

Learning Justice

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In our three previous meetings, we have dealt with important issues on justice in our present-day worldwide political situation. By way of our topic this year, we make, as it were, a change of perspective, a change of view. At stake is now justice as a learning process, as something that can and must be learned and that, by teaching, we must get across to others. In this process we always remain learners and teachers at the same time.

After all, this pedagogics of justice, which is at stake here, is always already included in the Biblical-Christian and also in the classical ethical traditions, which I am taking here as a starting point. For, as Aristotle writes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: “Not for the purpose of knowing what being good really means, we make this investigation, but to become good people. Otherwise it would be useless.”¹ Therefore, it is obvious that even according to the Biblical Scriptures, the issue is not information about justice, but rather that listening and thinking are oriented towards acting. Last semester I was holding a seminar on this subject and I realized that we discovered here a sort of blank spot in modern discourses. Thinking is not in an equal manner coupled with acting, and the question after learning processes is largely left out. By that I have already indicated the way I am going to structure my deliberations. In a first section, I will take over Biblical and philosophical impulses on the topic of “learning justice.” In a second move, I will raise the question as to what this means under the present conditions of globalization and medialization, and also why I feel that in contemporary thought a not at all harmless blank here exists.

1. Learning justice as a lifelong task

The learning of justice is not first and foremost a matter of information, it is rather a question of a special mode of education that refers to the whole person.

If we condense the multifarious and extensive narratives, prophecies and proverbs of the Biblical books in two sentences, we will discover

¹ NE 1103b27–29.

that it is, on the one hand, the recognition and worship of God that they are concerned with, or in other words, the love of God and, on the other hand, justice in face of fellow men, or in other words the love of neighbour. These are the two basic Christian commandments. The term 'love' may lead us astray here because in contemporary everyday usage it is used in a restricted sense. Obviously, in this context there is not a certain feeling at stake, but a personal learning process, which, in recognition of God's order of creation, is oriented towards a "righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees" (Mt 5:20), a sort of righteousness that exceeds mere legal morality.

In all monotheistic religions, justice is the central moral norm. Just to mention a few dimensions of this extremely variform term: According to the story of creation, God has formed humankind in his wisdom to "rule the world in [...] righteousness" (Wis 9:3), namely as an image of God to establish just orders, where human beings can live together peacefully and harmoniously. Since reality looks totally different, an outcry against injustice traverses the following books of the Bible. Paradigmatic for this are the stories of the Exodus as a model of divine assistance: God listens to the cry of his people and shows them the way out of their oppression. In the Book of Psalms, the prayer implores God to do justice to the person praying, and this means to help him against his oppressors. But he also confesses his guilt and asks for forgiveness: "O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger, or discipline me in your wrath" (Ps 6:1; 38:1). In seven of the Ten Commandments, the just order in human relations is the subject. The prophets exhort the people to be just and to condemn injustice. The "greater justice," which is demanded in the imitation of Jesus, calls for going beyond what is legally demanded and stipulated, in order to come to a fellow human being's aid, especially if he/she is in trouble. This includes the suffering for the sake of justice, to "overcome evil with good" (Rm 12:21).

Thus, justice as an expectation that is directed at others and equally as an appeal to one's own responsibility, does not primarily designate a state of affairs that has to be achieved, but enjoins an action. In addition, it is a never ending process. Through it, the human being develops into a person. In sum, in a Biblical perspective justice reveals itself as a learning process, which shapes humankind towards what he/she is expected to be as an image of God: a just person. What basically is at issue is to train the capacity and willingness to do justice to the other as a person, to be just to him/her. This approach is analogous to one of Greek ethics: becoming oneself begins

