DIALOGUE WITH WORLD RELIGIONS

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DIALOGUE WITH JUDAISM: THE COVENANT

In naming our partners in inter-religious dialogue it is natural that we should start with the Jews, since they are the ones who are 'nearest' to us. From both a historical and religious point of view Christianity and Judaism spring from the same roots. But it is crucially important that we should not imagine that dialogue with Judaism is simply a matter of studying what we Christians call the *Old Testament*. We need to be aware that even the use of that title is not neutral—it implies a judgement that the Sacred Writings of the Jews are incomplete and in some sense transcended by our Christian *New* Testament.

Furthermore, we have to keep two other points in mind. Firstly, Judaism has a whole wealth of very ancient religious teaching and tradition over and above the books which Christians call 'the Old Testament'. And, secondly, the Jews have had a further 2,000 years of history since the coming of Jesus; so Judaism today is a very different—and far more complex—reality than it was when Christians and Jews began to go their separate ways.

Having noted the need to tread cautiously in relation to these issues, I now take the risk of trying to identify a religious value which provides a key to a sympathetic openness to the Jewish religion. It seems to me that the notion of the Covenant ('*berith*') plays this central integrating role. It helps us to have some sense of how Jewish people see themselves as a special, 'chosen' people. The Covenant implies fidelity on both sides—that God promises to be faithful to the Chosen People and that they are invited and challenged to remain faithful to God and to their commitments.

A rich spiritual reward awaits us if we succeed in developing a sympathetic understanding of the Jewish outlook. It will convince us of how important it is that we too have a sense of being

chosen by God. This awareness of being chosen helps us have a deep sense of our own worth and of the unique contribution each of us is called to make with our lives.

When the Jews first came to their 'covenant awareness' it was linked to a strong *inter-personal* experience of God. We see this, for instance, in the very personal way God called Abraham (Gen. 12: 1-3, 7). It is even more clear when Moses is called and is taught to call God 'Yahweh' (Ex. 3: 14-5). It is true that in more recent times some Jews no longer relate to God in such a personal way. Nevertheless, for me as a Christian to explore the Jewish sense of being 'chosen' gives me an opportunity to deepen my inter-personal relationship with God. Borrowing a phrase from Raymond Carver we can find the deepest meaning of life in being able 'to call myself beloved, to feel myself beloved on the Earth'.

But we can also learn from Judaism that the sense of being chosen is not a purely personal or private experience. It is rather an awareness of being part of a whole community—a member of the chosen 'People of God'. It is not just that *I* am called but that *we* are called. In this way we are helped to avoid the modern tendency

to turn religion into a purely private relationship between the individual and God. Eric Voegelin goes so far as to claim that already in the covenant with Abram/Abraham (Gen 15), the new domain of Yahweh is contained in germ. This new political order in which the Jewish people become the people of God originates in Abram 'through the inrush of divine reality into his soul and from this point of origin expands into a social body in history'[1].

A crucial aspect of the Covenant—an aspect which as Christians we can easily overlook or play down—is its immediate link with 'The Land'. We may not agree with the Zionist understanding of the Covenant; and we may be appalled by the insensitivity of successive Israeli governments towards the Palestinians. But we have to accept that the concept of the Covenant does not sit easily alongside the easy distinction most people make nowadays between religion and politics. In fact we find ourselves compelled to recognise that, though this distinction is valuable and even necessary, nevertheless there are some situations where it is almost impossible to draw a clear boundary-line between politics and religion.

Dialogue with Judaism does not demand that we accept the views and policies of the majority of Israelis today. But it calls us to find within ourselves a sense of how closely Jewish identity is bound up with Jewish history—which in turn revolves around repeated possession and dispossession of their own land. We need also to have a sense of how this history has always been experienced as a *sacred* history, the story of a whole people's on-going and intimate relationship with a God who nevertheless remains transcendent.

By sharing in some degree in this Jewish world-view we may learn how to 'ground' our own sense of being chosen and we may integrate that sense into our everyday world and our history. For the Jews there is a fundamental link between 'being chosen' and having their own Land. From them we can learn that our spirituality is likely to remain shallow and rootless until we 'bring it down to earth' quite literally. External or internal dialogue with Judaism will teach us to recognise and appreciate our need for a *home country* whose history and geography provide us with roots and meaning and spiritual nourishment.

