



# **Harmony – Searching for the Ground of Being 27 – 29 November 2020**

## **All the documents**

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## **A) The basics of the challenge**

### **19.00 – Introduction (15’)**

Rules: 1) Try not to go astray in our sharing and discussion. Focus on the theme / on the questions. 2) Contribute with awareness to the evolution of the debate. 3) Do not confront others but you may challenge them. 4) Keep it confidential.

### **19.15 – Experimental approach: the Ground of Being (15’)**

The theme of this workshop is the search for harmony and for God, as he/she is believed to be the source of all harmony, i.e. the Ground of Being. The present acute crisis we are experiencing (climate change, Covid, democratic collapse, economic injustice, etc.) teaches us that we have lost the sense of harmony. Where is the way forward, i.e. out of the crisis? As Chinese philosophy puts it, any crisis is an opportunity. I believe that the present crisis is the best opportunity to do a deep conversion in our ways of being, living, searching.

Of course there is no easy recipe how to find harmony and our true connection with the Ground of Being. It is why, in this workshop, we will be very pragmatic. We will not start from theological teaching. In our search for God, the less we have preconceived ideas or representations or concepts, the freer we will be to recognise his discrete, often hidden presence or expression in our daily lives.

The subtitle of this workshop could be this quotation of Simone Weil: *“I do not ask you to believe in God. I only ask you not to believe in everything that is not God.”*

The theme is the search for God, or rather for Life, for the Source of what we are and what is. There is no theology that can tell us who the Essence of everything is. We should probably call him or her the Ground of Being, as the origin and source of everything that is. I like to call it GoB in order to get free, tongue in cheek, of what the word “God” means so often wrongly or even what it should mean but does not express. There is only one Source, one energy of Life, although there are many approaches, many religions which try to lead us. All these different teachings and paths are very helpful, although none can express the deep mystery. They are only helps. They are the fingers which show the moon and not the moon itself. We have to do the search ourselves and make it our own experience. We will then try here to talk only about what we experience in our lives, and not about doctrine.

I have chosen a few main themes that seem to me most important, according to my own practice. As we will not debate about theology, we can only talk from our own point of view. It is why my guiding lines will be very subjective, according to my own experience. Each theme will be accompanied by a few statements of my own. You do not need to agree with these statements, but it will be probably helpful for you, I hope, to examine how they correspond or not to what you experience in your own life. The statement is not a final point but only a starting point. You are then invited to share how these statements resonate, or not, in you.

### **19.30 – Two possible interpretations (30’)**

First a very basic statement, which is a bit longer to explain:

There are roughly two possible perceptions of the world or two ways of interpreting the world and its evolution: there is 1) a mechanist interpretation and there is 2) a spiritual interpretation.

As human beings we are part of the cosmos and it is impossible for us to have a detached, objective and complete view of what the cosmos is.

As living beings in a vast universe we can only observe, experience and interpret what we may grasp with our five senses and with our mind. We can either adopt a very scientific approach which will rely only on demonstrable and measurable experiences, or we can adopt a more philosophical or spiritual approach which will also integrate rather subjective aspects of our own experience and observation, and therefore be less reliable in terms of rationality. But this second approach may well also reveal itself to be more accurate because it will be able to integrate some broader immaterial aspects which the scientific approach would discard. Note that both approaches are compatible.

In order to present this fundamental question in a simplified way I will reduce this complex and manifold question to two terms only and I will describe here two main possible alternatives or models of interpretation of the essence of our world:

- 1) **The materialistic model:** It consists mainly in the scientific approach which can only accept what can be proven by measurements or by replicas of the same experience that prove to show every time the same results. According to this approach the evolution of the universe started at the big bang and the universe has been expanding since then. Mutations have happened that were guided by chance or necessity. There is no origin or creator and there is no intention in the evolution of the universe. Oops, it just happened.
- 2) **The spiritual model:** It accepts that what science describes is true but it says also that the evolution of the universe is not the fruit of chance and necessity. This evolution tends indeed toward an end or an aim which is unknown to us but which has been guiding and still guides the general trend of the whole evolution. This interpretation does not exclude chance and necessity but sets them in the broader frame of an Intention. Life has a source which is not mechanic or material. There is an Intelligence, a Source, an Energy of Life which animates the whole universe and influences its evolution, yet without determinism. This intelligence is of spiritual nature. It is not

so much the creator who started the process. He or she is rather the energy that animates the whole and is the source of a continuous and permanent creation and invention of new forms.

In both models the mystery remains of how the whole process has started. Is there a Creator who is at the origin of the universe or not? This question remains open as a mystery. To accept this explanation of an origin is evidently easier for religion and philosophy because it is justified by a global intuition or personal experience of the universe, while science cannot accept this explanation without having means to measure this origin or to prove that it exists. How to write the mathematical formula of GoB?

The first materialist model poses two major problems which can be summarised in four questions:

- 1) If it is accepted that the world is of materialist nature, what is the nature of our sense of justice, of generosity, gratitude, beauty, faith, hope, love, etc.? Are these immaterial realities formed only by hormones or genes or any similar chemical functions? What is their material expression? How can such immaterial dimensions exist in a materialist approach if they are not material? How do the people who adopt the materialist approach experience these immaterial dimensions of life and how do they explain their presence?
- 2) In a similar way what is the essence of life? What is the difference between a living body and a corpse? How does life translate in material terms that exclude any spiritual dimension in human or other sentient beings?
- 3) Is the present complexity of the world just the fruit of chance and necessity? Can pure probability, even in 14 bio years, produce such complexity and diversity and beauty as what we observe in the universe? from whales to platypuses, from mind to consciousness?
- 4) If there is no spiritual dimension of life, because there is no material form or explanation of the essence of spirit, why do people who defend the materialist approach not consider themselves as just

stuff, a bit complex material but nevertheless only just matter? Why should we then value life of a human being more than the existence of a heap of stones? Why should these people have merits, if their actions are only the result of chance and necessity? Why should they expect to be loved?

Another observation shows also the fundamental difference in these two approaches:

- 1) The first (materialist) approach understands the world as a move towards more complexity. Particles appear, then molecules, then cells, then organisms, then beings, etc.. It describes an evolution towards more complexity and more consciousness. Consciousness seems to arise progressively out of a material evolution, although it is immaterial, through the mere play of chance and necessity.
- 2) The second (spiritual) approach observes the same move towards complexity on the material level but it considers it as the progressive expression of the intelligence which “hides” behind it or, on the contrary, reveals itself through it progressively. The material form is then only an expression or revelation of the spirit that animates the creation. The whole evolution can be understood as the incarnation of this intelligence which makes itself ever more “visible” - although it is not visible by essence - by successive steps of more complexity. Like the wind makes itself visible in the motions of the leaves or the branches. It is important to understand that this intelligence does not impose itself. It only offers its quality to who will welcome it. It is not a powerful will for domination but it is a discrete presence of love that asks to be searched for. True love makes itself invisible, because it is gratuitous and cannot be imposed. It remains then discreetly hidden but yet remains fully discernible. Consciousness, as discernment of what is not visible, is then in this context the reflective image of more maturity and more subtlety in the understanding of Reality. In other words, the Universe is first a spiritual entity that creates its own ever more

evolved form of expression as a constant creation of energy and of signs which make it visible and recognisable.

At first sight it seems these two approaches are antagonistic. But it is not the case. They are very much complementary. The former, out of its own will (in the name of rigor of science), has imposed limits to its own quest: the facts that it recognises as valid must be observable and measurable and the experiences must be able to be repeated with the same results. This is a strict limitation which founds the seriousness of the former approach. It can't invent fables; it has to be able to observe them and prove their reality. It is why the latter approach opens some more breadth to the quest in including also less graspable aspects of reality. This is indeed the integration of both approaches that brings most information and inspiration. The risk of the latter approach is to forge a fictive reality or to find refuge in an abstract god who would be believed in but never experienced in our present incarnated life. It is then a belief only that has little to do with our present life. By contrast the former approach remains entrapped in material happenings and loses a wider perspective. When both approaches join they can present a wider picture for our present experience as living beings caught between our spiritual essence and our material daily life that allows us to integrate both dimensions: spiritual essence and material expression. This is precisely the meaning of incarnation. Matter becomes the expression of spirit; matter reveals the essence of spirit. Without matter we would not be able to discern what the spirit is. Science is an important contribution on this path, but it has its own self-imposed limits.

