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Identity, Memory and Healing: In Search of Dialogical Wisdom

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Abstract: After going through the philosophical basis of dialogue, leading to related truths and experiential wisdom, the author reaffirms that dialogue implies sincere and genuine communication among persons, among groups, among cultures and among peoples. It requires silence as well as words. We need silence to come to our perception of our truth and to welcome that of others with honesty and openness. This makes us all companions together searching for truth and leading to wisdom. This will make us both intelligent and wise

Keywords: Dialogue, wisdom, companions, way of life, Socrates, Kant, Heidegger, Panikkar.

Recently I read a message passed on through the internet where the difference between an intelligent person and a wise one is illustrated well.

1. Intelligence leads to arguments. Wisdom leads to settlements.

2. Intelligence is power of will. Wisdom is power OVER will.

3. Intelligence is heat, it burns. Wisdom is warmth, it comforts.

4. Intelligence is pursuit of knowledge, it tires the seeker. Wisdom is pursuit of truth, it inspires the seeker.

5. Intelligence is holding on. Wisdom is letting go:

6. Intelligence leads you. Wisdom guides you.

7. An intelligent person thinks he knows everything. A wise person knows that there is still something to learn.

8. An intelligent person always tries to prove his point. A wise person knows there really is no point.

9. An intelligent person freely gives unsolicited advice. A wise person keeps his counsel until all options are considered.

10. An intelligent person understands what is being said. A wise person understands what is left unsaid.

11. An intelligent person speaks when he has to say something. A wise person speaks when he has something to say.

12. An intelligent person sees everything as relative. A wise person sees everything as related.

13. An intelligent person tries to control the mass flow. A wise person navigates the mass flow.

14. An intelligent person preaches. A wise person reaches.

Intelligence is good but wisdom achieves better results.

I believe that the above description of a wise person is applicable to Prof Noel Sheth SJ, with some qualifications and nuances. He was on in search of wisdom. He tried to encounter different traditions and entered into dialogue with them in search of wisdom. He himself personified dialogue among religions, cultures, different groups and between science and religion. He was also a professor of philosophy. So in this essay, meant to remember and honour him, I want to focus on the philosophical basis for dialogue. We follow the basic insights of five philosophers on dialogue which enables individuals and communities to reconcile among themselves. In this way, we can collectively search for truth and experience wisdom.

1. Socrates: Commitment to Conversation

In Plato's "Apology," wise man Socrates exemplifies a philosopher, a lover of wisdom, who is dedicated to the search for deeper understanding. Possessing understanding takes considerable humility as many are willing to contradict the wisdom of a person who presumes to possess it. Only through a process of much discussion or deliberation will they come to find out with which wisdom resides. Socrates understands the definitive quality of meaningful dialogue to be this kind of examination. We see upon a closer reading of Socrates' apology that this examination is realized through extensive dialogue with others. In fact, in order to test the validity of what the Oracle says about him, Plato says of Socrates: "I thought of a way to try to find out, something like this: I approached one of those who had the reputation of being wise, for there, I thought, if anywhere, I should test the revelation and prove that the oracle was wrong: "Here is one wiser than I, but you said I was wiser" (Plato 1984: 507).

Socrates does not merely accept the words of the Oracle. Rather, he tests this revelation through dialogue with others that may prove to be wiser than he. What Socrates finds astonishes even him. Through questioning a politician, a poet, and an artisan, Socrates finds that he is truly wiser than his fellow man by virtue of one trait: Socrates, unlike the others, understands that he does not know all there is to know.

In the end, Socrates is put on trial for the very characteristic that sets him above the rest of his citizens – the desire to gain wisdom even if it means questioning his own assumptions or pride. Meletos, one of those who sought Socrates' death, accuses Socrates of aspiring to corrupt the youth of Athens.

