



The new
concept:

god(?)

Sorry for the spelling or translation errors, English is not my native language. Let me know if there is someone who wants to correct the text. I will be very grateful for it. Thanks in advance.

Foreword

We live in the 21st century, but you wouldn't say it. The representatives of different religions still kill each other. What is the cause of this fanaticism? Propagating a belief is one thing, but why goes this in a number of cases along with murder and manslaughter? Is it possible that these believers think that they are the owners of the true religion and the only religion? Or is there something more to it? Maybe it's the doubt as to the own religion or something else? It is absurd and despicable human behaviour that you should expect in the Stone Age, but not in the 21st century. It is therefore time to look for something else, where no violence occurs, and what ought to be peace loving. Something else to which you do not have to **doubt**, but what you **know for sure**. And where you find **grip** and **support**.

In the following pages I will explain my vision. It is a simple and readily understandable vision; it gives a place for the **questions of life** (*). Regardless of tradition and religion teaches us with fresh eyes to look around and find solutions for (life) questions that concern us. Secondly this vision gives guidance, support and solace in a number of cases that are important to everyone.

It is a vision in which we are all shepherd and sheep at the same time; where no hierarchical organization is involved and together we determine the values and adopt the laws in a democratic manner.



It is not about whether or not there is evidence of God. It concerns me much more about the questions of life, not so much to answer questions of life, but to give them a place. This creates peace and ensures a certain degree of grip. It's like a candy: if you know in which the drawer [= god(?)] the candy is, it gives you a more satisfying feeling than you do not know whether a candy [= God] exists or not.

In my analysis I go into how faith (of all religions) handles the translation of questions of life. Thereby, I involve issues related to faith, such as the norms, values and laws that are propagated by the religious organizations (the representatives of the religions). These institutions claiming the existence of God and are pointing for the evidence of their words to the ancient writings (i.e.: the Bible, Torah, Koran etc.). And that's not all. They instruct their believers by which norms and values they should live and what laws they must obey. Their ancient writings are leading. In addition, reli-



gious organizations are highly structured hierarchically. The mixture of ancient sources and a hierarchical structure guarantee conservative institutions that have more attention to traditions than to contemporary changes.

For believers it isn't easy to turn away from these conservative organizations (mosque, temple, synagogue, etc.). After all, the religions provide answers to the questions of life, provide support and guidance in shaping their lives, give solace and encourage them when needed.

In short, God (and his representatives on earth) is the shepherd and the flock need only follow.

This is a reassuring situation. And as long as there is enough grass and they keep the wolves away, there is little wrong with it. Problems will arise if the grass runs out, or a neighbouring herd has other habits. More serious it is when one flock is pitted against the other. Reprehensible is the changing of sheep in wolves. We all know the examples.

(*) **questions of live** (important questions in our life that concerns us), like: where we come from; what is infinity; what existed before the begin of the universe; etc.?

Introduction

I believe it

“Tomorrow it will be going better, I *believe*.”

“Do you know that for sure or do you only *believe* it?”

“Surely, you never know it, I *believe* it.”

I’m asking you this, because the word ‘**believe**’ has two meanings: first, ‘*not knowing for sure*’ and second, the word ‘*believe*’, as a religious understanding: (quote)(*) believe, including one of the many forms of meaningfulness, or the search



for meaningful connections, usually with a central place for a higher power, a Supreme Being or god. (end quote). In this last sense the word ‘believe’ has an opposite meaning. Believers speak of a belief, while they know it for sure. They are so sure of their belief, that they mention representatives of another religion as infidels or pagans. It even goes so far that they in a number of cases attack those infidels not only in word but also be physically. Think of the persecution of the Christians in the Roman times, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the iconoclastic, the struggle in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants and recently the **jihad**.

(*) Source Wikipedia (<https://nl.wikipedia.org/>)

Where does all this anger come from? What inspires the religious: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and other religious groups to attack dissenters? Because of the use of other rituals? Because of the social and/or economic backwardness that one group of believers has compared to the other? Because one group has the power and the others are just the servants? Or is it to suppress their doubts about their own faith? God may know.

Moreover: I’m not looking for causes, but I’m seeking for solutions.