DIALOGUE WITH MUSLIMS: SOVEREIGNTY, DESTINY AND REVELATION

Dialogue between Christians and Muslims is probably the most difficult sphere of inter-religious dialogue today. Some of the difficulties spring from the long racial memories of bitter wars and crusades. Furthermore, there is at present a high level of political tension between 'the Muslim world' and 'the West' (which is still seen as in some sense 'Christian'). In the world as a whole, perhaps the most significant source of political tension arises from the fact that, since the death of communism, Islam provides the only really effective challenge to the cultural and political dominance of 'the West'. Moreover, *within* many countries in Asia, Africa and Europe there is serious strain in Muslim-Christian relations. In many countries the Muslims see themselves as having to 'catch up' with the Christians who often had a privileged role in the past; while in a few places (Pakistan, for instance) the Christians constitute a very poor and oppressed minority.

But the obstacles to dialogue are not just historical, political and cultural; they also arise in the strictly religious sphere. A key point is that both Christianity and Islam tend to be absolutist in their claims to possession of revealed truth[2]. Even though scholars on either side have done much work in exploring the sacred writings and history of the other religion, the fact remains that, quite frequently, each side puts forward an interpretation of the other religion which believers on the other side find quite unacceptable.

Faced with such an intractable situation it is all the more important that Christians should engage in whatever kind of dialogue is still possible. Most vital of all is the *internal* dialogue which enables us to have a sympathetic understanding of the religious values which form the core of Islam.

The word 'Islam' means 'submission'. At the heart of the Muslim faith lies the profound religious impulse of total surrender to the will of God. Linked to this is a very strong sense of God's total sovereignty, the utter conviction that all things are under God's control and therefore that whatever happens is willed by God[3]. These ideas are also central to Christian belief; so it should not be difficult for us to resonate sympathetically with Islamic believers, at least in these aspects of their core beliefs.

At times we Christians may feel that Muslims tend to understand God's sovereignty in a one-sided way which leads to fatalism. Many missionaries have had the terrifying experience of travelling in a bus or taxi whose Muslim driver refused to take elementary precautions on the grounds that he would die only at the time God has decided. I suspect that our exasperation with this attitude springs not merely from a fear of being killed but also from our awareness that a similar misguided understanding of destiny is not unheard of among some Christian drivers as well!

It would be grossly unfair to judge Islam as a whole on the basis of such an unbalanced application of the principle of God's sovereignty. It is clear that fatalism is an aberration and is not typical of mainstream Islam, either in its official teaching or in everyday living. Nevertheless, on this issue there remains quite a wide gap between the religious consciousness of ordinary Muslims and that of modern Western Christians. We are not, however, entitled to assume that *they* are wrong and *we* are right. In fact, Islamic belief in the sovereignty of God provides a very healthy challenge to the quasi-secularist attitude which, within the past generation has become fairly common among Christians in the Western world.

Some years ago, when I was teaching in an inter-religious institute of education in Africa, I asked a class of mature students what for them was the meaning of the word 'destiny'. It was very striking that all of the older, more traditional ones defined it as 'fate, or what happens to you'. In sharp contrast to this, all of the younger, more Westernised students defined destiny as 'what you make of yourself'. These responses brought home to me the radical shift of consciousness which was taking place within a few years—as a result of increased contact with 'the West', and perhaps especially with Western Christianity.

Here, then, is one point where religious dialogue with Muslims may prove fruitful—precisely because it points to an aspect of Christian belief where we may have compromised and weakened our faith. We may have failed to challenge—and perhaps even to notice—the assumptions of the prevailing secular Western culture. We may have come to take for granted that our destiny lies entirely in our own hands. Dialogue with Islam invites us to examine our consciences, to see whether we really believe in the power and sovereignty of God and are truly willing to entrust ourselves unreservedly into God's hands, while at the same time believing in the reality of our personal responsibility for our lives[4].

The notion of prophetic revelation also lies at the heart of Muslim belief. Once again this is an area where there is a great deal of common ground between Christians and Muslims. Yet, paradoxically, this agreement tends to make the remaining differences even more intractable. When we engage in dialogue with Muslims on the nature of revelation we come up against the same problem as when we try to find a basis for communicating with Christian fundamentalists. We can understand this better when we know a little of the history of Islam. Within a couple of centuries of the time of Mohammed, orthodox belief came to be identified with a very literal reading of the Koran; and any kind of more liberal interpretation of the Koran was condemned as heretical. Since that time, mainstream Islam has been totally committed to seeing the Koran as the Word of God in a fundamentalist sense.

