

Overcoming Despair: Open Soul, Hope in Dialogue

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Abstract:

According to Gabriel Marcel, no task is more important and more complex than looking for ways of confronting and overcoming despair. Therefore, the search for the essence of hope is the objective of this paper. Reference is made to the theme of the open soul in Henri Bergson's, Gabriel Marcel's, and Jan Patočka's works. Such a soul is not centred in itself; moreover, according to Marcel, hope and soul are intrinsically linked together. Hope opens people towards the future. The concept of hope in the biblical context is shown briefly, according to which hope is in God (Ps 62:5), while God is coming to man. At the same time, biblical texts sketch a pathway to hope setting out from suffering, through endurance and character (Rom 5:3–4). The paper stresses that hope takes root in dialogue and that a person is empowered to adopt hope as a gift.

Keywords: hope, open soul, dialogue, Gabriel Marcel, Jan Patočka, theological virtues, acceptance.

This paper is a contribution to the ontology of hope and the interpretation of hope as a concept of ethics. For that reason, while ontology is the 'study of being', the objective of this paper is the search for the essence of hope. In the 20th century, the philosophy of the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel was titled as the philosophy of hope.¹ Therefore, Marcel's interpretation of hope will be analysed on one hand, while on the other hand biblical terms of hope will be analysed, because Marcel's philosophy was entitled by Sartre as a Christian humanism, which was at first accepted by Marcel, but later Marcel preferred other names for his philosophical approach. Consequently, the question as a basis of this paper is: Can one find some similarities between Marcel's philosophy of hope and the biblical meaning of hope? Moreover, Marcel spoke about his philosophy as a concrete philosophy because he wanted to write about problems that really had been touching people during his lifetime. (Concrete philosophy is from Latin *con-cresco*, where the prefix 'con' is from the preposition 'cum' with the meaning 'with' and the verb 'crēscō' means 'I increase, rise, grow, thrive; multiply, augment' or 'I come to be' or 'I become visible, spring from, arise, come forth'). One can say that the philosophy of hope written by Gabriel Marcel was especially a practical philosophy of hope, that is, ethics of hope. Therefore, another question of this paper asks: Can one find some similarities in the ethics of hope by Gabriel Marcel and the ethics of hope that can

¹ Cf. JILL GRAPER HERNANDEZ, *Gabriel Marcel's Ethics of Hope: Evil, God, and Virtue*, London: Continuum, 2011. Cf. GABRIEL MARCEL, *K filosofii naděje*, transl. Věra Dvořáková, Miloslav Žilina, Praha: Vyšehrad, 1971.

be found in the Bible? Hope has been, of course, several times interpreted from the theological point of view as well as from the philosophical point of view. Josef Pieper or Jürgen Moltmann can be mentioned as thinkers of hope from the theological point of view in the 20th century. In this text, the aim is to find similarities in Marcel's philosophy of hope (and, potentially, others philosophers or thinkers of existence connected with Marcel's concepts) and some key notions of hope in biblical texts, therefore, different words concerning hope in the Bible will be considered and compared, in order to distinguish between them nuances that are reflected in the various concepts of human behaviour. In other words, the philosophy of hope by Marcel and significant notions of hope in the Bible are compared here, to see if there can be traced a phenomenon of hope as a concept of ethics discovered in Marcel's works as well as in the Bible.

1. Hope – What Does It Mean? Gabriel Marcel's Searching of Hope

Beginning with the question 'Hope – what is it?', by trying to find an answer to the fundament of hope, we can feel like Augustine² as he tried to find his answer to the question of 'What is time?' Obviously, we do know that we have hope, if we have it. However, by asking about its essence, we do not know what to say.

