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## Concerning « Charlie Hébdó »

### Question to Patrick Pargnien :

*Hello Patrick,*

*I am profoundly affected by the massacres carried out in the name of God. If you have written anything on this subject I would be interested in finding out about it. I think that our « religion » should also reflect upon its possible aberrations by stripping itself of all objects of attachment ( ideology, concepts, master, rituals, stressing the importance of texts...) all possible sources of division and war, and keep only zazen and the precepts.*

### Answer :

I understand that you are affected by this terrible lack of consciousness and wisdom.....and I am too. I haven't written anything on this subject (this could be a theme for the future...) but I can write in a few lines what I think about this.

« God » has always been and is « a good excuse » for justifying different exactions which are committed, for justifying this violence that we, as humans, have within us, and which is rooted in the fear of difference which leads irremediably to exclusion.

How difficult it is for us human beings to enter into relationships with others, in other words, to dare to enter into difference, into another's space, and to dare to let the other person enter into our space, with his difference, without losing our own uniqueness. « The other » which could be all living organisms (mineral, plant, animal...) but also a situation, an event.

We are fundamentally beings of love, but we are non- realised, separated from this source and so with the deeply rooted illusion that we are separate. And this feeling of separation, of distinction, generates fear, anger or violence.

This feeling of separation which has its origins in ignorance ; ignorance of our vaster dimension.

And so we create a whole network of structures, systems which we become attached to, we identify with, and which reassure us, or more exactly, which reassure the conditioned system.

And in order not to lose these « supports » on which our personality, our way of life, our beliefs have been built, we are ready to defend this « territory »

So, above all, I think it's important not to dissociate ourselves from everything that's happening in the world as it is a faithful reflection of what is within us, of our conditioning. Because conflict, suffering, exclusion, violence, fear etc..... exist within us and so it's our responsibility (in the sense of giving a response) to turn our gaze inwards in order to shed light on these different states of mind that express themselves within us, and within the members of our immediate circle.

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To shed light on them so that they lose their grip on us and stop running our lives.  
But it is also important to see and be aware of the beauty which is in this world and within us,  
and which dwells within every being.

The Way of Zen is a very beautiful way, deep as much in its practice as in the teaching it proposes ; transmitting essential values which are aimed at the heart of being, but, however, in my view, it's important not to define it as a religion and unfortunately the current institution tends to want to make it into a religion, even, maybe, a new church.

But personally I believe that Zen is neither a religion nor a philosophy and that's the originality of this way ; that we cannot define it, name it, trap it within a concept. At best we can consider it as a spiritual way, in other words, a way which « looks after the mind » through practice. Whether that practice be meditative in sitting, or in the different actions of life, and which thus ensure that the most favourable conditions are brought together for the silent light of awakening to be realised.

So that human beings may fulfil their full potential.

And as « spiritual » beings engaged on a path of liberation, of transcendence, we must effectively remain very vigilant that we don't crystallize forms or become crystallized ourselves concerning these forms.

In a certain way - to play with them in order not to confuse them with what is essential, the heart. Only forms. It's true that often the importance of texts is stressed and they can, in the long run, become dogmas when in fact their deep meaning and their fundamental purpose is to inspire us and to be an inspiration accompanying us on the path. So, I think, as teachers, transmitters of the way, it is essential to always keep that in mind.

This spiritual way – Zen – which through the different eras, the cultures and the human beings that have practised it, has become structured, formalized through different rules, ceremonies etc...would effectively gain from shedding certain aspects. Not necessarily getting rid of everything but - as I wrote earlier – playing with forms, making some clean breaks, simplifying things to adapt it to today's reality that is that the great majority of beings who are engaged on this path are also living in the outside world.

And it is important to fully assume this reality : to live up to this calling, this inspiration of the spiritual in the life of human conventions, as being a way in its own right.

Because the way and awakening are beyond all forms in the sense that they are « the expression » of the unconditioned. It's the invisible silent song of what is ungraspable.

The song of awakening, of silent light, is like the bird which lands freely on a branch of a tree. Nobody called it, nor attracted it. No one can catch it.

Whereas, often, as you know, the pitfall that institutions fall into is to take possession of a format, to take it out of its context (era, culture....) and to seek to make it coincide with today's reality. And this lack of flexibility, of freedom....can generate a crystallization which is toxic to investigation and thus to the spiritual path and the seeker....

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But sometimes forms are useful, sometimes they're not, what is essential is not to take them for what they aren't, not to confuse them with the heart of the way.

I agree with you, there is a « stripping away» which is necessary so that the spiritual way addresses itself directly to the heart of beings, and doesn't over-nourish a divisive state of mind, but this is also related to the way of teaching, and to the wisdom of the person who transmits.....

From heart to heart,