It is also interesting to notice that these two approaches nevertheless agree about one essential point: in the whole Universe matter is almost inexistent in comparison to the void between particles. At reduced scale the Earth would be a grain of 1mm diameter and the sun would be big as a grapefruit, 10m away. In-between there is almost nothing (except two planets smaller than the Earth). The same is true about the atom. This means that our Universe is made more of relationships (attraction

or love) than of matter (the almost inexistent particles). If there is such a little quantity of matter, how can the materialist approach base mainly its understanding on matter? What holds the whole together? What are the relationships which are dominant, in the in-between?

As you can see, I favour clearly the second approach because I cannot follow the materialist one. Or rather I favour the integration of both approaches. My whole life experience points towards the reality of both interpretations when they can fuse.

And now the most important consideration: if there is an intelligence which guides the evolution of the universe, this presence is evidently the key of all understanding. It becomes then a priority to discover who this entity is. Philosophies and religions have contributed to describe who this intelligence is. They all constitute a rich teaching but they can only be a description of this Reality; they can't be the Reality themselves. The description is not the truth but only "the finger that shows the moon".

The great crisis of our society is probably due to the fact that we live according to the first materialist approach in a world that has been shaped by the intelligence searched for in the second spiritual approach. There is then a deep contradiction in our behaviour as we lead our lives in a mentality that is in deep conflict with the true essence of the world in which we live. We are then out of tune. We are out of harmony. The urgency is therefore for us to abandon the narrowness of the first approach and to open it up to and rediscover the intensity of the second approach.

This will be the theme of this workshop: Do I look for what I can get for myself in a materialist world (egocentric attitude)? Or do I try to discern what the implicate order of the cosmos is and learn to adapt to it, as a sacred order which is the true source of life (hetero-centric attitude).

- 1) The egocentric attitude has little meaning and seems absurd because it limits itself to the material and visible world.

- 2) The hetero-centric attitude is by contrast infinite in meaning and mysterious. The discovery of the source becomes then an endless transformation of ourselves in our attempt to adapt to Reality as we discover it step by step. An ever new consciousness is the guide.

Which path shall we choose?

## **20.00 - Three Teachings: Eastern – Prophetic – Zen (30')**

From the point of view of spiritual teaching one can consider there are three main paths to search for the Ground of Being.

### **1) Experience or teaching or In-between**

If we compare Eastern and Western religions, we notice an important difference in their respective methods by which teaching is transmitted and on what it is focusing. Zen, as a third path, proposes its own critical approach.

First it is important to see that Eastern and Western religions show very different contents.

- 1) **Teaching of Prophetic religions:** We can call the Western religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) the Prophetic religions because they announce a revelation and try to describe the essence of GoB. Who is GoB? What are his qualities? The danger of this approach is to create an image of GoB, which becomes quickly an idol or repels people who have a personal experience that is not directly compatible with the teaching; all images or representations are deceitful as the Mystery remains always much beyond what can be described. Teaching is understood here as a guide that is meant to reveal us the truth and to guide us in our search for GoB. There is also a form of discipline of practice that goes with it, but this aspect is no more as dominant as it was at the time of the Desert Fathers and Mothers in early Christianity.

**In a few words: Prophetic religions are based on teaching and on trust in this teaching as a guide.**

- 2) **Experience in Eastern religions:** By contrast Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism) are rather focused on the practice of the believer. In short they say: meditate and you'll see what happens, and you'll learn out of your own experience. There are no emphasis on dogmas and concepts. Teaching is rather a guide for practice in a relationship between guru and disciple. This teaching or guidance makes the disciple aware of what he/she is experiencing.

**In a few words: Eastern religions are based on experience and challenge concepts.**

- 3) **The In-between as place of the relationship:** Zen offers a third path based on a critical approach to these two forms of search. It questions everything that can be said and challenges any representation or concept or understanding of our own experience. It questions even our own existence as independent human being. Who is searching? Searching for what? This is then not about GoB or Me. It is about the way I (who is this I?) am related to the Source which is Emptiness and Fullness at the same time. The focus is on the in-between, on relationships.

**In a few words: One can question anything. Even one should dare to.**

This comparison is very simplified, but it describes pretty well, I believe, the main differences in their respective approaches.

We will, during this workshop, adopt rather the Eastern method based on experience. It does not mean that we do not listen to Prophetic teaching. Combining both is fascinating. Teaching makes us aware of what we can, or even cannot, discover through experience. Experience allows us to assimilate the teaching as something personal and verified.

And the Zen approach demonstrates that we cannot trust our own representations and that we can only grow in maturity if we accept to

question any belief, any image, any concept we have forged. Zen is a very powerful challenge to the rigidity of the Church or Synagogue or Temple which have disfigured religion in proposing a simplistic and falsified version that does not fit with the diversity and authenticity of many experiences of believers; therefore it has lost its credibility and prevented many searchers to find their ways. Worse: it has even sometimes destroyed the path of access to the Sacred.

Faith is not blind trust. It is a trust in what takes shape through personal assimilation, i.e. personification.

Q: discuss the issue: teaching vs experience.

## **2) Translation or transformation**

Another important distinction between two ways of interpreting religion in general is about the function of religion.

In short, our profane society presents a world vision based on an egocentric search for pleasure, comfort, accumulation, prestige, power, etc.

By contrast the role of religion is to teach us another world view which is fundamentally different from this conventional view society supports. It describes happiness and peace of mind based on letting go.

Once we have understood (assimilated and made it personal) how different these two visions are (i.e. the search for pleasure or the search for truth) we have to choose which one we want to follow. They are incompatible and cannot be combined. The adoption of the spiritual vision leads us to live very different lives. This is a radical choice. Christianity calls it "metanoia" from the Greek: turnaround of the mind, reorientation, conversion as a turnaround of the whole body-mind. If religion is taken seriously, it should provoke this fundamental turnaround in our lives.

Hence religion can have two different functions:

- 1) **Religion as an explanation:** Religion can be understood as a translation that explains why the world is as it is; it tells us then how we have to fit into it. It is rather conservative because it generates adaptation to an outer setting and does not impact on who we are.
- 2) **Religion as transformation:** By contrast religion can also be understood as a revelation of another perspective of life which contrasts with this former understanding of what is and how to relate to it (see 1). It proposes then a fundamentally different interpretation of the Universe and of the meaning of life and it generates consequently a deep transformation in us, in the way we perceive ourselves and in the way we relate to the world and in the way we express ourselves in the world.

Both functions of religion are necessary and they both combine and support each other. Yet only a small minority of believers understand their adherence to religion as a conversion (a turnaround – a metanoia), i.e. a fundamental transformation of their way of perceiving, living and being.

Q: Discuss the issue: translation vs transformation.

## 20.30 - The Ten Ox Herding pictures (30')

The Ten Ox Herding pictures from Zen describe the chase of enlightenment with humour and yet a great depth. Each picture represents a stage of the search. The little fellow searches for the ox as a representation of his enlightenment. It starts by a chase and finishes at the market place, with a very normal life: draw your water and cut your wood.

### 1. The Search for the Ox

*In the pasture of the world,  
I endlessly push aside the tall  
grasses in search of the Ox.  
Following unnamed rivers,  
lost upon the interpenetrating  
paths of distant mountains,  
My strength failing and my vitality  
exhausted, I cannot find the Ox.  
I only hear the locusts chirping  
through the forest at night.*



**Comment:** The bull never has been lost. What need is to search? Only because of separation from my true nature, I fail to find him. In the confusion of the senses I lose even his tracks. Far from home, I see many crossroads, but which way is the right one I know not. Greed and fear, good and bad, entangle me.