In his book entitled *Creative Fidelity*, Gabriel Marcel wrote the following: 'Unhope which is opposed to hope as fear is opposed to desire, is truly a death in life, a death anticipated. No problem is more important or more difficult than that of determining how we can overcome it.'³ Thus, according to this thinker, we should try to determine how we can surmount hopelessness or despair, which is anticipated death. Solving this problem is the most difficult but also the most important issue, because human life is not only a gift, but also a task: a task of living, not so much a task of dying. Gabriel Marcel called himself a neo-Socratic or a philosopher of the threshold,⁴ and – as it was said earlier in this text – his philosophy was called the philosophy of hope and concrete philosophy.⁵ He himself was convinced that loving someone means to tell him the following: 'Thou, thou shall not die',⁶ because 'the love of one person for another, seems to have as its basis the unconditional: »I shall continue to love you no matter what happens.«'⁷ In Marcel's works, hope is called a surge, a soaring leap, a protestation dictated by love, an appeal, 'a boundless recourse to an ally who is also love'⁸ or 'the very stuff of which our souls are made'.⁹ A human person should care for the soul, but he is not the creator of his soul, he is not a divine person. Therefore, the following is true as well: 'The only true authentic hope is one that relies on something that does not depend on us; hope's wellspring is humility, not pride, which consists in finding its strength in oneself alone.'¹⁰ In this sense, Henri Bergson, Gabriel Marcel, or Jan Patočka wrote about an open soul,¹¹ one which has not the centre in itself, but outside: 'Human life is not a life lived in and for

2 AUGUSTINE. Confessionum S. Augustini: Libri tredecim, (liber undecimus, caput XIV) p. 816, in © Jacques Paul MIGNE, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, volume 32, available at: https://books.google.cz/books?id=1hURAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA10&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false, cited 22nd November 2019.

3 Gabriel MARCEL, *Creative Fidelity*, transl. by Robert Rosthal, preface by Merold Westphal, New York: Fordham University Press, 2002, p. 54.

4 Cf. Gabriel MARCEL, *Thou Shall Not Die*, edited by Anne MARCEL, transl. by Katharine Rose Hanley, South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2009, p. 1.

5 Cf. MARCEL, *Creative Fidelity*, p. 79. Cf. MARCEL, *Thou Shall Not Die*, pp. 57–60.

6 MARCEL, *Thou Shall Not Die*, pp. 22, 64.

7 Ibid., p. 26, cf. p. 64. Cf. MARCEL, *Creative Fidelity*, pp. 136, 149.

8 MARCEL, *Thou Shall Not Die*, p. 55.

9 Ibid., p. 55.

10 Ibid., p. 57.

11 Cf. Jan PATOČKA, Comenius und die offene Seele, in: Jan PATOČKA, *Jan Amos Komenský. Gesammelte Schriften zur Comeniusforschung*, ed. Klaus SCHALLER, Bochum: Comeniusforschungsstelle im Institut für Pädagogik der Ruhr-Universität, 1981, pp. 414–421. Cf. Jan

itself; it is a living with others and with regard to them.¹² The concept of the open soul was shown as the opposite of the closed soul, which is the soul in the subject-object approach, developed by Descartes and described by Martin Buber as an I-It approach to the world.

Jan Patočka, as well as Gabriel Marcel, tried to turn from the subject-object approach to the world, the self, and other people. According to Patočka, finding this pathway to the change was connected with the aim of human life as genuinely human. For him, the aim of human life is freedom: 'its freedom [i.e., freedom of a human life] is in its innermost foundation the freedom of the undaunted. [...] Scales fall from the eyes of those set free, not that they might see something new but that they might see in a new way.'¹³ A change of form, transformation, a movement to freedom, an openness for the future¹⁴ or life in truth¹⁵ appears the most important to an open soul, and its living is exactly opposed to death. This movement is born by hope; and at the same time, hope is a movement, not a position or status. Hope is a movement of the open soul.

After World War II, Gabriel Marcel asked himself 'if hope couldn't be looked at, always, as an active reaction against a state of captivity. Perhaps we are only capable of hoping to the extent in which we first recognize ourselves as captives.'¹⁶ One of the interpretations of this statement about captivity might be to know that I am not as free as I would like to be and as I could be. Then, hope would be very close to a will to freedom. Such an interpretation would correspond to the following words of Gabriel Marcel: 'To hope is to carry within oneself the intimate assurance that, despite what appearances may be, the intolerable situation that is currently mine cannot be definitive; there must exist a way of escape.'¹⁷ Whereas Jan Patočka and Václav Havel wrote about 'the power of the powerless',¹⁸ in this context, Gabriel Marcel wrote about 'the arm of the disarmed': 'Distinctive to hope is perhaps not being able to directly use or enlist any technique. Hope is proper to beings who are disarmed; hope is the arm of the disarmed, or, more exactly, hope is the opposite of a weapon and it is mysteriously in this that its effectiveness resides.'¹⁹ Only acting according to some mastered methods, using already known and proven techniques and styles means to maintain a state of affairs, to remain in current horizons only. However, hope opens new horizons: truly new ones, which Henri Bergson not only taught his students, but also let them experience these in their own lives. For example, Emmanuel Levinas called it the spirituality of the new, of new and unique forms, 'otherwise than being'.²⁰ Hope is connected with newness, with open horizons, with the future. Hope was called the faith of future.

