

# "In the Beginning is the Word"

## THE SPHERES OF THE WORD

### *The Parrot Word*

The parrot word in itself is mysterious and can include all the mystery of the Word. But here I can take it as representing the superficial sphere of the word. A parrot repeats mechanically words that it has heard from people without any modification because of assimilation. So we can perceive at once whose word and in what circumstances it is repeating. It is really a word which floats just like floating dust, without any connection with its own thought or personal experiences. It is repeated automatically. This word can be democracy, freedom or a word from the Holy Scriptures. It is a simple repetition in the imagination or sensorial feelings. It is something like the shadow of a word. Here already, what is astonishing is that we can taste even here the mystery of the word.

## TWO CURRENTS OF THE VISION OF THE WORD

### *I The Black-White Word Category*

This sub-title might sound poetical rather than logical or rational. This is just what I am going to deal with here. People always want to be clear consciously by means of concepts, without being led into the mystery of the Reality in instability-blessed instability. At the basis of this kind of thought, there is an envisioning of the word where one takes the word as representing

some idea. If I can simplify, I can say that it is a Post-Greek-Roman vision of the rational word. A word there represents one meaning or a group of meanings which can be reduced to one meaning. Thus one can present a pair with opposite meanings; e.g. black and white, poor and rich, freedom and slavery, etc. Unhappily, this vision of the word is used almost exclusively by the so-called civilized people, educated in the Western way. I do not condemn this vision. On the contrary, it only represents one aspect of the mystery of the word and not the whole reality of the mystery.

Because of the very nature of this kind of word, very serious problems will result. I will deal now with two aspects of this word.

### *The Third Leg of the Chicken*

I will begin by an explanation of this title. The right leg of the chicken is not the left one and vice-versa. It is so not only logically but as a fact. We cannot fit the right leg into the left one completely.

When the farmer talks about the leg of a chicken, he refers to the concrete leg, the right one or the left one or both legs. There is no problem in this case. Without this concrete reference, if one talks about the leg of a chicken only in the head, a problem comes out. This leg conceived only abstractedly can be the right leg or the left one or both legs. In other words, it can refer to the right leg or the left leg or both legs. This leg which can be the right leg or the left leg or both legs is not by this fact the right leg itself nor the left leg itself nor both legs themselves. Such a word conceived only abstractedly I want to call it the third leg of the chicken. It is called general, abstract or logical concept or second intention.

In this world of the word, one wants to represent one meaning or some similar, associated meanings to a word. This kind of word cannot carry contradictory meanings. And it is connected directly with ego-consciousness, and an explanation by such words is likely to be accompanied by some self-satisfaction. Any justification or excuse is possible by composing with words of

this nature. As long as the combination of this kind of word is referred to the reading into (*intus-legere*=*intelligere*) the Reality, and works in a vision of the whole which contains many contradictory aspects, it can be fruitful. But the free manipulation of these words without this reading into the Reality or vision of the Whole, in other words when the third leg of the chicken begins to walk by itself, is disastrous. Just in that way, one justifies the slaughter of the Jewish people, and other such atrocities, in the name of a greater benefit or richness to mankind. Also, the Church has condemned, for many centuries, brethren of the same faith as heretics just because of the difference in the external verbal expressions of their faith.

All those who discuss worship without the real impact in themselves before God or prayer without agony, tears and need within, would manipulate the third leg of the chicken. In our daily or social life, this kind of word should be used only by those who are in the challenge of reality. Even in that case, one should not abuse it. One should use the simplest words in concrete situations. Peace in the New Orient would not begin by discussions on freedom. From these kinds of discussion, peace would once more go far away. In such a situation, one should have asked the question, "What do you want in the minimum?" The answer in that case would be, "I don't want to be killed, I don't want to see my parents, sons, daughters, friends and brethren persecuted.", and the question would go back to the questioner and elicits the answer, "Neither do I, I don't want to be killed." How often words such as freedom, human rights, democracy, progress, civilization have until now brought disturbance and crime. All humanity should reflect upon this.

### *The Word-Idea (Real Reasoning)*

We have a natural tendency to reason when we want to clarify Reasoning is carried on in this realm of Word-Idea. But if it starts with the simple word-idea and ends with the simple word-idea, it is not reasoning but playing with reasoning. Real thought is what carries always what is beyond logic in its encounter with reality. If not, there is no content in this reasoning. As long as thought carries the echo of what is beyond logic in its first

encounter, it is not alien to real life. When we start reasoning in the encounter with some unknown reality, if we reason in our insecurity, seeking the security of understanding, if we endure in sincerity in this dark tunnel of researching and arrive at the ultimate point of despair in clarifying reality, we are prepared somehow for the encounter with the new reality which will come far beyond the horizon of this thought. Thus, at that moment, even in pure science, we shall encounter the Word—Event. All the scientists of worth who have contributed to the progress of science are those who have experienced this kind of process.

