

## Simon's Triangles talk January 2024

### “Triangles in the Rubble: Phoenix from the Ashes”

Just before Christmas my wife and I went to a wonderful performance of Handel's famous Oratorio, *The Messiah*. We do this nearly every year and are always really inspired by the sublime music – the various arias and famous choral passages such as the Hallelujah Chorus.

But this year we were sitting in seats very near the front of the auditorium, and the result of this was that we were able to pay particular attention to the words of the libretto. This was compiled by a colleague of Handel's called Charles Jennens. He extracted various passages from the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible and combined them into a formidable statement about the coming of the Christ. Of course, these texts and their setting by Handel need to be placed in the context of a deeply devout period in the evolution of Christianity. Nevertheless, the truths which they embody and point to are timeless and can be applied to most historical periods and especially to our own tumultuous time. We hear words like “But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire.” And “Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.” And we hear the bass soloist sing “Why do the nations so furiously rage together? and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed.” Later we also hear the bass sing “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”

We can gain a more global perspective of this by recognising that the foreknowledge of a coming world teacher is beautifully present in the scriptures of various world religions. For example, there is the famous passage from the Bhagavad Gita, which sounds such a similar note. It's the extract quoted by the Tibetan at the beginning of his book on the Reappearance of the Christ: “Whenever there is a withering of the law and an uprising of lawlessness on all sides, then I manifest Myself. For the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of such as do evil, for the firm establishing of the Law, I come to birth age after age.”

In our chaotic times we can perhaps go over the top and exaggerate how bad the world situation is. But who can today doubt the severity of the crises that humanity is facing and – let it be remembered – has largely brought upon itself? In fact that deep thinker, Iain McGilchrist, with many others I am sure, has termed what we are all facing as a “metacrisis”. We are being challenged on every front. Politics appears to be in an introspective self-serving mess. Malevolent leaders and would-be leaders who clearly do not have the good of the whole at heart are stirring up resurgent nationalisms and ethnic hatreds. We see the emergence of new and ruthlessly cruel dictators. Financially the world is cruising to a disaster on a lemming economy of a perpetual growth of consumption which our finite world simply cannot sustain. The state of the natural environment is causing major concern, though we should rejoice that so much is now being done to address this particular issue.

Then there are major conflicts in various parts of the world where leaders are pursuing their ends militarily, as they believe they can get away with it with impunity. And the reason for this is the breakdown in the diplomatic communications and relationship between the leading powers and the lack of moral and financial support for the UN as peacekeeper – a role which it fulfilled with great success in helping to resolve previous 20<sup>th</sup> century conflicts. This aspect of the UN's mandate is desperately needed now in so many places: Israel/Gaza, Yemen, Ukraine/Russia, Sudan and so on.

The reality is that the very foundations of our societies and institutions all around the world are being challenged and shaken – and rightly so. They are being examined before the bar of truth and justice. They are being assessed as to the values which motivate them. Are they the personality values of materialistic selfishness, or are they the values of the soul which are predominating? These of course are the values of compassion, of selfless love, the capacity to sacrifice for the good of the whole.

We can all get downhearted when we see the falsehoods, the cruelties, the lack of compassion, in particular, the use of highly mechanised and digitised war machines to impose selfish solutions on difficult national and international disputes.

But if we will only open our eyes we can also see people embodying the values of the soul busying away (largely unreported) to provide creative solutions to all of humanity's problems. This is a wonderful testament to the fact that wherever there is a problem the love of the human soul will work to provide a genuine and lasting healing. People everywhere are yearning for the truth, are longing to simply be able to trust each other again. We recognise people's basic needs for a safe environment in which to raise their children, and simple but essential things like the security of supplies of good food and water. We know and can be encouraged by the fact that people in their millions are joining together all around the world to make all these things possible, to remedy injustice, to nurture the environment, to educate our children into a world of beauty and awe at the wonder of the amazing universe we all live in, to recognise anew the beauty at the centre of all created forms that can be evoked.

