

THE WOUND OF EXISTENCE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>VOLUME ONE – THE WAY OF PASSION</i>	4
<u>PART ONE= THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT</u>	5
1, Desert Heart	6
2, Hard Wakan	8
3, Duende = The Black Pain in The Deep Heart	13
4, God of the Heartbreak	22
<u>PART TWO= DEEPENING</u>	25
5, The Existential Stance, and the Two Errors in Buddha's Four Noble Truths	26
6, Passion as Arising from the Affectedness of the Human Condition	30
7, Duende 2: The 'Battle on the Rim' with Death	39
<u>PART THREE= FAITH</u>	55
8, Faith as the 'Leap' of Passion	56
9, Mysticism of Heart	63
<u>PART FOUR= TRUTH</u>	75
10, Clarification: Mankind as a Passion	76
<i>Truth 1= The Fight For Truth Is The Fight For The World</i>	78
11, The Way of the Warrior, and the Cante Tinze, Past and Present	79
12, The Warrior Fights Spiritual Evil	108
13, The Lost Man of the Heart	110
14, One Horn of the Dilemma	112
<i>Truth 2= The Living Of Truth In The World</i>	120
15, Heart Truth vs. The Need to be Right	121
16, Fruits of Lived Truth	145
17, SUMMATION= The Way of Passion is a Paradox	148
References in the Text	150

THE WOUND OF EXISTENCE

Volume One:

THE WAY OF PASSION

I: THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT

“It is impossible to exist without passion, unless we misunderstand the word *exist*.”

Kierkegaard

“Our age is an agitated one, and precisely for that reason not an age of passion; it heats itself up constantly because it feels that it is not warm – basically it is freezing... In our times it is merely by means of an echo that events acquire their ‘greatness’ – the echo of a newspaper.”

Nietzsche

“I accept God but I do not accept his world.”

Ivan Karamazov

“We live in an unredeemed world. But out of each human life that is unarbitrary and bound to the world, a seed of redemption falls into the world, and the harvest is God’s.”

Martin Buber

DESERT HEART

Struggle.

My life has become struggle towards some kind of truth glimpsed in the heart, but not otherwise provable.

It began when as a child I stood on the vast desert rocks of Joshua Tree in a silence that was humming, and heard those rocks speak out of some deep core of that silence. They were talking to my heart about the heart. They were telling me the world was built on the promise that is contained in the rock. Much later, as an adult, a Lakota elder told me a similar story when he said that creation began with the Sacred Rock Inyan whose blood was given to make all things. The ancient Jews, also, staked their existence on a promise and I came later to recognise in the Logos of the Greek Christians this Rock whose blood and promise upholds everything and will be with everything forever.

Six summers ago I met in the Lakota University at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, a young man who had fought in a parachute regiment and was now a member of the Kit Fox Warrior Society. In a break from the class we were attending, I recalled from memory the Kit Fox Warrior Song. I knew I was only getting it schematically.

Anything difficult or dangerous we foxes are to do
Only the sky above lasts forever
Only the rocks below last forever
We foxes are born into life to die.

It sounds better in Lakota, he said dryly.

He told me about how in the old days, in a ferocious fight, a particularly bold and brave man who was a member of the Strong Hearts [Cante Tenze] Warrior Society would tie a sash he wore over his shoulders to a stake driven into the ground. He did this to say, I am not moving. You will have to carry me off this field of battle dead. I will not leave it while I still live.

I could see this spirit in the Lakota young man and I recognised it was the spirit that first spoke to me from those rocks as a child, growing up in the empty liberalism and surface glamour of the Hollywood film business.

The promise is what a warrior aspires to be faithful to. And it is this fidelity of heart that receives help and inspiration and power. The fire that falls from the sky enters and dwells in the rock, making it incandescent and alive.

I recall the mysterious lines in Ezekiel where the prophet describes Lucifer, the arch guru and free spirit of self-glorifying creativity, as having once walked upon

the stones of fire in God's holy and mysterious place of divine wisdom, but having been cast out.

The struggle to be true to God's trueness of heart entails letting that poisoned flower of deceptive beauty and shining be burnt up. Yet it also has to overcome the opposite evil that William Blake called Satan the Accuser.

As the poison of deception is burnt out of our hearts, we are tempted to make the fire of purification into a moral killer, a moralic acid. We are tempted to judge ourselves as never good enough, never true enough, in our fidelity to the promise, or we take such pride in our fidelity that we divide the world into winners and losers, the saved and the lost. Yet it is the very spaciousness of the Rock, its patience and humility, that constitutes the stumbling block on which such Satanic Accusation trips up, and falls. For it has no true standing.

True fidelity, true standing, is in the heart, and is a faith of heart, that allows fidelity to discern the difference between glamour and emptiness of heart, on the one side, and on the other side a cramped fearfulness of heart that in a real but subtle sense does not trust the promise and its patience to win through and win for all.

I still dream of that desert, though I am 50 years and 8000 miles removed from it. I wake up from such dreams with a peculiar pain searing through the heart. A pain of memory and rededication.

It makes me realise how much I yearn for the spirit encounter that left Jacob wounded but blessed, the encounter with the eternal, unchanging rock-solid and rock-deep promise and the terrible power it has to kindle real faith and real fidelity in the mysterious deeps and battlegrounds of the heart.

For in that desert I stood, if only fleetingly, in the midst of the stones of fire and saw Lucifer, son of the morning star, fall from the sky and then, as Satan, dig in to the testing ground and the hard places, waiting to cripple and spoil people's real struggle of heart to find that faith that will bring them through everything that is difficult or hard, and dangerous, to do.

The faith not afraid to be born into life to die.

HARD WAKAN

It is important to situate the most essential values of human life in a lived context that illumines what they 'really' are, and what they are not.

Moral Values: What They Are Not

Modern understanding and practice of morality seems stuck on one or another of three basic stances: a morality that is harsh, punitive, rigid (authoritarianism); another morality that is undiscerning, permissive, sentimental (liberalism); still another morality that is above it all, in some romanticized, idealized, or falsely spiritualized 'realm' that escapes too easily from what is arduous at the ground level, and tends therefore to be either facile about the challenge of that level, or cruel in expecting too much from it.

Authoritarianism is a disease of 'heart', liberalism a disease of 'mind', and being above-it-all a disease of 'soul.' Authoritarians are hot, but blind, in heart; liberals are cold, but sophisticated, in mind; above-it-alls are elevated, but dissociated, in soul.

Most people, if they are honest, will be able to identify which of these three is their more likely 'home.' But we can also jump around from position to position, like musical chairs. Thus, sometimes people start authoritarian and, discovering the secret fear and violence in authoritarianism, turn liberal; or, they start liberal, and discovering the hidden undiscerning and selfishness in liberalism, turn authoritarian. Sometimes those who are above-it-all, discovering the secret evasion (safety-seeking) and baseless arrogance in this position, simply become disillusioned, and embrace cynicism, once their beautiful bubble gets punctured by reality's sharp edge; then they glory in tearing off the wings of everyone else's butterfly.

Authoritarianism is quintessentially about a heart that cares in the wrong way; it wants to coerce love, truth, goodness. It does not trust the freedom of the human person. It often produces a cramped, inhibited human being, who is offended if other people are too free: they must conform, and be cramped, too.

Liberalism is quintessentially about a mind that values its freedom to range widely, but will not engage the difficult and the intractable as it impinges on the heart. Authoritarianism at least feels this difficulty and intractability, but it is too afraid of its danger, and seeks an un-free, formulaic solution. By contrast, liberalism funks the challenge, and skates over it, leaving the problem 'free' as a sign of its own [fundamental] indifference to it. Liberals ultimately are self-indulgent, and leave others to do as they want out of non-engagement with the things in existence that throw us all together in very tough and binding ways. Being above-it-all is quintessentially an abuse of the 'intimations of immortality' Wordsworth famously referred to, in that it is about a soul that wants its natural

sense of beauty, potency, and possibility, not to be 'disfigured' or 'limited' by life's losses, ugliness, and need for sacrifice. Thus this soul prioritizes joy over suffering, life over death, and more important, expansion over restriction.

If the authoritarian is over-aggressive and under-sexed [which is why sexual lust and lasciviousness so often explodes out when the authoritarian is trying most fervently to keep to the party line], while the liberal is over-sexed and under-aggressive [which is why aggressive nastiness so often explodes out when the liberal is fervently trying to be tolerant, but this tolerance is questioned], then the above-it-all is in a lovely cocoon wafting on clouds, yet one fashioned by a pride that thinks this cocoon makes them above all honest need, and reinforced by a vanity that allows its glory and other positive attributes to be over-estimated – an inflation which holds up only so long as the higher and higher trip does not have to 'fall to earth.' Authoritarians and liberals may dispute with each other, but the above-it-all is beyond all that; they have the octane fuel that places them outside of all that mess and contention, as they are superior to it.

That is the statement of what true morality is not.

It is not authoritarianism/conservatism – which tries to forcefully suppress the real problem of human existence in its *paradox*. It is not liberalism/relativism – which tries to rationally evade this problem's *bite*. It is not being above it all/superiority – which tries to rise higher out of the problem's *weight*. None of these 'answers' works. They make the problem worse: we need to embrace, not run from, the ambiguity, bite, weight, of the real problem of human existence. For our heart is inescapably 'bound hand and foot' to that problem.

Moral Values: What They Are

The statement of what true morality is starts with the honest, brave, generous, humble, patient, and respectful, acknowledgment that the problem of human existence is hard. It cannot be suppressed, evaded, risen above. It has to be engaged. It has to be committed to. It has to be accepted and suffered; there is no way out of it. There is only a way through. Authentic values help us find, and walk, that way.

There are two other moralities that do not help this walk. One is the psychopath's amorality: "Have a nice day, get out of my way." Psychopathy is interesting not as a clinical disease, but as a false stance in existence's dilemma. The psychopath's out and out criminality arises from his refusal of vulnerability; he thinks he can get through, or get an advantage, by toughing it out. But there are many reasons why this is false, one being that we need our vulnerability as much as our strength to face up to existence. Another is that we need our sensitivity: we cannot act on the world unless we accept that the world can also act on us.

The other morality that does not help the walk is political radicalism without a corresponding spiritual radicalism to anchor it – we must be prepared to go through hell and high water to let ourselves be spiritually changed, and then we can wisely alter worldly conditions. But it is another illusion to think that external changes of environment, however just and necessary, can entirely take the sting out of being in this world. The problem in human existence has an irreducible core, because it was put there by God, and intended. There are many ways to express this basic existential fact, but Zen does it as well as any: “This life is a fire pit. With what attitude of mind do you think you can avoid being burnt?”

True values do not prevent us from being burnt. They help us get burnt, so that instead of being destroyed by the burning, we are broken and remade by it. In Hasidic Judaism, they don't speak of a spiritual master, or expert, or learned or upright person; they refer to a person who is 'proven', some one tested and proved by existence's problem. Morality helps us go through this, to emerge out the other side. The testing is hard because it is deep, but then so is the proving it brings. Existence puts us on an edge, in a gap, at a crossing of roads; but the process justifies itself by its result. Its result is the fundamentally changed human being.

Thus morality, truly understood and practiced, is about the heart. Everything else comes into it, of course: mind, soul, body, inner and outer, visible and invisible, history and nature, the cosmos and the earth. But quintessentially it is driven by and about the heart.

The deep heart.

The passionate, suffering heart.

The brave, willing heart.

The heart capable of the most vicious, cowardly, pretentious smallness, yet also called to greatness and depth. For, as St. Macarios of Egypt rightly said, “the human heart is an unfathomable abyss.” Morality addresses one thing only: the struggle, both terrible and beautiful, both fearful and wonderful, both agonized and ecstatic, in the heart for a new heart. Flamenco speaks of the 'duende' – the struggle in the heart that produces 'cante jondo', deep song; and it says we must 'bear it in the kidneys.' Bodidharma said, 'you will bear the unbearable and endure the unendurable to reach holiness.' Morality's true story concerns our deep song, and the long, hard road that leads to our transfiguration, and thus the real divinization of our humanity. This road is 'hard wakan', the mysterious fate that is unyielding, inflexible, relentless, because it will not cease from smashing us to bits until we are undone and redone, crucified and resurrected.

Hard Wakan is also God's 'heartlessness' in not giving up on us, and God's determination to break our heart, so a new one can be made which will become the indwelling of God's heart. Morality stabilizes us in this hard walk; keeps us

at it, waves the Zen stick at us which just insists, walk on. Bear. Endure. Be patient. Persevere to the end. Or in St. Paul's words, hope in everything. Yet all hope and all despair burn up before we reach our end. Morality hints at the value of the walk, and what profound things, not just for us, but for all the world, are at stake in it. In the end we will not just see everything as God sees it, a felicity of the illumined mind and sacred soul, but we will acquire the capacity to *love* everything as God loves it, and *act* for that love as God acts, bearing and enduring all things, in a passion that is only spiritually kindled in the holiness of the heart.

The deep heart is not the heart of superficial attachments, nor driven, deluded and devouring, 'fallen' passions. Not even the desiring heart. But the deeply given, suffering heart, taking the hit of existence and struggling to let itself be opened fundamentally, and fundamentally made self-transcending in the true ecstasy, the ecstasy of self-sacrificing and self-sharing love. 'He who loves acquires another self.' 'For he who loves, what happens to the other happens to the self.' 'Love is to rejoice with those who are joyful and mourn with those who grieve.'

Hard Wakan is the kindling of fire; and with fire, comes light; and with light, comes living water. The easy route doesn't go anywhere. The Hard Way, alone, moves.

The Way is Hard for the heart, because it resists true greatness and depth. Yet this spark wants release, and thus constantly urges us, against all the odds in this world that dictate the converse, be great, go deep.

Morality reveals to us we are a conflicted being, yearning for and called to great heartedness and depth of heart, but also inclined toward smallness. Every evil passion in the heart – every dishonesty, cowardice, meanness, hatred and hostility, envy and jealousy, luxuriating softness, rationalization, judgmental hardness, inauthenticity, disrespect, pride, vainglory, betrayal and infidelity, lies to self and others, and lack of risk-taking, lack of bearing and enduring – is a failure of the true passion. Yet passion must carry and grow through the failure to something not merely its converse, but something won from the agonized struggle. Something greater than small heartedness emerges from the struggle with it, because it has to go deeper really to overcome it. Thus only love is greater than 'good' because it is deeper than 'evil.' Love is generous, courageous, strong, patient and persevering, because it is ecstatic.

To fight and journey in this process of lifelong struggle, and change, is the mark of self-awareness and honest self-appraisal, but it is more than that. It is the mark of the real human dignity. It is the proof we have not given in or given up with regard to that spark that drives the heart. It is the real spiritual passion. Existence wounds us as we bear and endure many outer things that are hard, yet so too must we bear and endure many inner things that are hard. Both are the mark of our heart's willingness, of our heart's struggle, through passion's conflict within itself of inauthentic and authentic, to attain a purified and singular passion.

A holy passion.

St. Dionysus: "Fire is in all things, seeking the substance on which it can burn."

If it is the destiny of the heart to catch fire, then morality understood in the true way is what helps us stay with, and dive in to, that whole process. When we reach holiness, we shed morality, because the fire is in our heart, and the two are and act as one. But morality tells us where we are going, providing both inspiration and constancy on a road that is dusty, long, and arduous.

Our heart rests on an emptiness, a nothingness, an unfathomableness, into which we dread to fall, should we risk love's self-sacrifice and self-sharing. For in stepping out of self, we sense the giddy feeling of no ground beneath us. Yet, every self-giving action we risk to that abyss brings God's Fire ever more into it, so that in the end the abyss we fear to fall into, endlessly, becomes the only ground – a 'groundless' ground – upholding our frail heart. Yet that proves sufficient.

That becomes the indwelling of the divine Love. When we can love – not when we are loved – we feel upheld by Love. When we act as God's heart in this world, we know there is a great and deep Heart that upholds our little heart and ultimately will not let it 'fall', but will bring it through a hard journey and battle to a final celebration, a celebration recognizing no winners and losers, no haves and have nots, but a common destiny shared by, enjoyed by, relied on, by all.

Knowing the abyss is not empty, because we have leaned on it and acted from it, is the peace that passes all understanding. It is the heart's joy, because it signifies a victory.

The human heart that houses the divine heart is real freedom, for only love makes us free. The experience of being free to choose or not choose love, important to our struggle as it is, is revealed in the end as a half way, a necessary half truth. Only love is free. Only love knows. Only love sees. Only love acts. Only love bears and endures everything, for the sake of what it is given to. That is its passion. The holy heart reads hearts, and perceives realistically and compassionately, because it has been in the same desert and crossed it on the same bony track.

True values point us there, but we still must walk.

We are all given to Hard Wakan. It cannot be 'magicked' away. It leaves scars, but these are also the marks of glory.

Duende= The Black Pain in the Deep Heart

John--

I found the quote you asked for among a chaos of notes from F. Garcia Lorca writing on duende, CD booklets on flamenco, a book of travels among the Gypsies of southern Spain, and the like... I got so interested in all this material, I decided to write out segments for you. I am doing this also because, rummaging through this old stuff, I realised that my own near death outside Granada, at 17 years old around Easter of 1962, looking for the Gypsies who lived in the caves and the true flamenco, has stalked my whole life. I should have died in the back of that car as it careened off the bridge into the void. Looking at these crumpled papers is like reclaiming the ghost who has haunted all my life: he has no face, and no name, but his cry is called duende. He is the dark wraith who took my American pie little life and stabbed it to the quick. I had asked for that as a child, at about 8 years of age. Surrounded by the superficiality of America, and feeling the hollow emptiness beneath, I prayed to God: give me something deep. He delivered on a hot, still day outside Granada, on a deserted and pocked road leading onto a bridge over a deep ravine into the void. The place of duende.

1,

No one knows the origin of the Gypsy music – singing [cante], dancing [baile], the vocal encouragement given to performers when the audience calls out [jaleo], intricate hand clapping [palmas], fierce foot stomping [zapateado] and guitar playing – known as flamenco. Its roots are obscure, but the Gypsies who evolved it are said to have begun in Rajasthan, India, and from there migrated through the Middle East, Egypt [where 'Gitano' originated, from 'Egyptian'], Northern Africa, into Spain. Andalusia in southern Spain is their heart-land. The Arab influence – southern Spain was Moorish for seven centuries – is beyond dispute, but scholars say that Indian [Hindu] and Greek Byzantine [Eastern Orthodox Christian] sacred chant also contributed. Probably everywhere the Gypsies went in their migration made a contribution, including possibly the other music of duende, Greek Rembetiko which evolved out of an older Greek and Turkish music of Asia Minor in Smyrna. Flamenco dancing is unlike any other dance form in the whole history and geography of Europe: its Orientalism is undeniable, yet the drama and driving-force is Western. There is a terrible edge in this music, a visceral sense of danger. Flamenco has recast east and west, by merging them.

2,

Flamenco does have a light side, like the cafe type of Rembetiko: 'cante chico', or light song, is known for gaiety. Where this expresses innocent passion's exuberance, or as Kierkegaard described the child heart, its "thirst for the mysterious and prodigious", it is vibrant, and alive, full of élan. However, cante chico should not be confused with the commercialised, light weight, sentimental

types of flamenco that tourists go to see and hear. These people are nowadays bussed to ritzy cafes where no Gypsy would ever be allowed through the door [nor would want to go in], to watch 'performances.' These are the kind of artistic fandangos that, in the austere language of true flamenco, "lack honour." I feel disgust for those that promote this untruthful betrayal. They are like those who want a touch of passion, with all its rigours and losses, to massage them, at a safe distance. Passion cannot be 'watched.' You either join in, and resonate out of your own life's 'sacred pain', or if you cannot do that, then you should avert your eyes. To see a human being in the throes of the true passion is to see something at an utter extremity, and it is raw, naked, ugly. It cannot be prettied up. It cannot be massaged into a more cosmetically beautiful appearance.

The real flamenco is the cante jondo, the deep song. This is the flamenco with 'duende.' Duende is Daemonic.

Goethe: "Daemonic... a mysterious power that everyone feels but... no philosopher has explained."

3,

Duende is a Gypsy word, meaning 'spirit', or literally the 'spirit of the house', or the 'spirit of the earth.' This spirit is never pictured. It has no face, it has no name. It is an experience, not a thought. It is a strange presence that comes from the earth, when the person is close to the ground; it rises through the soles of the feet to lodge in the guts and heart. As I said to you in the letter sent yesterday [13 December 03], this spirit arises from the abyss beneath the earth and beneath the heart. Duende is a terrible power whose electricity runs up and down the spine, and whose edge and bite penetrates the heart. The duende in true flamenco dwells in the black pain. When we hear this music, the struggle and suffering of the 'really deep pain in the deep heart' is ratified, voiced, intensified. In this music is darkness, lit up by occasional sparks and flames of light. There is grieving in this music, but nothing of self-pity. This music is itself simply 'a suffering' of the profound. Thus duende is also translatable as 'the profound.' Deep Song= Cante Profundo.

Duende is not the victorious outcome 'at the end', but the struggle itself, in the middle, which 'could go either way.' This struggle contains heaven and hell, joy and sorrow, mourning and comfort, loss and gain. But it is on a searing edge, in danger, all the time. You don't know if it is God or the devil who has wounded you like this, but more vital, you don't know if the wounding is for heaven or for hell: if it will break and make you, or just be your ruin. It is the heaven only found in hell, and it is the hell that gives no birth to anything, only dereliction. The point is, in the duende it is not certain yet: we cannot know, we have no guarantee, we must undergo it, stay in it, see it through. It is the room from which there is no exit. The duende is both for heaven and for hell.

It must be, to be truthful. We are in the long dark tunnel, and if we could claim light at the end of it, this would be lying, and premature. It would be fake. Passion is 'passing through' every fated, deep, hard thing life can throw at us,

and plunge us into. We are, in the throes of this, not cool, calm, and confident. We are hot and bothered, torn, stretched, brought to breaking point, and beyond. Duende is the wrestling with the profound that is our desperate hurt, our ecstatic joy, our inescapable destiny. Duende has to be truthful to where we are. At times it is sacred and holy, at times it is broken down and crazed, at times it is a flight into the superficial, humdrum, everyday, or the brittle gaiety of the cafe where we put a garishly lit-up mask over the void... But always it is heroic. Always it faces the faceless, steps up and takes on all that mysteriously wounds the heart, and by this very wounding, raises it up and casts it down. Duende is sparse in expression because the battle in the depths is with the nameless. No Jungian images can penetrate its darkness and portray it. No words can express it, no thoughts can explain it. It is the one koan that cannot be solved. In the throes of it Bodhidharma sweated white beads. Christ sweated blood.

In duende is the cry of the heart, gripped by every fate in life – death, loss, the inexplicable and unacceptable, God. In the duende, we bear the unbearable and endure the unendurable ‘in our kidneys.’ Duende is a spiritual power that possesses us, in our art, in our deeds and words, and even bodily gestures, when we are true to this fate in our struggle with and suffering of it. It is a greater power that renders us powerless and yet, paradoxically, bestows upon us the only real power we will ever have that is our own, a power of the heart. Only by what touches and moves us can we touch and move anybody or anything.

The people in this life seized and left with the scars of duende are the afflicted ones and the ardent ones. The power in their heart is a reproach to the half-living, and also an encouragement and a hope.

The poor and socially disenfranchised with dust on their feet are closer to duende than the rich and protected.

To say of a given flamenco singing and playing and dancing that it ‘lacks duende’ is to say it is inauthentic. It lacks depth: it has not been forged in suffering the profound. It is a fake. It might be too timid and inhibited and shyly curtailed and contained, or it might be too grandiose and exaggerated in drama, or it might be too powerful in the human trying, on its own account, to assert itself or aggressively dominate, as in false heroics or superman tough-guy control and violence. It is always protest and at the same time it is acceptance. Its power always comes from a wound. That wound exposes us where we really live for who we really are. Doing flamenco in public is a test: it shows everyone present the ‘true’ or ‘real’ temper [the steel] or quality [the excellence] of the one who sings, plays, dances. If they are evading the wound of fate, or faking a response to it, this is brutally exposed. This is why an artistic event must have ‘honour.’ The struggle and suffering in life that the artistry conveys must be respectfully and fully conveyed, warts and all, with all the piss, shit, vomit, pus, blood, sweat and tears of existence. If a person ‘hasn’t lived the life’, this will be revealed. There is no hiding place. It is an honour to see artists trying to honour existence’s wound. This is why, as in Rembetiko, other

performers and even the audience shout encouragement. They are shouting from their own passion, and its fearful pathos, 'go for it', 'do it', hoka hey!

4,

The best flamenco voices are hoarse, searing, unadorned in their crying. Though there is tremendous discipline and self-control in flamenco, it is not perfection of technique that allows duende to be invoked, but some heart truth that the singer has only attained through the pain of their life. Early flamenco singing was unaccompanied by any instruments. Even now, the guitar must complement and never overshadow the expressive power of the human voice.

The song form replete with duende and most indisputably Gypsy is the 'siguiriya.' The song form capturing the wisdom of age in these heart cries is the 'solea.' The 'alegria' is a fiesta song sun-lit by Andalusia, and the 'buleria' is an explosive and rhythmic fiesta song with tragic drama always lurking underneath. Also part of the canon is the 'fandango', thought to be of Moorish origin; 'tango', another fiesta song; 'taranta', thought to be a mining song. Before all of these came the ancient 'tona', which included the 'marinete', named after the blacksmith's hammer, and the 'carcelera', from the Spanish for prison [carcel]. Tona, siguiriya, and solea are the very heart of flamenco; while solea, alegria and buleria are probably the leading dance forms.

All performers carry a particular place in their soul as well as the fated injury to the heart. Seville, Cordoba, Granada, Jerez, Cadiz, are the best known towns: but there is also Huelva, Alcala, Malaga, Santiago, Lebrija, Ultrera, Ronda, Almeria, Cartagena. One writer says the trough of cante jondo lies along the River Guadalquivir, south of Seville.

Flamenco is a paradox: sophisticated, but rooted in something simple and plain; born of poverty and oppression but rich in spirit; rhythmically strictly bound, but requiring constant improvisation; respectful toward tradition, but always beset with the urge to break away; terrible suffering – the deepest level of 'deep cries to deep' – but a joy and sensuality, and love of life, born only from its deep pain= from this black pain in the deep heart is banished all grey, all compromise and boring flatness, and is born the vividness, poignancy and vibrancy of colour.

5,

There are many truly great flamenco men and women, too many to name them all. F.G. Lorca's own collection of 78s included Manuel Torre, Nina de los Peines, Tomas Pavon. Other names worthy of mention include Pepe de la Matrona, Ramon Montoya, Carmen Amaya, Manolo Caracol, Gregorio Tio El Borrigo, La Perle de Cadiz. But two should be picked out, as exponents of the duende at its most savage and holy.

Cameron de la Isla [The Shrimp of the Isle] was a pale, thin Gypsy. He got his name because when his uncle first saw the white skin and clear eyes, he

exclaimed, “he is so pale he looks like a shrimp.” But this man had a heart that could barely be contained in his chest. Unusually he began singing early, at age 8, when he stood on the platform of the buses and trams running between ‘the island’ and Cadiz. Already then, the temper and quality of the heart was visible in his voice.

They say that time threatens me.
They say whether I am alive or dead.
And I tell them: while my heart boils,
I will conquer my enemy.

He wrote this song not long before his death. His heart stopped boiling three years later.

This was sung at his funeral:

How sad not to be a Gypsy
from the island of Leon,
to weep as they weep
for the death of Cameron.

The other Gypsy singer who was an exponent of duende came from an older generation. His name was Fernando Monje. He was born in Cadiz, or Jerez de la Frontera, which gave him his name, Terremoto de Jerez [The Earthquake of Jerez]. Physically he was known as ‘the human mountain.’ Heaped with awards in his lifetime, he hated receiving recognition of any kind, and would only sing when he felt like it.

This man some called a ‘black demon’ who was the ‘terremoto del cante’ [earthquake of the cante] died of a brain haemorrhage one morning, at 47 years old. El Cameron was 41 yrs old when he died. What Lorca said about the Gypsies of flamenco could be applied to both men= “Nearly all of them die of heart problems, I mean to say, they explode like enormous cicadas... They sing as if they were under the spell of a shivering, very bright point in the horizon. Geniuses are like that: strange and simple...”

The Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis said, upon hearing a recording of Terremoto de Jerez for the first time:

“An earthquake is a natural phenomenon. So is this Gypsy. This kind of music cannot be analyzed at an artistic level. This music is existential. Each time I hear a Gypsy sing a big cante with all his body and soul, I feel as though I have come face to face with a question I cannot answer. This is when I say Life-Death. It is fundamental. This performer can sell his soul to God or the Devil just as well. He does not even know.”

A friend came back from visiting the Nazi concentration camp in Dachau, Poland. She had found there this utterance: “I have seen and felt everything of heaven and everything of hell.” The words do not tell us if this seeing and this

feeling was for heaven, or for hell. Any resolution to the tension, and koan, of the story of our life is trite: it betrays the profound.

Don't tell me you found the answer. That is 99.9% certain to be a lie.

Sing me your deep song.

6,

Rembetiko, the music of the Greek exile from Smyrna in Asia Minor, also has duende, though its form differs from flamenco. Its greatest singers include a man known as Dalgas [Antonios Diamantidis], a Turk whose name I recall as Hafiz Burhan, and two women whose voices are burnt into me, like clean incisions of a sharp knife: Rosa Eskenazy, and Rita Abadzi. There is a song Dalgas cries, or screams, that shreds my heart every time I hear it. I personally would trade in the whole of Mozart just to hear a snatch of this song.

In America there is the blues, and Johnny Cash. Both strain towards but do not attain duende. I ask myself why. Then I realised it: the form is simply not an adequate vehicle to the depth it wants to incarnate. Then I realised, this statement – the form is not an adequate vehicle to the depth it wants to convey – could be the summation of America. Depth cannot be uttered= the forms there will not release it. No wonder the place is so crazed.

What might be called the Americanisation of the world will spell the end of duende. Either it will be suppressed, stillborn and stifled, shut in the depths out of which it needs to come forth, or even sincere attempts to reach it will flounder. The 'form' isn't there, culturally, spiritually, artistically, because the 'bearing it in the kidneys' has disappeared. In the Americanised west we all have fallback positions these days. The Gypsies didn't. They were on the line. We all know we do not have to walk the line, whatever we say. It is only when we are forced, and there is nothing else but walking the line, that a form adequate for duende will be found.

The supposed heroes of duende in current times are all play-acting. It is not serious for them. They can always go somewhere else, do something else, even reinvent their identity – a sport in America which everyone plays.

Duende needs the heart to be tied by its feet to a stake driven into the hard and dusty earth. For duende, the heart must be grounded, and precarious precisely because of that. This is why flamenco, Rembetiko, and other musics of the struggle and suffering of passion 'out over the deep' have duende. They have depth only because they are earthy. It is our vain and foolish attempt to vanquish the earth, through our high rise towers, that guarantee we will continue to be without any form – in art, religion, society, politics, daily life – with which to be the vehicle for releasing the terrible eerie power of duende. Our current forms show us to be deprived of any way of telling, and sharing, our depth.

Lorca [fragment from 'Ballad of the Three Rivers']:

two rivers in Granada
one of weeping, the other of blood.

Written in Arabic on the walls of the Alhambra palace in Granada:
"No conqueror but God [Wa la ghalib illa Allah]."

7,

Only God knows if it is for heaven or hell.
Only God can make heaven from hell.

In the duende, only God is as deep as we are, when we are fighting a battle
half lost, half won, half only just beginning; and in a journey going somewhere
we do not know, adrift on wave after wave.
"Kima to kima", as the Greek song says.

Lorca:

Listen, my son: the silence.
It is the silence of waves,
a silence
where valleys and echoes slip past,
which turns faces
to the ground.

If I remain a Christian it is only because I believe Christ took the duende to the
utter, absolute extreme, for both God and for humanity. Other than God, only
he has conquered. Conquered not for God alone, but for the human.

Was Christ in peace and calm on the Cross? No he was not. He was in the eye
of the storm, stretched and broken in the wound of God in humanity which is
God's passion, and the wound of humanity in God which is human passion.
Christ passed through the defeat of heaven in hell, which alone can secure the
victory of the heaven only found in hell.

His deep song embraced ours.

8,

Hence, I can give my own description.

Duende: 'earth spirit.' The spirit who rises from the depths only when we are
staked to the ground, mixing with the earth in equal measure our tears and our
blood.

9,

The early afternoon was hot, and still. We were in a car, Joe, me, and the Moroccan driver who had picked us up hitching on the road from Alicante. For some reason, as we came closer to Granada, he accelerated. Suddenly we hit a wall at speed, bounced off, shot at an acute angle onto a bridge spanning a deep ravine: hundreds of feet straight down into a misty river far below. The car catapulted into the flimsy fence on the bridge, lurched out over the abyss, and I looked down into the certainty of death [I was locked in the back of the van, with a wire mesh between me and Joe and the Arab up front]. I knew I was going straight into that black maw. Then the car rolled back, the fence acting like some rubber band that gave way and then shot back... The car rolled over, and we ended upside down. None of us three was hurt.

The car was crushed and a total write off, hard on the Arab who was obviously set to enjoy motoring through Spain. I was very stunned, and per usual for me, angry. I went back down the rutted, heat-hazed road a spell, and kicked a rock off the side. It rolled down into a ditch. Suddenly, a black-clad Spanish mama stormed out of a wood and paper hut, seized the rock, strode back up the bank, and with force placed it back at my feet. I don't remember her exclaiming a word, but her face was thunderous. 'Don't pollute my front yard with your carelessly kicked stones.' I hadn't even seen the hut, and the little ground in front of it was dusty, rock-strewn, and hardly a candidate for 'Better Homes and Gardens.' But, when I gazed at it more attentively, I noticed there was no garbage there, no thrown away debris of existence. The ground before her hut was dirty, from natural accumulations, but no careless human jettisonings had been allowed... Why should I kick stones into this, even if death had like the bull's horns passed close to my ribs?

I turned away from her wrath, and walked back, helping Joe Record [I will always remember his name] push the van upright. Joe was on the run from England. His story was: as a new trainee teacher in a backward school, he hit upon the idea of hypnotising his disengaged children. It worked a treat. After starting every day with a group trance session, they became bright sparks and the performance of the school suddenly shot up. You would think people would be grateful. Not a bit of it. First the parents, then all manner of busybodies got suspicious, and pretty soon the game was up. The whole education regulatory body was horrified and came down on Joe with a ton of bricks, totally anathematising him, but the parental reaction was worse: mutterings to burn him at the stake were heard, so he took the better part of valour and vacated England. I met him on the road, somewhere in Andalusia. He was like a body-builder before there were any such. A powerful man. He and I righted that car, with brute strength, mostly his [I was 17, he was 23]. Then we walked the rest of the way into Granada, leaving the Arab to the Spanish police. I recall that the rest of the afternoon was passed in a Spanish patisserie in the centre of the town, eating sweet cakes and drinking coffee. It took a long time for the adrenaline to pass.... In our disorientation, we didn't even stop for the Alhambra [the Red Palace]. We hitched up into the Sierra Nevada mountains, and were gone by dark. I don't recall why we had to depart with such urgency,

or where we were going. Once back at school in England, I got a few letters from Joe, who stayed in Spain. They were sent from Almeria. He never found the Gypsies, but spent pages on the Spanish señoritas. Near the end of our travels, we picked up an American flake-head, who had offended a gang of Arab drug pushers in Tangiers, and was running from them. It seems they were determined to kill him. We let him tag along for a while, but he had no sense of humour, and his views on William Blake were disrespectful and foolish, so we didn't try to hold on to him when he went his own way somewhere near Malaga. I never knew if those Arabs caught up to him; he saw them loom out of every shadow every day. Somehow I still picture him on the run... Over the years, I have wondered how Joe's life went. Did his youthful hopes come true? He came from Richmond, Surrey. I always promised myself to look up his name in the phone directory, but never did. Maybe he remained in Spain. A piece of me did. My death.

Seville to wound, Cordoba to die, said Lorca. And Granada to breathe death's clear air in through my nostrils and throat, and to let it settle in the upper left hand chamber of my heart, which they tell me is faulty now, because the muscle is too big. There are four chambers to a heart, and it is in one of these that there still dwells the chill clarity of death, and the questions that cannot be answered.

Lorca:

Long live Granada, the Moorish queen,
a land watered by the river Genil:
and bless the morning I first saw you
with your Gypsy face.

It is what it is.

So be it.

GOD OF THE HEARTBREAK

1,

God does not create humanity dualistically Separate from him, as the Occident claims; God does not create humanity monistically at One with him, as the Orient claims. There is nothing at risk for Creator or creation in either of these positions. The former promotes this-worldly autonomy and the domineering of egocentrism; the latter promotes otherworldly escape and the dissolving into impersonality. Both these opposing positions are false; the truth is 'not this, not that.'

God creates humanity as a genuine Other. The Other is created through love, but this love has to open a wound in God, and has to open a wound in humanity.

'To have a heart' is to know the heartbreak in God and to know the heartbreak in humanity.

God of the heartbreak, God of the black grieving, God of the flaw in Love: this is the only true God.

The other 'gods' are idols.

2,

In creating, God takes a risk.

He risks what he creates, inherently: this is redemption as heaven on earth vs. earth as hell.

He risks himself to what he creates, inherently: God could end up walking the heavenly earth with us, or God could end up in our hell; God asks us to join the conjoint risk, to share its burden and its honour, to carry it together, to sweat, cry and bleed for it, together, in order to plant its spark and kindle its fire.

This conjoint venturing of risk, this sharing of burden and honour, this joint sweating and crying and bleeding, that is operative 'between' God and mankind, is 'passion.'

Christ is the extreme of passion, human and divine, because in him it is God making the decisive sacrifice to mankind, not just mankind making sacrifice to God.

All older religions of any validity knew sacrifice as the central lodge pole. But in earlier times, the earth is sacrificed to the Spirit. This is asceticism, this is morality, this is what we offer from ourselves, out of love for God. In Christ, the

Spirit is sacrificed to the earth. This is Passion's Nobility. The Greater suffers for the Lesser; the Greater carries the Lesser; the Greater pays for the Lesser.

Those who have reached passion in this most fiery sense are the ones who will be required to give more, lose more, plumb the human pain more, because they will have picked up the burden everyone else has put down. It is on our passion that the passionless lean.

The sacrifice of passion: I offer myself, at cost to my own fullness, to the other person.

Unless a seed goes into the ground and dies, it will not bear fruit.

3,

In the heart's depth is black inexplicable pain. In the black inexplicable pain is the God of the heartbreak.

The black pain reduces everything to nothing. Red fire is forged in a furnace of dead ashes.

It is only in the abyss of black pain, where the God of heartbreak dwells, that the red fire of passion is kindled. Thus for the life of passion, only two colours are sacred: black and red.

Passion takes on a Danger, and becomes a Venture.

Passion takes on a Gap, and becomes a Journey.

Passion takes on a Hardship, and becomes a Struggle.

Passion takes on an Unknown, and becomes a Leap into Mystery.

Passion takes on an Undetermined Outcome, and becomes a Battle.

Passion embraces the Deep, and becomes the action that stands on, and stands up for, the Truth upon which the heart is staked.

The red of passion throws off warm, bright colour, but emanates from a deep black.

In flamenco, this black in the red is 'duende.' In an interview with a newspaper [3 Feb 06], Cristina Hoyos 'points the inevitable finger towards her heart': "Flamenco comes from 'muy de dentro', very deep inside of you. And you can be a great, great dancer, perfectly poised, have a very sophisticated technique, but if your dancing does not give people goose pimples...it cannot be great flamenco." Duende is the power that electrifies the heart only when it is in the deep heart suffering and in the deep heart fight.

Passion binds itself to the killing ground where our sweat, tears, and blood are spilled.

4,

There is no hope. All hope is futile and vain.

There is something darker, more mysterious, more powerful.

There is the grieving, and there is the flame.

There is the God of the heartbreak who will not leave any heart alone, until it is in grieving and it is in flame.

God of the heartbreak: come now, and finish what you began.

5,

God creates through a wound opened by love.

In Eros, this wound is the soul's desire for God: God heals it by joining with the soul.

In the Daemonic, this wound is the heart's fervour for redeeming the world: God sacrifices his own and humanity's passion to it.

God of the heartbreak: God of the black grieving, God of the flaw in Love, God of the Suffering for Love, God of the Fight for Love, God of the Black and God of the Red.

This is the only true God.

II: DEEPENING

“The heart is but a small vessel; and yet dragons and lions are there, and there poisonous creatures and all the treasures of wickedness; rough, uneven paths are there, and gaping chasms. There likewise is God, ...the heavenly cities and the treasures of grace; all things are there.”

St. Macarios of Egypt

“The remembrance of death is the mother of wisdom.”

Desert Tradition

“Our pleasures are shallow, only our sorrows are deep.”

Cheyenne Indians

“So out of what you wrote about passion, I carried away this: We are moved by deep things, even though we are shallow.”