In his integrity, Socrates denounces this through the very same process of dialogue. He questions the reasoning behind Meletos' accusation. Socrates points out that most men, if not all, aim to influence their associates toward the good precisely because those same associates whom one influences will be the persons with whom one shares his life. He asks Meletos, "Have I indeed come to such a depth of ignorance that I do not know even this—that if I make one of my associates bad I shall risk getting some evil from him—to such a depth as to do so great an evil intentionally, as you say" (Plato 1984: 512)? In these words, Socrates supports the idea that, if we do evil to those around us, it is at minimum unintentional. Conversely, we seek to do good by those around us and, for Socrates, doing good by those around him is engaging in meaningful dialogue or argumentation that sharpens and brings wisdom. A final instance in which Socrates defends his dialogic aim and foundation is seen when he is asked to lead a quiet life and not bother their political process with his questioning. He responds with the following:

> For if I say that this is to disobey the god, and therefore I cannot keep quiet, you will not believe me but think I am a humbug. If again I say it is the greatest good for a man every day to discuss virtue and the other things, about which you hear me talking and examining myself and everybody else, and that life without enquiry is not worth living for a man, you will believe me still less if I say that (Plato 1984: 526).

Throughout his life and death, Socrates embodied his undying commitment to the process of examining his life through conversation with others. As a result, he braved the

grave consequences of the death penalty in order to be an example to a society which did not value the same. Though he was executed, Socrates' manner of living persisted, guiding others in a method of self-examination through inviting intellectual debate and dialogue.

2. Immanuel Kant: Dialogue for Enlightenment

After Socrates, we take up the greatest philosopher of the modern times: Kant. Impassioned by the possibility that change in the way human-being was conceptualized would "bring about a failing off of personal despotism and of avaricious or tyrannical oppression," Kant (1798) was tried his best to describe the conditions by which he thought change might become a reality in his "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment" (Kant 1798: 2)? This transformation in the way persons relate to each other would not be through revolution because revolution was sure to replace one tyrant with yet another and another. Instead, Kant postulated that "for this enlightenment, however, nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the least harmful of anything that could even be called freedom: namely, freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters" (Kant 1798: 2). In order for humans to be enlightened, they need not be merely told what is right and what is wrong: their actions directed solely by an authority figure. Instead, persons need to have the opportunity to partake in the education, or sharpening, of their intellect. This sharpening would make a more sophisticated public dialogue about morality possible without the necessity of control. Wisdom would direct change in a society, not the will of a select, powerful few. In postulating this kind of free discourse, Kant (1798) anticipates feelings of trepidation on the part of those in power, disallowing them from understanding

the gravity and benefit of the change that enlightenment would bring. In the following passage, Kant addresses these potential fears:

> But I hear from all sides the cry: do not argue! The officer says: Do not argue but drill! The tax official: Do not argue but pay! The clergyman: Do not argue but believe! (Only one ruler in the world says: Argue as much as you will and about whatever you will, but obey!) Everywhere there are restrictions on freedom. But what sort of restriction hinders enlightenment, and what sort does not hinder but instead promotes it? I reply: The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among human beings (Kant 1798: 2).

This revolutionary claim says that the enlightenment and, in turn, the advancement or progress of society would only be realized if citizens were able to freely disseminate their ideas about any number of life's issues whether they be political, religious, etc. Dialogue and argumentation are, here, set apart as indispensable to what it means to be human. For Kant, it is not the case that enlightenment should bring an end to authority and duty. Instead, persons are given a particular forum – public sphere – in which to voice their individual understanding, rightly called the public use of one's reason. In the private use of one's reason, persons are called to uphold the duty of their position. Systemically, giving persons the freedom to exchange ideas about an array of subjects, including morality, cultivates an environment in which human dignity is upheld. As a result, humans "who are now more than machines" rise above their "selfincurred minority" and are able to construct a more complex, well-

rounded understanding of ourselves through collective encounter and dialogue (Kant 1798: 6).

