Chapter 6 – in demand of an Apology

For this one I suppose I need to establish some cultural context first. I certainly haven't eaten a meal in a while where I had much of a choice. And there's perhaps a debate to be had about what is more cultured. The argument would be about whether or not it's cultured to have vegetables be a separate part of the meal. Either way, when it comes to that, there's three types of people. There are those that eat the vegetables first and the „good stuff" last; Those that eat both indiscriminately and those that eat the „good stuff" first and maybe the vegetables later. And on occasion this habit has become a topic during gatherings; And each of these groups would see their way as the most logical way to go about it.

And between those that separate the veggies from the rest, it's fair to see that at the end of the meal it makes no real difference. It's probably not much different from looking at the clouds and looking for familiar shapes; Or psychological ink-blot tests. There may be something to be said about the Character of a person; Though needless to say, the flaw is with those that do it other than You do. And while those that separate the vegetables from the rest are opposites, they can still agree that those that it both at the same time are the odd ones out.

It's a harmless example; But there was a moment in my life that changed my outlook on this kind of stuff. A friend and I were out at night, walking about, probably drunk; And while we were standing somewhere in a park, talking, I looked at the night sky and saw a beatiful full moon illuminating a majestic fluff of clouds „around" it. I pointed it out to him – not looking at it while I did so. He looked up and he didn't seem too impressed. So I looked up again, but the view had changed. A few faint clouds had moved in front of the moon – and they clearly looked like the face of some evil entity; Almost as if the moon itself had evil intentions. And ever since then I was mystified by just how differently we might see the world.

It is said, in the Bible, that we should try not to be an offense to others. Or to be offensive. And ordinarily that's the kind of stuff You'd expect, probably. But since I come into this topic with a certain pretext, that verse reads slightly differently. In a way it gives me the right to demand an Apology.

But what if then the act of demanding one is in itself offensive?
We are, in this day and age, certainly at a point where the simple fact of *BEING* offended is already as a *„vile transgression of social decorum"*; In a way that has us – in a way – be collectively numb and blind to the plight of *the weak*.
For in such situations, then, it is the weak that have to suffer the ignorance of those that have the might to impose it.

It's a cycle of doom at this point. To be offended by those that are offended, because You are there yet waiting for an apology before You yourself are willing to give one Yourself. I myself have found comfort in trying to be unapologetic in my ways. I can say „forgive me" and „sorry" for all the things I don't care much about – while at the rock bottom of my heart there's just a „fuck You" for all those that don't accept me the way I am.

We shoul try not to be an offense. Therefore the other has a right to be or feel offended; And subsequently is entitled to an apology. Because this demand should apply to all of us, we ourselves are no different – and in pointing out, to each other, what we are offended by we can evolve to higher degrees of social enlightenment. „That's how You have to think about it".

If I myself don't make use of my right to feel offended; I might swallow my grievances and in turn become sour. Become offensive. And feel entitled to retaliate with offensiveness.
On the other hand, how can I try not to be offensive, if I don't know the things that do offend?
And if we cannot talk about the things that do offend, how can we make sense of who is truly entitled to what kind of an apology?

Like the white man that takes joy in casual racism, turning ethnical stereotypes into a joke, but is then offended when being called a ‚cracker'?

Around some positions there's something to be said about a „selective hegemony". On the one side they feel strong as the „patriarchic hegemony" argues that one has to be able to take a joke. On the other they feel weak against the „progressive hegemony" that demands us to respect cultural and interpersonal sensitivities. And so they would feel offended when this bastion of cultural correctness would turn around to single *THEM* out; As „a taste of their own medicine".

To say or wonder: Does collective responsibility work?

> It seems fair while You request it of „the other", „those that offend You".
> But it seems unfair when it is requested of You, „for the transgressions of someone else".

And You wouldn't care, either way, if You could live as removed from all those things.
But if You want to engage with the heartbeat of our modern society, You kind of have to. And expect to get dirty.

But while it might seem as though we are entitled to demand Apology, we are not. The Bible, for instance, also recognizes the concept of a Loan; And yet we are asked to not expect it to be returned; Nor to collect interest. We might call it „*the exposed flaw* of Christian thought" – or so: *The beating heart* at the idea that Christians are weak.

