worldly: that is something that we do not have under control.

If the "infallible" declaration is about inner-worldly matters then the yardstick to be applied consists of the contemporary objectivity and truth criteria for inner-worldly assertions. The Extra-worldly is not conceptual and cannot be the reason for anything, especially not for an inner-worldly infallibility that might override these criteria.

– *That there were mysteries of faith.*

It is impossible to attach any attribute to the Extra-worldly, it cannot be mysterious. If the telling should still be relevant then the faith-related content in question must be inner-worldly; otherwise it could not be mysterious. Before believing it, one had better wait until the secret might be disclosed and the evaluation of its truth becomes possible.

That the Extra-worldly cannot be conceptualized does not mean that it could not lay open before us, if we could only direct our view on it. The suggestion, that there were an unsolvable mystery around the Extra-worldly is likely to restrain people from seeking a sight of the Extra-worldly. In this way, the word of the "mystery of faith" contributes to the avoidance of God. It misleads the recipient to miss the best that can happen in our life.

– *That it were forbidden to create whichever religious pictures, even less negative ones.*

Obviously, we have here an interpretation of the Second Commandment, which overshoots the mark. This commandment simply implies that religious pictures must not be taken as factual representations. To have pictures point to the Extra-worldly is a legitimate and laudable kind of endeavour that has already produced many marvellous results. Such pictures can be criticized, even though not without existential competence.

Distorted and blasphemous pictures can, of course, hurt so-called "religious feelings". But feelings are inner-worldly matters and cannot be related to God. If one wants to ban certain pictures or to oppose such ban, then the Extra-worldly does not offer any reasons, but one is required to advance inner-worldly justifications.

– *The (biblical) Genesis would disprove evolution theory.*

In Chapter 5, we have seen: the strongest interpretation of the Genesis results from taking it as a telling about the Extra-worldly origin of our being.

As a factual text about the world, the Genesis fails the established and secured acceptance criteria for a theory: it cannot be verified and explains comparatively nothing.

Evolution theory is a purely inner-worldly matter. How should it be possible to disprove it by way of an approximately pointing telling!

– *That the transsubstantiation during Eucharist were factual.*

For an explanation: wine and bread are claimed to turn into the blood and flesh of Jesus. Inner-worldly, an effect of this kind has never been reproduced and is therefore totally irrelevant. An Extra-worldly causation is impossible anyway. But it would also make no sense to draw on the Extra-worldly of all things here, only to construct a reason why we must not, against our primal trust, take the facts as such as we encounter them.

This does not mean that this type of irrational religious forms is fundamentally false and void. Everybody planning to found a religious community would think of how to make people consider their existence on a regular base. That founder would recognize that this requires recurring opportunities – speeches, actions, times, forms – that are firmly and exclusively associated with a sight of the Extra-worldly, and that avoid banal associations with inner-worldly matters. In the best case, these opportunities had, from the beginning, something about them that confronts people with the question of existence and, for some time, infects their minds.

What certainly achieved this were human sacrifices, as practised in early religious rites and, of course, public executions. Later everything became more humane, the human sacrifices were replaced by animal sacrifices and, finally, by symbolic sacrifices and charitable offerings for people in need. The death penalty will rather not be executed in public or has been completely abolished. Today, the old cruelties are no longer acceptable for us and their relevance with respect to the Extra-worldly does not come to mind anymore.

But, dear reader, allow yourself now and here to follow slowly the following imaginations: you are sitting in a church, it is very quiet and you forget your daily matters. Ahead, there is this chalice, allegedly with human blood in it, the blood of a crucified man. Now put yourself in his place, really in his place: you know this is your end. The soldiers around you who are torturing and injuring you, and will kill you, the people who stay with you as friends and those who just fail, your mother: all have faded and seem far away. What remains of you? What is holding you to live even this?

This effect could originally have been meant with the telling of the factual transubstantiation. It opens the door to deliverance. The more inept is it to present this telling as a factual assertion and thereby discredit and block it.

– *That miracles would prove that the Extra-worldly were acting and intervening.*

Miracles are an inner-worldly matter. The Extra-worldly cannot be related to any concepts, including the practically or theoretically impossible. An event may inner-worldly be or seem impossible. But if it occurs in spite, this does not prove that it has an extra-worldly cause, rather its explanation continues to be an inner-worldly challenge.

Inner-worldly, we recognize regularities and represent them as laws. But no proof exists that the world must conform to our findings in all cases and forever. We can, at most, verify a law in a limited number of cases, even if we employ all people of all times. That a case occurs, that enforces a change of a "well-proven" law, is actually something that we have to expect every now and then.

By the way: Random events differ from law-fulfilling events only by the length of their theory. For describing all events adhering to a certain law, at best, a short formula is sufficient. The most complex theory is a complete list of the descriptions of all events captured. For random events, no shorter theory is possible.

The Extra-worldly cannot serve as a reason for inner-worldly effects on a person, or for actions by a person who apparently does miracles. From such effects and miracles, it cannot be derived that the wonder-working person had an extra-worldly connection, for example, his or her blessedness or sainthood.

That a miracle-working person has a connection to the extra-worldly can, if possible at all, be recognized with an existential view, and then one may also see that the action of such person is widely enhancing life.

– *That there were Satan and hell.*

To define them as extra-worldly concepts is impossible as the Extra-worldly does not have a conceptual structure at all. There is nothing absolute about Satan and hell. Inner-worldly they do not have any material reality. One may compose around them a, however dramatic and sophisticated, thought construct including purgatory, transition rules, salvation through prayers and intercession of saints: as mental objects they all end with the world.

It may perhaps be quite illustrative to use again our analogy of the virtual reality here. Let us assume that among the avatars – the virtual living beings – of the game, a little virtual theology is developing: That outside the game, there were the Great Designer-Avatar. That He would, among others, own three separate Spaces with insurmountable borders. Into the First Space, He puts all avatars that have dropped out of the game; into the Second Space He puts all avatars that have donated at least 10% of their game resources to other avatars; into the Third Space He puts all avatars that have ever cheated another one. An avatar in the Third Space may be saved, that is moved into the second Space, if that avatar in the Second Space, that has most of all been cheated, agrees, etc. ... If this game would run long enough, the virtual theology might become ever more enriched and refined. As it is impossible to disprove it within the game, all avatars would, in the end, adopt it. – And *we* know that this theory is abysmal and irrelevant nonsense.

– *That, by his acceptance of death and resurrection, Jesus had vicariously atoned for all our sins and thus redeemed us and overpowered death.*

Crucifixion, entombment, and that the entombed leaves the tomb, are inner-worldly processes. Still, "death" cannot mean here inner-worldly death, the temporal end of our life. This death is obviously not at all disempowered, given that still no human being can escape it.

The alternative would be a "being dead" in an extra-worldly sense, a kind of negative extra-worldly existence, possibly as opposed to an extra-worldly salvation. But again: there is no structure of the Extra-worldly and therefore no such dual structure of salvation and perdition.

The proposition of the heading does not reach beyond its inner-worldly interpretation, and in this interpretation it is false.



At least there is a "liberal" religious interpretation of the heading: We can overcome the inner-worldly fear of death. If we deal with our own existence in a way of openly confronting death, then we catch a sight of the Extra-worldly and recognize that it is free of all inner-worldly, hence free of feelings, hence free of fear. Already this sight alone effects a kind of resurrection, the blockage caused by fear is released, and life energy is flowing again.

– *That there would be a resurrection of the flesh in a different life.*

There is no structure external to our life, that is: to our world that ends with death. The Extra-worldly does not have a time axis, on which something could happen, and "flesh" exists in the world only.

Resurrection is inner-worldly. During our life, parts of our world can cease to exist, and that is to us like a partial death. But after it, we can rise (resurrect) again and explore new world and thereby start new life (possibilities).