We know that if forms crystallise and can no longer carry the reality and energy of the soul, then these forms will decay and rightfully die. Much of our present world structures come into this category. But although difficult, this death is ultimately benevolent. It happens so that new and better structures can be born and developed that will carry and transmit into the world the soul energies of a newly incarnating civilisation based more on the timeless spiritual values that we all know about, cherish and determine to embody in our daily lives.

The question we all have to face is how to come to terms with this dual reality. Someone recently wrote into the Arcane School the other day, and expressed it so beautifully. She said "We need to see what is being born and not what is dying."

All these disturbances can be likened to earthquakes. And these are events not just on the physical plane, but mental and emotional too. For example the tectonic plates of the mind – the thoughtforms that humanity viewed as so certain and stable and which would carry us all forward into a better future have ruptured and been exposed as false. Here are two examples: firstly the concept of a perpetually growing economy which I mentioned earlier, secondly the inviolability of the nation state with preserved national borders (should we call them barriers,

now, I wonder?). These mental shatterings are of course to be welcomed because it gives opportunity for something new and better to be born. But the powerful and the rich and those with vested interests in the status quo are fighting hard to prevent this happening, as we see only too clearly.

The emotional earthquakes – perhaps better thought of as tidal waves, or Tsunamis – affect us all as the collision between our collective unredeemed materialistic desires – an irresistible force – meets the immovable object of the material world that is unable to meet them. And then of course there are the solar plexus earthquakes of mass and intense emotional trauma that are directly affecting people in the many existent conflict zones. And they indirectly affect all of us around the world as we watch helplessly at the unfolding and almost unbelievable suffering of so many.

And then of course there are the physical plane earthquakes where landscapes are fractured and buildings – sometimes whole cities – are destroyed. Which reminds us that generally it is buildings that kill people – not earthquakes.

In this respect it is interesting to look at the earthquake that hit Christchurch in New Zealand's South Island in 2011. This 6.3 magnitude quake caused many buildings to collapse – and of course many people were killed. Now, one of the main buildings to be irretrievably damaged was the Anglican Cathedral. But what should capture our attention is an astonishing initiative that saw a new place of worship rise out of the rubble in a remarkably short time. It is called the Cardboard Cathedral and was designed by the Japanese architect Shigeru Ban. It opened in August 2013, just two years after the earthquake. He is known for his innovative work with paper, particularly recycled cardboard tubes which he uses to quickly and efficiently house disaster victims. Many of his notable designs are structures which are temporary, prefabricated, or incorporate inexpensive and unconventional materials in innovative ways.

But of particular interest to us is the shape of the church he designed. I hope you will be able to see an image of it on your screens now. As you can see it is a triangular structure. Of course its foundation is a square – most buildings are – but rising from this is the symbol of the triangle. And within the overall triangle is the west window which itself is a tapestry of triangles filled with colourful religious symbols.

To me this is such a beautiful and grounded image of what is humanly possible even in the most difficult of circumstances. And it seems to me that the triangles meditations that all of us participate in every day are providing the energy matrix for humanity to build out of the rubble of the dying world order something so new and so practical that it will become increasingly desired and increasingly possible.

And again, this on every plane. On the mental plane for example the triangle is a beautiful symbol of cooperative effort linking upward to the soul. Separateness is no longer a barrier but transmutes into a demonstration of shared diversity. Each unique part contributes to the kaleidoscope of beauty of the whole. On the emotional plane perhaps we can see the triangle as the path. It is wide in the foreground and tapers like an isosceles triangle to a one pointed aspiration towards the Buddhist dimension of the intuition. The astral pairs of apparently irreconcilable opposites that loom so large in the foreground eventually resolve into the unified reality of love-wisdom

Indeed, with the help of our world-wide triangles “we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” As Handel’s Messiah expressed it.

And as Roger Fry’s famous “Sleep of Prisoners” poem puts it:–

Thank God our time is now when wrong  
Comes up to face us everywhere,  
Never to leave us till we take  
The longest stride of soul men ever took.

Triangles, indeed, from the Rubble – and the human soul, phoenix-like, will rise again from the ashes of our present world disorder.