

Helmut Wautischer  
Alan M. Olson  
Gregory J. Walters *Editors*

# Philosophical Faith and the Future of Humanity

 Springer

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Helmut Wautischer · Alan M. Olson ·  
Gregory J. Walters  
Editors

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*To the Memory of Leonard H. Ehrlich*

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Karl Jaspers Society  
of North America and Founding Members, Leonard H. Ehrlich,  
Edith Ehrlich, and George B. Pepper

# Editors' Preface

*Philosophical Faith and the Future of Humanity* celebrates the 30th Anniversary of the Karl Jaspers Society of North America (KJSNA) founded on December 28, 1980. The prospect of forming a learned society devoted to the philosophy of Karl Jaspers emerged as Leonard H. Ehrlich, Edith Ehrlich, and George B. Pepper worked toward a systematic presentation of the philosophy of Karl Jaspers in the form of an English reader, *Karl Jaspers' Basic Philosophical Writings-Selections* (1986, 1994). During this process, the co-editors concluded that the organization of a learned society dedicated to the thought of Karl Jaspers and his contributions to twentieth century philosophy would greatly serve the interests of scholars concerned with contemporary and Continental philosophy.

Since its founding in 1980, KJSNA has held meetings in conjunction with the annual meetings of American Philosophical Association (APA) and occasionally with the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP). KJSNA has also cooperated with the Jaspers Society of Japan, the Karl Jaspers Stiftung of Basel, and the Austrian Karl Jaspers Society in the planning and execution of six international conferences on the life and work of Karl Jaspers. The first international conference was held during summer of 1983 in conjunction with the XVII World Congress of Philosophy in Montreal, Canada, commemorating the centenary of Jaspers' birth. Since then, international Jaspers conferences have been held every five years at the World Congresses in Brighton, Moscow, Boston, Istanbul, and Seoul. The proceedings of these events have also been published in separate volumes.

Following the Fifth International Jaspers Conference at the World Congress in Istanbul (2003), the officers of KJSNA commenced the development of an online international journal in philosophy under the Jaspersian masthead, *Existenz: An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts*. The mission of *Existenz* is to provide the means whereby select essays presented at the annual meetings of KJSNA, as well as direct submissions of research and writing in philosophy and related fields, might be published in an accessible and sophisticated electronic format. Since the founding of *Existenz* in 2005, bi-annual volumes are produced under the co-editorship of Alan M. Olson and Helmut Wautischer. Volume 5/2 (2010) is devoted to the life and memory of Leonard H. Ehrlich by way of a lengthy philosophical autobiography and also to Edith Ehrlich's work in Nietzsche studies.

The anniversary volume at hand explores two basic issues in the philosophy of Karl Jaspers: the notion of philosophical faith, and Jaspers' abiding concern for the future of humanity. Thirty-four international scholars have contributed to an elucidation of these themes and issues, which are "fundamental," as the late Leonard H. Ehrlich put it, not only to the work of Jaspers, but to philosophy as such. Indeed, it can be argued that the notion of fundamentality is of even greater importance today, as philosophy finds itself drawn away from perennial concerns and into the position of becoming the handmaiden of the natural and social sciences.

We are very pleased, therefore, to provide, by way of the introductory section, a translation of Jaspers' *Grundsätze des Philosophierens: Einführung in philosophisches Leben, 1942/43*. These five principles, from the Jaspers *Nachlass* and so graciously provided by Hans Saner, Literary Executor of the Jaspers Archive, are strong and important reminders as to what Jaspers considered fundamental in the pursuit of philosophy by all who wish to philosophize. It is entirely appropriate that Springer Verlag has seen fit to publish these materials, given the longstanding relationship of this publisher with Karl Jaspers, dating back to 1913 with the publication of Jaspers' earliest major work, *Allgemeine Psychopathologie*, which has gone through eight editions; the 1919 publication of Jaspers' entry into the philosophy faculty at Heidelberg, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*; then in 1923 *Die Idee der Universität*; and the three volume edition of *Philosophie (3 Bände)*, first published in 1932. The Springer Verlag also published the first major work of Jaspers' famous student, Hannah Arendt, who completed her doctoral dissertation under his supervision, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin* (1929).

For the continuing interest of the Springer Verlag, past and present, in the life and work of Karl Jaspers, and for the steadfast support of all who assisted us throughout the production of *Philosophical Faith and the Future of Humanity*, we would like to thank the editorial directors at Springer, Harmen van Paradijs, Ties Nijssen, Willemijn Arts and her assistant, Anita Fei van der Linden. We are also deeply indebted to Dr. Carl S. Ehrlich, the son of Leonard H. Ehrlich, upon whom we greatly relied when his father, due to failing health, was no longer able to supply us with pertinent information regarding his mentor Karl Jaspers, KJSNA, and the International Association of Jaspers Societies. We would also like to express gratitude to Dr. Kurt Salamun, Editor, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Karl Jaspers Gesellschaft*, for the tremendous work he has done over the years in providing a forum for the philosophy of Karl Jaspers and, of course, also to Hans Saner, Literary Executor of the works of Karl Jaspers. Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank Brian Jenkins, doctoral candidate in philosophy, religion and science at Boston University, for his fastidious work as a fact-checker for most of the essays in this collection.