## 2. Discovering the Footprints

*Along the riverbank under the trees,  
I discover footprints.  
Even under the fragrant grass,  
I see his prints.  
Deep in remote mountains  
they are found.  
These traces can no more be  
hidden  
than one's nose, looking  
heavenward*



見跡

**Comment:** Understanding the teaching, I see the footprints of the bull. Then I learn that, just as many utensils are made from one metal, so too are myriads entities made of the fabric of self. Unless I discriminate, how will I perceive the true from the untrue? Not yet having entered the gate, nevertheless I have discerned the path.

## 3. Perceiving the Ox

*I hear the song of the nightingale.  
The sun is warm, the wind is mild,  
willows are green along the shore -  
Here no Ox can hide!  
What artist can draw that massive  
head,  
those majestic horns?*



見牛

**Comment:** When one hears the voice, one can sense its source. As soon as the six senses merge, the gate is entered. Wherever one enters one sees the head of the bull! This unity is like salt in water, like colour in dyestuff. The slightest thing is not apart from self.

## 4. Catching the Ox

*I seize him with a terrific struggle.  
His great will and power  
are inexhaustible.  
He charges to the high plateau  
far above the cloud-mists,  
Or in an impenetrable ravine he  
stands.*



得牛

**Comment:** He dwelt in the forest a long time, but I caught him today! Infatuation for scenery interferes with his direction. Longing for sweeter grass, he wanders away. His mind still is stubborn and unbridled. If I wish him to submit, I must raise my whip.

## 5. Taming the Ox

*The whip and rope are necessary,  
Else he might stray off down  
some dusty road.  
Being well-trained, he becomes  
naturally gentle.  
Then, unfettered, he obeys his  
master.*



牧牛  
五

**Comment:** When one thought arises, another thought follows. When the first thought springs from enlightenment, all subsequent thoughts are true. Through delusion, one makes everything untrue. Delusion is not caused by objectivity; it is the result of subjectivity. Hold the nose-ring tight and do not allow even a doubt.

## 6. Riding the Ox Home

*Mounting the Ox, slowly  
I return homeward.  
The voice of my flute intones  
through the evening.  
Measuring with hand-beats  
the pulsating harmony,  
I direct the endless rhythm.  
Whoever hears this melody  
will join me.*



騎牛  
歸家  
六

**Comment:** This struggle is over; gain and loss are assimilated. I sing the song of the village woodsman, and play the tunes of the children. Astride the bull, I observe the clouds above. Onwards I go, no matter who may wish to call me back.

## 7. The Ox Transcended

*Astride the Ox, I reach home.  
I am serene. The Ox too can rest.  
The dawn has come. In blissful  
repose,  
Within my thatched dwelling  
I have abandoned the whip and  
ropes*



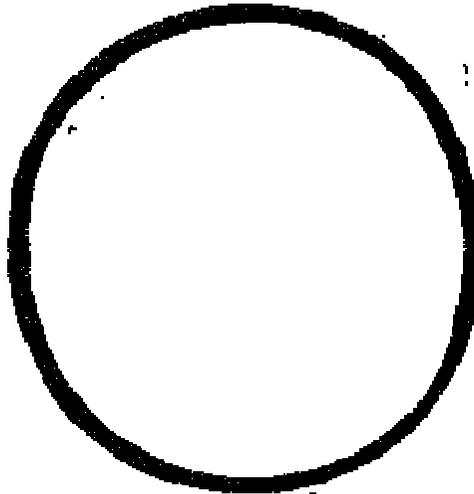
忘牛  
存人  
七

**Comment:** All is one law, not two. We only make the bull a temporary subject. It is as the relation of rabbit and trap, of fish and net. It is as gold and dross, or the moon emerging from a cloud. One path of clear light travels throughout endless time.

## 8. Both Ox and Self Transcended

*Whip, rope, person, and Ox -  
all merge in No Thing.  
This heaven is so vast,  
no message can stain it.  
How may a snowflake exist  
in a raging fire.  
Here are the footprints of  
the Ancestors.*

**Comment:** Mediocrity is gone. Mind is clear of limitation. I seek no state of enlightenment. Neither do I remain where no enlightenment exists. Since I linger in neither conditions, eyes cannot see me. If hundreds of birds strew my path with flowers, such praise would be meaningless.



人牛  
俱忘

## 9. Reaching the Source

*Too many steps have been taken  
returning to the root and the  
source.  
Better to have been blind and deaf  
from the beginning!  
Dwelling in one's true abode,  
unconcerned with and without -  
The river flows tranquilly on  
and the flowers are red.*



九  
還返  
源本

**Comment:** From the beginning, truth is clear. Poised in silence, I observe the forms of integration. One who is not attached to “form” need not be “reformed”. The water is emerald, the mountain is indigo, and I see that which is creating and that which is destroying.

## 10. In the World

*Barefooted and naked of breast,  
I mingle with the people of the  
world.  
My clothes are ragged and dust-  
laden,  
and I am ever blissful.  
I use no magic to extend my life;  
Now, before me, the dead trees  
become alive.*



昭和辛卯夏  
安齋寺  
画並刻  
檀

十  
入  
手  
廓

**Comment:** Inside my gate, a thousand sages do not know me. The beauty of my garden is invisible. Why should one search for the footprints of the patriarchs? I go to the market place with my wine bottle and return home with my staff. I visit the wineshop and the market, and everyone I look upon becomes enlightened.

\* \* \* \*

SATURDAY MORNING

07.30 – MEDITATION

08.00 – BREAKFAST

## **B) Nothing else than GoB**

### **09.00 – Getting free of representations (15’)**

Let’s start with a metaphor:

There is a stone in this room which one can hold in the hand. It is white. Its form is the form of a cube with six identical sides. It is red on the top. You will be only able to grasp it if you believe that this description is true and the only truth. Please show me this stone.

To find this stone, there are three possible attitudes:

- 1) Blind face: doctrine is stronger than reality or your experience of it.
- 2) Rejection: the description does not suit anything I can see. The stone does not exist.
- 3) I see a stone but its description is not adequate. I know that the stone exists and I trust the cosmos (?) that I can receive a better understanding of what it is.

**My statement:** The pre-condition for searching GoB is to get free of any image of him/her; to get free of any representation. Representations are idols.

On the other hand, representations are only thresholds; they are new starting points that open onto the next step.

Simone Weil: “*I do not ask you to believe in God. I only ask you not to believe in everything that is not God.*”

These are evidently false representations:

- God as the bearded fellow (Michelangelo).
- God as severe father who commands and punishes.
- God as the privilege of a few; God as exclusive (Catholic).
- God as the Other elsewhere (in heaven), far from me, alien to me.
- God as the rosy light that makes everything sweet and easy.
- God as the leader of fundamentalist fights (ISIS).

Q: Examine the representations you have of GoB, and observe how they are false images or idols.

### **09.15 – Breathing in and out: nothing more (45’)**

There is no Ground of Being to be experienced as being distinct from what is, because everything is given here and now. There is nothing to be achieved, nothing to be found, because you have it already here and now.

**Exercise:** we just sit and breathe in and breathe out. 10min.

Concentrate on the breath.

There is nothing else than life as you experience it now: being alive.

There is nothing else but you alive. Your breathing, your pulse, your skin.

All the rest has vanished: who you are, your loved ones, your memories, you projects.

Just you here without past and without future. Just being.

There is no other possible experience of GoB than in this instant, in this breathing, in this awareness of what is. No other experience of GoB than this simple experience of life as a pure wonder, just as it is, in this simple breathing. There is no GoB that could be elsewhere.

**THERE IS NOTHING ELSE THAN LIFE**

### My statement:

All is included in this awareness of being alive. It is the experience of a wonder for life as a miracle of each instant.

This is the experience of the Ground of Being. All you feel comes from Him / Her = being alive.

There is nothing more to expect. Nothing more to be discovered.

Enlightenment, in a way, is just being aware that there is nothing else.

The presence of the Ground of Being is not something we can grasp. It is rather a form of silence: but this silence is much more than the absence of noise. Silence is a quality of mental space. It is a Presence that fills the silence. This silence is fullness. But you cannot grasp it. It inhabits you and brings peace and joy in your heart, something ever escaping but yet very real and present, in the void of fullness.