3. Martin Heidegger: Dialogue Based on Disclosure of Being

Following Kant, we take up another great German philosopher, Martin Heidegger. Desiring to give a phenomenological account of being (i.e. how being shows itself in its everyday dealings with and in the world), Heidegger (1966) explicates the nature of thinking and the conditions for the possibility of living together in the world. Accordingly, Heidegger spoke, and, we can say, still speaks to a public that is far too thoughtless. Heidegger conceptualizes the issue in the following way: "Thoughtlessness is an uncanny visitor who comes and goes everywhere in today's world. For nowadays we take in everything in the quickest and cheapest way, only to forget it just as quickly, instantly" (Heidegger 1966: 45). Although persons may be engaged in many activities, all of which include the presence and participation of others, it is important to understand the quality or essence of such participation in more detail. In this regard, Heidegger points out that "man today is in a flight from thinking...but part of this flight is that man will neither see nor admit it" (Heidegger 1966: 45). The reason that man neither sees nor admits his flight from thinking is because his understanding of thinking has evolved altogether; failing to recognize that thinking is inextricably connected to, even rooted in, communicating and always already being understandingly or meaningfully in the world.

Accordingly, Heidegger situates thinking as the "place" where the world can show itself as meaningful through

communication (i.e. humans interacting with other humans and entities in the world). In order to garner a deeper understanding of how humans relate in and through communication, Heidegger affirms that "we speak because speaking is natural to us... language belongs to the closest neighborhood of man's being" (Heidegger 1971: 187). Dialogue is a central part of our humanity because we are always-already interpreting our experience, using language and reason to do so. This is not to say that we do not have automatic, emotional, or intuitive responses to sensuous experience. However, we make such experience meaningful by communicating our understanding of our experience through language. In this concept of being, Dasein (i.e. human-being) is differentiated from entities that are present-at-hand. Entities that are present-at-hand are beings for which their being is not an issue (e.g. a car, a hammer, a computer). He explains this distinction by arguing:

> That Being which is an issue for this entity in its very Being, is in each case mine. Thus Dasein is never to be taken ontologically as an instance or special case of some genus of entities as things that are present-at-hand. To entities such as these, their Being is 'a matter of indifference', or more 19 precisely, they 'are' such that their Being can be neither a matter of indifference to them, nor the opposite (Heidegger 1962: 68).

In other words, human-being cannot be conceptualized as the adding together of entities in the world. We are not merely defined by the number of bones in our bodies, the kinds of cells in our blood, or even the unique pattern of our particular DNA strand. What makes Dasein, Dasein is that it is the "site" in, or towards, which the world discloses itself. This means that the activities about which Dasein

is concerned are communicative activities that interpret, create, or respond to the world. Entities present-at-hand in the world do not have this concern and they show this by way of an absence of understanding or an indifference of sorts.

Entities in the world, present-at-hand, always-already show themselves as ready-to-hand. To put it differently, the disclosure of entities' meaningfulness to Dasein is ineluctably defined in terms of their "toward which" or "for that which" character: entities are interpreted as being for our human endeavors that are always-already "underway." Consequently, Dasein is always-already understandingly responding to entities in the world by way of responding to or interpreting their "involvement" in the world. For example, the computer on which one writes one's thesis is not just an aluminum and plastic piece of technology. It is the tool by which one continues in his or her studies and continue going on his or her path. The computer is ready-to-hand, meaningful, in a totality of significance (i.e. the conditions for the possibility of its showing itself in a particular manner). When Heidegger explicates this concept of "totality of significance" he writes: "Dasein, in its familiarity with significance, is the ontical condition for the possibility of discovering entities which are encountered in a world with involvement (readiness-to-hand) as their kind of Being, and which can thus make themselves known as they are in themselves" (Heidegger 1962: 120).