Boston, Massachusetts  
 Ottawa, Canada  
 San Francisco, California  
 July 10, 2011

Alan M. Olson  
 Gregory J. Walters  
 Helmut Wautischer

1. Gott ist.
2. Es gibt die unbedingte Forderung im Dasein.
3. Der Mensch ist endlich und unvollendbar.
4. Der Mensch kann in Führung durch Gott leben.
5. Die Realität in der Welt hat ein verschwindendes Dasein zwischen Gott und Existenz.

Karl Jaspers, 1942/43

*Grundsätze des Philosophierens: Einführung in philosophisches Leben*



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**Part I**  
**Introduction, *Nachlassfragment*,  
Autobiographical, Science, and Linguistic**

# Introduction

Helmut Wautischer

As a trained psychiatrist, Karl Jaspers undoubtedly had keen insight into the nature of humans. Recognizing the importance of scientific methodology, he understood that “medicine draws little distinction somatically between man and animal.”<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless there are distinct differences: “Man is not merely pattern, he patterns himself” (*GP* 8). Of course, the chosen methodology will dictate the range of results, and as such, the uniqueness of the human condition eventually leads to an antinomy. Humans are subjected to the methods of science with regard to physical, mental, and emotional qualities. Likewise, this ability to pattern oneself transcends human existence into a domain of Being where self-realization takes place in the context of communication with others. Such an Other can be any entity ranging from the mineral-, plant-, or animal kingdoms to humans, transcendence, and god.

Fully aware of the limits of any methodology, Jaspers maintained their importance for the acquisition of knowledge. In fact, from the very beginning of his academic writing, he developed a sense of openness and a willingness to engage in dialogue based on different methodologies, each of which may shed light to explore the complexity of Existenz. Already in his *General Psychopathology*, Jaspers attempted “to develop and order knowledge guided by the methods through which it is gained.”<sup>2</sup> At the same time Jaspers was a fierce and compassionate critic when interpretations of facts occur on the basis of methodologies that are not suitable for the phenomenon under investigation. This is demonstrated, for example, in his elaborate critique of Ernst Kretschmer’s constitution theory that assumes a correlation between body types and psychological dispositions (*GP* 641–668). For Jaspers, the concept of science included a much broader spectrum than merely research in the so-called natural sciences. With regards to the science of humans, a

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, trans. J. Hoenig and Marian H. Hamilton (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 7. [Henceforth cited as *GP*]

<sup>2</sup> Karl Jaspers, “Philosophical Autobiography,” in *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1981), pp. 1–94, here p. 20.

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variety of methods is called for, without any one method overriding the relevancy of the others. For example, the criterion of testability in psychopathology reflects the dynamic between limits of empirical methods in contrast to philosophical assertions about human freedom. Likewise, in developing an axiomatic ground for scientific research, the boundaries of knowledge-belief-faith are not clearly demarcated, as an analysis of the difference between philosophical faith and religious faith demonstrates. Such analyses based on different points of observation are described in this volume. Jaspers reminds us that the human condition ultimately escapes objective accessibility. He endorses a plurality in the methods of understanding, and universality for the methods of justification: “What is known scientifically can be demonstrated and proven in such a way that any reasonable person at all capable of understanding the matter cannot evade the compelling truth of it” (*GP* 768). The Encompassing (*das Umgreifende*) as such transcends beyond justification; it is grasped by the individual in the immediacy of communication. In this context, “thinking is itself an act of the essence of the thinking person, an essence which produces itself by touching an Other, viz., Transcendence.”<sup>3</sup>

At a first glance, an in-depth analysis of philosophical faith might appear irrelevant for understanding life in modern societies, given their seldom challenged acceptance of scientific dogma to govern and interfere with all aspects of personal existence throughout all stages of life. From therapeutic practice, Jaspers knew that any objectification of humans has limits. “There always remains the all-embracing precondition which we call the vitality of life, idea, creativity, the initiative of Existence itself” (*GP* 398). Such initiative is non-objective and occurs in one’s philosophizing about the inevitability of foundering, in which Transcendence shows itself. Jaspers does not call for some remote or exclusive attentiveness to purely intellectual or spiritual practice. He knows of the defining layers of human existence and would not want to submit their corresponding drives into any hierarchical order. In his classification of drives he differentiates between the obvious somatic and sensory drives, the vital drives, and the drives of the human spirit (*GP* 319). He knows that, “man cannot, as it were, participate in nothing but purely intellectual or spiritual drives” (*GP* 320). If one does, most likely some form of pathology will develop.