– *That churches, as the owners of faith, had an inherent ethical authority, because faith would be the foundation of ethics.*

Such moral authority may exist here and there, but such inner-worldly condition could never be extra-worldly justified, neither the ethics nor the authority, nor any power possibly derived thereof. Ethics are inner-worldly phenomena and its yardsticks are inner-worldly. The members of religious communities are, like all other people, thrown into their Dasein and thus bound to move in the space of good and evil. The absolutely good is extra-worldly and, in the world, "good intentions" often turn out as the opposite of "good".

Of course, every organization may earn and maintain ethical authority. Theological knowledge per se does not help to this end but religious practise – the regularly refreshed sight of the Extra-worldly – makes people resort to enhancing life. And such people may possibly become known as having a high ethical reputation – in the best case, they may even convert the conduct of a "high and mighty" person.

– *That one should become that person that, by God's will, one is determined to be.*

How could anybody in the world claim that an otherwise inconceivable Extra-worldly had something inner-worldly like a will, and how should anybody grasp that will! It is impossible.

Or isn't it? Haven't we at the very beginning, with the analogy of the virtual reality, and in Chapter 25 on free will, done exactly what we are now rejecting? There we have suggested that our extra-worldly Authentic Self is directing our inner-worldly being. That we had in mind there not the dimension of divinity but rather the dimension of our Authentic Self and of designing does not make a difference in the structure of our telling.

Where then is the difference that could render one telling valid and the other telling invalid? Answer: We have not claimed that we can understand the will-doing connection between our Authentic Self and our inner-worldly being; rather we have claimed that we have no control.

As opposed to this, the heading implies that the Extra-worldly had once and forever planned a specific character for our inner-worldly being that it – the Extra-worldly – could not, or did not want to, produce, and that it has ultimately left to us – but still expects us – to achieve. In this picture, it is the Extra-worldly that has no control. What a decidedly anthropomorphic structure for an otherwise inconceivable Extra-worldly!

How can the heading then be reasonably interpreted? About like this: What would help us most would be to gain a sight of the Extra-worldly, and thus our Authentic Self, and thereby get our life optimally oriented and directed.

- *That evolution theory faces enormous leaps of complexity that cannot be bridged in an evolutionary manner. The differences must have, from the beginning, been laid out in an "intelligent design", of which nobody could have been capable except God. That would more or less prove the existence of God. The creatures have all been created by God in their current shape.*

Yes, the telling of an "intelligent design" is religiously valuable. We have above, in Chapters 7 and 8, noted that we are given the capability to design our world understandingly. And in doing so we recognize with awe that, by human standards, the creatures and their development appear so highly admirable, as if they had been conceived by God. But then, it still remains our task as human beings to understand, and hopefully explain, all the interrelationships. And with regard to that, we have noted that our worlds are *our* designs; and if there are spontaneous, non-causal events, then these are our designs either. In the assertion: "X is the cause for the inner-worldly fact Y" – for example, for a complexity leap in an evolution – one can replace X only by an inner-worldly concept, but not by the Extra-worldly.

If somebody misses a cause in the world then is not a particularly intelligent idea to just take the Extra-worldly for the cause. The issue of proving the existence of God has, by the way, been finally – negatively – settled centuries ago.

- *That God were just.*

Again a void attribute of the Extra-worldly. Justice is a purely inner-worldly matter. On the other hand, we have already mentioned that a sight of the Extra-worldly will "adjust" us, that is, moves us to take the right stance.

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In all examples of this chapter and this Part 6, inner-worldly facts are being associated with extra-worldly reasons or consequences.

We have explained above that and how the Second Commandment forbids such a conceptual misuse of the name of God – and thus all possible names for the Extra-worldly – in inner-worldly assertions.

Our inner-worldly constructions have their character, their reasons and their consequences, their benefits and their harmful effects within our world. To try to involve the Extra-worldly in these constructions is just absurd.

## PART 7: RENDER UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S

### Chapter 27:

#### At the Limits of Life

At which development stage of the embryo does human life start? Up to which phase of pregnancy is abortion tolerable as a last resort? Which types of cloning of which creatures are allowable, which are unjustifiable? At which point is a man so dead that we can abandon him with a clear conscience? Which types of genetic engineering need to be banned by law? Can animal experiments for enhancing human life be justified?

These are weighty questions. It appears that the discussions are difficult to control, business and churches are representing massively partisan positions, science is wrestling with itself, and every single decider can actually not please anybody, including his or her own conscience.

To say this beforehand: In spite of the possibility that, by the time, many of these questions may be sorted out and settled, the problem with our conscience will remain, and it will not be possible to protect anybody against it.

Apart from that, it is obvious that these are questions in the border zone between religion on the one hand and science and technology on the other hand. So, all that we have broadly dealt with in Parts 1 through 5 should bear fruit here. The following observations seem appropriate:

- The point of time and the conditions, under which an Authentic Self would take control over an embryo, is not inner-worldly definable. Even the Authentic Self isn't.
- The point of time and the conditions, under which the Authentic Self would leave a person who has lost touch with reality, is lying in a vigil coma, or is dying, is not inner-worldly definable.
- Whether animals are having an Authentic Self that controls their being in the world, is not inner-worldly definable. Therefore one cannot derive, that it were acceptable to treat a human being like an animal, if only the human being is in an early development stage lower than that of any mature animal and thus has not yet entered its Dasein.
- Whether and under which conditions human or animal clones with engineered genomes, possibly produced in vitro, or even defective ones, are taken over by an Authentic Self that controls their being in the world, is not inner-worldly definable.

What are the implications? Inner-worldly conditions for the Dasein mode of being, from which one might derive criteria for its presence, or that could be implemented in controlled ways, do not exist. The extra-worldly "component" of our Dasein is not at our disposal.

And if we thus render unto God the things that are God's, namely to give Dasein to a being, then it becomes clear, that the solutions of the inner-worldly problems spanned by all these questions must be found inner-worldly. From the Extra-worldly, nothing can be derived for their solution, and extra-worldly authorized, higher moral instances that could be asked for help, do not exist.

All the more we must bring into play all available inner-worldly experience and competence – including ethics. We have to explore and develop these new worlds beyond the limits of our current world, by newly designing them. And for our possible mistakes, first and foremost the mistakes of hubris and of burying our talents, we will inevitably have to pay according to the rules of the Dasein game.

This means, we need to draw from all pertinent, notably specialist, sociological, and economic understanding and then determine inner-worldly – politically – at which point of time we assume that human life starts, stops, and ends, whether and under which conditions we kill animals, which types of cloning we find acceptable, and how we ensure that no unacceptable clones result. And then we have to live with the outcomes and, as the case may be, mend our understanding and our regulations.

That is going on anyway? Not really, for in this approach, the enormous interference of extra-worldly founded dictates and vetoes would be kept out of the game. The religious communities would not be allowed to threaten with God's retribution, but would have to deal with all aspects of the matter on the basis of their *inner-worldly* ethical competence and without taboo. And lacking the comfort of simplifying but illegitimate ethical restrictions imposed beforehand by theology, science and technology need to stand up to the responsibility to solve the *complete* problem in its full technological extension, including the ethical component.

Could it be helpful to focus on the soul here? If animals have souls then this could possibly serve as a criterion for not killing animals. That would also provide a differentiation from the plants that are viewed by almost everybody as having no soul, and that rather nobody has scruples to kill.

In Chapter 24, we have considered the soul as an inner-worldly structure, and a soul of this type we can obviously find with many animal species. But there is also a variant of the above observations valid here:

- Whether all living beings with a soul have an Authentic Self that governs their being in the world, is not inner-worldly definable.

Therefore, the soul cannot contribute to an overriding criterion. And as an inner-worldly criterion it is difficult to use, as the following question shows: Why should one be allowed to kill one type of living beings with a soul: the animals, while not being allowed to kill other ones: the human beings!