However, these difficulties should not lead us to minimise or play down the vital importance of our common belief in a transcendent yet personal God who has graciously chosen to speak to us. Furthermore, both Muslims and Christians believe that God's revelation is itself truly a Divine reality which has

mysteriously entered into our world. In seeking to have some sense of the role the Koran plays in Islam it is not sufficient for us to compare it with the role played by the Bible in Christianity. The Koran in Islam has a role comparable to the role of Jesus in Christianity, since the Koran is seen as, literally, the Word of God, not just a created reality. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith says: 'Muslims do not read the Qur'an and conclude that it is divine; rather they believe that it is divine, and then they read it.'[5]

We have much to learn from the utter conviction of Muslims that God has truly spoken to us through the prophets. Living in our highly secularised world, we are constantly tempted to play down the reality of the prophetic Word. Fear of being seen as old-fashioned, or odd, or fanatical can inhibit us from proclaiming or witnessing to our beliefs.

In this atmosphere it can be quite helpful to be in touch with, or even to be aware of, the millions of Islamic believers who are quite unabashed in practising and preaching their religion. They inspire us to be less inhibited and shame-faced in relation to our faith. Furthermore, we sometimes have the opportunity to make common cause with Muslims in asking that the State should live up to the pluralism it professes, rather than reducing pluralism to secularism.

DIALOGUE WITH THE HINDU AND BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS: MYSTICISM AND COMPASSION

There is such an extraordinary richness and diversity in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions that there can be no question of trying to encapsulate their teachings and values in a few paragraphs. In any case, it is difficult to pin down any universally accepted body of teachings in either of these great religions[6]. This is partly because they do not give the same prominence to 'doctrine' as Christianity and Islam do. It is also because, over the centuries, each of these religions has branched out into different streams and traditions; and what is central in one branch of Buddhism or Hinduism may be quite peripheral or may even be denied in another branch. It is not possible to give universally valid responses even to such obvious questions as whether Hindus or Buddhists believe in a personal God or what priority they give to contemplation, or moral action, or religious devotions.

MYSTICISM

However, it is safe to say that one of the features common to several strands of both the Hindu and Buddhist traditions is a strong emphasis on mysticism. Indeed it is ironic that many people in the West who feel a real hunger for religious experience have sought to meet this need not by turning to the mystical tradition of the West but by looking to these Asian religions.

We cannot be really open to the contemplative aspect of the Hindu and the Buddhist traditions if we make the mistake of evaluating these religions in purely *moral* terms. Many people in the West, including many Christians, fail to realise that contemplation and mysticism are to be valued in their own right and not simply in terms of how they affect us at the *ethical* level—e.g. whether they cause us to be more just, more generous, or more loving towards others. Of course meditation and mystical experience do tend to make a person more moral. But the point I am stressing is that this is not their sole purpose—and may not even be their primary purpose. We must not reduce religion to morality.

It is particularly important not to make this mistake in regard to the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, since the distinctiveness and strength of both of these religions does not lie solely (and perhaps not even primarily) in the ethical values they inculcate, but more in the deeply *religious* values they embody. If we are to engage in effective dialogue with the Hindu or Buddhist traditions we must recognise *from our own experience* the difference between ethical values and religious values. We must know how important it can be to leave aside even very pressing moral concerns in order to 'go inside' and focus on religious values such as inner peace, or wisdom—or God.

In this strictly religious sphere, it can be enormously challenging and enriching to engage in an inner dialogue with these two Eastern religious traditions. *Challenging*, because it encourages us to let go of our inclination to value ourselves in terms of our achievements, or the good works we engage in, or even our high moral ideals. *Enriching*, because it affirms and strengthens the inner call we all experience at times to become more contemplative, to give 'quality time' to nourishing the spirit. Dialogue with the Hindu and Buddhist

traditions can help us to listen to the inner voice which calls us to move inside, to sit still, to value meditation and the deep religious peace which it brings.

The call to reverse our priorities—to adopt a contemplative rather than an activist mentality—need not necessarily be seen as an invitation to do less work. We come nearer to the heart of the Hindu and Buddhist attitude if we think in terms of 'renouncing the fruit of works'. This phrase is taken from the Bhagavad Gita[7], which is one of the most profound of the Hindu sacred writings, composed over two thousand years ago. The passage suggests that we are hindered religiously not so much by our activity as by a utilitarian attitude which makes us calculate the worth of our actions (and our own worth also) in terms of short-term consequences. The Buddhist tradition lays great emphasis on the same point. Buddhists believe that a true inner freedom comes when we are able to choose what is right, with a certain indifference to the outcome.