Q: share about this statement and your experience.

### **10.00 - Love can only be discrete – not self-imposing (30')**

1) True love is given freely without expectation of return.

Are we able to love one-way, and not be loved in return. Or even loving without the other knowing we love him/her?

If the Ground of Being as a Presence and Intelligence is a Reality, I can only understand that it is a Presence that makes itself very discrete and not imposing. The one-way love I just described. It is a self-effacing or contracting Presence that intends to leave a maximum of space and freedom for the Creation to evolve as a responsible entity. It is necessarily for me a discrete and self-effaced Ground of Being. Not threatening. But welcoming inasmuch as we may accept to welcome Him/Her. And, before all, not imposing.

2) On the other hand, it is often said also that GoB is in control.

How can these two statements be compatible (if they are)? Is there a will of the Ground of Being?

### My statement:

**1) About love:** The Ground of Being loves us in this way. Hoping to get a response, but it is never a condition. And we can only respond; we are never the instigators of this loving relationship.

GoB's love is nothing else than the school for us to learn how to love in the same way. How can I love the one who does not respond to my love?

**2) The Ground of Being is not in charge.** In charge of what, indeed? If GoB is self-effacing, how could he/she be in charge? GoB has made itself powerless by choice to love, to be love and to be loved. This is a powerful choice.

I propose here a few characteristics of the Ground of Being. These traits are of course only my own way to describe this unfathomable Reality:

- The invisible Presence as a root of our essence.
- Love as discretion (hiding). Not graspable.
- A will that does not manipulate us but creates opportunities.
- A creation that has nothing to do with evil events.
- GoB's will as a quality of being rather than a will for action.
- "A core of seemingly simple truths to guide me" (Ciszek).
- A firm ground to be rooted in: the Ground of Being.
- Our true essence and vocation.
- A leading energy: the Spirit in us (inspiration).

Q: What is your perception, experience, feeling, thought?

Q: Think of an example of such a love in your life / or of the contrary example of it.

10.30 – MUSIC - MOVEMENT

10.45 – MORNING TEA

### 11.15 – The big contradiction... or big depression (30')

When we realise that the Ground of Being is the Source of everything and that we are no more the real actors, we feel disempowered. If love remains always discrete, we have to become very good listeners. This new discovery opens the doors to a very powerful crisis that dares to shaken the entire basis on which we are used to build our lives. How can we stop being the performers of our lives? How can we become just receivers, if we cannot initiate anything because everything is given freely and depends on the Ground of Being?

This is then the big depression: if the Ground of Being is the real actor and I must listen and remain in tune with what It initiates, what do I do with the long duration of my life? Am I still responsible? Am I condemned to being passive? What can I initiate? My life seems to escape my control and I don't know any more what I'm in charge of.

See Charles de Foucault's prayer that seems to give up any responsibility. Charles de Foucault becomes here pure receiver:

*Father, I abandon myself into your hands;  
do with me what you will.*

*Whatever you may do, I thank you:  
I am ready for all, I accept all.*

*Let only your will be done in me,  
and in all your creatures –  
I wish no more than this, O Lord.*

*Into your hands I commend my soul:  
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,  
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,  
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,  
and with boundless confidence,  
for you are my Father.*

This is the big contradiction of our spiritual search. Am I in charge or not? If yes, how? The question leads maybe to a deep state of depression when one does not know how to be active. If life is about just being and listening to the Ground of Being, what do I do with all these hours of daily time when I don't sleep? It seems a very strange question to ask; but it is indeed extremely serious. A question of life and death. What is the Work?

**My statement:** Our Work consists only in removing obstacles and opening to grace. The Ground of Being is the initiator. We have nothing to do, except removing obstacles, dismantling our own resistance. Our Work consists in opening ourselves to this Source which is not visible and which we tend to forget. There are maybe four main steps in this process of lesser resistance:

- 1) **Dismantling our own resistances:** There is nothing to do or to achieve. Everything is given. The principle obstacle consists in our resistance to Reality because we believe in false appearances. We reduce the world to what we see (the small visible part of the iceberg) and we ignore the Root (invisible). Another obstacle is our false identification with something we believe we are but we are not: we identify with our body-memory-mind and do not see that these are only accessory aspects of our person. A bit like our trousers! We look at that again later.
- 2) **Daring to question:** When we are aware that our perceptions are much too restricted, we feel the urge to discover the true essence of

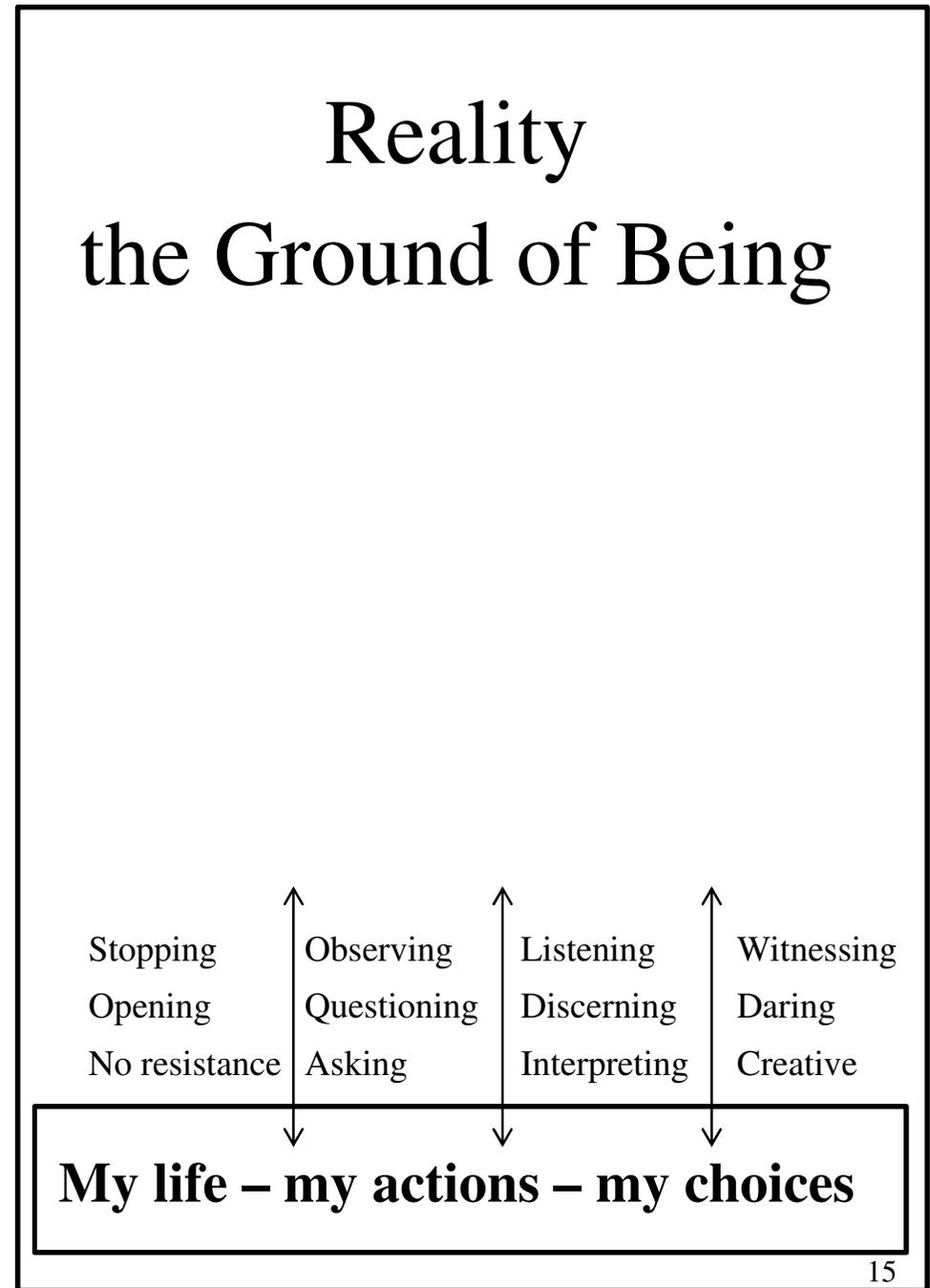
Reality. We have only limited means but we are called to discover much more than what we know. Evidently we will not pierce the ultimate meaning but our sharp observation will generate a complete change of mind. The quest (not the answer) is the path. Asking the right question is an art. See below.