By the way: Inner-worldly, the almost absurd view cannot be proven false either, that even relatively primitive living beings have an extra-worldly root and are lead by an extra-worldly Self in a Dasein film, and that actually all nature – in the old meaning – were souled. In our analogy of the virtual realities this would correspond to the

situation that we do actually, in simpler computer games, control beings with just a few degrees of freedom.

But shouldn't religion somehow be able to guide our actions even at the limits of life? How can that work? The Fifth Commandment says: Thou shalt not kill, which means: In the context of the first three Commandments one will not kill. If according to these three Commandments we direct and maintain our view to the Extra-worldly, then we will get into a life-enhancing stance and will not lessen the world of Others, whom we see rooted in the same Extra-worldly. Rather, we will become their "neighbours" and foster them as beings essential to our world.

Can we be the neighbours of animals and plants? Can we see them as rooted in the Extra-worldly, with an Authentic Self that controls them? Can we existentially connect to an 8-cell human germ, to a brain-dead human kept alive only by technical support, a laboratory rat, a handicapped clone sheep, a tree, in such a manner that we see them in the same Dasein situation as ourselves and thus become unable to kill them or allow them to be killed? Yes we can in an individual case and with a sight of the Extra-worldly, but then the connection cannot be controlled or grasped by inner-worldly reason. We will then just know for sure that it is right and will, if necessary, absolutely oppose the death of this neighbour.

## **Chapter 28: What Else Is God's**

We have seen how religious teachings can wrongly transgress the border to inner-worldly reality and thus get lost in false assertions about facts. On the other hand, rigid rationality and science can transgress its limits with a claim to understand and explain everything, a claim to prove that God does or does not exist, or a claim to prove the inanity of religion by exposing that their teachings contradict the facts.

Let us again work through a list of theses. They show an ambivalence of goals: On the one hand, they try to matter-of-factly substantiate or disprove religious assertions; on the other hand, they try to convert religious contents completely into facts. Both are *impossible*.

– *That God were dead.*

This sentence is meant to say that we have to give up the old, long doubted and, by false religious teachings discredited, view that somehow there is a God. Our cognition could grasp, or in principle grasp, all that exists, and God is not among it. The inner-worldly is all that exists, outside the world there is nothing.

It is fundamentally impossible to prove all that, it is even impossible to formulate it. All that can be said about the Extra-worldly is that it is not inner-worldly and that we

cannot talk about it in conceptual terms as commonly used for inner-worldly matters, for example, about an object "God", that could be existent in the world or not.

Which proposition is more reasonable: that there is an Extra-worldly or that there is none?

In our world shaped by science, from a number of alternatives usually that view survives that better explains new or more phenomena. The assumption of a single point outside our understandable reality is no big deal in this regard. For a unified theory of all forces in physics it appears naturally acceptable to assume several additional, difficult to understand dimensions of the universe or even many fictive parallel universes, without anybody considering this as unreasonable. This book demonstrates among others that, on the base of a view of Dasein that includes an Extra-worldly, we can reasonably explain more and more difficult religious texts and, at the same time, the existential traits of our being – better than psychology, sociology, and historical research combined.

This cannot, however, be the last word. Actually, our existence is openly visible for us from the beginning. Our sight on it is just obstructed by our world constructions and deflected by the attractions of our being in the world. So to speak: we need only look at it again. In Part 8 we show what we would miss if we did not look.

– *That science could explain everything.*

This claim reminds of the laboratory rat that tells her neighbour: "I have full power over my experimenter. Just by pushing this lever here I can force him to give me food, again and again." We know: This depends on whether the experimenter cooperates. "If I apply my law to a pertinent situation then it proves to be valid, again and again", the scientist is thinking and does not know whereupon it depends. Why can science rely on the assumption that the facts that it encounters will also in the future remain regular and conform to its "laws"? Whom does it trust here?

What science cannot explain either is why the variables in their formulae have taken such values as fit our world. It is known which laws govern the orbits of the planets around the sun, but it is not known why we are having just these planets on just these orbits.

A great, probably *overly* great, challenge of science is to explain phenomena like quality, intelligence, beauty. There is some evidence that they cannot be defined at all.

Finally, it should be pointed out that there is more to it than explaining. Even if science could explain everything, it would still be infinitely far from creating. Actually a most essential aspect of the world is that we encounter it out of nothing. That we encounter something in the world, that we can trust its regularities, and that the world appears to us in the framework of these regularities in exactly the way it does appear to us personally, that is not in our hands. Nothing of all that can be taken for granted, and we do certainly not owe it to science and its capability of inventing some partial, structural background of the world.

- *The structures of the understandable world are so superhumanly wonderful, that they cannot but have been invented by a higher being.*

This is the same derivation as the one in Chapter 26, in the context of "intelligent design". How it is to be assessed as an assertion about facts has been covered there. Scientifically, it can neither be proved that the Extra-worldly has some kind of being, nor that it does not have.

The thesis above is only valuable as a religious telling: It shows that, if we look at the world *intensely*, we may find a line of sight of absolute beauty, which we have in turn recognized as a dimension of the Extra-worldly.

- *That, as evil exists in the world, there cannot be a God, because such God would be a God of goodness and salvation and would not tolerate evil.*

To disprove, with inner-worldly means, the being of God is equally impossible as to prove it, because not even the hypothesis can be formulated using inner-worldly means: what mode of being of which object? Also, the Extra-worldly does not have any attributes or traits, for example that it could be good or responsible or would act by certain principles.

Our worlds are our constructs, including the evil therein. In contrast, our Dasein situation as created by God is of absolute quality, and the most striking evidence for this is, that actually rather nobody wishes to die. In terms of our initial analogy: that a computer game contains evil characters and that one's avatar may be eliminated from the game, has never caused anybody to consider a game as bad. But the beautiful 3D-Graphics, the rich sceneries, and the sophisticated construction of the game which, at the same time challenges, captivates, and exercises the player, are exciting characteristics.

- *That all the central claims on which Christianity is based, are – scientifically seen – bogus. For example, Jesus has not been born by a virgin and not in Bethlehem. He did not re-awaken any dead person. He has not resurrected from death and not ascended to heaven.*

Science is right in stating and proving these theses as scientific assertions, and the religious leaders deserve, or would deserve, to be attacked hard in a domain where they are out of place. On the other hand, taken as religious tellings, the claims are outside the scope of science, but to be measured by their existential competence.

In Part 6, we have sufficiently demonstrated the absurdity of all attempts to substantiate religious teachings by inner-worldly facts, and to use religious "reasons" against the achievements and new developments of science.

What is science gaining here? A demarcation against false religious teachings going astray in the world of concepts – nothing less and nothing more. However, a



demarcation against genuine religion and thus a potentially fruitful exchange over this border are totally missed by taking religious claims as assertions.

Similar to the way it can correct false religious teachings, science could get false transgressions into religion corrected, for example, to request from religion ethical justifications in the border zones of life. Science would have to put up with the idea of accepting the Extra-worldly as an existential "given", absolutely inaccessible for science. It could, on the other hand, build on another existential given: that understanding is a dimension of our existence and that we have to multiply our talents by exploring new worlds, including scientific worlds. Science is existentially rooted.

– *That eternity was infinite time.*

Of course, anybody can usurp the religious view of eternity and then use the sentence above as an inner-worldly definition. One should then immediately add that this concept has nothing to do with the religious telling. But just this is never being said; rather everybody is modelling time – certainly classical time – as an infinite, straight line with a measurement scale on it.