By bringing attention to such references in the context of exploring philosophical faith, it should become clear that Jaspers is not some lofty philosopher disconnected from reality. It is quite to the contrary. Philosophical faith is the human endeavor on the path of temporal truth. How such path, in a Jaspersian context, can guide a person to live a truthful life is described, from various perspectives, throughout this book. Reason alone will not suffice, as can be demonstrated with examples of conflicting expert testimonies, denial of facts by authoritative experts, or with dogmatic applications of truth that serve ulterior motives where the dignity of others is being objectified for practical ends. Jaspers knew that an individual’s awareness of truth is

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<sup>3</sup> Karl Jaspers, “Reply to My Critics,” in *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1981), pp. 747–896, here p. 849. [Henceforth cited as *RC*]



not just a given. It belongs to the drives of the human spirit, “drives to comprehend and give oneself to a state of being which manifests itself as an experience of absolute values, whether religious, aesthetic, ethical or pertaining to truth” (*GP* 319). For each participant in any historical age, this motivation needs to be nurtured anew without any reliance on dogma, be it religious, philosophical, or scientific. Such process of renewal is not just a destruction of the old, but requires an awareness of truth “whose fountainhead is at such level of depth where reason is approached by that which comes to light through reason.”<sup>4</sup> Human progress requires more than simply destroying ancient wisdom by misclassifying it as dogma. It requires development of motivation and maturity for travelling on a path of knowledge. “Truth springs from the intertwinement of thought and life, while obscured awareness of truth springs from decay” (*VW* 2).

In this context it becomes clear that Jaspers offers valuable insight for maintaining and recreating a sense of humanity that is so drastically challenged in this current age of seemingly insurmountable struggles; such as the ever increasing world population, the global challenges that arise with an externally induced metamorphosis of cultures due to centralized political and economic regulation, and the increased efficacy in shaping human life to accept a shared global narrative that is presented through centralized global channels of communication with their claim of supporting freedom of expression. Manipulative democracy knows best how to highlight and mass-distribute selective voices on any subject matter for the purpose of guiding public opinion. The short-lived gains acquired through deceptive interaction eventually lose their value when measured against one’s finite existence in eternity. While it is true that the key to life is in the hands of the individual, its functionality for opening one’s comprehension of the Encompassing is acquired by authentic communication that transcends subject-object divisions. “Only thus can we gain the way to ourselves by becoming communicable, by communication and renewed recognition” (*RC* 791–792). In other words, communication is at the very core of human existence. But not just any communication will do. In the end, communication must include other humans and demand the same dignity be given to others than is expected for oneself. All other instances of communication can only provide for functionality. Jaspers’ description of the doctor-patient communication describes such limits in regards to psychotherapy, where “the doctor limits what he tells and speaks authoritatively; the patient duly accepts and does not think about it but has blind confidence in its certainty . . . doctor and patient instinctively adhere to authority as something reassuring” (*GP* 797). Such communication objectifies its participants and Jaspers does not leave it at that. He elaborates on a doctor-patient relationship that takes place as existential communication, reaching far beyond any therapy and “beyond anything that can be planned or methodically staged” (*GP* 798). Just like in this professional interaction between doctor and patient, most human interaction takes place within their unique parameter of diverse motives

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<sup>4</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Von der Wahrheit* (Munich: Piper & Co. Verlag, 1958), p. 2, translated by the author. [Henceforth cited as *VW*]

and reasons for engaging in dialogue. Differences constitute a limitation but can be addressed by sharing “destiny as fellow-travellers within the frame of what is called Transcendent Being. Mere existence does not bind persons together, nor does Existence itself as such” (*GP* 799).

When communication is addressed in the context of a global communication related to the project of world philosophy, Jaspers’ writings offer profound insight that is explored in Part 3 of this book. The focal point of discussion is directed to comprehending the difference between philosophical faith and religious faith, and the efforts by an individual to ascertain knowledge of the encompassing. Placing this effort on a global stage of world philosophy requires one to discuss the legitimacy and limits of authority. Public freedom of expression does bring empowerment to the individual, provided that there is an attentive listener. Most likely no reasonable person will object to the fact that screaming “Fire!” in a crowded place should be illegal unless there is indeed a fire. Most will agree that public search engines should not direct users to manuals for building explosive devices. But when authority uses deceptive rhetoric to justify its demand for obedience, the public is easily fooled due to lack of better knowledge. For example, the current state-of-the-art inoculation schedule for 0–3 year olds in pediatric medicine becomes increasingly demanding for the immature nervous system of this age group. Some even argue that post-vaccination effects are related to auto-immune and neurological disorder in children. Despite this controversy, a pediatrician who challenges this practice in favor of a more individualized inoculation schedule to support healthy development in the child will face authority challenges by the Medical Board. Jaspers identifies several reasons for and against the legitimacy of authority and he knows of the human condition that yields to, desires, and revolts against authority (*VW* 804–816). For any future of humanity, the moral challenge of global capitalism will have to be taken into account. While it is important to stress the responsibility of individuals, it is too simplistic to place the burden of moral compliance on individuals alone. In this context, one’s willingness to engage in cunning communication becomes a tool of authority. Jaspers paraphrases Hannah Arendt when he addresses the moral obligation of a State: “No state today is only responsible to itself, but must ask itself what consequences its actions have for the possible free federative unity of mankind—and with this it is already on the road to renouncing its absolute sovereignty” (*RC* 754). In today’s world such obligation best serves as a directive for multinational corporations with regards to their presumed perception of entitlement for the ownership and distribution of the world’s resources. When communication is not direct but mediated through opaque technological gateways, democratic discourse can easily become a form of one-sided communication that is projected into a neutral domain of internet accessibility with no real knowledge who might engage with the material posted, if anyone at all. In his very perceptive way, Jaspers already anticipated such form of communication. “Everyone says anything. There is a chaos of irresponsibility. Within this context there are suggestions, deceptions, and sophistry for material gain and seeking power. This is used as a pastime of general speaking without continuity of education. All truths and falsities occur in random chaos as a form of speech act, where even truth becomes hollow and loses its relevance” (*VW* 809).