with self-knowledge ("Know yourself!"), the goal being justice as the highest virtue, acquired by means of training and habit, which presupposes bravery, moderation and wisdom. In German, the term 'Tugend' [virtue] derives from 'zu-etwas-taugen' [to be capable or good for something]. The goal of human life is to become what humankind can and should be – similar to the way that other things in our world should serve their purpose. In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas has inserted this approach in a theological context: ethics as a learning process of justice and love takes up most of his central work, the *Summa theologica*. Its basic ethical design – now of a connotation geared towards the individual – says, that the individual human being comes from God, passes through the world and returns to God. This short formula (according to Max Seckler) – "from God through the world to God" – discloses the human life- and world-commitment as a moral learning process. Humankind is created in order to become human and to bring this humanness in God to perfection. Justice and learning, pedagogics and moral development are inseparably linked together. Life and activity are meant to strive for justice, i. e., to learn righteousness. In this dynamic process, conscience gets sharpened for what is just the longer the individual engages in moral questions. It is also for that reason that ethics plays such an eminent role in theology. The moral language of that time, by the way, was much richer than that of the present day and age. According to the philosophy of language, the degree of differentiation in the modes of expression can be taken as a criterion for a highly developed culture in a certain field; whereas the impoverishment of the moral language and the lower accuracy of ethical concepts in the present time is an indicator of our weaker interest in a just order of human relations or of a less exact knowledge in this context.

Today, as before, our daily routine confronts everybody with an abundance of issues concerning justice, which have to be decided in a responsible manner and which need orientations, norms and models. In this context, learning justice in the face of God, of our neighbour and of ourselves constitutes the core of a person's moral identity. It consists in the knowledge "of being responsible for one's actions" and in the capacity of acting accordingly. This is the convincing thesis of the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur.² Not "cogito, ergo sum", but "credo et ago, ergo sum,"

² P. Ricoeur, *Das Selbst als ein Anderer*. Paderborn, 1996, p. 185 (Engl.: *Oneself as Another*. Chicago, 1992).

whereby religious and moral identity are closely interrelated to each other. By that, the very nature of learning justice is defined: it is a social learning process which challenges and forms the person as a whole and in which his/her most basic being is at stake.

Closely related thereto is the fact that a dimension of unavailability is proper to moral learning and by that also to moral teaching, which corresponds to that of the person him/herself. This is demonstrated by Plato at the end of his "Dialogue Menon": even if one can argue about the contents of what is good as justice and sobriety, σωφροσύνη, nevertheless its achievement is a matter of divine grace.³ Similarly, the Biblical texts speak of a peculiar form of obduracy of those who hearing do not listen nor understand and who do not carry out what they have recognized as just and right (cf. Mt 13:13 f.).

Learning justice, therefore, never is only a matter of will, but a personal process, which is of a completely other kind than technical and economical procedures. Hannah Arendt, in her "Vita activa," has made a distinction between 'producing' and 'acting,' and she demonstrated that the modern 'homo faber' does not grant 'acting' its appropriate place. Similarly, Jürgen Habermas differentiates between a communicative and an instrumental reason, whereby, in our technically and scientifically imprinted world, the latter became dominant to such an extent that it overgrows, as it were, the communicative, ethical reason.

However, human justice in itself always also remains imperfect: it will attain its perfection in the Eschaton, in God's ultimate reality. It is indeed the characteristic feature of the Kingdom of Heaven and cannot be realized in innerworldly conditions.

2. Personal learning as social learning

Since the learning of justice is of a personal nature, it takes place socially in groups and communities. This is true of the family, equally of the Church or the cult, of schools and universities, and last not least of the public realm, where the media play a crucial mediating role. All these social agents are of great significance in the context of the moral learning processes and should be investigated separately. At this point only some brief annotations.

³ Plato, *Menon*. 100b.

The family is the primary place of socialization and of learning justice. It is time and again surprising that children have a natural feeling for justice. The spontaneous statement, "This is unjust!"; demonstrates an elementary desire for social order and harmony. It is within the family that, embedded in religious traditions, the proper ideas of what is just are passed on. "When your children ask you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your children, [...]" (Dt 6:20 f.).