On such a time axis, our lifetimes and the lifetimes of all people are finite intervals. When we die our intervals end, and we will be born again directly or later and obtain a corresponding new interval, or we will not. If not, at least our souls will be preserved. Sometime, in 30 seconds, or long after all life on earth has become extinct, or after the universe has 99 times imploded and exploded again – we don't know when –, God will, if the Christians are right, place Judgement Day. Then all living people will die, all souls will in the resurrection of the dead get a new body, and will be sorted by certain criteria either into heaven, or into purgatory, or directly into hell, where they will, for the infinite rest of the time axis, continue to live very well or very badly.

All this depends on an inner-worldly concept of eternity that is not even of any inner-worldly use. And its irrationality alone does in no way indicate that it might point to something absolute. Eternity is just not even "like" infinite time. So, we better deny religious language the idea of infinite time and determine that Eternity is extra-worldly.

– *That the effectiveness of praying for others could possibly sometime be explained by quantum entanglement.*

We observe that many cases are being reported in which person A has prayed for person B, without B knowing, and that B has more or less directly experienced an effect that clearly corresponds to the prayer, for example a healing.

So far, we have not found out, how that might function. If, however, there is an explanation, then it must be inner worldly, because, from an inner-worldly activity like praying, in which I try to get a sight of the Extra-worldly, I may experience an effect on myself but it is impossible to bind the Extra-worldly in this way and to induce it to make an effect on somebody else. The Extra-worldly is unavailable.

If the thesis is meant to suggest that we could, like in the case of the (would-be) extra-worldly long-range effect of prayers, by the time finally cover everything religious with scientific explanations, then it tries to suggest something fundamentally impossible in principle.

A comment on the possibilities of inner-worldly explanations: As long as little was known about the brain and of electromagnetic waves it was easy to speculate that the effectiveness of praying for others could be explained by electromagnetic waves. And, even today, somebody who has no idea at all of physics and physiology may easily be made to believe that the effect were "magnetic". On the base of these experiences we better remain sceptic vis-à-vis quantum-physical explanations for some time.

But it would not be amiss if no inner-worldly explanation could ever be found. That sometimes in the world, life is inexplicably getting enhanced is a likable quality of our Dasein situation, which we can gladly accept while there is no inner-worldly explanation.

- *That machines could in the future become equally intelligent as humans, or even more intelligent (and that they could then possibly dominate the world and tyrannize mankind).*

Understanding is a dimension of our Dasein. But, why we, all of a sudden, do understand something that we did not understand all the time before, of which we did not even recognize before that there was something to understand: that we cannot understand and not control. Therefore we cannot inner-worldly reproduce it either.

What we can of course and evidently do is, to build machines that can learn, in the future certainly machines that can learn much better and much more than contemporary ones. They will take up very much information from their surroundings and act in sophisticated ways and, to that end, will be extensively conditioned by their human tutors in their target environments – to learn, what is to be done in all possible situations – and thus become able to ever more harmoniously move therein.

What we cannot do, is to build into them a connection back to an extra-worldly Authentic Self, or induce the Extra-worldly to throw our machines into a Dasein situation and equip them with the capability to act understandingly. And therefore, we cannot expect that our, however teachable, machines will explore significantly new worlds for themselves. For a never seen, new type of (designer) chair that the machines do not already find in their templates, object definitions, or associations, we will have to feed them the information that this object is a chair, too, and which forces which parts of it can withstand. And this is still a fairly simple example. Much harder would it be to train and equip a machine such that it could by itself find out the meaning of a concrete situation in which a ring is being moved from one person to another person.

By the way, we see also among us humans that somebody does not by the best possible tuition make it to become a dancer, or cellist, or a skilled cabinet maker, or jurist, or manager, etc., because his or her capabilities of exploring worlds in this direction are

limited or merely not better than average, because he or she does not have a "special bone for it" – in the end nobody knows what is behind it.

Animals, too, can be optimally conditioned for their environments but their limitations are even more obvious to us. A dog does not differentiate its utterances beyond a certain limit. This makes a bigger difference to humans than the fact that the dog cannot speak. It is not given to the dog to progress towards a world of further utterances, and we would not know how we could give the dog the attitude required for such progress. Therefore, many people go as far as denying that animals had an extra-worldly Self.

How should we build into the machines a profile for exploring worlds if we cannot ourselves see through it! Intelligence has an extra-worldly root which cannot be inner-worldly defined nor produced.

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All examples in this chapter and in this Part 7 expose attempts to deal rationally with the Extra-worldly, to substantiate, disprove, or qualify it. That cannot work because the property of our world as being conceptually graspable does not reach beyond our world. Attempts to comprehend the Extra-worldly in spite of this limitation are absurd.

## Chapter 29: Sixth Partial Summary

In Parts 6 and 7, we have dealt with the demarcation between ratio and religion. Apparently there is nothing but transgressions at this borderline.

15. The soul is an inner-worldly structure and not the same as the Authentic Self. The understanding of the soul is a matter of science but does not pertain to the Authentic Self.
16. As the world is constructed in terms of causality and chance, there is no room in it for a free will of man. Our Authentic Self is directing our inner-worldly subject through its stance vis-à-vis the world.
17. In the border areas between religion and ratio, there are permanent attempts to bring into play the Extra-worldly in order to justify, control, or disprove inner-worldly facts. In the opposite direction, inner-worldly systems of assertions are being, explicitly or implicitly, extended to the Extra-worldly, in order to explain, prove, or disprove it. Assertions relating to the Extra-worldly are violating the Second Commandment and are void.
18. The Authentic Self is inner-worldly imperceptible and unavailable. In particular, no assertions are possible about extra-worldly roots of living and inanimate beings.

In the following part, we will now investigate how we can get an approximate sight of the Extra-worldly, and what is going to happen in such case. To this end, we will apply our type of tellings to a selection of pertinent religious and generally existential texts, and we will thus get an impression of the reach of our tellings and recover the great importance of these texts.

In this process, we will pick up again our telling of Chapter 11, that every inner-worldly dimension appears as if it were, at one end, connected to its genuine, pure, converse-free Dasein dimension.

Christian religion associates this end with beatitude. In any case, the next part is about the absolutely most important and desirable in our Dasein.

## PART 8: BEATITUDE

### Chapter 30:

#### The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount

If we do not get into heaven by obeying the Ten Commandments then the question remains: how else? Jesus' Beatitudes provide a very irritating answer:

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

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

All this does not look exactly promising and does not certainly describe what we usually imagine as a situation of eternal beatitude.

What we are actually having here is a telling about situations in the proximity of which we may find beatitude. It appears that there are two overall categories of access to beatitude: a "soft" one, circumscribed by a pure heart, peaceableness, meekness, righteousness, mercifulness, also naivety (poorness in spirit); and a "hard" one by way of suffering pain, slander and persecution. What can be reached, however, through these access situations are a lot of positive achievements, circumscribed by: heaven, comfort, inheriting the earth, satisfaction of all desires for righteousness, obtaining mercy, being a child of God.

This is the structure of the Beatitudes, and now we need just remember Chapter 3 where we have discussed the possible accesses to the existential, singular, direct "truth" of our Dasein, that we may find either in a modest attitude or in the hard way, in any case, only if it we really become concentrated on our existence.

Obviously, the Beatitudes show where and how we can get a sight of our existence, but their even more central message is that, at the roots of our existence, with God, there is blessedness, that everything there is beautiful beyond imagination, just heavenly, and that there is nothing to fear about this sight of our existence.

It is this structure for which the books of the New Testament are being called the "Good News" (evangelium).

Of course, we could develop further interpretations of the Beatitudes, for example, note that a poor spirit is named as a precondition, which means that blessedness cannot be approached by means of rationality and intellect. By mental sophistication, people are obstructing their own access. – Or we could ask why the reward for the meek is not heaven but "the earth". We will come back on this.

But all this would, at this point, distract from the towering importance of the insight: that connected back to the roots of our existence, we are glad, beatified, liberated.