Letter from a friend

The Existential Stance, And the Two Errors in Buddha's Four Noble Truths

1,

I am often asked, how can you be existential and religious at the same time? Isn't the existential non religious? But I reply, if you understood the existential, you'd turn this question on its head. You'd see the real question is, how can you be existential without being religious?

The existential reveals the real God: the last 'god' we would ever chose, invent, seek.

2,

The existential stance asks us:

- to make spiritual sense out of our suffering position in the world [awareness of ontological insecurity],
- to feel free and responsible within this [will; existential choice],
- and to find meaning, value, and purpose, through this [passion; existential engagement and commitment].

'Our suffering position in the world' does not mean, simply, that we suffer now and again – or even that we suffer a lot of the time. It means something far more radical. It means something absolutely fundamental. Our very 'position' in the world 'inherently' subjects us to an 'inescapable fate' which is not simply full of suffering – suffering and joy both come and go, increase and decrease – but itself just is a suffering. This fate is 'a suffering' in the Old English sense of a befalling that we do not choose and cannot escape. It is not just that we suffer pain. We suffer unknowingness and uncertainty, risk, jeopardy, and danger, non guarantee, difficulty and hardship, paradox, ambiguity and contradiction, loss, sorrow, hurt. Our very 'situation' of being in the world entails having to accept, without choosing it and without any alternative to it, a condition of existence whose pain is inexplicable and cuts deep. There is a "host of shocks that flesh is heir to" in this condition of existence.

Different ways of describing 'the existential fate human beings suffer' are possible. Poetry is often preferable: existence is on an Edge where it can totter, in a Gap where it can prevaricate, at a Cross-Roads where it is torn; existence is stretched taut within a Koan, existence is broken on a Cross. I met a Jewish follower of Martin Buber who had been given a different way of putting it; humanity inevitably encounters in this existence:

- The Mysterious,
- The Meaningless,

- The Hostile,
- The Contradictory,
- The Unexplainably Warm and Giving.

The heart of our suffering position is hard to express, because it is mysterious and irrational, beyond all words, and even images hardly catch it; it is, 'the wound of existence', or 'the wound of the Daemonic.' We are shaken, moved, unseated, at the core of our being, once we wake to this suffering position we are in just by virtue of existing in this world. Buddha was ignorant of the suffering position that is the human lot, that is the human condition, until he broke free of the gilded palace where he had been protected from existence all his childhood, and suddenly encountered death, old age, sickness, and poverty.

Buddha, however, taught that a spiritual path could be walked that would end our suffering position of existing in the world. Many monastics in other religions, including some Eastern Orthodox Christian monks, would agree with him. Our suffering position is due to the loss of consciousness of our root in a spiritual reality, and attachment to the world's reality. Once we regain that lost root, by severing the worldly attachment, we will indeed be free from our suffering position.

The Jews embraced mankind's suffering position in the world – which includes the 'absent God', and the God who does not make sense to us and is indeed nothing but an affront to us – as spiritual in origin. Buddha's greatest moment was not when he sat under the tree for 40 days, and attained a problematic and incomplete enlightenment, but when his heart was moved by the existential condition he shared with all humanity, and he vowed both to join that condition and find a way to serve and help all humanity in it. This moment, of leaving the palace, was the heart of Buddha, the heart his subsequent mind of enlightenment did not fully recover.

The suffering position we are in becomes, in fact, not easier but harder, more inexplicable, more pained, if we realise that God placed us in exactly this existential situation. What kind of God would do this? Why did this God do it? For what end? For what point? For what meaning? Did this God dump us here, and go off to enjoy his unsuffering being, or is he here with us, to join the suffering? Why would he do that? Kierkegaard famously asked, 'who put me here?', 'for what reason?', 'why wasn't I consulted?', but I think that a religious existentialism, rooted in a this-worldly spirituality, actually cries out more strained questions than these... Part of our experience of existence's wound is that God does exist, but has inflicted this Daemonic wound on us. What God does that? It hurts more, not less, that there is a God and this God must be an existentialist: unlike any 'god' we can imagine, hope for, desire. The illusion we lose concerning the world and our existing in it is also the illusion we lose about God. The real God is 'the unknown God', and this God's unknownness is heartbreaking to every human being. David hinted at this cry of heart in all of us when in the psalms he uttered "deep cries to deep." This is why Kierkegaard

rightly said that faith is trusting in an ultimate absurdity; thus the person of faith makes a far greater leap into the dark than the atheist or agnostic.

The God that the human heart knows to have put us here is the absent God, and to bring this God closer is the ultimate existential adventure and existential folly. It is a sword that has pierced every heart. The Jewish-Christian 'fall of humanity' did not put us in this suffering position; the fall in fact constitutes our evasion, our flight, from it. In our fallenness, we foolishly think there is a way out [secular], a way above [spiritual], rather than embracing the undeniable existential revelation that confronts our heart day in and day out – there is only a way through, not any way out, not any way above, but this way through is not secured. It is not guaranteed, for us individually, for humanity collectively. Something in the heart says, you can get through, something else says, you can be lost on the way. Victory can be won from struggle, and it can really come to deadness and end in ruin. Nothing ventured, nothing gained: but there is no guarantee the venture will come through. If it does, it will be a close run thing. Such is the real truth of the Jewish and Christian 'heaven and hell.'

Whatever existential descriptions we use to try to evoke our existential fate, at the core it is a state of basic and irremovable insecurity, an un-secured state of being. Something is at stake, the heart knows. To care about it, to love it, is to stake oneself to its fate. Thus, the this-worldly spirituality calls for, and culminates in, sacrifice.

The 2 untruths in Buddha's 4-fold enlightenment are:

- [1] that humanity's suffering position in the world can be escaped, and
- [2] that the escape is via detachment from the world.

Buddha's own life gives the lie to these 2 errors – the day he left the palace his heart knew something his subsequent enlightenment would seem to have lost:

[1] humanity's suffering position in the world cannot be spiritually escaped, but must be spiritually embraced, and when it is, this changes the nature of that suffering but does not remove it – indeed, the suffering is intensified precisely in its existential meaning;

[2] when humanity's suffering position in the world is spiritually embraced, there is only detachment from that in the human heart which seeks escape from its Daemonic fate – fallen attachment is let go of, but this is replaced by a new and totally passionate attachment that binds one's own fate to the fate of the world.

This suggests, if the world goes down, I go down with it; only if the world comes through will I come through.

Heraclitus pointed to the real enlightenment when he said, "Those who are awakened are in the same world, but those who sleep are each in a separate world."

Jewish and Christian love for the world seeks not to escape, nor to falsely secure, the existential precariousness of the world, but to redeem it. The world is un-secured because it has no ground: it rests in a groundlessness. But it is this groundlessness that all ground rests in which allows, or better, forces the heart to step into the breach, and make that sacrifice whose tears, sweat, and blood, secure the ground over the abyss.

'Sufferingship' is 'passion' in Kierkegaard's Danish tongue. Our suffering position in this world is what sparks passion. We are to stay here, stake ourselves to what is at stake, and see it through. From this irrational, pained struggle, the real spirituality is kindled.

Passion moves through time, on the ground, over depth.

This is its fate.

But it is also the destiny of heroism, forged in the furnace of existence, so that it can reforge existence in the furnace of its heart.

Such is the real God; such is the human heart, an organ of fire, in which and through which God ceases being absent and enters the world.

Enters the world to make sacrifice, and by sacrifice to redeem.

PASSION AS ARISING FROM THE 'AFFECTED' CONDITION OF THE HUMAN BEING

1,

The human being is an affected being.

To be affected is to be subject to a fate we cannot escape which impacts upon us powerfully, like a heavy blow or a tender caress. Either way, we are reached at the core; either way, we are penetrated, touched, moved, in the living quick.

We cannot distance ourselves from this fate. We cannot place ourselves outside it, so as to look at it 'objectively.' We cannot place ourselves above it, so as to look down on it 'all encompassingly.' We are totally caught up in it. We are wholly given over to it. We are immersed in this fate. We are in it up to our necks, and over our heads, not able to get beyond it.

Therefore, we cannot feign neutrality towards it. We are at stake in it, and consequently we have a stake in how it turns out. We care which way it goes, because that impacts upon us totally.

From this fatedness is all human destiny carved out. There are different ways to respond to this fate. It can be for heaven or hell: it can make us deep and great, or it can lay waste to us and make us small.

At the smallest, affectedness makes us concerned only for what happens to us. We care what happens only to ourselves, or those few we identify with, rely on, belong to. Our 'care' is worry. At the greatest, affectedness makes us concerned for what happens to everything and everyone, including those strange to us, or even those who are enemies. Our 'care' is love. We care what happens, not just to ourselves or to our own, but to everything and everyone, simply because they too are at jeopardy, they too are in pain, they too must undergo loss. This is the spirituality of heart: we are moved by the suffering other to us such that to join with it, in order to help and make common cause with it, we will put ourselves at even profounder risk and expose ourselves to even profounder suffering. Our affectedness either shrivels us, closes us down and shuts us in, or expands us, opens us up and moves us out.

The same passion that arises from our affectedness can either be self-serving or self-giving, self-preserving or self-sacrificing, self-pleasing or self-emptying. The heart is the deepest or the most shallow, the greatest or the most small, a human being can be.

2,

Humanity has always sought a Tree of Knowledge by which to escape from the affected condition in which human Life is radically situated. 'Salvation by de-

situation' has always been through knowing. All that changes from culture to culture, from olden times to the present era, is the nature of that knowing. In the past, this knowledge needed to be metaphysical: philosophy transcends this world, by rising up toward an otherworldly perch from which to overview it, and comprehend it. At the present, this manoeuvre of 're-situating' takes a different form but is still operative: the aim of science is to separate the mind from the ground-level experience in order to stand back from it, explain it, and thereby be able to predict and control it. One abstraction is about getting free of this world, the other abstraction is about dominating this world. But both seek to be existentially impregnable, both seek to reach a position where existence cannot hurt the human being, by switching all awareness to the mind, and transferring the mind to somewhere at a safe and secure remove. The mind ceases to be able to attend to the experiencing that reveals how the human being is situated, and as a result becomes capable only of seeing, only of viewing, the world; the mind loses the capacity of getting close, of embracing, of being directly in touch with and touched by, what it meets on the ground. Seeing, or viewing, becomes indirect. It is at a distance. Its aim is to keep reality at a distance, metaphysically or scientifically, so as to reduce reality's impact. Nothing is directly encountered. A spectral or mentalised life, a life transferred to unreal spheres, takes over. This mutes the existential bite of existing in the world, but also robs the human being of any immediate access to the world. As this abstractionism increases, human beings become detached observers, not able to be involved participants. Nothing affects the person – but the person affects nothing.

Kierkegaard critiqued this use of the mind, whether metaphysical or scientific, as "thought without a thinker." The affected 'existent', the person, disappears, because the real nature of the meeting of this person and the world is abstracted away from. But Dostoyevsky saw the other side of this equation: the world in its vividness, in its paradox of fearfulness and wonder, the reality that is affecting, also disappears. As Dostoyevsky puts it, Idea becomes more real than Life. Idea irons out Life, and in the end, people prefer the Idea of Life to Life: "The cognition of life is superior to life, the knowledge of the laws of happiness – superior to happiness." This is why Dostoyevsky rejected the naturalism of the Western novel [materialism, and its offshoot naturalism, are another Idea put in the place of Life], and said of his novels: "I am merely a realist in the higher sense, that is, I portray all the depths of the human."

Dostoyevsky repeatedly attacked, through his stories, the 'unrealism' of a science too abstracted from the existential mess and conundrum of life on the ground in this world: positivist science created a pseudo psychology where questions of good and evil, life and death, meaning and absurdity, beauty and ugliness, were banished from their prominent place in human experience. But he also attacked a religion that was in its own way equally unrealistic: a religion falsely raised out of the existential cauldron, peddling answers and solutions that evaded it, rather than jumping into it. Interestingly enough, both a certain kind of science and a certain kind of religion provide an all too easy out, albeit in reverse ways.

Both Kierkegaard and Dostoyevsky foresaw, in the 19th century, the increasing abstractionism that would dehumanise and denude humanity of pith and juice and spark, in the 20th and 21st centuries. Like Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky protested against this Mephistophelean evil, the evil of the mind's ability to offer a false salvation through indifference to our fate. Such indifference is not, as it pretends to be, some superior mental state; it is simply the killing off of all consciousness and life below the neck that is in unbreakable dialogue with reality, and is forced to be real as a result.

My friend Karin Greenhead comments on the human result of abstractionism in this manner. "There is a lot of this about in church as well as in the world: the fear of knocking oneself off balance by experiencing or risking anything of any profundity. I wonder if westerners... cultivate a particular version of this that... goes with 'enlightenment' and wealth – they/we are very defended. People don't look out of their own eyes and engage with others without a wall, the gaze itself is a wall, whereas I am often struck by the immediacy of the gaze of many oppressed and third world peoples. Their souls seem to be more accessible to them and live with them at the skin's surface, not buried far behind, which is what I feel here."

In a letter to his brother, Dostoyevsky defends the need to regain the humanity lost to abstractionism: "Mankind is a mystery. It must be unravelled, and if it takes a whole life time, don't say it is a waste of time. I'm preoccupied with the mystery because I want to be a human being."

And Franz Kafka, in a letter to Oskar Pollak, dated January 27, 1904, put it like this: "I think we ought to read only the kind of books that wound and stab us... We need books that affect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us."

3,

The cost of escape either through metaphysical transcendence or through scientific control is to cease to have a heart. For unlike the mind, the heart is that in the human being which is totally nailed to the ground, and not able to flee the affecting condition in which it finds itself. The heart is that in the human being which takes the hit, and has to rise up to meet it, or go under to it. As in Act 5, Scene 7, of Macbeth, when all options have run out, and Macbeth says, "They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly, but bear-like I must fight the course", so the heart is bound hand and foot to the world where it has its life, being, and action. In this world the heart steps up, and takes its stand, or runs away and falls down.

The heart experiences the situation in which humanity is placed, and has to see it through to the end. For the heart, there is no way above; for the heart, there is no way around. For the heart, there is no way beyond. For the heart, there is only a way through, but this way can go either way, there is no guarantee how it

will turn out, it means taking a chance. Things are exposed to the hazard of harm, loss, ruination. This world is not secured.

The heart is existentially situated, and thus is inherently affected. To be an affected being is to be a being of heart. To be a non affected being is to be a being of no heart. But because heart rumbles beneath, whether acknowledged or not, the pretence of non affectedness is a sickening of heart, a loss of heart: an inability to keep faith with having a heart. Keeping faith with this, not running from it, not seeking spiritual or materialistic 'release' from our affected condition, is passion. Passion is what keeps faith with the heart, for it is generated precisely by what it must accept, and cannot change. In this sense, passion is love's muscle.

It is passion that must suffer and carry the affected condition of the human heart in this world. It is passion that goes with this, or flees it; breaks down under it, or comes through; leaps into it through faith or tries to cheat with it through inauthentic moves of false power. It is passion that is brave and generous toward 'the passible' condition of the heart, and of all the world, and of all things, beings, persons in the world like passengers in a single boat sailing over profound seas. For the world is placed in the care of the heart. Only if it lays its hands on us, can we lay our hands on it. The heart is both vulnerable and spirited, both malleable and open to influence, yet at the same time resolute and dedicated. The affected condition of the human heart is a thing of terror and beauty.

It moves us to behold it because it is what moves us in our depths, whether we face this or avert our gaze.

4,

The ascetic path of mystical religion, especially in its monastic form, is ambiguous on just this point of the 'passible.' At its best, it represents a purification of the passible nature of passion, to bring out its stance most true to heart. At its worst, and this is all too common, it seeks a type of 'dispassion' that jettisons the whole drama of passion in its existential relationship to the world. True dispassion is a kind of sifting, a kind of clarification, that separates wheat from chaff in passion, in order to carry forward passion's mission in the world less weakly and more strongly. Its self-control is a standing back from the shallow [conventional and normal], the deranged [neurotic and crazy], the evil [power mad], the toughened [hardened but heartless], in passion, in order to plunge in with the heroic [true], in passion. Here, stillness is the preliminary to action, and silence is the central turning point of the storm.

But, much monasticism, Buddhist and Christian, uses dispassion as a way to de-invest in passion, and thereby sever passion's attachment to the world. The sign of this is that neither passion, nor world, are regarded as 'spiritual.' The Impassible is preferred to the Passible, Contemplation is preferred to Action, Mysticism is preferred to Redemption. This is the Greek error. Though ancient

Greek culture had many figures tossed on the waves of heart passion, this invariably ended in tragedy; therefore Greek spirituality turned from the Dionysic toward the Apolline; and pursued Eros as love, eschewing the more difficult and disturbing love constituted by the Daemonic. The Eros of union with God is Greek; but the Daemonic passion of enworlded suffering and enworlded journey and battle, in order to follow in our passion's doing what God's passion is doing, in history, for the collective of all mankind, is Jewish.

Clearly not Jewish, and hence more Greek than Christian, is the remark of Theophan the Recluse: "We simply need to remind ourselves that God does not favour any kind of passion... Because of this, passion sets God against us and cuts us off from him" ['The Heart of Salvation']. This statement could not be more in error. It is the fallen passions, what Buddhism calls 'delusive cravings', that cut us off from God, but that is not because they are 'passionate', but because they are a failure within passion to hit its true mark. They are false to passion's real calling. Without the true passion, there is no human action in history and in the community that 'obediently', and 'faithfully', follows God's action in history and in the community. Theophan is recommending giving up on the human heart, whereas God's real spark in us requires us to use our heart. In action, we use our heart for God. God's Light is born in contemplation, but God's Fire is born in action. We can contemplate God's Fire, and be awestruck by its big heartedness of action in the world, for the world, but that is not enough; we must more irrationally trust God's Fire in our own human fire, in our own action: this is passion. Theophan is promoting the usual monastic mistake about passion, and hence promoting contemplation as more ultimate than action. For the Jews, it is the other way round: though the Old Testament is full of mystical and visionary revelations – like Plato's 'theoria' – these events enhance the collaboration between God and humanity. If the human passion does as God's passion does in the world process, this will unite the two hearts, divine and human. This is holiness; without passion there can be no holiness.

Consequently, all the heroes of the Old Testament were men and women of Daemonically anguished passion, and they had to wrestle in all the passible states the heart is capable of, which includes madness and criminality as failures of true heroism, as well as fanaticism as the failure of true righteousness and superstition as the failure of true loyalty. What could be farther from the monastic quiet of contemplation than the troubled and turbulent lives lived out to the full by the Jewish heroes of faith in the Old Testament? Passion has to pass through all these states, to sift wheat from chaff, to recover the true fire [heaven] from the raging and devouring flames [hell]. This is required, because the Jewish heroes remain committed to the world in a manner that the monastics do not, with notable exceptions like Mother Maria Skobtsova. It is no good purifying the heart, then remaining withdrawn from the fray. The monastic claim that a holy love arises automatically out of purification is misleading: the heart can be cleaned, but if it won't give itself wholly up to the buffets of the world that are the price of admission to the redeeming of the world, then 'house cleaning' will not spark the real passion, and in that case, the sifted state is worse than the un-sifted state. This is because a certain sort of quieted heart that loses the false attachment to the world also loses the true

attachment to the world, and thinks that heartless state of calm and clarity is 'spiritual.' It is not. St John Chrysostom once delivered a severe sermon to monastics, telling them they had no right to some spiritual peace outside the world, but had no other ultimate purpose in living monastically than to support those in the world, upholding them in their struggle.

It is necessary to break free of false attachment: this clears a path towards the true attachment. Purification has only done its job if it returns us to passion's most ardent attachment to the world.

Not surprisingly, it was in the very midst of these anguished wrestlings with heroism, with madness, with evil, with fanaticism, and with superstition, which were always turbulent and troubled in heart rather than 'cool, calm, and collected', that the Jews gave birth to the Messianic hope, the hope that the ultimate of passion will be the test God must endure, and the sacrifice God must make, to redeem the entire world. A God without passion, an impassible God, is a fiction of other-worldly metaphysics, and is not the true God revealed among the Jews. The true God makes humanity passionate because he is passionate. He created us a being of heart because he is a being of heart.

The paradox is, then: the Greeks could not see anything spiritual in the human tragedy of passion, whereas the Jews located spirituality no where else than in this tragedy. They not only accepted the pain and shouldered the burden, but they elected to go all the way with it. If the heart's tragedy cannot be redeemed, they will end up with egg on their face. If it is the heart's tragedy alone that can be redeemed, then their turbulent and troubled enworlded passion will finally be vindicated. The story the Bible tells is this journey and battle of passion in the world. It tells the story of all that the heart must undergo, by virtue of what the heart undertakes.

Our affectedness must remain in suspense because the end remains suspended between heaven and hell. My friend Andy Harmon's song states it as it is. "Who can say where love will take us, whether it will save or forsake us, but what else can we do?"

Passion is what rises from the heart to meet the 'passible' condition of human existence, and passes through it, to take it to the other side, and lose no one and lose no thing on the way, but redeem all. Passion is what rises from the heart to make a difference to what can turn out either way.

Passion starts where all knowledge, of any ilk, ends. It is an existential position which moves the human being to go beyond what is directly available, beyond what is readily understandable, beyond what is easily obtainable. Kierkegaard says of this paradox, it is the uncertainty in which everything finite is suspended that can generate an infinite passion in the human heart.

By having to dwell within limitation, passion is moved to go beyond all limit.

5,

A writer says of one of Dostoyevsky's most realistic novels: "Perhaps the key to understanding Raskolnikov is through [realising] that suffering is a means of enlightenment. He did not freely live in the desert eating roots and locusts to purify himself. Circumstances forced his suffering upon him, as they force suffering on most of humanity. What his suffering broke down was his egoism and its attendant rationalism."

Dostoyevsky foresaw that the growth of Rationalism also entailed a growth of Individualism, or as he often terms it, Egoism. The Mind becomes the fortress and defence for the isolate, lone Ego, which breaks not only with God, but also with nature and other people, in order to be 'free' to fulfil its gifts [Jung's 'Individuation'] and push its autonomy to a limitless potency [Nietzsche's 'Superman']. Another version of this Rationalist Egoism was the appeal to 'enlightened self interest' used to buttress the rivalry, and selfishness, of the capitalist societies evolving in the west. All this is the attempt to create what Dostoyevsky called 'the Man-God.'

Suffering can destroy the Rationalist Egoism, the utilitarian ethic, the Man-God. In Dostoyevsky's novels, only the acceptance of suffering takes us to the depth of the world, and to the depth of the human heart. It kindles a strange spark. We want to go into the belly of existence's dragon because that is where 'it is really happening.' That is where more than our own life is at risk= that is where everyone and everything is at risk, and where our passion is required, to make the difference. This is the irrational step, from our depth into existence's depth, through a wound; we know this step in its absence as the oldest pain deep in the heart, and we know it in its presence as the different way of meeting that pain which promises a changed ball game for everything and everyone.

This step, of joining the suffering of the world through one's own suffering, is the ultimate kindling of passion. This carries the sense of breaking through to a new land of heart.

My step daughter Anita Harmon, who is a practicing Buddhist, once wrote me: "When you speak of heart I have always felt that you mean what I mean by 'commitment', the crazy kind of commitment that won't let go, give up, or avoid fate, no matter what. As you say, it is the kind of commitment that says, 'if you go down I'm going down with you.' And I think this is what you feel about God. He's going all the way no matter what. Of course this commitment comes from the heart because it is all about courage, and non rational unconditional love. No sane person would do it. Even the spiritually wise might well shudder at it. So it is a sort of holy fool position, who says it's not enough for me to be OK, redeemed, unless you are too, and if you can't be, or won't be, I'm going down with the ship, with you."

This is the crunch. Suffering may open us, and humble us, taking us across a frontier only the broken reach. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those

who mourn. But suffering may also create the sinking ship, because we can't, or we won't, accept it.

6,

There is a place where all human beings really live. This is the heart.

There is a place where all human beings are suffering. This is the heart.

Heart is what is affected.

Heart is affected because it is placed at the centre of the dilemma, the predicament, the paradox, of existence. This is the koan for which there is no solution.

This is the place where the heart really lives.

This is the difficult place. This is the sticking place.

Here the heart has to accept suffering as what is, but this fate is onerous and an ordeal. Thus everything the heart can say about what it is struggling with is poetry, which comes out of a silence where words fail.

There are no words that can really voice the heart's affliction, its apprehension and agony, about what it has been given and what it has failed.

The pain in the heart that is deep in every human being is beyond any words because the hope and despair are so terrible, so wrenching, so beyond imagining. Everything that can be said about the heart, and the passion with which it seeks to accept, and undergo, come through, and act nobly toward, its existential fatedness, is inarticulate.

The heart in us is sore because the pain that is deep in the heart is very old, and implacable. Nothing can remove it. Nothing can fix it. Nothing can change it. It is what it is. It just is what is. Because of it, if we listen to the heart in us, we hear crying. We hear a crying so old and so deep, it has exhausted all words. It comes out in the most nerve jangling screeching of Antonios Dalgas in Rembetiko, and in the sorrowing of the earth carried like a stabbing pregnancy in the voice of Nina de los Pines in flamenco. Nothing is more deeply believed by the human heart than God's heartlessness. Academic theologians are relieved to abstract themselves safely into the mind, to evade it. Scientists and materialists glory in trying to prove God does not exist, to evade it. Consumerism eats and drinks itself to the glut of death, to evade it. Western converts to Buddhism say it is possible to have a religion without any theistic God, to evade it. The sensation-seeking adventurers live for today and forget tomorrow, to evade it. The street thugs swagger and bully the weak, to evade it. The philistines keep to the busy everyday surface, to evade it. The fashionable follow glittering but hollow celebrity, to evade it. The religious worship churchiness, or turn moral struggle into Satanic accusation, or turn ascetical

discipline into other-worldly Mephistophelean angelizing, and Luciferian superiority, to evade it.

Everyone is evading the heartbreak so old and deep, it cannot be evaded, only covered over, hidden away, buried where it should not be found. This is the belief God has no heart, and even if he did, it is powerless to make any difference. We prefer to believe, in our heart, 'there is no God' rather than facing what we really believe about the God who forged the human heart, binding its sinews in tension and suspense before he released his hold upon it, and it began to beat. We know him in the heart. God has left too great a mark on us, in the heart, where we really live, in our suffering, for any abstractions of mind or any consolations of soul to work. The heart knows the heartbreak. We know God made our heart to beat and we also know we cannot believe in this God in the heart where it matters. In the heart, this God has either chickened out, a long time back, or even if he is still around, he is too weak, too powerless, to make any dent. But the other side of it is that neither do we believe in our heart, for we know it has either chickened out, a long time back, or even if it is still around, it is too weak, too powerless, to make any dent. We are in abject despair, about the God we do not believe in because not believing in him means we cannot believe in the human heart he made like his. Over both God and the human heart there lies a curse.

Yet, in this extreme despair is the possibility of turn around, where we know something else without any voice.

Passion is that in the human heart created by God to embrace and enter the place of dilemma, predicament, koan, cross-roads, and see to the end what its paradox is for.

Christ is universal because he addresses this place, and makes the decisive change there, for all human beings.

Christ, only Christ, shows God has a heart for what he has made, by putting God's unwavering passion where human passion falters. This is the Cross of Christ.

Christ goes into it fully and Christ goes all the way through it, so we can do the same.

Passion cannot see in advance, passion cannot understand, but must just live out to the full and to the end, the paradox most severe of all: in passion's heroic encounter, we must lose to win, fail to succeed.

The vindication of human passion is the vindication of the divine passion that created it, that marked it, that scorched it, in spiritual fire.

DUENDE 2 = THE 'BATTLE ON THE RIM'

PREAMBLE

What follows is a shortened version of a lengthy letter to a friend that engages with Lorca's two essays on 'duende', and then wrestles with a new insight concerning its meaning. This came to me as I read these essays, and listened again and again to Lorca's own selection of the flamenco artists he thought most possessed by the spirit of duende. I realised that duende is the point where east and west meet, the point where Oriental impersonality is overcome yet not replaced by the occidental ego; the real meaning of the 'ex-stasis' of the 'personal' is revealed in what Lorca calls 'the battle on the rim.' This clarifies the hidden drama behind statements such as these= Tia Anica la Pirinaca – "When I sing as I please, I taste blood in my mouth." Felix Grande – "These songs, to be born, must come from the singer after fighting his own voice and falling into an ecstasy... that will draw everyone around him into a vortex of feeling, ...surging down the dark line that runs from nothingness to nothingness through life." Jose Moneleon – "Flamenco is tragedy in the first person."

Dear John,

It may be too late for any further quotation on duende for the new book you are writing, but having read Lorca over this Christmas, I am moved to send you some more of his material, and my attempt to enter into dialogue with it. Lorca's essays on deep song grab a person at the level on which duende exists, well below the neck, and his Gypsy poems convey it with even more power. Though not explicitly religious, he has none the less grasped the essential 'heart' of the human condition out of which our deepest spirituality must emerge, or be lost forever; duende is make or break for the profoundest spirituality, the spirituality of the heart... Duende is nothing to do with Nous [what Lorca calls the 'angel' of light, who gifts us with seeing]. Duende is nothing to do with Soul [what Lorca calls the 'muse' of beautiful form, which gifts us with harmony]. Duende is an ecstatic and twisted agony, a flamenco dance and fight with the cape against the horns of the nameless dark force, "on the rim." Duende is to do with the heart, it is the break-down or break-through moment for the passion of the 'deep heart.' Lorca says this duende can only be awakened "in the remotest mansions of the blood." All religions which transcend duende are using what they term 'spirituality' to climb out of the heart, and escape the heart's destiny: to be bound hand and foot to the world, so that however much its spirit began in the sky, it ends subject to the earth. In the duende, the spirit in the heart cannot rise above, but must carry, the weight of the earth, and it must undergo and be affected by, riven by, shorn and torn by, everything that the flesh of the earth is 'heir to' – it is either simply killed by this, or killed and resurrected from it. Duende is what happens to the heart when its passion is staked to the ground, and there is no running away. We are in a room from which there is no exit, and the floor of this room is poised over an unfathomable abyss. Everything

'worldly' is a protection racket designed to cover up that abyss. The "bitter root" of human existence is "the pain which has no explanation." Duende reminds us it is too late to protect ourselves.

But no one accepts it. No one wants to face it. Our light shuns its darkness, our happiness shuns its pain, our rationality and control shuns its irrationality and vulnerability, our calmness shuns its trouble. Thus duende becomes, as Lorca says, identified with the disreputable, the derelict, the soiled: its natural abode seems to be that of the drinking tavern, the brothel, the gambling den, the gutter – it is not allowed into the polite drawing room, the intellectual academy, the pious church. But in fact, duende dwells in the most awful and sacred temple of the human heart; that is why all these 'despoiled' locales are in fact the faces of the gods guarding that hidden temple. Rightly have many authentic spiritual traditions claimed that the heart is not ordinarily accessible to us, and must be searched for if ever it is to be truly lived. The duende is the only way in to the heart. Duende encompasses two things: passion, and the woundedness of passion. "The black pain in the deep heart" is what relocates us superficial, formulaic, safety-seeking, invulnerability-wanting humans in that heart which is terrible and wonderful at once. This is what we most want and what we most resist; we flee it and are drawn to it. But when the duende seizes us, it knocks us off the fence, and plunges us in. In short, it destroys our prevaricating by destroying our life, destroying our heart. It invades. This is but the first of its blessings.

Duende is identical to 'the wound inflicted by the Daemonic God.' Lorca was also aware of this link to the old Greek understanding of the Daemonic [not demonic, but equally, not angelic]: "The duende resembles what Goethe called the Daemonic." Only the duende stops church from becoming churchy, the ultimate protection racket. We lose God in the duende, not only the churchy god of authority and security but equally the mystic's god of ecstasy without agony, and light without darkness. Yet at stake in the duende is the stark contrast between there being no god at all, and a different God- – the truly 'unknown God' the Greeks acknowledged. This unknown God – not yet found, and lived by us cowardly Christians – is the God whose spirit is born only in the earth, through the pain and loss of the earth. This unknown God – not yet tested in us nor proved by us – is the God only raised to heaven from hell. In the duende, it is only the absent God who can become the God who is present, truly 'with us' because he dwells in the abyss of the human heart, and is only released upon the world by this human heart. This is the mystery and paradox of the duende.

1,

F. G. Lorca, born in 1899, was executed by fascist thugs in Granada in 1936. He was just 37 years of age. Had he lived longer, he may have gone further in understanding duende from the existential rigours of his own life; the amazing body of work he left may not have pronounced his last word on it. Yet there is something right about his account stopping just where it did: it captures forever the crucial and central core of the lived experience of duende, which is that of

being stretched on its rack. In Granada two rivers, one of tears and one of blood. In the duende, we are immersed in the in-between.

I want to take a further step, but it is an arrow only shot from the bow Lorca's poetry and essays draw so taut: "...deep song knows neither morning nor evening, mountains nor plains. It has only the night, a wide night steeped in stars. ...It is song without landscape, withdrawn into itself and terrible in the dark. Deep song shoots its arrows of gold right into our heart. In the dark it is a terrifying blue archer whose quiver is never empty."

We are not only deepened by accepting this, but we are also drawn into a fight where we do not simply passively submit, but actively wrestle with fate: "The true fight is with the duende."

We are in a drama, and it is not only that we do not know, cannot know, 'how it will turn out', we also do not know, cannot know, 'what is at stake in it.' Its tension cripples us and makes us electric; thus we only know what is at stake must be at once terrible, yet immense. The tension twists us out of any rational, balanced shape; its very intensity makes us ugly to behold, too stark, too naked, too extreme. Yet this very tension of anguish and yearning moves us deep within, and readies us to move outwardly to make some action in the drama required of us and crucial to it.

'Drama' and 'action' have the same root meaning in Greek. The strangled cry of the human heart is also the shout that is the prelude to action, action in a drama, action on an edge, action in a gap, action within a Koan and on a Cross, action stretched to breaking point and released, to explode outward into the world. Action electric, action charged with energy, because the drama contains something that electrifies all who are caught up in it. Not by sunlight, still less by artificial light bulbs, is this drama illumined; only lightning tearing the veil of night lights up its mystery, its dark deep, and candle flame, and the slight shift in the air in the hour of the wolf that heralds the dawn. A dawn is coming, but it has not arrived. We sense the dawn in a subtle shift which we feel, sense, even hear, before it can be seen. This dawn cannot be rushed. It may leave us in the in between for what feels like a time that does not end, a time endlessly suspended. Yet this is the time for us to act. If we fail the tension, if we waste the intensity by refusing the tension, we will feel regret. Regret we did not use the time. It was our time. It was the time of our action. If we fumbled our action, and withdrew from the drama, it is as if we refused our part in its story. Refused to be moved by it and thus unable to move it along, as it asked from us: play your part, do not demand to know the whole, the whole is not yours to know or command, only play your part, because only by that do you serve the Whole.

In flamenco's deep song, duende comes with arrows, a knife, and zig-zag lightning. It comes with electricity. It brings danger, and threat, and some indescribable aggressiveness; the threat is aggressive, yet the energy it raises up to meet it, the energy strung tightly and released by it, is equally aggressive. Lorca tells of a flamenco contest in Andalusia won by an old Gypsy woman. Her rivals were young, beautiful women dancers and singers, full of angelic

effortless grace and the muse's fluid, attractive movement. The old woman took the stage, and performed one gesture= she threw her head back, and in an explosion, raised her arms. Then she stood and stared. The audience was silent. When their stunned quiet passed, they erupted in chants of ole! Duende had come.

The spirit of duende is hugely threatening: the Daemonic God is not nice, not reasonable, not decent, not negotiable. He has come to put us in a drama not of our making or choosing, a drama he imposes on us. In this drama, the hero never wants to act, and has to be 'forced by circumstance' into action. Yet, it moves us inside our guts and bowels and marrow of our bone as nothing else. It needs only to make the slightest gesture, and we are riven, electrified, awakened: as if the rest of our life we had been asleep, dreaming, drifting, vacant, and this was the moment we were waiting for, the moment of encountering our destiny. The old woman didn't pout and strut, she didn't in the least dramatise herself; nor did she just explode in anger. She acted with exquisite self control, and timed her move. She opened herself to the duende and let that dramatic, threatening, endangering spirit place her on the edge. Her leap, followed by her stand in silence, brought electricity. The drama was set. The time for action was invoked. The issue at most fundamental risk in life, the hidden issue most powerfully and dangerously at stake, was suddenly and dramatically present. She did no more, this was enough. Everyone recognised that the human heart they all were bearing and enduring had ascended the rim of the well, to act in the drama darkest and deepest to this existence: the deep dark well that can be glimpsed and felt only on the rim, the well of death and life, the well of forgetting and remembering, the well of nullity and flowering. For the drama fights on the rim of the well. If the fight is lost, the well swallows all. If the fight is won, the well renews all.

It is not just that the true fight is with the duende; the duende contains the true fight for everything. The danger, yet aggression, electric in the duende is to fight the true fight, the fight of God on the rim of the well, the fight of humanity on the rim of the well. The fight in the deep dark. The fight in the heart.

The fight which is the destiny of the heart in this world; the fight for which it was born, the fight to which it is summoned.

If this fight were merely for evil ends, it would have no drama so charged in its depth and dark. If the fight were only for the ego, its consumptive greed, its posturing vainglory, its ambitions and achievement motive, again the drama of 'whether the ego gets what it wants or not' would be lit up with no lightning. In much music and story telling these days the attempt is made to inject drama into it, but usually this fails; one gesture by an old Gypsy woman contains more drama than all these heated up and overheated attempts will ever reach.

Passion is warm, but keeps its cool.
Emotion is cold, but blows hot.

Nor is the drama of duende present in the religious ethos of the 'fight of good against evil' in Western dualism. It is not difficult to hear with one's own ears and heart that the combative and triumphalistic martial music of dualism is as far from the fight with and the fight in duende as it is possible to get. Duende creates existence's 'true fight'; and for many fundamental reasons, that fight cannot be captured in the ethos of purely 'Western' culture and spirituality. But equally, duende is absent from the ethos of the culture and spirituality of a 'pure' Orientalism. The metaphysics of oneness, of monism, of unity with God, or unity with nature, permit no fight. In the Far West: the wrong fight. In the Far East: no fight. Sufi ecstatic music, and the Qaw'wali of Pakistan, are closer to flamenco: their ecstatic yearning for and opening out to God is neither dualist nor monist, for it implies a separation yet the possibility of a union between God and humanity. But the ecstasy of Sufi, and Qaw'wali, do not have the fight, with its electric drama, that exists in flamenco. They have neither the pained ecstasy, the ecstatic agony, nor the threatening, dangerous, aggressive force held in tension and generating dramatic intensity in flamenco. Yet flamenco came from the East and went west; its parentage is wholly Oriental. In this paradox lies hidden the revelation about duende.

Duende needs a certain kind of Oriental element and a certain kind of Western element. It is the east of the West, or the west of the East= an east moving westward, and a west looking eastward. Duende dwells in between east and west, strung out on an almost invisible thread that links them.

Scholars may nowadays dispute Lorca's origins of flamenco in precise detail, but again, whatever the literal specifics, his account contains a more subtle precision. He believes three Oriental religious traditions nurtured the rise of flamenco: the Gypsy music of Hindu India, probably Rajasthan; Eastern Orthodox Christian liturgical chanting in the Greek Byzantine church of Asia Minor; the Islamic music that the Arabs brought with them in their march westward into southern Spain. All of this is sacred music, yet 'indigenous music' that comes directly out of the experience, the sorrows and joys, of 'the people.' As such, this music does not recognise the distinction between sacred and secular which has come to define the West since the European Enlightenment.

The invisible thread that created the paradox of flamenco's duende starts in the east [Hinduism], then gathers momentum in the middle east [Greek Christianity, and Arab Islam], before passing through Egypt and North Africa into Andalusia. What is this 'east' of the duende? Why is it important?

Lorca comes close to stating it in his comparisons of Islamic poetry, especially Hafiz in Persia [but the same would most probably hold for Rumi in Turkey], with Gypsy cante jondo lyrics. The point could be stated more musically. The 'Orientalism' needed as the parentage of flamenco is the ecstatic quality heard in Hindu, Byzantine, Islamic music. There is in this ecstasy an opening of the finite toward the Infinite. Qaw'wali can be the key example; this music is, in its ecstasy, self-transcending and joyful, even at times rumbustious. As the word ecstasy says in its Greek meaning, we are taken out of the self, beyond the self. In ecstasy, the human is moved out of itself and in movement toward the

divine: the divine is pulling the human toward itself, as St Gregory of Nyssa describes. The joyousness, indeed celebration, in this kind of ecstasy is the experience of the human's destination in the divine: the finite is being drawn in to the Infinite. This is a mysticism of mankind's 'return to God', or the revelation that our real root is in God.