In the following, we can ask the next question about the significance of hope in the biblical context.

PATOČKA, *Komeniologické studie II*, ed. Věra SCHIFFEROVÁ, Praha: OIKOYMENH, 1998, pp. 337–351. Cf. Jan PATOČKA, *Co je Evropa – šest zlomků*, in: Jan PATOČKA, *Péče o duši III*, Praha: OIKOYMENH, 2002, pp. 482–483. Cf. MARCEL, *Creative Fidelity*, p. 189. Cf. Henri BERGSON, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, transl. by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002, pp. 38, 52, 58, 59, 63, 64. Cf. © PLATO, Republic, 518e, 521c, in: *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vols. 5 & 6, translated by Paul Shorey, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1969, available at: <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg030.perseus-eng1:7.518e>, cited 28th November 2019; <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg030.perseus-eng1:7.521c>, cited 28th November 2019.

12 Jan PATOČKA, *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem*, edited by Ivan CHVATÍK, Lubica UČNÍK, transl. by Erika Abrams, foreword by Ludwig Landgrebe, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2016, p. 55.

13 Jan PATOČKA, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. Erazim Kohák, ed. James Dodd, Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1996, pp. 39–40.

14 Cf. PATOČKA, *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem*, pp. 176, 179.

15 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 188–190. Cf. Jan PATOČKA, *Péče o duši I*, Praha: OIKOYMENH, 1996, p. 434.

16 MARCEL, *Thou Shall Not Die*, p. 54. Cf. MARCEL, *Creative Fidelity*, p. 146.

17 MARCEL, *Thou Shall Not Die*, p. 54.

18 © Václav HAVEL, *The Power of the Powerless*, transl. by Paul Wilson, *East European Politics and Societies* 2/2018, pp. 353–408. doi:10.1177/0888325418766625, available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0888325418766625>, cited 27th December 2019. Cf. PATOČKA, *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem*, p. 179.

19 MARCEL, *Thou Shall Not Die*, p. 54.

20 Cf. Emmanuel LEVINAS, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981.

2. Hope in the Biblical Context

What does the Bible say about hope? While two of the theological virtues, ἀγάπη (agapē, love) and πίστις (pistis, faith) are found in the New Testament 116 times²¹ and 244 times,²² respectively, ἐλπίς (elpis) – the Greek word for hope – can be found only 54 times.²³ In the Septuagint and in the Psalms, ἐλπίς (elpis) appears 74 times and 18 times respectively, while in Job, in Proverbs, and in Isaiah it occurs 13, 11, and 14 times, respectively (including eight times in one chapter: Isa. 28:4,5,10,13,15,17,18,19).

In the Septuagint – in Psalm 39, verse 5 (40:4) – ἐλπίς (elpis) appears in connection with the name of the Lord, whereas the opposite is *looking 'to vanities and lying fooleries'* (Ps 40:4 Charles Thomson version) or *regarding 'vanities and false frenzies'* (Brenton version). Clearly, ἐλπίς (elpis) is connected with sense, truth, and value here, while life without hope is linked with vanity, foolery, or falsity.

One of the Hebrew expressions for hope,²⁴ תוֹכֶלֶת (tokhelet), occurs six times in the Hebrew Bible. For example, the form תוֹכֶלֶת (tokhelet), can be found twice in the book of Proverbs (in 10:28 and 13:12), once in the context of another Hebrew expression for hope, i.e., תִּקְוָה (tiqwah; figuratively *expectation, longing*; literally a *cord, line* – Josh 2:18,21 – as an *attachment*),²⁵ and once in the context of desire (תַּאֲוָה, ta'awah).