- 3) **Discerning:** After questioning we have to listen to the answer. It means to be open to whatever it is, free of any preconceptions. And then interpreting. Not that our interpretation is right but it is the means to get nearer to the meaning of life. Step by step. But never holding on what one has discovered. It is not a rock; it is a flow. Running water.
- 4) **Creative action:** Your response will be yours. Shape it as you believe it is best. There are many ways. Each one is good as long as you do your best to conform to Reality, and not to your own agenda. You are just the worker, but fully free to invent what is suitable. This is one of the meanings of incarnation.

**The art of asking the right question:**

- 1) Identify the topic of your own interrogation.
- 2) Formulate a precise question. Yes, very precise.
- 3) Wait for the answer which will come soon, very probably in the most unexpected form or content. Open to the unexpected.
- 4) Trust then you got the answer and, if necessary, check that it is the right answer (with a second question). You'll get the confirmation.
- 5) Act according to what you heard. Imagine the ways; this is your freedom and creativity. Trust that you are in the right path.

Q: How do you feel about these “instructions in 5 steps”?



## 11.45 - Consciousness: being a witness (30')

Our main handicap in our opening to Reality is that we have false representations of the universe and of who we are. The root of this misunderstanding is probably the false representation we have of ourselves. We see ourselves as an autonomous individual with its own independent body and memory and mind. This trinomial body-memory-mind accompanies us everywhere. It is where we are; and it is not where we are not; and we cannot be where it is not. This is the incarnated form of our being.

But is it all there is for our whole being? No.

We can observe this trinomial. What the eye can see is not the eye. In the same way what we can observe is not our being but only many accessories of our being: body, memory, mind, emotions, actions, etc.. Yet this awareness that we are “beyond” our body-memory-mind” does not diminish the importance of our body which is our only sustainable form to be in the world. But it means that we are more than this body or memory or mind.

We can observe how much the concept of individual is linked with the Western culture, especially since the Enlightenment. In so many other cultures, mainly traditional cultures, this concept seems irrelevant.

Who are we? Who asks the question? How can we better grasp the essence of this unknown entity?

**My statement:** We are indeed nothing else and nothing more than witnesses to what happens in us, around us, in our relationships... We are just an ear, an eye, a skin, a form of consciousness... We are the spectators of the big show that happens by itself in us and around us.

Maybe our body, memory, minds, feelings, thoughts, imagination... are only tools. A bit like our trousers...

And when we die, it is like taking off our trousers at night before going to bed. We leave behind our incarnated form and we are transformed into something else. Our essence remains. As when we go to bed: we do not disappear because we took off our trousers. Death is then only a change of form, not of content. We leave our “trousers” behind but we go on. The witness remains but it goes on, into a new expression.

It means also that we are all one, swimming in the same river of life. If the body dissolves, the essence remains. Our bodies are then a way to make our persons distinct one from another, but the envelope does not break the link or the continuity of common essence. Who are we truly beyond our incarnated form?

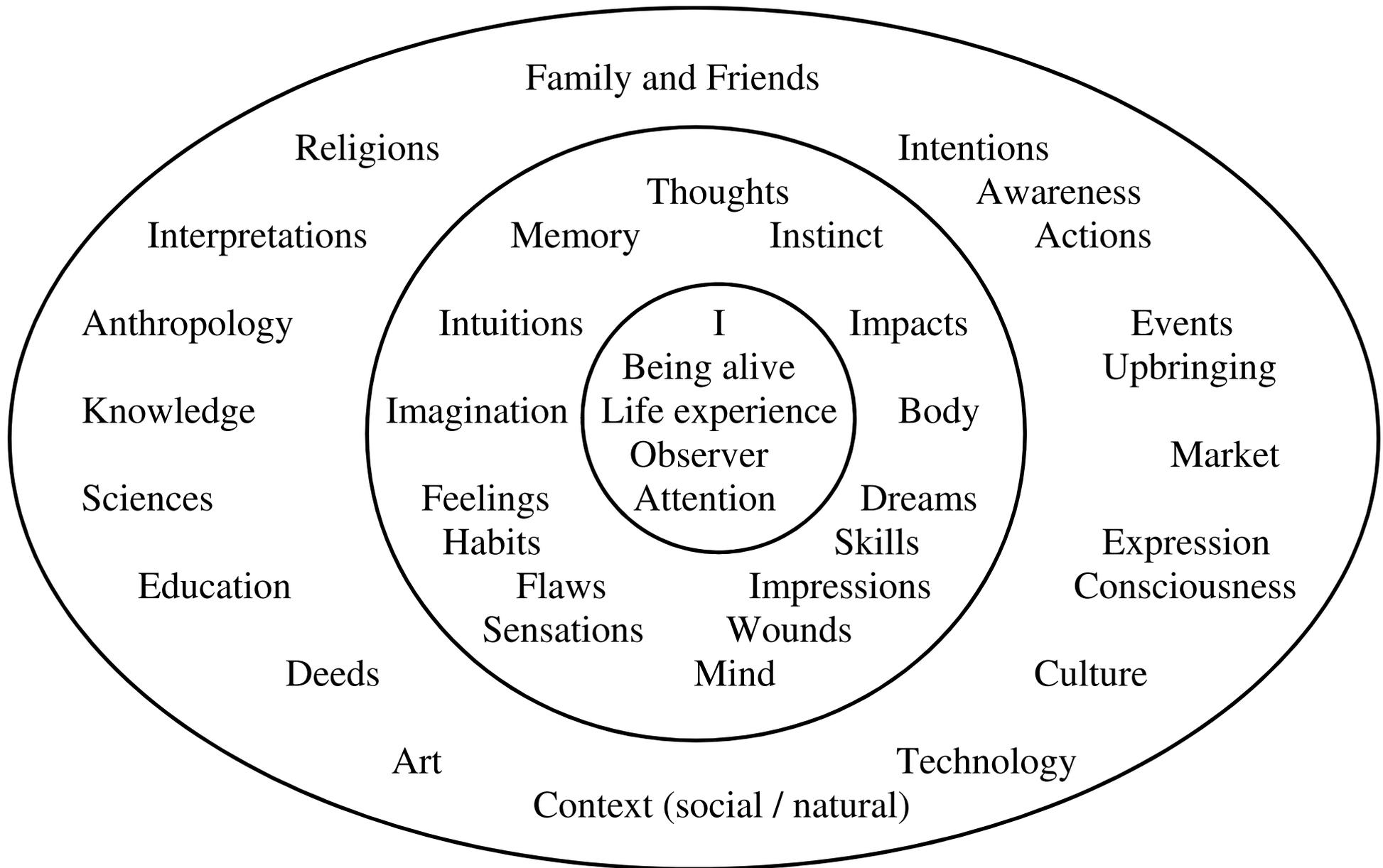
Q: Comment the two diagrams of the 2 next pages:

**First page:** normal daily awareness. Religion as translation. Multiplicity of elements in daily life. Identification with body, memory and mind.

**Second page:** consciousness of being = you as just a witness of what is. Religion as transformation. Everything recedes into the background. There is nothing else than life, whatever happens.

How do we become true witnesses, centred on our true essence but yet fully incarnated?

Being alive... and other facts – where is our true Self? in everyday life.



And then... just being aware of what is = life.