Besides the view that there (somehow) is an inconceivable Extra-worldly of highest relevance, the claim of the Beatitudes, that there is blessedness in the sight of this Extra-worldly, is no smaller challenge of our reason. It is just too good to be true. Our experiences seem to support rather the opposite.

In the following we will do two things to substantiate the Beatitudes:

- (1) look at how other sources are approaching this question, and
- (2) on this base, derive more plausible ideas, how we can ourselves get direct sights of the target.

### **Chapter 31: Hans in Luck**

Luck is a great topic of fairy tales, if not the main topic. Most directly it is the topic in "Hans in Luck" by the brothers Grimm.

At the end of his apprenticeship, Hans gets from his master a lump of silver, as big as his head. On his way home to his mother, he trades the silver for a horse, then the horse for a cow, the cow for a pig, the pig for a goose, the goose for a grind stone, and finally he loses the stone in a river. And then the fairy tale concludes:

"For a while he watched it sinking in the deep clear water; then sprang up and danced for joy, and again fell upon his knees and thanked Heaven, with tears in his eyes, for its kindness in taking away his only plague, the ugly heavy stone. 'How happy am I!' cried he; 'nobody was ever so lucky as I.' Then up he got with a light heart, free from all his troubles, and walked on till he reached his mother's house, and told her how very easy the road to good luck was."

Depending on personal situations, there are two main reactions to this: Somebody with just a little business sense will say that Hans quickly and foolishly spoils his initial luck – an excessively valuable quantity of silver. That is the way luck is being, man cannot force it to stay. Somebody else may think of the daily onerousness of life and dream of getting rid of it, of becoming free of all burdens and thus happy. The latter is what Hans achieves at the end of the fairy tale, in his view, by the provision of God.

In the language of our tellings in Part 1, this means: In the inner-worldly dimension of having and not having, we consider possessions as valuable and strive for them. Extra-worldly beatitude, the happiness coming from our Authentic Self, has nothing to do with inner-worldly possessions and burdens, and can be found where our Dasein has its origin – symbolized in the fairy tale by the return to the mother.

## Chapter 32:

### The Fisherman and His Wife

Another fairy tale that deals, in a very pointed manner, with the pursuit of happiness, is "The Fisherman and His Wife". Initially, they are living in a pigsty, close by the seaside, and the man uses to go fishing every day. One day, he catches a great fish that speaks and presents himself as an enchanted prince. That causes the fisherman to spare the fish. His wife later reproaches him for not having asked the fish for a free wish – he would certainly have got one. And she sends her husband back to ask the fish for a snug little cottage. The man does it, and the wish gets fulfilled. After some time, the wife wants more and sends the man again to the fish to ask for a stone castle. This wish is fulfilled, too. The procedure then continues through a number of stages: the wife wants to be king, emperor, pope, and these wishes are all fulfilled. Ultimately, the wife still finds something more to wish and the man calls the fish again:

"What does she want now?" said the fish.

"Ah!" said he, "she wants to be like God." [literally from German original]

"Go home," said the fish, "to your pigsty again."

And there they live to this very day.

Whomever one may ask, the end will be understood as a punishment for the cupidity, and eagerness for power, of the wife: she has overdrawn all credits. A punishment for striving and wishing? There is no word in the tale about any punishment. The wife has not forced the fish to fulfil the wishes. The fish has five times predicted the fulfilment of the wishes. Why should that be different in the sixth case? Because having a cottage, a castle, being king, emperor, pope, are inner-worldly positions, and the fish is only able to fulfil inner-worldly wishes? Because the fish is being asked too much when it comes to being like God?

The fish does not, however, show the least sign of overstrain. In each case, it says with equal indifference: "Go, home ..." and then follows a factual statement about what the man is going to encounter on returning home.

The wish of the wife, to be "like God" may be taken as presumptuous, and the words of the fish: "go home to your pigsty again" as sarcasm. With equal justification one could assume that the wife has changed or the fish has taken pity on her. The text does not say anything like this – which means: it is irrelevant.

The fish responds to all wishes almost mechanically. With the pigsty he responds to the wife's ultimate desire for happiness, to be "like God". Inner-worldly happiness may be escalated as much as one may wish – it will be only temporarily satisfying and, in the end, not at all. Nearer to the "happiness of God" we are in modest living circumstances and, first and foremost, where we have started.

If we compare the greater structures of both fairy tales above we see similarities: Hans and the fisherman's wife achieve an inner-worldly rise, then give up or loose everything, and only then, arriving where they had started, achieve beatitude and "being like God".

### **Chapter 33: The Prodigal Son**

In this parable by Jesus, a son is "lost" by having his inheritance paid out by his father and then quickly squandering all of it in amusements far from home. When he arrives at the very bottom of poverty he thinks that he would be better off as a servant of his father. He returns home with the intention to confess: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants". But his father receives him with great compassion, arranges a big feast, and reinstates him in his previous position. The other son, who had remained at home, complains to his father for he has always faithfully served his father and never been given the smallest feast from his father. The father responds: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Many people first of all note the injustice: The bad one is being rewarded, the faithful to God not the least. This is a similar injustice like in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, who are being employed at different times of the day and, in the evening, all receive the same pay. The message is: a higher reward than "being with God" is impossible. This reward is absolute, even if received late. It makes good everything that has been before. All's well that ends well.

The following is obvious: The father in the parable is God and both, the lost son and the son having remained with the father can, in principle, stand for everybody of us. Our paths of life are the theme here, better said: our Dasein stances during the course of our life. We can keep a far distance to God, and we can do well or badly; in the worst case, we may completely fail like the lost son, but the way back always remains open, and when we take it, we will arrive in a position as if we never had broken away, in other words: All that Good has, is ours.

That much about the overall structure of the parable, as we can relate it to ourselves. On this base, we can now retell the parable using our sights of Dasein as developed in Part 1:



We may always stay in the proximity of our authentic Dasein situation in which the Extra-worldly presents to us the phenomena of our world and enables us, in the position of our Authentic Self, to reliably understand and act therein and thus explore and develop our world.

We may also leave this position, put ourselves fully into our inner-worldly ego, become absorbed in the world, and strive for a life as nice as possible. We may even totally fall for the world. There, in the world, God is definitely not to be found. And of course, we are then, as shown in Part 2, in a situation where we are not in control. We try to avoid the uncertainty by taking the middle course as mastered by most other people, or we try hard to still get some control, to extend it, and to use it for enforcing and keeping hold of the nice life. In any case, we may succeed or fail. In the latter case, that much may break off our world that we reconsider our authentic Dasein situation and resume it again.

To all this, the parable adds the description, how it is to be with God: God is like a father, the arrival is a feast, "being with God" is of unsurpassable quality, all that is God's is ours in this situation. This is a – partial – definition of beatitude.

Let us compare this with the two preceding tales:

Hans is happy in the end. The reasons for his happiness are, on the one hand, that he is free – from the burden and the care for it –, on the other hand that he returns – to his mother. This picture is not less valuable than the return of the lost son to his father; it is just not expanded that much. By the way, Jesus is after his death being laid into the lap of his mother, which certainly is to symbolize, that he has returned to his roots. The fisherman and his wife finally return to their initial simple life from which they had raised. How they are feeling there, is not made explicit. If we take the text as it is written, then they are "like God" in this stage – while still in the world!

Job has initially a better life than all others, then everything is taken from him, too, and after an encounter with God, he has an even better life: his initial wealth is doubled. This is a massively worldly picture. It points to the same as the promise of the Beatitudes: "for they shall inherit the earth": There is not only eternal beatitude as an extra-worldly Dasein dimension, with inner-worldly misfortune as its counterpart, but there is inner-worldly beatitude, and this is extremely important. We have a chance of extended beatitude in the world

Mapped to ourselves, these analogies mean: We are with God in the beginning and in the end, and we come to God if we strive to, and also if we fail in the world and mind God again. We may be and stay connected with God, and then everything, that is his, is ours: the whole world.