It is also, especially in Byzantine and Islamic traditions, a mysticism of God as the lover and humanity as the beloved. There is awe, worship, gratitude, devotion, hope, élan, in such music. But there is no pain of the kind which flamenco has. Yet, there is a hint, a beginning, of such pain in the yearning in this ecstasy. This yearning implies separation, postponement of union. Thus a motif in Islamic mystical poetry is often God's hiddenness, a crucial and even more pronounced aspect of Judaism. But the Islamic lover of God often yearns for God as any human lover longs for their beloved, and suffers the disappointment of ecstasy's union not being consummated. The union is possible, indeed the very foundation of human life, yet it is not direct, not straightforward. Even in the most mystical Islam, God is a lover but a difficult lover. Somehow the possibility of union, so close, must remain far off. Pain starts creeping in to this. Yearning, desire, ardour unfulfilled, hurt the lover who cannot be in ecstatic union with the beloved. Thus a paradox opens up here, which becomes in other climes a veritable chasm: God calls us, draws us, we have tastes and touches of real unity, but union as such is not yet. To yearn for ecstatic union, to feel it and taste it and touch it yet not be able to realise it: this is the fate of the lover of God, who is also the beloved of God. This is not because of sin; thus it cannot be fixed by purity or enlightenment. Created for marriage with God, yet the soul waits for the divine bridegroom. Like Eros with Psyche in the ancient Greek story, he comes, then goes away. He is gained, then lost. There is some bigger, but hidden, ontological reason why we cannot go back to God, return to God, in happiness. God wants it, but not yet. Why the delay?

Certainly, in ecstatic mysticism the Infinite transcends the finite, and cannot be reduced to its categories. Ecstasy is apophatic, not cataphatic, a way of negation, not a way of positive affirmation. But the ecstatic Love that creates a marriage of union between Infinite and finite cannot ever be impersonal: it is no melting, no death of small into Large, no ontological disappearance or extinction of the personal into the Impersonal. An Infinite which is, in Lorca's Moorish image, 'an ocean of Love', is not an Impersonal divinity that swallows up all personalness of humanity, such that the tiny drop fades away in the vast sea. Ecstasy tells us this scenario will never happen. Union is not ontological dissolving. It is neither dualist nor monist, but 'non-dual.' It unites but holds a distinction; therein is its joy, a joy of meeting and sharing and interpenetration.

This ecstasy contains two elements crucial to the development of flamenco: [1] it accepts an ontological distinctness of God and humanity [Creator and creature], and [2] discovers the beginnings of pain in their love relationship, through the acceptance of some kind of deferred marriage, creating the tension of an intense yearning that strains after this union and wants it to come quicker, and more straightforwardly, than God will allow it to do. Even the Oriental

musical scale accentuates this yearning, for unlike the Western scale which has balance and thus closure, the Eastern scales are incomplete, lack closure, and thus always open out to something beyond. They strain after resolution, but it is not attained.

Yet for all this, the parental ecstatic Oriental music does not contain the immense anguish and black pain, nor the drama that accompanies this, present in its flamenco offspring. Indeed, some Oriental ecstatic music is without pain of any kind= it confidently aspires to and celebrates the coming union of the human with the divine. In other examples, there is pain starting to come in. The personal cannot resolve its dilemma just by being swept up in God= there is some reason, not disclosed, why it must wait, on earth, through time. The betrothed awaiting the bridegroom= the union is not yet. God intends the union, but not at the beginning, only at the end. What comes in between matters, even though it puts the marriage entirely at risk. Joy: height. Suffering: depth. The union is rejected in the height, and made subject to depth.

This, then, is the secret of the literal and spiritual geographic route of flamenco going from east to west. Without the ecstatic opening out toward, and encompassing sense of, the Infinite, inherited from the Orient, the cry of pain in flamenco would just be the complaints of our small, finite being, and as such, would lose depth. It would be mere 'complaining', and it would mean little somehow. If the finite were 'all there is to it', if the personal were just some egoic boil on the ass of a vast, indifferently constituted cosmic elephant, then its little complaints would have no power.

This is why duende is absent in the West, even in Johnny Cash and the Blues, which come closest. The west has lost all Oriental ecstaticness, through rationalism, puritanism, capitalism. Its radical pursuit of individualism imprisons the individual, and so when this individual cries out, all he expresses is missing out on his share of the pie. There is no depth or drama in this. Why? Because in the cosmic scale of things, the individual doesn't matter. All his individualistic, egoic, self-oriented, sufferings are simply petty: he didn't get what he wanted, life isn't fair, he dreamed of infinite pie but got less than he aimed at. So what? An individual, living on the surface of life, contained wholly by the parameters of materialism, is a being of no passion, and this being's fate does not move the heart. Any heart. His heart. Your heart. My heart. Our modern tragedy is we have no tragedy. We laugh about this, pretending to immense sophistication and irony, but post-modernism's laugh is hollow, its sneer empty. Its heart too is just another pig feeding at the trough, getting more and more empty the more it fills up.

The ecstatic dimension is necessary to flamenco, even though flamenco's ecstaticness is a 'scorched yearning', as a friend put it in Lorca vein; an agonised ecstaticness, born of pain in the heart, deep pain, pain about what is deep.

In going West, height is subjected to depth. Joyfulness is subjected to grief. Light is extinguished in darkness. What we seek has to be lost to be found;

given away to return. The lovers have a task in the depth before they can be reunited in the height.

In going west, flamenco did not simply confront the depth as the pained root of the relationship between Infinite and finite. In doing this, it also discovered a new value that the Infinite places on the finite. The sufferings and raptures of the finite suddenly matter, to an unbearably and unendurably moving degree, because the Infinite has to be incarnated, or embodied, in the finite through the finite's heart= its freedom to accept or refuse passion. Here emerges the finite as hero [existential courage], and as sinner [existential cowardice], because the finite is allowed by the Infinite to either co-operate with or block the hugeness of the Infinite's coming in and through its 'small' heart. The drama requires both Infinite and finite in a perilous dance, and fight, right on the rim.

God will not unite with humanity except through the duende.

Thus the duende is God's foolish, or foolishly wise, risk of 'the personal.' The unique personal heart is all that stands between heaven or hell coming to earth, rising from the depth, through the soles of our feet.

2,

In the ecstasy of joy, God is make or break for humanity.
In the ecstasy of suffering, humanity is make or break for God.

Vamos ya!

The Spanish call death "the Intruder." Though much of the rest of Europe adopted in the wake of the enlightenment a bland optimism, a kind of glibness and facileness in the face of the 'abiding' sadness of human things, Spain has never been able, or wanted, to remove the constant, uneasy sense of the Intruder loitering near by. He may be banished from polite company, and even mocked in the well-lighted drawing room, teaching hall, or laboratory, but in the darkness at the margins he forever lurks. 'The margins' are where the human heart is most open to, and defenceless toward, every gaping hole in existence that has the power, whether literally or spiritually, to 'kill' us. These margins exist in every single person, but also are visible in the groups of people 'pushed to the margins' in an entire society. The outcasts, the bereft, the lost, the poor, are all rejected, feared, denigrated, attacked, because they carry the mantle of the tremors and terrors of the Daemonic depth of existence which ordinary people, successful people, the bright and beautiful and powerful, will not 'own.' Those who suffer explicitly have to suffer not only on their own account, but for those who won't suffer, like the Jewish scapegoat sent into the desert, burdened with the people's failings, so that they need never confront them either inside themselves or spread throughout society. Existential vulnerability aches too fiercely; it is unacceptable, and that is why passion is disavowed as immoral, crazy, or intemperate. To be passionate, we must be vulnerable to existence's wound. Only suffering gives depth.

Somehow, the Intruder in Spain is charged with a metaphysical significance both horrendous and decisive for everything of ultimate value. In his faceless and nameless person – I awoke to him once in Crete on a moonlit night, standing in the doorway onto the balcony, peering at my sleeping body – is constellated the whole drama of the heroism and poignancy of the frail human vessel, destined either to embody something unimaginably vast, or to really founder, come to the end of its venture, smashing on rock at the bottom of the chasm. This feeling of death, its tragedy yet its strange spiritual necessity, is impossible in cultures that have given up on any ultimate importance for humanity, and this world, and have placed all importance in God: death is reunion, and thus liberation from a veil of tears. Equally, there is neither numinous fear, nor mercy and tenderness toward the little vessel, in cultures where nature is the only God, and life and death is but a natural cycle like the leaf leaping up and falling back. The Spanish fascination and horror toward death, like that in existentialism, encompasses both meanings of the old English word awful: there is awe in death, and real awfulness. Thus a new spiritual meaning marks this Intruder. “The duende only comes if death is a real possibility”; but it is death in this haunting guise, as the enabler and the killer of something the human heart ventures.

It is because of this peculiar meaning of death – a meaning not as a matter of interpretation but part of death’s Intruding Presence – that the heart has not only passion but also pathos. This venture of the human heart both passionate and pathetic is ‘personal.’ It is the personal which is called to action, to risk and loss for the sake of something at stake and requiring its action, in a drama played out only on the rim where death awaits the slightest false move, and at the same time generates the most exquisite poetry and the most electric power.

But the personal is not the individual. Personalness is neither the Oriental return of the human to God, nor the Western assertion of the human as an end in itself cut off from God. Personal is not the individual dissolved, nor the individual accentuated. Person is ‘in relation.’ Person is ecstatic. Thus the personal refers both to the unique, particular, singular, unrepeatable person, and to the community of persons living together. Though each particular person contends with their own death in the duende, ‘the people’ as a communal reality are also immersed in this wrestling. Hence deep song is indeed always the ‘voice’ of the whole body of mankind, especially when such a communal body honours its root in the earth, and creates no division between tower and pit, preferred and marginalised, insider and outsider, because all the people are aware of being in the exact same dilemma. Yet, in particular persons, not standing apart from the communal, but none the less distinct and alone, the real intensity of facing death in the duende is made apparent; certain ‘exemplary’ persons seem able to reveal what everyone is battling, at depth. This utterly particular personal quality, within the universal dilemma of all, is precious. Lorca’s duende was precious to his; yours is precious to yours; mine is precious to mine; I am listening constantly, currently, to El Lorenzo Pepe Nunez, and to La Paquera de Jerez, and being riven by something particular in the voice and heart of this particular man and this particular woman. These particularities are not divided off from the universal, the common, but articulate

it in different ways that reveal the universal, the common, more strikingly. Anyone who loves flamenco is honouring the long history, wanderings, and survival of oppression and murderous attacks of the Gypsies [Hitler exterminated many Gypsies simultaneously with the Jews]. There is even a valuable difference in the duende of one culture as compared with another.

But neither of these senses of personal really fully capture this term. The passion of the heart is risked or withheld, hoped of or despaired in, given away or retained, as a personal deed of the heart. It is the heart's deed in existence that is ventured. This deed is personal because it is something a heart must 'do' or not 'do', and this deed is done on the rim, and it is done by some-one, and it is therefore always down to them whether it gets done or is funky.

In the duende, the personal is trusted and put at risk: this is the death always haunting the heart's deepest, truest, most passionate action.

What we hear in the music that has duende – which we cannot hear in either the joyful ecstasy of the Orient nor in the self-preoccupied little triumphs and disappointments of the caterwauling self-sufficient individual – is something new and utterly shocking, something heartening yet paralysing, something that alters all cosmic order, and turns moral niceties upside down.

We hear the real edge, the real danger, the real at-stakeness, in the real drama of existence.

We hear a new spiritual situation. We hear ecstaticness, but an ecstasy of a new kind. It risks the personalness of the heart's passion, not only as the ultimate relationship of God and humanity, but also as the foundation for saving or losing the whole world.

At last, the human heart, with all to play for, has ascended the life and death stage commensurate with its fragility and its nobility.

Ole!

3,

The duende is harshly realistic, full of sadness, and a cosmic loneliness. This "loneliness without rest", as Lorca called it, is not just because we are fallen, cut off from God. On the contrary, it is the very precondition of God's new approach, not through height but through depth, not through light but through dark, not through eternity but through time. It is all on a slender thread which could snap at any second. But this slenderness is the crucial linchpin by which depth raises up a new height, dark illumines a new light, time incarnates a new eternity. Fallenness merely obscures this. A friend wrote me today of a dream, in which to right and left, the devil raised up colours to persuade him to abandon his wounds. His wounds were in the centre and constituted his path ahead. That 'left and right' is fallenness. Our wounds belong to God: were there no ecstatic dimension in existence, there would be no such wounds. These

wounds however are severe, real, grave; they either destroy us, or they create through death a new kind of ecstasy, 'the ecstasy of the personal.' The ecstasy of the God who suffers for humanity, and the ecstasy of the humanity who suffers for God. The ecstasy of God's heart in man, and the ecstasy of man's heart in God. For, God and humanity will only finally be joined in the duende common to their tortured but passionate relationship.

Only in death, life.

Only in the black pain, the final joy of victory.

The duende is the suffering and struggle of the personal= this is its agonised ecstasy, its going beyond itself. It is compelled, and moved, and summoned, to do this for the sake of what is at stake in all of existence. Only its tears, its sweat, its blood, is the seed that fertilizes the rocky and barren ground poised over the chasm.

Only in time, eternity.

Only in strife, the peace that passes all understanding.

Lorca echoes this paradox, in which death raises the personal to its supreme importance and yet threatens to extinguish it utterly, in all his writing. In fact, we face death because we are going to lose the fight on the rim next to the abyss. But, though we must lose to death, and let it truly extinguish the personal, in another more strange and hidden sense, the meaning of this rests on how we face and fight death: how we die, which is really what we die for. The manner of our death is crucial. This led to the insight that suddenly seared my heart over Christmas. The duende calls for a sacrificing of the personal that, alone, secures existence at depth. Each death is for all.

Lorca doesn't make this as explicit as I am doing here, but to me it is implicit in all he says about death and the nature of our battle with, and final loss to, the Intruder on all our schemes, petty hopes, and wishful dreams. For Lorca scorns the recklessness of those who seek death, as a way of ending the tension: they squander the intensity on the edge. Equally, he has no respect for those who die idly in bed: they relax and by this never gather the energy needed for heart action. In the eleventh round, after the wounds of our existence in this world have for all intents and purposes finished us, we get up to come out for the 12th and last round. The duende summons us to die on our feet, in that life and death moment, that oddly elongated time which stretches out endlessly yet is over in a flash, that time the Greeks call *kairos*, when all is lost yet there is still everything to play for. This is when the truest spirit in the passion of the deep heart makes its truest, most exquisitely and achingly vulnerable and most aggressively and generously bold, heartrending move. This is the time when everything can change in the deep. This is the time when God makes his move and the human heart moves only to that. This is the moment of final defeat for everything that truly matters, or the moment when redemption has come.

Thus, death has to be challenged. What one writer calls the grey, anonymous death that just overtakes us, as we run away, must be overcome. To die well

requires strength: and all the heart virtues, honed only under duress, create such strength. Thus all of our life we must be engaging our death, so we are ready for this last moment. Lorca says that to risk our life for something worthwhile, and die doing that, “honours” you and gives “sense” to you losing your life. All creation groans until this honour of passion’s duende is grasped.

Old
earth
of the oil lamp
and the sorrow.
Earth
of the deep well shafts.
Earth
of the eyeless death
and the arrows.

Even violent death is better than mere expiring:

Dead he was left in the street
with a dagger in his breast.
Nobody knew him.
It was early dawn. No one
could look at his eyes
wide-open in the hard wind.
And dead he was in the street,
a dagger in his heart,
and nobody knew him.

This poem was meant of someone whose body Lorca encountered in the street. The poem evokes Christ after the crucifixion. No one could look at his eyes, no one knew him, no one knew why he died, no one knew his honour. The same poem will be said of all those of us who die in the duende. No one will know our honour. But it doesn’t matter. Earth, old earth of the oil lamp and the sorrow, earth of the deep well shafts, earth of the eyeless death and the arrows, she knows. She will mourn us, quietly. She will sing gently on the wind, and in the rain that brings new creation out of our blood, she will pray for us, and honour us with her gratitude.

Death is the real extinction of personal existence. Death makes the personal rise up and take its stand in order to leap, to act, and yet death is going to really kill this very personalness. Will the going of our personalness be a seed for everything in the whole of creation that needs its tears, its sweat, its blood; or will personalness merely lament, perhaps regret, its brief flickering? Will it console itself by believing in an impersonal whole that wraps it up in ontological safety? Or will it really die, and really make the give-away and sacrifice that only death can call forth, letting God and the earth dispose, between themselves, of the fruitfulness of our pain for everything. For only God, our father, and only earth, our mother, can bring colour out of our blackness. We can’t. We must die as we lived: naked, poor, riven, stark, radical.

Something in passion, something deep in the heart, can only find joy at the extremity, in the situation where it senses its death 'is for something worthwhile.' Then, the hero, however broken by wounds, however pushed to the margins in himself and in the world, knows his time has come, the time for which he was born. In this time the final and ultimate question is put to his heart: the passion which has already struggled and suffered through the test, and is ready for the final risk, is the heart's reply.

For, in this final moment, the heart takes the greatest and deepest risk: it is joyful to die for the sake of what is at stake in existence, even though it cannot know what this is, and why its going will help to redeem it. It must die in faith, and with trust, to die well.

Only the personal's give-away and sacrifice redeems the risk. Though there is no way to know this for sure, no guarantee, no solace on the edge, something deep in the heart knows 'this is it'; it all comes down to this moment, and this death. The battle we have fought now must be lost; but it all comes down to what we lose, and what we lose it for. Deep in the heart, we know suddenly and at last, why the depth had to wound us. With our final cry and shout, we dive in. We make the stand. We make the leap. We die for love, and just as death exterminates us, we know only this love is deeper than death.

Ole!

God has come.

Only God conquers. But God only conquers in man.

Ole! means not only God has come. Man has come. Behold the man.

This was Christ, but it is also all of us.

Only the earth knows. She is still sorrowing, but from her gentle rain, the deep well shafts fill up. A new time is coming. It is not visible yet. It is still night. There is no dawn. But the air has changed.

The deer is already awake, peering from greenery. The wolf knows what is changing is already on the air, and he howls.

The new deep song of duende will be "the sufferings and raptures of the spirit." The raptures that let duende test and prove 'the deep things of God and the deep things of humanity' through suffering, the duende who risked the personal.

What Unamuno said of Lorca is the truth of Christ nobody wants to know; and it is true of us, who follow Christ's passion to its end: "He was gained by the truth of death for the cause of life."

4,

The poet Antonio Machado commemorated Lorca's murder in a poem still famous in Spain.

The Crime Was in Granada

I

He was seen, surrounded by rifles,
moving down a long street
and out to the country
in the chill before dawn, with the stars still out.
They killed Federico
at the first glint of daylight.
The band of assassins
shrank from his glance.
They all closed their eyes,
muttering: "See if God helps you now!"
Federico fell,
lead in his stomach, blood on his face.
And Granada was the scene of the crime.
Think of it – poor Granada – , his Granada.

II

He was seen with her, walking alone,
unafraid of her scythe.
Sunlight caught tower after tower,
hammers pounded on anvils,
on anvil after anvil in the forges.
Federico was speaking,
playing up to Death. She was listening.
"The clack of your fleshless palms
was heard in my verse just yesterday, friend;
you put ice in my song, you gave my tragedy
the cutting edge of your silver scythe;
so I'll sing to you now of your missing flesh,
your empty eyes,
your wind-snatched hair,
those red lips of yours that knew kisses once...
Now, as always, Gypsy, my own death,
how good being alone with you,
in these breezes of Granada, my Granada!"

III

He was seen walking
Friends, carve a monument
out of dream stone
for the poet in the Alhambra,
over a fountain where the grieving water

shall say forever:

The crime was in Granada, his Granada.

The paradox most wounding is: if the personal has ultimate value, why does it end in death?

The inescapable and irresolvable koan of the personal: its life and its death.

The personal is the struggling and suffering of creation.

This is what must be redeemed, in its ruin, that the risk should be proved worthwhile.

If the personal lives only to avoid death, it comes to ruin, and ruins the world. This is the origin of all the sins. Then, the personal knows in the blood and marrow that nothing it has pursued in life and held precious will survive death. And this is so: what the personal has ruined by refusing death will be swept away. Many religious people see this as punishment, or karma, for ill-spent life, but it is God's mercy.

We feel death as numinous because we know it is going to blot out the personal, and this holds for all of us. But there is a different death. This is when the personal lets its death be the seed that only by dying can go into the ground and bear fruit, for if it does not die 'it remains alone' and bears no fruit [John, 12, 24]. Passion is asked by death to spend its blood, to give away its life, for the sake of something it senses is at stake in the whole world and needs its gift of self-offering, its sacrifice, but will never know why.

Martin Buber: "I do not consider the personal to be either the starting point or the goal of the human world. But I consider the human person to be the irremovable central place of the struggle between the world's movement away from God and its movement toward God. ...the decisive battles in this realm... are fought in the depth, in the ...groundlessness, of the person."

This other death of the personal is no less an extinction, a total annihilation. There is no ghost that slips out of the body, and flits off. Death is the dark darker than night, and this numinous dark truly puts out the flame of the personal that is the flickering of our life. But, in this death there is a letting go, there is an incipient knowledge and an incipient joy. That death, for love, is passionate: it is willing, it is given, it is not taken. The loss is just as poignant, the end of the personal just as comprehensive. There is no reward for passion. The reward is intrinsic, not extrinsic: passion has attained its deep song.

Don't tell me you have an answer. It won't survive death. Sing me your deep song.

The stench of death is real. But in that odour, a miracle waits to come forth.

In Christ, duende kindles a new Daemonic power.

The power of love to suffer for love and prove only love is deeper than death.

To prove only suffering love is deep and great.

Even in killing Christ, the murderous cowards mock him with, 'where is your God now?'

The reply?

My death.

God is in my death.

It is not forced on me. I give it.

My death, Ole!

III: Faith Is Passion Going Through The Dark Gate

“Faith is trust in the unknown.”

Gerald One Feather

“Religion is essentially the act of holding fast to God. And that does not mean holding fast to an image that one has made of God, or even holding fast to the faith in God that one has conceived. It means holding fast to the existing God. The earth would not hold fast to its conception of the sun... nor to its connection with it, but to the sun itself.”

Martin Buber

FAITH as the 'Leap of Passion'

PRELUDE

Kierkegaard's book 'Fear and Trembling' [1843] addresses the question, 'what is faith?' It takes Abraham's willingness to kill his much loved son Isaac, at God's request, as the example, virtually the paradigm, through which to understand the real meaning and dynamic of faith. In fact, the Old Testament provides many examples of faith in action, of faith being lived. But Abraham is called 'the father of faith.' His example somehow is the root of all the other portraits of faith throughout the Old Testament.

1= Faith Is The Leap Of Passion

Kierkegaard's first concern is to show that the notion of faith widespread in the religion of his day - and it would still apply to our day - has cheapened it to such an extent that "what is talked about [should]... not properly [be] called faith at all" [Alastair Hannay, Introduction to the English translation of 'Fear and Trembling', p 13].

Kierkegaard makes many distinctions in order to discern the difference between real faith and various alternatives. Like all existentialists, he says the distinctions that matter in life are not hard to make so much as hard to face. Facing up to faith is extremely difficult= most human beings, especially the religious, falsify faith because they want to avoid what faith asks of them in their action, what it asks them to give in their living. Faith is 'a bridge too far.'

Thus in trying to clarify the Old Testament story of Abraham being asked to sacrifice his son Isaac, Kierkegaard stresses we should be made to appreciate what it was like to be Abraham undergoing the trial of faith. Abraham underwent something inexplicably pained, and achieved something great.

But what did he undergo, and what did he achieve? Until we can answer, or if not answer then at least delve and explore, these questions we will never understand faith.

Faith is not a matter of reflection or thinking. Faith starts where thinking ends. You cannot think yourself into faith, because faith is an action – Kierkegaard will call this action "the leap of passion" – and no thinking can bring about this action required by faith.

Kierkegaard refers to passion as a "movement" we make. This is a movement of the heart; only passion can move the heart: only passion is the heart making its move, going into action, laying itself open, putting itself forth, giving its sweat, tears, and blood, to existence. This is a 'leap' because it is a step out of

the safe and known and a step into the dangerous and the unknown. Passion leaps into an abyss.

Kierkegaard says that the movement involved in faith “requires passion. Every movement of infinity occurs with passion, and no reflection can bring about a movement. That’s the... leap in life which [accounts for] the movement...
...What we lack today is not reflection but passion. For that reason our age is really... too tenacious of life to die, for dying is one of the most remarkable leaps...”

In effect, giving the heart to existence, on a basis of faith, is accepting death. It is a sacrifice. And sacrifice is at the heart of Abraham’s wrestlings with the passionate leap required by God if he is to follow the way of faith. His son is not only personally loved by him, the son’s very appearance so late in Abraham and Sarah’s life is a miracle. God’s promise to Abraham that he will be the father of generations to come will be lost if Isaac is killed. Faith demands of Abraham the sacrifice of precisely what he most wants from life, what he most values and is most precious to him. The willingness of Abraham to make this sacrifice is extraordinarily costly; moreover, no human morality can justify it, for a father killing a son cannot be squared on any ethical criteria possible to imagine. Abraham’s action cannot be rationalised, moralised, or made any sense of whatever; it is a leap into the deep and dark abyss, and as such, is radically irrational. Passion is irrational: it exceeds, and defies, the sensible boundaries within which most people elect to live.

Faith is not that credulity, or naive innocence, of the child which must be outgrown, and replaced by a more sober experience. For Kierkegaard, faith sets us the profoundest task, and challenge, of our human existence. What is tested in faith is not whether God exists, but God’s love and our love in relation to God’s. To attain faith, a struggle and a suffering must be embraced; this is the “genuinely human factor.”

Kierkegaard says that increasingly in his day, and it is only worse now, people believe the problems of life can be solved by the mind, but the mind’s solutions merely make the task, and problems, of existence seem to disappear. Worse, we believe former generations have resolved these problems, entailing that “succeeding generations inherit the solutions without having to face the problems.”

To counter this pervasive evasion created by the mind, Kierkegaard argues we need “an honest seriousness which fearlessly and incorruptibly calls attention” to the task set by faith, and embraces its challenge with the leap of passion.

“However much one generation learns from another, it can never learn from its predecessor the genuinely human factor. In this respect every generation begins afresh, has no task other than that of any other previous generation, and comes no farther... But the highest passion in a human being is faith, and here no generation begins other than where its predecessor did...”

“Faith is the highest passion in a human being. Many in every generation may not come that far, but none comes further.”

Kierkegaard admires Abraham as a person of faith for

- what he loved: God,
- what he trusted: the impossible, the absurd, the irrational,
- what he strove with: God.

2= Alternatives To Faith

As well as rejecting the widespread secular belief that faith is a type of regressive childishness to be outgrown as we enter a more adult consciousness of existence, Kierkegaard also distinguishes faith from two other stances: [a] the aesthetic stance, which is, if anything, even more pervasive in our day than Kierkegaard's, and [b] the ethical stance.

[a] the aesthetic stance

This is a stance very widespread, and neatly fitting in with capitalism. Kierkegaard describes it as a way of life in which everything is treated aesthetically. By this he means not reacting to things for their beauty, or artistic merit; rather, as Alastair Hannay conveys it, “treating something aesthetically is to grasp it in terms of the immediate impact it makes, of how it strikes you in the here and now, of its tendency to attract or repel you. It is to treat life itself as a repository of objects of longing and loathing, ...in short as a pool of goods [of whatever kind] to be secured and the lack of them avoided. The aesthetic life is a life dedicated to ‘immediacy.’ This is a life ‘absolutely committed to relative ends’ [Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*]. ‘Absolute commitment’ to something relative is intended to smack of contradiction.”

In this stance, people seek sensations, experiences, wondrous events. But because they are dedicated to relativism, their seeking does not lead anywhere, and it produces no learning of life lessons. In the aesthetic life there is no passion, only a bee hopping from flower to flower: living for the moment, and living for what you can get.

[b] the ethical stance

Though Kierkegaard would admit there are very many different types of moral codes, his aim is to show that morality of any kind is not to be regarded as an end in itself, but rather, as serving something larger and more mysterious than morality as such. He is particularly at pains to show that each and every one of us has a relationship to God, and a duty to God, that can clash with any socially based morality, where we are told that we must serve what people consider their best collective interest. Bob Dylan drew close to this in his lyric when he sang, “to live outside the law, you must be honest.” Abraham's willingness to kill Isaac cannot be reconciled with any system of rationality, or of morality, which humans can invent. It makes no rational or moral sense.

Rationally, it is insane; morally, it is a crime. God may have commandments, but what God is doing with the world, and asks us to join in with when we become persons of faith, is deeper and greater, but more perplexing and more sorrowing, than any sticking to the rules of an ethical code can encompass.

This is why faith cannot be explained, or even put into words. It can only be invoked by the story of what faith 'undergoes', 'does', and 'achieves.' A story tells faith's deed, its living.

Indeed, the Old Testament has little theology, if any at all; it has little in the way of creeds or doctrines; it has a moral yoke, and a burning love for righteousness and social justice in regard to the whole communal set up, not just the individual. Yet, the Old Testament is not at all a compendium of moral exhortations; it is a strange and beautiful series of stories, in which persons of faith, who are seeking righteousness and justice, not only betray it, but are placed in testing situations that reverse and render paradoxical what it means to love righteousness and justice. All Jewish moral concerns are put in a bigger and deeper context of faith, throughout the Old Testament stories. The hero or heroine of faith often has to transgress morality to find what morality serves, as not an end in itself, but pointing to something profounder. Faith requires what God calls 'truth in the inward parts', and a change of heart motivation, a change of basic heart stand. The Old Testament is sacred because it tells the story, and stories, of faith.

[c] faith is passionate, not aesthetic, not ethical

Thus, Kierkegaard puts faith way beyond the relativising [liberal] aesthetic life, and way beyond the universalising [conservative] ethical life.

And faith is not what we start with, as children, but is, rather, what we should aim to end with as adults. "No one goes further."

Out of faith comes the holy passion of love's sacrifice.

3= Faith vs. Resignation

Kierkegaard has a section where he distinguishes the 'knight of resignation' from the 'knight of faith.' He paradoxically claims that resignation is necessary to faith, but faith is a movement, a step, beyond resignation.

What he means by resignation seems close to what is here called 'the wound of existence', the inescapable tragedy and suffering of existence that affects every person 'thrown' into this world, though the aesthetic and ethical stances are ways of trying to avoid recognising this. Resignation implies, then, realising that what we most want from the world cannot be realised; Kierkegaard is not speaking of wanting bad things, but wanting good. The possibility we see in the finite is denied us, by the world's very nature, and through resignation we embrace this sorrowful condition of things. Faith must 'accept' the woundingness of existence, yet it finds in this loss something that resignation, by itself, cannot find. It finds grounds for hope and meaning in the very loss of

hope and meaning. Victor Frankl, who came through the concentration camp, is a supreme illustration of a person of faith having to be resigned, but taking some further step in faith not possible to those who are merely resigned.

We can put this distinction between resignation alone, and resignation that leads to and includes faith, in another way: isn't this the distinction between the so-called religious existentialists, who find in darkness the only real light and fire, who find in suffering the only basis for hope and joy, as opposed to the anti religious existentialists? In the former camp are Kierkegaard, Marcel, Jaspers, Berdyaev, Tillich, the later Camus, and supremely Martin Buber. In the latter camp are Nietzsche, Heidegger, the early Camus, and supremely Jean Paul Sartre. Both camps embrace the inescapable angst of existing; all pitch their tent near existence's wound. Yet for some, this only produces resignation: a strengthening of a sort of existential heroism, an existential 'tough guy' stand; while for others this is the very trial that both destroys pseudo yet remakes genuine faith. Both go through the long dark tunnel, the lonesome valley, but in one stance, this produces resigned acceptance, with its toughening, but in the other stance, this produces the most terrible despair and the most grounded faith. The person of faith 'accepts' in a different way, and somehow emerges from the tunnel changed in a different way, and somehow emerges from the valley to a different place, a 'new mystical land' of the heart. The resigned are loners, but the resigned-with-faith never stand alone, but give themselves away, embracing sacrifice, for their brothers and sisters. Faith is never just faith in God; faith is always also faith in humanity.

I once tried to distinguish these two types of existential struggle and suffering through contrasting Buber and Heidegger, the person of faith vs. the philosopher of the ontological. I did not resolve it. I want to leave it as a question.

What is the acceptance of existence's wound that makes us stronger and tougher in our isolate stand, and what is the different acceptance of existence's Daemonic blow that reduces us to rubble, or burns us to ashes, yet restores us to a different heroism, a heroism of passion's love – for God, for humanity?

The latter acceptance is just as resigned as the former acceptance; both embrace a savage loss, and say yes to it. Neither believe in religious fairy tales. Both are resigned in the sense Kierkegaard defines it, as 'renunciation of the human possibility of possessing the whole world.' Yet for one, it is the gate to the proof that the infinite has abandoned the finite, and we are each of us here alone; while for the other, it is the gate to the faith that the infinite must wound the finite to restore it to our care in a new way. We did not care for the wrong things, but we cared in the wrong way; these things will be returned to our care, but we will care in a new way. This new care will be dead to the old way of caring, thus can be called dispassionate; yet, in caring in a new way, without limit or impediment, it can be called the ultimate passionateness.

What is the final demonstration of the foolishness of faith to the one is to the other the profundity that upholds faith. For faith leaps into the abyss not to

commit suicide, or throw itself away, but to answer a call, and in the trust that it will be upheld.

Resignation renounces the naive hope in the world: that it will deliver to the heart what it wants. Faith loses the world in the same way, but paradoxically restores the heart to love of the world, but in a new way, on a whole new basis. This new way Kierkegaard calls the 'absurd.' Lost to us as human possibility, the world is 'given back' to us as a divine possibility: the world is regained in faith.

Abraham is not murdering Isaac, or throwing him away in resigned sadness; Abraham is giving Isaac back to God, so as to receive his son again on a new basis.

4=Good and Evil Passion

Kierkegaard conveys a sense of what Eastern Orthodox Christianity calls the 'fallen passions', and what Buddhism calls 'delusive cravings', in this=

"If at the bottom of everything there were only a wild ferment, a power that twisting in dark passions produced everything grand or inconsequential: if an unfathomable, insatiable emptiness lay hid beneath everything, what would life be but despair?"

'A wild ferment, a power that twisting in dark passions' produces all the nightmares of history, all the grand and small soap operas, full of Macbeth's 'sound and fury, signifying nothing' – could a better description of the evil passions be found? These passions, despite their noise and tumult, their seeming movement and bogus action, end in nihilism. They don't amount to a heap of beans. They lead nowhere, and accomplish nothing. They fill our empty lives, but leave that emptiness worse when their caravan has passed by. Through the delusive cravings and evil passions, we traverse and end up falling into an abyss that is empty, an abyss that is void and vacuous. It sucks our life and our passion down.

But this does not entail that passion per se is delusive, or passion per se evil. As the term 'fallen' really implies, something true has lost its way and become false; but it can recover, stand up again, and return to honest seriousness and courage towards its task and challenge, by making its sacrificial action. The heart can change, the heart that moves in falsity can change direction and move in truth. God will never give up on the human heart.

Thus, there must be no transcending of delusive craving, or evil passion, by ascending into some passionless spiritual state.

Rather, the delusive craving or evil passion is to be healed, through a dying, so that there can be a recovery of the true passion of the deep heart that can leap. This is the passion of love's fire, this is the 'burning' in us of faith; such faith heals and restores passion to its true calling, which is to test and prove God's

love for the world in our love for the world. Faith tests the nature and dynamic of the only real love we can rely on in this world.

Passion= the finite opening to the infinite, through a wound;
Passion= the infinite opening to the finite, through a wound.

Kierkegaard speaks of faith as 'the highest passion'; I prefer to speak of passion as 'deep.' And what Kierkegaard does not notice, oddly, is the parallel between Abraham and Isaac and God and Christ. Abraham's agony is a human reflection of something divine. A father called to sacrifice his son= this is the deed that grounds faith, giving to it the vow and promise that upholds it in the abyss where it must leap and where it must struggle and suffer. But at the last minute this sacrifice is not required of the human – because God is telling the human it is his sacrifice. Abraham does not have to sacrifice Isaac because God the Father will sacrifice his only begotten son, the Logos become divine-human as the Christ.

It is God's faith that is deep, and our faith, leaning on his, becomes deepened. For the sacrifice we make, of the human, out of faith in God, is bound to and leans on the sacrifice God makes, of the divine, out of faith in us.

Praise be to the faith of God in humanity and the faith of humanity in God.

The sacrifice that secures love for the world is irrational, because in it a father sacrifices his child – that another child will not be lost.

Thanks be to the passionate heart of God.

Thanks be to the passionate heart of humanity which carries, as a wound and a burden, the passionate heart of God.

Mysticism of Heart

1,

Passion can only be approached through the existential stance: any other stance will eliminate the need for its risk-taking venturing, its acceptance of the pain of deepening, its courage in making the leap of faith, its generosity in taking the stand of truth, its love that burns with fervour for the redemption of all things.

Yet there is, in this existential realism, also a mystery that entails that passion is ultimately mysticism.

Not mysticism of the sky, but mysticism of the earth.

Not mysticism of nous enlightenment: the mysticism of awakening.
Not mysticism of soul ecstasy: the mysticism of joyousness.

Mysticism of heart.

Not open-eyed transcendence, but closed-eyed surrender.
Not open-winged uplift, but closed-winged letting go.

Not freeing oneself of the tragedy of the world, but plunging in.

In this closing of the eyes in order to plunge into a deep mystery, we travel to a strange place not reachable if we open our spiritual eyes wider and wider, and insist on the light of illumination.

In this closing of the wings in order to plunge in to a pained unknown, we battle in a perilous contest not reachable if we open our spiritual wings wider and wider, and insist on the joy of union.

In this strange journey, in this perilous battle, it is revealed to us that we are a part of humanity, and there can be no saved and damned, no winners and losers, in the ultimate. In the ultimate, each heart is tied to every other heart, and all hearts are tied together, and tied to the world wherein they dwell. In the ultimate, we all come through, or we all go down. In the ultimate, there is only one ship and it is sail or sink for this ship. When we reach 'the heart ground', we find out there is only one heart, and it is only this one heart that ultimately will uphold us all. Without brotherhood we will fall endlessly into the groundlessness of the abyss. The heart ground is also 'the killing ground', because it is where the journey reaches its end, and the battle between depth and shallows, greatness and smallness, division and standing together, is at its fiercest. It becomes more risky, more pained, more weighty, more costly, as it comes 'down' to this final contest on the heart ground. This ground is the place of sacrifice.

2,

Faith is needed to enter this place, and faith is needed to enter its contest. Faith, in the way of heart, is far more 'spiritual' than the enlightenment of illumination and the ecstasy of union.

Nous enlightenment and soul ecstasy are often regarded by those who have attained their altered state of consciousness and altered state of being to be ultimate. Both gift the human being with significant, and life-changing, knowledge, and this knowledge is certainly spiritual in nature. In enlightenment, illusion is stripped away from reality. In ecstasy, the origin of all reality is embraced at source. I respect the traditions that pursue these kinds of spiritually advanced states of consciousness and spiritually advanced states of being. Buddhism seems more concerned with the former, Sufism seems more concerned with the latter. The Greek Fathers of Eastern Orthodox Christianity have been concerned with both, often blending them.

The important role played by nous and by soul in the human constitution must be acknowledged, for we are complex creatures; we are a composite of many different, and marvellous things. Who can discern how they all fit together?

But, these states of consciousness and being, contrary to what the traditions that specialise in them claim, are not ultimate.

The heart knows spiritual knowledge is not ultimate.

The way of heart, the way of passion, is ultimate, and this way is not about spiritual knowledge, but requires that a certain restriction be put on any and all knowing, whether merely intellectual and scientific, merely philosophical and metaphysical, or even the expanded states of nous knowing in illumination and of soul knowing in ecstasy. The way of heart is a way of not knowing. It is not about expansion, but contraction. It is not about advanced states, but being engaged and committed to something at once hidden, undisclosed, and foolish in the risk, the pain, the weight, the cost, it asks from us. We give everything in the way of heart, and can preserve nothing. This way requires a surrender of light, a letting go of union, in order to go to a dark and pained place, to enter upon the strange journey and perilous battle in that place.

No one goes to this place and enters its battle except through faith. St Isaac of Syria: "Faith is the gateway to mysteries."

Thus, it is empty boasting of traditions of enlightenment and of ecstasy to reckon their respective kinds of spiritual knowledge rule out any need for faith. Even the most exalted spiritual knowing is incomplete, because no one can 'know' the heart in this manner. Neither enlightenment nor ecstasy can fathom the heart. Its secrets, its treasures, its horrendous edges, gaps, cross-roads, its Koan and its Cross, are not revealed to those who have experienced enlightenment and those who have experienced ecstasy. To walk the heart way

needs faith, and as a Red Indian elder put it to me, faith is trust in the unknown. To journey and battle on the heart ground requires the ultimate leap, the ultimate surrender, the ultimate letting go.