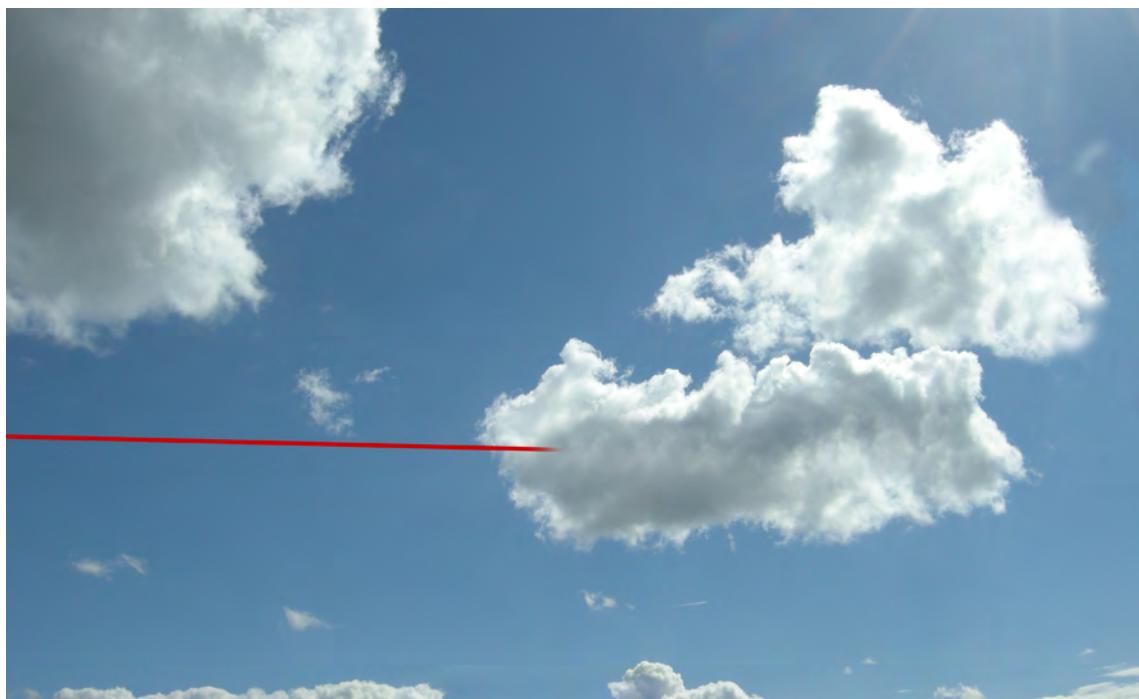
In any case we see throughout the centuries that one religion repress another one. In

the name of God they kill the other ones.

But didn't they proclaim at the same time that God is there for us all? There must be something wrong.

Back to the word '*believe*'. As has been said: no one doubts the meaning of the word '*believe*' as '*to be not sure about something*'. However, as soon as the meaning of '*believe*' is linked to a religion, the meaning is changing from '*not sure know*' in '*conviction*'.

Surely there must be something with that meaning over the centuries have gone error. That's why I want to redefine a thing, if it's only to prevent more bloodshed. (That's probably wishful thinking, because history shows that anyone who holds a different view about the existing religion, at least is smeared with pitch and feathers and is exiled to faraway places where the 'demonic words' no longer be heard. I've already packed my bags.)



Vision

A new concept: god(?)

There are many questions that we do not know how to respond. Many people find - for the answer to these questions - support in a religion. I find the answer not in a religion but inside myself. Actually I find no answer, because I know the answer isn't (yet) available. No, I give that question a place and I do so with the following definition.

Definition: *anything I don't understand, all I may not contain, I call 'god(?)'.*

That I write with a lowercase 'g' and a question mark to indicate that the concept of *god(?)* is a set of questions. This is so not the Supreme Being with the same name, but a concept. The 'concept of *god(?)*' or simply '*god(?)*' means: *I don't know (yet)*. Let me mention the concept of 'infinity' as an example. Infinity, we can't hardly imagine what it implies. Our brains are probably not adequate enough to contain

that notion. I can continue. There's still so much that we (still) cannot understand or of which we only have some vague ideas: how is the universe arise and what exists there for that time; how is it possible that out of dead matter arises life; what is the explanation for such a diversity of life on this planet; what is gravity exactly? And so on. All those questions I call *god(?)*.