In the next chapter, we will review these fundamental situations in greater detail.

## Chapter 34: Accesses to Beatitude

Beatitude is somehow "with" God, that is, if our existence is being put into question by ourselves or by fate. Existentially important to us are, above all, birth, death, failure and rising again, love.

These are the themes on which the key Christian holidays Christmas, Easter, Pentecost have been built. To simplify matters, we follow this systematic here and, in preparation, deal with the question of how it is to be "with" God: If all, that is his, is ours, then the whole world is ours.

### The Rich World

It is quite normal to underestimate the value of this "whole world". We may easily conclude that the world is generally wretched, nature is brutal, and people are bad and evil. It should however get us thinking that the existentially most competent author of the book Genesis – except after the creation of man – is repeatedly saying: "and God saw that it was (very) good". The equally competent evangelist who has the father say to the brother of the lost son: "all that I have is thine", certainly has valuable possessions in mind. Let us therefore seek for an interpretation as reasonable as possible.

We start again with a telling of Chapter 6: to enhance life is a fundamental trait of man, exploring and developing world is an inherent quality, a dimension of Dasein. We explore the more world the more consciously we perceive what we encounter. We need just *direct our attention* to the following: how much meaningful, well functioning, rich, and beautiful structure is behind the least phenomenon, and effects that we encounter it as we do; and that millions of similar, small and large phenomena constitute the Dasein film, which is exclusive and unique for each of us. So, let us direct our attention to it!

We take, for example, something as simple as a dish. Over the world, there are porcelain industries that produce dishes; there are vehicles and vessels for transporting the porcelain raw materials and the finished porcelain products everywhere; similarly for transporting food, cultural goods, and people. There are the corresponding traffic infrastructures. There are shops, and there is money for which we may buy in shops, for example, dishes, but also infinitely many other goods and services; there are businesses where we can work and earn money; there are education and training infrastructures where we can learn the capabilities needed for earning money; and this "there are" can be continued for long. There have been people who have developed the ideas for all this, people who were able to build, establish, and progress all this, and today there are people who are able to, individually and collectively, operate it in its current form. Decades would not suffice to write down, not to speak of studying all that is, in this sense, behind a dish. And this exercise works with any other object as well: a ball-point pen, a cap, a music score, a black hole, a marriage, an election result ...

I have contributed nothing to the fact, that all this is available in the world, and most people will say the same of themselves. We have found it and continue to find it ready-made for us, without paying any price for it. It is given to us as a present, and obviously it is rich beyond measure. –

It is also good beyond measure. Let us take a different example, say a blade of grass. It has an elegant form with a longitudinal fold in the middle; it is glossy on the upper side, matt and raspy underneath. Dear reader, imagine *you* had to produce a precise copy of the grass blade, initially just the shape, from whichever material, but faithfully coloured. Next in natural size, with identical texture. Then from identical material – the challenge is to re-build it, not to raise it from a seed. Then – still re-build it – precisely to the very cells. Then a complete grass plant that can exist self-preserving for a certain time. Next with the ability to reproduce itself. Then, in the same way, a lime-tree, ... a cat with a cat psyche, ... a human with a human psyche. Then the whole thing not from existing materials but from nothing. – The whole world of biology, serving as an example here, with its designs, technologies, aesthetics, complexities, usage values is an offering of absolute quality. We have done nothing to make it, it is available to us as an almost inexhaustible environment for our life, entrance is free, and there is no rental or leasing fee.

If we stop looking at our personal possessions and abilities, that are indeed of high value to us, and if we instead direct our attention at what is being offered to us as our world, then we recognize: The world is rich, good, and for free.

## Resurrection

The precondition for resurrection is death. Death is the end of our life in the world, on the one hand the end *in time* of our possibilities to live at all, on the other hand the *permanently present* limit of our possibilities.

If we lose a part of the world that we have built for us, then this is also a – partial – death: we cannot any longer live this part of our world. Hans in Luck cannot buy or change anything anymore; the fisherman and his wife cannot any longer live in the palace, dine nobly, let themselves be waited on; Job cannot any longer move among other people, he cannot even carry out certain bodily movements; the lost son cannot any longer subsist on his own, etc.

Our life has to be wrested from death. If we enhance life then we are doing it against death.

That works, as we know anyway, and the resurrection of Jesus is a strong picture for it: death may take away much from us in life but then we can still seize new possibilities of life, explore new worlds, enhance life. Death can also "switch off" our whole world, like somebody may switch off our computer game or virtual world, but that cannot switch off our Self that we are being outside the virtual or real world.

How does a person feel, if threatened by an existential loss? He or she is full of angst. How does that person feel after recognizing that the loss is inevitable? The angst

becomes manageable. How does the person feel, after the loss has just happened? For some time – possibly a very long time – hurt, devitalized, hopeless. But then the vital forces will return, and he or she will use the remaining possibilities to live on and to try to build a new life and enrich it. And this is certainly a kind of resurrection.

There is no guarantee, that we experience enlightenment in this process. But if we face it openly, live through it consciously, and do not remain fixed on the loss, then it may happen that the time of disheartenment ends with taking a fundamental review of assets: which possibilities remain and what can we still make of them. Thus, we are (nearly) looking at the roots of our own existence. The sun is still shining, the wind is still cooling, the trees are still standing, we still have muscles and reason to our disposition. We may be amazed, how much we are still able to do, that we have never given any attention before. And we may think: Actually great! All that might be lost, too, and as it isn't lost, it is a present. So, one may even be grateful and excited. That would be a trace of beatitude. It does not persist, but if we later remember it, we can always feel it again.

All this can easily be said by a person, who does not herself have these problems. At least, it is the best that people may tell us who have risen again after blows of fate, and it is a view that experienced helpers are suggesting. We are here in an extremely difficult communication, in which inner-worldly prudence will no more than partially help, and scepticism will not help at all. We have to really face the bitterest truth:

A totally broken person may not any longer have the least faith that she might still be able to act and that this could make any sense. She does not see any basis anymore. But the basis, that is, the world is still there, and it is still dependable. It is possible to make a step, and the ground will carry as before. The chair on which one is sitting can still be trusted, or the bed in which one is lying, the floor on which the chair and the bed are standing, the house in which the floor is located, the ground on which the house has been built, etc. It is not to be expected that, in the next moment, all this would dissolve into nothing, and that we would all of a sudden float in space freely and without any hold to any objects. Should we fear that to-morrow, or already in the next second, all light in the universe would be switched off? That the laws of nature would suddenly become invalid, and everything would vaporize? Nothing of this is under our control; everything could be lost in the next instant. In spite, we trust it so much that we never question it. It is given to us as a present. This basis is here as long as we live, and we can always build on it.

What does effectively console? That, which consoles a child that has fallen from its bicycle, is hurt and is therefore beside itself: This is painful now, but the pain will fade – you can already feel it –, you are still whole – soon you will ride the bicycle as before, look here is something beautiful else. What are we feeling, when being consoled, in the moment when the consolation starts to help? That life is still beautiful. And for this, we are going to rise up again.

Summing up abstractly, we have to conclude: Death cannot switch off our Authentic Self. What is otherwise healing us is the richness of the world. The partial death of some

part of our world will always leave to us sufficient attractive world that is worth further building. Happiness increases along the lines of sight of absolute happiness, that is: beatitude. As a consequence, for every, however big, misfortune there is a bigger happiness that can compensate for it.

## Birth

We need not break down in order to learn that life is beautiful and carries beatitude in it. Every single birth can remind us of this and, in particular, Christmas is meant to remind us of it. The essence of Christmas is not that a most special man was born, identified as the one and only son of God, but rather that it points to our own births as beings with divine roots. And to make it very clear that Christmas is bearing reference to our existence, the legend does not simple report a birth, but Mary has a prior appearance of an angel, that is: she recognizes her Authentic Self; the birth itself happens in demonstratively poor circumstances; and to further emphasize the existential relevance, the baby massacre of King Herod must happen at the same time.