Faith is the trust in the unknown that is necessary for the way of the heart. No enlightenment of nous, no ecstasy of soul, can light up the dark abyss of heart, nor release the jet of blood, nor kindle the fire of spirit. The mysticisms of enlightenment and ecstasy are not able to comprehend the black of depth and the red of greatness that are the way of the mysticism of heart.

Thus suffering must not be shed, but accepted and delved to its end. Suffering becomes pregnant, in the end, with the deepened human being, the man or woman of heart. And out of this black depth there rises up, and comes forth, the only spiritual red fire, the fire of the human spirit aflame with God's Spirit, the human passion kindled by the divine passion.

The heart is given over entirely to "the contest of love" that alone is the irrational rationale of passion having to suffer depth, and having to be burdened with the summons to greatness, and for this to be decisive for all of humanity and for the whole world process.

3,

But black is the depth that can be for heaven or for hell; depth is the darkness of evil as well as the mysteriousness of the absent and unknown God. This God is the only depth that can fill the human depth. This God can only be present and known in the heart when we allow our suffering to open the heart to the world's suffering. Then the red of passion born of the black is brave, generous, honourable: it suffers for love.

This is not inevitable.

The dark and pained depth can, if resisted and refused, or if falsely resolved, give birth to a very different red of passion: the red of hate and malice, of vengefulness. This is also the red of the religious fanatic, the false zeal that, by never facing the hell in itself, is all too ready to find hell in others and to visit hell upon them if they do not bow down to its religious dictates. This is a red of coercion, of domination, of power over the other; a red of damning to hell, of condemning, of spiritual murder dressed up as loyalty to God. Satan stalks the way of heart.

The way of heart is therefore spiritually dangerous. This is why humanity in many cultures preferred the way of nous or the way of soul: the mysticism of glowing light or the mysticism of living water. If fire is present, it is only a coal of flickering incandescence, not really a flame, and certainly not a raging torrent.

All monastic traditions readily lend themselves to the mysticism of nous, or to the mysticism of soul, and sometimes both intermixed. Rarely do monastic traditions attain the red of passion, from their way of being in the black of heart.

4,

The light and the water are necessary, and not to be dismissed. Christ identified four faculties by which we must love God: nous, soul, heart, and strength or spirit [Mark, 12, 30]. The latter two belong to passion: the human spirit is our passion. But the former two are necessary. Egyptian Desert Tradition gave the injunction, “take the mind [it means, in context, the spiritual mind, the nous] down into the heart.” Christ said the same to St Silouan: “Keep your nous in hell, and despair not.” The ‘hell’ referred to is that in the heart. The nous, therefore, can join the heart in its problematic wrestlings, to shed a helpful light on these. Equally, we could advance an equivalent injunction for the soul: take the soul down into the heart. Soul is almost universally regarded as feminine, the spiritual woman, while the heart is Biblically regarded as masculine [in 1 Peter, 3, 4, St Peter speaks of ‘the hidden man of the heart’], the spiritual man; thus it is possible to see the soul as wife, and hence as the ‘helpmate’ of her husband, the heart, offering the nourishment and regeneration of joy to his sorrows and injuries. God can use both nous and soul as partners with the heart. In dramatic stories, the nous is often the mentor figure, the wise old man or wise old woman, who instructs the hero, through discipline and advice; the soul is often the romantic figure, the young and beautiful love interest, who becomes the hero’s friendly companion and erotic lover, sharing the onerous ordeal with the hero, and not only urging on his valour but bringing her own magic, her own love of life and affinity with its spiritual gifts, to his rescue.

Yet, there is a rub in this. Both nous and soul have to be ‘lowered’ to play any constructive helping role vis-à-vis the way of heart. For those who do not want the way of heart, and in one sense that includes all human beings, it is tempting to keep nous and to keep soul well separate from heart. This is how spiritualities of nous enlightenment and spiritualities of soul ecstasy become entirely estranged from any involvement with the human heart.

5,

Nous estrangement from heart, and reconciliation to it, is shown in the history of Buddhism.

Buddhism’s original teaching contends that in our ignorance of the spiritual reality, we regard the world’s reality as an end in itself, separated from the spiritual. There is a need for awakening to the spiritual reality, which will fundamentally recast our attachment to the world’s reality.

Yet there is a very fine cutting edge here.

On the one hand, regaining the awareness of the spiritual may overcome our delusive belief in the world’s autonomy, and thus may undercut, dampen, ‘take the heat out of’, our delusive cravings in relation to that separate entity.

But, on the other hand, this new mind awareness can then also support an entire turning away from the world, as if only awareness of the spiritual, not involvement with the world, ultimately mattered. This implies that the only possible relation to the world in which we are 'thrown' is delusive in how it sees and thus delusive in what it wants from the world, because of the ego at the root of that seeing and wanting. Remove the ego, and the mind will be free from worldly attachment, and free for unencumbered awareness of the spiritual.

We see the world not as it is, but as we are, and that is why we develop delusive cravings toward the world. These delusive cravings are in two major groups: lust and greed, clinging and grasping, and possessing, are one group, and hate and ill-will, animosity and hostility, aversion and negation, are another group. This closely corresponds to the Desert Tradition of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, which speaks of exactly these same two groupings, the first termed the 'appetitive faculty' of perverted desire, and the second termed the 'incensive faculty' of perverted anger. The former is fallen due to desire becoming self-enclosed in 'self-love', and the latter is fallen due to anger becoming self-enclosed in 'self-pleasing.' St Maximus says the former cuts our desire off from union with God's Eros, while the latter cuts our thymos off from solidarity with the Neighbour; by the former selfishness, we devour and acquire, and by the latter selfishness, we coerce and murder. In the former, we 'use' others and things, in the latter we 'dominate' others and things. The core of the problem is the same in both Traditions: the delusive or fallen passions arise through attachment to the self.

If we cease to see the world as we are, a separate ego out for itself, then we will cease wanting from the world things that arise out of this egoism. If we change the false consciousness of delusion [moha], and become capable of 'seeing things as they are', then we will cease to be attached to the world out of selfishness, whether in the lustful [lobha] or hateful [dosa] manner. Again, the Desert Tradition agrees with Buddhism on the nature of the awakened nous, which releases the other two kinds of energy from delusive attachment to the world, and reveals their potential for good. Buddhism says the nous that sheds delusion becomes capable of wisdom [anaoha], and this both frees the desirous faculty of lust and greed, making it capable of 'rapture' [piti] and 'charity' [alobha], and frees the incensive faculty of hate and ill will, making it capable of 'vibrant energy' [viriyā] and 'loving kindness' [adosa].

The delusion of nous, and the two kinds of delusive cravings it generates, are the root of all suffering [dukkha]. Only if we change the false consciousness of mind, will the false energies of soul [desire] and heart [anger] be changed. This will remove the worst suffering, and allow the attainment of spiritual happiness.

This makes 'mind' the instrument of salvation, the deliverer, and upholds the spiritual mind as more in the leading position than any energy – whether soul longing or heart passion – that 'naturally' attaches to the world; consciousness leads energy out of error, it takes the heat out of the error in energy, but it does not really give energy free expression to unlock its own energetic potential. Soul and heart energies remain, because of this nous watchfulness over them,

cooled off, muted, gentle, but not very dynamic. Another way to put this is, enlightenment breaks delusive attachment to the world, but it does not replace this with anything approaching an ecstatic or suffering attachment to the world. Buddhist philanthropy of soul and kindness of heart are not to be dismissed, but they are benevolent and benign, not all that loving in any radical sense= the soul is not married to the heart, and the heart is not married to the world. The nous still drives the chariot, and has the two active horses well reigned in. They avoid evil in the way they do good, but they do not take the chance of a more dynamic and more difficult good that requires a more attached relationship to the world. The latter is love at its most 'given.'

Two friends, one a Romanian woman, the other a Greek woman, both confirm that in their native tongues nous is adept at curbing false energy, but not able of itself to go where true energy takes us. Ioana Novac says that in Romanian 'ia a-minte, ia seama' means 'be mindful', literally 'take-into-mind', or be careful, take care through the mind's awareness and perceptiveness; similarly, Dee Jaquet conveys the same point through telling a story: "My mother and grandmother's exhortations to me any time I went out on a date as a young woman was 'na exeis to nous sou', which meant simply, 'be self aware, pay attention, be vigilant, be alert, be present, guard that you remain true to who you really are'." But, not losing who we really are is not the same as losing who we are for love.

Salvation by mind, not by soul or by heart, is particularly clear in early Buddhism. The following words, attributed to Buddha, illustrate this:

"One should with clenched teeth and with tongue pressing on palate, subdue, crush, and overpower the mind by the mind, just as if a strong man, having taken a very weak man by the head and shoulders, were to subdue him, crush him, and overpower him. Then the harmful thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion, will disappear."

'The Dhammapada', a book devoted to the Buddhist path of virtue, starkly asserts this spiritual bias in favour of expanding the mind, and weakening the vital energies which attach the soul and heart to the world in a wrong way. In chapter 20 [The Way] is this exhortation:

"The best of virtues is passionlessness;
The best of men [those] who have eyes to see.
This is the way, there is no other leading to the purifying of intelligence.
Go on this path!
[If you don't go on it, you will be caught up in] the confusion of Mara the tempter.
If you go on this way, you will make an end of pain!"

This clearly supports a widespread interpretation of Buddhism, at least in the West, that suffering is not existentially or mystically inherent, but that, on the contrary, much human suffering is self-generated, and arises out of illusion

created by the mind. When the illusion departs the mind, then suffering is diminished, and happiness replaces it.

But Buddha's voluntary departure from the palace that had been the citadel of his existential innocence is usually not recounted in full. This tells a very different story.

In the book called 'The Life of Buddha' written in the first century A.D. by the 12th Buddhist patriarch, Asvaghosha, it is not that the youthful prince confronts the four existential givens of death, old age, sickness, and poverty, by accident, but rather, it is a Deva, a God, who actually assumes the form of each of these, in order to bring them to his notice.

The real question is, was the divinity seeking to bring this human predicament to the prince's mind, or to his heart?

– If the former, it is only necessary to awake from the illusory existence, and stand back, not involving oneself in it, except from the benign and bloodless position of the teacher helping others to get free.

– If the latter, then awakening from the illusory existence is only in order to return to the real existence, and immerse fully into it, to uncover its ultimate worth, and be bound to that worth, no matter what it asks in sacrifice.

In the latter case, the spiritual mind becomes secondary to the active engines of involvement, soul and heart.

It is less of a shock for the soul woman to be dragged down by the heart man 'to his level' because, in desiring Eros, the soul is already a being of love. But it is a momentous shock for the nous to have to confront an existential truth it had never been forced to face before: that the irrational energy carries the profounder and greater meaning, while consciousness, even if expanded, can only gasp in amazement at how deep and how far this energy will go in its more loving attachment to the world.

Thus here the spiritual consciousness of the mind can no longer lead the energy of heart, but is led by it – into a baptism, an immersion, first in soul water and then in heart fire. The psalms speak of this when saying, to be redeemed we must 'pass through water and fire.' The salvation of mind, offered by early Buddhism, gets us 'out' of polluted water and polluted fire, but it does not pass through water and fire. The nous' light is not baptised in water and fire.

This is where faith enters. No direct seeing of reality without illusion, before we leap into the ravine where a more ambiguous reality is hidden and awaiting release, can absolve us having to dive in and go through that which the spiritual mind can only see from the outside, but never understand because it cannot undergo it from the inside. This is why in the way of heart there cannot be any ultimacy to an 'open-eyed' transcendence of illusion that is raised into a vast

light; more ultimate than any enlightenment is a 'closed-eyed' plunge into existence's unfinished and suffering cauldron that is given up to a vast dark.

Consequently, this is why it is necessary to 'take the mind down into the heart.' This refers to the attentive, alert, wakeful, sober, vigilant, watchful, earnest, non drunken, non sleepy, non dreamy, non conceptual, non discursive, nous. This nous is not automatically housed in the heart, and thus is not the eye or the thought of the heart. The nous that has descended into the heart can be like a lamp illumining dangerous and challenging terrain in the night, but to play this role entails a radical and fundamental humbling for the spiritual mind – which it resists for reasons mistakenly regarded as 'highly spiritual.'

Two issues are at stake.

[1] The spiritual mind is given to the temptation to misuse its direct seeing of, its insight into, the spiritual reality that inheres the world's reality. For it wants this to elevate it above the ambiguous mess and degraded dirt of existence, and place it in the 'leading position'; it sees itself as the driver of the chariot, while soul and heart are only the horses, thus it can and must guide them. But, the spiritual mind ignores that all its awareness is capable of is an experience of 'seeing', which is not the experience of being wholly involved. The nous is not constituted so as to be able to roll its sleeves up and get itself really wet and get itself really scorched by existence. The soul and heart energies actually experience what is and what is not true of existence, in venturing a far more involved, a far more attached, connection to it. Nous is the watcher, soul and heart are the participants. Thus, nous awareness is ultimately secondary, not primary, in spirituality to the soul and heart energies. Without humility, the nous earns the condemnation of St Maximus, who described the mind of enlightenment as "the visionary mind, swift flying bird, and most impudent."

[2] The leadership role the nous appoints for itself as watcher, standing back and not having to give anything radical – teaching students, in order to raise them out of the mire to where you are out of the mire, is giving very little – has to be inverted. The humbling of the nous, as the price of participation in existence's reality, has a spiritual purpose the nous is apt to not understand. Christos Yannaras sums it up well when he says that the nous, the spiritual mind, the mind of enlightenment, "has to submit to the contest of love."

The soul and heart energies are spiritually more ultimate, whatever their fallenness on the way, than even the enlightened nous Buddha refers to as the "purified intelligence" of those "with eyes to see." This is because soul and heart are inescapably involved in the contest of love that is being waged in the world. The soul and heart are attached to the world because in their truest being they are totally engaged with and committed to that contest to redeem the world for love. The soul and heart are lovers, not just knowers. They incipiently know something deeper and greater in their love. This is why, unlike the spiritual intelligence, or seeing eye of the nous, they cannot be attached just to the spiritual – whether the spiritual is seen as entirely apart from the world because of being above and beyond it, or the spiritual is seen as so

overshadowing the world in 'non duality' that the need for any brave and generous contest to gain the world for love is eliminated.

Early Buddhism fails to confront the Daemonic, and its Otherness. The ego, or self-attachment, is really only overcome to free love. Love is egoless, love is not attached to the self, but love is not a-personal, de-personal, impersonal. Love is personal, it needs distinct beings who take a real chance in relation to each other, and God. These distinct beings are I–Thou, as in Martin Buber.

The contest of love is irrational, and requires a mystical unknowing and a mystically unfixable pain as its ticket of admission. Yet the victory love wins in the contest of love in this world is immeasurably more ultimate than any enlightenment that should be a matter of coming out of soiled waters and ravaging flames but temporarily, for the sake of returning to them in a new way.

My wife wrote this story about her life: "In India, as well as in my family and at the Catholic convent school I went to, my spiritual nous was fed and I took to it as a bird to air. My spiritual nous although a child's was very clear, I often saw more than my elders which I found disconcerting and silenced me. Later at 19, I was alone one Christmas and befriended by a priest. We were discussing certain choices I had to make. In my youthful untested arrogance I said, 'When I can clearly see the outcome of doing something, how can I act on it?' To which he replied – he was middle aged – 'you cannot evaluate something until you have experienced it.' I found through the suffering brought by age this was true – it was heart truth."

My mentor in spiritual psychology, E.G. Howe, reached enlightenment in Ceylon, after months spent sitting in a Buddhist monastery near a river. He was in his 70s then, and I only in my early 20s. I asked him if he would describe this event at a public lecture for the many people who came to his foundation which combined spirituality, therapy, and teaching. He agreed. During this lecture he told us about the ascetic process that led up to its culminating moment, which included allowing cockroaches to crawl over his seated body, so as not to interfere in their comings and goings. To the shock of everyone gathered, especially in light of the prominent place given to 'Non Duality' in all his lectures, he suddenly said, after briefly describing enlightenment, "So what?", and then began to cry. "It was cold," he said of the enlightenment. Then he added, "I don't know what love is. I know what love is not."

The silence that followed was dramatic, its tension unrelieved. Later I heard one of the people who had witnessed this unexpected moment of defencelessness in a man of otherwise imposing presence sneering at the old man. This cynic said, "He was just play acting, his tears were contrived." They were not. Graham Howe was huge, both physically and spiritually. The Buddhists had repeatedly invited him to join them, though he had invariably refused, and my own Tibetan meditation teacher Trungpa Rinpoche had always forced me to tell him about Graham Howe before he would settle down to instructing me in the subtleties of Tibetan Buddhism. On that night I saw this

man of impregnable height abandon his mountain, and leap into the vulnerable but pregnant depth.

What William Blake said of European Enlightenment 'reason' can with equal force be asserted of Buddhist enlightenment as originally understood and practised: "Energy is the only life, and Reason is the outward bound or circumference of Energy. Energy is eternal delight." Energy is delight to the soul, but to the heart it is 'the sufferings and raptures of the Spirit' which God requires to write people's names into the Book of Life. Delusion, lust, hate, do indeed distort the contest of love. But a certain kind of enlightenment is arrogant, because it abandons that contest and pats itself on the back for this heartless and passionless existential cowardice, regarding it 'spiritual.'

Buddha's Middle Way brought the Hindu and Greek nous that is transcendent, above the world, back into the world, making the nous immanent. This is significant, for which we owe Buddha thanks.

But later Buddhism still had to overcome the intrinsic temptation of arrogance of the swift-flying and impudent spiritual mind, in order to rejoin the contest of love. Zen can say this:

"Master: Buddhahood is passion and
passion is Buddhahood.

Monk: In whom does Buddha cause passion?

Master: Buddha causes passion in all of us.

Monk: How do we get rid of it?

Master: Why should we get rid of it?"

Enlightenment will always be prone to introduce a new and more subtle duality, for it chooses Non-Duality at the expense of duality. 'Form is not Void, Void is not Form.' This is "the stink of Zen." Having separated the spiritual reality from the world's reality, we fail to realise that only if the two are reunited will the way things really are be acknowledged. 'Form is Void, Void is Form.' However, the first realisation is very accessible to, but the second realisation is almost impossible for, the nous. Why? Because the spiritual reality is present in the world's reality fully only through love. Nous cannot take this second step, only the heart, bringing along the soul, can take it. Non-Duality, so long as the arrogant predominance of the spiritual mind goes unchallenged, remains as heartless as it is impersonal. Spirit and world are only united ontologically because they are existentially married through love.

Love is ultimate, but it is not a disincarnate love, rather it is love taking a chance with the world. Hence in this world, the contest of love is ultimate, and no one joins that contest except through faith. No one knows yet, and it is granted to no one to see, what the world's ravine will test and prove for the destiny of all the world. That ravine, that cauldron, is as binding for the spirit that joins the world in love as it is for the world itself.

Christ said, 'be in the world but not of the world' [John, 17, 11-19]. Only passion can attain the true attachment to the world, and push it deep, and push it far.

Holiness is not the same as enlightenment. In holiness we have passed through the water and the fire and reached the far shore, not for ourself alone, but for everyone and everything. We go together. We bring each other through. In the waves of existence the need for spiritual direction fades away, and is replaced by a brotherhood where we carry each other, bear each other, forgive each other, so that none shall finally be lost, so that none shall drown, so that none shall be burnt up.

6,

For the soul, coming down into the heart is a different shock to that faced by the nous. As a being of energy and of love, the soul is 'half way there.' But there is still a problem.

For the soul is a love junkie, and the addiction to love is desire for Eros. What shocks the soul is to find that the Daemonic anger for truth, and the contest of love, is not love as the soul yearns for it. Inevitably, ugliness is added to beauty, chaos is added to harmony, evil is added to goodness. The soul's love of joyous union is interrupted, and postponed, and must learn to include the heart's love that is wounded and burning, and is inextricably bound up with the world, so there is no bounteous haven 'away from it all.' The soul too must submit to the contest of love. Where the nous does it out of its humbling, the soul does it out of respect, and love, for 'what the heart is doing' and thus for the heart who does it.

This is the meaning of the saying to Mary, "and a sword will pierce through your own soul also..." [Luke, 2, 35]. At the Wedding of Cana, she told Christ that humanity had no more Eros, and Christ performed his first miracle, changing water into wine, to answer this thirst of the soul. But at the Cross, Mary let go of her soul's desire for Eros, and bowed, with much grieving and sorrowing, to the necessity for the Daemonic destiny that the divine and human hearts were always going to have to face, have to step up to take on. Mary let the sword of truth pierce through her soul, that the thoughts of many hearts could be revealed.

7,

If the way of heart passes through a black night without stars, then it needs light not to dispel the darkness through which it must pass, and in which it will give birth, but to illumine its way, to help differentiation and discernment. If the nous will submit to the contest of love, it can be the traveller's lamp.

If the way of heart passes through an empty desert without rivers, then it needs water not to dispel the abysmalness wherein it must find its ground, and upon which it will stand, but to nourish its way, to bring good things, beautiful things,

providential things, as refreshment. If the soul will submit to the contest of love, it can be the traveller's oasis.

Yet, even with a lamp and a wellspring, still the heart must walk on; still the heart must embrace its fate to be able to create its destiny. Like the nous and the soul, the heart began in a garden; but the heart cannot return to paradise. The heart is called to the city.

The mysticism of heart will pass through the deepest black to reach the greatest red.

The affected heart is the suffering heart; the suffering heart is the tested heart; the tested heart is the deepened heart; the deepened heart can become the burning heart.

The passionate are the wounded ones and the burning ones.

This mysticism is a paradox: we must be wounded by love to burn with love.

If we resist the wounding by love, we burn with hell.

By a wound evaded in heart, we created hell.

By a wound taken to heart, Christ created heaven in hell.

Both are the way of heart.

Heart is tragedy, and heart is redemption of tragedy.

To seek this, despite its irrationality, foolishness, stumbling blocks, is the mysticism of heart.

IV: PASSION AS THE FIRE OF TRUTH

1,
FIGHTING FOR TRUTH – THE WARRIOR KING

2,
LIVING TRUTH – THE SACRED CLOWN, or HOLY FOOL

3,
DECLARING TRUTH – THE PROPHET, or ELDER (VOL 2)

CLARIFICATION= “Mankind Is A Passion”

Passion has a bad name these days, and only means sex, or deranged zeal of political and religious fanatics. Most people just want to be reasonable and decent, or nice. Even when passion is lauded, it is usually only because it is confused with ego ambition.

Wrestling with Kierkegaard today, a clarification emerged.

Passion is the energy of love. It is a kind of love, but a kind that has to use energy, because it faces a hard road, and daunting task, in the existential situation in which it must act. To love means going further into this situation, not turning back at the point where innocence is lost and experience initiates us in to ‘the way it is.’ But this has an ever increasing existential ‘cost.’ Without passion, love refuses to engage reality because love decides it cannot pay the cost of allowing itself to be committed to what happens to it as it gets more and more stuck in with reality. For once the dictionary is spot on= it defines cost as ‘to cause the expenditure of.’ Given the existential exactions in which all action, all meaning and purpose, all valuing, is situated, then to love is existentially costly= it requires the expenditure of our very being, and it subjects us to increasing expenditure in terms of putting us more and more on the line as we go all the way down the line. Thus the dictionary adds to its definition of cost= ‘to result in the loss of or infliction of.’ Without passion, love will pay no cost= it will suffer nothing for what it loves, it will carry nothing for what it loves. Passion is what we will give, and give up, and give away, for love. Passion is a love that will accept to be put into danger, and will accept to be made to embrace loss, by the situation where it finds itself in order to act nobly towards what is most precious and precariously placed there. Passion is love’s generosity and courage, its heroism. Passion is what we will expend, what we will allow to be inflicted and what we will lose, as a consequence of being bound to and bound up with what we love. Passion is a willingness, and is an urge that wants to, risk and let go the very self for the sake of that which is loved. Love is not cheap, not easy, not safe. Our life is what we will pay, our life is what we will expend, for love.

If love were situated differently, it would not need any such passion. If it were situated in a place of fulfilment, or of ease, or of no difficulty, we would not need passion to make its vow, and go through its ordeal.

But love is not situated in that manner. The existential givens of this world where we are situated are not surface, mechanical, predictable things, which we can control. The givens of this life are the deep things, the non contrived, the contingency that is never fail-safe against danger and loss.

Passion is our willingness to have a go, to pay the cost, and carry the consequence, out of a strange and irrational sense that it is worthwhile. Thus we know the pain of the depth, the pain that comes to lodge in the really deep heart, is sacred.

When people innocently say to us, “how’s it going”?, do they really know what “it” they are asking of, and how much is implied that it can be “going”?

The truth on which passion leans is that God created the world out of his own passion, and has dignified and burdened us with passion, so ours can be purified, but most important, offered up like God’s for the world, and thereby joined to God’s.

We are called to the divine-humanity, which means called to the conjunction of the divine and human passions.

But then that means there is a single description of passion that supersedes all the others, or rather, gathers them up in a single point. Passion rests on a truth of heart, and it is this truth that passion always seeks. The ‘drive’ in passion, the impetus, is for truth. Passion stands on, and stands up for, truth. Passion serves something bigger, and this is truth. Passion will make give-away, and sacrifice, for truth. If the soul’s desire is a thirst for the Eros of God’s Goodness, Beauty, Life More Abundant, and Providential Wisdom, poured like spring water into a parched ground, then the heart’s passion is a hunger, an eagerness, an ardent seeking of, a fighting for, an ultimate give-away and ultimate sacrifice because of, a truth kindled in a harsh ground. Passion stands and falls by truth. It is the truth of God’s venture in the human venture that passion seeks, defends, makes give-away and sacrifice for.

This is the way of heart.

It reveals that ‘mankind is a passion’, because God’s purpose in creating us was to share gifts with the soul, providing truth could be tested and proved with the heart.

Passion goes into the room of no exit, and only emerges to be staked to the ground for truth.

Hoka hey!

[1] The Fight For Truth Is The Fight For The World

“The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.”
William Blake

“Perhaps misguided moral passion is better than confused indifference.”
Iris Murdoch

“I come not to bring peace, but to bring a sword.”
Christ in Mathew, 10, 34.

“Do you suppose I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division.”
Christ in Luke, 12, 51.

“Let’s start by recognizing there is a fundamental unacceptability about unpleasant truth. We all shield ourselves against its wounding accuracy.”
William Sloane Coffin

“Never fight evil as if it were something that arose totally outside of yourself.”
St Augustine of Hippo

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
St Paul in Romans, 3, 23.

“By truth the earth endures.” “The basis of honour is truth.”
“The dead go to the place of truth.”
Old Celtic

The Way of the Warrior and the Cante Tenze – Truth, Honour, Nobility, Sacrifice

PREAMBLE

The first thing I did upon becoming a sub chief in the Cante Tenze of the Oglala Lakota was to create a code for this society that distinguishes ‘warrior’ from ‘soldier’ and from ‘thug.’ The paradox we find hard, as warriors, is that the Great Mystery fights against the world in order to fight for the world. A warrior wields a sword that cuts two ways: it wounds, to heal a wound.

This contemplation is offered to Wakinyan Tanka, the Thunder Being. My last day on the reservation Wilmer Mesteth and I sat on a mesa in the Badlands, under a glowering sky, and we took some sprouts of the juniper tree that is related to the Thunder Being and never struck by him, lit it as an offering, and then Wilmer sang this prayer in Lakota to Wakinyan Tanka:

Have pity on us,
Help us in our difficulties.

I send Wakinyan Tanka this prayer now.

PART ONE= THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF THE WARRIOR WAY

[1] Animal Patrons of the Warrior’s Way

I have a friend who tells me that the Vikings had three warrior animals, basically= wolf, bear, boar. I went away from this and pondered whether such a trinity would work for the Lakota. If it did, it would have to be wolf, bear, and buffalo. But it is too simple. There are scores of animals who help the warrior, and they encompass not only the 4-leggeds of the ground but also the wingeds of the sky, and include even certain insects, such as the butterfly.

Some of these helpers are related to the Thunder Being, who grants the warrior the power to unflinchingly confront the enemy. Other helpers are related to the playful and mischievous Whirlwind, who is the 5th and youngest in the family of the 4 winds corresponding to the 4 directions, who grants the warrior the power to confuse the enemy and avoid his attack. Though the wolf is the primal bringer of war, as the bear is the primal bringer of healing, and the eagle is the primal bringer of vision, none the less a full list of animal helpers in the way of the warrior might well run to double figures.

Buffalo
Bear
Badger
Wolf
Fox
Dog

Eagle
Hawk
Owl
Swallow
Horse
Dragonfly/Butterfly
Raven/Crow
Spider

This list is not exhaustive.

Some of the attributes of some of these warrior animals are the following:

The buffalo bull prays to the Whirlwind before he fights, by kicking up dust. Buffalo bulls will encircle the herd in a protective shield that cannot be outflanked, and they will always protectively stand round any fallen brother or sister, until they can get back to their feet= no one is abandoned, or left behind. The buffalo shows great strength through steadfastness, always advancing step by step, never getting ahead of itself, never flying before it can run, but growing in power by the consistent and unremitting advance that takes on each problem as it arises, faces and deals with it, and only then moves ahead. As Wilmer Mesteth puts it, the buffalo is the cure for our most basic and far reaching human disease of 'pre-maturity.'

The bear is irritable, and fierce= his tolerance of human nonsense is almost non-existent [though as healer, he is open to and patient with human need]. The bear rushes an enemy without fear. This sudden on-rush can just blow all opposition away, but it can be vulnerable to taking many wounds in the process. Thus the bear combines immense power with vulnerability.

The badger is in many ways like a smaller version of the bear; his chief helping attribute is tenacity.

The wolf – as the archetypal mentor of war in both its spiritual and material dimensions – has many helping attributes crucial to the warrior. He moves through the world quietly, with acute attentiveness and alertness to the surrounding terrain, from which arises his scouting and hunting abilities; he also has speed, but the ability to change course in the heat of the moment, in order to adapt to changing circumstances; he goes on and on to get a quarry, never giving in or giving up along the way however hard it gets. The wolf has the courage to take on any fight for the sake of brothers and sisters, but the strength to back off from pointless fights where only ego, false glory, pride, are at stake; he cares nothing for show, and never mouths off about his warrior prowess, because he knows he has nothing to prove. He possesses the secret of strength, which is make your stand, do your action, and let it fall as it will; he is not attached to the outcome of action but lets its truth speak for itself. The wolf's close relationship to the Thunder Being is shown by the fact he can predict the weather. It is also said he has 'all knowledge', because in being a good scout and hunter, he studies all the other animals, and comes to

understand their ways. He usually fights alongside comrades, and always for the sake of comradeship; it is the wolf who primordially taught the balance between individual freedom, responsibility, initiative, and collective togetherness, solidarity, sharing. Therefore fidelity to the common interest that holds people in commitment to one another is his main motive. The penetrating wolf gaze looks fear in the face, thus teaches non avoidance of all that terrifies, unsettles, anguishes, the human heart; by looking at it unflinchingly, he out-stares it, and gets to the bottom of it. The wolf has the gift of invisibility with which to disorient an enemy, causing them to become lost and confused= his howl will produce an eerie wind and yellow fog, and a mist that crawls close to the ground.

Many Lakota and other Plains Indian stories about the wolf teach the primary ethic of communalism: when you help, you are helped; when you give, you are given to; and wolves often appear to humans who are in trouble, to help them get through to the other side – though if these humans do not learn the lesson of reciprocity, they lose any further wolf assistance. Wolves are helpers, and teachers; though not a healing animal per se, they teach in a manner that has healing properties. Wolves are guides on the spirit road, who help and teach us on this hard road, as well as defenders who protect us as we walk it. Thus their crowning attribute is the wisdom that comes from sweat, tears, and blood, as we travel far and fight without let up, for the people. It is wolves who see the first light, the new dawn of what is coming to everyone and everything, which makes the long journey and tough battle worthwhile. Finally, it is wolves who guide human beings across the strange wasteland between life and death, protecting them in this numinous transition where they can be lost.

Fox is traditionally regarded a less powerful warrior animal, but he has the gift of seeing without being seen. Sometimes called “many tracks”, he is adroit at fooling people, by sleight of hand, fast footwork, and spiritual camouflage. Fox is good at finding the food caches of other animals, so he is a kind of divine thief. But fox is not a good loser.

Every warrior must “call upon the eagle.” Eagle brings that clarity of vision which can only be bestowed from above to below: the divine revelation that comes from beyond the sky but first appears in the sky and then subsequently descends down to the earth. I once had a visionary dream in which there was an eagle dancing on the ground, first left to right making a circle, its wings slanted in one direction from the ground to the sky, then right to left making the reverse circle, its wings slanting in the opposite direction ground to sky; Wilmer Mesteth told me, when I asked him about this dream, that on the eagle’s wings are all the designs the Creator used in creating everything that is. In the same way that eagle brings the Great Mystery’s vision to the earth, so he also sees with spiritual discernment and acuteness all that happens on the earth. Without the eagle, the warrior has not got spiritual eyes, and therefore does not know what he is fighting for: his fighting does not serve the spiritual, but serves himself or some lesser motive that is unworthy. Eagle signifies the challenge of and need for genuine spiritual accomplishment that raises up the human heart, and creates strength of character; which is why eagle feathers were earned by

brave or effortful deeds, one feather signifying one such spiritual achievement. [To wear feathers, when you have not earned the right by performing the great deeds they signify, would be the worst cheating imaginable. Empty bragging and posturing is not compatible with real spiritual accomplishment.] The eagle invariably succeeds in reaching spiritual ends, as the Great Mystery succeeds in embodying his vision on earth. Thus it is said that when the eagle swoops, he never misses his prey; his power grants the warrior the ability to overcome all enemies.

The hawk is a messenger, like the eagle, but he knows how to hover, surveying a terrain thoroughly, then swoop with lightning speed. He helps the warrior wait for the right moment, but when it arrives, to strike with total commitment, or in Japanese samurai terms, to be “unhesitating.” To go straight in, after holding back to see how the land lays, is a gift of the hawk. The hawk strikes quickly and accurately, and cannot be killed by arrows, bullets, hail, or lightning; he has “a charmed life”, it is said.

Called “riders in the cloud”, the flying of swallows always precedes a thunder storm. This bird is closely related to the Thunder Being. He is swift and agile, wheeling and turning in ways hard to get any purchase on. Like the hawk, he cannot be killed and leads a charmed life.

The horse is also associated with the Thunder Being: lightning has wings, and is often portrayed seated upon a horse. Traditionally, all good warrior horses should be as swift and agile as the swallow. A horse needs this ability not only to help the warrior evade enemy attacks, but also to help the warrior mount attacks which are hard to anticipate and hence impossible to stop.

The dragonfly, like the butterfly, is hard to hit. He moves like the whirlwind: he can whirl and dart, and this twisting motion can create confusion in the mind of an enemy. He is linked to hawk and swallow in being virtually impossible to kill in battle.

The spider is called “a friend of the Thunder”, and is a relative of the Whirlwind. The spider’s web protects a warrior’s shield, even from bullets, as well as lances and arrows.

The bird counterpart of the wolf is raven. Ravens and wolves hunt together, and wolves always leave a portion of their kill for these watchful companions. In Celtic mythology, raven was the war goddess, a feminine wisdom crucial to the true exercise of masculine action. Among the Lakota and other Plains Indians, the raven has a secret knowledge of that which is hidden from ordinary perception, and reveals this as prophecy or omen. The crow finds lost things, but signifies in addition the sacred ‘natural law’, as it is written by the Creator in woman – not the law invented by men, which has no root in the Creator. For some tribes, since the crow tends to be the first at a kill, it is said that warriors want their arrows “to fly as swift and straight as a crow.” The raven, and crow, connection to what is secret, what is hidden – the invisible world just behind the appearances of the everyday world – means that they link

the warrior way to some subtle sacred providence at work in the background of human affairs. Mystical realities hover near the warrior path, initiating it into darkness and helping it find its feet in darkness. The only light emerges through darkness.

In a similar vein, especially for the Lakota, the owl has the ability to see at night, thus has eyes that work in darkness. Stepping into the numinous darkness of the unknown is inevitable for the warrior; hence to have the owl's seeing in the dark is crucial. But owl is mainly a medicine person's animal, and is said to inspire a style of healing that comes in a manner that is soft and gentle.

[II] The Good Red Road and the Bad Black Road

In Lakota culture, there are 2 ways that cross, like holding up your right forearm vertically, then crossing it with your left forearm horizontally:

- 1 – the way of the healer
- 2 – the way of the warrior

- 1 – the way of the healer is Sanctification
- 2 – the way of the warrior is Sacrifice

Sanctification, or “making sacred”, can be identified with the good red road of purification and spiritual understanding that runs south to north.

Sacrifice, or “dying for the people”, can be identified with the bad black road of worldly difficulties and war that runs west to east.

Black Elk said that the Great Mystery has made both of these roads, and furthermore, has made these 2 roads to cross, for the place where they cross is holy. His prayer=

“Grandfather, Great Spirit, once more behold me on earth and lean to hear my feeble voice. You lived first, and you are older than all need, older than all prayer. All things belong to you – the 2 legged, the 4 legged, the wings of the air, and all green things that live.

You have made the powers of the 4 quarters of the earth to cross each other. You have made the good road and the road of difficulties to cross, and the place where they cross is holy.”

The good red road ‘naturally’ runs from south to north, because the natural movement from youth to age, from ripening to the white hairs, if embraced in a sacred manner, produces purification and wisdom. Going from summer to winter, from the expansiveness of bright morning to the contraction of dark night, if not resisted but learned from spiritually, produces sanctification. This natural pulling in of the horns is spoken of as a “purgation by cold winds and healing snows, washing away the old and preparing for the new.” The

harshness of the north, extinguishing the luxuriance of the south, makes us strong and persevering; “harshness is bracing to our weakness.” This ‘bracingness’ is necessary to the healing of sickness, which is like a deadness, a worn out and rigid self-enclosed structure that needs suppleness, openness, receptiveness, to the spiritual if it is not to become totally encrusted and static.

But if this natural process of losing and letting go is resisted, then old age is experienced only as the diminishing of youthful power: a spoiling of its potency, as when a fruit on the vine goes off. If this process is accepted, and its lessons learned, then the passing of ripening produces something more fruitful from a spiritual point of view: the flowering of old age, the final sanctified human being whose death will be a rebirth, not a final end. The good red road cannot run from north to south, but its naturalness can either be made sacred, and understood in its spiritual meaning, or that naturalness will lose all sacredness. We are all walking south to north over the course of our life, but whether we are walking in a sacred manner is another matter. Ascetic and sacramental practices are crucial on the good red road, for it is these that allow the people to shed what divides them, and to come together, and stay together, as one corporate body. On this road, the soul’s life, beauty, joy, providence, are realized, and the soul becomes the ‘dwelling’ where the Great Mystery, Nature, and the People, all draw close, and unite in a rich sharing and inter-personal communion. All genuinely good things, which are sacred in origin, flow through this communion, like blood circulates in the body.

The bad black road, however, can be walked in either direction and it is the direction in which it is walked that defines whether it is taken in a good manner or a bad manner. The good way to walk this road is west to east, but the bad way to walk this road is east to west – the direction the white man came in his greed and violence to colonize the western frontier. Walking the bad road in a good manner means good emerges from this road’s badness, whereas walking the bad road in a bad manner means evil emerges from this road’s badness. For a warrior who is rooted in spirituality, the ‘peace movement’ that wants to close down the black road entirely can never succeed, and is both wrong-headed and heartless. The Great Mystery has made this bad road every bit as much as the other good road, and more paradoxically, has made the two roads intersect. A warrior’s challenge is to walk the black road in a good manner, by overcoming in himself any weakness, any temptation, to walk the black road in a bad manner. He must not go east to west, his direction is west to east; and if he goes in this direction, he will encounter the place where the two roads are made to cross: the place where spiritual understanding must embrace the anguish and torment of the badness that hits it on the black road, taking away its light and its joy, and plunging it into a depth of unknowing and of pain. In this way, a new and greater spiritual understanding can only emerge from difficulties and war. That which is sacred must be stretched, broken and remade, if it is to reach the Great Mystery’s holiness.

The sacred is tested, in two senses, on the road of the world’s drama and tumult: [i] it is tested as to what it is made of, what its heart really is, what it really believes and will give of itself; and [ii] it tests or tries out a radicalism of

heart that would not be brought forth except in an existentially precarious situation where something of supreme value is put at basic jeopardy – the heart has to fight to care about it, for if the heart refuses to fight, it abandons that endangered value.

The south–north axis of the sacred circle is natural, and ontological. But the west–east axis is historical, and existential. The west is autumn, the darkening of evening stretching into the deep night. It is said that in the west, where brother sun departs, we are brought into darkness so we may search for the questions of our life. But as Victor Frankl discovered in the Nazi concentration camp, this darkness that comes with entry onto the bad black road of worldly difficulties and war is where we lose all our certainties and safeguards= it is not we who question existence, he said, but existence that questions us. The questions that hit us in the existential darkness of the world put our whole life in doubt= they search out and test the heart to the limit.

