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The Perceivable vs. the GreaterTruth

"Matthew, 27, 60 "And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."

Matthew, 27, 64 "Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first."

Matthew, 28, 2 "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it."

My Dear Christian Brethren!

The writings of Carl Gustav Jung, the person who understood well the human soul, have been translated to Hungarian. I take to heart many of the thoughts of this great thinker. At Easter time what comes to mind is one of the questions he posed of the perceivable and of existence. While his pairing of these terms may sound unusual at first, his question brings us to a substantive aspect of Easter. The first approach to those terms is that what is perceivable exists, and what is not perceivable does not exist. So, at least on the surface, there is no contradictions here. However, a further reading of Carl Jung brings up additional questions. Can we say that, indeed, the only things that exist are the ones that are perceivable, the ones that are visible? Is it possible that things exist but not perceivable? Or the other way around, is it possible that perceivable things don't exist? Without substantial analysis of Jung's work here, suffice it to say that these questions bring us closer to understand ourselves, and to enliven our faith and belief in God. Jung concludes, just like Tertullian, that the human soul is Christian by its nature. There are two thought from Jung that are relevant to our Easter celebration. First, if someone is happy this person will not need independent proof of it. The second, it's a common human folly to wish to slow the turning of the big wheel of life, to preserve youth, and to escape death.

It kind of makes sense that when we are happy, we feel that so deeply, that we don't need an added explanation of what we feel. Similarly, it would be futile to try

to convince joyful individuals that they are truly unhappy and that they are experiencing something unpleasant. Similarly, it would be a waste of time to try to stop the passage of time. We can't stop the movement of the Earth, and we can't control the coming of starlight or Moonlight. Neither can we stop the gushing forward of a spring from the depths of a mountain, nor can we stop the creek to carve its own bed, or the merging of creeks into rivers that flow into the ocean. We have no means to influence our own growth from a newborn into a child, then into a teenager, and then into an adult, and then into an elderly till our death. Just like we are unable to influence the coming of the dawn and the morning, and then the succession into the dusk and the night, we are unable to influence the passage of time that brings us to our own demise. What happens to us after death is likely to be just as unstoppable and un-influenceable. We do see the progression of the body of our loved ones; we follow the traditions of our ancestors when we place that body into a casket, and then place the casket into the grave. Then the soil covers up the casket, where our loved one rest. This is what we see, this is what is perceivable. Is this all to it? What could have possibly happened to the soul that made that heartbeat, that moved that hand to work or to caress; the soul that shaped human speech. What could have possibly happened to all those plans, desires, successes, failures, to those battles, to the knowledge, faith, hope, love, all those feelings and events that deepened the furrow on our brows? Whether it is the force that make the spring water to break through the rock, the force that makes winds move, or the force that gives light to the Sun, these forces are invisible, but they exist for sure. We may come to a similar conclusion when we examine Easter more closely. When we ask the question of what happens to our souls after death, the answer is revealed through our faith. A necessary part of the answer is the human soul itself, which is invisible, not perceivable, but arguably exists. Carl Jung compares the end of human life to a sunset when he writes: After lavishing light on the world the Sun withdraws its light, but keeps the light within itself. We can extend this image by acknowledging that the very same Sun that withdraws its light from us, continues to shine its light on the other side of Earth. We can see, perceive, that sun is going down near us, but our senses can not observe the rising sun bringing dawn to the opposite side of our planet. Despite of our perception the sun is rising on the other half of the Earth. In a similar fashion, we don't know what might happen to our souls after the sun of our life goes down, but our faith in God tells us that the dawn of eternal light is coming to us. Our faith tells us that God doesn't just guide our life along a plan, but God calls us away from life according to a plan. The sunset of life is followed by darkness, and that is followed by a new dawn. That is the miraculous world God created for us! In this line of thinking about the perceivable and existence the miracle of Easter becomes more approachable. Easter now becomes the example of the dawn for our souls.

What meaning may we recognize in the miracle of Easter? The Jewish celebration of Passover falls around the same time as Easter, and the Jewish people has retained through countless generations the memory of liberation from bondage of the Pharaoh, and the following exodus. The Christian celebration of Easter may also be understood as a sign of liberation. That liberation is the empowerment of our souls to break the chains of perceivable, to throw off the yolk of skepticism, and to gain the armament of hope. The mystery of Easter helped to mold a Christian community which was needed to keep the teachings and the benevolence of Jesus alive. The Gospel of Matthew describes how, after the death of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea took him off the cross, placed the body in the tomb, and rolled a boulder in front of the tomb's entrance. The high priests and the Pharisees requested from Pontius Pilate that the tomb be guarded by soldiers. However, as Saturday came to an end the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. The guards became scared. The angel told the nearby women that Jesus has risen, and that they should take the word of this joyous news to the disciples. Jesus himself then appeared among the disciples and asked them to spread the news of his rising. In the Gospel of John we learn that one of the disciples, called Thomas, did not believe that Jesus came back to life after the crucifixion until he saw the wounds of Jesus.

What can we learn from these events of Easter? First, we look at Joseph of Arimathea with tremendous appreciation, because he paid the proper final respect by taking the body off the cross and burying it in the tomb. Opposite to this feeling of appreciation is what we may not be able to articulate in words. The high priests and the Pharisees who caused the death of Jesus, denied Jesus the dignity after his death. Their inhumane behavior betrays the immense fear, the fear of Jesus even after his death. They felt so insecure that they had the tomb guarded by soldiers; there is no historical records of anything like that before or after the time of Jesus. They feared the power of his love. With their unenlightened thinking, with darkness in their souls they failed to recognize that the dominion of Jesus is not of this world. They failed to recognize that brute force will not change the laws of God. They were defeated, because they believed that the power of weapons could overcome the power of the soul.

For us, people of the Unitarian faith, the message of Easter is more in the meaning than in the accuracy of minute details of that day. We do not ponder what the Angel of the Lord looked like, and in what particular way he rolled away the stone from the entrance of the tomb. We do not ponder how specifically the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus happened, and just what factual evidence we have that it will happen to us as well. We do not tempt or beleaguer God with requests for new miracles. What is meaningful for us is that the Angel of the Lord did roll the stone away from the tomb, and by doing so rolled away our doubts that there is

continuation for us after death. While the action of the Angel of the Lord may never be perceivable to us, we believe that, as a part of the greater truth and as part of our faith, the Angel of the Lord will roll the stone away from the tombs of our loved ones, and from our own tombs as well. Our everlasting caretaker, our God will be looking after us even after our death.

Amen.