In other words, Dasein needs to be understood as distinct from entities in the world because it is to Dasein that the things in the world show themselves; Dasein makes the showing possible. This showing, disclosure or revelation is an import foundation from which to start because dialogue

can be conceptualized as participation in the activities of Dasein (i.e. responding to the world as disclosed through language). With this in mind, dialogue can be seen as something "ready-to-hand" though, not quite. Entities are ready-to-hand and dialogue is not an entity as such. Therefore, dialogue can be "caught up" in the totality of a project and when one is circumspect one can see the significance of dialogue's function in a sense. However, this can only be analogous to Heidegger's conception of the ready-to-hand because language is discovered, "used", in the way a pen (object-present-at-hand) could never be.

At the same time, persons' moral understandings can "break down" almost as things that are ready-to-hand can. In this way, Heidegger's discussion of the (un)readiness-to-hand becomes especially helpful in starting to theorize the nature of moral turning points. He describes that "when an assignment has been disturbed—when something is unusable for some purpose— then the assignment becomes explicit" (Heidegger 1962: 105). If moral frameworks are our habitual responses, or understandings, of the world and these systems fail to continue giving an adequate picture of what our experiences "uncover," then we can be motivated to comport ourselves toward entities or toward other humans differently. Heidegger's intellectual work on the nature of human-being (Dasein) informs the current project by way of the importance of interpretation and the communication of interpretation through dialogue as necessary conditions for attaining wisdom.

4. Ricoeur: Dialogue Leading to Collective Transformation

After Heidegger, we can take up Paul Ricoeur's

path to dialogue leading to healing among persons and communities. We can better understand briefly Ricoeur's contribution to dialogue in terms of creating a community (through identity) and healing of collective memories of the communities in conflict, leading to forgiveness and transformation.

4.1 Narrative Identity

We know that in the everyday the sense of a self, and of a self identity is tied to mundane practices in which people locate themselves by reference to a routine of action or performances, and expectations about themselves and others that remain relatively stable in particular social settings. The term "iterability" is often used to point to what is significant about subjectivity in relation to acts, the re-iteration of a particular subjectivity in instances of action that position a self by reference to a previous pattern of behaviour recognized by significant others. For instance, the frequent reliance on stereotypes of the 'other' in the accounts of behavioural expectations as described by participants in the encounters suggests that such pre-established vocabularies and patterns exist in a discursive form, interiorised in the form of imaginaries, that are enacted and embodied in face to face situations. The stability of social relations is premised on such patterns of repetition and mutual recognition so that a self exists as a knot in a network of intersubjective action and understanding; they enact the fact that every particular 'who' or self is coupled to a world, both material and social. It follows that change implies transformation in that whole world. The line of argument I am developing is that because identity is constituted in relation to narratives of belonging and of the collective – nation, ethnicity, religious community, tribe – that inscribe

the deep structural aspects of the socio-material lifeworld, our understanding of change must interrogate the process of constitution. Here, it is important to recognise the fact that social interactions are ever open to the indeterminate. The possibility of change and further growth is premised on this openness (Venn 2018).

Ricoeur's notion of narrative identity points to the idea of a self as a storied self, as an entity made up of stories told, indeed, entangled in the stories that a person tells or that are told about her. Yet, this very mundane aspect of human beings is also a profoundly enigmatic element. This is because, in Ricoeur, the notion of narrative identity is grounded in an ontology deriving from Heidegger's (1962) emphasis on temporality as the defining characteristic of human beings. The primacy of time in relation to being has to do with the understanding of being as the entity that questions itself as to its way of being.