The place of the west on the sacred circle signifies that existential apprehension, anguish, torment, tumult, drama, trouble, that discerns good from evil and ‘tries out’ truth.

- 1 – The healing way of Sanctification is the Soul’s way
- 2 – The warrior way of Sacrifice is the Heart’s way

[III] The Place of the West, and its Guardian, Wakinyan Tanka

The Thunder Being is the spiritual guardian of the west, and the patron of warriors. The thunderstorm that heralds Wakinyan Tanka’s presence comes in the spring and lasts through the autumn. The thunder clap, lightning with its electric power, winds, hailstones, and the rain, all betoken the activity of Wakinyan Tanka.

Black Elk: “The Thunder Being comes fearfully, but brings healing rain.” He threatens the worldly, who are attached to the bad road in the wrong way – a way of fear that urges us to protect ourselves alone, and get all the selfish advantage we can grab, without concern for what is at stake in the badness, nor for our brothers and sisters caught up in its peril – but he reassures the spiritual, who are trying to find a path by which to walk the bad road in a good way – a way of courage, integrity and solidarity.

Black Elk says the Thunder Being has “the power to make live and the power to destroy.” The former is the cup of living waters. The latter is the zigzag lightning, and pounding hail. Lightning flushes out evil from its hiding place.

Black Elk also says the Thunder Being guards “the place where all things pass, which is the source of the greatest power.” Flamenco’s ‘deep song’ is sung from this place “on the rim.” The Greek term ‘Daemonic’ describes the power here: a revelation that the divine inflicts as a wound, which brings about a profounder good in the end.

The Thunder Being of the west is thus the source of the most terrible and wonderful 'empowerment.' It is said of this: if you serve truth, empowerment is for good; if you serve yourself, empowerment is for evil.

Wakinyan Tanka of the west reveals and empowers the 'spiritual warfare' in which all creation is caught up. Lightning confronts evil in its secretiveness.

Spiritual Warfare: the sword of truth is placed in our keeping. This sword is not a toothpick for stabbing what we find inconvenient, to clear it out of our self-seeking path. "Have a nice day, get out of my way." The sword is lightning come down to earth.

Thus, this sword [a] *cuts away* masks that hide from truth; [b] *cuts into* lies precious and enshrined in our heart and exposes the truth they distort; and [c] *cuts to shreds* lies in the world that make it hell on earth.

Truth: not the doctrinal truth of religion, not the abstract ideas of philosophy, science, or art. Truth here is heart truth.

Sword: the truth by which the heart lives and dies, in itself, and in and for the world. This is the truth that enables people to Stand, Step Up, and Act from the real, deeper heart.

Thus, the sword on which lightning dances and from which thunder sounds is the truth that burns in the heart like fire, and tests the heart for its mettle, in a molten furnace, so that it becomes as unwavering as steel. A Scots king once cried, "give me Irish fire and Scottish steel."

Truth wounds us, and wounds the world, before it can heal. People want to be healed, but they don't want truth. A Lakota prayer:

Truth is coming
It will hurt me
You can heal me
I rejoice.

Truth of heart therefore embraces existence, the world, history, and materiality. Its road runs west to east; it is horizontal. This road throws the heart into the deep pain of existence, the pain that is black. Without this pain, there is no truth; without this pain, there is no redemption of the world.

Truth of heart takes on existence's ultimate challenge= the ultimate obstacle to having a heart in the world, for the world. It faces up to this courageously, yet it is not only brave toward it, but is also generous in self-giving and help to all others caught up in the same predicament, and long-suffering in the bearing and enduring of it, and willing to pay the price for it and carry the burden of it. The Cante Tenze symbol of this: the warrior who is staked to the ground, and sees the battle through, no matter what happens to him.

Something is at stake in existence, and the heart is staked to it, as a sacrifice, because the heart knows this is what matters most.

Truth is fighting against us and for us, so that we can fight for and against the world.

Thus, when the heart struggles for truth, it develops virtues like courage, generosity, fortitude, persevering, honesty, loyalty, faithfulness, boldness and daring, kindness and compassion, humility, modesty, mercifulness. But these virtues are not really just moral. They are existential. They arise out of the way the heart is big enough to meet existence's Call, and yet face up to and suffer existence's Block. Hence our existential calling and existence's most daunting challenge are one and the same. If we answer the call to a task, a duty, a heart deed, we also have to embrace what the ordeal is, and what the cost to us is: what the loss to us is for the sake of a greater gain.

What a warrior does, from the heart, for truth, is not cheap. It is a great struggle, and it ventures on a long journey, and fights a savage battle. It goes out over the deep, it tests the deep of existence.

Truth is the origin and aim of passion. Hence, passion is ardent for truth, fervent for truth, zealous for truth, angry for truth. The warrior is the central figure of passion's seeking of and loyalty to truth, along with three others: chief/king; sage/prophet; sacred clown/holy fool.

Empowerment is nothing more and nothing less than the sparking of the passion that wrestles with something in existence dangerous, hard, wounding, costly, for the sake of what is most ultimately valuable, and most under attack from 'fleshly', 'worldly' and 'evil' forces seeking its total destruction.

Truth is what sustains heart passion= it is entrusted with the care of truth, required by truth to act with honour, called by truth to the ultimate give-away of the self.

The truth served by passion inevitably has enemies. Passion stirs up enmity against its way of truth, because the non passionate, the anti passionate, do not want truth to expose their stand as lacking truth: as not a stand on truth and a stand for truth, but as a falling down in heart and a falling down in the world. This would be shaming. This would induce guilt. The warrior is the world's conscience, and to the extent the world wants to be deaf to its own inner voice of conscience, so the warrior's way of voicing conscience in the very manner of his standing will be feared, resented, hated, opposed.

To those who have fallen but want to stand up again, the warrior is the encourager, the helping hand, the 'comfort' in the Old English sense that strengthens. To those who are oppressed, taken advantage of and impoverished, by the heartlessness and lies of the rich and high-handed, the warrior is the champion.

[IV] The Engine of Passion

1, Risk and Danger= Nothing ventured, nothing gained. The 'wisdom of insecurity', which brings zest, excitement and colour to all of life, preciousness to each passing moment, and binds people together in the common jeopardy. Your richness becomes the people with whom you stand in reciprocal dependence and mutual trust, not the possessions that supposedly create around you a bulwark against danger. There is nothing in life you can rely upon except people. "A truly poor man has no friends, no loves, no songs."

2, Hardship= We appreciate nothing that we haven't made our own by our effort, and sweat. The 'wisdom of step by step', which builds stamina and strength, patience and fortitude, persistence and long-suffering. Keep going, don't give in and don't give up. Difficulty hones you, strips you of the unnecessary and the bogus, and draws you beyond the safe shore out onto the wave tossed sea. Pressure and tension, as well as pain, must be borne and endured, to reach the far shore.

3, Suffering= We suffer to lose that in us which cannot love, so we can acquire the suffering for what we love. The 'wisdom of sorrow and grieving.' Tears purify the heart. Grief connects you to the predicament humanity is in, and grief opens you to all those grieving in the common tragedy. To help people, you must be hurt for them= you must join them where they are hurt.

4, Cost= There is always a 'trade-off', a friend says. What we give up, and give away, to follow heart truth is costly; we will sweat white beads, shed tears in rivers, and let our blood go into the ground, to plant a seed and kindle a spark.

5, Reversal= The spiritual is the inverse of normality. It overturns falsity, in the sense of pompous respectability, baseless authority, stupid convention, rigid expectation. The 'wisdom of being turned upside down and inside out.' The tower hit by lightning, and brought low. Holy Fool or Heyoka= God's laughter at our pretension and false building up to reach too high. Zen is full of this earthy laughter. Old Testament God= "My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways." Paradox's Koan, and Cross. You will pass through the eye of a needle, and find truth only if there are edges, gaps, and cracks; beware solid floors that are prison house walls.

In the end, the heart that can stand and fight for truth can test and forge the world for its truth. As the truth slays our heart to remake it, so our heart becomes the truth that can slay the world to remake it.

The trinity here is:

GOD → HEART ← WORLD

For the warrior way, this trinity can never be broken apart. No warrior will abandon the world 'to go to God.' Going to God means, for the warrior, going to

the world for God, to act as God, and to die as God. Only sacrifice brings about the redemption of everybody and everything.

This is the truth the warrior serves in the heart.

Before everything else, the heart is a warrior.

[V] Some Crucial Aspects of Passion in the Warrior Way

1, Courage in relation to Fear

Wilmer Mesteth once told me, “The lessons of the west have to do with the knowledge of one’s own courage in the face of danger.” He also said to me, at a time on the reservation when I was assaulted by strange spiritual terrors, “whatever you do, don’t run.”

Fear is primal. A warrior lives with fear, and faces fear, and wrestles with fear. He does not overcome fear in the sense of being able to banish it; this would not help. He defeats fear in the sense of ceasing to allow it to condition his existence. Most people live lives where fear sets the limit on what they can do with their heart. They dare not challenge this limit, thus the heart becomes severely limited in any risk, hardship, suffering, cost, it will take on. Fear restricts passion. It is fear that counts cost and measures out gifts meanly; it is fear that silences conscience and makes our heart deaf to what is calling it out. Fear shrivels the heart, and hems it in. To overcome fear is not to cease to experience it, but to cease to let this experience close us down and shut us in; instead, the experience becomes a cutting edge, on which we take our stand.

Fear is deep. Fear perceives reality correctly but incompletely. Fear is a journey; only at the end of this journey is fear overcome. Those who run from fear make no beginning, and never reach any end. Thus fear always chases them, like the ghost at the feast.

We fear all sorts of things. The ultimate fear is death, and beyond that, Nonbeing.

There are two things we can learn by staying with, not running from, fear. The first is what resolved my crisis on the reservation.

[i] If you live for the people, you do not die alone. The people are with you, as you make your give-away of life. If you live for yourself, you die alone, as life is taken from you.

A different death.

[ii] Fear is, at depth, fear of God. At depth we fear what God is doing with us and with the world. And we fear the world: the nothing it rests in. For if we act decisively in the world, we invite retaliation, and thus we step out over the abyss beneath the world, knowing we could plunge in.

If God will enter this nothing, we fear. If God won't enter it, we fear. Fear rouses our deepest ambivalence about using the heart: what if God is in the abyss and requires the heart to leap in? What if God is not in the abyss and we leap in and merely fall forever?

Only when we have found God in the abyss of our heart do we really trust God's presence in the abyss beneath the world. This is when love 'casts out' fear; wisdom begins in fear but ends in love, where fear is overcome. This really means, where our ambivalence about using our heart is overcome. Fear reveals we are in a precarious situation and fear reveals what is required of us if we are to have a heart in that situation, and enter its arena to fight for what is at stake there. Only trust in the Great Mystery allows us to trust our heart and trust the deed in the world to which it is called.

Fear is resolved in a paradox. On the one hand, we can do nothing: in the hands of fate, God, world. On the other hand, we can do the one thing that matters supremely.

This is true heroism.

To do what you must, to serve the one thing needful; yet not believe you are in control, and are able to do it of yourself. This paradox is freeing: it enables you to not evade doing the thing that matters most, but go out on a limb for it, go to the edge, go to the gap, go to the Cross.

On the rim, where the real warrior fights, the options are few and narrow down only to one, but this last one is very powerful.

True heroism is surrender: "Thy will be done."

In this way, we also find strength, which is ceasing to hide from the world= make your move openly, and let it fall as it will. Be free of the outcome.

The courage forged through fear is dauntless, and unrelenting.

The Maori 'haka', nowadays said before every New Zealand rugby match, but an old warrior chant, declares this final place the heart reaches: "It is for life, It is for death."

2, Anger For Truth

Anger is the fire in the belly that must go into the heart. The Japanese 'hara' or the Greek 'thymos' [thymos in ancient Greek meant 'spirited, angry, passionate']. False peace is always sought at the expense of the anger that rouses us to warfare on behalf of truth; this is why such a phoney peace, whether between nations or between persons, never works, merely suppressing what anger needs to say and what anger needs to do. Anger is the

Witness to truth, who won't let the truth be falsified so as to give us an easier ride.

[a] Anger is the courage to do what is right, no matter the consequences to oneself.

[b] Tibetan Buddhism: anger brings "clarity." But anger is more than that. Anger brings truth. When the heart is stirred by passion for the truth, it takes no care for itself – for its status, for its safety – but gives itself wholly over, in fervour and zeal which is intense, to the fire of truth.

[c] Truth has two faces: generosity, kindness, compassion. But truth also comes "terribly." Anger is the face of truth when it needs to come terribly because it cannot come gently. If it came gently, it would be disregarded. So it comes in a way that commands attention, and respect, like it or not. This does not mean anger departs from politeness. But it does mean anger cuts through all the indifference, all the flimflam, all the evasion. It electrifies any situation where it suddenly strides in, because everyone involved knows truth is coming, like it or not.

[d] Anger can be distorted into hate, revenge or vengeance, malice and nastiness, maliciousness, and hostility. Twisted anger – not straight as an arrow which is what anger spiritually is.

[e] Psychologically, fear and hurt elicit anger as a defence. Pride that is wounded also releases self-protective anger, as in narcissistic injury that explodes out as narcissistic rage. We have all observed these defensive angers in ourselves and in those close to us. They accomplish nothing for truth, on any level. Emotional venting can make people feel relieved. But defensive anger never clarifies truth, personal, social, spiritual. It muddies an already muddy water still more. Yet most anger, even when not distorted and evil, is merely defending the indefensible, and helps nothing.

[f] Anger can also serve selfishness, and become its defender, as when nations and persons think they have a 'right' to use violence to keep their private property from any sharing with the brother and sister. Violent anger often defends avaricious greed and lust; anger is the defender of theft. This connection with the avarice within greed and lust is why anger manifests also in jealousy and envy.

[g] The pure spiritual impulse in anger is protective. To protect the innocent, and to fight for justice for all. Justice reflects not European Enlightenment secular humanist notions of 'human rights', but the spiritual fact every person is equal in God's love, and thus this love prefers none over others, benefits none over others, and never abandons some whilst saving others. All are saved, together, as a corporate reality, or none are saved. God has no favourites. God appoints leaders, but from these more is expected, in giving and in sacrifice. God is "no respecter of persons", and has no concern for the hierarchies to which we kowtow. The leader is the servant of all; and whenever we abase

ourselves to any other person, it is for the sake of humility and modesty, not to break the equality that holds all in God's love.

[h] Anger is a Witness to the heart truth of what really happened, or what was really done. Anger won't let this truth be buried or lied about, or masked over. It must come out. It must be exposed, or everything sickens and goes wrong.

[i] The heart cannot live and act without truth: it falls into depression, and decline; becomes listless, bored and restless; loses its path or direction. When anger for truth is thrown away, 'accidie' results: a desert. Nothing matters. Nothing is of value. Nothing has purpose. Bitterness becomes the gall in our mouth, night and day, in this condition. In Greek, this word refers to something like 'the unburied', but it means we are so burnt out we do not even have the energy to bury those we love, much less stand with them in the fight for truth in the world. The ultimate lie, and defeat of the heart, is to fall into this 'apathy.' It exists widely on the res.

[j] In anger, we must journey beyond recovering our psychological hurts, to an anger that arises out of joining other people in their hurt. Most anger remains too personal: it only cares about the self. Anger must become the fight for justice. Without justice, there can be no peace.

[k] The other impulse in anger: anger is hopeful. It believes people can do better. Anger seeks to restore what has gone wrong, so that it can go well. This is evident in the prophetic anger of the ancient Jewish prophets, but it is also at the root of God's anger with humanity. As God says, this anger will not last, it is only for a time, and it exists to blast away our attachment to delusion and folly and iniquity, and to bring us back to our more basic attachment to truth. God's anger expresses God's unwavering belief in the human heart whose burden and wound we all share.

[l] The Desert Tradition of Eastern Orthodox Christianity says that anger, when holy, is the most 'self-transcending' of all passion. It pleases not itself, but offers itself up in 'ex-stasis' for a greater drama in which it is the servant, and for which it will die. Anger, when on fire with God, will go to any lengths, and will entirely forget itself in the doing of what must be done. This makes anger the most dangerous passion to all those resisting truth, whether because of fleshly heaviness, worldly inducement, or devilish lying. Nothing can stop this 'anger for truth.' If it takes hits, it keeps coming. It cannot be tired out, seduced, bought off, deflected. It keeps coming and will not give up or give in.

[m] Beyond protectiveness and hope in being able to make reparation, anger is God's own weapon defending human beings from the evil spirits. God is not angry with us, nor has any desire to punish us; God's wrath is set against the forces of evil that desire and will the destruction of the project God and humanity are engaged in together: building a human heart capable of containing and acting for the divine heart. Therefore, anger is our weapon against demonic forces that want to intimidate and break us from within, incapacitating us for what we are called to do without.

“Be angry, yet do not sin” [Septuagint= Psalm 4, 5]. St Athanasios: “Obtain righteousness, do righteousness, and offer it in sacrifice to God.”

3, Gentleness, Chivalry, Kindness

The Lakota say, “A man of great heart has self-control, bravery, and generosity.” Generosity tempers anger’s strictness, and guarantees that we are never petty, small, or pinched, in heart. This is why gentleness and terribleness are two sides of the same coin: the truth that anger is ‘vehement’ for is the truth of the heart – the truth that there is heart in everyone and a primal goodness of heart in everyone, which no spiritual fallenness can remove. Thus, anger’s other side is to see that ‘good heart’ in everyone, and to help it grow. When anger is mastered and developed spiritually, it creates a compassionate strength that never struts, brags, looks down upon or threatens other people more weak, but always puts forth a giving, and kind, hand to them. In extremis, then, a warrior can fight the world, or can offer his death to the world as a sacrifice. Either way – the Sword or the Cross – his passion for truth has faith in redemption. It is the redemption of all that defeats any ultimate reward and punishment, any ultimate division between just and unjust. Sacrifice, to bring out the good which is lost or imprisoned in delusion, proves to be God’s judgement on judgementalism.

4, Eros and the Womanly

The west of the sacred circle polarizes masculinity and femininity, and brings them into relation. A friend who is a pastoral psychotherapist to the American military tells me that the training to be a soldier, and the experience of war, engenders men who find it impossible to span the masculine and feminine Worlds; they return from the Daemonic arena incapable of finding any Eros with which to husband their wives and father their children. A rigid masculinity rules out any link to femininity. This is a hallmark of the soldier, but the warrior is different.

Warriors among the Lakota were good husbands and good fathers. They knew how to return from the daemonic arena and re-enter the feminine tipi, to appreciate and care for its many gifts, its many good things. Many Lakota warriors also had artistic talent, and could find that reality of the Daemonic which Socrates experienced as ‘the creative spirit’ that tutored him.

In the Orient, a Buddhist woman who was a nun in a monastery founded kung fu: the masculine element is tiger, the feminine element is crane. The latter signifies speed and fluidity, which veers toward dance, and becomes the basis of defence. The former signifies ferocity and directness, like an arrow shot from a bow, and becomes the basis of offence.

In the old times, the Cante Tenze had an advisor who was regarded a sacred woman. Among the Iroquois, in those past days, it was the women who decided war or no war.

A warrior is fundamentally connected to woman; he protects her, and he listens to her and can be guided by her. He is no cruel brute, no blind robot, no rigid erectness whose flesh has become a hard and cold armour that nothing can touch.

The Thunder Being of the west removes weariness and restores energy, and he also cleans away lust. Lust – as the fallen or distorted version of Eros – threatens a warrior. Lust must be overcome, as well as bullying. Lust destroys a fighting heart: it becomes a phantasy get-out from putting yourself on the line, a way of easy victories [over the opposite sex, as opposed to your true enemy], and creates a yearning toward ease and comfort, which makes it impossible to bear and endure, in order to hang tough through thick and thin.

Among the Lakota, any man who tended toward bullying was liable to be kicked out of the tipi by his woman, which was a public shaming. He had to take it, and not protest. If he complained, that merely reinforced his lack of manly stature. Moreover, if any wife was abused by her husband, he could be expelled from the tribe, or in extremis, killed by her brothers without anyone objecting. Normally, the killing of one's own was the severest taboo. But it was lifted in the case of men harming women.

Traditionally it was said, if men are not brave [in the Daemonic], the rains do not fall; if women are not virtuous [in the Erotic], the buffalo do not return.

PART TWO= THE CANTE TENZE, PAST AND PRESENT

[I] The Cante Tenze Warrior Society: Past

1, Name

'Cante' means heart, and 'Tenze' means Strong, Brave, Resolute, or even Undaunted. Strong Hearts, Brave Hearts, Resolute Hearts, Undaunted Hearts, are all roughly equivalent. As far as I can tell, the Cante Tenze was one of 5 main warrior societies among the Oglala Lakota, the others being the Kit Foxes [Tokala], Packs White [Wicinska], Crow Owners [Kangi Yuha], Go Right On Through [Iy Uptala]. But I have never checked this with Wilmer Mesteth, so I put it provisionally. The Cante Tenze are virtually the same warrior society as the Dog Soldiers among the Cheyenne.

2, Organization

Traditionally there were two chiefs, or "bonnet wearers." There was also a sacred woman present at Cante Tenze councils.

In addition, there were 4 lance-bearers, 2 whip-bearers, 1 food-passer, 4 drummers and 8 singers, plus 30-40 lay members.

3, Initiation

Candidates to become Cante Tenze had to attend society dances, with red paint on their faces. The Cante Tenze tipi was often in the centre of the camp circle. Anyone could go to their meetings and eat their food. There was always food on offer there, for everyone: they were known for their generosity, as well as their bravery. Also, they wanted to foster a non-elite attitude among warriors, and a sense of service to the ordinary people. Looking down on anyone, or using the strength acquired in the warrior way of life to stand apart and trumpet superiority to an inferior populace, was and still is radically unacceptable to the Lakota. Arrogance toward ordinary folk is not part of the Lakota ethos.

The Cante Tenze induction consisted in the young man living a year with one of the poorest families in the tribe and taking care of their every need, from hunting for food to menial chores like carrying heavy firewood up a hill for an elderly person. Whatever the family's needs, it was the job of the young initiate to look after them, and see they did not go without.

The Cante Tenze did welfare, not just fighting. Indeed, traditionally people came to the Cante Tenze to sort out all kinds of physical, social, political, problems. They always knew the Cante Tenze would get it done, whatever it was. Hence the Cante Tenze were especially known as a catalyst for action; they were relied upon to be 'can do' and 'will do' for the people. The Strong Hearts earned their name because they were the ones who would always step up when others backed away. This remains so to the present day.

4, Feathers

Eagle feathers are rays of the sun; each one worn by a warrior signifies a brave deed that is valued not for its bravado, but for being an accomplishment that is spiritual in nature. Such a deed must be witnessed and publicly testified to by another person. A man without any feathers is without any spiritual accomplishments, and no position of responsibility will come to him in the society. Many feathers signifies many of these accomplishments: such a man will be listened to in councils, and regarded as great among his people.

5, Sash Wearers

Those called "sash wearers" were the warriors who carried the heavy burden of staking themselves to the ground in a hard fight that could go either way.

A statement is made by the staking.

To the people you defend it says: You are not abandoned. I won't withdraw from this place.

To the enemy it says: This is my stand, I will go all the way, to beat me you are going to have to go all the way.

The staking declares: I stake myself to what is most at stake, at the place where it is most at stake.

This is a warrior's Give-Away. This is a warrior's Sacrifice. This is warrior passion.

This deed of the warrior reveals the passion that takes a risk, carries a weight, suffers a wound, pays a cost, for love: it does this to care about what love puts at stake and only love can redeem.

The warrior staked to the ground cannot release himself. Only another person can release him. Why is this? Once made, this Vow binds him to the sticking place. What holds him to that place, since no one else has put him there? Honour is what holds him. It is circular, and illogical: it is honour that motivates the making of the warrior Vow, and it is honour that motivates the keeping of that warrior Vow.

Vow: to die for the people.

Honour: to keep your promise, to be true to the word your heart declares in its deed.

There are two mystical realities revealed here.

God – a being of passion, a being of great heartedness.

The People – standing together in one human heart.

It is God's vow to defend and save all the people that a warrior's vow leans on, and believes in; a warrior's vow is only upheld by the vow God makes primordially; the irrationality and sacrifice of the latter draws strength from the inexplicable self-giving and self-emptying of the former. And, when a warrior repeats the sacrifice God made primordially, this becomes the means for drawing the people together, and showing them there is really only one heart all humans share. The deep heart is a ground on which all stand. But this is also the killing ground, for it is here that all the forces that fragment the people into islands of fear, and self-interest, contest the ground where they could stand together. Staking, with its ultimate sacrifice of dying, takes the killing ground back and makes it the heart ground.

Thus, a warrior not only makes God's Vow, but he also upholds God's Honour. When the last warrior has gone from the world, leaving its killing ground uncontested, it will then be as if God never made a Vow and God has no Honour. The world's killing ground will be handed over to the evil spirit, and there will be no heart ground on which all stand together in the common destiny; the human heart which is really at depth only one will fragment and splinter into isolated, frightened, competing, hostile enclaves, each staked to nothing and each only caring about its own personal advantage, no matter what disadvantage that inflicts on the rest.

This is not the Greek conception of the warrior's honour, exemplified in heroes like Achilles and Alexander. For the ancient Greeks, honour was seeking immortality: it meant becoming as special as the gods, to be remembered forever, unlike ordinary mortals who had no charisma and were soon forgotten. This sets up an inherent cultural rivalry between the superior few and the inferior many. For the Greeks, honour just means glory for myself, in contrast to the drabness of all the rest of you. The charisma associated with honour is exclusionary.

For the Lakota, this Greek glory-seeking is a betrayal of what the warrior really is. The true warrior rallies the people: he is a hero to them because he believes in them. He is their self-belief.

He stands and makes the ultimate sacrifice for the Common Destiny. What happens to one happens to all. We sink or swim, together.

The paradox of the warrior's two-edged sword is this: until we make peace with the Common Destiny, it is at war with us.

A warrior lives for honour, not for freedom. Freedom is a given. Honour is attained.

His honour is not his own excellence, it is the honour of God and the honour of the people he lives for.

A warrior only fears betraying honour.

An old Cante Tenze prayer says: "Wakinyan Tanka, have pity on us, and let the tribe live on."

It then addresses the directions, starting with the west: "Help us with strength, so that the tribe will live."

To the north: "Send us cold winds and let the tribe live."

To the east: "Shine out in full to us and let the tribe live."

To the south it invokes good winds, because the south sends sickness, as well as being the origin of life.

A warrior prays not that he will survive, but that his life or his death will help the people to live.

6, Setting Out

The wolf was always asked for help when any war party set out. The scouts needed to have the wolf's ability to track a quarry through all kinds of terrain, and relied on the wolf to tell them 'who was in the neighbourhood': something wolves always knew. [Hunters, for example, could always consult wolves as to

what game was in the vicinity.] In addition, wolf songs were sung by the warriors, to reinforce their solidarity in the coming fight. In a real sense, the wolf spirit presides over main activities crucial to conducting warfare on a spiritual basis.

A Cheyenne scouting song:

“Wolf I am.
In darkness
In light
Wherever I search
Wherever I run

Wherever I stand
Everything
will be good
because Creator
protects us.
ea ea ea ho.”

But the warrior road also requires searing honesty about our failings. Here is a Lakota song that involves the humility of a reality check:

“A wolf I considered myself
but
I have eaten nothing
and
From standing I am tired out.

A wolf I considered myself
but
The owls are hooting
and
The night I fear.”

7, Shields

In some warrior societies, everyone had a shield decorated the same. This was not so for the Cante Tenze; each man’s shield symbolically declared the precise nature of his own personal empowerment by the Thunder Being.

In fact, the shield was the summit of a warrior’s paraphernalia, not his weapons. Why? Because the shield was his spiritual power; it both portrayed and embodied the spiritual power that inspired and guided him, as well as protecting him. The shield manifests a warrior’s way, his road, his path. This was far more important than the fact that a well constructed shield, made from buffalo hide first wetted and subsequently dried to become very tough, could deflect arrows, lances, and even the bullets of the old muskets. Boys had to learn the deflecting motion with a shield to turn anything striking it; they learned this by

holding a shield and trying to turn away a rain of arrows shot at them by warriors standing some feet away.

The shield, representing and channelling a warrior's spiritual power, was said to be his true face, his "front." Thus the shield says, 'this is who I am.' It proclaims to the enemy, 'this is what is coming for you.' It not only threatens the enemy, but vows and promises the man: he knows what he is letting down or betraying if he funks it.

Your war clothing prepares you for death; this is why warriors are always buried with their shields.

8, Songs

Warrior societies had their songs, and so did individual warriors. A Kit Fox song:

I am a Tokala
I am living in uncertainty
Anything difficult or dangerous
That is mine to do.

A Cante Tenze song:

Friends, difficulties I seek.
Difficulties I have now.

A Cheyenne Dog Soldier Song:

I will walk on the ashes of the earth, singing.

Lance Henson, poet and Cheyenne Dog Soldier, says this: "A warrior is a man saying goodbye to himself."

9, The Ones Who Wrap Their Braids

Everyone has heard that a warrior was known as a 'brave'; but they were also known among their own people as "aske ki giuwipi": 'those who wrap their braids.' Since the soul is in the hair, and unfettered hair indicates a powerful life force emanating from the soul, wrapping up the hair means curbing the soul, in order to unleash and strengthen the heart. All boys, but especially those wanting to be warriors, were separated from their mothers at 7 years of age; after that, the boy never addressed his mother or his sister again, speaking to them only through a third person. The intuition in this practice pertains to masculinity becoming free of the glued-to-mother kinds of pathology so widespread in Western society – such as symbiotic over-dependence on the mother, enslavement to the mother's narcissistic demands, and the oedipal complex where mother elevates the son by making him believe he can defeat the father. These early 'infantile sicknesses' have the power to emasculate the

growing boy, by depriving him of the exercise of his heart in the existential arena where he faces life and death. A good father teaches him some of the self-discipline he will need to enter that arena, but even more important is a mentor figure who can teach, encourage, and challenge the boy more rigorously, in order to get the best from him.

There is another factor about Lakota warriors that is much commented upon, but often misunderstood. The boy initiated into warriorhood as a man had to learn both a stoicism whereby he could put up with much, not reacting to it, in order to reach the moment of decision, and a kind of seeming recklessness whereby, once that key time had arrived, he could go straight in, with no hesitation, no holding back, but total abandon. I was once told by a friend that this recklessness is nothing but a death wish. This is not so. Traditionally the Lakota, and other Plains Indians, preferred to send a small war party into the very heart of their enemy's territory, instead of using large numbers to destroy a weak enemy. Why? Because by going in with small numbers against much larger forces, you strike at the very spirit of your enemy, and proclaim your own strength, courage, and faith in your own medicine power – and contempt for death. Such recklessness is no death wish: it is to break the enemy's spirit, with your spirit.

Scholars will enumerate reasons war parties went out: [a] to defend one's band from attack, [b] to revenge an earlier attack on the band – the so-called “scalp raid”, [c] to steal horses, [d] to count coup on an enemy by going close and touching him with a spear, bow, or other weapon, not killing him but risking to be killed by him. A famous example of this last was the Cheyenne warrior Yellow Nose, who snatched Custer's standard at the Little Bighorn, and used it to count coup on as many of the 7th cavalry as he could run down when they scattered and fled: the myth that they made a ‘last stand’ is nothing but invention. Scholars generally claim that revenge raids became rare after the horse arrived, but whether this is true or not, it misses the whole point. Indeed, this 4-fold list of reasons for war parties going on the “war path” misses the real point entirely.

What Plains Indian recklessness really reveals is that warfare is spiritual: it is a spirit contest, a contest of spirits. The winner is the truer spirit, the loser is the less true spirit.

Many primal indigenous cultures given to the honour of the warrior way understood that when war is such a ‘spirit contest’, everyone profits and no one loses, because everyone can learn about the qualities of spirit that inhere ‘the fight’ which is for truth. The contest of spirits reveals who stands closer and who stands further from the truth, but all profit from this, because all can learn the lesson that is revealed. For this reason, enemies were respected. Each side knew the other was standing up for a greater truth that challenged both sides equally. In this sense, though the warriors protected their own, they never fought only in a partisan manner for their side. They fought for something bigger than either side, which oddly united both sides in the same quest, the same trial.

The warrior's way, in short, is a training in heart. What the heart staked to the ground really does is to put 'spirit' in the heart, and to put 'heart' in the body, so that the bodily deed becomes a pillar of fire, burning from within, and radiating without.

On the killing ground of this world, which is the only heart ground, God, the evil spirit, and the weak human heart, are all in play with the strong human heart. "Be strong" is one warrior's constant encouragement to the other: and that is the warrior's encouragement to the wavering heart of the world.

This is why it is better to die in battle, than from old age or sickness.

Test the heart, by letting the heart be tested.

Try the heart, by letting the heart be tried.

The ultimate pain in the heart we all carry, the "black pain" of Lorca, the deep pain, is over the heart:
does God have a heart?,
does humanity have a heart?,
do I have a heart?

If your way of living, your deeds and experiences, allow you to say 'yes' to this anguished existential questioning, you die happy.

If this remains unanswered, undiscovered in your living however much you might profess it as an idea, then you die in great apprehension and great trouble of spirit.

If this is answered with a 'no', you die in despair.

All three states are in each of us, and vie for the victory.

At root, the heart asks, is life worth it? And it asks of itself, is my heart worthy of what is worth it in life?

This is the real 'fear and trembling' in us, the real 'angst', the real 'dread.' Not simply, is there anything worth my heart's sweat, tears, and blood?, but even if there is, is my heart up to it, and hence worthy of it?

The Mohawk people of the Iroquois confederation have a long word for being a warrior: "rotiskenrahkete", which means, "those who carry the burden of peace and justice", but more subtly, it is also understood to mean, "those who carry the burden of protecting the origins."

The first meaning carries the implication, no justice: no peace. Therefore the suppression of warfare in a situation still unjust is not true peace. It is putting

down the burden and escaping the responsibility for protecting the origins, which are holy. It is a coward's way.

Here is a statement by a Northern Plains elder in his old age, a man who had been a leader, but looked back in sadness that he had allowed himself to be seduced into a false peace:

"I regret the fact that I did not lead as a warrior as opposed to leading as a peace-maker. Peace does not work in this country. A peaceful man gets put aside."

He is speaking about America, but there are situations elsewhere that are analogous.

I once saw, pinned to a battered old wall in the Lakota Oglala College in Kyle, the following description of a 'brave'; what does this say about the existential nature of the origins that uphold all the creation, all the world, in their holiness?

To be a brave, in the Lakota Way, means:

"To do what is right, just, truthful, and generous,
in spite of selfish desire,
in spite of fear of change,
in spite of hard times, in spite of painful or difficult experience,
in spite of fear of honest self-reflection,
in spite of superficial ego protection,
in spite of fear of other people's anger,
in spite of concern over issues of rejection by peers."

9, The Sun Dance

The Sun Dance has the central significance for the Lakota, and other Plains Indians, that Christ's crucifixion has for Christians. What is often not recalled, however, is that the Sun Dance was originally a warrior ceremony, as Wilmer Mesteth explained to me.

The Sun Dance contains the central meaning of the warrior's way as Sacrifice. The Sacrifice depicted and enacted in the Sun Dance has two basic purposes.

[i] to regenerate and fructify life, nature, the earth;

[ii] to identify with the Great Mystery, as the source of life, whose giving of life-blood in sacrifice brings into being all that is.

The first is to renew the creation;

The second is to root human existence in the power of the Creator.

The first honours everything that lives and breathes and moves;

The second honours the Great Holiness from which they take their origin.

[II] The Cante Tenze Warrior Society: Present

1, Current History

The usual statement – all warrior societies died after the reservation period. On the reservation, there are people who claim this. They argue there was nothing for these societies to do any more; furthermore their continued existence would have been a red rag to the American bull.

An alternative account exists – the Cante Tenze, and other warrior societies, went underground, but never completely disappeared. According to Duane Martin, the current chief of the Cante Tenze, the Strong Hearts rose up again in 1924, at the request of the people.

Duane was appointed chief of the Cante Tenze when he was a boy of 10, by Frank Fools Crow, the last of the great Lakota medicine men. It moves me when I think of this boy, with such a heavy responsibility put on his shoulders so early, and his willingness to rise to it, no matter what it involved.

2, Sitting Bull on the rez situation

A Hunkpapa artist, from Standing Rock, once asked my wife, in a moment of rare unguarded vulnerability and sincerity, “Why do they hate us so much?” He meant the Americans. She replied, “We hate those we have wronged; it protects us from facing our guilt.” That is as good an answer as any. But there is another reason why Americans still hate the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. Americans are so used to projecting themselves into a grandiose fantasy Tower, the real Pit it is constructed over does not make nice viewing for them. Most look upward toward the idealization; few look downward into the reality.

Sitting Bull’s view of the reservation was this:

“I do not wish to be shut up in a corral. All agency Indians I have seen were worthless. They are neither red warriors, nor white farmers. They are neither wolf nor dog.”

To be Red Indian, Sitting Bull taught, requires seven things.

- 1 – live close to the earth,
- 2 – have few possessions,
- 3 – help each other,
- 4 – talk to the Creator,
- 5 – be quiet more,
- 6 – listen to the earth,

7 – don't blame other people for your troubles and don't try to make people into something they are not.

Honour is the sacredness of duty. Freedom increasingly means, in all Western 'liberal' societies, just running away from duty. This makes people weak. The wrong liberalism has undermined all the true warrior fighting spirit, not only as it pertains to warfare, but also to every human activity that requires grit. Liberalism has spawned the most passionless people ever in the world.

Doing your duty means that other people can see and trust you as person of good heart. If a Lakota person says, tersely, "My heart is bad", that means he has totally lost his way. He doesn't know who he is anymore, and he doesn't know what he is doing anymore. This bad heart is pervasive on the rez.

To become a reliable adult, upon whom other adults can depend, is the greatest thing this life can offer. To live only for oneself is to never really grow up, but to remain like the child who thinks the universe revolves around him.

3, Sitting Bull on the Americans

Sitting Bull said: "Americans are great liars."

He also said: "There is no use talking to these Americans; they are all liars. You cannot believe anything they say. We have no faith in their promises."

Dishonourable: not promised to anything worthy.

– If promised to the worthy, you can declare this as your vow, and keep your vow.

– If given to the unworthy, you never declare this but hide it, and so no promise you give means anything – you cannot promise anything.

By Lakota standards, Americans are a people without honour. They are not promised to what is worthy, thus never struggle to be worthy of it. They simply please themselves.

4, 'Concentration Camps'

What Black Elk [1863-1950] said to John Neihardt in 1932 sums up the tragedy still engulfing the traditional indigenous life as a consequence of American invasion: "Once we were happy in our own country and we were seldom hungry, for then the two-leggeds and the four-leggeds lived together like relatives, and there was plenty for them and for us. But the Wasichus came, and they have made little islands for us and other little islands for the four-leggeds, and always these islands are becoming smaller, for around them surges the gnawing flood of the Wasichu; and it is dirty with lies and greed."

The Lakota word for the white invaders literally means 'fat-taker.' The word refers to the richest part of the buffalo, which the hunter who brings down the animal in the chase bestows upon someone else, rather than keeping it for

himself. Hence the usage of the word for the incoming settlers refers to their tendency to keep the best of everything for yourself, or your own group, or your own kind, even if that entails the other, or his group, or his kind, must make due with little or nothing.

It took time for the Lakota, and other tribes, to fully realise that the American nation was not dealing with them honourably. Thus the native peoples trusted American leaders to be like their own, and were duped, repeatedly, until they learned that politically the Americans would invariably make a show of integrity, but underneath had hidden agendas. By 1873 Kicking Bird was disillusioned: "My heart is as a stone; there is no soft spot in it. I have taken the white man by the hand, thinking him to be a friend, but he is not a friend; government has deceived us; Washington D.C. is rotten." The Wasichus were driven by acquisitiveness and ambition, but could not be truthful about it. Red Cloud put it like this: "They made us many promises, more than I can remember. They kept but one – they promised to take our land, and they took it."

Today the Agencies that Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull surrendered to are no better than they were in the 19th century. [These Agencies were called 'concentration camps' in the 1860s, and it is now known that Hitler borrowed the name for his own 'final solution'.] They are still places of cultural genocide and the murder of a people's spirit.

5, Inverted anger on the rez

It is well known in psychology that the oppressed often identify with the oppressor, by internalizing his oppression and transmuting it into self-hatred, self-doubt, self-paralysis. This inverted anger means that native peoples destroy themselves, and destroy one another, rather than fight the oppressor.

In effect, the oppressor can step back, and relinquish control, because the oppressed do his work for him: they attack themselves.