Not anything goes. Just as there are criteria for scientific communication, there are equal criteria for philosophizing, practicing religion, or truthful communication in transcendence. Such criteria are needed for the acquisition of knowledge, but Jaspers makes it clear that no individual can hide behind criteria to pretend truthful communication. Ultimately such communication requires the full participation of an authentic individual who recognizes himself by interacting with others in full awareness of one's foundering in Existenz.

The thirty-four contributions in this volume speak to this journey on the path of knowledge, starting with Karl Jaspers himself in a lucid and insightful outline of five principles for philosophizing.

San Francisco  
July 10, 2011

Helmut Wautischer  
Executive Editor

# Foreword to Karl Jaspers' *Principles for Philosophizing*

Hans Saner

**Abstract** A summary statement about the five principles that define Jaspers' position of 1942/43, and a brief description of the circumstances for this hitherto unpublished writing of Jaspers.

The probate fragment of Karl Jaspers' *Principles of Philosophy: Introduction to Philosophical Life*, which is said to have secretly circulated in 1943 among the students of Heidelberg, consists of ten parts, of which five are transcribed and include about 350 printed pages. The parts VI–X, partly transcribed and partly in notes, consist of about 700 sheets. The project is like the hub of mature themes of Jaspers' philosophy which are then developed in the post-war period. They originate in philosophical faith that Jaspers characterizes in five principles:

1. God is
2. There is Unconditional Demand in Being
3. Man is Finite and Unfinishable
4. Man Can Live By Guidance Through God
5. Reality in the World has Diminishing Being between God and Existenz

Of these five principles he developed three in his later writings, namely, God; unconditional demand; and reality in the world has diminishing being between God and Existenz. The special feature of this writing of 1942/43 is its strong commitment which is otherwise quite atypical of Jaspers. It seems to reflect the crisis situation of the time, and something that he not only softened later, but also subjected to criticism. While the principles pertain to no particular religion, neither are they merely metaphysical, but indicate religious positivity, which may surprise many.

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# Principles for Philosophizing: Introduction to Philosophical Life, 1942/43

Karl Jaspers

**Abstract** This original probate fragment of Jaspers' literary estate summarizes five principles that define Jaspers' philosophical position of 1942/43.

## Preface

[...]

This writing may be an encouragement for philosophical living, a sort of modern *Protreptikos*. Its final aim is practical. It commands the seriousness of a self-engaged reader. It wishes to aid the awakening of the essential core within a human being. It encourages by affirming the encompassing, by truth, by looking at origins, by means of examples from human thought and abilities.

[...]

## Introduction

[...]

### *The Overall Humaneness of Philosophizing and the Individual*

Philosophy is the matter of an individual. It must originate from its age and bear fruits from its soil; but the uniqueness of philosophy fully comes to life in the context of including narratives from all of thoughtful humankind. General humaneness is claimed in the philosophical works of East Asia, India, the Occident as its kind of factual philosophizing by humans. Reverberating upon these works, one's

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This unpublished manuscript was released by Hans Saner, curator of Jaspers' literary estate, for first publication and is translated from German by Helmut Wautischer. The ellipsis indicate redundant and duplicate text omitted by the curator for the sake of a more cohesive presentation of Jaspers' thesis.

own self is found through philosophizing. Each work is an objective construct of thought—even though it is historically identifiable as belonging to a certain people and time and situation, and is cloaked by its own history—from the very beginning it addresses in principle a universal comprehensibility that is present in every human being. In dialogue throughout the millennia, one human shares with the other knowledge about oneself, the world, and God. Early attempts to protect philosophical insight as some secret to be shared with others only when they are ready to fully comprehend it at the level of their personal maturity soon proved to be futile. It is the task of philosophy to transmit itself to the public, and by avoiding the label of secrecy to remain an open secret that is available to each individual: in the freely accessible work, thoughts will be comprehended only by the one who engages them with self-awareness. [. . .]