The word תִּקְוָה (tiqwah) has 34 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible, mostly translated into English as hope, longing, or expectation (cf. מִקְוֶה, miqveh²⁶ – 'hope', cf. קָוָה, q-w-h²⁷ – 'to wait for', cf. יָחַל, y-kh-l²⁸ – 'to wait, await'). Later in this text, there is reference to one of these occurrences in Psalm 62.²⁹

Another Hebrew word translated into English as 'hope' is מִבְטָחָה (mivtakh).³⁰ In the Hebrew Bible this word has 15 occurrences, mostly translated into English as confidence, trust, secure (security), and likewise בִּטְחָה (betakh – security)³¹ with 42 occurrences. The Hebrew word מַחֲשֵׁה (makhashah³²), which means a shelter or a refuge, is also translated as hope at times, for example, in Jeremiah 17:17: 'Be not a terror unto me: thou *art* my hope in the day of evil'³³ or in Joel 3:16: 'The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD *will be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.'

The word שֶׁבַר (sever) is also translated into English as hope; one of the only two biblical occurrences³⁴ appears in Psalm 146:5, emphasising that 'hope is in the LORD'.

21 Cf. Webster Concordance (1833), Strong: G26, © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/greek/26.htm>, cited 1st June 2020.

22 Cf. Webster Concordance (1833), Strong: G4102, © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/greek/4102.htm>, cited 1st June 2020.

23 Cf. Webster Concordance (1833), Strong: G1680, © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/greek/1680.htm>, cited 1st June 2020.

24 See the word in the biblical concordance, for example, on © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/str/hebrew/8431.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

25 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/8615.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

26 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4723.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

27 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6960.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

28 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/str/hebrew/3176.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

29 Cf. Stefan M. ATTARD, *The Implications of Davidic Repentance: A Synchronic Analysis of Book 2 of the Psalter (Psalms 42–72)*, Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2016, Analecta biblica, 212, pp. 251, 255, where an extensive and inspirational biblical analysis is presented.

30 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4009.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

31 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/983.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

32 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4268.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

33 KJV: King James Version, © King James Bible Online, 2017, available at: <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org>, cited 22nd November 2019.

34 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/str/hebrew/7664.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

2.1 Ways Leading to Hope

In the biblical context, hope is in God: the Lord comes to us, as hope comes to us.³⁵ Besides that, in the New Testament, one can find a text describing yet another way to hope.

Paul in his Letter to the Romans (Rom 5:3–4) wrote about a way from θλίψις (thlipsis, tribulation, pressure) through ὑπομονή (hypomonē, patience) and δοκιμή (dokimē, proof, trial or experience) to ἐλπίς (elpis, hope). This place in the Bible, in this context about reconciliation, shows better than any other place the linkage of hope with crisis on the one hand and life on the other. Thus, one can say that without crisis, one cannot achieve hope in the full sense; one cannot find hope as linked to any other subject or object without crisis or pressure. Pressure as part of a crisis cleanses or purifies us from our wishes, desires that have nothing to do with hope – on the contrary, they prevent us from living with hope.

2.2 Hope and Confidence or Trust

In some theological reference books, hope and confidence are presented as synonyms.³⁶ Let us determine whether there is some difference between hope and confidence. Confidence goes together with something or someone; it cannot be without a subject or object. Confidence is placed in someone or something. Hope can be connected with someone or something, too. However, hope is more than confidence in someone. Here, we mean hope in the sense of something that can be there even though we know that our physical death is imminent: hope as the environment which gives us purpose even at life's end; hope which comes to us from the outside and is neither subjective nor objective; hope which is not only a human feeling, but something which gives us a reason to live.

Contrary to English, the verb 'to hope' does not come from the same root as the noun in some languages, for example, in Czech. This fact I interpret to mean that we, as human beings, cannot hope without help from the outside. We cannot 'have' hope in the sense of an object; we can only live in hope as in an environment. Hope comes to us as human beings; we cannot but open up our hearts to hope or to close them. Likewise, we can see the interpretation of the meaning of the verb 'to hope' in *HELPS word-studies: 'actively waiting for God's fulfilment about the faith He has inbired through the power of His love'*.³⁷ According to this interpretation, all three *virtutes infusae* (i.e., faith, hope, and love) are connected here.³⁸

Hope and trust are referred to also as synonyms in some theological reference books.³⁹ Does trust originate from hope? Does it mean that firstly hope is given to us and then our hearts are changed and trust comes as a result? In my opinion, hope and trust can be connected as hope and confidence are; however, trust is something which comes from within.

In confidence or trust, we rely on someone or something. However, hope does not entail such reliance, implying 'our' actions, techniques, or powers.