The secondary place of socialization is the school, which, in complex societies, takes over wide areas of education, the issue being at present to what extent it even takes over and may take over moral education. The weakening of the family results in a situation where schools are challenged also in the field of the so-called social learning; this concerns interpersonal relations, which become more and more demanding through the media and multiculturalism.

The Christian cult is another place, where justice is mediated. Especially the regular reading of Biblical texts in the liturgy is an important feature for the learning of justice, based on repetition and memorizing. The narrative traditions, i. e. the various stories and narrations, offer the chance of applying the specific demands of what was heard to the individual situations in life. In this way happens, as it were, a hermeneutical interpretation of what was heard. When the story of the poor Lazarus is read, who lies at the gate of the rich man, the listener immediately will ask himself about his own dealing with material goods. The very drastic threat of an imminent retaliation in the hereafter, of which this story speaks, reveals the radically serious side of our responsibility in view of wealth (Lk 16:19–31). We find such rousing appeals for justice in all the Gospels. They express the specifically prophetic character of the Christian message, which resumes that of the Old Testament prophets. Prophecy, however, is criticism of an alienation from God and of the contempt of human fellow beings. It publicly rises up against injustice. Those are the false prophets who support a sort of appeasement policy: they shout "peace, peace," where there is no peace, and whitewash (Ezek 22:28). The prophets call for justice as a foundation of political rule and social relations. Justice is the be-all and end-all of wisdom (Wis 1:1) and the basis for international recognition: "[...] for this will show Your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!'" (Dt 4:6). Not physical power, but justice is the criterion for superiority.

Justice is learned by word and example. In a special way this comes to a head in the New Testament, in which Jesus is presented as the embodiment of righteousness. He is “the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). This makes the personal element of mediation the focus of attention in a new way. I do not intend to elaborate in this context on the issue of the Christian doctrine of salvation. It is rather the aspect of the imitation of God, which interests me here. This aspect is already an important topos in the Old Testament: it is the task of the believer to imitate God in his justice. In the Christian spiritual traditions, this is transferred to Jesus: the learning of justice takes place through the imitation of moral examples. A deeper scientific investigation of the idea of *Mimesis* would be required. Does it not rather correspond to our basic human experience that we do not primarily learn through words, but through imitating the praxis of those whom we respect as the significant others? The proverb “*verba docent, exempla trahunt*” (words may teach us, examples attract) is to the point. Moral attitudes are not only and not even primarily transmitted by words, but through both the conscious and frequently also the unconscious orientation by other people. This is, as I was told, largely neglected in modern learning theory. I think that this is true because the said theory is too much cognitively oriented and takes the autonomous individual as its measure. But the reflection on one’s own activity, and thereby the formation of conscience, is not only based on norms and values, but also on other people, like parents, teachers, brothers and sisters, and on models who are decisive for a certain culture. It would be interesting to dedicate a separate investigation to this subject. In a further step only will it become possible to question always anew one’s own understanding of justice and to interpret and re-interpret it in a given situation. As demonstrated by the American social philosopher Michael Walzer, this is true not only for individuals but also for cultures and religions – and also our dialogue meetings here represent such a learning process.

3. Attempt of an actualization

Subsequent to these general observations, I would like to reflect on their meaning for us under the present living and learning conditions.

Let me begin by quoting the Austrian child psychologist Dr. Max Friedrich on future developments. “Skills of the moral judgement, the formed conscience and the interior voice will be mediated by the united representatives

of monotheistic religions in fifty years time electronically in permanent ways by means of an audiological implantate. [...] The children of tomorrow will experience contemporary cultural elements, like architecture, music and similar things, as if they were from the period of classical antiquity – by virtue of the fast acceleration 50 years will be equal to former centuries.”⁴

This statement confirmed me in my persuasion that moral learning primarily means personal and social learning. Quite apart from the strange idea of a syncretistic union of the monotheistic religions within the next 50 years, even in a still more technical ‘brave new world’ the learning of justice cannot be, shall we say, mechanically instilled into someone. The very opposite seems to be true: in view of further technicality, the family, the community of believers and the school will gain ground. As stated by Friedrich – without establishing an inner connection between the two statements – the problems of children are increasing, given their deficient emotional education, and they become incapable of empathy because of their inability of interpreting and reflecting on either their own feelings or those of others.