### *Affirmation Truth and Philosophical Truth*

Philosophy is not religion. A philosophical creed—in the sense of belonging or not belonging to a historical community of fellow believers—is a misnomer. Philosophy can bridge any abyss to coalesce each and every one, not necessarily by shared community and beliefs, but by means of listening and understanding and by engaging in a dialogue of questions and answers. As such we cannot put forward a catechism of philosophical creed, but we can develop principles for philosophizing.

Confession is faith in the content of dogmatically defined sentences, and confession is conforming: from my origin with others I affirm the deeds of my community. As such, affirmation truth is the objective disposition of a community in truth for all its members. This truth is the subject of religion and its authenticated institutions.

Philosophy lacks such firm ground in speech, deed, or form, but finds it in the context of objectively gained reminiscence which awakens and motivates. Philosophical propositions are not affirmations; they are outlines of possibilities, steps in thought processes, attempts in ascending to an authentic sense of self. The manifested universalities of such propositions suggest a direction to the reader for actualizing a concrete philosophical thought process. This ever-unique content is not a confessional content. The truth of philosophy, that is analogous to affirmation, is solely found in practice: in the conditioning of its historically well-founded ethos, in the unyielding nature of being-a-self. Such truth is not knowledge, but in its propositions has its ground of remembrance and appearance.

[. . .]

Philosophy proper is lost when it forms sects, foundations, or “schools”; it is also forfeited by founding restrictive traditions analogous to religions, orders, or states. Philosophy is public and common property—essentially bound only by writings, the possibility for free speech, and a certain inspiration for contemplation—it is free of purpose in the world, and constitutes a revealing quiet space of illumination in truth for each and every one who desires it.

Whenever principles for philosophizing can be formed, they constitute an indication for remembrance of primal experiences and the means of their elucidation. While such propositions can bring refreshment in truthful awareness of being, when taken alone they cannot constitute a complete teaching of truth.

Whenever a person communicates philosophy—and philosophizing is shared in this form alone—such philosophy cannot take on a form that is valid for all, or complete, or final. Our principles here are serious, but not a confession; they are carried by the faith in their implicit truth, but not a claim for unconditional acceptance; they try to seek approval of such truth by the other, but constitute simultaneously also an encouragement for the stranger to engage in questioning us, and all this as an expressed intent for clarification.

[...]

[...] Regardless of their own historical origin, there are ancient beliefs of universal applicability that form the foundations of philosophy and religion, in contrast to mindless thoughts of unphilosophy (*Unphilosophie*). In spite of their universality, these beliefs are not detachable binding truths for all, but they do have a historical coloring. As they are communicated, they remain in limbo for rationality. Their absolute demarcation would be untrue. [...]

[...]

## Part 1. Philosophical Beliefs

The contents of faith are invisible. They cannot be shown in the world. They cannot be proven, since they do not depend on anything else.

When speaking of beliefs, this it is not done for the purpose of proving their truth through reason and by making them available to the senses, but it is done to circumnavigate them and guide to them by means of signs that are found indirectly in the facts of existing in the world. Contents of faith are to be awakened wherever a receptive individual can listen, but they cannot be handed over.

[...]

Philosophical beliefs differ from religious faith. Philosophical contents lack a specific religious ground in cults, rites, dogma, or religious institutions. They only know transmissions of thoughts derived from personal meditations. Rather than acknowledging a certain currently active authority, philosophical belief acknowledges only the authority of its origin in view of its history in human thought.

From the tradition I attempted to acquire in my own life, I postulate five beliefs.

### *God Is*

#### Historical Examples of the Belief in God

When Jeremiah noticed the demise of all for which he had devoted his entire life, when his country and people were lost, when in Egypt even the last remnants had

became unfaithful to Yahweh as they offered sacrifices to Isis, and when his disciple Baruch lamented: "I am tired of lamenting and I find no peace!", Jeremiah answers: "Thus spoke Yahweh: Behold, what I have built I shall tear down, and what I have planted I shall pull out, and you demand great things for yourself? Demand them not!"

In such a situation these words mean: That God is, already suffices. Whether or not "immortality" is possible, is not the question; whether or not God is "forgiving," such question is no longer relevant. The individual no longer matters, having a mind of one's own and concerning oneself with beatitude and eternity has diminished. Even more, it is understood as impossibility that the world as such should have purpose susceptible of fulfillment and that it will endure in some form; since all is created by God out of nothing and is in his hands. Attaching oneself to anything in the world means that the experience of joy also brings the experience of sorrow: the weakness, malice, taking pleasure in the pain of others, demise and death. When all is lost, one thing remains: God is. When even with presumed guidance by God one human in this world failed in spite of best efforts, one unshakeable reality remains: God is. As a person fully renounces himself, his goals, and any final reward, then this reality will show itself as the only reality. But it does not show itself in advance, or abstractly, and only when one descends into one's own existence will it show itself right at the boundary.