But the truth is simple. How else can You exalt forgiveness – if we are to encourage one another in our demands for an Apology? Or payback? Or interest? „Yes! Be Merciful! Except at each occasion that might encourage You not to be!"

But so we again can highlight a difference between ***the Philosophy***, Dogma and Doctrine.

So, I guess … kind of Like Jesus … I find myself here trying to appease and assure You that „I am not come to dissolve the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them". … Hmm …

Food for Thought

Anyway … . Here it might be appropriate to call a certain word to mind, but let's play a little game first. So, instead of ‚the word', let's call it wordB. To say *wordB* in some undisclosed Language, so we're sure we have no idea what I'm talking about. Another word that comes to mind is *wordA*. The two may in some ways mean the same thing; Though eventually, I suppose, cultures develop an understanding that distinguishes the basic idea: „to do what is right" into different realizations of the idea. And it stands to reason, that this distinction is more pronounced when the ‚dominant' realization of the idea diverges more drastically from the intimate or personal understanding of it. Different cultures might also develop different relationships with either of the two; Say, if either wordA or wordB is more in tune with the general idea of ‚what is right', the respective other would be met with more negativity.

But still, the distinction is eventually sound enough for both terms to stand on their own; And possibly yield derivatives. In Biblical terms, the word *Righteousness* is the more prominent one. I certainly don't know much about any Biblical ideas about *Justice*.

Well. I suppose that Jesus' attitude concerning the Pharisees for instance could be read as an argument against Justice; Speaking of their ideas or ambitions to „do what is right" as somewhat twisted or misguided. And conversely is ‚the greater good' of Religion, I'd argue, a mostly intimate or personal one, therefore speaking of Righteousness. And when Justice fails – or the ideas of Justice become rotten – it is, at the end of the Day, Righteousness that would lead us back onto the right path.

Righteousness demands introspection of us. Whereas, when this process is externalized, there need be all sorts of „things" – codices, institutions, … mechanisms – in place, following some

mode of agreement, for it to be effective. At least that would be the idea behind having an objective standard to then hold one another to.

As a measure for a wicked society, we can look at ours today; Where Justice is frowned upon since we don't believe that those who are to uphold it really do so; And Righteousness is laughed at as though it were meaningless or uneffective. It could *only* be ineffective if society were twisted enough to not allow it to bear fruit, which would in turn be the fruit of a broken system of Justice.

But so did I mean to call the word *Justice* to mind; For rather than being the demand in ones self, it is the demand in society, or culture, or civilization to ‚do what is right'. Which, at this point, is to remind ourselves that all demand in ourselves is fine and all; But also lost if we can't have it mean anything. Or be externalized to a point of … *common Justice*.

And in part I would blame Pacifism – or some exaggerated, twisted idea thereof – as what is to be blamed for this *dystopian reality* we live in today. Well, *„is it so bad"*? It depends on who You ask, I guess. How easy it is to glance past its injustices. How strongly one is *encouraged* to go along with it.

It may very well turn out to be fine. But *when the moment comes*, it certainly depends on what kind of enemy You're facing. Whether there is a „*human heart*" beating in their chests, a sense of Righteousness or Justice to appeal to. But so we are appalled by people who resist with Force; We call them Terrorists or such; But honestly, what hopes could a Gandhi really have these days? In this day and age where elected politicians encourage their citizens to just „mow over" any kind of protester that might have some kind of „goodie two shoes righteous pacifistic agenda"?

And how might one retaliate against ignorance? What does it mean to mount a pacifistic opposition to that?

With a faith soaked burning heart You'd say: „Kay, come into the fold or szzzzt". No need for apologies. Just actions that speak to the *Enlightened* ear.

This word: ‚Ideology' however would be another one. Or ‚Principles'. All … and I mean it: Seriously good concepts – great ideas – but Ideology and Principles have a way of being somewhat narrow. Closed minded. Unable to deal with complex issues. They have a way of demanding a form of categorization of ideas that can get in the ways of developing a *more nuanced* understanding.

„Christians can't do business, for when a thief comes to rob them, they're supposed to forgive". Hence the Christian is fortunate when there is „the other" who is still willing to do the dirty work; Unless we're talking about *American Christians* I guess – who wouldn't recognize Christ even if it was the second coming. *Socialists* call them *Bootlickers*.