35 Cf. Jürgen MOLTSMANN. *The Spirit of Hope: Theology for a World in Peril*. Westminster: Westminster John Knox Press, 2019. Cf. M. Douglas MEEKS (ed.) *Jürgen Moltmann and the Work of Hope: The Future of Christian Theology*. United States: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

36 Cf. *English Strong's Lexicon or Greek Lexicon IPD (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)*, © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/greek/1680.htm>, cited 1st June 2020.

37 HELPS Word-studies, 2011, © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/1679.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

38 Cf. Josef PIEPER. *Faith, Hope, Love*. Ignatius Press, 2011. Cf. Josef PIEPER. *On Hope*. Ignatius Press, 2011.

39 Cf. *English Strong's Lexicon or Greek Lexicon IPD (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)*, © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/greek/1679.htm>, cited 1st June 2020.

2.3 Hope and Longing, Desire or Yearning (Craving, Urge)

Hope comes from outside and only through patience, not from inside. However, by longing, desire, yearning, craving, or urge, which come from within to the outside, there is a certain urgency. This circumstance can be observed well in Proverbs 19:18,⁴⁰ where hope (תִּקְוָה, tiqwah) and desire appear as opposites. As for the latter ('desire'), the Hebrew text uses the form of נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh),⁴¹ a word entailing a living being with blood and breath, referring to inner life – mostly translated as soul, living being, life, self, person, desire, passion, appetite, or emotion. On the other hand, the former ('hope') comes from without, as one can see very well in Psalm 62:5: 'My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him.' (NASB, cf. ESV, NABRE).⁴²

2.4 Hope and Acceptance

Hope is a gift: a gift that is waiting for acceptance, yet which can remain unaccepted. A gift is a call. A gift is something to respond to, an urge for being responsive, a gift without acceptance is not a gift anymore; hope is a gift for someone specific, not for anyone. Hope is dialogical; hope does not exist with no one accepting it. However, at the same time, hope comes from patience. If one longs for acceptance, yet it does not come, it hurts and one can feel anxiety, distress. Like the psalmist without response from God (cf. Ps 42:10–11; 44:10–27) we can feel the night of faith (cf. Ps 32:3–4). However, if there is great love, which is the psalmist's *only* force, then he can hope for the day, for God's response (cf. Ps 40:2–4). Here we can see how love and hope are interconnected (of course, all three theological virtues come together). There is hope that neither anxiety nor distress will have the last word. As human beings, are we a gift, too? Are we dialogical beings as a gift for someone? Can or should we wait for a response?

The griefs and anxieties of people can be shared. In its initial words, *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council, says that the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age are the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ, as well as the joys and the hopes of the men of this age are the joys and hopes of the followers of Christ.⁴³

As the apostle Paul wrote about hope in his Letter to the Romans, there is a connection between sins on the one hand and the death of Christ, the Son of God, on the other (Rom 5:6,8), as well as between His Resurrection and the object of faith and hope (Rom 6:5,8–11, cf. 1 Cor 15:17). However, this hope is not only for this life *hic et nunc*, here and now. If the hope of Christians would be only for this life, they would be the most pitied of all men as Paul puts it in his First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:19).

With the possibility of acceptance, with openness to the world, to others, to God, with this potential for dialogue, comes hope that life is not in vain, that life can be meaningful, good, precious, valuable. The value of life, like other values, originates from its potential to being offered in exchange; the value of life is in its convertibility, which means in acceptability. If we could not be accepted, if we could not stay in dialogue, then life would be senseless, worthless, futile.

40 Cf. Proverbs 19:18, © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/texts/proverbs/19-18.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

41 © Bible Hub, available at: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/5315.htm>, cited 22nd November 2019.

42 NASB: © the New American Standard Bible version, available at: <https://nasb.literalword.com/?h=5&q=Psalm+62>, cited 22nd December 2019, cf. ESV: © English Standard Version, available at: <https://www.esv.org/Psalm+62/>, cited 22nd December 2019, cf. NABRE: the New © American Bible, Revised Edition, available at: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/psalms/62>, cited 22nd December 2019.

43 GS 1, © Pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world *Gaudium et spes* promulgated by his holiness, Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965, available at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html, cited 22nd December 2019. In my opinion, here, for 'the joys and hopes' the insertion 'especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted' is of utmost importance.