Jeremiah's words are rough words. No longer are they linked to a historical will to action in the world that used to affirm life and made possible such ultimate goal. These words are simple and free of any allusions about ultimate things; they contain unfathomable truth, precisely because of the renunciation of any claim and any fixation in the world.

Jeremiah positions absolute transcendence into the thought of an otherworldly creator. From this origin which at times is veiled, this belief permeates the Occident until today. A different form of transcendence is found in India since the time of the Upanishads. Whether as Atman-Brahman or as Nirvana, it is the essential being within and in relation to all worldly existence which, including gods, humans, animals, or plants constitutes Maya, disappearing appearances.

Even rougher is Shakespeare's knowledge of transcendence in Hamlet, simple in its lack of knowledge and by renouncing infinity. Upon completing in this world what was relevant to him, Hamlet speaks his last words prior to his death: the rest is silence.

Absolute transcendence is shared in India and the Occident, by finding some ground beyond worldly existence and its corresponding freedom for humans in their ability to bind themselves to some otherworldliness. All else though is radically different: In the occidental tradition, creative spirit is experienced in the totality of world creation by means of extraordinary efforts and by historical participation in world events including the demise of such world totality. In India, transcendence is not experienced by means of human activity in regards to shaping the world, it is also not experience in a historical awareness about the unfolding of human matters; instead, it is found through indifference toward this infinite and the alien hustle and



bustle of the world, and by the individual's effort to cultivate awareness and one's "state of being." The divine creator becomes personalized, while transcendence in India remains impersonal.

Both forms of internalizing absolute transcendence have the capacity to experience their boundaries to avoid their respective manifestation of an abyss: The claims for exclusivity in the belief in God as found in Judaism and Christianity is manifested in human action and by its relation to secular goals; in such digression it is identified by the speculative, infinite, and deep concept of transcendence in India as Maya. The lack of historicity and world in Indian transcendence regresses from impersonal emptiness to passive inactivity; it is the might of a faith in a personal God that commands participation in world events, where it is through foundering and not because of avoidance that an otherwise abstract transcendence can be truly experienced.

### ***The Reality of the Axiom: God Is***

The axiom refers to God as reality per se. This reality is not already contained by just thinking of this proposition. Merely thinking about it leaves the proposition empty. Its meaning is to be experienced, if at all, by historical presence in transcending through reality beyond itself as the actual reality.

This reality is the Being of trust, despite the demise of a life, despite the moment when one's actions cease, despite individual foundering: in the end, all is well. Within the horizon of inner-worldly purpose and in one's judgment about the totality of perceived history, such awareness constitutes an anticipatory deception. Since in the world [. . .], the fate of an individual and the totality of foundering in the end remain indeterminate. [. . .] Being in the world as such is always reason for despair or for stubborn steadfast in view of absurdity. Appearances as such and without godly attributes manifest themselves as determinate as a perceived proximity to God, even without any indication of an actual God or a clearly descriptive language.

The axiom itself, more or less, relates nothing. Although the name God carries an infinite historical depth, it has to manifest itself first within an individual life. God is to be sought out, and not to be owned; but the actual search starts with the initial certainty that He is.

God is reality itself and not, as in mere thoughts, the boundary of the world, nor the external point without content, nor a mere nothingness of transcendence in contrast to the visible colorfulness of the world.

Therefore, the axiom "God is" takes on many shapes. Speculative: "It is Being" (the origin of Parmenides' thought). In historical presence: "God is;" "God is the living God." Revelation lets him speak directly: "I am who I am."

Believing that God is does not mean knowing what God is. Propositions used to justify that God is present themselves as proofs of God, while propositions that speak of God describe knowledge of God.

## ***Proofs of God; That God Is***

The axiom that "God is" has been denied. Recent attempts in philosophizing seem to circumvent it, i.e. neither confirming nor denying it. But whoever philosophizes has to stand one's ground. When there is doubt that God is, a philosophical answer is in order.

Yet, the existence of God escapes proof, regardless of numerous attempts throughout history in a rich variety of reflection. Most proofs start with the assumption of something in the world that can be found, experienced, or followed and then conclude: if this is the case, then God must be; by imagining the basic riddles of the existence of the world, they now serve as proof for God. Or, one engages in speculative reflection where awareness of one's own existence first is understood as awareness of being which then deepens into an awareness of God. Or, one views the reality of love; experiencing eternity within the context of love is like a language of God. At all times the constant flux of the world and the planning of human inventions and manifestations in the world lead to a boundary; when facing the abyss one will experience the void or God.

It is obvious that none of these proofs satisfy understanding, but they are pointers for reason. Proof for understanding relates to finite events in the world. Pointers actualize understanding. A proof is an inappropriate form for the affirmation of God. The affirmation of insights, of reflectivity, of transcendent thinking does not come about through proof, but through elevation (*Aufschwung*). A proven God is no God.