Real reasoning is fruitful in itself. What impoverishes it is not something inherent in reasoning itself, but the very fact that we have lost the sense of the mystery in reasoning. What is conceived is the tiding up of some image born in the bosom of the first encounter with reality and it becomes independent once it has been conceived. One concept does not change into another concept in a continuous way for, in the replacing of one concept by another, the first concept has to be digested and re-born into some new entity. The tragedy with many modern intellectuals is that they have lost the mysterious entity of concept.

Reasoning, even real reasoning, is not all the process of our thinking.

Another way of reading into reality can always be parallel to the real reasoning. It is not intuition, compared to reasoning. There appears some whole looking into some whole reality which will continue to envelop the real reasoning. For example, to read what is happening in the mysterious reality of a little baby, the central attitude should be this wholesome looking into this mysterious reality. Such an attitude which has been common in the ancient world of wisdom has been rejected as childish and primitive just because of the confusion between this kind of attitude and the little so-called intuition. People of little reasoning have condemned this world of wisdom through ignorance on their part.

## II *The Word-Event*

When a baby begins to cry, it cries 'A, A'. No one taught babies to cry so. Their existence itself cries 'A,A'. And when

they begin to urge their mother for care, they begin to cry 'Mamma'. This kind of word 'Mamma' expresses the whole of the baby. It is the word of a baby which is born under the mysterious engagement of the unknown, hidden Hand. Such words are real words for us of the Orient. This is the Word-Event. So, in Japanese we call it 'koto' and 'koto' means simultaneously the event and the word. 'Shabda' of Sanscrit is similar. In Chinese Tao, means at the same time both 'to say' and the concrete way of life. In Hebrew, 'dhabar' is not an exception. But in the case of the Jewish people, because of the deeply penetrating experience of Events guided by the Hand of God through the centuries, this word 'dhabar' carries strongly and really the image of the Hand of God. It is what is shown by the wonderful symbol of the Producer of their Drama — History as the image of a great hand with an eye in it, with another hand in the midst of the palm of this great hand, which has also its eye within it, and with little hands and little eyes clinging to each finger of the great hand.

When a farmer takes care of the rice-fields, he does not run into the library each time something happens in the rice-fields. He listens to the rice because the rice will tell him that water is lacking, fertilizer is lacking, that it is too cold... The fact of the rice is the word. The rice speaks in a wholesome way (the reasoning in word-idea is the result of the word-event). The Word-Idea does not contain the whole.

When we use a word, it is not always the word-idea. If the word is concerned with the whole existence of human beings, it may carry contradictory meanings, paradoxes -within it. The word 'hesed' of Hebrew means at the same time grace and shame. When we are somehow in grace, we shall have peace in the depth of our existence, but in our consciousness, we shall carry simultaneously the feeling of shame for our own existence. As long as this kind of echo of the word is carried on, even though a parrot word, it is not alien to real life.

The Word-Event is by itself indescribable but has some possibility of being transcribed into the word-idea, though always through abstraction and restriction.

The Word of the Holy Scriptures is essentially the Word-Event. And it should be treated as such. As long as we treat it as the word-idea, we shall never be able to penetrate it. For real life, we have to cut out continuously all the abstract reasoning which is combined with vain explanation, self-satisfaction, self-pretension and self-consciousness together with all other movements of the ego which appear in desires. One should deepen his silence to taste really the Holy Scriptures.

If we advance in deepening silence, we become more sensitive to the Word-Event; as we advance further the Word-Encounter will become closer and we shall taste somehow, by and by, the Word of Christ in such words.

#### *The Word-Encounter*

As we go into the deeper sphere of reality, we shall meet the Word-Encounter. Here there is no possibility of transcribing it into the Word-Idea. There would be some invasion of the unknown depth, so to speak. It can happen when one's consciousness and sub-consciousness come to be sufficiently purified from noises and as one's being begins to be penetrated by transparency. One can never repeat it consciously. What happened continues to control all his existence. One should continue the deepening of silence. One has Heard the Voice. The Word-Event has assumed another facet. The encounter there is the encounter with the unborn sphere.

In the mystery of the Word-Encounter, it seems to me that somehow we are already facing the mystery of the Word-God.

### THE WORD-GOD

We shall continue to go on into the deeper sphere of the Word-Event. We should not measure the distance between us and the Word-God. Real life is faith and the limitless development of faith life. Faith life is some mysterious entity conceived in the Word-God and the Word-God is infinitely beyond our existence.