The questions that keep us busy today, maybe getting an answer 'tomorrow'. That doesn't mean that *god(?)* lost its meaning. On the contrary, this brings us a step closer to *god(?)*.



This new *concept: god(?)* makes life a lot easier. We don't need a church, mosque, synagogue, temple etc. Nor we need a religious organization that tells us where we come from and how the world works. We don't need these organizations to tell us for all what we have to do to become a good person. We can do that ourselves as educators and if we don't know it, we ask pedagogues for assistance. We need no longer the help of popes, pastors, priests, rabbis, ayatollahs, muftis or any clergy for the determination of our standards and values.

What a freedom, but also: what a (own) responsibility. With the concept of *god(?)* we are forced to think about ourselves about how everything works and we don't need to follow anymore the centuries-old rules of religions. In short, if we cannot contain something, we call it simply *god(?)*. From now on we call all questions without an answer: '*god(?)*'. We know one thing for sure: this collection of unanswered questions, exists. This brings us to the following statement:

Statement: *god(?) exists.*

Revolution?

Is this vision a prelude to a revolution? Yes, in a sense: a revolution in consciousness, but not a revolution in the sense of a (violent) revolution. This vision is simple and understandable, but that does not mean that the final consequences can be

extremely complicated and far-reaching, because it could mean the end of the religions.

Initially, this vision is just an attempt to take a fresh glance around us and to seek solutions to the important questions in our life (issues of life) that concern us.

Secondly, this vision gives a guidance, support and solace in many cases.

The religions also offer solutions, guidance and solace, but they provide a different answer (proclaim another messages). In addition, the followers of religions in the past and unfortunately also in the present are too often guilty of excesses that led not to the solution of our life issues. These excesses evoke more questions than that they provide solutions. That's why we put the religions in the waiting room.

Is this vision a new religion? On the contrary, it is not a *new faith*; it is a *new certainty*. Will this vision take over the position of the religions? Hopefully yes, although, it is a vision that does not need to be spread with violence. However, it will not directly replace the current religions. After all, the existing religions are very deeply rooted in our existence and their representatives will not specify their faith soon.



Existing religions

Now follows a few examples why the religions will not quickly swap their position for a peaceful vision. Here are some examples.

The Holy Scriptures

Religious extract their faith from their writings. It will still take a while before they will look at their holy books on another way. Just as admittedly engaging, but ancient writings from the distant past. The step to estimate these ancient scriptures into perspective when it comes to establishing the guiding principle in life will be a giant

step for religious. Because they judge these Scriptures as sacred and inviolable. For me these old books are wise scriptures but dated, where it comes to determining current values and standards.