I think that the question of which way the new technical and cultural conditions will affect the learning of justice is going to be crucial for the future because the learning of righteousness and, more generally, the moral education are more difficult today and at the same time more significant than ever before. As to this question, here some observations, which however are hardly exhaustive.

1/- The process of differentiation in modern societies leading to partial sectors, like economy, politics, science, and private sphere, results in varying standards for the various areas and in different roles for people in these areas. But is justice not indivisible? It integrates all areas, and by that it makes a comprehensive claim. It is exactly here that the growing interest in moral education – some even speak of an ‘ethics boom’ – becomes understandable. Courses of lectures about ethic questions meet with great interest in economy, science, etc. The issue of what is good and right has to be introduced into the various sectors of society, which all have their own logics. Christian and other religious traditions have an important task here, to make people sensitive to justice as a human value, without promising easy and facile solutions for all problems, which simply do not exist in view of the given complexity. The opposite trend also has to be mentioned, assuming – as it is demonstrated by the aforementioned quotation – that morals and

⁴ *Die Presse*, June 24, 2006, p. 41.

justice are superseded by an evolutionary technology, and humankind, so to say, becomes its own creator, leaving uncertain moral standards behind. Justice as a question and the struggle for it then become a remainder of a religious and metaphysical era, belonging to the past, just as the legal system of the "Codex Hammurabi," chiselled into stone, or the Ten Commandments. In view of this tendency, it is necessary to keep the learning and teaching of justice on the agenda as a central ethical challenge.

2/- The quantity of transmitted information, which through the Internet has increased nearly ad infinitum and is far more than human capacity can cope with, calls for an increase in general and philosophical education and above all in ethical education. For the mass media presuppose a higher degree of ethical discernment. Therefore the learning of justice constitutes a complementary programme, so that information can be incorporated into one's worldview and become coherent; because we have to regard this as the basis of human self-experience insofar as the person is the efficient source of his/her actions and responsible for his/her deeds. In addition, the technical possibilities of a transfer of knowledge give rise to the illusion that justice can also be learned and taught by the mass media – even if the assumptions frequently are not that extreme as it was formulated in the aforementioned citation. To what extent can electronic learning be employed in school instruction? Are physically present teachers still needed at all? I think that especially in the field of ethics personal relations and communications in a social context, such as in family, school and Church, will continue to be of decisive weight. Here, also the role of the media should be considered more in detail – which in my opinion exert a relativizing and indoctrinating influence – in case the media consumer him/herself does not have clear ideas that might be differentiated, reinterpreted, etc. through the messages of the media.

3/- The cultural and religious permeation of the society can mean an enrichment, if we are successful in clarifying discursively the various concepts of law and justice and arrive at shared convictions in the national and international field. The world as a common living space also needs common living conditions, i. e. universally recognized rules, laws and values. The same is true for individual societies. Here too, the learning of justice is of special significance. The factual living side by side does not yet create togetherness. If not accompanied by ethical education, the experience of different ideas of justice will lapse either into an ethical relativism or – so to say as a turnabout – into a moral fundamentalism. Both do not promote

social peace. Plurality demands a high degree of ethical discernment in order to conduct public discourses in a tolerant and differentiated manner. The exclusion of ethical scrutiny finally involves that, in an unreflected manner, it will return through the loophole.