Yea, „no Fundamentalism is better than twisted Fundamentalism". Huh?
Obedience could be nice, if it weren't so easy to be selective about what to Obey.
…
Sorry. But my heart is sure yearning for a „Turntables" moment; But sadly there aren't any Tables to turn!

So, what forgiveness is there for a Thief? Sure, some foolish, juvenile delinquent might not be fully capable of grasping their actions – enough for one to think „Forgive them, for they do not know what they're doing" – but can You be so sure about it?

You might think of Salvation, divine retribution; Some eternal damnation they're unaware of – and yay. Possibly so. But this Judgment is reserved unto the Lord – and whether or not one forgives them should not have much of a bearing on it. If anything, it is to speak of ourselves; So that we can be with those that HE deems worthy – regardless of which transgressions they have been guilty of, in OUR eyes. And from the victim's perspective I would further agree, that

Righteousness cannot be first and foremost about seeking vengeance upon those that wronged You. But when someone else is being wronged; Would Righteousness not demand us to take action? And is collective Righteousness therefore not interested in *persecution*?

Is Justice not the idea, that there be a set of rules that is to govern these kinds of interactions? To say that theft is wrong and therefore impose a penalty upon those that are found guilty of it?

Yes, *worthy* is the soul that walks on Righteous paths even in a world of Wickedness.
„Needless to say“ …

Yay, „they“ may not know what they are doing – as they may not have properly weighed the wisdoms and truths of the divine; So in a society that has to ‚shrug‘ when confronted with questions as to its existence. But what now of a society that has to ‚shrug‘ when it comes to halting the transgressions of the wicked?

Yes it is said: „Give unto the King what is his“ – but what good is a King if their Kingdom is one of Darkness?

And certainly: If this is as a call to grab them torches and them pitchforks – then yay, let it be so, I say! But … yay … sigh … where to begin? With Yourself of course! But what if we start running in circles, because past ourselves there’s nothing more to do?

Well, it sure is a Mystery!
To me, yes, certainly. I have suggestions … there’s a logic that I deem self-evident which takes us from A to B to C and so on. And still … . It’s frustrating – kind of like watching „a noob“ play a Videogame where You know the path forward but they keep walking past it – time and time again – while shouting „where is the way forward?!?!?!“.
And while it sure may ignite embers within me that I would direct unto the medium I would watch this through; It wouldn’t really help. But someway, somehow … . Yes, sometimes patience is a virtue. And sometimes it’s a waste of time. Hmm … bad analogy. This sure isn’t a smooth ending to this.

But note: Not all retribution is the consequence of yielding for Your nether, primitive urges and desires. There sure are emotions in play that could be frowned upon – but the truths that feed them may certainly be ‚primal‘. Rather than „just primitive“. We should therefore not use „Higher Reasoning“ as an excuse to deny us the goods of justice, but as a tool to direct the destructive potential of our ignorance into something productive; Or at least into something collectively beneficial.

Anyway … I suppose I got a little heated up; So, I have to cool down before moving on. But then there’s the urge. The urge to … say: OK, this is good for now. I mean, I’m the type that eats their veggies first – to save the best for last. Given that the meal is finite and I can fit it all into my belly. For if the sauce were any better with the veggies in it, it would be prepared as such. And how enjoyable would the meal be, if I had to flush it down with vegetables? And yet there are moments, or situations that aren’t so easily cut. For when what is supposed to be – or at least capable of being – a fine meal is turned into torture, just for the sake of principles, it’s one of those moments where there is wisdom in lenience. For what do principles serve me, in those moments, other than misery?
Sure, so I say, it isn’t truly a fine meal – when it is so. At least not in that moment, for as far as personal factors are concerned. But as the purpose is that of nourishment – and nothing else is truly won or lost – then „excuse me“ for enjoying it the way I can!

And don’t worry; If Your taste or sensitivities aren’t as good or well developed as mine! It is Yours to say – and personal fortitude is a virtue. Certainly best served optimistically. Though sometimes too much optimism highlights the dire reality in a negative way – the courage of the heart is not always easy to come by. And when cheering up is as a fight against a pack of wolves, the silver lining can be the sword You need to get it done! … Hmm … Well. Even if there is such a thing as ‚too much honesty‘ – it still is as a solid ground to stand on.