Hierarchy

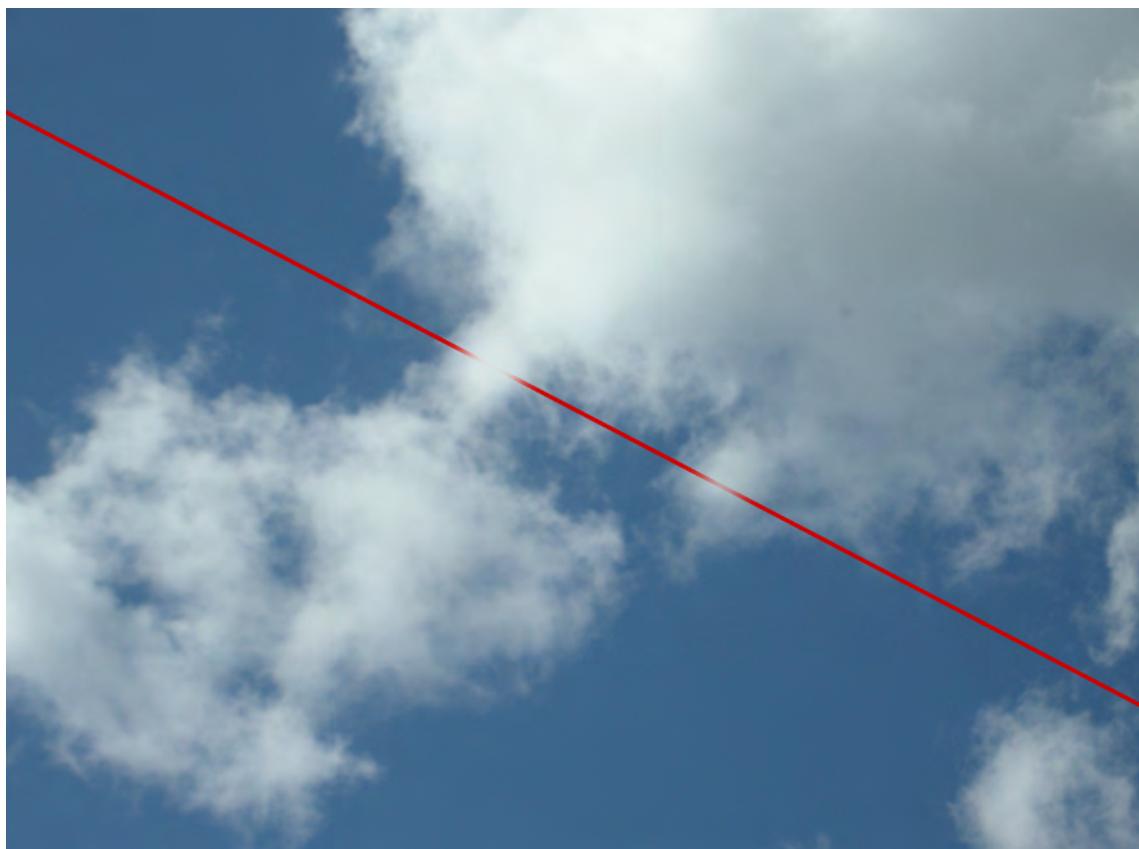
Those in power within the hierarchy of religions don't want give up so quickly their major positions within their faith communities. My vision needs no institutions (read: Church, Temple, Mosque, Synagogue, etc.) and thus no representatives in a hierarchy of an organisation.

Orthodox

In particular orthodox believers are not open to other ideas. They attach rather to tradition.

Radicals

Radicals don't think, but follow their leaders. They are willing to use violence as their leader gives the instruction.



God(?) exists

Well, now we know that *god(?)* exists, but where do we get our standards and values? What gives us direction in life? What's our handhold? We must have a number of starting points, where everyone has to keep. Those principles are there already. We only need to test them whether they are still up to date.

Handhold

Religions over the centuries are a large handhold to humans. We are looking for support with it and find solace. Our values are checked against the value and standards of our faith community. There is not much wrong with it. It is only wrong if

those values and standards no longer correspond with common values and standards, or deviate from the values and standards that are used elsewhere. This creates differences and that in turn causes disputes.

In that case, the solution lies not in the interpretation of writings from thousands of years ago. Written down by wise men, no doubt about that (Unfortunately, I have never heard that women also have contributed). But it is more obvious that we determine the values and standards in the light of the present times and that we do this together. Jointly by men and women from all countries.

This requires capturing of principles and - as said - those are there already: I call the universal human rights, laid down in the manifesto of the United Nations (see: appendix 2). Furthermore I mention the writings of the various religions.

These writings are the basis of constitutions and laws that appear in the civil codes of many countries.

I blow the dust away and open one of those ancient scriptures: the Bible.

Many values and norms find their origin in the 'ten commandments' or other commandments of other religions. Therefore, it might be interesting to draw attention to this commandments and to compare them with the new concept: god(?).

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are deeply embedded in our daily lives and include the basis of our civil code. For believers these commandments or laws are so obvious that they



are hardly wonder themselves what they actually mean. Even better: believers go even every discussion out of the way by saying that the Ten Commandments are part of the Holy Scriptures and hence sacred and absolute. That they are beyond any discussion. That keeps me not against to see how up to date this Ten Commandments still are? Are they ripe for the fine-tooth comb, the pruning knife, have we need a bulldozer or

can we leave them unchanged?

Starting point for this analysis is my new concept: god(?), without thinking of any religion at all.