Let me end my presentation by defining the tasks that present themselves today in the process of learning justice with three headwords:

- *Clarification*: the division of societies in sectors, the inundation of information, the mechanized transfer of knowledge, and the multiculturalism in the experience of the varying ideas of justice result in the challenge for religions to include the central concept of justice in the public discourse, put ethical issues on the agenda and promote the learning of justice in the private sphere.

This is true for all the topics that were dealt with in our dialogue meetings so far, such as international justice and tolerance, and also for other subjects, such as ecology, gender issues, biotechnology, and so on. Thus, the message of the monotheistic religions concerning justice must be spelled out again and again in the concrete problems of the time. For achieving that, it is essential to learn from each other. Ethics however first of all needs people who educate their conscience and conduct their lives according to moral standards. One could perhaps be a good technician and a wicked individual, but, regardless of all fallibility, the learning of justice needs ethical practice.

- *Criticism*: Islam and Christianity are prophetic religions. Prophecy in the modern sense however means social criticism that carries forward to the public the quest after what is just. This is easier in liberal societies with warranted rights of freedom than in authoritarian and totalitarian States. Simultaneously, however, this leads to the legitimate expectancy of a public commitment of the religious communities to justice and to the teaching of it. They are also expected to clarify their differing ideas in a peaceful manner and through dialogue. As the history of religions, but also of philosophy shows, prophecy is not harmless at all. When it gets to the core of the matter, criticism evokes antagonism. In order that "the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Is 26:9), not only errors must be overcome, but also wickedness, violence and unscrupulousness must be confronted.

- *Creativity*: the rapid changes in the contemporary world demand that the signs and structures, the talks and actions become effective for the ever new conditions. Vis-à-vis all the radical new challenges, which I previously

tried to outline, also a radical ethical creativity is needed, which corresponds to the creativity in the technical and economic fields and which is resolved to mould this progress more humanely. This, above all, calls for a change of perspective, which views the world with different, with good eyes, with the eyes of God. Could the world not become more just, if many or perhaps only a few people regarded the goods of this world not primarily as their own property, but as an entrusted general wealth that ultimately belongs to God? Would not the world become a more peaceful place, if many or perhaps only a few people regarded their fellow human beings primarily as God's creatures with their own capabilities and promises rather than as enemies, rivals, or unbelievers? An international study of experts, the Global Governance Report, formulates as follows: "The most important change that people can make is to change their way of looking at the world. We can change studies, jobs, neighbourhoods, even countries and continents and still remain much as we always were. But change our fundamental angle of vision and everything changes – our priorities, our values, our judgments, our pursuits. Again and again, in the history of religion, this total upheaval in the imagination has marked the beginning of a new life [...] a turning of the heart, a 'metanoia,' by which men see with new eyes and understand with new minds and turn their energies to new ways of living."⁵

The learning of justice demands exactly this, and I think that both of our religions have at their disposal the necessary resources, which we should use trusting in God, so that all progress can become a progress that is humane.

⁵ *The Report of the Commission on Global Governance. Our Global Neighborhood.* Oxford, 1995, p. 47.

Questions and Interventions

what does justice mean, is there a legitimate variety of concepts?

MAHMOOD S. S. If we raise the issue of learning righteousness, we certainly have to know, first, what justice in fact means. So do we not need in our context above all a clear definition of what being just really means?

GABRIEL We have to depart from the fact, that the other one is a person who has certain chances in his/her life. John Rawls, for instance, approaches this issue constructionally by saying: imagine that you are in a certain room and when you leave this room, you do not know who you are going to be – whether you are going to be a peasant in some African country or a woman in Latin America, etc. Therefore, what is at issue here is to design an order, which we will still find as being just, even if we have left the place in which we were accustomed to live.

It is this very change of perspectives which I have described in my presentation: if we could look at the world by asking ourselves whether we could live in the varying conditions here and there, I think this could lead to a fair measurement for what 'being just' really means. And I think that people tolerate some differences. Not everybody will have to be one of the richest people in the world, and maybe we need not even want to be it. But there is an inherent sense of justice, already in children. For example, if you have a group of children and something doesn't function in the right order, they say, "But this is not just!" All of us have this basic sense of justice and perhaps we do not really need a clear definition, when we set out for asking how righteousness can be learned.