## ***Cognizing God: What God Is***

In our finite thinking God is constantly "not" this or that *definiendum* that we can think of or perceive. He is the "not" all finite, amounting in finite thinking to seemingly nothing. He is nothing when the sum of finitude is something, and each finite has an absolute manifestation. That God is perceived as nothing and opposite to all being in the world therefore suggests: he is not less but more than all reality, he is reality in itself, being as such. Restrained by empirical reality and being in the world, as long as I consider this for absolute, God is not.

Regardless, since time immemorial God is thought of and perceived. As he is seen in thoughts and similes, each thought or image is veiled. God seems to be nothing when we cannot allow ourselves any perception; he is hidden, as we attempt yet another inappropriate perception. Whatever God might be, is only seen through finite form. Such finite form becomes symbol (meaning, language, cipher). It is immediately out of place as soon as it should become God himself.

[. . .]

Foremost and most convincingly God is portrayed as a personality. [. . .] Also this view, albeit the most perceptive one, remains inappropriate, and this is not because God is less, but he must be more than personality. [. . .]

[. . .]

## ***Faith and Testimony of Faith***

Faith in God is the only ground that remains. The manifestation of such faith in perceptions, thoughts, or actions may be poor or rich; where faith truly is, it is necessarily deep and infinite.

But the testimonies of faith are preempted either in abstractions, in deisms of understanding, or finally in conventional colloquial expressions that ultimately can be linked to some factual nihilism. Or, the testimony digresses into perceptions that, combined with infinite fixations, lead to superstition. All testimonies of faith are but a play in an incessant movement of revocation. A single testimony can have a force of symbolic accuracy for memory to awaken or confirm in a given situation; it can become the *signum* for a firm position of consciousness. But all perceptions and thoughts can never replace by objective means the subjectivity of faith that humans are gifted with by God for realization.

[...]

## ***The Immediacy of Faith in God Denies any Mediation***

[...]

Of philosophical relevance is the fact that faith in God becomes real and without any fixations that would be unavoidable for anyone. Within historicity, an immediate, unmediated, and independent relationship takes place for the individual with God.

Historicity is not general for all. It does not constitute an absolute truth in its communicability or representation, but by means of it the absolute is grasped. The historical path of an individual is *his* way, not *the* way. Whence he arrives, it is the One, shared by all. What is perceived as an affirmation on the path, and it appears as a proof for its truth—even though it is not factual proof, since this would mean some superstition—is not a condition for all, but a historical form of infinite modifications.

Whatever God is, he must be real and absolute and not just in one of the historical appearances of his language in the language of humans. When he is, he must be immediate and perceivable without detour or mediator for humans as individuals.

## **There Is Unconditional Demand in Being**

To my question, “What shall I do?” I receive answers in the world that state finite purposes and means. [...]

[...] Whence I set out to comprehend the commanding authority, I find myself with an authoritative demand of an alien “I ought to do so” or, “as it is written.”

[...] All such orders apply whenever purpose or obedience is in place. They are conditional demands. Are there unconditional demands?

Conditional demands bring forth dependency on another, on purpose in being, or on authority. Unconditional demands originate within me. Conditional demands

face me in opposition as a certainty that I may choose to obey. Unconditional demands originate from me in as much as they carry me.

The unconditional demand approaches me as a request from my actual self to my being. When the foundation of my will is unconditional, I resonate with it as a manifestation of myself because I ought to; and vice versa it is a manifestation of what I ought to be, since I am this resonance. Such becoming-in-contemplation is dim at the beginning yet bright at the end of my reflective clarity. Once becoming-in-contemplation is completed, all questioning finally ends in the certainty of one's sense of being—in the course of time such certainty cannot be owned, questions surface again, and in ever changing situations such certainty must be regained anew.

The unconditioned (*das Unbedingte*) is not to be understood as purpose since it precedes the purpose that it forms. Consequently, the unconditioned is not what is desired, but it is that from which desire stems. When captured as the purpose of will, the unconditioned is lost, because such reversal brings finitude and with it conditionality.

That the unconditioned becomes the foundation of action is not a matter of knowledge, but it is the content of faith. Inasmuch I recognize the reasons and goals of my actions, I remain within the finite and the conditioned. Once I cease to live in objective justification, I start to live from the unconditioned.

### ***Historical Examples of Accepting Death***

Unconditioned actions occur in the development of life, in love, in struggle. In any such occurrence, the hallmark of the unconditioned is one's readiness to chance life. All conditioned action builds upon life as necessity, while the unconditioned builds on a view where life itself is subject to conditionality rather than the final concern. By realizing the unconditioned, a restriction of existence takes place, since existence is subordinated to the unconditioned: an idea, a vocation, loyalty, communication, love. Only at the boundary to special or exceptional situations one can notice that acting from the unconditioned may lead to a loss of existence and to one's conscious choice of accepting the inevitability of death, regardless of the fact that the conditioned is ready, foremost and at all times, for paying any price to remain in existence, to live.

[...]

The most vivid example of this is Socrates. In the lucidity of his reason and by living in the encompassing of unknowing, he traveled his path steadfastly with no disturbance by passions of indignation, hatred, or righteousness; he made no concessions, did not cease his chance to flee and died in joyful spirit, risking all due to his faith.