In the Bhagavad Gita this inner freedom is the fruit of a profoundly religious experience, a sense of being wholly dedicated to God: 'Who standing firm on unity communes-in-love with Me as abiding in all beings … that athlete of the spirit abides in Me.'[8]. This is an experience which seems to be very close to what Christians would call total devotion to the will of God. In other strands of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions the notion of a personal God is less prominent or even absent. But the idea of an inner liberation remains very important. There are different ideas about how one can attain this freedom of spirit (e.g. through asceticism, through yoga, through chanting, or breathing, or meditation).

There are also varying understandings of what it is that one is set free from, or has to let go of. In general terms the liberated or enlightened person is released from *Karma*. This *karma* can be seen as the 'weight' of bodily existence or as the legacy or consequences of one's actions[9]. We might picture it as though it were sticky mud which pulls us back into a swamp; it clings to us because we tend to grasp and cling on to the passing things of this world. Of course this image would suggest that the material world is like a swamp out of which we are trying to escape; and, from a Buddhist or Hindu point of view, that might not be too inaccurate. Both of these great religions tend to think of spiritual progress in terms of shaking off our entanglement with material things, including the human body.

ENLIGHTENMENT

There are, of course, significant differences between the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. There is no need to go into these differences here. It may, however, be worthwhile recalling that the Buddha spent some years learning the practice of Hindu meditation. It brought him great peace of spirit. But it did not meet his deepest need because when he returned to daily life he still felt encumbered by his desires. That is why he went on to seek—and eventually to find—an 'enlightenment' which set him free from the burden of human desires.

This story poses a very deep and serious challenge to us Christians. Do we allow ourselves to admit how restless we are, how burdened and scattered we feel as we are dragged hither and thither by the welter of desires which flow through us? And are we really willing to let in the possibility that the way to be humanly fulfilled may be the *relinquishment* of our desires rather than their *attainment*? (When modern Western Christians engage in

dialogue with these Eastern religions I think it is helpful to think of being burdened and weighed down not so much by the fact that we are material beings but by the multitude and power of our wayward *desires* for material things.)

The reason the challenge of Buddhism is so radical is that it calls us to be counter-cultural. Modern Western culture muffles the inner voice which calls us to the kind of freedom which comes through a letting go of desire[10]. So the first step in an authentic inner or outer dialogue with Buddhism is perhaps the most difficult: it is simply to recognise and uncover within ourselves the half-buried longing to be free of restlessness.

If we pay attention to this longing, it leads on to further profound questions. Should we seek an experience of 'enlightenment' which would enable us to transcend our desires? And what would this involve? Could we envisage some kind of mystical identification with God which would set us free of the many pulls which seem to be part of the fabric of human living? And how would this compare with the Buddhist 'enlightenment', which is usually described in more negative terms, without reference to God?

These are not issues with which Western Christians—or theologians—usually concern themselves. So the importance of dialogue with Buddhism is that it shows up blind-spots in the Western approach to religion and spirituality. We may never be

able to find clear-cut answers to the questions it raises. But more important than answers is a willingness to make space in our lives for the questions. And, of course, we are missing the whole point of the dialogue if we seek to answer the questions in an abstract manner. The real challenge is to engage in an experiential exploration.

COMPASSION

So far I have been focusing mainly on the more *mystical* aspect of dialogue with Buddhism. But there is a further crucial element in Buddhism which is perhaps equally important. It concerns the *moral* response of the Buddha himself when he achieved 'enlightenment'—and of others who have followed his path. The 'Enlightened One', having been set free of the burden of desire and the constant rebirth it brings, may be moved by *compassion* for the multitudes of suffering people in the world. This compassion leads him or her to choose to postpone the full experience of the peace of *nirvana* in order to help others to find the way to enlightenment[11].

From a Christian point of view, compassion is the basis for social and political action: we 'share in' the suffering of another and this drives us to ease the other person's pain or to tackle the causes of the suffering. Dialogue with Buddhism offers a different perspective on suffering and a different way of living out one's compassion. The Buddhist sense of the finite and passing quality of all things leads to a feeling of ultimate detachment. So the Buddhist may not feel the Christian's sense of urgency to change the situation; compassion may be experienced simply as a willingness to *be with others* in their suffering.

There are, then, two concepts of compassion: a Western active one which focuses on relieving the suffering of others; and a Buddhist one which may seem passive because it does not seek to change the outer

world but which actually calls for 'work' of a very different kind. It invites one to find a way of being fully present to oneself and to others—and especially to those who suffer—which does not allow the evil in the situation to have its way, to triumph over the human spirit.