That questioning takes the form of a search for a sense of self measured or judged in terms of ways of being inscribed in models and scripts for the emplotment of life that exist in the form of a culture's archive of existence. One could say that a self comes to be folded in a kind of temporal envelope that circumscribes a memory referring to one's past action as well as to the reflexive account of collective existence. Time, then, determines the horizon for any understanding of being; as soon as we think of ourselves as conscious beings, we think time, and we cannot think time without bringing up the question of consciousness, specifically, the consciousness that we exist in time, as beings in time, dispersed between a remembered past, an evanescent present and the anticipation of a future. For each subject, the having-been, the making-present and the

coming-towards constitute the three moments, indeed, the co-articulated moments, of the temporality of one's being-in-the-world. They mark the space in which we question ourselves as to our way of being. In thinking about the problem of subjectivity and of the possibility of transforming identities, we need to recognise that the spacing and trace of time, in the form of memory and narrative, allows us access both to the intersubjective dimension of existence and to the historical framing of culture (Venn 2018).

One basic aporia of time is its inscrutability. This may well be because we are encompassed by time, as I have just indicated, so that it is impossible to stand outside it. The avenue that Ricoeur follows is to explore the possibility that narrative is the form in which we can overcome the unrepresentability of time (when we think of it in the singular), and the device by which we express the lived, or phenomenal, aspect of the temporality of being. The underlying idea is that the act of telling a story "can transmute natural time into a specifically human time" (1984: 17). In Ricoeur's approach, the term narrative identity seems to join up two problematics of subjectivity: concerning identity, and concerning the relation of history to fiction in the process of the figuration of temporality. The two problematics are correlated by way of the idea that time, and the way it is lived, provides the common ground for their co-articulation (Venn 2018).

Furthermore, the sense of narrative identity that Ricoeur develops stresses the view that every identity is "mingled with that of others in such a way as to engender second order stories which are themselves intersections between numerous stories... We are literally 'entangled in stories'" (Ricoeur,1996: 6). These stories are structured according to

rules of emplotment of experience that exist in a culture, including models of the good life – e.g. how we should live, what rules must guide us, and so on.

Narrative identity appears in his discourse of being as the concept that enables us to think of the mediation between the phenomenological and the cosmological apprehension of time, that is to say, the mediation between time as lived, inscribed in activities in the world, and "inscrypted" (that is, at once inscribed and encrypted) in life narratives, and time in the singular, the intuition of a dimension that cannot be derived from the experiential but encompasses and transcends it. As Ricoeur (1992) has put it, narrative is the way of joining up the 'time of the soul' with the time of the world. In a sense the 'self' as a meaningful and meaning-making entity appears at the point of intersection of two kinds of reflection on our beingness or existence. On the one hand, we find the stories and memories that express the time of being-in-the-world and of being-with, the duration of events and experiences in the everyday that is, "the scansion of the temporal flow in each life that we reckon and keep and memorialise because they involve our care" (in the Heideggerian sense).

In fact, every culture inscribes collective and shared memories of the group that have effects for how the biographical and the historical dimensions of being-in-the world and being-with are lived in the everyday. A self happens at the point of intersection of these two kinds of narratives, weaving the personal into the collective. For instance, for the students at the schools in the study, 'real time' involves memories of the daily fighting going on all round them, and in which they participate or get caught up, as in the case of the Jewish girl who cannot talk about the

Arabs without recalling the stone-throwing incident that she suffered whilst travelling in a car (Venn 2018). This kind of incident calls up a history of conflict between the two communities, and relays another history of the oppression of the Jews, with effects for the analysis of change that I will develop later on. Thus, the phenomenal apprehension of time already inscribes a dimension that opens towards an unrepresentable trace, the absent presence of memorialised and immemorial real and imagined events.

The mediation between the phenomenal and cosmological modalities in our experience of time brings into play the effects of another kind of discourse, that which addresses the questions which surface about time in the singular. This is about finitude and the experience of loss and thrownness, or, about existential suffering. They are the questions that animate the discourses about what gives meaning to life at the general, cosmological level. Ricoeur would relate this to the apprehension of a sublime or ungrounded dimension to human existence, an experience, besides, that links up with the ecstasy and epiphany of being. Typically, this dimension of the temporality of being is expressed in religious discourse (and, in a different register, in the sublime in art), invoking a transcendent being – God or gods – and an imaginary space – the afterlife, the promised land, paradise – that allocates their place to the mundane, grounded activities of daily living.