Of course there are still problems, which I haven't answered yet. For example when we start asking what justice in fact means in case we are confronted with a concrete type of injustice. How should we react to it? To what extent is it allowed to use violence in face of injustice? Even if we have in the Christian tradition an option for non-violence, it is not easy at all to "overcome evil with good" (Rm 12:21) and to make a general solution out of it.

BSTEH At this point, I would like to refer to our Iranian-Austrian conferences since 1996, which dealt exactly with this complex of problems relating to justice and led us to deep insights, the last conference being on "Peace, Justice and Their Menaces in the Present Day and Age" (Tehran, 2003) and

again published in both conference-languages, Farsi and German as well as in Arabic.¹ So, together with our Iranian partners in dialogue, for almost ten years we had been working hard to clarify crucial points in the whole array of questions concerning justice from Christian and Muslim perspectives.

in which way equality and equity are linked together?

BELARBI If we can stay in this conceptual field, I would be interested to know more about the link between justice and equality, or between equality and equity: the reason being that there is repeatedly big confusion between both these concepts. Some people are of the

opinion that equality means the same as equity. Or can we regard equity as the main principle that enables us to find out what equality really means? I think it would be important to clarify both these concepts.

GABRIEL I think we can agree that equality certainly cannot be simply identified with equity. But what are people equal in, and what are they unequal in? And which inequalities are justified and which cannot be justified?

For Muslims and Christians, all human beings are equal in their being human persons, created by God. By that they have their fundamental dignity, and this comes before all possible differences. Still there is this big discussion: what comes first, the difference or the equality? – be it in the discourse on men and women, be it in the discourse between religions. First of all, are we all equal or for example, because of our religion unequal? I think there should be a clear option for equality.

But then, how far the differences can go and which social form they may take, this is of course undefined in the discourse on justice. It is indeed a very difficult philosophical problem: all these ethical concepts are of a different type than the knowledge of natural science. Ethical questions always leave a certain leeway for discussion of what is right or wrong. We very often cannot simply say, this is morally right and this is morally wrong – and this is just and this is unjust.

how do we learn justice?

KHOURY If we refer back to the title of Professor Gabriel's paper, it is on learning justice. I would be interested to know more about the conditions and the

environment in which somebody gets the right sense of justice and the right feeling for the practice of justice. Is it, first of all, in school, or, as I would think, rather in the family that we learn righteousness?

¹ A. Bsteh et al. (eds.), *Friede, Gerechtigkeit und ihre Bedrohungen in der heutigen Welt*. Mödling, 2005 (Farsi edition: Teheran, 2005; Arabic edition: Jounieh, 2005).

If I think of the family as the primary environment, various levels come to my mind: there you learn first the practice of righteousness, and of imperfect forms of righteousness too. Second, you learn in the family to overcome simple righteousness through solidarity. And, thirdly, you learn there to overcome simple righteousness and solidarity by love, selfless love. In my opinion, these are the first steps of learning justice, even in the realm of society and further on in international relations as well.

... vis-à-vis all the problems in families and school

GABRIEL I dealt with this aspect in my paper, but left it out in my presentation for lack of time because I thought we could take it for granted that the family is the primary place of socialization. I then departed from the problem that nowadays in incomplete families, this education for justice becomes problematic not least because of the influence of the media. If it really happens that the family loses its primary role in the socialization of the children, nothing less than a fundamental element of the society gets lost. The task is then transferred to the schools, but they are only in a limited way capable of doing justice to it: because there we will find only a vague idea of social education. In fact, there is a great number of strongly varying concepts and subsequent to it a sort of split-up in the field of education: when, increased by the influence of the media, nobody really knows what is right and what is wrong. In this situation, how should we be able to help people to get a moral identity, i. e. an open and flexible identity, which is not locked up in a rigid system of ideas, but also open for a dialogue with other people? This seems to me to be of fundamental relevance to learning justice.