It is hard to resist the urge to compare these two positions with a view to deciding which is more correct or more valuable. But the whole point of this kind of dialogue is to avoid jumping to conclusions too quickly. In this case dialogue does not mean we have to abandon our commitment to human liberation. It does not require that we replace our ideal of liberation of the world by a notion of inner spiritual liberation. But the dialogue offers us an opportunity to deepen and enrich the quality of our compassion. It challenges us, firstly, to admit that in many situations we may be quite powerless to ease the suffering of others. Secondly, it reminds us that the word 'compassion' means, literally, 'suffering-with'. So, even in situations where suffering can be relieved by our action, we must not seek to by-pass the first step of really 'letting in' the pain of the other before rushing to 'cure' it.

Above all, perhaps, dialogue with Buddhism on this issue invites us to acknowledge the importance of liberation of spirit if we wish to bring liberation to the world—or to engage in any other form of mission activity. For our desire to help others can be 'muddied' by our need for approval, or an urge to prove ourselves, or other self-interested motivations; then the resulting action becomes distorted or even corrupted. So this inner liberation has a certain priority—as Jesus reminded us when he insisted that good fruit comes only from a good tree (Mt. 7: 17-8).

Buddhism teaches us that to identify with others in their suffering is profoundly redemptive for both parties—even apart from any external effort to transform the situation. This lesson may help us Christians to come to a deeper understanding of God's response to our suffering. If find myself scandalised by God's apparent failure to 'do something' about the appalling suffering in the world, perhaps it is because I have failed to really 'let in' that suffering; perhaps I am looking for an easy escape from it. Is it not ironic that Buddhism, which professes to have little or nothing to say about God, should in this way throw new light for us on one of the most profound aspects of our Christian faith?

Buddhist compassion is not limited to other human beings. The Buddhist (and Hindu) conception of *karma* is one where all living beings are linked. Animals may be reincarnated in human form and humans may be re-born as animals. So the compassion of the enlightened person extends to all living creatures. Dialogue on these issues with Hindus and Buddhists may give a new depth to the ecological concern which in recent years has become much more prominent in Christian spirituality.

Closely related to the compassion motif is the Buddhist emphasis on non-violence. This springs from a sense of reverence for others and for life in general. One of the lessons we in the West can learn from Buddhism is the deep inner connection between the *religious* value of contemplative freedom of spirit and a *moral* attitude of gentleness and non-violence. To engage fully in dialogue with Buddhism is to find oneself invited to adopt an

approach to life which is radically different from the activist and 'go-getting' outlook which brings 'success' in the Western world. This dialogue can help to ensure that Western or Western-educated Christians do not succumb to this Western inclination which results in so much exploitation and dis-ease.

DIALOGUE WITH THE CHINESE RELIGIONS: STABILITY AND FLOW

There is some doubt about whether Confucianism should be called a religion. Some would say it ought to be seen rather as a philosophy of life because it appears to make little reference to God or any transcendent power. However, it can be seen as a partner in the kind of inter-religious dialogue with which I am now concerned. It represents a particular outlook on life where the value of stability is given a much higher priority than other values. The Confucian philosophy of life lays great emphasis on the importance of order or pattern in life. In this way it helps us to appreciate that order is one of the fundamental values without which we cannot live a truly human life.

Harmony, dignity, stability, and respect—all these have a high place in the Confucian value-system[12]. No wonder then that there is a lot of emphasis on authority, first of all within the family and then in the wider society. In order to have a sympathetic understanding of Confucianism—and indeed of the ancient Chinese culture—we need to appreciate the importance of these values.

Over the past generation we in the West (and the whole of the Western-dominated world) have discovered to our cost that we cannot take these values for granted. We see all around us the fragmentation of society and the damage to individuals which occurs when there is widespread breakdown of family life and of the cohesion of local communities. There can be no doubt that we have much to learn from external and internal dialogue with the Confucian world-view.

Taoism

Taoism is another Chinese religion or world-view. For centuries it has existed alongside Confucianism, and uses some of the same language. Nevertheless, it is, in many respects at the very opposite end of the religious spectrum[13].

Both religions stress the importance of the *'tao'*—a word which means 'way' or 'path'. As used in Confucianism this word refers to the ordered pattern or way of life which gives dignity and a true quality of humanity to life. Taoism, as its name implies, gives an even more central role to the *'tao'*. But its conception of the *'tao'* is more cosmic than purely human. For the Taoist, the *'tao'* might be seen as 'the pattern of Nature' or even, possibly, as 'the natural law'. But perhaps the most helpful translation of the word *'tao'* in its Taoist sense is 'the *flow* of life'.

