

JACK KABEY

A letter to the world

One of the reasons why our lives always run along the same lines and do not become easier and more pleasant is our belief and value system. It has not changed in thousands of years. The cause of problems is seen in the poor application of the "yardstick" and not in the "yardstick" itself. What if we have stretched our yardstick inaccurately from the ground up? Such a realization would change everything. Everything.

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The following words could have an almost disturbing effect on many. They will believe that it shakes their foundations of life and pulls the foundation out from under their feet. It is not my intention to offend or hurt anyone. I am not questioning the most sacred thing in our lives, I am merely questioning our view, our belief, our actions. Because, in fact, what we believe and how we believe and what image we have of the architecture of life is everything decisive.

A moment of understanding

I was about six years old and had just woken up in my bed. I looked at the ceiling, frozen. I couldn't remember the dream that had just burned up into intangibility, but the conclusion of the realization that had just detonated inside me began to fan out before me like a never-ending kaleidoscope. I became clearly aware: I exist. I live. I have awakened on the world stage. I will play my part and at some point the curtain will close and I will go backstage. I will die and I will find out if there is life after death. I will meet, if there is, the Master Chief Commander, the star architect of the multiverse himself. And my journey will continue, on and on and on. I'm alive and it's never going to end, no matter what I do, I'm never going to get out of this one. If every single muscle in my entire body hadn't been cramped to the max, I would have shit myself on the spot.

Where do you run when the sky falls on your head? Naked fear shot through all my brain synapses at faster-than-light speed like a bullet in a pinball machine, and a thousand new questions flashed up with every touch of one of the slingshots. The kaleidoscope kept spinning, the different colored fractals connected to form new patterns, and the slingshots catapulted the ball once again into the maze of my neural universe beneath the roof of my skull. My mind would have fallen that night by a hair's breadth into the abyssus of madness.

Like the vast majority of us, I tucked the fear of death away in the farthest corner of the 428th basement of my subconscious and closed the door behind me. We men are good at organizing, stowing away and repressing things. Maybe that's where our affinity for basements and garages comes from. Women are quite different. They're not big on garages, basements and boxes. They always want to unpack the boxes tucked away in the back, talk about them, and rummage through our psyche like they do with their handbags every day. Heavy sigh.

In good times we don't think about death. I forgot the box, I forgot the cellar. The years went by and I enjoyed my life, my first kiss, my first beer. But from time to time, dark clouds creep in front of the sun and just when we least expect it, we find ourselves in churches, cemeteries and graves and the exiled box from the 428th basement finds you. And once again I became aware that I am a traveler in eternity.

People with Alzheimer's disease probably understand best what eternity means. They can no longer remember the beginning of their life, and they have forgotten that it will end one day. Can't we do more than die? To lose your whole life and everything you ever loved in a prison of self-dissolution, in the flames of oblivion, is worse than any death.

Why are we so afraid of death? What awaits us on the other side? This idea, no matter whether we are aware of it or not, it decides how we think, feel and act. It is the guideline according to which we align our entire existence.

I met with a good colleague years ago. He is a specialist in forensic psychiatry and I asked him if I could tell him a disturbing story, I needed his expert opinion. He was willing to listen to my experiences and descriptions. On a business trip I met a CEO of an international company. The job took some time, so we often went out to eat together, I attended various meetings, I was also privately invited and introduced.

This guy was a real challenge. He had an extreme need for attention, recognition and admiration, couldn't stand criticism and couldn't empathize with other people. He was impulsive, aggressive, incredibly jealous and irresponsible. Sometimes he seemed to be a different person, was friendly, empathetic and in a good mood, only to throw everything over the edge in the same moment and irretrievably stomp out years of projects in a single moment without regard for losses. Acquaintances of his even told me that he had asked his wife to give away their daughter just to test her love for him. He supervised all his employees, did not tolerate the slightest misconduct, and had already thrown entire departments out on the street. In my opinion, he posed the greatest risk to the entire company.

My colleague raised his eyebrows, leaned back on the sofa and adjusted his wristwatch, an involuntary sequence of movements to gain some time. The psychological term is displacement activity. Nervousness and insecurity in higher stress situations can cause such and similar displacement activities. He looked at me with a serious face and explained to me that this man would probably suffer from three extremely serious personality disorders and would urgently need therapy. He then explained to me the narcissistic, dissocial and dissociative personality disorders and said that these were unfortunately more common in high management positions, but in this form would regularly end in catastrophes.