striving for what is perfect, in our earthly conditions, also needs some courage to be imperfect

BSTEH The aforementioned widespread uncertainty of knowing what is right or wrong and all these problems concerning an appropriate socialization of children in our present day and age could remind us of the basic fact that here in our earthly conditions, we still are on our way and therefore not yet perfect and that we have not yet reached our goal. In the said situation we need, in the interest of our striving for the perfect, also the courage to be imperfect. This does not mean, on no account, that we shall be content with imperfection as such. Doing so, we would establish a very dangerous ideology by admitting ourselves of the obligation to strive for what is perfect. On condition that we have, so to say, a vision of what is perfect in our mind and incessantly strive for it, the courage, then, to accept

striving for what is perfect, in our earthly conditions, also needs some courage to be imperfect

what is (yet) imperfect seems to be the only way to reach out for what is perfect. "For we know only in part," as Paul says, "but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end" (1 Cor 13:9 f.). Otherwise, finally we would be crushed by the reality because we cannot but realize in these earthly conditions that we are still imperfect and on our way towards the perfect.

As Christians we have Jesus' commandment "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). But how could I live under this divine commandment without taking into account that only by striving for it, I will be able to fulfill it. If I am well-advised, this motif of the way is also decisive for Islam, when Muslims are praying, day by day, "Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight way" (Sūra 1,5 f.), and constantly confessing that "[...] God careth for all, and He knoweth all things." (Sūra 3,73).

The way Annemarie Schimmel explained it to us, there is the wonderful fact that the Muslim believer, above all the mystic, knows that the way to God is infinitely distant. But the true believer knows that the real infinity of the way will then be *in* God. To understand God's infinity from this symbol of an infinite way, is fascinating. In other words, with the vision of what is perfect in mind, I think we all need the courage of being imperfect, i. e. still on the way and striving for the perfect.

let us not do wrong under the pretext of not being perfect

MAHMOOD S. S. Nevertheless, we have to be careful not to forget, that we should not make deliberate mistakes on the pretext of not being perfect. We rather should accept the fact that we can be perfect, that we are capable of striving for perfection. So it doesn't really need courage, it just needs acceptance that we are imperfect.

the role of example in being a teacher

MARBOE I would like to add with regard to the role of schools, previously mentioned by Professor Gabriel, that the role of the example in being a teacher is quite often neglected, even in the modern learning theories.

In fact, this is surprising and we should deal with the reasons for it.

GABRIEL There are two blank spaces that are significant of the contemporary cultural situation: the high ranking of the autonomous, self-reflexive individual, so that other aspects do not reach inside. Connected with it, we notice a second element, that is that the dynamic nature of personal development is neglected and narrowed down to a normative aspect which is closely linked to scientific norms. No doubt, we welcome these

norms in the fields of biotechnology, euthanasia, etc. But even though, this is important. The other aspect must not be ignored either – the personal development in the field of ethic values, which is typical also of religious learning. I think there is something very exciting and motivating about this dimension: that we never really come to terms with it, that there are in many cases no clear solutions, that are valid once and for all, but that there is a lifelong way leading up to God and then in God; a way, which is never accomplished and where we need not be perfect ourselves. And, perhaps, this dimension of a personal example is still tightened up under multicultural and multireligious conditions.

A very nice example, which I read in a newspaper the other day: an old lady felt always frightened of foreigners because they speak a foreign language, etc. But one day, she collapsed on the street and there was a Turkish family, who helped her up, held her hand and called for the ambulance – while all the others passed by. In this situation, a moral learning process happens – simply through this natural behaviour of the Turkish family. This aged lady, will now see the world in a different light because this family acted like that. This is a general assignment for our daily routine, which can be rather interesting.