Yet the situation on the rez is more complex than that, for in addition to the self-punishing are the collaborators and appeasers who try to do the oppressor's bidding for him, as his stand-in and stooge, and hope by that to get a few more crumbs from the master's table. In stark contrast to these two stances is a small but admirable minority of heroic people trying to save the Lakota Way, the culture, politics, and spirituality, from extinction. One of the things most striking about the rez is that the difference between neurosis and collusion and heroism is so starkly defined; the choice is stark, thus the differences created by taking different stances toward that choice are stark: crumble; kow tow; stand up. Or: despair; manipulate; fight. To live on the rez, is to have to choose.

In some respects there is a great serenity and silence on the rez, and many people there who are in touch with it. The rez is like a beautiful dream in the midst of a nightmare.

6, The way forward?

The pain that coexists with the widespread inverted anger is extreme, but it strangely mirrors the pain in all people who feel the Creator has let them down; beneath everything, the unvoiced cry is, "why did the Creator let this happen?" The worst pain is unacknowledged, a hurt about the Divinity that failed. Personal tragedy is commonplace and can be borne. But how can the tragedy of a whole people, a whole way of life, disappearing be borne?

I doubt the Lakota can return to some pre-cataclysm paradise; it seems more likely that they will have to come to terms with the ultimate existential dereliction, and existential abandonment, that the Great Mystery has caused them to enter. But this is part of the warrior's bad black road: they have, as a people, come to the place where the two roads cross, and it is in this most extreme terrible place they will have to find the most extreme holiness. Drinks Water, who foresaw in the 1820s the whole coming fate that would befall his people, and reputedly died from this vision, also foretold the need for two new ceremonies to be created in addition to the 7 given the Lakota by the White Buffalo Calf Woman. Perhaps these two new ceremonies yet to come hold the seeds for the Lakota being resurrected from their crucifixion at the place where the good and bad roads cross.

The well known Dakota writer Vine de Loria Jr. says that the Lakota, and other indigenous peoples, are in an exile, and it is up to them, as happened with the Jews, to find a spiritual meaning in this exile that will build on the pre-exilic spirituality but can develop an exilic understanding that is a transition to a new spirituality.

These things remain a mystery. Their working through is coming from the future to the present, and will change how the past is accepted. It is coming. Truth is coming. It will hurt and it will heal.

If the Lakota are currently lost on the bad black road of worldly difficulties and war, then only warriors walking this road in a good manner, upright, strong, brave, generous, heroic and sacrificial, can signal to all the people that they too can dust themselves off, and stand upright again. This cannot be led by the medicine people, who are leaders on the good red road of cleansing and spiritual illumination, but has to be led by the warriors who lead on the bad black road. When both roads are strong again, the chief as supreme leader can reappear, for it is the chief in whom both roads converge.

Two songs on which to end.

This is the song that the people sang to honour Crazy Horse, when he surrendered:

I love the ways of war
But I have difficulties
Trying to maintain them.

The Cante Tenze song Duane Martin created in prison, which says ‘the Strong Hearts are walking on the ground’, and implies a return, a restoration of an old vow and an old honour, is a staking to the ground, a seed and spark for a future flowering and kindling:

Cante Tenze ki maka ahkatog
Leciya inajilo hey hey hey ho
Maka sitomnia
Leciya inajilo hey hey hey ho
Cante Tenze ki maka inajilo hey hey hey ho.

The ground on which we stand is here,
The universe is also where we stand,
Strong Heart stands on the ground.

Hoka hey!

It is so. Let it be. Let’s do it. Let’s go.

Today is a good day to die.

Today is a good day to live again.

In the heart, we are on hard ground.

This is warrior ground.

THE WARRIOR FIGHTS SPIRITUAL EVIL

Living on the Lakota reservation in South Dakota taught me three things: one about fear, one about hate, and one about the spiritual nature of evil.

1= Death nearly got me several times, in different ways, that year on the res. I only came through it by this= if we die for what we love, in a give-away, fighting the war the heart is born to fight, then we are not afraid. God granted me to know for whom I was going to die. When that hit, I stopped running.

2= Overcoming death is not enough. The most onerous challenge is to overcome hate. God granted me a way to do that, personally in my context, on my last brief visit to the res. It was after Junior had died, perhaps been murdered, and I was not in a good place with it. I had strong suspicions who had chased him, knocked him down, and left him to freeze to death in the winter night. I seriously considered broaching these people in their lair with the Cante Tenze. But a strange event occurred that allowed me to own up to the fact that I was hurting too badly to attain any 'righteous anger.' I was simply full of hatred. And what the event showed, with graphic force, was that hate is destructive, and will harm the innocent along with the guilty. Overcoming hate exposes vulnerability, in everyone. It is hard to acknowledge this in one's enemies, but they too are hurting.

3= No human being can stand up to the Satanic Accusation alone. It has an element of truth about it. We are all screw-ups, not up to our spiritual calling, due to our weakness, due to how we mishandle our hurt. Thus, it is true that literally only God can redeem our possibility. We cannot, any of us, make a pig's ear into a silk purse. God makes up for our lack, and works the transfiguration that makes our lowly clay capable of carrying that which is higher than any angel. This is why, confronted with Satanic down-putting, or Luciferian flattery, only God coming to us can contest the Lie the Evil One puts on us. If it is just us and Satan or Lucifer, we cannot repudiate his Lie. Within its limited purview, it is partly true...The devil is a Liar because his half-truth kills. Hence, under demonic assault we must turn to God and bring our height – Lucifer's target – and our lowliness – Satan's target – to God. In a sense, the reason we are allowed to be hit by demons is to realise only God holds the truth of our destiny which is more profound and more noble than the devilish Lie about us. But, cut God out of the equation, and we humans cannot refute the Lie about us, for if God were not a dynamic factor changing the equation, the devil's assessment of us would be true.

No, I wasn't really judging the people who may have killed Junior any more than I ever judged him. I was judging myself for not being there, for not doing anything. When I left the res, he cried in my arms, and said, 'What am I going to do without you?' He couldn't live up to his austere father, nor talk with his busy stepmother. He could rouse me at 6 am, shouting 'Wake up Jamie, I need some free therapy.' And we would watch the sun come up seated on the rickety

porch of the trailer, and share how hard, how impossible, this life is. His father was going to give him a sacred pipe when he got off alcohol, but he knew he wouldn't. The drink had always been there, from childhood up, he couldn't imagine it ever not being there. He knew it, I knew it, we knew it together as the dawn came. He also knew he could play me, and I knew that too, but I didn't care. Junior was one of those rogues whose crocodile tears, to extract something further out of you, you didn't mind. I could hear the real tears deeper down. They were no different from mine. I hadn't told him, but when I left the res I formed the intention of getting him over to England for a while, and seeing if a change of environment might help him dry out. I wanted to be a brother to him. He had come to my rescue several times when inexperience, and clumsiness, had put me in a pickle. Secretly, I formed the idea that when I could raise some money I would use this to help Junior kick the booze. But he died too soon, before I could implement it.

I am going to have to remember him now as he was, in tears; smilingly conning me; riding bareback on one of his father's little Indian ponies, coming up the hill at a gallop, the wind blowing his long straight black hair back, and him shouting with exultation.

My friend Miles Stryker, who didn't know Junior, wrote this poem for him:

How The Birch Leaf Falls

sparingly God measures the disaster's
terrible storm,
the consequent of a foreign economy
or how the birch leaf falls in the morning.

the bones are thrown by old hands
the meat taken by the young

it is not a bad way
though many die on the trail to tomorrow.

Junior, I am sorry I wasn't there when you died. That is it. I am sorry. If I could have made a difference to it, I would have, but I couldn't, and I didn't. I am sorry. That is all.

THE LOST MAN OF THE HEART

One of the evolving nightmares of Western European history has been the manner in which men abandoned the heart ground, gave up on their duty and call to be 'the hidden man of the heart' St Peter alludes to [1 Peter, 3, 4], and instead increasingly identified their masculinity with and 'occupied' the mind's abstract space, colonizing it as their own. In doing this, the men shoved the woman's soul space, with its magical water, into a political and psychological netherworld or 'backwater'; the men also, in doing this, created a new kind of mind, not the old spiritually perceptive and discerning mind of 'nous' with its 'direct seeing', not even the Greek 'reason' with its ability to see the big picture, and weigh up and evaluate supports for what we assume, but a modern 'intellect', whose space is precisely made more and more abstract, so as to escape the heart ground – and yet still try to control it by conceptual 'thought', rather than accept and suffer it by existential 'passion.'

The mind that men created when they abandoned the heart ground is a mental space more and more rarefied, more and more removed from ground level reality, where heart must stand, and passion must contend. Men wanted an easy triumph, by taking thought, and using thought to map and plan, to control, to dominate, the world at no cost. By the clever use of mind they sought to win cheap victories... In doing this, they ceased to be real men, and the sacred meaning of manhood was more and more lost. The heart was given up on, and abandoned; passion was no longer lived, however much its echo was still faintly remembered. The heart's passion, and its buried truth, has become merely the stuff of entertainment= video games, TV, movies retain stupid cartoon-like evocations of the old Celtic, or Red Indian, heroic warrior way, but these are popular in inverse relation to how much they are lived. Already in the 19th century, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Dostoyevsky all watched the concrete heart passion die, for want of anyone to pick it up and run with it, while the abstract mind rose 'higher and higher.'

In many modern battles, mental organisation has prevailed against the loose structure of raw passion of heart. This has been happening more and more. As men become mentalised and abstracted, the world goes to hell, becoming ever more of a heartless waste ground, with the jackals roaming the street and the vultures perched in high rise buildings above them; and more and more violence, the shadow of men's castration, is heaped on women. People like Jung are not wrong to say we need to bring the womanly and the soulful back, but that cannot happen unless the real men of heart step up, to take on the men of no heart. Every man worth his salt knows what the real battlefield in this world is: it is the battle ground, indeed the killing ground, of true heart against false heart, and this must be fought inside us, but that in itself is not enough, because it must be fought in the world, to not allow the world to end up in the hands of men with no heart. True passion must fight mental abstractionism, as well as fallen passions, to establish the heart as the 'chief', the king, the leading reality, of this world.

If spirituality remains only in the ascetic desert, or only in the worshipping temple, there can be no redemption of the world. The heart's passion is bound to the world, because it is called to fight for the world's redemption. This is a fight, material and spiritual; anyone who says redemption can come without any fight is a liar and a coward: another of no heart or of bad heart. The no hearts rise above the fight, the bad hearts fight dirty. Only the true hearts fight nobly, and with honour, for truth: for heart truth.

ONE HORN OF THE DILEMMA

PRELUDE

A letter to a friend, who argues for Christian pacifism, and claims only non violent resistance is compatible with the example of Christ...

1,

You want the paradox, or contradiction, dissolved, with one horn of the dilemma removed. It can't be.

What was Christ's 'love without anger' toward the money changers in the temple he lashed with a whip? He came to redeem the world, not judge it as irredeemable, but redemption needs the paradox of both Sword and Cross.

What is shaming is not only that the church ended up defending excessive wealth and privilege, but also that it just handed this world over to the devil, and told people that this failure of heart did not matter, because they would go elsewhere, to a place outside the world. Both justice and mercy, anger and forgiveness, are the paradox, or contradiction, we live within.

2,

Many Christians fear Christianity becoming too harsh, but what I see in these times is that it has become too soft. I have more respect for this challenge by a native elder to the white man to whom he is telling his life story, so it can be recorded. After praising this man for his honesty, the elder continues:

"But you're a coward."

The words hit hard.

"You're afraid of other people's anger."

I let out a nervous involuntary laugh. The accuracy of that insight was frightening.

"Do you see everything so clearly?" I asked.

"There's a reason why my people have survived" he said. "Now, I want you to understand this. People are going to get angry with what you write. They are going to be angry at you and they are going to be angry at me. I don't care. I am not a coward."

I made a mild protest. "That's an awfully harsh word."

“Let me finish. You cannot be afraid. There is good anger too, and you have that. It is the anger from seeing clearly. It’s the same anger I have. It’s the anger the Old Ones warned me about. You must learn to control [in order to direct] that anger, then it can be of use. But there is bad anger too. It is the anger of people who only want their own way. That anger is selfish. It is a child’s anger, and you must not back down from that anger. If you back down from it you are being a coward. Do you understand me?”

“I think so,” I said.

“Good,” he answered with finality. “You will use your gift well if you stop being afraid of other people’s bad anger.”

Grover wanted to emphasise the point... “He’s saying you write what you see and you write what you hear. You are a keeper of the fire.”

[The old man] nodded his approval. “Keepers of the fire cannot be cowards. They are carrying light.”

I quote this story because too many Christians are afraid of ‘other people’s anger’; too many Christians are afraid of ‘the world’s bad anger.’ They justify this with all the talk about forgiveness, forgetting that without justice establishing the costs and consequences of the things people do to each other in the situation of their total interdependence, there can be no ‘letting off the hook’ in a more radical magnanimity. Without the Sword, and only the Cross, there is sentimental mush; without the Cross, and only the Sword, there is judgemental keeping scores.

If God kept scores strictly, we would all be lost. That is true.

But there is another side of the coin, and that is to do with being accountable for one’s deeds. There can be no responsibility for making heart action without this accountability. Accountability is not keeping score. It is honesty about where one’s heart is, and what its motive is, as revealed in its relationship with other hearts. If we are not simply ontologically glued to each other in a state of Non-Duality; if there is Otherness so there can be Love, and hearts must therefore take a chance with each other, personally offering their hearts to each other, as in Martin Buber’s I – Thou, then what we ‘do’ to one another has ultimate implications. It cannot be skated over, nor can it be left to karma to sort out. It may be so that ‘what comes around goes around’, but that does not address what our relationship is, heart to heart, person to person. It is not a moral question of good and evil, it is an existential question of trying to love and failure to love: both have immense, and different, consequences. Buddhism confuses the self-attached and non ecstatic identity it calls ‘ego’ with the ‘royal personhood of the heart’, who has to personally offer that heart, ecstatically, to the venture of coming together on one Heart Ground with other persons who offer their hearts to this same venture.

Clearly, forgiveness in its ultimacy is to keep us together, one people united as brothers, so no one ceases to be a 'relative' to us. But this entails 'bearing the brother', carrying their weakness, and accepting the hurt they have done to us; it is paying a price for them, to keep them with us.

'Forgiving' is merely that disgusting Christian masochism so widespread, when those whom we have had to bear in this manner are at the same time never called to account, and will not acknowledge what they have done to add to the burden we already carry in existence. This is forgiving as pretending 'it didn't happen', and that does not work. It is unreal, and unreality cannot be changed in any way, and it certainly cannot be redeemed. Anger is the witness who says it did happen, and the fact that it happened is grave for those to whom it happened. Most anger is too personal in caring only about offences done to me or mine; the rarer spiritual anger cares for all mankind.

For, humanity is a community of brothers and sisters, a single body of Christ; and as such, we stand together shoulder to shoulder, and we help each other carry each other's burdens. But, as Martin Buber makes clear, when one of us refuses his own burden, this burden has to be put on another, and this may cause that brother to stumble under the weight. Every single person born into the collective of human society owes a debt of thanks to many others who by standing with him, allowed him to stand. Hence, evil deeds refuse that debt to those many others, and creates a worse debt: such evil injures not only the specific person it is directed at, but the whole community. The community already carries burdens in its togetherness, so those who break ranks for what they see as individual advantage simply put down their own portion of the communal weight, forcing someone else to pay the price for this by having to bear its consequences.

Existential guilt is a matter of acknowledging what one has done in putting down one's own burden and thereby placing it on another, and therefore on the community. Without this admission of 'cost and consequences' we inflict on one another, there can be no forgiveness. This admission is a willingness to make reparation to our brother, for the sake not only of being in relationship with him, but of honouring the community where we all hold and uphold each other.

3,

But it is not only that Christians, in their softness, misunderstand and distort the actual 'facing of reality' involved in forgiveness, but it is also that they use this cowardice to mask and justify their unwillingness to pay any price for calling the world to account. Some Christians do work for the transfiguration of the world towards its eschatological destiny; but this is often soul philanthropy and charity, not heart anger for truth which exposes the Biblical 'wickedness in high places' and puts the world on notice that it is not going to be handed over to the devil. Christian mildness – never putting one's head above the parapet, but always looking the other way, by crossing over to the comfortable side of the street when trouble hits – is not only a collusion with worldliness, it is also a

collusion with the devil who is already 'prince of this world' and bidding to become its king.

The human heart was called by God to be the world's warrior-king, and the heart's anger for truth is not only a warning to worldliness that its absence of heart and its bad heart is not going to pass unnoticed and uncontested; more radically, it is a warning to the devil that this world is not going to be handed over to him. If he wants it, he is going to have to come and take it, and he will not take it without a fight. Anger is not going to hand the world over without a fearsome fight, from which it will never back off. The heart's anger comes from 'the wrath of God', and just as God's wrath is protective of us, so too is our human anger. For too many centuries Satan the Accuser sat in the seat of Christ in all the Christian churches, spilling out his moralic acid and spiritual murder stemming from judgementalism, but once he is dethroned from religion, he still tries to seize the world through brute force and intimidation designed to break our heart's spirit.

In some final way, Christ's Cross carries and pays all the existential debts that are beyond repayment, beyond reparation and restitution, for all of humanity, and this is a defeat for the Satanic way of keeping scores and moral retribution masking retaliation out of loss of belief in any brotherhood.

But Christ's Sword makes it very clear that there is a debt and a price, and that it is the fewer noble in heart who will have to carry and pay for the many ignoble in heart. In this process of resolving a paradox, a contradiction, the anger for truth will be the only line in the sand preventing evil from over-running everything. Heart anger cannot kill off the evil that wants to kill the whole venture of heart God and humanity are embarked on, since God does not allow evil to be eliminated from the world process; but anger is called upon to drive evil back, and hold a line beyond which evil cannot pass. This is necessary, for without this Sword, the Cross cannot operate. A stand for truth of heart, against evil, is made by the Sword, and this clears a space for the deeper and greater give-away, and sacrifice, of heart, exemplified by the Cross.

The line drawn by the Sword has had to be defended many times in history, most recently in World War Two in the defeat of Nazism. Hitler had to be stopped, at any price. Many peoples shed blood to stop the evil that possessed the Nazi mythology, but chief among them was the Russian people. Without what Russia gave to this fight, neither Britain nor America could have prevailed.

This is a cosmic drama, but not simply between moral good and evil: it is an existential drama and is really about 'what is the heart made of.'

The point is, both Sword and Cross are a conversation with evil. If the Sword had the power just to wipe out evil in one fell stroke, this conversation would be cut off prematurely, before it reached its deepest and greatest moment, in the Cross. God could easily suppress evil by sheer power. But this would not help the heart grow to its full stature. Evil is needed as the prod, the 'adversary', pushing the heart farther than, by itself, it would go. Evil is part of what sifts the

heart, tests and proves the heart. By the opposition of evil to its way, so the heart must grow clearer and stronger in its way.

This is a dangerous game God has set in motion, because the Evil One is not joking, he is serious in wanting to bring God and humanity's conjoint project of heart to final break-down and annihilation. It could be said that the devil's particular ire and jealousy is directed against the 'Christ', more than against any lawgiving Moses or any enlightening Buddha, for Christ is the victory of the divine and human hearts woven together as one 'divine-humanity.' Hence God will not relent in the test and proof of the human heart, readying it for not simply the visitation but the indwelling of the divine heart, and this means, no brute spiritual power will be allowed to eliminate evil, but rather, the human heart will have to converse with evil, accept its assaults, and overcome them by getting to the root where the way of heart and the way of evil are truly locked in 'spiritual warfare.' The root must be exposed, and the heart way must be chosen and preferred in a fair fight with the evil way: this is not a fight of opposite forces, it is a fight between the Truth and the Lie. But, it is a truth of heart vs. a lie of heart. The battle ground is in the heart because the battle is about what the heart 'really' is and what the heart can 'really' do. At stake is: what is the heart to become? And because it is a battle for the heart, it is also a battle for the world. Also at stake is: what is the world to become?

This ongoing conversation about the heart's nature, call, and destiny, can only happen if evil remains as a prod, an adversary, prompting the heart to either give in to its heartlessness, or to grow more grounded and more strong in the truth of its heart way. It needs God's help to fight this battle, but it also needs to play its part. God will not perform any magical rescue, like a father intervening on behalf of a child being bullied; the child has to grow up, and face the bully, and defeat him out of his own heart. God is in a high-stakes game with humanity and the devil: what can kill us off is also what is, if we stand up to it, the making of us.

The Cross would not be a stumbling block to the Jews if it did not reverse their moral dualism of good and evil, through revealing a Love deeper than evil and greater than good. This rules out Protestant America's 'John Wayne scenario' of 'the good guys vs. the bad guys', as much as it rules out Fundamentalist Islam's current 'holy war.' Equally, the Cross would not be foolishness to the Greeks [and all Oriental religion] if it did not reverse their moral relativity in which good and evil only arises in the absence of spiritual enlightenment, by revealing a 'contest for love' that is more ultimate than any illumination of the mystic. Yet this contest of love is ultimately resolved not by ending up with the duality of winners [saved] and losers [damned], nor by escaping into the non-duality of everyone needing only to see the light to do good, evil being merely due to blindness.

Jews can get stuck in a narrow heart, and Greeks [and all Oriental religion] can place themselves outside the heart.

4,

Martin Buber lays out the truthful situation in regard to the existentially real heart difference of good and evil. He says, evil is to be suffered and redeemed. This opposes both Oriental monism and Western dualism. It suggests a genuine third way, which rejects their familiar opposite positions.

[1] It rejects the Oriental view of the relative reality, or even unreality, of evil, because it either disappears when oneness is attained, or is subsumed within its higher unity. Here, you get beyond evil, rather than suffer and redeem it.

[2] It rejects the Western view of the absolute reality of evil. Here, you crush, suppress, vanquish evil, or God does it for you if you are among the good guys and not among the bad guys, rather than suffer and redeem it.

Evil, in the human being, is contesting the root of the human heart; thus redeeming evil means that, in the suffering of evil, that root is won from evil, and given to God. This transfigures evil not so much into good, as into Love. Whilst the contest at the root still is raging, and its outcome remains in doubt, good and evil sharply polarise, and good is used as a bulwark against evil. Once the contest is won, the heart can no longer be tempted by evil inside itself, and the sign of this is that the heart suffers evil outside itself in a totally new way. Once evil is overcome inside, it can be challenged on the outside in a clearer, stronger, more radically Loving way.

But until we become singular in heart, or wholehearted, we must bear and endure having two hearts, what the Old Testament calls 'the heart of flesh and the heart of stone' [Ezekiel, 11, 19-20; Ezekiel, 36, 26-27]. Despite our Fallenness, we still have a bigger heart, but we also have a smaller heart; we go two ways, we are always conflicted. In Hasidism, the radical doctrine is proposed – very upsetting to Christian ears – that God created humanity with these two hearts even before the Fall. I believe in this teaching, because I do not believe human beings were ever perfect and threw it away [if they were perfect, this could not have happened]; rather, they were innocent and hence perfectible, but in this very innocence lay both the possibility for pushing it towards something more profound and radical, or betraying it and trading it in for something more superficial and open to the inducements of evil. If God was to test and prove our heart, then there had to be two Trees, two alternatives, two possibilities, latently at war from the beginning. Even without the devil, we are conflicted as to whether to be big or small in heart. But the devil intervenes, as an outside force that comes in, to lead us astray, to play on our smallness and offer it pseudo grandness and bloodless short cuts and pseudo solutions to its aching dilemma. It is because the heart is inherently a dilemma to us that the devil can play upon it. Following the devil or God is therefore a matter of taking very different routes from within the same human heart.

This means that evil has an attraction to us, and takes root in the root of our being. We go on Protestant American style crusades against the outer evil when we have not confronted the evil inside ourselves. 'No one is without sin.'

Even the hero aimed at holiness has a heart of stone, not just a heart of flesh, where the evil can and has got a hold. Christ warns against this crusading mentality, when he asks how it is we notice the mote in the other person's eye, but refuse to see the beam in our eye. Crusaders always attack in others the evil they never own up to in themselves. In psychology this is called 'projecting the shadow.' The faults and evils that most arouse our moral disapproval toward others are invariably the faults and evils we most hide from in ourself.

The point is, the battle between good and evil, or bigger and smaller heartedness, is in everyone. This must be so, because God is testing and proving every heart, personally, and all hearts together, communally, by letting evil possess and thus challenge, prod, and even hurt, the heart, so the heart is forced to become what otherwise it could not: a king and warrior, a prophet and sage, a sacred clown and holy fool. What evil pushes the heart to, personally and communally, is that Love which exceeds all good and evil. Love redeems the battle of good and evil, because it carries its weight and pays its cost. That is the Christ.

But on the way, the journey is long, the battle is severe. People of big heart are needed, or the people of small heart will be sucked down by the devil. The bigger heart always carries more, always pays more, for those who can carry nothing and pay nothing. This is what truly defeats the devil, in the end. The warrior, in particular, is needed every step of the way, or the road is lost.

The warrior leads on the bad black road of worldly difficulties and war, by the red of his honour and his blood.

5,

The warrior is: firm and fierce toward those who seek to obliterate the sacred origins; tender and merciful towards those who have been hurt by evil; forgiving and long-suffering towards those who have done evil but have repented of it; a good brother to those trying, as he is, to carry the shared weight of the common destiny.

The warrior has always had and always will have three options: to die in the fight; to kill another in the fight; to offer up his own life in the fight rather than kill anyone. All three are ways of fighting.

A warrior is ready to die, not because he wants the tension of carrying a very heavy weight to end before the time comes to put it down, but because of the truth about the heart, and of all humanity, he serves. There is a sacrament here: a kind of holy mystery, of death transfigured by the sacrifice which only love can make. When you die for the people, for their common destiny on the heart ground, they are all with you when you die; you don't die alone. The whole of nature watches, the whole of the world of spirits watches, and urges you on. They rejoice in your manner of dying, because they know it is a victory not only for your heart, but a victory for the heart all creatures and things and

human beings rely on. A victory on the killing ground that is the heart ground we all stand on together.

Both Sword and Cross ultimately declare, live out, and enact the same mystery of heart, the mystery decisive for all of humanity and all the world process from beginning to end.

[2]: THE LIVING OF TRUTH IN THE WORLD

Kierkegaard: "It is perfectly true, as philosophers say, that life must be understood backwards. But they forget the other proposition, that it must be lived forwards."

Nietzsche: "Something is only true if it can be lived."

Proust: "We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey through the wilderness which no one can make for us, which no one else can spare us."

Van der Post: "It is one of the laws of life that new meaning must be lived before it can be known, and in some mysterious way modern man knows so much that he is the prisoner of his knowledge. The old dynamic conception of the human spirit as something living always on the frontiers of human knowledge has gone. We hide behind what we know. And there is an extraordinarily angry and aggressive quality in the knowledge of modern man; he is angry with what he does not know; he hates and rejects it. He has lost the sense of wonder about the unknown and he treats it as an enemy. The experience which is before knowing, which would enflame his life with new meaning, is cut off from him. Curiously enough, it has never been studied more closely. People have measured the mechanics of it, and the rhythm, but somehow they do not experience it."

Nietzsche: "Metaphysical knowledge of another world is about as much use as knowledge of the chemical composition of water would be to the sailor in danger of shipwreck."

Lao Tzu: "To believe in the Tao is easy; to keep the Tao is difficult." "Everyone knows the Way, but few walk it."

William Blake: "A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees."

HEART TRUTH vs. THE NEED TO BE RIGHT

“Every man is right in his own eyes but the Lord pondereth the hearts”
[Proverbs, 21,2].

1,

The life, teaching, and sacrifice, of Jesus Christ is calling us to something fundamental. When we answer that call, and step off the edge into the deeps that stretch us beyond the known, the safe, the comfortable, then we have the help and guidance of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit goes with us on that hard road. We cannot walk it without the Spirit helping us every step of the way. Christ is the visible model, or paradigm, of walking this way that is radical, and walking it to its very end; but the Spirit is the invisible counsellor, guiding us into what Christ at the end of the gospels calls “all truth” [John, 16, 13]. This is lived truth. Truth attained by effort and by suffering. Truth struggled for in the heart. This is the truth God is looking for when he “searches the heart.” Since God sees the human heart in its fathomlessness, why would he need to search it? He does this for us. He does it with us, throwing us deeper in, stripping away pretence and exposing what is in our heart, and where our heart really stands, in its depth. God’s first word to Adam after the Fall [Genesis, 3, 9] is, “where are you?” This means, look at your heart. Delve its hidden recesses, uncover its motive, wrestle for its truth. This is a great and terrible struggle, a long journey, and a savage battle. It is not romantic, it is not idealistic. It is real. It is ‘hard wakan.’ Hard mystery, hard holiness, hard road.

God searches the human heart to challenge us out of our complacency about being a decent chap, a nice guy, a good person, and similar kinds of illusion. The challenge to us is to drop the comforting belief that ‘we have a heart’, and instead be forced to look under the surface, and stare honestly into our absence of heart – yet by owning honestly the horror of that absence rekindle our passion to find the real heart in the depths. These are the depths where all is lost, broken, ruined, for the human heart, yet they strangely still glower with the flame that rises from the abyss and cannot be extinguished. God already knows this place where break-down and break-through are knotted together, so coming to this extreme place is not for his benefit. It is for our sake. In the Old Testament the Spirit of God tests the deep things of God and of humanity. The truth God requires us to search out and struggle with in the depths of the heart, the truth that tests us so that we can prove it in the heart, is the truth too hard for any human being. Yet it is to this truth the heart is summoned, and if we respond to that summons, then it is to this truth the heart is vowed. The vow stakes us to the ground, the heart ground where truth is betrayed and faithfully pursued, lied about facilely and declared with blood. This is the killing ground.

On this ground, we are searched out and tested in depth.

On this ground, our heart is exposed.

On this ground, our heart is vowed.

On this ground Christ stood, and died. If we stand with Christ, we will die his death.

2,

Our God is a consuming fire: God is radical. The searching for heart truth, the testing and proving of heart truth, is radical. It will cost us everything.

Is it worth it?

This is the sticking point. Not that the way of heart truth is too hard for us, for if we walk hard wakan, we will be helped. The real question is, is it too costly for us? The choice whether to pay the cost cannot be taken from us

We are hunting God, when we hunt the real, deep heart of humanity. Is it worth the terrible cost? It is only worth it if we want God – want God from our heart, and want God in our heart. For that is the great and deep end of the hunt for the hidden and elusive God which is at the same time the hunt for the hidden and elusive heart.

Do we want a heart?

This is the terrible question with which God confronts us.

3,

Radical is not conservative, radical is not liberal.

Conservative and liberal are flip sides of the same mistake about God and about the human heart which has been dignified and cursed to struggle for God's truth. Both conservative and liberal fear the human heart's struggle with what God has blessed and gifted to the human heart, as a wound; both falsify and betray this struggle with God's wound. Neither entrust themselves to its awfulness.

The authoritarian accuses the heart, the liberal excuses the heart. Both are heartless, but simply in opposite ways.

4,

There is a difference between something that claims 'authority' and something that simply is 'authoritative.'

Only when truth has proved itself in a living way, from the stand the heart makes and the struggles into which this plunges the heart, is truth authoritative.

But it is this test of truth in life, when the way of heart is really walked, that people who are worshippers of authority cannot risk: they defer to 'the rules' precisely so that they do not have to make authentic effort and endure the authentic buffets and blows that are inevitable on the real road of truth. Passion is needed to walk this road, and passion has to undergo and suffer, before it reaches heart truth, and can 'know.' For the heart, arrival is not assured. For the heart, going is dangerous. For the heart, the price to be paid on the way is total. This process in the heart is what is not trusted by those who rely on authority. Trusting this process that heart must be subject to and pass through is the real meaning of faith. It is this faith which is lacking in those who make authority their idol. They regard their reliance on authority as 'obedience', but it is fearful evasion. Such obedience takes the place of the testing and proving of heart truth which God requires. For God wants 'truth in the inward parts.' Following the rules evades the only process that can authentically find heart truth.

The problem with the conservative, authoritarian stance is that it has no truth in the inward parts. Its fidelity to truth is only outer: it parrots truth attained by other hearts with the mind only, but it pretends this outer charade is the real inner heart attainment. Though far from the process by which God's Heart is born from tears, blood, and flame, in the human heart, it claims it is 'loyal.' In that, its heart is false. Its heart is bad. The conservative, authoritarian religious person is the 'whited sepulchre' Christ rebukes [Mathew, 23, 27-28]; it is of these ultra correct religious people Christ spoke when he warned that 'not all who say Lord, Lord' will inherit the kingdom [Mathew 7, 21]. To these people who have used the mere ability of the mind to ape truth, but not sweated, cried, and bled, for the difficult truth only found in the heart, Christ says he will 'not know you' [Mathew, 7, 23].

He searched for your heart, but you would not search with him. You blocked any testing of your heart, and thus you could not be proved, checked out, in heart. In your deep heart is still hell, though through your mind you convince yourself you are well on the way toward heaven. For this Christ also had a warning: no one can increase their stature even one cubit 'by taking thought' [Mathew, 6, 27].

With our mind, and will, we can clean up our act, and fake any amount of religious fidelity; but only in the heart, in the terrible struggles and sufferings the heart must let itself be subject to and undergo, can we come to the wailing wall, where it is all over, and where the turn-around can occur. The hunt for our heart and the hunt in our heart for God's Heart is horrendous, and no one passes through this as a good boy or good girl, as docilely obedient, keeping to the straight and narrow. We go through heaven and hell, and everything in between; we piss ourself and shit ourself, we humiliate ourself totally, we lose the plot and fall off the wagon. We fall out with God big time, and we despair not only of God but also of our own deep heart. What is in our heart, toward God and toward our own human potentiality, is terrible. A million times a day we turn back on the path, and run away, and have to arduously return. Like the Western saint who covered the walls of his monastic cell with his excrement,

we rail against God. It is not simply that the way is unknown, unsafe, uncomfortable, from the secular, rationalist point of view; but it is also offensive to our natural religiosity: it is a way where we lose the possibility of being the good boy or the good girl patted on the head by God, for the way of heart strips us of all possibility to be correct, to be right, to be kosher. Our need for confirmation, for justification, for approval, is not met by God. It is more than that: this need is utterly destroyed by God.

St Peter is the model of the radicalness of heart. He is always the first to leap in, then to get out of his depth and retreat, and have to weep bitter tears to return. But the mistakes he constantly makes and admits to are why he wins the name the 'rock.' Only through this horrendous heart process which a human being ventures for the sake of real love of God, real faith in God, can they find the immovable rock in the abyss. This rock is passion's immovable commitment to see it through to the end, no matter what passion must pass through.

5,

At the core of the conservative, authoritarian stance is a double error.

[1] *The creation of a false father as an 'idol'*

On the one hand, there is a yearning for a certain kind of father, a fatherly authority who acts with invulnerable power and irresistible force by unambiguously 'laying down the law', imposing it from above to below, and policing it in the below. But this 'patriarchal' father is an idol, and is not the true father. Christ instructs us to 'call no man father' [Mathew, 23, 8-9]. This means no human role, be it biological fatherhood, kingly fatherhood, or even spiritual fatherhood, is an ikon of God's fatherhood. To some extent, these human roles borrow, by analogy, some attributes of the divine father. But the Biblical injunction is telling us to not stretch this analogy. In reality, the fatherhood of God is terrible and wonderful at once. The real divine father is the 'unknown God' to whom the ancient Greeks left their memorial [Acts, 17, 23-29]. This father God is still unknown. Though when asked about him, Christ said 'look at me, and you will see the father' [John, 14, 9], none the less, Christ also said only the father, not the Incarnate Logos, knows when time will end and the father's purposes in creating humanity will reach their climax and conclusion [Mathew, 24, 36]. However much Christ carries and bears the divine heart in the human heart for us, to restore us to our fearful and wonderful calling, there is another sense in which the fatherhood of God is strange and wholly unknown. The real father is hidden from us, and we cannot conceive by any imagination, however expanded to Christ's Light or to the Spirit's Mystery, what this father who made us is doing with us.

The Biblical saying that we 'cannot see God' means just this: that even in the most exalted vision this father remains hidden. In the heart struggle and heart suffering that we must place ourselves in the hands of, the father is – as the Lamentations of Jeremiah [3, 44] put it – covered within a cloud that our

prayers cannot penetrate. Only when we break-through, and the wailing wall crumbles in the heart, will we 'see' God. This is a special seeing, rarer in religious history than hen's teeth. When the heart is finally won to God, then we see God and we see the world as God sees it. Then we know as we are known. But it is not yet. It cannot be faked. We are driven on, in our hunt for God and for the heart, by this seeing, and this knowing, yet we also know next to nothing about it and are utterly blind to it. The eye of the heart is closed. We have not reached it, and on the way to it, we are lost, broken, ruined. A Russian woman friend once said that even in the most sad Russian Orthodox church music, there is hope; but on the hunt for God and for the heart, all hope must be exhausted. If the church can hope in the midst of sadness, then the church already knows something we don't yet. We cannot pretend to this knowledge. It must be lost to be found. The descent into death and hell is real. All this is the mixture of grief and compassion which the unknown father visits on those who really seek him, really love him, and in really loving him, despair of him and rage against him. This is the real 'yoke' we are under; this 'waiting for redemption', this being yoked to and waiting for break-down to become break-through in the deep heart, is what we have faith in. And our faith consists in nothing optimistic: for any image, secular or religious, of optimism would be an illusion we put in the place of the real father into whose hands we have surrendered our heart's fate.

But this unknown father, whose way of dealing with us is – as the Lamentations of Jeremiah [3, 38] proclaim – an unbearable and unendurable mixture of good and evil which we must bear and must endure, is rejected, fled from, the hunt given up. It is not just secular humanist, rationalist and liberal people who turn from this father who cannot be known. His real betrayers are conservative, authoritarian people who think they are loyal to him, but put their own humanly constructed image of him in the place of the dark and the pain where alone he can be sought and finally found, when – as the Lamentations of Jeremiah [3, 32] say – he ceases making us grieve and shows compassion to us.

There is only one question at the root of all the existential questions for which there are no pat answers prior to going through it all: and this is the question of questions. It is not, is there a God? It is, does this God have a heart? Does the divine father care about what he has made? Or is his experiential absence a sign he has ceased to care and has washed his hands of us? Or worse, that he cares but is impotent to do anything? In the 19th century God did not just die as a doctrinal, creedal belief; God died as a father with a heart. Even Christ, who in Aramaic calls this father 'daddy', cried to him on the Cross, and voiced our collective question; why have you abandoned your children?

Why are you not with us in the fathomlessness where we have abandoned you?

Without mystery, there is no depth to life. Yet it is in this very depth revealed by mystery that we are lost, broken, ruined. It is here we have missed the mark and failed; it is here the whole venture God risked in creating a human heart capable of attaining and losing the divine heart has come to final desolation.

It is not enough to say Christ's Cross and Resurrection answers the question of questions for us. This same abandonment, and reconnection, in the deep and fathomless place of dereliction, must happen to each and every one of us. Christ did not do it for us, to absolve us from having to go through it. He did it that we can go through it, with him.

Yet in our Gethsemane, and on our Cross, we too must stake everything on this unknown father whose way of exercising fatherhood is unlike anything in human nature or in human experience. This is faith. To risk this father. To risk what this father has risked. To risk his unimaginable, unseeable heart, in our heart, is faith. We cry out to him, as well as fear and tremble before his mysteriousness, his hiddenness, his absence. One day, we will call him daddy, when we know as we are known, when we see what he sees. But to fake this now, when our heart is still contending in its birth pangs, and its moment is not yet, is faking. It is lying – lying to oneself, lying to God, lying to the world. This is what the conservative, authoritarian good boys and good girls are doing: they are lying. Their excrement is not thrown on the Wailing Wall, but at other people who are non conforming, and not towing the line; their tears at the wailing wall are stifled, swallowed, disavowed, and so they have to make other people cry for them with cruel and harsh judgements on their failures. It is easy to judge the heart when you are yourself not in it.

It was this unknown father whom Christ trusted all his life, and had faith in, like a human being must do, but it was also this unknown father who searched Christ's heart and tested and proved it at the terrible extremity where all our hearts refused to go, long ago. Even Christ had to lose this father, and thus had to not know him, as we do not know him. Christ was made to struggle and suffer for him, as we must, so that we can. Christ calls us into the terrible depth. Christ speaks to our heart, and takes on, without judgement or fear, all our tears, all our 'sickness unto death', and all the real hell in our fathomless heart's abyss. We have already lost our heart in that depth, and we can lose it finally, yet it is there we must go. We go to a deep place, a place where all hope in the father is lost. Christ went there, and he calls us to follow.

The conservative, authoritarian stance avoids the vicissitudes of the heart, all the ups and downs, the temptations, the falls, the confusions, and the terrible searing reversal of all we religiously believe and hope about God, when the heart really seeks him. God hurts the human heart which seeks him, breaking it to remake it. But, the conservative, authoritarian person denies this heartbreak which God inflicts. They pretend to be fully reconciled to God, when in fact in their heart they have chosen to reject the whole process by which the human heart's illness and blindness toward God is healed. The deep heart becomes for them the no-go area. They risk neither its aliveness nor its deadness, they risk neither its heaven nor its hell. In the conservative, authoritarian stance, the human heart entirely atrophies. They are mind people, but of course, it is a rigid mind that clings to externals, not the nous that looks under the surface. This stance is father idolatry.