Faith life is the mystery of mutual inclusion through infinite distance. But it does not mean that the Word-God is some-

thing abstract. What determines our way of life really and concretely is nothing but the Word-God. The Word-God is not objective nor can it be seized by consciousness. But the commitment in faith with the Word-God is direct. When we respond to what we should respond with all our existence, at the very moment of the Need, and when we look back towards what has happened after a long time, we shall discern indirectly the trace of the Word-God, the Hand of God. Thus all our life is one whole in Real life. This Word-God is the only word to which a believer should commit himself and for the very reason that we should respond to this Word, our self-liberation, transformation of our silence into divine silence is more and more demanded. Even our sins there will be tasted not only as personal but as the sins of humanity 'which Christ assumed'. And our whole life would disappear, transformed into the life of the Word-God. Like in its most real sense is life in the bosom of the 'Father'-God and the life of mysterious union with the Word-God, the Hand of God.

When a baby begins to cry, it cries 'A,A'. But in this 'A,A' all the weight of its existence is present there. When it cries 'Mamma' to its mother, urging her care, all his existence is thrown to her. The one who has eyes to see would see the Hand of God which makes him cry in this way. No one has ever taught this to him. We cry to God as a baby with the similar vocal 'A,A' but with some accent of despair 'Abba'.

When Jesus was baptized, this cry of 'Abba' of Jesus is pronounced prophetically and John the Baptist heard the voice of heaven 'My Beloved Son'. All the life of Jesus would be poured into the definite moment when this crying 'Abba' would become absolute. And it happened on the Cross when he cried to the Father, 'Why have you abandoned me?'. To this cry of absolute 'Abba', the answer of the Father is already achieved there — He will rise up in New Life. And when he left his body and blood at this eternal moment, he asked us to eat and drink it. When he has risen up, to show himself, he shows the trace of the nails in his hands and that of the spear in his side. What is important for us is not to have some knowledge about spirituality, nor to reflect on some spiritual considerations, but to cry each one in his own way before the unknown Father, 'Abba' with his voice,

beyond all his hindrances and the obstacles of his desires, his concern for honour, feelings of vanity or consideration about his position. When one cries 'Abba' in the bosom of the Father, in the 'Abba' of Jesus Christ, the Holy Trinity is there as life, as Jesus himself taught us, "When you cry 'Abba', it is by the Spirit of God".

All our relationships with the brethren, and all the Word-Event among us through His Grace are the echoes of this 'Abba'. We should not follow the way of the Pharisees and Sadducees but the very way of the little ones of Jesus.

### THREE SORTS OF TIME

#### 1. Phenomenal Time

This vision of time is based upon the vision of phenomena. The Rose is now open, or opened some minutes ago. Modern daily life is regulated by this vision. One is in the superficial horizon of past, present and future, to which the tense of western language corresponds: The rose opened yesterday. It is open today and it will wither in a few weeks. This sort of time, as "black-white-word", belongs properly to the outer-consciousness sphere.

#### 2. Existential Time

This vision of time is in the vision of the whole of existence. This sort of time does not disappear constantly as does phenomenal time: At 5 o'clock, 4 o'clock does not exist. But the existence is not so. In a rose tree, the time of sprouting of itself is carried on. It is there. Sprouting is done, then and now. This sort of time belongs to the word-event sphere, to which the expression of ancient or oriental languages correspond. "Densha ga *kimashita* kara hakusen no ato ni sagatte kudasai." (Please retire behind the white line, because the train has come.) The train is not yet there, but will come 20 seconds later. One does not say "because the train will come" nor "because the train is coming" in real Japanese, but one says "because the train has come". It is there already. The time is done, even though the phenomenal realization is in the future. Under the influence of



western-style education, in which even Japanese grammar is modulated to the western, Japanese has been distorted, but the sense of Japanese usage remains always however it is phrased. This is the concern of Hebrew, Japanese and other similar languages.

This sort of time can be embraced without friction in the Vision of the Whole.

### 3. Eternal Time

This sort of time, eternal time, so to speak, would correspond to the Vision of the Whole, and the sphere of the Word-Encounter.

#### *Time of God*

The distinction between time and eternity is based upon the vision of the "black-and-white-word", as is the distinction between "invisible" and "visible".

God has His Time, in his bosom and in history, which corresponds, as it were to say, to His Word eternally said in His commitment. His Time and His Hand are inseparable and it is by His Saying from His Bosom. — "*Then* He will 'Say' in his anger to them... And I have anointed my King upon Zion, the holy mountain. I will declare a statute. The Lord said to me: Thou art my son. I have begotten Thee this day" — (Ps. 2). The Time of God is the Time of Jesus. His Cross, Resurrection and Breaking down of the wall between God and Man.

#### *In the Beginning is the Word*

But His Saying is not Saying. His Saying is He Himself: The Word-God. Everything which is done in His Pure commitment of Love, is done by Him. He has become flesh in the womb of a virgin to bring Here His Time: The Revelation of the Trinity.

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