Family and Friends

POWERLESSNESS

Religions

Intentions

GRACE

LOVE

Thoughts Awareness

Interpretations

Memory

Instinct

Actions

Anthropology

Intuitions

Impacts

Events

LIFE

I'am

(awareness – witness)

Upbringing

Life experience

Body

NONVIOLENCE

TRUST

Imagination

Market

Knowledge

Feelings Attention

Dreams

JOY

FORGIVENESS

Habits

Skills

Expression

Education

Flaws

Impressions

Consciousness

Culture

Sensations

Wounds

CREATIVITY

Mind

ONE BODY

Art

Technology

Context (social / natural)

## **C) The great turn-around**

### **12.15 - Metanoia: transformation and salvation (30')**

First a preliminary remark: Religion is not an ethical code as it is too often understood. It is indeed a revelation that describes Reality as it is (even in its hidden aspects) and shows us the best way to adapt to it, to Life, to be in harmony with the cosmos and the laws of life and to find happiness. True religion is not constraining; it is liberating. It does not impose onto us a constraining model of ready-made beliefs and behaviours but, on the contrary, it helps us to become free of our false representations and to transform into what we are meant to be. Only if we want to.

Now, there is a big problem: Our western culture is based on action. As participants in this culture we are all actors who mainly lead our actions in the interest of our own individual (fragmented) beings, at the best including also our relatives in this prospect. It is all about doing what we like, getting more comfort, more pleasure, more wealth, more stuff, reaching our own goals or actualising our individual projects. We understand ourselves as independent actors. Freedom is understood as individual choice.

Our world view is based on divided entities: me, you, them. Men and women. Whites and blacks. Catholics, Islamists, Fanatics and rationalists. Rich and poor. Leaders and passive citizens. These different individuals or clusters fight one against the other or avoid / ignore each other, or uses / exploits each other. We live in a fragmented world; we have lost the sense of wholeness. We cannot see that the cosmos is a whole that rules all parts, although not in a deterministic way.

To better illustrate this tendency of individualistic acting, we can observe how our language is based mainly on nouns and adjectives. The wolf eats the goat. The wolf is the actor and the goat the victim. We are the doers and action depends on us because we believe we are free to choose what we want to do. The wolf is the main actor and it eats the goat because it is a free individual, distinct from the goat and it cares for its own comfort. Actors are mainly concerned by themselves, because they are not linked with others. They are distinct. It is why we call them individuals. They are the smallest unity that cannot be divided (in-divid-ual). Like atoms are said to be the basic building blocks of matter. Of course we can also be kind to one another, but the pattern remains the same, based on individuals and our free choice to do as suits us.

But this understanding is a false construct. It is an illusion which took shape progressively, especially in the century of what is called Enlightenment.

In fact the Universe is not based on nouns and adjectives but on verbs. It is not fragmented; it is a coherent wholeness. It is ruled by general laws and it evolves as a whole, not as an addition of fragmented autonomous parts. It is a flow of life that happens, much beyond our control. Life happens in us. It is a flow of transformation: nothing is permanent, everything changes. A flow is a verb: something that happens and transforms what we experience in us and around us.

The great transformation or the metanoia, the turn-around of our body and mind, the radical change of mentality consists in discovering that life is a verb and that the cosmos is a whole. Without nouns, without doers, without distinction between subjects and objects: light shines. Light is not the actor but the phenomenon that happens in the form of shining. It is a process. The Earth rotates

on itself and circles around the Sun. The Sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening. The Earth is not an actor. The Sun is not an actor. It is happening in this way that there is movement, flow.

This is the great revolution, the great turn-around. We are no individuals. We are no independent actors who act according to individual purposes. We are all One in one unique flow of life, despite our distinct bodies, because we are all animated by the same energy of Life, by the same flow of consciousness. Life is one and moves the whole lot. And there is a general meaning to the evolution of the cosmos. We have to grasp this leading energy, which is much beyond our small individual projects. We have to perceive and understand what moves the universe. We have to discover the implicit order that remains hidden in it. This implicit order is the ultimate verb.

This is the new Reality. We are not individuals, isolated objects, or even subjects. We are the swimmers, the witnesses in the same river which supports us and gives us life and nourishes us with food and awareness of what is truly happening. The focus is not our individual aims, but this general evolution as wholeness.

If we want to access this new understanding and undergo metanoia, the tricky thing is that we have first to change our perceptions in order to change our experience, because our erroneous perception can only dictate a false way to interpret the experience. My own identification with my body-memory-mind can only generate a perception of fragmentation which will define and even reinforce my interpretation of the experience of being fragmented (you against me) and it will consolidate ever more this perception of fragmentation. This is a kind of vicious circle.

I observe that my body is distinct from yours, so I deduce that my being is separated from yours. How can I then experience that in a

certain way, beyond our physicality, we are one, you and me, swimming in the same river and carried by the same flow? I need first to change my perception of separateness.

In order to do so I need to perceive that the separateness concerns only our physicality. I need to observe that I can observe your body as I can observe mine and I can observe your behaviour as I can observe mine. Of course I will have the tendency to favour my own behaviour at the expense of yours, because I know better my body from inside than yours; but it is only the physical perception. I can even observe this tendency to favour my own point of view and discover a form of symmetry when I discover that I can observe you in the same way as I observe myself. This is the tricky game between the observer and the observed. Who is then the observer, and who is the observed? And who observes?

Then my experience of separateness can change and evolve and bring new insights which will foster new experiences and new understandings free of the preconception I had. Hard work but necessary work to break my own imprisonment in false representations.

This work is probably very real and very adequate in meditation when one tries to observe neutrally what happens in oneself and around. Once we have broken the vicious circle of feeling separated, change can move very quickly, from new experiences to new perceptions to new experiences.

When we become free, we can recognise the pattern of multiplicity and unity, of diversity and yet wholeness. We feel as if we were a mosaic where each one contributes by his/her own unique colour. The picture can only emerge from this combination or cooperation of all, where each one is needed. Each insight is only a part, never

the whole picture. What I see, hear, feel, know, is only a small contribution to the whole lot of the total mosaic.

The great turn-around that takes shape in this way opens onto our salvation because we are no more the doers, no more the actors in charge. Our main role is to flow with the flow. We have to listen and adapt to what is. It does not deprive us from being actors at our own level, i.e. being creative to find the right means to listen well, to adapt thoroughly and to be in harmony. As we have seen earlier with the 4 steps: no resistance + questioning + discerning + creative action – all in the little box at the bottom of the big rectangle.

What matters is that we are no more the actors who believe we can re-create the world at our image. No, our role as actors is much more modest. It is to look for our harmonious insertion into the flowing river. To become seers and listeners. To become true witnesses. We remain yet swimmers, fully creative. This is true salvation. Freedom to be truly in adapting to the laws of the wholeness. Being as a verb that is acted by “external” sources. External = beyond our small identification as body-memory-mind.

**Exercise:** Write and describe what you feel here and now, using mainly verbs that impact on you and make you the object of transformation. Avoid nouns that define you as an actor or subject.

Example: “When I came here, my car took me along a road that was leading us over the hills that were jumping like sheep and were greening to make us happy. And the sky was enveloping me. I felt like vibrating to the pulse of the cosmos” Do better than that!! 15min.

Then we share our impressions.

13.00 – LUNCH

### 14.00 - Our choice: egocentric or hetero-centric? (60’)

We have seen how we are fragmented and identify with small entities and feel divided, one against the other: rich against poor, men against women, whites against blacks, Catholics against Islamists, etc... Such individuals or social clusters (you-me, us-them) are mainly egocentric, even if we can be kind to other people. They remain centred and related to their own perceptions, centred on themselves, even if it is only in the way they look at the world from their own point of view and interests or privileges.

When we stop identifying ourselves with our body-memory-mind and we discover our ability to behave less as fragmented actors and to become rather like unified witnesses and seers, we open to another dimension in life: Life as Unity, as Wholeness, and no more as a fragmentation, conflict or competition; life as a creative living community of interdependent parts. Life as One, as the river of Life.

And instead of pretending to make it what it is, we adapt to the main laws of life and try to discern the pattern, the general meaning, the implicate order as the scientist David Bohm calls it..

Our lives in a western society are very much modulated by the general belief in the dominating roles of individuals. How do we escape from this trap and how do we convert our lives into a form of integration and participation into the wider body of community, not as single actors who contribute punctually to the common good but as integral organs of this new wider body from which we receive all instructions and inspirations? How do we experience unity rather than division? How do we rise to a higher level of perception? instead of seeing the competition of the cells, how can we perceive

how they all play an essential role in a further whole of higher order: the wider organ, the wider body. How do we rise to this higher level of perception that sees the whole as a unity rather than the parts as competing?