[2] Seeking 'justification' from the patriarchal idol

The conservative, authoritarian stance, then, invents a patriarchal authority as an idol designed to blot out the unknown father – and the whole process by which we hunt him in his hiddenness, and only find him as our heart goes through searing difficulty and changes as a result. Therefore, this stance seeks not to find the real God, but to be declared 'right and proper' by idolatrous authority. What drives this stance is not only the creation of a false father, but also the need for justification by him.

The real divine father will not justify us in this manner. He blesses and owns Christ at the river Jordan, but he also allows Christ to be wholly non justified, invalidated, and disapproved, by his accusers. We should remember, it was not the liberals who crucified Christ. They were off some place else, drinking and carousing, or making money, or whatever the slack and lax did in those days. It was the conservatives, the authoritarians, the kosher people who were trying so hard to be 'right' in order to please 'the patriarchal authority', who killed Christ. These are Christ's most dire enemies – because they think they follow him.

When such conservative, authoritarian people are challenged by Christ's radical heart truth, they cannot cope with that challenge, given the unchecked and unredeemed state of their hearts. So, they invalidate the challenger. He's not in with the patriarchal authority, and so the substance of what he actually says, or does, can be dismissed, and entirely ignored, because he has no right to speak and act as he does.

This is the game played by the accusers of Christ at his trial. The game was played by the religious authority of the Jews who were kosher. Christ was regarded by them as non kosher. This outraged them. How dare this man say all that he said and do all that he did? He didn't have the blessing of the fathers of the past. He went beyond the fathers of the past. He selected what he regarded the core of the past fathers and ignored the rest, making a differentiation of wheat from chaff in the tradition: but how dare he do that? – he was innovating, pleasing himself, rewriting religious history and scorning religious tradition! He was an anarchist with no respect for religious authority! That his words and deeds had existential 'heart validity' was of no interest to Christ's accusers. He was insisting on standing on his own turf, and they were insisting he must stand on their turf. By refusing this, it no longer mattered what heart actually dwelled in his words and in his deeds. He had no right to speak or act, except on their turf, the turf of tradition and authority. Just by insisting on standing on religious turf in a different way, he must be wrong, bad, deluded. Non-kosher: not capable of being valid.

Christ has rejected this 'rightness'; he calls it 'self-righteousness.' In extremis, it leads to what St Isaac of Syria called 'the derangement of zeal.' He did not mean that very different zeal, or fervour, of a heart on fire because it is being burnt in God's furnace to ashes, but the zealotry and fanaticism that declares existence a simplistic matter of right and wrong. Whilst there is a difference between the 'two hearts' in all of us, a heart of flesh and a heart of stone, and

thus a difference in which heart we pursue, the genuine righteousness has nothing to do with the self-righteousness of the conservative, authoritarian stance. In self-righteousness, we prove our standing and prove we are worthy, by virtue of there being an external standard by which to measure ourselves. But this external standard is, however moral it pretends to be, a humanly constructed idol, and is not the aim to which God binds the heart seeking him. The real truth of heart, real integrity, needs a much more subtle, and interior, yardstick to 'read' the heart's stand and deed, its deep motive and inward condition.

And the real divine father addresses, engages, and blesses, only that subtle, inward place so hard to discern, and refuses all external proof. Christ is allowed to be publicly disinherited, shorn of all support of tradition and denied all mantle of authority. He is shamed and humiliated, and neither his father, nor he, lifts a hand to insist on his external rightness. St Peter followed him in this when he was crucified upside down, but St Paul could not go so far; he insisted on a degree of proving his credentials, proving his validity, at his trial. But then Paul is the nous man, and Peter the heart man. Paul could see the heart; Peter could act from the heart, in all its tragedy and glory. Paul may be the nous of the church, but Peter is the rock of the church's heart. His entire life was making mistake after mistake, yet as soon as he had been foolish or deceived in heart, acknowledging it and using that 'wrongness' to go deeper. By making errors, even by the ultimate betrayal, he found heart truth. In the end he knew from his own effort and mourning 'where Christ was coming from' in the heart. He rejected the judgement of the mind for the knowing and seeing of truth in the heart.

The conclusion is clear. No one who seeks rightness or validation can walk the way of heart. You can only make yourself 'right with God' using the mind: the intellectual mind that polices behaviour but cannot gaze into the heart to perceive its impulse.

The search for truth in the heart is different. It is this search that Christ's whole teaching addresses.

6,

Conservatives betray heart in one way, liberals betray heart in another way. The way of heart is the royal road, yet it is not marked out, and according to Martin Buber is a 'narrow ridge with chasms on either side.' It is onerous, an ordeal, and smashes our authoritarian rightness, just as it smashes our liberal relativism. You can see those walking the way of heart clearly, if you know how to look. You can recognise them by the tears carving rents on their cheeks and by the fire in their guts. You can find them by how they sing existence's deep song and whether their death song has any truth. Even the devil can quote chapter and verse: he knows the scriptures perfectly and he knows every word ever written by any past teacher about God. So what? It cuts no ice at all. We should note how often Christ clearly speaks from Old Testament scripture but does not offer any chapter and verse: he wants to show some more supple

heart knowledge of sacred text, not just the mind studying and remembering words, and quoting them to demonstrate the quoter's validity. Anyone can do that. The devil can do that. It takes only mind. It doesn't require heart. To understand the text in the heart, it is necessary to have walked the way of heart.

The true criterion of walking the path is the quality of a person's deep heart struggle and their deep heart suffering. This leads to "you can tell a tree by its fruit" [Mathew, 12, 33-35].

By their fruits, it will be seen what their heart is.

7,

What drives us to hunt the fundamentally mysterious, unknown divine father should not be confused with our more psychological, archetypally governed, need toward the merely human father. The latter is meant to be only a help on the way to reach the former, but can become a huge impediment blocking that way. The divine father is not only unknown, but also unknowable – yet the heart can know him at the end of its lengthy, impossible hunt, if the need for either a human mother or a human father does not get in the way. Our need for the human mother can disable the heart's road, by insisting on a love from God too maternal; equally disabling, in a reverse manner, can be our preoccupation with the human father.

The need for human fathers, whether biological, political, or spiritual, is to raise a standard of heart truth to be aimed at by those embarking on the difficult, long road that leads to it. This means we have ideals; such ideal figures personify heroism for those just beginning to embrace its exactions. We need to see others further ahead on that daunting road, whom we can 'look up to.' They demonstrate, by their life, by their life's action, that 'it can be done.' Nowadays especially, when rigid rule followers who think themselves already safe and sound, and lazy self-indulgers who think it fine, and even amusing, to skim the surface of life, dominate the social and cultural scene, it is necessary for young people, and to an extent all of us, to respect the few heroes who 'went all the way.' They call us on, when the going gets really tough. They remain staked on the killing ground, even when the killers come. Like Christ, they took it to the absolute max, went to the last extreme. We need the heroes of passion who, like St Peter, dusted himself off, wept in bitter regret, and then got back to his feet and proceeded.

Initially these heroes seem to be far ahead of us. But as we become more adult in the spiritual road, more adult in the spiritual warfare, so we realise that we are all, as humans in this travel, in this fight, together. It is humanity's journey and battle, not any individual's. Only Christ is ahead of us; and we have the Holy Ghost not only when we follow his lead, but also when we follow together, bearing each other, forgiving each other, pulling together [1 Peter, 1, 17-24].

The need for heroes also speaks of the need for what the Lakota describe as 'instructions.' There is certainly a need for instruction, guidance, counsel, as we walk. This is on the ground wisdom, not mountain-top vision. But this wise helping hand cannot become a substitute for our actual wrestlings with walking the road. You have to be doing your homework, so to speak, to profit from the help offered as you travel and as you fight. No help can reach us if we run away, or put the burden down. The help only makes sense to us when we are trying. We may have to learn to try in a very different way, and we may have to come to key points where we are 'all out of what it takes' and can do nothing. But, the road and its journey and battle are strange; and unexpected events happen on it which no teaching can fully prepare us for. Studying Christ's Gethsemane and Christ's Cross, however far you delve, will not encompass what it will be like for you to reach your garden and your crucifixion.

This means, too much leaning even on authentic people who have walked a long way on this road can prevent each of us from 'going through that lonesome valley by yourself.' This is a danger of being too in thrall to our heroes, and to their instruction; God will savagely destroy this dependency, 'because he is a jealous God', and insists we put him first.

Thus, God often destroys religious idealism, even as he destroys religious romanticism. In the moments of real crisis on the ground and in the ravine, only God is with us in our heart, only God, us and the devil, occupy this wilderness, this desert of rock and sand, of scorching winds and burning heat. In that place, everything is spoiled yet only in that place can everything be regained. In that place begins real prayer, the prayer of the heart.

Only by undergoing do we come to understand, and to know, and to see. Such is the wisdom of the heart. Wisdom, for the soul, is one thing, but for the heart wisdom is lived truth: truth attained only by the living of it. No one can understand this truth 'intellectually' by studying its sayings; this truth is only understood by walking the road that leads to it [Mathew, 7, 24-27].

When a person has gone through their own solitary lonesome valley, it makes them brothers or sisters to all other human beings. They shed any conception of leaders and followers, of directors and directed. Our human leaders, paradoxically, are those most grounded in brotherhood and sisterhood; they rally others when down, when defeated, but they realise clearest of anyone that it is 'we' who go, and 'we' who get through. They would go back for one lost person.

Nor does this apply only to the church. It applies to the world. Everyone means the world.

8,

We can go far on the road, but each of us will retain flaws, big flaws, to the last breath.

St Paul rebelled against this, complaining of it to Christ; but Christ rebuked him, telling him that the injurious grit in the oyster is necessary to the pearl. “My strength is revealed in weakness” [2 Corinthians, 12, 7-9]. St Peter accepted this, and went further with it, than anyone else.

Why did Christ insist the heart must remain weak, if ever it was to become strong in his truth?

9,

St Peter, in the simple yet majestic words of his opening letter [1 Peter, 1, 3-7], sums up much that has been asserted in this statement. He says, “even gold passes through the assayer’s fire, and more precious than perishable gold is faith which has stood the test.” But what follows it is more extraordinary: “These trials come so that your faith may prove itself worthy of all praise, glory, and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.” And this revelation will be only “when salvation comes – the salvation which is even now in readiness and will be revealed at the end of time.”

God puts us between a rock and a hard place to make us deep and great, so that in the end it will be the human heart that is victorious. In one way, God retrieves that victory when it is well and truly beyond our reach; yet in another way, God lets us struggle and suffer for it, that it may be ours. God puts a heart in us capable of carrying the divine heart, and though Christ redeems the future of this divine-humanity, it is we humans who wrestle toward and ‘work out’ that redemption. Thus in the end the victory is conjoint: it is God’s heart victorious in the human heart, but it is also humanity’s heart victorious in God’s heart. Our contribution is needed, not just Christ’s; he is, in this project, ‘the first born of many’, not the sole victor. In the end, not just Christ, but humanity, will receive all praise, all glory, all honour. The human heart will be ‘vindicated.’

But for this victory to come, the human heart will pass through every deadness and every hell. It will accept all the ‘evil’ God does to it for an inconceivable and unimaginable good. It will face its persuasion to the way of evil which was sold, like a huckster’s potion, by the devil who is the father of the lie, the father of all lies that undermine and destroy the human heart. In the ultimate, this lie seeks to convince us we are not good enough for God’s purpose. It will bring the heart to an end state where it is unworthy in its own eyes. This is so that, like Judas, we will give up and will give in, throwing our worldly sins back in the face of that in the world which occasioned them, yet still killing ourselves over them, to seal our heart in spiritual despair.

All this – all this life and death and everything between, all this heaven and hell and everything between – is forced on the heart by God; the heart is made subject to all of it. Why? Even the seemingly faithful Job, checked out to the extreme, was tempted to condemn himself – this is what the conservative, authoritarian religious judges recommended – or to just throw the towel in and die – this is what his wife, who couldn’t put up with it any more because she had had enough and wanted to bring to a close what Job was going through,

offered as the way out. Judgement of the heart or putting the heart away: patriarchy and matriarchy. Neither can comprehend the person of faith who just persists, without kowtowing to God's judgement, nor cursing God and turning from him. Job's faith consisted in simply going on, and remaining in it, letting the undergoing continue.

Why does God insist on this 'passing through' everything dangerous, pained, hard, costly, for the heart? Conservatives moralise over this: it is punishment for not being right with God. Liberals evade it, sweeping its ugliness under the carpet. But the real answer to this question is, there is no extraneous answer. Let's put it starkly, as we experience it: there is no answer. It has to be gone through, and the going through and the undergoing destroys all the pat answers, whether religious or secular, whether supplied by absolutist moralism or supplied by pluralistic relativism, which we began with before entering the dark and pained place of the empty desert, of the starless night. There is no answer, because in the throes of it, all answers die. Doctrine dies; all teaching and instruction dies; everything goes, to leave the heart alone with its own abyss, God, and the devil. Yet there is an answer, and by passing through, it is found. The only answer is: God wounds us, God inflicts all this on the heart, for the sake of truth.

The short answer to our agonised question, why?, is: for the sake of truth.

People do not know what truth is. They mistakenly think it church dogma or doctrine, or past teaching and instruction. Or worse, they think it abstract propositions that can be argued about with the mind, so that one person says this, and another person says that. Truth is neither this nor that. Dogma is the boundary of truth, but not its essence. Doctrine is the shape of truth, but not its core. Teaching and instruction points at the truth, but the pointer is not the pointed at.

Truth is what is tested and must be proved in the human heart.

Truth is what is risked in the human heart: its victory is heaven, its defeat is hell.

Truth is what enlivens the human heart when it stands upon its ground in the abyss, and truth is the pit of deadness when the human heart has fallen from truth and finds in itself a gaping hole.

Truth is what is lied about and betrayed in the human heart, and truth is what is faithfully declared and acted upon in the human heart.

Truth is the life of the heart, the way the heart walks, the sweat, tears, and blood, the heart gives to go on seeking, and wrestling for, truth.

Truth is what the heart is vowed to, in its passion.

Truth is what the heart loves, more than staying alive, more than itself. It is for the sake of truth that the heart will undergo anything. There is no external obedience to authority involved in this; nor is there any pleasing of oneself. The passion that undergoes anything and everything, and does not give up or give in, however terrible and awful it becomes, is the heart's "obedience to the truth" [1 Peter, 1, 22].

Truth is heart truth.

Truth is forged in the human heart, or wholly distorted and forfeited in the human heart.

Therefore, the truth that gives life, and the way, to the heart is what is victorious over the lie that kills the life and falsifies the way.

But this will not be reached in any individual life, as St Peter says, but awaits all humanity at the end of time. Thus, in all humanity, collectively, we still strain after it. Heart truth is what neither dogma and doctrine, nor past teaching and instruction, has yet attained. The redemption effected for all mankind when heart truth dwells in each and every human heart is, as St Peter puts it, "the theme which the prophets pondered and explored" [1 Peter 1, 10]. Christ brings it, for he says of himself, 'I am the life, way, and truth' of the divine heart in the human heart, but Christ's coming, contrary to what the church of the time believed, did not bring the end of time. All of time is needed to complete in all of humanity what Christ accomplished.

10,

What happens is that when we really go through it, he turns up to share the ordeal. But, the most far-reaching fantasy of Christians has always been that Christ will do it all for them, and they need merely spectate as he takes the ordeal away from them. This is childish delusion, the 'pap' of which St Paul speaks [1 Corinthians 3, 2], and which he contrasts with 'strong meat and drink.' Did not St Anthony of Egypt ask Christ, after a period of hideous travails, "where were you when I needed you?" and Christ replied, "I was right beside you, admiring your valour." God ministers to us, but he also waits upon us to make our move. It is ours to give. The 'drama' of human existence arises entirely from this waiting upon us, for it creates the tension of, which heart in us will we live? Which heart in us will prevail? It is not a foregone conclusion. It is totally open and vulnerable.

Hence, St Peter speaks to all of us, not just the new disciples of his own time, when he says, "you have not seen him, yet you love him" [1 Peter, 1, 8]. Indeed, St Peter says this love dedicated to finding truth, which enters an arena of trials, transports us "with a joy too great for words" [1 Peter, 1, 9]. This is not that joy brought by Eros, the joyful ecstasy. It is none the less joy, the joy of the passion stricken for love, the joy of the pained, grieving, mourning ecstasy. The Erotic joy is a state of exaltation, but the Daemonic joy is the ecstasy of the exulting that enters the arena, and says, 'let it come.' Let the trials begin. Bring

it on. My Lakota brother in the Cante Tenze warrior society ends every letter to me with these words: 'hoka hey!' This was translated as 'it is a good day to die', but it really means, 'let's go.' Let's do it. But, the implication is, 'let's do it whether we face life or we face death. It is the same either way. Let's get it on, for life, let's get it on, for death.' Few people comprehend the rejoicing in passion when it enters upon the road that will bring it to the place where God's heart promise, God's heart truth, will test and be tested by, will risk and be risked to, the human heart's promise, the human heart's truth. They collide and interlock in fearsome contending. And the devil is in the arena, with God and us, trying to distort, twist, derail, this honest contention between Creator and creature over what most binds and divides them. The heart was created for this. The heart was created in a furnace, and it rejoices when it again enters the heat of the fire in which what is a forgery in it will be exposed but also in which what is true in it will be forged as 'the genuine article.'

At last, we are answering the call. No more are we just messing about, but the drama of existence has struck, and we are riven.

God calls to each of us by name, 'come try my passion', and that entails, 'try your own passion.'

This is the meaning of the enigmatic remark of one of the elders in the Desert Tradition: "If you have a heart, you can be saved."

11,

'Passibility' is a peculiar word with a profound meaning echoing down all the centuries of the Eastern Orthodox Christian Tradition of spirituality.

Passibility is the core of passion, since it refers to the way in which the heart is affectable, moveable, touchable, reachable, by that which is other to it and acts upon it. Temptation arises from this, and being temptable is a manifestation of the heart's weakness. To be 'weak' implies that the heart can be affected or moved in a delusive and destructive direction: it can be converted to falsehood, thus persuaded out of the yoke of being loyal to truth.

Given this reality – and it is a reality – then would it not be better for the heart to be non affectable, non moveable? Cannot the heart be made 'strong' in a manner that hardens it to all negative influence? And, if this hardening of heart so that any influence bounces off it is not possible, then isn't it better to entirely drop the claim that the heart can know and see truth? Surely, it is far better to see and know truth only through the nous, rather than trust the variable energy of the heart to direct itself toward truth? In fact, doesn't passibility imply that the heart inherently lacks all direction, like a leaf that can be blown off course, tossed hither and thither, squandering itself to chase after chimeras? It becomes addicted to what is merely passing away, and of no enduring value; or it becomes enmeshed in the blindness, malice and viciousness, of evil. Who would trust such a heart? Christ voices an army of follies and sins that live in and emanate from the heart. All these are heart passions. Surely, then, the

heart cannot be trusted as the central and most important spiritual organ? The heart is too malleable. It should be attached to God, but instead prefers to be attached to the world's ephemeral fancies and powerful corruptions. Following our heart is the path to perdition.

This negative critique of passion's passibility has to be placed next to the theological claim that complements it. This is the assertion that the very nature of God, and by extension all things pertaining to God, all things good and true, are always non variable, non passible. They are eternal. They are not passing, and so of only relative reality, good for a time, true for a certain context. They do not pass away, because God is not passing away, but eternal.

From this, however, it was further surmised that [a] God is not a passionate being, since by definition passionateness is not eternal, and indeed identified with relative reality and downright unreality; [b] humanity has fallen away from God's 'eternal verities' by becoming a passionate being. To return to God entails that we, too, must become impassible. Passion holds us back. To grow spiritually is to shed our passionateness, by self-control, ascetic exercises, and a nous-led raising of our being into the light that reflects eternity.

But [a] and [b] are false. In the Desert Tradition you can see this twofold mistake contending with the more heart rooted approach. Evagrius is the most obvious casualty to the error about passibility, while St Macarios is the most obvious champion of the reality concerning passibility. St Peter validates the passibility of the human heart's passion, but Christian Tradition never has adequately comprehended what is at issue. Some people went the way of St Paul's temperament, to try to become flawless, while others took the way of St Peter's temperament, to let passibility stand, with its huge flaws, but work with it and work through it. The paradox is that the temptability and weakness is necessary to the rock of strength. This is the paradox of passibility which Christ needed to reveal to St Paul, but which St Peter always lived to the full spontaneously. Indeed, if we excise passibility in our so-called spirituality, then spontaneity is no more. The capacity for spontaneity is a sign we are on the right road with passibility.

The paradox of passibility is that it is the door to our worst and to our best, yet to win the best from it, the worst must remain, like an injury that we must put up with and not try to surgically remove. That paradox of the heart, of passion, was created by God and it is God who tells us to let it be. It will guide us to the true strength, indeed, to many other fruits of passibility: courage, hunger for righteousness, generosity, compassion, patience, fortitude, and wisdom. The wisdom of the heart is wisdom, precisely, about our passibility.

Such wisdom is thus not touched by doctrine, or creedal belief, that is articulated as eternal and 'accomplished' verity. The truth of heart is different: it requires a process, and thus wisdom of the heart is all about how we get to truth.

Passion must 'pass through' life and death, heaven and hell; wisdom concerns this passing through.

How do we pass through that which is passible, and can 'go either way'?

How do we get through, or come through?

How do we come through together, so that none are lost on the way?

Wisdom of heart, unlike the vision from the mountain peak, is about how we stand on, and walk through, rough, messy, ambiguous terrain. We are changed in this process, such that our inherent worth, the goldenness of our heart passion, is sifted and won from all the unworthiness. But this is if we come through. If we do not come through, we are lost, adrift, forlorn.

Many do not like or trust this paradox of the passible. The attempt to impose eternity on time creates religious fascism, oppression, moralistic accusation and moralistic murder. Eternity is given away, and sacrificed, to time, to bring time through a process to the eternal. William Blake put it like this: "Eternity is in love with the productions of time." Eternity has been reversed to enter time. Eternity comes not in triumph to impose on time by force, but in a kind of powerlessness that has a very different power, the power to change and transform time from within its vagaries, from within its passingness. Eternity lets itself be reversed, overturned by time, in order really to be planted in time, so that it can reverse time, overturn time, from the abyss and ground of its existence.

The non-passible element in God's passion is the promise to see it through to the end, to remain passionate until the victory of truth in the heart is won. This is the rock upon which God is staked, and this rock was the foundation stone of the entire creation.

It is this rock which upholds the world.

On this rock is spilled blood. On this rock is kindled fire. From this rock gushes forth living water.

But this has an extraordinary implication: in our passion we go through what God in his passion goes through to win truth, on the ground, through time, over the depth. We pass through the passion that God passes through, to redeem the divine promise.

12,

For that promise really says, 'truth will not just be declared from above, in eternal doctrines, but truth will finally live below, in the depth of the heart.' But to live in the heart, it will have to be struggled and suffered for, journeyed and battled for, and lost to be regained. It will have to be searched out, tried in trials, checked. It will not be allowed to triumph, externally, imposed from above.

Eternity's victory in time will be more difficult, subtle, complex, paradoxical. That eternity will be reversed to enter time means eternity comes to us in humility, not spectacularly; eternity lets itself be humiliated, shamed, made guilty, scorned, laughed at, besmirched, by those living on the ground, in time, over the depth. Modestly, it refuses the provocation to 'prove' its power externally, by a show of force that can only triumphalistically impose above on below, and instead opts for a different way of proof. It proves the inward parts, it proves the heart, it proves the depth, it proves the passion, and demonstrates this inward proving where the seed really goes into the ground by outward deeds that bear much fruit [Mathew, 7, 16-17]. Truth is checked out in the heart: truth is checked out inherently, intrinsically, in and of what it is in the heart, and for the world. You will know their greatness of heart in what they give, lose, sacrifice, for the love that will undergo everything to bring everything to truth.

This is why strength is revealed through weakness: the accomplishment of a heart won to truth, in its living, by the way it passes through the passingness of existence, depends on that accomplishment being risked to variability, temptation, giving in. The truth that refutes error is no good; that is imposition, that is force. The truth that is discovered in error is really tested and really proved. That, alone, is good.

This is the point of the story of the woman who washes Christ's feet with her tears, while Simon, the self-righteous Pharisee, looks on disapprovingly, thinking to himself that Christ must not be a prophet, since he has failed to realise this woman is a sinner. Christ reads Simon's heart and, after telling him a parable about God forgiving both those who sin much [like the woman] and those who sin little [like the Pharisee], ends it by saying, "her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little" [Luke, 7, 36-47]. The kind of moral and ascetic correctness exemplified by the Pharisee 'loves little', whereas the many errors of the woman arose out of 'loving much.' Kierkegaard summed up this paradox when he said passion is both exaltation and perdition: we lose through passion, but we lose more with no passion.

So be it. Let it be. Let it come. 'Amen.'

God really allows contrary ways to slug it out with passion's way on the ground, in time, over the deep. Only passion's way can win the depth, but these other ways, some human, some demonic, are allowed by God to seek their ends, and create their own test of the truth to which passion is vowed.

Non passionate human ways effectively say to God, 'hey, relax, let us be, don't torture us with your depth, we just want a few beers, a few sexual encounters, some productive work and a dash of creativity, and we'll be fine. So, calm down, blow off the intensity, chill out, big guy. You can come down from the Cross. Let's use our head to banish the existential exactions of this world; we'll banish death, disease, poverty, strife. We'll enjoy ourselves a little. Even if we cannot control fate, we will be content with whatever pleasures and rewards we

can grab. Let's just take it easy.' Obviously, there are many non passionate human ways being tried out in the world, not all of them to be described as 'secular humanist.' Some are bourgeois, some are religious, some are scientific. Some hedonistic, some aesthetic, some bohemian, some conformist, some rebellious. A rich pluralism? In a sense, yes; but in another sense something sad, however quiet the despair: a shallow decency, arranged and enforced by reason. The tragedy in the deep heart is avoided, but so also is jettisoned the chance of its redemption. Passion is too inexplicable, too pained. Yet, the deeper tragedy keeps breaking in on the humanist rose garden. When we got rid of religion everything was supposed to flower, but the same old problems continued and intensified. We just made a religion of science, or politics, or art.

The heart's passibility must remain open and vulnerable to influence. A closed, invulnerable heart cannot be reached by God, by the world, by its own precariousness. Nothing moves it, but it moves nothing. When we are moved by God, this moves God. When we are moved by the world, this moves the world. Strength through weakness: passion through pathos.

Satan is furious with God for creating us and declaring us worthy, by entrusting everything eternal to our passible heart, and thus Satan is determined to prove that God cannot bring us through and make us worthy in the end.

In Hebrew, 'Satan' means 'the Adversary', and Buber reads this as 'the Hinderer.' Satanic bullying and intimidation, which is aimed at breaking our spirit, crushing our passion, comes through oppression. This oppression is experienced as a dark, heavy force weighing on the heart; but it also comes through being sexually abused, or being violently beaten up, in childhood. Satan is playing for keeps, so he attacks children who are passion at its most passible, variable, weak, temptable, open, vulnerable. Satan is the child-murderer. He doesn't fight fair: it is rare you get him to climb into the ring with you in direct combat. He fights dirty. He gets the world to do his dirty work. The child abuser, sexual or violent, in your own family; the nasty down-putting teacher; the corrupt policeman who is in with the criminals; the bullying gang of your peers; the lying politicians who feather their nests and care nothing for any common good; and the cowardly ministers and priests who stand around and wring their hands or go 'dear, dear', but never do anything; all these various kinds of heartlessness surround you as you grow up, and deliver a message: trust your passion and the roof will come down on you. Children often have the innocent enthusiasm, eagerness, élan and exuberance, that St Peter so clearly retained; but by adulthood, many children have been left in no doubt that if they push the boat out, they will be attacked. 'Kowtow, or else', a dark and hateful force says to every heart born into this world, as it steps up to take its stand there. 'Take a stand, and you will be knocked down and stamped on in the dirt.' Christianity as a whole has over-done the sin which the heart is tempted into, and under-done the hideous and vast damage, the scare and the scar, over-poweringly forced upon the heart by the world when in thrall to Satanic influence.

God does not cheat. He stays true to the perilous journey and fair fight that the divine and the human passions are committed to. God is not going to depart from the way of passion, in his deep heart or in our deep heart. That will prevail as we go through, or it will not; there will be no *deus ex machina* rescue, in which God gives up the pathos necessary to passion, the weakness necessary to strength, the vulnerability necessary to heroism. This is the only hand of cards God is playing with. He makes no deals. We can explore it together, question it together, nuance it together; and though there is only one Big Story that reveals how the divine and human passions fight each other and fight through as one, within that there are millions of personal stories that reveal and honour it in a myriad of different ways. This is the real pluralism. The route to heart truth is always the same, but always different. There are no rules and regulations mapping it. There is only a pathless path found in the heart, when it seeks truth. If the aim is genuine, the route to it, in a given life, reveals itself. It reveals itself only as we walk, as we try, as we give it our best shot.

The conscience which prods us tells us when we are not trying enough, or not even trying at all. This is a devastating stab. People resort to worldly things, or evil urges, to medicate this stab. But it is always there, never letting us rest, never giving us peace, always spoiling our quiet. 'Where are you?' Where do you stand? What is in your depth? What life do you live from your heart?

We understand, gradually, the pull of all these ways God allows to compete for our heart's allegiance: the divine-human, the merely human, the spiritually evil. When we are truthful with ourselves in this manner, especially when honest self-examination leads to tears, we confess then our love for the greater way, and our regret for being invested in all the lesser ways. This is a confession of faith in God's deepest heart, in humanity's deepest heart. Hence, such repenting renews faith, as well as clearing the undergrowth away, allowing us to see these different competing paths more clearly, and showing us a way through that jungle towards the one path our heart's passion 'really' wants.

This passion has not lost its direction; it remains forever aimed at heart truth. That is why its conscience, when we pretend we have no directionality toward heart truth left in us, bites us so harshly. We know, in our heart, that is a lie. We know, in our heart, we have not lost the direction, the aim of our passion. But what we have lost is faith in this direction's way, in its road, in the route going toward its aim. Fallen passion has taken an easier way, a safer way, a way of less expenditure. Every human heart wants, deep down, to be great, but what fails is the heroism needed to go on the hunt for this.

By admitting our sin, rather than feeding it, we can delve it to its root, and we can enter that other side of our heart's weakness, which is its poverty, humility, modesty. Since it is God's heart at work in our human heart that really engenders our passion, so we must come also to the place where our heart experiences itself as powerless, fireless, a nullity, a nothing. This is the humus, the humble earth, of the heart. This heart is not even our pathos, but something more basic: its malleable clay, which waits for rain, thunder, flame, to enliven and impassion it. But our passion, without God's dynamic presence, is earth

laying fallow. This is a different quiet, a different peace. The earth is humble, modest, poor. It is nothing. It strives after nothing because it rests in its own nothing. When false flames in us are purged, they are burnt to ashes; and these ashes rest quietly in the earth. It is a dying. But it is not a deadness, a deadening. It is a reduction to nothing. When we start to withdraw from false easy ways, when we begin to withdraw from false passions, they burn down and they burn out. We cease being falsely passionate, but our dispassion is a doing nothing, a silence, because we rest in the fallow earth. This is the 'good earth', ripe for God's planting. The seed grows underground; the spark ignites far below. The Hebrew terms for passion [as in Greek, it is a family of words, not a single word] suggest not only carrying a burden and suffering a wound, but also a pregnancy, a coming to birth. The heart is that which can change; the heart is that which was set in movement by God from its inception, to undergo a huge change, and make the world part of that vast change. When we are reduced in false passion back to the earth, we are cradled in the poverty, the humility, the modesty, the nothing, that pregnantly gives birth to true passion. By this reduction we are renewed in faith, renewed in the way. The true passion is given birth from the lowly earth of the heart.

God does not want our heart hardened. He wants it malleable and pliable. In the Old Testament [Ezekiel, 11, 19-20; Ezekiel, 36, 26-27], this softness so easily snared yet also so open to the Spirit's power and inspiration, is termed 'the heart of flesh.' This is the good heart, the bigger heart. The lesser heart, the bad heart, is termed 'the heart of stone.' This is the heart not just hardened in evil, but also hardened in human and demonic judgement of evil, which seals evil in, so that it cannot change. The fleshy heart can fall and repent in alternating turns a million times a day, if need be. The stony heart is inflexible: its evil is set, and equally set is its human and demonic judgement of evil. The fleshy heart is a mixed heart, full of wheat and chaff. It can always change. The stony heart is a divided heart. It cannot change. It is this type of heart which Freud described in his notion of 'Super Ego versus Id': a dark and harsh inhibiting judge pitted against a dark and harsh rebellious criminal, and there is no hope possible in their relationship, since each wants to do the other in. It is stalemate. Christ referred to this [Mathew, 12, 25] when he said 'a house divided against itself cannot stand.' Satan woos us into evil, then accuses and convicts and damns us for that evil: this is his game plan. Thus, both 'condemnation' and 'indulgence' are equally locked into Satan's prison. They are flip sides of the same coin.

Our truest passion is like the wolf who finds the tracks of God in the trackless desert in the heart and in the world; our truest passion is like the raven who flies in the abyss of God within the heart and within the world without knowing the principle of its flight.

Passion is vulnerable, but out of its vulnerability is born its strength. The way we deal with our weakness determines the kind of strength we will attain. Passion crosses over. Passion moves through.

The devil has been stalking the heart down through all time, but passion is stalking him. Slowly, he is being manoeuvred into a corner where he will have to fight openly, and there he will be brought down. The devil will be defeated, by God's passion, by humanity's passion. The way of heart will come through. The worthiness will burn bright and warm. This is the end, when Christ will be revealed openly, because the human heart made to be like him will have proved its worth.

This is redemption.

13,

Christ made the impossible crossing over the desert and over the abyss. He paid the price of our failure, shouldering its consequences and taking that hit. But he did more than atone for us: he carried the weight of passion we put down, he suffered the pain of passion we refused. He went on where we turned back. He lived this. He did this. He did not simply teach this as possibility: he lived and did it in existential actuality. He was aflame with the fire that he wanted to kindle in us.

Christ is the 'hidden man of the heart' to whom St Peter refers; and Christ invites us all to unhide this man in us. This man is passion.

This is the man of sorrows, the man uncomely to behold and bruised for our sake, ugly with affliction. This is the man made the scapegoat for his people. This is the man whose passion is folly to Greeks, because they are too taken up with knowledge, and rising upward into the light of heaven, and this is the man whose passion is a stumbling block to Jews, because they are too taken up with judgement, and separating the righteous from the transgressors upon the earth. This is the man who gave his life to death, to make death life; this is the man who gave his heaven to hell, to make hell heaven. This is the man who made defeat into victory.

This is the man. Passion is the man.

But this is also the man despised more than all others. No man was ever so mocked, so reviled, so spat upon. His passion is the foundation stone of great worth [1 Peter, 2, 6], yet no 'construction block' was ever so cast aside, and left unbuilt on. A Christian saint once saw this man as a beggar in the wilderness, driven away from all human habitation.

He is the man not only of passion's 'self-giving', but of kenosis, passion's 'self-emptying.' He became less than the humble earth: he was humiliated, stripped and shamed, found guilty. He was laughed at, looked down on, scorned. The rock of greatest worth upon which is kindled passion's flame was hated, as no spiritual leader ever has been detested. This is strange, even when you have factored in the political threat he may have constituted to the Roman Authority, or the religious threat he may have constituted to the Jewish Authority. There is more to it than all this. What is the unmitigated ferocity and savagery of hate

which this passion provoked? Why does the passion of this man hidden in the heart elicit such hostility?

I have witnessed this hatred in the feigned offhand sneers of secular humanists who airily dismiss Christ, as well as in the fanaticism of those who actively oppose Christ. I once saw a Buddhist viscerally wince in disgust, catching sight of a Cross. To a large extent, this hatred of Christ is in all of us, for we all murdered him. That is the whole point. It wasn't just the crowd, or the Romans, or the Jews, who killed him: it was us. He knew we would kill him when he came into the world. He came to die, at the hands of those he loves. He knew love would have to embrace even this extremity.

Why? Why must we devalue that of ultimate worth? Why must we desecrate that of ultimate holiness? It would be too easy to say this is simply the devil in us, though on the Cross Christ forgave us, declaring 'they know not what they do.' On one level we don't: we don't know who Christ really is, and what he really means to us. How could we so hate the redeemer of the heart and the redeemer of the world? Do we prefer the loss of redemption? Our hate for Christ cannot be comprehended, by grasping after rational explanations. Such explanations never penetrate the human heart. The heart has its reasons, but they belong to the irrationality of passion.

We hate Christ because we hate our selves. We hate our heart, we hate our passion. When we spit on and revile Christ, we spit on and revile our heart and its passion. Christ is the lamb, the eternal child, so innocently outgoing toward life; and Christ is the tiger, the adult who must face the enemy, to make a stand and a fight for truth. But we are this child too, and we are this adult too. Like him, we are lamb and tiger. Our hatred for him is, at bottom, the vast hatred we harbour for ourself.

Why do we hate the passion in us?

There is no reason and every reason.

It rebukes us, for we experience it as too demanding and we resent it for exposing our weakness, and cowardice. It humiliates us, shames us, because we are not up to it, or it makes us guilty because we cannot get it right but always get it wrong. We hate its vulnerability= we hate its pathos. We hate its big stand and its big fight. In one sense it is just too much, and in another sense it is just not good enough. We hate being passable, moveable, touchable, reachable. We hate it that we are in suspense, that the outcome is not assured, that our safety and status cannot be secured. We hate it that there is no extrinsic reward, or external confirmation, validation, approval. We hate the way of heart.

We hate it all, and we hate the man of heart who took it all on, so that we could take it all on. We hate his passion because we hate our own passion. He offers us a hand, he sends an invitation, but we have to say 'no' to tell him just how bad it is= to tell him how real and how deep is our loss of faith in the way of

passion. He has to know how much we are hurting, how lost we are, how ruined in possibility, how far gone in dereliction. We have to inflict our self-hate on him, because he loves us, and we do not love ourselves.

We hate Christ because he has faith in us and we have thrown away all faith in ourselves. In the deep, it is tragedy. In the deep, it is real bad. Death in the deep, hell in the deep, are real. Christ has to know that. He says he loves us, and will suffer to redeem us. We have to test that to see if he can prove it. That is why we kill him.

The passion in us is killed, and we kill it in ourselves and in others a thousand times every day. We are not going to buy in to any cheap salvation that does not embrace, and change from within, the immense devastation at our root. We have to kill him. He has to know how serious, and how impossible, redeeming our deep of passion is.

We hate the man of constant sorrow, the man of passion, because we hate the constant sorrow of our passion.

We cannot bear it. So, we cannot bear that he bears what we cannot, that we may bear it. He opens a wound we wanted closed long ago. To heal us, he must embrace our wound. To be healed, we must open our wound and let him touch it. We hate him for trying, still trying, with that in us which we have given up on.

We put defeat on him so we can evade our deep defeat. Thus do we sneer at his Cross. Yet conversely, his willingness to accept defeat opens us to our defeat, reminds us of it, regrounds us in it, because he goes there with us and suffers there what we suffer. Thus do we weep at his Cross. We slay Christ, refusing any opening to him in our heart, yet if we do this honestly, we are slain by Christ, for his death opens us to ours, his hell opens us to ours. We see the heart crucified by us, yet paradoxically and by reversal, we see the heart crucified for us, and this breaks us open, because we are already crucified. It is here, in this reversal, that the truth of his dying for us, because we are dead, pierces our heart. Suddenly there is a turn-around: we are turned upside down, because he is with us in the dark, pained place, and he is there to get us through. He has come for us, and he is going to fight for us. He is not going to abandon us where we have abandoned ourselves.

Though we must hate Christ because he has faith in us where we have no faith in ourselves, by the same token, this deed changes us in depth. His faith in us generates a new faith in him and in ourselves. His fight for us gives courage to us to re-enter the fight. By his suffering of all that passion must suffer, he tells us we can suffer all that passion must suffer. He is not just the man for us: he raises the man in us, and sets him on his feet again.

By his wound, we are healed [1 Peter, 2, 25]. God suffers the human wound that the human wound may be healed. But this healing means the restoration of passion to its fate, to its destiny: to its mission. That 'the just suffers for the

unjust' means that unbroken passion suffers for passion's brokenness, to make it live and act again. He bears the unbearableness that we have rejected, that we may bear the unbearable through him. He is our passion's strength: not just the elder brother leading through where we must go, but the spark in our spark, the backbone in our standing, the fire in our fire. Though his body went to death, his spirit went to life: so will it be for us, because his passion is in our passion. Hence, he not only leads us as an example, but he goes through the eye of the needle with us. He is our child and our adult. He is the hidden heart in our heart. He is the man of the heart who gives the man in our heart a new courage.