So, at one level, temporality encompasses the historical and cultural space of the emergence of the who of action and meaning, and at another level, it opens onto a critical hermeneutics and to a reflection which points to the apprehension that a self "does not belong to the category of events and facts" (Ricoeur1991: 193). So Ricoeur argues

that grand narratives, whether expressed in the secular language of the Enlightenment and the project of modernity, or in a religious, or onto-theological discourse, function to relay the two levels.

In the case of doctrinal systems of beliefs or fundamentalist sects, the rules and principles, as interpreted by the believers, determine absolutely what is rightful conduct and draw very strict lines of demarcation between what is and is not acceptable. The line separating purity from danger is both unambiguous and rigidly established, correlated and repeated in terms of the cleavage between identity (conceptualised in terms of unicity) and the other (conceptualised as absolutely other, or reducible to the same). One can see this at work in the attitude and action of fundamentalist sects on both sides of the conflict in Israel/ Palestine. In such circumstances, the problem is how to envisage the possibility of a translation between the two experiences, that is, the possibility of meaningful dialogue.

4.2 Healing of Memories and Forgiving.

Clearly there is a primary political issue to be resolved, to do with establishing the conditions for any dialogue at all. That is but a first step, since in the case we are examining, and similar ones elsewhere, the return to violent conflict is a constant danger until some notion of community has been (re)constructed. Community, after all, depends on sharing stories of belonging and narratives of becoming.

So, we can understand some of the conditions for the emergence of new communities of solidarity, beyond the political level. In addressing a similar problem regarding the ethical issues involved in the integration of Europe, Ricoeur proposes three models for analyzing the relation of

identity and alterity. The first is that of translation premised on 'the principle of universal translatibility' (Ricoeur, 1996 :4) itself conditioned by a 'translation ethos' grounded in the gesture of 'linguistic hospitality'; the latter is inscribed in the principle of "living with the other in order to take that other to one's home as a guest" (Ricoeur, 1996: 5). The spirit of translation expressed in this idea of hospitality is to be extended to the relationship between cultures.

The second model that Ricoeur discusses is that of the exchange of memories or 'narrative hospitality'. It connects with the first model in that the latter recognizes a "difference of memory ... at the level of the customs, rules, norms, beliefs and convictions which constitute the identity of a culture" (Ricoeur, 1996: 5-6). These features of memory are preserved and communicated in narratives of identity and of the community. For this reason, Ricoeur argues that the exchange of memory calls for each party to take responsibility for the story of the other. Clearly, the implication is that this exchange requires a labour, involving the recognition of the other as a fellow human being worthy of respect and dignity. An obstacle to this process is the effect on the collective memory of a people of 'founding events' that fix the history of the cultural group into an immutable identity, untranslatable to the 'other' as outsider. Experiences of oppression and persecution, inflicted because of ethnic or religious or racial difference, and the collective memory of the suffering caused, as with the Shoah, amplify the hold of founding narratives on the enframing of the meaning of the nation, or the ethne, or the religious community. Breaking with such a tradition requires an ethical gesture indicated in the notion of hospitality, that is, the welcoming of the other as someone entrusted in one's care. Ricoeur proposes the possibility of