If life is obviously and definitely being enhanced anywhere, then it is in a birth, through which new life is originating and starts growing. In the first place, this is an inner-worldly matter and well understood as such. In addition, we know that, in a human birth, not only does the growth of a capably organized and self-organizing cell cluster enter a new stage but also the foundation is being laid of a new, individual Dasein. Somehow and at some point, this being will recognize that it is "there", that it is having a self and has been put into the world; that it can try out everything encountered in the world, master much of it, and enjoy it; that there are Others who can encourage, console, help; and generally: that we need just accept all this without knowing or being able to explain why it is given to us and why it is repeatable. The being will explore all this with insatiable excitement and thereby, and by its progress in life, enthuse everybody. It will ask, why, why, why ... and it will be told that all things are causally interrelated, and possibly even: that they are made by God.

So far the factual aspects. And how do we feel about them? Who does not feel joy over the birth of a child! Who would not long back for being thrilled like he or she had been as a child, especially at Christmas! Who does not know that it is first of all children with whom we can observe beatitude! On the other hand, without having experienced it, one can hardly imagine how children can enrich the life of their parents. A little easier is it to imagine, how grandchildren can rejuvenate their grandparents, and how happy parents and grandparents may then be.

All this is a reflection of beatitude. It is originating from nothing but the fact that a new, rich world is opening up to the child.

## The Holy Spirit

Later in life, the occasions are getting rare, in which we are thrilled like a child, the moments are getting rare to which we might say: "Ah, linger on, thou art so fair!", but they are not impossible and, more important, we can still imagine them. Our access to such occasions is often blocked because we believe to know certain external conditions under which we might be happy, and we try, with more or less strain, to produce these conditions – as one usually tries to *make* one's fortune. With a stance to recognize what is given to us, and to accept it as a present and intensely live it, we are doing better: we are almost there: at enjoying beatitude. Its extra-worldly root is, as we have already seen in Chapter 12, pure salvation without alternative or opposite. The communication of such salvation is something very special.

There is a famous text about the communication of the Holy Spirit: the legend of the Pentecost miracle. The Holy Spirit overcomes the apostles with a sound from heaven; they are preaching, and everybody, many foreigners among them, are hearing them in their own – the listeners' – native languages. And Peter is explaining that to them with a citation of Prophet Joel, according to whom God would, in the last days, pour his Spirit over all flesh, with the consequence that: "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy ...."

"Prophesy" is accordingly an expression for the communication that everybody does understand across all differences of native language, as if simultaneously translated. This reminds contrariwise of the legend of the Tower of Babel, at the end of which nobody understands anybody else. The Babylonian language confusion of mankind is meant to be unmade by the Holy Spirit.

We can easily integrate these structures by resorting to our insights of Parts 1-3:

Let us first fill in here the interpretation of the Tower of Babel legend. In Chapter 13, we have already touched on it a little when discussing a conflict in a waiting queue. As shown in Chapters 7 ff., we are designing and building our world as a structure of concepts and, of course, it is growing larger all the time. It is like a tower of understanding of which we erect each floor on top of the others. We are building our personal part of the Babylonian tower on top of the levels built by previous generations. We are predominantly moving in the "current", upper levels and there we are extending and heightening the building, using the knowledge and possibilities of action that we have acquired newly or from our ancestors and contemporaries. Everybody is doing this in his or her own way, and it is obvious that everybody's experiences and understandings cannot but differ – that we are drifting apart and getting estranged. Everybody is building a different side tower, that is, a different conceptual structure, and as a result we do not understand each other in many ways, and our languages are confused.

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In the upper levels of our conceptual world-tower we are living high above the fundamentals, at great vertical distance from our roots, and there we do not understand each other. If we have lost the view of the fundamentals we do not understand the structural static of our tower either. Down at the base, we all understand our Dasein situation, where we are and where God is, where we are Gods "servants and handmaidens", and where, in an extra-worldly, un-articulated "sound from heaven" the world is off for the moment. And because we all are there in the same – holy – Dasein situation, where only our existence matters, we understand each other directly and easily, the language confusion is gone. This is the Holy Spirit communicating.

Pragmatically said: The Holy Spirit feels like the best conversation we may ever have had from human being to human being, like the most in love dialogue or the best reconciliation talk, or as if another person delivers us from a great inner blockage, or vice versa, or like the best mutually understanding silence of soul mates.

The better our sight of the common fundament, the better our re-ligion to the roots of the Others' existence the higher is our chance to experience this feeling: existential love. It is a touch of the Holy Spirit and an approximation of what remains when the world is irrevocably gone: absolute beatitude.

## Chapter 35: Final Partial Summary

In Part 8, we have considered how we can get an approximate sight of the Extra-worldly and what we can experience in this. The results can be summarized as follows:

19. The world is rich, good, and for free.
20. Death cannot switch off our Authentic Self.
21. Beatitude is a Dasein dimension, with "eternal" beatitude as its extra-worldly root, and an inner-worldly extension between blessedness and disaster.
22. We find beatitude, if we seriously give attention to our existence, be it the hard way, for example, in rising up again after a blow of fate, be it the comfortable way, for example, in the context of a birth or in an existential communication with another person.
23. Inner-worldly beatitude is an optimal Dasein stance into which the sight of the Extra-worldly is adjusting us. Beatitude is lasting, because it does not depend on luck or misfortune *in* the world, but rather is an attitude *vis-à-vis* the world as a whole and is enthusiastic about its richness.



## PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

In spite of the strangeness of many religious texts we have for this book assumed that something existentially relevant and reasonably comprehensive can be found behind them and, to this end, we were out to acquire existential competence of our own.

By inner-worldly standards, practically all religious tellings are wrong or even nonsensical. Therefore, it appears obvious to try to identify their key contents outside the world – God is not of this world. Because the world is precisely all that we can, in principle, conceptualize, the Extra-worldly cannot be grasped with our concepts and conceptual assertions, and is thus structure-less for us.

The consequence is not, however, that we had to be silent about the Extra-worldly. Mankind has been talking about it for millennia and rather not in ways that nobody would understand. It is possible to tell about the Extra-worldly in an approximately pointing manner and, thereby, communicate something like inner-worldly lines of sight of the Extra-worldly.

The analogy to virtual reality and the telling of Dasein dimensions have provided us with a language context in which we have first dealt with the constructive character of our exploration of the world. We have reviewed various Dasein dimensions and seen how unproblematic the telling of Trinity is, how obvious Jesus' command of love, and why we know what is good and evil.

In this way, we have got an impression that and how bible texts are existentially competent, and we have therefore taken up some central messages of the bible, like the Ten Commandments, the book Job, and Jesus' role, and we have been able to plausibly explain them in our language context.

So, our result is a network of coherent existential tellings that can largely satisfy our reason and that do not at all appear obsessed but, to the contrary, here and there even wise.

In order to extract a practical benefit from all this, we have looked at the consequences and found that they are, on the one hand, very simple for us personally, as we can have our stance oriented and justified by the sight of the Extra-worldly. On the other hand, we had to get to some extent into the immense repertoire of void religious assertions, and we have felt the laboriousness of this business.

Less laborious was our job to finally explain how we can get a sight of beatitude and what can be seen there.

What are we now supposed to do?

Almost nothing, just to try again and again to get near, or even into, lines of sight of the Extra-worldly.

Our Dasein is as described with the analogy of a virtual reality – with many Others as co-participants –, and that cannot be helped. Even if we do not for our lifetime get a sight of our Dasein structure with its extra-worldly root, this does not change anything

in the end: our world ends, and the Extra-worldly, with its dimension of our Authentic Self, is as it is.

