

SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHOLOGY IN THE FACE OF SUFFERING AND ILLNESS

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This contribution aims to explore the main aspects and concerns due to suffering and illness in psychological and spiritual terms. It will be given to everyone in life to make experiences of suffering and sickness - even if for the latter not necessarily in the first person -, dramas and fundamental faces of humanity inaggrabili of our earthly pilgrimage, despite the narcissism of a society that tends to anesthetize every little human pain and suffering. In general one is never fully equipped to face suffering and illness, especially when it involves a lot of pain, and basically all possible declensions to understand them fail, at least partially, the enterprise. Without any pretension of resolving the issue, occasionally bringing it up may offer or remind us of the existence of some possibility of meaning and significance, thus contributing to greater understanding and acceptance. Appealing to the Bible and to Christ himself, and particularly to some extremely significant experiences, including the figure of Job and the experience of V. Frankl, the "nonsense" of suffering and illness could take on an unthought out meaning and face, and encounter a healing that goes beyond the purely, though important, corporal. The revisitation of the psychological and spiritual dimensions, the latter not always easily accepted, sometimes completely rejected, could thus become weapons and support in the common and often daily intrusiveness of suffering and illness. Thus, after a brief anthropological passage, these will be addressed in their main psychological and spiritual dimensions, in order to find possible ways of meaning, which often seemingly or superficially seems impossible to exist.

Key words: pain - illness - meaning - suffering - spiritual

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SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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Alcoholics Anonymous is, according to the Program's basic documents, a spiritual program - especially regarding Steps 2-3, 5-7, and 11-12. This paper reviews the history of the Program with emphasis on its spiritual background, as well as on the roots of the spiritual side of the program, and showing the spiritual accents in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. The paper also considers the Christian background of the movement and, more broadly, explores the connection of AA founders William (Bill) Wilson and Dr. Robert (Bob) Smith with several Catholic people, such as Edward (Ed) Dowling, SJ, and John C. Ford, SJ, and indicates some points of contact between the Program and Ignatian spirituality. The paper illustrates the pioneering role of the Alcoholics Anonymous program in integrating spirituality into the process of recovery from and treatment of addictions, an integration that just recently has been embraced by modern psychotherapy and psychiatry. The paper shows the theoretical and spiritual underpinnings of the Program in the religious context. The paper illustrates the orientation of the Program in assisting addicts to integrate into their recovery their own spirituality, a clearer image of God, and personal spiritual and religious progress.

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WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? REFLECTION ABOUT HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN SUFFERING IN THE THOUGHT OF KARL RAHNER

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The article deals with the problem of suffering in the world based on reflection of Karl Rahner. He observes the problem through the perspective of traditional points of view and based on the same, he puts the question about God's allowing suffering in the world and notices the inadequacy in answers given by traditional points of view. Suffering presents itself as a natural companion to the human existence from the beginning till present times. In this respect Rahner observes suffering as the consequence of created imperfect human freedom, although it is true grace given to human beings. Our author observes suffering

as a test which serves human being as a means for growth in love to God and neighbour. He reflects on suffering as an act of human person being directed to others, and even more, as a certain attitude of human direction towards eternal life. Rahner agrees with every answer that traditional points of view offer but also finds a space for further development in giving an answer to the question: Why God allows that we suffer? At the end he notices that incomprehensibility of presence of suffering in our life is in fact an acceptance of God's incomprehensibility (cf. K. Rahner, *Esperienza*, pp. 175-191) and concludes that we do not have an answer which would be satisfying for all people in every period of time. He also concludes that in human life suffering has a therapeutic role and gives a deeper meaning to human existence.

Key words: God - man - free will - sin - suffering - eternal life

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MIRACULOUS HEALING IN JUDAISM

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This paper explores and discusses the miraculous powers attributed to certain figures in Judaism, a power to revive or kill, heal, or harm. This idea already appears in the Bible, but also in many places all over the Talmud and rabbinic literature. Sometimes, the action performed is passive, the sages do not ask for it directly, while sometimes it is active and deliberate.

Since Judaism is known for its attitude to witchcraft, which is explicitly prohibited in the Torah, it is clear that such powers are not based on magic. If so, what forces are involved and what is their origin?

In this paper, we attempt to answer these questions and discuss other issues, such as the relationship between medicine and Jewish law, the attitude of Judaism toward medical healing and intervention in God's affairs, healing and the power of prayer and healing as a fulfillment of the obligation to save lives. The main part of this paper examines miraculous healings in the Bible, in the Talmud and during the rabbinic period. The last part investigates the source of the righteous metaphysical power and the attitude of Judaism regarding sorcery.

Finally, in the end of this paper we attempt to define the appropriate attitude toward those who seek blessings for medical healing from rabbis.

Key words: magic - sorcery - miraculous healing - medicine - Torah - Talmud - rabbis

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JESUS'S MIRACULOUS HEALINGS IN MT 8:1-17 SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE

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Jesus's messianic identity is the central topic of the Gospel of Matthew, where the author presents the Messiah of Words and the Messiah of Actions in an original way. Namely, after chapters 5 - 7, in which Matthew writes about the Messiah of Words who restores the original meaning of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount, in chapters 8 - 9, the Evangelist presents not only Jesus's messianic identity, but also the model of his deep and fundamental messianism, which is evident in the power of miraculous healing, as well as the powerlessness of the servant, the authority of the call to follow in his footsteps, and the charity toward the poor. Therefore, we are addressing Jesus's miraculous healings, which demonstrate not only Jesus's messianic identity, but also the specific character of his »to be the Messiah«, i.e. the special significance and role of his actions that lead to salvation.

In Mt 8:1-17, the Evangelist presents three miraculous healings by Jesus: The healing of the leper, the healing of the Roman centurion's son, and the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, which represent three vulnerable and marginalised groups: lepers, heathens, and women. Matthew ends the account of those three miraculous healings with a summary about Jesus's exorcisms and healings of many sick people, according to the words of the prophet Isaiah: »He himself took our weaknesses and carried our diseases«. In that specific quote, Matthew offers the key for the interpretation of Jesus's miraculous healings to the readers. Unlike the suffering servant from the book of the prophet Isaiah, Jesus does not accept the weak-