The central point is that, in Taoism, the 'pattern' or 'law' of nature is not understood as being fixed or providing stability. Those who are in touch with the *'tao'* are people who can allow themselves to be carried along in the river of life, people who have an intuitive sense of where life is leading them. This means that while the

Confucian *'tao'* represents stability, the Taoist *'tao'* implies spontaneity. But this spontaneity is not a purely arbitrary activity. It is, rather, the ability to know when *not* to act, not to interfere, not to try to control things, not to try to put *our* shape or stamp on the world, but to allow ourselves be borne along by the flow of life.

Dialogue with this Taoist point of view is of crucial importance for us today. Many religious people from the West—and people educated in Western ways—sense that some of our most intractable difficulties spring from the fact that we have become disconnected from the flow of life. For four centuries Western science has been dedicated to the effort to understand the world, not in order to *flow* with life but in order to *control* it, to 'master' the world. And its tools have been rationality and disciplined, organised, investigation. This has left us out of touch with the more spontaneous, creative and intuitive dimension of human life. We have gained knowledge at the expense of wisdom. Inner dialogue with Taoism may help us to be aware of this loss and may help us to come more in touch with the flow of life.

It is not just overtly religious people who have come to realise the enormity of our loss when we are no longer adequately in touch with 'the flow of life'. There is a growing understanding among psychotherapists that healing and well-being requires that we regain our connection with the *tao*, the flow of life[14]. Even in the business world of today there is a new appreciation
of the importance of intuition. Management consultants, having more or less exhausted the possibilities of tools for rationalisation, have now begun to devise tools to develop the creativity and intuitive abilities of planners and workers[15]. This is a good example of how religious issues underlie our everyday secular concerns—even in the most unlikely places.

It is important, however, that we should not allow the inner dialogue with Taoism to be 'hijacked' by people who would like to 'use' what it has to offer but are unwilling to face its radical challenge to the dominant Western value-system. To become a follower of 'the Way' in the genuine Taoist sense is not just a matter of learning to use one's intuition in order to sense what is likely to happen. It is, rather, to let go of the need for power and prestige. It is to relinquish the frenzied activism and consumerism which drives the economy of the Western world. It is to return to a more placid and simple life-style, to know when to flow with life rather than trying to shape it to our design and for our comfort.

The dialogue with Taoism can also have important implications in the sphere of ethics. Those who are in touch with the *'tao'* are not guided primarily by rules or laws. They have an inner sense of what is right and wrong. They know when to break the rules. This is not to say that they are lawless or immoral but rather that they recognise that life is constantly changing so that no fixed set of rules can provide an adequate guide for authentic human living.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Is it really possible to be open to Judaism while disagreeing with Israeli policy?
2. Is it justified to use the word 'holocaust' to refer to other genocidal events besides the Nazi treatment of the Jewish people?
3. How would you define 'destiny'? How does it fit with human responsibility? Is there a difference on this issue between Christians and Muslims?
4. Does the Buddhist conception of compassion throw some light on the attitude of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and of Charles de Foucauld? Is the Christian *always* called to change the world?
5. What does the notion of 'the flow of life' mean to you? Do you experience it? What helps?

NOTES

1. Cf. Eric Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation*, 194; see also *ibid.*, 418-427.
2. E.g. The Koran's rejection of the Trinity—Sura IV, 165 in Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, 97.
3. Cf. Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, 540.
4. See, for instance, the insistence on human responsibility (under God) by Khurshid Ahmed in 'A Muslim Response', in Joseph Gremillion and William Ryan (eds.), *World Faiths and the New World Order*, 182-3.
5. Willard G. Oxtoby (ed), *Religious Diversity: Essays by Wilfred Cantwell Smith*, 31.

6 Cf. R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 3.
7 *The Bhagavad-Gita* 5:12 (Zaehner edition), 63.
8 *The Bhagavad-Gita* 6:30; cf. Zaehner's introduction, 27-8.
9 See R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 63; cf. Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, 114 (on Buddhism) and 151-2 (on *The Bhagavad-Gita*).
10 Cf. John T. Catoir, *World Religions*, 90.
11 Cf. Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, 112.
12 Cf. *Ibid.* 198.
13 Cf. *Ibid.* 216.
14 E.g. Arnold Mindell, *Sitting in the Fire.*
15 E.g. Joseph Jaworski, *Synchronicity.*