overcoming the hold of founding narratives and collective suffering through his third model, that of forgiveness, grounding the latter in an economy of debt and of the gift. The elaboration of the model passes through the process of the refiguration of identity that involves the revision of the past by reference to the mimetic functions of narrative. Ricoeur specifies two instances of suffering that needs to be worked upon, namely the wounds that one associates with the 'terror of history' (Ricoeur, 1988: 9) and the suffering one inflicts on others. The memory of such suffering needs to be exchanged in the third model, not according to the contractual rules of reciprocal obligations, but according to an economy of the gift that exceeds reciprocity so that one would "proceed from the suffering of others ... before imagining one's own" (Ricoeur, 1996: 9). It is clear that a spiritual economy is invoked in Ricoeur's discussion, involving a non-forgetful forgiveness that does not confuse forgiveness with forgetting, for one must keep the memory of the debt owed to those who have suffered. This means that "... the work of forgiveness must be grafted on to the work of memory in the language of narration" (Ricoeur, 1996: 10). It follows that the effort of telling differently involved in refiguring identities requires the work of anamnesis, thus of mourning (in relation to loss and suffering) and of the revision of the past as narrated in 'traditionality' (for instance, in relation to the recovery of the traces that onto-theology and monotheism erase, and in relation to a justice called for by a suffering caused).

Dialogue would take place in the shelter of such an ethic of responsibility for the other. However, telling differently is in solidarity with a difficult, because non-unitary and indeterminate, justice. The appearance of the notion of justice along the line of analysis suggests that

other principles must be brought into visibility to charge the models with the capacity to guide transformative action.

This is the essence of dialogue, leading also to healing of memories, forgiveness and transformative communitarian action.

5. Panikkar: Dialogue as Collective Search for Truth and Wisdom

The last philosopher we study is Raimund Panikkar, who has written prolifically on religious dialogue. For this article, I limit myself to one interview which he gave to Religion Online (Panikkar 2000).

Panikkar is categorical: "Someone who is afraid of losing his or her identity has already lost it." He adds: "In the West identity is established through difference. Catholics find their identity in not being Protestant or Hindu or Buddhist. However, other cultures have other ways of thinking about one's identity. Identity is not based on the degree to which one is different from others."

In the Abrahamic traditions people seek God "in difference," i.e., in superiority or transcendence. Being divine means not being human. For Hindus, however, the divine mystery is in man, in what is so profound and real in him that he cannot be separated from it, and it cannot be discharged into transcendence. This is the domain of immanence, of that spiritual archetype that is called Brahman. In Hinduism, people are not afraid of losing their identity. "They can be afraid of losing what they have, but not of losing what they are."

Then he elaborates on the conditions for religious dia-

logue to succeed. "The days are over when religions could take refuge in splendid isolation. In Europe, for example, religious people can no longer ignore the existence of the millions of foreigners with different cultures who are now living there. They can no longer ignore the fact that, across three quarters of our planet, the dominant religion is not Christianity. Hence there must be dialogue."

"As long as I do not open my heart and do not see that the other is not an other but a part of myself who enlarges and completes me, I will not arrive at dialogue. If I embrace you, then I understand you. All this is a way of saying that real intrareligious dialogue begins in myself, and that it is more an exchange of religious experiences than of doctrines. If one does not start out from this foundation, no religious dialogue is possible; it is just idle chatter."

Engaging in dialogue is connected to searching for truth and wisdom. Jesus did not answer the question, "What is truth?". He silences the answer. "In fact, truth does not allow itself to be conceptualized. It is never purely objective, absolute. To talk about absolute truth is really a contradiction in terms. Truth is always relational, and the Absolute (absolutus, untied) is that which has no relation.' So Panikkar cautions that "pretension of the great religions to possess all truth can only be understood in a limited and contingent context." We also need to be aware of the myths we live with. In order to be aware of our myths, we need our neighbor, and therefore dialogue and love. The truth is first of all a reality that permits us to live, an existential truth that makes us free.

Panikkar adds: "I am convinced that each of us participates in the truth. Inevitably, my truth is the truth that I perceive from my window. And the value of dialogue be-

tween the various religions is precisely to help me perceive that there are other windows, other perspectives." He adds: "Therefore, I need the other in order to know and verify my own perspective of the truth. Truth is a genuine and authentic participation in the dynamism of reality. When Jesus says 'I am the truth,' he is not asking me to absolutize my doctrinal system but to enter upon the way that leads to life." Dialogue is imperative in this process of discovery of truth leading to wisdom.