Without the possibility of genuine acceptance, without the potential to give and take, without openness to others who are different, there could be neither communities nor families, brotherhood nor fraternity.

3. Comparison: Marcel's and Biblical Concepts of Hope

In the first part of this text, hope was described according to Gabriel Marcel. In the second part, there were noted some significant interpretations of hope in the Bible. In this section of the text, the question to be considered is: Can there be traced a phenomenon of hope as a concept of ethics discovered in Marcel's works as well as in the Bible?

Marcel wrote about the capability of hoping to the extent to which one first recognises himself as captive. In the Letter to the Romans, there is described a way from tribulation through patience and experience to hope. One can see here the similarity of potential hope in a critical situation, during an examination of troubles and suffering. However, recognising oneself in that situation is only the first step.

Then, in the second step, one must avoid all techniques and accept being disarmed, because hope is the arm of the disarmed, as we know from Gabriel Marcel. When the biblical psalmist waits in silence for God only, hope comes from God. The silence of the psalmist's soul can be compared with a disarmed man, with man who denies the subject-object approach, who evades or refuses all techniques. However, even then, it is not certain that one will receive hope.

In addition to this, hope is a gift. Marcel wrote about the authentic hope that relies on something that does not depend on us. Likewise, in Psalm 40:2–4 or 62:5, one can see that hope is a gift from God.

Lastly, if the soul of the psalmist were closed, he could not receive hope. There can be no dialogue and no hope without the open soul, without the possibility to give and take. According to Gabriel Marcel, to hope is to carry the assurance that there must exist a way of escape, that the intolerable situation cannot be definitive. Similarly, Job was deprived of his own hope, but he hoped for God (cf. Job 19:10,25–26). In the same way, the psalmist felt turmoil in the soul, but his hope was in God (cf. Ps 42:5,11; 43:5). In crisis, troubles or suffering, the closedness of the soul can be changed by something that does not depend on us, by someone who calls us (cf. Ps 119:43,74,81,114,147; 130:5), who comes to us as hope (cf. Joel 3:16). In this change, our longings and desires prove insufficient, the only hope is now able to enable us to live (cf. Prov 19:18,21).

One can see it is possible to perceive a phenomenon of hope as a concept of ethics discovered in Marcel's works in some similarities to the significant biblical notes about hope. However, Gabriel Marcel tried to describe a path to hope from the human point of view, with philosophical language, whereas the Bible is a testimony of the revelation of God to man, with the language of the testimony of God's dialogue to man.

Conclusion

Only as dialogical beings with an open soul can we try to overcome hopelessness or despair, that which Gabriel Marcel called 'death in life'. Only with hope can we truly open up our hearts and try to understand each other.

If we do not feel hope, it means that we are not in con-tact,⁴⁴ that we are not in a truly living

44 Contact: from Latin 'contāctus', 'con' – with, together, 'tāctus' – a touch, 'tangere' – to touch.

community, and help is needed. Without living in community, in dialogue, without the communication of our joys, hopes, griefs, and anxieties, we can feel isolated, alone.

However, living in the world, we are never absolutely alone, we are never absolutely without the possibility of openness, we can always ask for help. Even in our nights of faith or trust, according to psalmist, hope can be given to us. Perhaps just there and then, during our deepest crises, the giver of hope is closest to us, as mercy, as Love bowing to us, as hope, both coming as well as waiting for our openness, for the conversion of Self (or ego) to a dialogical being.

As human beings, we can be open to the acceptance of a gift of hope. This hope is not an object. We live in hope, just as we live in freedom; likewise, we are encouraged to live in truth. In fact, we do not 'have' hope, meaning we never own hope, as well as we neither own truth nor freedom. We can live in hope as in an environment that is truly vital.

One can find some similarities in the ethics of hope by Gabriel Marcel and the ethics of hope that can be found in the Bible. Genuine hope comes in a critical situation, during troubles and suffering. Hope is the arm of the disarmed, of those who avoid all techniques and all their own desires and can receive hope as a gift vis-à-vis the open soul.

Hope comes in dialogue, in living contact through the word, which can build a community where people can share the most precious values, love, faith, hope, but also pain, misery, despair. The true living, communicating community which lives by the belief that we can share the logos (the principle of creation), that we are accepted and can live, move and have our being in God (Acts 17:28), such a dialogical community can be an environment of hope.

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