Isn't it amazing? Well over four billion people believe (consciously or unconsciously) that the person just described corresponds exactly to the image we have of God. This is our idea of what awaits us on the other side. This idea has been part of our identity, culture, and understanding of the world and our lives for thousands of years. And it hasn't changed one bit for thousands of years.

You don't believe in such a God? If you're Christian, Jewish or Muslim, you do just that, and so does everyone else, albeit in a slightly different form. The story of the Flood and that of Abraham and Isaac is deeply etched in our genetic code.

Here it is important to distinguish precisely. I am not questioning God, I am questioning the idea we have of him. I am not attacking God, I am defending him. There are three things that unite Islam, Judaism and Christianity: God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. I am putting these three attributes on the table between us.

The Flood story tells us about the destruction of all mankind, which the Creator God sent to the earth out of disappointment and anger at the

wickedness of mankind. The waters of chaos burst into the world and wiped out all life. Only Noah, his family and a couple of each of the animal species are spared. Why does the all-knowing God commit global genocide against all the peoples of the earth and then immediately promise never to do it again, even though He knows that this will not change the behavior of human beings?

God demanded absolute obedience from Abraham: He should kill his only son Isaac - to prove his unconditional loyalty. Why does God demand such a cruel, inhuman and life-despising proof when He already knows the answer?

To free his chosen people from the hostage-taking of Egypt, God blackmailed the pharaohs of the Nile state and terrorized the whole area with plagues, regardless of all innocents. The waters of the Nile turned to blood and were undrinkable for more than seven days. Thousands of innocents must have died of thirst in the dust-dry desert sand. After the frogs came the mosquitoes, then the flies and in their wake they brought the plague, the festering ulcers were not yet healed, already the locusts fell over the land, on top of it there was a three-day eclipse and for the final conclusion of the fine dining ten-course menu of the apocalyptic horror show God himself strangled all the newborns in the city. What a vendetta - the 'Ndrangheta, Italy's most brutal international mafia, is strictly Catholic, by the way, but was excommunicated by Pope Francis eight years ago and thus expelled from the church.

The almighty would not even have had to rise from his throne, a slightly bent forward clearing of the throat would have been enough and the pharaohs would have jumped into the Nile and swum the 7000 km to Lake Victoria, without a break and against the current.

We all know these stories and reflexively we justify the ruthless murder of God as just and when all arguments give up the ghost, because they simply do not make any sense at all, then we conjure the killer argument out of the hat: The ways of the Lord are unfathomable. I'm not criticizing God, I think he has precious little to do with all these stories. But I am criticizing the religions that got stuck in the post-Flood mud with their cart ages ago and are not even trying to get the cart out of the dirt.

All the stories we are told about God smell suspiciously of human beings. So are all religions meritocracies, without exception, and all of them threaten final consequences. It's not surprising that if our God is a completely crazed, sociopathic maniac whose penchant for blood orgies and rampages puts even the 'Ndrangheta to shame, people will do anything to bribe the ferryman to

avoid being taken over the Jordan River. For what we expect to encounter on the other side is found on earth only in padded cells and death rows.

But why should we correct our image of God? For generations, the churches have kept us poor and the state has kept us stupid. The whole functioning of our society is built on fear - the fear of God.

We say that God is love. But love is characterized by a very special quality: the absence of fear. I am adding love to the other three attributes of omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent on the table.

Thank you very much for your attention.

To be continued...



***Jack Kabey** ist nicht so wichtig wie seine Leser. Er war über drei Jahrzehnte Security Advisor und Strategieberater für öffentliche Institutionen und internationale Handelsunternehmen. Heute ist er als freier Autor und Publizist tätig, legt dabei den Finger in die Wunden unserer Zeit, fasst in Worte, was nicht mehr in Worte gefasst werden darf und reflektiert mit der nötigen Prise Humor die tiefsten Winkel des Kaninchenbaus, den wir unser Leben nennen. Jack Kabey ist ein Avatar, sein Name ein Pseudonym. Der Autor möchte lediglich seine Identität für sich behalten, um seine ganze Energie zum Recherchieren und Schreiben nutzen zu können. Seine Arbeit finanziert sich zum grössten Teil aus Spenden. Er lebt in Manarola / Italien.*