There have been martyrs of purest moral energy in loyalty to their church, such as Sir Thomas More. Rather questionable are quite some other martyrs. To die for something and to confess it can easily create purposefulness and with it impurity of

dying. As martyrs were driven by their desire to die in imitation of Christ, impurity increased with an urge to die that veils the soul with hysteric appearances.

Rarely do we find philosophers, even those without any essential affiliation to a community of faith in the world and left to themselves when facing God, who came to realize the Platonic dictum: Philosophizing means learning to die. While awaiting his death sentence for years, Seneca overcame his cunning efforts for rescue, so that he did not have to renounce himself in unworthy actions nor did he lose his resolve. Boethius died innocently due to a death sentence imposed by a barbaric ruler: all the while philosophizing in bright awareness attending to the actuality of Being. Giordano Bruno overcame his doubts and partial concession by yielding to his noble decision of steadfast and fearless resistance until sentenced to the stake.

### *The Purpose of the Unconditioned*

The unconditioned does not become the unreflective given of human life. As unreflecting beings, humans become the subject of psychology. Whatever I can know philosophically of myself or others is always submitted to the scrutiny of endless causes, reasons, and motives, and I never find an unconditioned. It is futile and deceptive to search for it in forms of spatial intuition. The unconditioned cannot be grasped when I perceive the essence of a person as his daimon. While such is understood as acting unconditionally from transcendence, nonetheless he is bound for any opinion to his dark and incomprehensible ground of mere suchness; hence despite his overpowering force of immediate action, he might suddenly grow weary and become different, showing himself forgetful and unreliable. The unconditioned also is not found in one's innate character that can transform itself due to decisions in freedoms of choice, metamorphosis, and rebirth. Innate character can also change for reasons that are accessible to empirical research. When asserting resolve like vitality, passion, or the demonic, all these manifestations of suchness are not unconditioned, despite their perceived forcefulness. Even the case of a sacrificial death does not prove unconditionality (as animals also can sacrifice their life, without grasping their demise).

The unconditioned becomes manifest in a resolve of existence that results from reflection and is now simultaneously present as being and ought. The unconditioned is from freedom rather than givenness. The unconditioned determines the final ground of a person, whether it has relevance or not. The unconditioned remains hidden, it can be felt only in boundary situations but even then without proof, despite the fact that it always carries life as it springs from existence.

Just as trees have deep roots when they grow tall, so also a full person's depth grounds itself in the unconditioned: all else is like brush, easily torn out, repotted, leveled down, and resilient *en masse*. But this analogy is not quite suitable, since the foundation of the unconditioned is best grasped as a leap into a different dimension rather than into the superlative.

## ***Faith in the Unconditioned***

When touched by the unconditioned, it becomes the most relevant reality, the unconditioned cannot be proven as knowable and cannot be shown as a being-in-the-world (all historical examples are mere references), thus the unconditioned is subject to faith. What we can see and know is always just an instance of the conditioned. What enriches one by an experience of the unconditioned is simply not present when measured in view of provability. In fact, a known and proven unconditioned is not really such; instead it is a strong force, fanaticism, savagery, spleen, or insanity. In response to the question whether the unconditioned actually exists, a skeptical response yields a better if not the only chance for persuasiveness.

For example: It is questionable whether or not there is love in the sense of the unconditioned rooted in its own ground rather than mere human affection, infatuation, habit, or contractual loyalty. A skeptic might argue that nothing can be manifest outside of itself, and thereby deny that existential communication can even be possible. All communication would be nothing more than the mirroring perception of monads that can perceive only their own states. Whatever can be shown psychologically in communication only captures presuppositions or derivations, perceptions or consequences, but not the communication by itself. Hence, psychological realities are subject to a variety of interpretations. It is quite possible to deny the reality of communication. Whatever can be shown is no longer unconditioned. Also, communication is real only at the time of its occurrence and by itself. Thus faith in the possibility of loving communication is a prerequisite for philosophizing about communication, and it is also a prerequisite to enable the possibility of practice to entertain the chance of fulfillment for a given historical life.

Such is the unconditioned. It truly is faith alone and for faith.

[...]

## **The Unconditioned in Time**

The unconditioned in humans is not given like human existence. It grows in the person. Once we notice the effort in a person and we feel the path traveled where the unconditioned decision is manifested unmistakably, only then do we believe him. The trustworthy person remains concealed from the very beginning by the abstract imperturbability of finality and motionlessness of his soul.

The unconditioned has its source not in Being. It reveals itself in the experience of boundary situations and in the threat of becoming unfaithful to oneself. Inasmuch as it claims itself, it is available to a person through transcendence by means of deciding from inner action.

The unconditioned as such does not become temporal. Wherever it is, it is likewise transversely to time. It bursts into this world from transcendence from the path of our freedom. Wherever it is claimed, it remains genuine at each moment. Hence: Whenever temporal continuity appears to have resulted in its possession, at the very