May Christ be forever praised wherever human beings have shed their tears and shed their blood.

Because he did it, we can do it.

Once we really do it, our hate for our heart and its passion ends. This ends Satan's rule over the deep heart. The worst has become the transition to the best; the tragedy has become the springboard for the journey and battle toward heart truth.

St Isaac of Syria sums up passion being alive and active again when he says those being made perfect "reject fear, disdain rewards, and love with their whole hearts." He also articulated the heart of passion's reconciliation to suffering for love when he said: "There is no greater invitation to love than loving first." And the fruit of passion's regeneration he put like this: "If you see your brother in the act of sinning, throw about his shoulders the mantle of your love." And Abba Poemen, asked what is faith, replied: "To live in loving kindness and do good to your neighbour."

But let St Peter close: "Do not be bewildered by the fiery ordeal that is upon you... It gives you a share in Christ's sufferings, and that is cause for joy... If Christ's name is flung in your teeth as an insult, count yourselves happy, because then... the Spirit of God is resting upon you" [1 Peter, 4, 12-15].

The passion deep in our heart is a whole way, a path, a road. God calls to it, and it calls to us.

Let's go.

Hoka hey.

FRUITS OF LIVED TRUTH

1,

Truth that is lived, authentically, has certain fruits. We know these are true break-throughs because we know the predicament they are up against. That fate which 'all flesh is heir to' is the yardstick of truth= [1] anything that embraces it and comes through, and [2] comes through with all who are caught up in it, is existentially true.

A= A mystic's fruit of truth – philanthropy

Philanthropy means, in Greek, to be a friend of humanity: all humanity is implied.

"...a person stirred by zeal is ill with a grievous sickness. While you presume to stir up your zeal against the sickness of others, you will have banished health from your own soul. You should rather concern yourself with your own healing. But if you wish to heal those that are sick, know that the sick have greater need of loving care than of rebukes. Zeal is not... a form of wisdom: rather it is one of the sicknesses of the soul, arising from narrow-mindedness and profound ignorance. The beginning of divine wisdom is the serenity acquired from generosity of soul and forbearance with human infirmities."
St Isaac of Syria

B= A warrior's fruit of truth – sincerity

If philanthropy is the mark of a soul won over to the quest for truth, then sincerity is the mark of a heart struggling to stand upright on truth as its only ground in the abyss. Sincerity finds ground where anything else in the heart falls down and falls through.

A certain person said, "In the saint's tomb there is a poem that goes,
If in one's heart
He follows the path of sincerity,
Though he does not pray,
Will not the Spirit protect him?"

A man answered him by saying,
"You seem to like poetry.

I will answer you with a poem:
As everything in the world is but a sham,
Death is the only sincerity.

Becoming as a dead man in one's daily living is
the following of the path of sincerity."

Yamamoto Tsunetomo, Samurai.

C= A king's fruit of truth – joining the mess

A king is charged with responsibility for and service to the common ground that only holds up because it includes all persons, and excludes none.

“The wise man goes to the king, very worried, and says, ‘I have read the signs and they tell me next year all the crop of wheat in the kingdom will be poisoned. Everyone who eats it will go mad.’ The king ponders the bad news. ‘What do you suggest?’ he asks his spiritual mentor and advisor. The sage replies, ‘By storing up supplies now, you and I can refrain from eating any of the poisoned wheat, so that when the whole world goes mad, at least you and I will remain sane.’ The king is silent. At last he says, ‘No, we cannot do as you suggest, because a king must remain a part of his people. If we do as you say, we will set ourselves apart, and in that event, we will cease to be able to do anything worthwhile for them.’ He paused, pondering further. ‘Here is what we will do’ the king said. ‘We will eat the poisoned grain like everyone else, but before we do, we will each make a black mark on our forehead, so that when we look at each other, we will know we are mad!’”

-Traditional, Hasidic Judaism.

D= A holy fool's fruit of truth – laughter

The huge and rolling laughter emanating from the belly acknowledges our own, and the world's, delusion and the house of cards built on top of it. If we do not admit we are sick, we cannot be healed; if we do not admit we are laying in the dust, we cannot get up.

“There are things that even the wise fail to do, while the fool hits the point. Unexpectedly discovering the way to life in the midst of death, he bursts out in hearty laughter.”

Sengai

In all four of these differing fruits of truth, this is where the Tree of Life finally flowers: it embraces the Tree of Knowledge, to redeem it.

How is this reached?

2,

Lived truth is a ‘praxis’ à la Aristotle, not a ‘theoria’ à la Plato.

Lived truth is a ‘drama’ à la Aristotle, not an ‘apatheia’ à la Evagrius.

Lived truth is a story beyond any archetype divinely ‘pre-set’ in the heavens or arbitrarily ‘constructed’ on earth.

Lived truth is a poetry and music impossible to put into words.

The story is heartbreaking, the poetry and the music are the inarticulate uttering and the silent crying of this heartbreak.

3,

It cannot be explained.

Those who live the existentialism of will and mind – speaking not of lived truth but of making an ‘interpretation’ of life, and referring not to testing and proving meaningfulness in meaninglessness but of ‘inventing’ a meaning sturdy enough to support a life – can never understand the existentialism of passion’s more crazy leap.

The existentialism that is spiritual takes a step that the existentialism which is philosophical cannot take. The former trusts more, and thus endures more. It sees the whole fated mystery, the whole fated struggle, through to the end.

The step cannot be understood.

First it must be lived.

It is only understood after it is lived.

Passion is what makes the leap without demanding to first understand it.

Passion could not do this but for two things: it is irrationally ready to go, and prepared to go much deeper, much farther, for no reason that reason can grasp; and it is summoned by a call that addresses it deep down, and to which it replies by following its irrational urge.

Nietzsche: “What is done from love always occurs beyond good and evil.”

Passion is what we do beyond good and evil, beyond sense and absurdity, beyond purpose and futility, beyond value and nihilism, beyond life and death, for love.

Love cannot be spoken. Love is lived.

SUMMATION= The Way Of Passion Is A Paradox

1,

If we refuse the Deepest Suffering *in* existence, then we can never enter the Greatest Fight *for* existence.

Ortega y Gasset: "These are the only genuine ideas, the ideas of the shipwrecked. All the rest is rhetoric, posturing, farce. He who does not really feel himself lost is without remission."

Suffering, if we stay with it and go far enough into it without turning back, takes us beyond our own hurt and disappointment and loss of innocence, and initiates us into the deepest suffering of all mankind, the suffering old, dark, deep, dirty, despairing, twisted, agonised, the suffering inherent to the human tragedy; only from this deep and dark place do we receive the true call, the real summons, to rejoin the human race and plunge into the human dilemma as a fighter, as one who stands up for the human possibility as its advocate, and will give their all, their last drop of sweat, tears, and blood, to redeem the human condition.

We are only moved to stand up, to stake ourselves to the ground, and to sacrifice our personalness and lifeblood, by a wound. It is this wound we are fated to encounter which reveals to us our personal destiny.

From this black wound arises red fire.

This is the mystery, the paradox, of passion.

This is why only two colours are sacred to passion, black and red.

Black – Taoism's 'uncarved block': it is called 'the ravine of the world.' It holds all possibilities, for love and the defeat of love.

Red – Judaism's 'consuming fire': it is called 'the pillar of the world.' It contests everything in the heart, and proves what is deepest, so only that stands up for truth.

Thus could Abba Elias announce: "Whoever loves tribulation will obtain joy and peace later on." St Isaac of Syria adds: when someone has no more "hope of life", "no one is more daring than he, no foe can face him, no... affliction can weaken his purpose, for he has resolved to accept death for himself."

2,

The reward for following passion all the way: to do what the heart was created for. Small heartedness brings final despair; big heartedness brings a strange and inexplicable hope that everything is still in motion, that it is not over until it is over, and that is not yet.

What is at stake for passion in the world, to which passion is staked, is not over until the end. Passion can fall, or be knocked down countless times, but it always gets up. It always comes again.

This is the way of heart, heart deep and heart great.

This is the way of passion.

It is too deep and too great for us, thus we have put down its weight, yet the ache of its un-lived life and un-given sacrifice urges us not to throw it away.

The ache most wounding and heavy of all tells us not to despair prematurely. In our most forlorn and ruined place of heart, some voice urges us, it can come again.

The ache and the voice whispers, with the most piercing tenderness, it is not over, it can come again.

Passion will get up. It is coming again.

3,

Only in the heartbreak that we accept, and do not try to fix or make better, is revealed the heartbreak of humanity which is held in the heartbreak of God.

God of the heartbreak, God of the bottomless grieving, become the God who will get up, become the God who is coming again.

REFERENCES IN THE TEXT

p. 5 – ‘It is impossible’: Kierkegaard, S., *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, quoted in *Existentialism*, ed. Solomon, R., The Modern Library, New York, 1974, p 22.

p. 5 – ‘We live in a passionless age’: Nietzsche, F., see *The Nietzsche Reader*, ed. Ansell-Pearson, K. and Large, D., Blackwell, Oxford, 2006; see also *A Nietzsche Reader*, trans. by Hollingdale, R., Penguin Classics, London, 1977.

p. 5 – Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. by C. Garnett, Random House, New York, 1996.

p. 5 – Buber, Martin, *The Way of Response, Selections From Martin Buber’s Writings*, ed. Glatzer, N., Schocken Books, New York, 1966, p 147.

p. 7 – Ezekiel, 28, 1-19; Isaiah, 14, 12-20; Luke, 10, 18.

p. 7 – ‘Satan the Accuser’: William Blake speaks of Satan in this way at various points in his work. “A Vision of the Last Judgement” is a description of a painting now lost, which was found in Blake’s notebooks after his death, and assembled from fragments by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Blake says that Christ came to deliver humanity, “the accused”, and not to deliver Satan, “the accuser.” The Last Judgement will be “deliverance from Satan’s Accusation.” Blake develops a powerful, and chilling, vision of Satan as not only the worldly tyrant who uses politics and economics to suppress human freedom, but also as the false god behind most if not all religion; the churches and the priests or ministers are servants of the Satanic Accuser and his religion of judgementalism. It is Satan who twists our honest awareness of failure to hit the mark into a tormenting sense of sin in which we look upon our human nature as inherently evil, and conclude it is wrong to have any thirst and hunger for life. This cripples us with guilt and fear, and therefore makes us susceptible to any ‘authority’ that claims to know why we are in the wrong and how to put us right. In the poem “To the Accuser Who Is The God of This World”, Satan is addressed thus: “Though thou art worshipped by the names divine, of Jesus and Jehovah, thou art still the Son of Morn in weary night’s decline, the lost traveler’s dream under the hill.” The ‘Son of Morn’ is an allusion to Lucifer, expelled from heaven, appearing in the sky as a false dawn, before plummeting to earth to become Satan, the secular and religious prince of worldliness, which Blake calls “the Empire of nothing.” The connection between Blake’s ‘Satan’, and Dostoyevsky’s ‘Grand Inquisitor’, is surely clear. Every worldly authority, whether secular or religious, tends toward the Satanic; and we remain under the dominion of the Satanic not only when we are self-despairingly sunk in sin but also when we are self-righteously condemnatory of sin. It was this Satanic ruler, both secular and religious, who crucified Christ. Significantly, the vision of St John in the very last book of the Bible returns to this theme of Satan as accuser of humanity. Thus Revelation, 12, 7-12, recapitulates the story of Lucifer/Satan falling from heaven and “coming down” to earth and sea “in great wrath, because he knows his time is short.” In verse 10, it says redemption has come through Christ: “for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them day and night before our God.” Thus, it is clear that Christ is the Advocate for the Human Heart, even as Satan is the Accuser of the Human Heart; and in verse 11, it says this relentless and unending accusation that Satan brings to God, seeking to prove humanity is an

experiment that has failed, is only defeated by Christ's sacrifice, which is "the blood of the Lamb", and by the humans who testify to this by their own sacrifice, "for they loved not their lives even unto death."

p. 8 – Victorian Liberalism was emphatically not permissive; it was a zealous movement that brought about many needed intellectual and social reforms. But in the late capitalism of the 21st century, its original 'liberation' has degenerated, more and more, into an unthinking and knee-jerk 'license' to do whatever we want, or to please ourselves as we see fit. Current liberalism promotes weakness of character, because it refuses any yoke of discipline that would promote discernment and strength; it takes the line of least resistance, always going for the comfortable and bloodless option. Temperamentally, liberalism now has no grit.

p. 8 – 'Intimations': Wordsworth, W., "Intimations of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood", in Quiller-Couch, ed., *The Oxford Book Of English Verse:*

1250-1900, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1919, Ode 536.

p. 10 – 'This life is a fire pit': *Zen Buddhist traditional saying*.

p. 10 – 'The heart is an abyss': St Macarios of Egypt, *The Homilies of St. Macarios*, trans. by Maloney, G., Paulist Press, New York, 1992, Homily XV; see also Vivian, T., ed., *The Spirit-Bearer: Coptic Texts Relating to St. Macarios the Great*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 2004.

p. 10 – 'You will bear', Bodhidharma's words: *Zen Buddhist traditional saying*.

p. 11 – 'Hope in everything': St Paul, 1 Corinthians 13, 7.

p. 11 – 'He who loves', etc: *Eastern Orthodox Christian Desert traditional sayings*.

p. 12 – 'Fire is in all things': St Dionysus, *The Celestial Hierarchies*, XV; quoted by Payne, R., *The Holy Fire*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1980, pp 241-242. See also: Clement, O., *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, part three, ch 4, New City, London, 1993.

p. 14 – Another stream of Gypsies went from Egypt into the Balkans and Eastern Europe. Their music reflects a different physical and cultural geography, yet the Oriental spiritual origins are the same.

p. 15 – 'The Daemonic': Goethe, quoted by Lorca, Federico, *In Search of Duende*, trans. by Maurer, C., New Directions, New York, p viii.

p. 16 – Bodhidharma 'sweating white beads': *Zen Buddhist traditional saying*.

p. 16 – Christ 'sweating blood': Luke 22, 44.

p. 18 – Mikis Theodorakis on flamenco: Pepe Pachon, *personal communication*.

p. 20 – 'Two rivers': Lorca, Federico, *Poem Of The Deep Song [Poema Del Cante Jondo]*, "Ballad of the Three Rivers", City Lights Books, San Francisco, p 3.

p. 27 – 'Listen, my son: the silence': Lorca, F., *ibid*, "Poem of the Gypsy Siguiriya; The Silence", p 13.

p. 22 – 'Long live Granada': Lorca, F.,

p. 26 – 'The heart is a small vessel yet contains': St Macarios of Egypt, *ibid*, Homily XV.

p. 26 – 'Pleasures and sorrows': *Cheyenne Indian traditional saying*.

- p. 26 – ‘Death is the mother of wisdom’: *Eastern Orthodox Desert traditional saying*.
- p. 28 – ‘I stick my finger into existence’: Kierkegaard, S., *Repetition*, trans. by Lowrie, W., Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1964, p 104.
- p. 29 – ‘Deep cries to deep’: Psalm 42, 7. [Septuagint= Psalm 41, 8, The Diocesan Press, Madras, India, 1966, p 49.]
- p. 29 – The ‘absurd’ is a vital reality in all of Kierkegaard’s writings, but is crucial to *Fear and Trembling*.
- p. 30 – ‘The awakened’: Heraclitus, in *Heraclitus, Fragments: A Text and Translation With a Commentary*, Robinson, T., University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1987.
- p 32 – ‘Thought without a thinker’: Kierkegaard, S., *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. by Swenson, D. and Lowrie, W., Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, p 47.
- p. 32 – For an existential account of Dostoyevsky’s thought, see: *Dostoevsky*, Berdyaev, N., trans. by Attwater, D., New American Library, New York, 1974.
- p. 33 – ‘Man is a mystery’, Dostoyevsky’s letter to his brother: see Krasicki, J. [2004], “Post Humanism and Russian Religious Thought”, *Studies in East European Thought*, 54 [1-2], pp 125-143; see also Hamilton, C. [1998], “Ethics and the Spirit”, *Philosophical Investigations*, 21 [4], pp 315-337.
- p. 33 – ‘Kafka’s letter to Oskar Pollak, January 27, 1904’: *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, trans. by Winston, R. and C., Schocken Books, New York, 1977.
- p. 34 – St Theophan the Recluse, *The Heart of Salvation*, trans. by Williams, E., ed. Amis, R., and “Introduction”, Maloney, G., Praxis Institute Press, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, 1991, p 93.
- p. 35 – St Maria Skobtsova was, along with two other monastics, killed by the Nazis for hiding Jews in her refuge in Paris. Other examples of monastics who understood the need to leave the monastery as a spiritual haven in order to fulfill Christ’s call to work and die for the redeeming of the world include, for example, St Philothei of Athens [1589], a nun who was killed by the Turks because she was helping slave women to escape; or St Kosmas the Aitolian [18th century], who left Athos to preach widely the urgent need for education and was also martyred for the stand he took.
- p. 35 – ‘St John Chrysostom’s sermon’: A monk on Mt Athos whom I met whilst living there for several months conveyed this sermon to me, in order to demonstrate that not all monasticism is understood and practiced as ‘other worldly.’ According to John Demakis [*Raising Lazarus*, ed. Muse, S., Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Mass., 2004, p 17], St Basil asserted the same point: “St Basil did not expect his monks to stay cloistered in their cells and pray all day, but rather should balance their prayerful life [theoria] with good deeds for their fellow man [philanthropia].” Demakis [ibid, p 17] points out that the early church in Byzantium supported many philanthropic institutions, including homes for the poor [ptochotropheia], homes for orphans [orphanotrophia], homes for the aged [gerokomeia], and hospitals [nosokomeia and xenones]. Indeed, “rival Christian factions often vied with each other in who would do more good works” [ibid, p 17]. Moreover, as Patriarch of Constantinople [from 398 AD], St John Chrysostom thundered against slavery and on behalf of the equality of women, and threatened fire from heaven upon

the luxury and vanity of the rich [Payne, R., *ibid*, p 217]. He combined the way of contemplation and the way of action in one: the former he likened to night, when the dew falling from heaven heals our wounds and calms our griefs, while the latter is likened to the fierce heat of the day which scorches and burns us [Payne, R., *ibid*, p 212]. But this link between quiet and tumult did not last. Perhaps over time as the church increasingly sided with the rich and powerful, in effect backing the most worldly, so monasticism became increasingly other worldly. Whatever the cause, the ultimate danger of monasticism is to embrace the heresy of 'Angelism': the desire to be raised above human frailty, so as to become pure spirit without body. This is the road to total heartlessness. It turns asceticism into a 'yoga of ascent', rather than a tool for discerning the difference between the two hearts. The heart as such is transcended, as the monastic becomes more ethereal, and confuses this etherealized state with 'spirituality.' It is nothing of the kind, rather it is just one of many 'abstracted' states which exemplify the Faustian problem of knowledge as escape from existential wrestlings. This is the evil of Mephistopheles. The name in Greek means 'foul air.' Angelizing spirituality is in fact a too rarified air. The person becomes too attenuated, too thin, to really live. This 'thinness' is not the life more abundant brought by the Spirit.

p. 35/6 – 'Andy's song': *The Fire Next Time*.

p. 36 – 'A writer says of Dostoyevsky's novels': see internet on *existentialism*.

p. 39 – Tia Anica la Pirinaca, Felix Grande, Jose Moneleon: *traditional sayings*.

p. 39 – 'The battle on the rim': Lorca, Federico, *ibid*, p 58.

p. 39 – 'The remotest mansions of the blood': Lorca, Federico, *ibid*, p 51.

p. 41 – 'Deep song': Lorca, Federico, *ibid*, p 14.

p. 41 – 'The true fight is with the duende': Lorca, Federico, *ibid*, p 51.

p. 41 – The more common Greek word for action is 'praxis', which is used to talk about everyday practical activity: 'practice makes perfect', 'the doctor asked me to call in at his practice', 'that is an odd practice they have in that country', are all examples of this. Aristotle distinguished such concrete, practical action from 'theoria', or abstract, even visionary, thinking; he also distinguished the process of praxis from whatever it produced: 'techne.' And he noted that vocational and complex practical activity is driven not by top-down theoretical vision, nor by fixed and inflexible mechanical technique, but by bottom-up practical wisdom, or 'phronesis.' By contrast, the Greek word 'drama' is not used in the everyday for action; it refers to action under special and limited circumstances: a deed, an office or duty one fulfills; an action represented on the stage [a performance], a drama, especially a tragic drama. The root 'dra' in the Greek 'dranos' has the sense of 'a doing, a deed.' Thus, putting all this together, it can be asserted that in Greek there is a kind of action which signifies a 'deed' that is 'dramatic' – a deed that is arresting, a deed with significant consequences for all involved, a deed that shifts the world, a deed in the public eye that will move those who witness it. This kind of action is realized directly in, and has powerful consequences for, the world – rather than being something just thought about or contemplated in the mind, or imposed on the world by the mind's scheming and calculating.

p. 47 – 'The duende does not come at all unless he sees that death is possible': Lorca, Federico, *ibid*, p 58.

p. 50 – 'Old earth of the oil lamp': Lorca, F., "Poem of the Solea; Evocation",

ibid, p 21.

p. 50 – ‘Dead he was’: Lorca, F., “Poem of the Solea; Surprise”, *ibid*, p 31.

p. 52 – ‘He was gained’: Unamuno, Miguel.

p. 52 – ‘The Crime’: Machado, A., ‘El Crimen Fue En Granada’ was first published in his last book, *The War [La Guerra]*, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, 1937.

p. 53 – ‘Unless a seed’: John, 12, 24.

p. 53 – ‘The personal’: Buber, Martin, *ibid*, p 96.

p. 55 – Gerald One Feather: *personal communication*.

p. 55 – ‘Religion is essentially’: Buber, Martin, *ibid*, p 72.

p. 56 – ‘What is talked about is not faith’: Hannay, A., “Introduction” to his translation of the Danish text of *Fear and Trembling, Dialectical Lyric by Johannes de Silentio*, Penguin Classics, London, 1985, p 13.

p. 57 – ‘Faith requires passion’: Kierkegaard, S., *ibid*, p 71.

p. 57 – ‘The genuinely human factor’: Kierkegaard, S. *ibid*, p 145.

p. 57 – ‘Succeeding generations’: Hannay, A., *ibid*, pp 12-13.

p. 57 – ‘An honest seriousness’: Kierkegaard, S., *ibid*, p 145.

p. 57/8 – ‘One generation... But the highest passion’: Kierkegaard, S., *ibid*, p 145.

p. 58 – Kierkegaard, S., *ibid*, p 146.

p. 58 – ‘To treat something aesthetically’: Hannay, A., *ibid*, pp 8-9.

p. 58 – ‘Absolutely committed to relative ends’: Kierkegaard, S., *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. by Swenson, F. and Lowrie, W., Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1941, p 412.

p. 61 – ‘If at the bottom of everything’: Kierkegaard, S., *ibid*, p 49.

p. 62 – Kierkegaard links faith to passion also in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*= “Without risk there is no faith. ...If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe. If I want to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty, so as to remain out over the deep, over 70,000 fathoms of water, still preserving my faith” [quoted in *Existentialism*, ed., Solomon, R., *ibid*, p 22].

p. 62 – Kierkegaard’s approach to the sacrifice asked of Abraham by God has generated much critical comment, not least among Jewish writers, who contend that the second commandment to love the neighbour as if they were the self is the flip side of loving God with all one’s nature [Mathew, 22, 37-40], and therefore cannot be reduced to any ‘mere’ normative, or universalizing, ethics. I cannot do justice to this debate, but I think these critics miss Kierkegaard’s main point. Though God establishes the ethical, never the less he is not confined to it. Faith leaves God free to operate outside even the ‘law of love’ he has himself established. Faith is not blind obedience to God; rather, it is a radical personal trust that whatever God does with the world, even if this reverses settled religious tradition, is for the world’s ultimate redemption. This is also why faith is invariably anguished, and an affliction: we must personally risk our very being, and lose all that makes sense to us, through relying on the personalness of God. This personal trust in the personal promises of God renders faith a struggle beyond not only the reasonable but also beyond the ethical. Abraham undergoes a trial of faith, and by coming through this, his existentially tested faith founds Judaism. What neither reason nor ethics can grasp is that they are part of something bigger, and more mysterious, which

exceeds their boundaries. Kierkegaard is therefore true to faith when he identifies it with the 'absurd', and claims it will always be an 'offence', even a scandal, to all structured human comprehension, whether secular or religious. Trust in God is not a license to allow God to act arbitrarily in doing 'whatever he likes'; it is trust in his personal love for us, no matter how stretched, and broken, existence renders us. Walter Kaufman, in *Existentialism, Religion and Death* [New American Library, New York, 1976, p 14], sums it up: "If it were really axiomatic that God could never contravene our reason and our conscience – if we could be sure that he must share our moral judgments – would not God become superfluous as far as ethics is concerned? A mere redundancy? If God is to make a... difference in our lives, Kierkegaard insists, we must admit that he might go against our reason and our conscience, and that he should still be... [trusted]."

p. 64 'Gateway to mysteries': St Isaac of Syria, *Heart Of Compassion, Daily Readings With St Isaac of Syria*, ed. Allchin, A., Darton, Longman, and Todd, London, 1989, p 2.

p. 65 – 'The contest of love', Christos Yannaras: This phrase was brought to my attention by a Greek friend who has been a student of Professor Yannaras.

p. 66 – 'Love God': Mark 12, 30; Deuteronomy, 5, 5; and 11, 13.

p. 66 – 'Take the mind down': *Eastern Orthodox Desert traditional saying*.

p. 66 – 'Keep your mind in hell and despair not': Christ's words to Silouan, in *St. Silouan The Athonite*, Archimandrite Sophrony, trans. by Edmonds, R., St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1999, XI, pp 208-213.

These words should not be misread. As Dante said, hell is where all hope has to be abandoned. Rather, Christ's words mean staying in the hell of the heart with full awareness, with perception and understanding, without fleeing. 'Do not despair' does not mean clinging to hope in the place that is hopeless, but it does mean remaining open even in this place, staying there without assuming it is 'the end.' In this context despair would be a premature foreclosure, a kind of literal or spiritual suicide, because we cannot accept just being in hell without wanting to finish it, via a total giving up. But the person who can remain in hell without despair "leaves it wholly to God how he is to be helped, but he believes that for God all things are possible" [Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, trans. by Lowrie, W., Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1968, pp 171-172]. Even in hell, passion cleaves to God.

p. 67 – For the teaching of St Maximus on the threefold division of the human being into 'Nous/Reason' [logistikon], 'Desire' [epithymia], and 'Anger' [thymos], see Lars Thunberg's *Man and the Cosmos, The Vision of St Maximus the Confessor*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1985, especially ch. 3.

p. 68 – 'One should with clenched teeth': *Buddhist traditional saying*.

p. 69 – 'Passing through water and fire' is a recurrent theme of the Old Testament, especially the Prophets and the Psalms: Isaiah, 43, 1-7; Psalm 66, 10-12 [Septuagint= Psalm 65, 10-12.]; Psalm 42, 7 [Septuagint= Psalm 41, 8]; it recurs in the New Testament: Luke, 3, 15-17.

p. 70 – 'Visionary mind, impudent bird': St Maximus, see *Maximus Confessor, Selected Writings*, ed. Berthold, G., Paulist Press, Mahwah, New Jersey, 1985.

p. 71 – Buber, Martin, *I And Thou*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1958.

- p. 72 – ‘Energy is the only life’: Blake, William, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*,
in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. II, Norton and Co., New York, 1986.
- p. 72 – ‘Buddhahood is passion’: *Zen Buddhist traditional saying*.
- p. 73– ‘In but not of the world’: John, 17, 11-19.
- p. 73 – ‘And a sword’: Luke 2, 35.
- p. 78 – ‘The tygers of wrath’: Blake, William, *ibid*.
- p. 78 – ‘Misguided moral passion’: Murdoch, Iris, *The Book and the Brotherhood*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1987, part two.
- p. 78 – ‘There is a fundamental unacceptability to unpleasant truth’: Coffin, W. S., ‘Message’, Radio Program 3519, February 16, 1992.
- p. 78 – ‘Never fight evil’: St Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, trans. by Pine-Coffin, R., Penguin Classics, London, 1961.
- p. 78 – ‘All have sinned’: St Paul, Romans 3, 23.
- p. 78 – ‘Truth’: *Old Irish [Celtic] traditional sayings*.
- p. 83 – For Black Elk’s prayer, see Neihardt, John, *ibid*.
- p. 85/6 – For Black Elk’s teachings on the Thunder Being of the West in the Sacred Circle, see Neihardt, J., *ibid*.
- p. 86 – In Jewish Tradition, lightning signifies the presence of God, more specifically the presence of the Daemonic: ‘a mighty God and terrible’ [Deuteronomy 7, 21].
- p. 88 – ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts’: Isaiah, 55, 8-11.
- p. 90 – ‘Perfect love casts out fear’: 1 John 4, 18. This is because fear expects punishment, and so he who dwells in reward and punishment is not perfected in love. Elsewhere, in Proverbs 9, 10, the claim is made that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” This is a different kind of fear. The Hebrew for this ‘fear’ means, not being terrified or frightened, but ‘awe, holy terror, respect, reverence’; while ‘beginning’ means ‘the chief building block.’ Similarly, in Proverbs 1, 7; Proverbs 15, 33; and Job 28, 28, our reverence for God vies against our being self-important [Luke 1, 51, describes those who remain self-important as “the proud in the imagination of their hearts”]; reverence makes us open. We can be instructed through our experience. Gradually, we reach understanding, and this leads us away from evil, even as it initiates us into the profound. Thus reverence for God is humility, and such humility is more primal even than moral integrity. Morality without reverence can easily turn into moralism, which is that kind of judging we are warned not to do, lest it be visited upon us. It is love that completes what reverence begins.
- p. 92 – ‘God is no respecter of persons’: Acts 10, 34-35; and Deuteronomy 10, 17.
- p. 93 – ‘Be angry’, and St Athanasios, in the Septuagint: *ibid*, p 3.
- p. 100 – ‘Counting coup’ was considered by Plains Indians the summit of a warrior’s fighting spirit: no deed earned more honour.
- p. 100 – The honourable basis of warfare gradually died out in Europe, and when the Europeans arrived in the New World, it stood no chance of revival in the building of America, because the newcomers had no heart to share the land with the peoples who had been already established on it for thousands of years. Their fever to possess what was not theirs told them the lie that God had given them all this ‘uninhabited’ land, and so they mounted a war of

extermination, resulting in a genocide both material and spiritual far larger than what the Nazis did against the Jews, or the Turks against the Armenians. This put native tribal peoples in a predicament they still have not resolved: if you are used to fighting with honour, how do you deal with a new kind of enemy who wants you to totally disappear as a people, as a culture, as a spiritual way? With your back to the wall, war becomes about sheer survival. American patriotism, to this day, remains a dishonourable exercise in war serving no larger truth, but merely serving 'mine' against 'yours', as if divine truth did not embrace both of us, but preferred you and yours to me and mine. By this, the Americans constructed a pseudo 'god', built on the image of their own avarice and the murderousness needed to defend it. But this problem is universal. For the most part, 'the way of war' is cruelty and selfishness wearing a mask of moral hypocrisy. Any noble cause for war, and any noble conduct of war, is long gone. Yet the spiritual warfare raging in each of us, and raging in all the world, between the two hearts cannot be magicked away, or suppressed by too easy and cowardly ideas about 'peace.'

p. 103/4 – Sitting Bull's words: *oral transmission*.

p. 104 – For Black Elk's assessment of the American invaders, see Neihardt, John, *Black Elk Speaks*, Abacus, London, 1972.

p. 105 – Kicking Bird's words: *oral transmission*.

p. 105 – Red Cloud's words: *oral transmission*.

p. 105 – Dee Brown, in *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee* [Pan Books, London, 1973], points out that of the more than one hundred treaties agreed between the two sides, the Indian tribes broke none and America broke every one.

p. 105 – See Frankl's description of the dynamics and ethos of German concentration camps: Frankl, Viktor, *Man's Search For Meaning*, Washington Square Press, New York, 1984, part one ["Experiences In A Concentration Camp"], also *The Doctor and the Soul*, trans. by R. and C. Winston, Souvenir Press, 1969, London, pp 99-108.

p. 106 – De Loria Jr., Vine: *personal communication*.

p. 110 – "What the public wants is the image of passion, not passion itself", Barthes, R., *Mythologies*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1972.

p. 112/3 – Nerburn, K., *Neither Wolf Nor Dog, On Forgotten Roads With An Indian Elder*, New World Library, Novato, California, 1994, p 169.

p. 117 – 'The two hearts of stone and flesh': Ezekiel 11, 19-20; Ezekiel 36, 26-27.

p. 120 – 'Life understood backwards, but lived forwards': Kierkegaard, S., *Journals and Papers*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1967.

p. 120 – 'Something is only true if it can be lived': Nietzsche, F., in Danto, A., *Nietzsche As Philosopher*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1965, p 85.

p. 120 – 'We do not receive wisdom': Proust, M., *In Search Of Lost Time*, trans. by Enright, D. J., Modern Library, New York, 1992-1993.

p. 120 – 'Angry with the unknown': Van der Post, L., *Patterns of Renewal*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 121, 1962, p 3.

p. 120 – 'Metaphysical knowledge about as useful': Nietzsche, F., Ansell-Pearson, K. and Large, D., *ibid*; and Hollingdale, R., *ibid*.

p. 120 – 'To believe in the Tao': Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. by Feng, G. and English, J., Wildwood House Ltd, Aldershot, Hampshire, 1973.

p. 120 – 'A fool sees not the same tree': Blake, William, *ibid*.

- p. 121 – ‘God sees into the heart’: Proverbs 21, 2.
- p. 121 – ‘All truth’: John, 16, 13.
- p. 121 – ‘Where are you?’ God asks Adam: Genesis 3, 9.
- p. 123 – ‘Truth in the inward parts’: Psalm 51, 6 [Septuagint 50, 8].
- p. 123 – ‘Whited sepulcher’: Matthew 23, 27-28; ‘Lord, Lord’: Matthew 7, 21; ‘I don’t know you’: Matthew 7, 23. ‘By taking thought’: Mathew 6, 27.
- p. 123 – I don’t know the name of the Western saint who threw excrement over the walls of his monastic cell, but I have always respected the honesty of his struggle.
- p. 124 – ‘Call no man father’: Mathew 23, 8-9.
- p. 124 – ‘The Unknown God of Greeks is the Jewish Father God’: Acts 17, 23-29.
- p. 124 – ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the father’: John 14, 9.
- p. 124 – ‘But of that day and hour knoweth... my father only’: Mathew 24, 36.
- p. 125 – ‘Covered in a cloud’: Lamentations of Jeremiah 3, 44.
- p. 125 – ‘Mixture of good and evil’: Lamentations of Jeremiah, 3, 38. In Deuteronomy God declares he has been tough with us that he might humble us, that he might prove us, to do us good ultimately. God’s ‘hardness’ is a school, and thus not to be taken as the last word on our relationship with God. As we are changed and grow, so the nature and dynamic of this relationship changes and grows.
- p. 125 – ‘God cease making us grieve’: Lamentations of Jeremiah, 3, 32.
- p. 127 – St Isaac of Syria, *ibid*, p 34.
- p. 128 – ‘A narrow ridge’: Buber, Martin, in Friedman, M., *To Deny Our Nothingness*, University of Chicago Press, London, 1978, Part IX, ch. 16, pp 281-306.
- p. 128 – ‘The tree is known’: Mathew 12, 33-35.
- p. 129 – ‘The link between being a true follower of Christ and true brotherhood among Christians’: 1 Peter 1, 17-24.
- p. 129 – ‘Teaching is not sufficient; it is necessary to act’: Mathew 7, 24-27.
- p. 130 – ‘My strength is revealed in weakness’: St Paul, 2 Corinthians, 12, 7-9.
- p. 130 – ‘Even gold passes through fire’: 1 Peter 1, 3-7.
- p. 130 – ‘Work out your [redemption] in fear and trembling’: St Paul, Philippians, 2, 12.
- p. 130 – ‘The first born of many’: St Paul, Romans 8, 29; 31; 35-39.
- p. 131/2 – ‘I am the way, the truth, the life’ speaks of Christ’s presence with us in our own personal struggle toward heart truth: John 14, 6.
- p. 131 – ‘Obedience to the truth’: 1 Peter 1, 22.
- p. 132 – ‘Heart truth as the theme pondered by the prophets’: 1 Peter 1, 10.
- p. 132 – ‘Pap’: St Paul, 1 Corinthians 3, 2.
- p. 132 – ‘Where were you?’, St Anthony to Christ: Athanasios, *Life of Anthony*, trans. by Gregg, R., Paulist Press, New York, 1980, ch 10.
- p. 132 – ‘You have not seen him’: 1 Peter 1, 8.
- p. 132 – ‘A joy too great for words’: 1 Peter 1, 9.
- p. 133 – ‘If you have a heart’: Abba Pambo, quoted in Chryssavgis, J., *In The Heart of the Desert*, World Wisdom Inc, Bloomington, Indiana, 2003, ch. 8, p 53. See also *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, trans. by Ward, B., Mowbrays, London, 1983; and *Wisdom of the Desert Fathers*, trans. by Ward, B., SLG Press, London, 1986.

- p. 134 – It is not that St Paul taught any kind of flawlessness; indeed, his teaching in Galatians 2, 15-21, that we are saved by faith, not by ‘the works of the law’, hinges on the claim that any moral or spiritual effort to achieve perfection is not only impossible, but also misses the point that only Christ can reach us where we are really lost and adrift, to bring us through to the other side. But, Paul would not have been rebuked by Christ if he did not have a personal difficulty with the flawed condition of the human. That he began, before meeting Christ, as a religious zealot and fanatic demonstrates he resisted embracing the depth of dereliction in the human heart through which Christ effects our redemption.
- p. 135 – ‘Eternity is in love’: Blake, William, *ibid*.
- p. 135 – ‘By their fruits’: Mathew 7, 16-17.
- p. 135/6 – ‘Her sins are forgiven, for she loved much’: Luke 7, 36-47.
- p. 136 – ‘Passion’s exaltation and perdition’: Kierkegaard, S., see *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, ed. Bretall, R., University of Princeton Press, Princeton, 1946.
- p. 138 – ‘A house divided against itself’: Mathew 12, 25.
- p. 141 – ‘The lamb slain before the foundation of the world’: 1 Peter 1, 19-20.
- p. 141 – ‘By his wound’: 1 Peter 2, 25.
- p. 141 – Christ is ‘the just who suffers for the unjust’ [1 Peter 3, 17-18], the healed who suffers for the diseased, the intact divine passion that ‘assumes’ the stricken human passion for no other purpose than to remake it.
- p. 142 – ‘That we are all to become Christs’: St Athanasios asserts the doctrine of divinization in his famous words, “God became man so that man might become God.” ‘Christ’ is a title, reserved in a unique way for Jesus Christ, but by virtue of his Incarnation and Cross, then spread beyond him to one and all. St Paul refers to this mystery when saying, “Not I, but Christ in me” [Galatians, 2, 20], and in speaking of “putting on Christ” [Romans, 13, 14]. The Christ is the Prototype, the pre-ordained pattern, of the divine-human joining; the ‘divine-humanity’ which is Christ-like is what our ‘humanity’ was created to finally become. This is why the Messiah, or God’s ‘Chosen One’, must become the Redeemer of this End for humanity, and cannot just remain its Primal Archetype. Hence through Jesus Christ the original possibility of becoming Christ-like is restored to humanity, in and by the Power of the Spirit.
- p. 142 – St Isaac of Syria, and Abba Poemen: *Orthodox Desert traditional sayings*.
- p. 142 – ‘Do not be bewildered’: 1 Peter 4, 12-15.
- p. 143 – ‘Zeal is a sickness’: St Isaac of Syria, *Heart of Compassion, Daily Readings With St. Isaac of Syria*, ed. Allchin, A., Darton, Longman, and Todd, London, 1989, p. 34.
- p. 143 – ‘A warrior’s sincerity’: Tsunetomo, Y., *Hagakure, The Book of the Samurai*, trans. by Wilson, W., Kondansha International, Tokyo, 1979.
- p. 144 – ‘We will both know we are mad’: *Hasidic Jewish traditional story*.
- p. 144 – Sengai’s words: *Buddhist traditional saying*.
- p. 145 – ‘Love beyond good and evil’: Nietzsche, F., *Beyond Good and Evil, Prelude To A Philosophy of the Future*, trans. by Faber, M., “Introduction”, by Holub, R., Oxford University Press, New York, 1998.
- p. 146 – ‘The ideas of the shipwrecked’: Ortega y Gasset, Jose, *The Revolt of the Masses*, Norton and Co., New York, 1993.

p. 146 – ‘Whoever loves tribulation’: Abba Elias, *Orthodox Desert traditional sayings*.

p. 146 – ‘Hope of life’: St Isaac of Syria, *ibid*, p 12.