If the Extra-worldly is nothing to us, and if we are not interested in it, then we need not do anything. But it can nevertheless happen to us, that we are abruptly thrown back to the roots of our Dasein, and then we will indeed all of a sudden have the unthought-of sight of the Extra-worldly.

If we get a sight of the Extra-worldly, then we are automatically getting oriented and justified. Although this effects a change of our life, we experience it as happy and for our own good, because subsequently we are at ease with ourselves and with the world and can live even misfortune with an unstrained and free spirit.

It is for the sake of this justification of our stance, that it is worthwhile for us to seek a sight of the Extra-worldly.

It is not self-stabilizing, but we rather have to maintain it on a regular base by redirecting our sight to the Extra-worldly. Our being in the world is usually distracting us and makes us lose the sight of the Extra-worldly, and therefore it is *our business* to find it again. We can do that by following a discipline of our own or by using the help of any kind of religious services, keeping in mind that some superficially irritating religious forms still have a deep content that points to the Extra-worldly.

And the fellow humans? Good and Evil? Fate?

By way of our fellow humans, too, we can get a sight of the Extra-worldly. We all are playing in the same great Dasein game, in a world jointly constructed. Others have previously successfully lived through their designs, or have failed therein. Others by our side are doing the same. In this way, life has been and is being continuously enhanced, and the result is an immense basis of possibilities on which we are standing. We are building on it, we continue living proven designs, risking to live through failed designs in spite, trying new ones. Our roles therein may be easy or highly challenging but, in any case, we are enhancing life, because at the end of our life we are in a state infinitely more developed than at its beginning.

And we see: the Others are thrown into their Dasein in the same way as we are, they are pursuing the same goal of the game: to enhance their own and their neighbours' lives. Like us, they earn successes, break down, invest good intentions, make others happy, cause damages, take pains, fail, struggle, go to extremes, are exposed to events that foster and train them, or that are over-demanding, throwing them back, killing them.

If we thus get a sight of the Extra-worldly in the Dasein of the Others, the same Extra-worldly as our own, then it becomes impossible to lessen their life on purpose, and we cannot but benevolently accompany and foster the Others in their life-enhancing pursuit. This enhances our life at the same time.

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This is the prosaic end of largely prosaic book – necessarily prosaic and, hopefully, still gratifying, because it is meant to pick us up from a position of clear reason and lead us to see in which sense religion is reasonable.

It is now advisable to forget all formulations but, the stronger, keep and upgrade the gained insights, for we have not stated water-tight assertions but have tried to point to the Extra-worldly.

For refreshing our sight of the Extra-worldly there are religious tellings available everywhere, mostly in religious communities and in world literature.

As a stimulation to-go, we therefore provide here finally two such tellings, typical random findings with the usual imprecision of pointing and an average degree of difficulty – now without any guidance for their interpretation:

A poem of non-theologian Johann Wolfgang von Goethe:

Do you wish always to stray further?  
See, *good lies as near*;  
learn only to grasp happiness,  
for *happiness is always there*.

... and a definition from the The Devil's Dictionary by Ambrose Bierce:

FAITH, n. Belief *without evidence* in what is told by one who speaks *without knowledge*, of things *without parallel*.

## APPENDIX: THE CHALLENGES THAT RELIGION POSES TO REASON

This is the complete list of the numbered key findings from the Partial Summary chapters of this book.

1. The roots of our existence are outside our world. Analogous to a virtual reality we are "controlling" the real reality of our life in the world from a point outside: from our Authentic Self.
2. The world is all that we can conceptualize. Accordingly, the Extra-worldly cannot be conceptualized. As we have nothing but our usual concepts and words available for our communication, we can at best try approximately pointing tellings to address the Extra-worldly. Such tellings still contain "objects" and "relations", but these can only help direct our view. By no means can they be depended on as concepts (for example in conclusions) – to the contrary: as concepts they are, strictly speaking, false.  
Nevertheless, approximately pointing language has, over the millennia, been functional in practice again and again. We have a predisposed intuition for it.
3. The above caveat regarding concepts is equally indispensable when the telling is about "God". But the telling of an "instance" that has put us into the situation of our Dasein and presents "live" to us what we encounter in the real reality of our life, is an obvious telling that will allow us to further build on.
4. We are ourselves constructing the world through conceptual articulation and structuring of what we encounter against the background noise of chaos.
5. We cannot control the corresponding impulses to understand and to act, because they are rooted in the extra-worldly. We get them as presents.
6. In the world, we encounter the Others as beings of type Dasein – like ourselves. We are connected with them – like we are with God – through love: a relation between existential instances, the inner-worldly correspondent of which is the dimension between love and the objectification of the Others.
7. Dasein has many dimensions: pure, without alternative, and without opposite in the Extra-worldly; extended between positive and negative extremes in the world. The compound of the inner-worldly extents of all these dimensions is the space of good and evil.
8. Evil is every Dasein attitude that is not out to enhancing life.
9. The Ten Commandments, and Jesus' general advice to love, deal with exactly the two connections that are possible in principle between existential instances, that is, the one from Dasein to God, and the one from Dasein to Dasein. The book Job is a drastic illustration of the Second Commandment: It is impossible to conceptualize God.

10. Jesus has positioned himself *on our level* as our brother, *not between us and God* as an intercessor and redeemer, and also *not as our superior* as a Lord and Judge sitting "at the right hand of God".
11. To follow Jesus means: to adopt his Dasein stance – not to walk after a divine superman and to unavoidably remain behind him forever.
12. The most important consequence of the structural condition that the Extra-worldly is absolute, and does not therefore have any consequences, is *the voidness of the many claimed "consequences" of the Extra-worldly*. In particular,
  - it is impossible to imply from the Extra-worldly that the world, or parts of the world, must be understood in certain ways, or that one must act in certain ways, and
  - it is impossible to prove or disprove any approximately pointing telling about the Extra-worldly; rather, one can only see or not see what it is trying to point at, and at the most, tell whether it is pointing successfully or not.
13. What is positively effective inner-worldly is the sight of the Extra-worldly. It has an aligning effect and brings us into the optimal Dasein stance. Without this sight, the world is just desperate.
14. The Extra-worldly does not lend itself as a base of ethics.
15. The soul is an inner-worldly structure and not the same as the Authentic Self. The understanding of the soul is a matter of science but does not pertain to the Authentic Self.
16. As the world is constructed in terms of causality and chance, there is no room in it for a free will of man. Our Authentic Self is directing our inner-worldly subject through its stance vis-à-vis the world.
17. In the border areas between religion and ratio, there are permanent attempts to bring into play the Extra-worldly in order to justify, control, or disprove inner-worldly facts. In the opposite direction, inner-worldly systems of assertions are being, explicitly or implicitly, extended to the Extra-worldly, in order to explain, prove, or disprove it. Assertions relating to the Extra-worldly are violating the Second Commandment and are void.
18. The Authentic Self is inner-worldly imperceptible and unavailable. In particular, no assertions are possible about extra-worldly roots of living and inanimate beings.
19. The world is rich, good, and for free.
20. Death cannot switch off our Authentic Self.
21. Beatitude is a Dasein dimension, with "eternal" beatitude as its extra-worldly root, and an inner-worldly extension between blessedness and disaster.

22. We find beatitude, if we seriously give attention to our existence, be it the hard way, for example, in rising up again after a blow of fate, be it the comfortable way, for example, in the context of a birth or in an existential communication with another person.
23. Inner-worldly beatitude is an optimal Dasein stance into which the sight of the Extra-worldly is adjusting us. Beatitude is lasting, because it does not depend on luck or misfortune *in* the world, but rather is an attitude *vis-à-vis* the world as a whole and is enthusiastic about its richness.

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