

THE AWAKENING

- a contribution to the healing of man's dilemma –

This has been difficult for me to put down on paper and make it available. It feels like getting undressed in front of eyes that – perhaps still filled with horrible and painful memories - and hearts still haunted by their own experiences and/or that of others - may look with hatred, blame and disgust on an entire nation that calls itself Germany, considering the content of their judgments to be of German origin and character. But here I stand.

I was born in Germany on Christmas in 1942 in a small village as the sixth of seven children to Christian parents who both loved and trusted God and not the Nazis or Nazi ideas. In our village there lived no Jews prior to the Holocaust, nor were there Jehovah witnesses or homosexuals that could have been sorted out, transported and killed. There was one severely retarded young man whom the Nazis miraculously never touched.

My parents were not political nor were they ever interested in any political activity or being in a political party. During the Nazi regime my mother quietly but sternly refused to send my older sisters to the *Bund Deutscher Mädchen* (girls group of the Hitler Youth) and she refused to accept the *Mutterkreuz* - the cross that was given to mothers who in Nazi perception produced children for the Reich. When she was ordered by the *Ortsgruppenleiter* –the local Nazi leader to re-name her two daughters, Esther and Ruth, and replace their "Jewish" names with names that were more "Arian", she refused that also. She was threatened at various times but never hurt.

My Father was drafted and because he had many children became an “office” soldier managing the soldiers’ payrolls. He often told us stories of how he managed to deceive *die Hitler-treuen* - those loyal to Hitler and how he deserted. However, to what degree he in fact cooperated I was never able to find out from him but I allowed for it. For as long as I knew him he hated, mistrusted and resisted *Obrigkeit* – authorities whether belonging to state or church and I often wondered what unforgiving towards himself caused it. My mother told me she knew about the transports of Jews from the nearest city (10 km) from hearsay as she never went there. She told me she had believed they were transported to work camps, and though she had strong feelings that this was unjust, she had not done anything about it but prayed. She accepted our later outrage over everyone’s silence and that no one had done anything and also accepted her own shortcomings (and our judgments) in sadness by letting us know that we may not know the degree of our own fears or passive hopes. She had focused on her life and survival in the village by herself with the six children she had by then without my father’s presence.

Far back into my childhood and as long as I can remember I felt burdened by an extreme sadness, which only subsided during and after I had a series of extraordinary experiences when I was around forty. Prior to these, Love had touched me deeply and had opened me to see beyond the manifested or physical world; I had recognized and knew from then on beyond doubt that Life was indeed eternal and death did not exist. Even though I trusted these experiences explicitly they did not prepare me for the involuntary deep and shocking visions that followed, which I experienced as extremely painful, even physically. Among other things these visions showed me again what I must have witnessed prior to my birth or incarnation in 1942. I saw man's insanity in his beliefs and actions throughout human history that culminated in WW II

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but were not caused by it. I became acutely aware of the pain that was in the country I had come into and in the people I was with that I had felt all my life. It was as though everything and everyone there had been saturated by it and needed release. The visions were very powerful and taught some profound Truths, which healed not only my experience but prepared me for living the Truth less afraid of destruction and death (my own and that of others) and physical violence. They did not prepare me, however, for experiences that followed later – though without the visions I wonder how I would have come through them. Here I need to go back a little.

In school we were not taught much of WW II history; all of the more current history was avoided in the earlier years after the war. Whether because of shame and guilt or whether everyone was too afraid to face up to it, face self or be caught as a former Nazi, I do not know. It may have been just simply due to a strong desire to breathe new air and leave behind whatever horror anyone had experienced, witnessed or participated in, even by being silent. I know today however that the fear of feeling all that is to feel causes all denial.

When I grew up I, too, like everyone else avoided looking closely at anything about the Holocaust. As a matter of fact I avoided to look at any other horrors of man's making like the persecution of *witches*, the crusades, the annihilation of the Natives of the Americas, black slavery. I tried to stay away from the horrors of apartheid in South Africa or the United States still present far into this century and beyond WW II, and even today still smoldering under the blanket of formal and surface integration, ready to break loose in any minor conflict. I also did not want to know about other wars, about the homeless, the hungry, the mentally and emotionally ill, the rejected and despised, because just thinking of them alone would already rip me apart. I thoroughly disliked the crucifixion story and was holding on to Christmas and Easter for dear life. The same anguish and anxiety caused me to avoid conflict of any kind. I tried to be good and do good and remove the "horrors" that I encountered out of my sight by efforts to fix them or ignore them and by practicing an oblivious tolerance. But eventually everything I had turned away from caught up with me and I decided to turn willingly towards that which I feared. I recognized that my fear of human feelings such as helplessness, failure, loneliness and not belonging, and especially my fear of all physical and emotional violence and suffering had become the warden of my inner jail.