It means then that we have to find ways to translate our egocentric perception into a hetero-centric experience. It is a Copernican revolution: no more me in the centre; but, on a higher level, the whole of which I am a necessary part, in a whole system of interconnections.

Note that it is not a fusion where each one disappears in an insignificant magma, but on the contrary, a form of personalisation that makes everybody unique and essential in the whole setting. My well-being depends indeed from the wellbeing of my local community. How do I transform my perception? my behaviour?

Q: How do I change my ego-centric perception of life into a hetero-centric experience of unity? a new perception of life that sees more the unity and cooperation of the whole than the fragmentation and competition of the parts? a participation which is based on the recognition that life is provided and nourished by this totality which is nothing else than GoB. True turn-around that will transform me deeply.

Go for a walk and come back here (with the solution) in 40min!!

At 2.40pm for sharing.

## 15.00 – Qohelet 2:3-25: on two different levels (30')

The next text (out of the Bible) is very challenging:

*I searched in my heart how to cheer my flesh with wine, my heart yet guiding me with wisdom, and how to lay hold of folly, until I might see what it was good for the sons of men that they should do under heaven all the days of their lives. I made myself great works. I built myself houses. I planted myself vineyards. I made myself gardens and parks, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit. I made myself pools of water, to water from it the forest where trees were reared. I bought male servants and female servants, and had servants born in my house. I also had great possessions of herds and flocks, above all who were before me in Jerusalem; I also gathered silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and of the provinces. I got myself male and female singers, and the delights of the sons of men—musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all who were before me in Jerusalem.*

*My wisdom also remained with me. Whatever my eyes desired, I didn't keep from them. I didn't withhold my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced because of all my labour, and this was my portion from all my labour. Then I looked at all the works that my hands had worked, and at the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold, all was vanity and a chasing after wind, and there was no profit under the sun.*

*I turned myself to consider wisdom, madness, and folly: for what can the king's successor do? Just that which*

*has been done long ago. Then I saw that wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the fool walks in darkness—and yet I perceived that one event happens to them all. Then I said in my heart, “As it happens to the fool, so will it happen even to me; and why was I then more wise?”*

*Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For of the wise man, even as of the fool, there is no memory for ever, since in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. Indeed, the wise man must die just like the fool!*

*So I hated life, because the work that is worked under the sun was grievous to me; for all is vanity and a chasing after wind. I hated all my labour in which I laboured under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who comes after me. Who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have rule over all of my labour in which I have laboured, and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.*

*Therefore I began to cause my heart to despair concerning all the labour in which I had laboured under the sun. For there is a man whose labour is with wisdom, with knowledge, and with skilfulness; yet he shall leave it for his portion to a man who has not laboured for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. For what has a man of all his labour, and of the striving of his heart, in which he labours under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail is grief; yes, even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.*

*There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I?*

**My statement:** Our acts of everyday are maybe vanity but they still make sense. Yet they are not on the same level as our connection with the Ground of Being. They are only the expression of what this connection is.

Q: How do you receive this text? If it is true, what does remain that is truly real and meaningful? How does it fit in your life?

*For what has a man of all his labour, and of the striving of his heart, in which he labours under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail is grief; yes, even in the night his heart takes no rest.*

15.30 – MUSIC - MOVEMENT

15.45 - AFTERNOON TEA

### **16.15 - Unity and dualism (15')**

We have earlier opposed fragmentation and wholeness or unity. It is important to see that they happen both at the same time, but on different levels.

In our incarnated life it remains true that my body can only be experienced as being distinct from yours. It is also true that I can only be where my body is, and not where it is not. This is our daily

experience in our physical world. Yet it is also true that unity of Life is a reality, on a higher level. We all swim in the same river of life.

Both experiences are true. The former happens on the physical level, the latter on the spiritual level. They are not opposed. They cohabit. And one (the sense of wholeness) nourishes the other (our fragmented action). This is the great fascination: how do we experience these two realities which seem so contradictory and yet are simultaneous? And how do we bring them together?

Dualism and unity are two sides of the same life experience, yet on very different levels. We have to remain aware of which law is that rules, depending on the level we are acting upon. If physical, it is the law of dualism, where the ego has its role to play as an envelope and kind of physical protection; if spiritual, it is the law of unity, where life is provided free of charge by the Source that leads us. Tricky game of contrary forces!

Q: How do you experience this cohabitation of two dimensions in your life: dualism in daily life and yet unity or wholeness at a higher level of consciousness?

### **16.30 - Trinity and Anti-Trinity (60')**

As a metaphor (or myth) we could say that we live at the same time in three worlds which, together, shape a complex Reality. See the diagram on next page):

1) World 1 = the Source: this is the world of our own Source and origin (the Ground of Being) that is not visible but nevertheless never stops from keeping us alive and from inspiring us. This is the immanent and spiritual source of our deeper being.

- 2) World 2 = the Expression: this is the physical world in which we live and which reveals to us (the book that makes it visible) the true essence of World 1 (the Source) when we dare to look for meaning beyond mere appearances. This is an expression of World 1 in physical and material form as the sign of impact of the Source on our surroundings.
- 3) World 3 = the Interpretation / the Construct: it is the world we construct ourselves (in our heart-mind) as a representation of the world (W1 and W2) in which we live: this is a man-made construct that fits more or less Reality (W1 and W2) when our representations and interpretations are adequate. But most of the time this World 3 consists in an illusion (a fiction or virtuality) we have built to protect ourselves from the fear we have of the Mystery (W1) and from the harshness of an environment (W2) that, we wish, should be more gentle and comfortable.

But more important, this World 3 is then, at the same time, the world we build artificially and physically (no more in our heart-mind but in our physical or social environment) through our action when we relate more to our preconceived representations (W3) than to reality (W1 and W2). We then transform physically and mentally and socially our environment (W2) to make it “more compatible” with our artificial representations (W3), rather than with the Source (W1). This forced adaptation of World 2 into World 3 makes World 2 less perceivable as the Expression. It means that our action will participate in hiding ever more the Reality (W1) through the screen we interpose between us and World 1 in transforming World 2 into World 3.

**1) World 1: The Source of life**

**Invisible – Our Essence.**

**Emptiness which is Fullness.**

**No way to represent it.**

*In this world there are two orders of being,  
the perishable and the imperishable.  
The perishable is all that is visible.  
The imperishable is the invisible substance  
of all that is visible.*

(The Bhagavad Gita)

**2) W2: The Expression - visible + impermanent**

**Nature - the world we see.**

**Makes the Source visible.**

**Signs that help us to grow.**

**Incarnation: see and do / be.**

**3) W3: The Interpretation - our own construct**

**Our projections – fiction.**

**The meaning we impose.**

**The world of our making.**

**The world we change / have changed.**

This is so far what we can observe and experience in our daily life. We have of course the free choice to delve into this complexity and to search for the Mystery or, on the contrary, to surf on W2 and fall into W3 without noticing how much they are different worlds of different natures.

Despite what has been said at the beginning of this workshop, we can do here a bit of theology, more exactly of Christian theology. There is indeed a striking resemblance between these 3 worlds and the Christian myth of the Trinity. This is evidently not by pure chance. The myth of the Trinity intends to describe this complexity of perception we are confronted to as incarnated human beings living in a tension between dualism and unity.

Let's remind us that a myth is a metaphor that tries to describe a reality in using an analogy. The myth is not the reality but it is only its evocation: a description which does not represent strictly what has to be shown but only evokes a deeper unfathomable reality which cannot be grasped. The metaphor is then a kind of poetic incomplete illustration that does not try to grasp the topic but only orients our glance into the right direction where sight is not limited by a closed description.

As everybody knows, the Christian Trinity describes God as three persons in one Unity: it is composed of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. By analogy, as it is a single unity composed of three persons, it may also be described basically like the three different natures of the fire which yet remains one single entity: energy + light + heat, in the equation  $3 = 1$ . It means that the Godhead or Ground of Being, according to this poetic evocation, is composed of three persons and yet remains One.