6. Dialogue as Way of Life

In this final section we collect the fruits of our previous discussion on the philosophers, which has helped us to look at the philosophical bases for dialogue.

In his integrity, Socrates denounces the accusations of Meletos through the process of dialogue. Throughout his life and death, Socrates embodied his undying commitment to the process of examining his life through conversation with others. As a result, he braved the grave consequences of the death penalty in order to be an example to a society which did not value the same.

Kant in "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment" makes the revolutionary claim that the enlightenment and, in turn, the advancement or progress of society would only be realized if citizens were able to freely disseminate their ideas about any number of life's issues whether they be political, religious, etc. Dialogue and argumentation are, here, set apart as indispensable to what it means to be human.

Heidegger points out that "man today is in a flight from thinking...but part of this flight is that man will neither see

nor admit it". The reason that man neither sees nor admits his flight from thinking is because his understanding of thinking has evolved altogether. It fails to recognize that thinking is inextricably connected to, even rooted in, communicating and always already being understandingly or meaningfully in the world. So for Heidegger What makes Dasein, Dasein is that it is the "site" in, or towards, which the world discloses itself. This means that the activities about which Dasein is concerned are communicative activities that interpret, create, or respond to the world. Entities present-at-hand in the world do not have this concern and they show this by way of an absence of understanding or an indifference of sorts.

Further, Heidegger points out that Dasein needs to be understood as distinct from entities in the world because it is to Dasein that the things in the world show themselves; Dasein makes the showing possible. This showing, disclosure or revelation is an import foundation from which to start because dialogue can be conceptualized as participation in the activities of Dasein (i.e. responding to the world as disclosed through language).

Ricoeur understands our self as a storied self, as an entity made up of stories told, indeed, entangled in the stories that a person tells or that are told about her. This leads to emplotment. Ricoeur has no hesitation to asserr that we are literally "entangled in stories". These stories are structured according to rules of emplotment of experience that exist in a culture, including models of the good life – e.g. how we should live, what rules must guide us, and so on. This calls for on-going dialogue between the different partners.

Further, human community depends on sharing stories of belonging and narratives of becoming. While we hope

for the emergence of new communities of solidarity, we cannot forget the wounded memories in need of healing and forgiveness at the community level. Here Ricour calls for a spiritual economy involving a non-forgetful forgiveness that does not confuse forgiveness with forgetting, for one must keep the memory of the debt owed to those who have suffered. This means that the work of forgiveness must be grafted on to the work of memory in the language of narration.

Finally we have Panikkar who holds: "The days are over when religions could take refuge in splendid isolation. In Europe, for example, religious people can no longer ignore the existence of the millions of foreigners with different cultures who are now living there. They can no longer ignore the fact that, across three quarters of our planet, the dominant religion is not Christianity. Hence there must be dialogue." For him, genuine dialogue is imperative in this process of discovery of truth leading to wisdom.

Conclusion

After having gone through the philosophical basis of dialogue, leading to related truths and experiential wisdom, we need to reaffirm that dialogue implies sincere and genuine communication among persons, among groups, among cultures and among peoples. It requires silence as well as words. We need silence to come to our perception of our truth and to welcome that of others with honesty and openness. This makes us all companions together searching for truth and leading to wisdom. This will make us both intelligent and wise.

Notes

1. For this section I am indebted to the well-researched article by Joshua Danaher where he treats the philosophical basis for dialogue from a moral perspective. I have borrowed heavily from him for Socrates, Kant and Heidegger.
2. For this section on Ricouer, I am grateful to (Venn 2018), who has applied Ricoeur's method especially to the conflict between Israel and Palestine. I have drawn from him Ricoeur's understanding of dialogue in terms of identity, history, memory and healing.
3. An aporia is an irresolvable internal contradiction or logical disjunction in a text, argument, or theory.

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