When the movie Schindler's List came out I decided I had to face the Holocaust, no matter what it would do to me. Therefore I went to the theater the first day the movie was shown. However, at the start of the movie I experienced something I wasn't prepared for at all. But it reminded me of an experience I had had in Copenhagen where I lived for half a year at nineteen. I was walking with a Danish friend one day; we were speaking German. A stranger was about to pass us when he looked at me burning with hate, calling me a Nazi pig and spitting on me. At the time this made me very upset and I asked myself "what do *I* have to do with all that happened; I was only a toddler!" But I had not really asked it – it had been more of a defense and an attitude of "leave me alone!" or "don't blame me!" - What I experienced now in the Movie Theater was a hundredfold worse. By no means could I escape my feelings nor could I hold on to anything or anyone to make it go away. I was utterly and thoroughly exposed to feeling German or even Germany itself by the very thoughts and emotions of the the-

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ater visitors. I felt put on a screen and looked at by everyone in the audience with hatred and blame, I felt despised and looked down upon with an attitude of collective self-righteousness and a desire for revenge. I grasped instantaneously the experience of the Jews that had been hatefully looked down upon as Jews through centuries (and not only by Germans), or the experience of the blacks or whites in racial discrimination. The pain I experienced right then and there was so excruciating that I didn't see much of the movie at all. I could not stop crying. I eventually left the theater confused and, so it seemed to me, inconsolable.

A few days later I decided to go back and see the movie again and face its content. This time my "German syndrome" had disappeared and so had my feelings of guilt and shame. Now I experienced the deep suffering of the Jewish people: the anguish, the fears, their incredulity and hopes, and a deeply hidden but strong yet confused hatred against the Nazis that wanted to surface but remained suppressed to a degree that it didn't even show on my face. I experienced great discipline against the provocation of being aggressive and thereby risking *my life* and becoming vulnerable to the perpetrators and thereby I became my own suppressor and perpetrator. Again I cried repeatedly and much during the next days and the tears brought some relief but not enough. After these experiences I looked for documentaries of survivors and began to read what was available on the Holocaust. (I stayed away from purely academic material written by those who thought/wrote about the Holocaust without having been there). During that time I processed, i.e. experienced and went through a lot of anger and pain that I carried within. I experienced myself - and without seeming to have any choice about it - as switching between feeling (being) "Jewish" and feeling (being) a "Nazi". I was put into or took on – although I had not desired this – the role of the different and seemingly opposing (polar) identities and identifications that I could clearly distinguish as having certain emotional make-ups, perceptions, belief systems and fears. I experienced much blame and other forms of projection and also mutual feelings of being exclusive or excluded. And eventually I recognized the subtlety of human ways to avoid necessary and much needed human experience.

What remained was an awareness of something I feel I need to share, a message not only but also to my brothers and sisters who call themselves Jews. I am aware today that I am neither Nazi nor Jew, neither German nor American, neither Christian nor a member of any other religion, neither woman nor man, but an expression of the Divine. Yet I am considered a "goy", not one with. I became aware of the role of the "goy" (the gentile, the heathen, the other), the projection created and brought into form (not only in the Jewish tradition, yet there it got the name). As the "goy" I am excluded and devalued, considered separate, different, opposite, polar, the *other*, not *chosen* (not recognized as Self or one with) through centuries. Someone, the children should not play with, a son or daughter should not marry in order to keep the blood pure, the culture in tact, a family's reputation indisputable, and ones religious or philosophical views unquestioned. Someone, who is not given support, is not invited or welcomed, not visited because he is not "one of us" or does not believe the same things. As the "goy" I feel - though myself as a "goy" excluded - looked upon as a potential enemy that can threaten whatever has been established as safe, that can remind of a past unredeemed and a future feared. It made me wonder what the true source of hatred is and what it is that fosters the all too common human desire to project the undesirable in self upon some "other" and then to isolate or even eliminate the "threat".

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It also made me wonder whether my feeling of closeness to the Holocaust survivor Alexander Rosner has anything to do with this and in what way. In the book *Schindler's Legacy* he speaks of the obvious discrimination his Afro-American wife *and he* (for being married to her) experienced at the meeting of the Schindler Jews in Israel, expresses his having been against the creation of the Holocaust museum in Washington DC and says, as quoted:

"I don't believe that there is such a thing as a victim. How do I characterize people who came through the Holocaust? They were survivors. The people who didn't are dead. If there were victims there was no God. Which would you like to have? If there is no God, there is no justice. It rejects any higher consciousness. I believe this, based on my own experience. Each one of us, our present situation and condition, is a direct result of past action. We get what we deserve."

My experiences are awakening me to Truth. I have asked myself but now I also place this question before you: Who is your "goy"? What do you fear as threat to that which you consider to be safe? And then: what else could possibly be safe aside from GOD and His eternal Life and Love?

My body's safeness loses its importance and so does my desire to belong to anyone but GOD. I doubt today that man will learn a thing from history, be it personal or collective, *unless* it is applied to self. I know today that Life *in no form* is a punishment, yet man will reap what he has sown until he can surrender into, accept and become one with the unconditional, inclusive and eternal Love of God within all of His children, in whom He manifests, including Self.

Christa (1996)