1) 1<sup>st</sup> person: the Father (World 1) is the invisible energy of the fire, the Source and force of life which gives itself freely and animates everything. He is the Origin but he remains invisible. He is the Creator, not so much because he made the Earth and the Universe in seven days (this is a poetic metaphor), but principally because he is

the source of all life, the strength of love, the deep nature and consciousness of everything that exists. He is the energy and life which supports everything. In this way he is in the Big Bang but also in the transformations of every day. He is the energy of life itself. Without him, everything returns to nothingness. He gives himself unconditionally, yet he leaves us free to choose to recognise him, to accept him in our lives or to ignore him. He does not impose himself. He is all powerful but remains discrete, hidden in a way which remains yet always accessible. Like our own heart he is not visible but essential for maintaining us in life. He is invisible like the wind which cannot be seen but can be noticed and observed through its effects. If we let him do, he nourishes our lives, lifts us, guides us, inspires us. He is the meaning of our own evolution that we have to trust because it will lead us to peace and joy. When we trust in him and let him guide our lives, his power of life (which is not imposing) can flow through our presence, to be given to others.

2) 2<sup>nd</sup> person: the Son (World 2) is the light of the fire, the Expression or incarnation which makes the Father (the energy of the fire) visible; the Son gives himself, in humility and gentleness, to reveal the Source. He is the Expression and materialisation of what is invisible. Since the beginning of the world he has been the transformation of what cannot be seen into what can be perceived. He is the expression of creation into signs and matter. He is by excellence the expression of love, the true love which helps to grow, to become more real and mature, more aware and integrated into the general movement of creation of the cosmos. Light makes things visible. Shadow is what remains where light does not shine. The man Jesus is only the human figure who incarnated the person of the Son into a human being, in a certain time in history, two thousand years ago. By giving himself he made the generosity of the Father perceptible as well as his own because they are united in one will. He made known that the Father is a gentle power who gives himself. He did this not so much by obedience to the Father but because he is of the same nature as the Father and he is

therefore love too. He gave himself of his own will because it is his true nature, and it is also our same true nature that he reveals to us. The Son is present in us, in our surroundings, in nature because these material realities (nature as much as us) are expressions of who the invisible Reality is, as we are also in our essence the expressions of this true love that needs to find ways of expression. He is the Revelation. A deep change happens in us when we understand the nature of his gift. He is Action. Salvation is nothing else than this transformation (metanoia or turn-around) in ourselves of the perception of what is the sacred and true dimension of life, and of ourselves, and of the others.

- 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> person: the Spirit (World 3 – as interpretation and inspiration, rather than the illusory world of our making) is the heat of the fire, the energy of love which unites everything and inspires us on the path of the search for Truth. He is the Movement which leads us in the everlasting dance of life. The power of the Spirit is a unifying force which creates Unity beyond the frequent fragmentation of our perceptions and inevitable tensions generated by differences and complementarity. Love is the linking force between what is perceived as antagonistic tendencies. We see “Either / Or” when we should rather perceive “And / As well”. Rather than established by a single monolithic power, unity relies on the balance of different and often opposed forces. Antagonisms provide indeed the best way to manage balance; they may do this much better than an authoritarian power that intends to control all forces by itself alone. Antagonisms are necessary to keep the balance because they participate in keeping the whole together in an equilibrium between acting and antagonistic reacting forces. For instance the arm has two muscles which work in antagonistic ways, yet the arm remains one because the antagonism is kept in balance by the sense of equilibrium and the interaction of the two forces. On the other hand, the Spirit is also the energy of transformation because life is constant change. Nothing lasts, nothing remains, all is flowing. Transformation is growth in maturity and awareness, adaptation to the flow of life.

Like the wind, the Spirit is leading us where we go, without us knowing where. He is the guide on our spiritual path.

Remember: this is only a metaphor, a myth that tries to reveal an unfathomable depth and mystery. It happens that these three persons are called today by names in the masculine form. This is very disturbing because these entities are indeed as much feminine as masculine; the three of them are of yin and yang natures in equal measures. The Hebrew and Greek traditions - that were shaped on the patriarchal model of the early centuries - have distorted these images and narrowed the extent of their true identities in giving them dominant masculine attributes, except for the third one that had a feminine name in Hebrew (ruah) yet neuter in Greek (pneuma).

Now, there is another aspect of this trinity which is very interesting. Our market society has twisted this original image of our Source of life into an illusory search for profit, wealth and power. As Ivan Illich used to say, the most dangerous evil is not the force of destruction that opposes bluntly but the slight twist of the truth that may, by mimicry, reverse this truth into its contrary. It is precisely what our market society has done, while mimicking the original pattern we just described into a false appearance that seems built on the same premises but is not.

The Anti-Trinity of our materialistic society is also composed of 3 elements, of 3 idols which are also leading forces, yet of very different natures:

- 1) 1<sup>st</sup> idol: Power, not as a force of life that is the discrete source of life and love, but as a force of domination, exploitation and destruction. Also invisible in itself.
- 2) 2<sup>nd</sup> idol: Technology, not as a force of gentleness that gives himself as a servant, but as a force of control and manipulation that subjugates. Also expression and materialisation of the power.
- 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> idol: Market and Consumption, not as a force of love that inspires and unites, but as a force of greed, accumulation and

retention that fragments and divides. Also a force that moves us, but where we do not want to go.

But this is only a false image, an illusion, a virtuality. What matters is the original Trinity and what it represents for our daily life. In this opposition between Trinity and anti-trinity, there is a hidden aspect that is pretty vicious. We have in fact too well absorbed the logic of the anti-trinity because we bath in it at each instant of our urbanised life and it impregnates most of our representations in a way we are not aware of. It is then essential to cleanse our perceptions of this influence. Because Trinity and anti-trinity are not compatible. We have to choose which one we will trust. This is the great metanoia or turn-around we tried to describe in this workshop.

If you look more attentively at this metaphor, you will discern a striking parallel with the experience of Brahman, Atman and Purusha in Hinduism or with Emptiness in Buddhism and Zen. Emptiness is Form; Form is Emptiness.

Q: Time of personal reflexion on this material, and then sharing.

*17.30 – MUSIC - SITTING*

*18.00 – DINNER*

**19.00 - AMA's video – Dry and Wet**

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*SUNDAY MORNING*

*07.30 – MEDITATION*

*08.00 – BREAKFAST*

**9.00 – End of the workshop**

# Harmony – Searching for the Ground of Being 27 – 29 November 2020

## A) The basics of the challenge

19.00 – Introduction (15’)

19.15 – Experimental approach: the Ground of Being (15’)

19.30 – Two possible interpretations (30’)

20.00 - Three Teachings: Eastern – Prophetic – Zen (30’)

20.30 - The Ten Ox Herding pictures (30’)

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SATURDAY MORNING

07.30 – MEDITATION

08.00 – BREAKFAST

## B) Nothing else than GoB

09.00 – Getting free of representations (15’)

09.15 – Breathing in and out: nothing more (45’)

10.00 - Love can only be discrete – not self-imposing (30’)

10.30 – MUSIC - MOVEMENT

10.45 – MORNING TEA

11.15 – The big contradiction... or big depression (30’)

11.45 - Consciousness: being a witness (30’)

## C) The great turn-around

12.15 - Metanoia: transformation and salvation (30’)

13.00 – LUNCH

14.00 - Our choice: egocentric or hetero-centric? (60’)

15.00 – Qohelet 2:3-25: on two different levels (30’)

15.30 – MUSIC - MOVEMENT

15.45 - AFTERNOON TEA

16.15 - Unity and dualism (15’)

16.30 - Trinity and Anti-Trinity (60’)

17.30 – MUSIC - SITTING

18.00 – DINNER

19.00 - AMA’s video – Dry and Wet

\* \* \* \*

SUNDAY MORNING

07.30 – MEDITATION

08.00 – BREAKFAST

9.00 – End of the workshop