

Issue content

Editorial 1

Adrián Slavkovský

An Interview with William Skudlarek: Interreligious Dialogue Emphasizes an Experiential Knowledge of Other Spiritual Paths 2

Martin Dojčár

The Issue of the Sex of a Conceived Child in Islam: From the Pre-Islamic Conceptions to the Current Methods of Genetic Selection of the Sexes 8

Monika Zaviš

Everybody Has a Connection Experience: Prevalence, Confusions, Interference, and Redefinition 16

Mike Sosteric

Patañjali's Kriya Yoga in the Rule of Saint Benedict 24

Mark Graceffo

Grand Faith 30

Sandó Kaisen

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Detail of Saint Benedict.

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Editorial

Recently, certain similarity in the attitudes of religious experience of different traditions appealed to me. I saw an older video recording of a brief instruction, in which at that time relatively young Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh was introducing a group of people to walking meditation. He suggested they should walk slowly as if they were the happiest people on Earth – as if the Pure Land had already become reality in them. Then they can in every step push such a stance into Earth and in this way contribute the Earth being pure and beautiful because by now it is far away from such a state.

The other day I was reading a passage from The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, from a tradition that is common to both Jews and Christians. Jeremiah says in it: *“For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, O Lord, save your people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth.”* (Jeremiah 31:7–8a). Jeremiah, in the name of God, provokes joy, singing aloud with gladness and exultation. After the first words of the appeal, we would expect that this is the way to celebrate the end of some tribulation or great gifting. But it follows from the sequel that the prophet appeals to joy not for what has already happened, but for what God yet promises.

Both approaches take seriously spiritual experience. The touch of transcendence, which both proponents have personally experienced, is offered to others as a possibility of openness for transcendent goodness and beauty, which can transform them and the world around them. Not as a technical guide, but as an attitude, in which we can prepare ourselves for such an experience that is not fully able to provide ourselves with and that, in these traditions, is referred to as the Pure Land, the Promised Land or the Kingdom of God.

These aspects of spirituality can also be found in this issue of Spirituality Studies. The interview with William Skudlarek and the Mark Graceffo article directly deal with the dialogue between different religious traditions. Texts of Mike Sosteric and Sandó Kaisen are, in turn, a similar challenge to openness for spiritual experience as Thich Nhat Hanh's and Jeremiah's exhorts.

I wish to you, dear readers, that reading of this issue would help you not only to understand academically the aspect of spiritual experience but also to contribute to your greater openness for transcendent hope, to a possibility to be happier people.



Cordially
Adrián Slavkovský