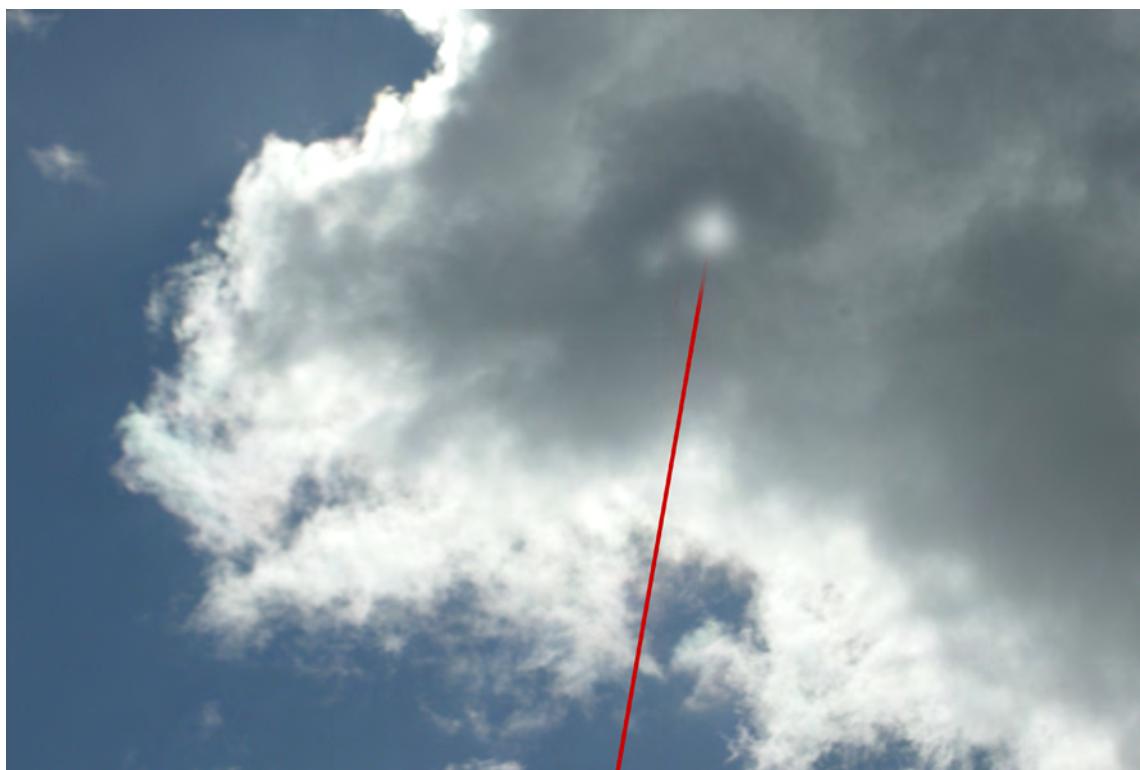
Furthermore, I have as an example of the Ten Commandments rather randomly chosen for a translation of the King James Bible, by Wikipedia. I also could choose for a different version (translation): but, for my analysis it doesn't matter.

(*) <https://en.wikipedia.org/>

We start, as a reminder, and for the readers that are not as versed in the Ten Commandments.

King James Bible

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the



house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet (neighbor's house),
Thou shalt not covet (neighbor's wife),
Thou shalt not covet (neighbor's servants, animals, or anything else).

Source: Exodus 20:1-17, translation: King James Bible from the 17th century.

We're going to see the commandments one by one.

The first commandment

The Christian faith (and not only that faith) assumes that God is the only true God. It is the Almighty and omniscient God. Is it not strange that He in his infinite wisdom concerned to the competition? If he is the creator and director of this all than he has little to fear from what other God that lives in the consciousness of any living



creature. The first commandment can be described as an admission of weakness resulting from the fear to loose power in a competitive battle. That is not consistent with the image of the Almighty God.

Of course, out of historical and human point of view, this first commandment is understandable. Spreading the doctrine at the introduction of a new religion, you have to beat the competition (the existing religion) or at least you have to manoeuvre them on a side track. It is obvious that this commandment is inspired not by the Supreme Being, but is emergence out of the thought of the propagators of the religion from the past. It only serves the purpose of the supremacy of the religion or the supremacy of the church community in those days.

This commandment stands even at odds with the universal human rights (see: appendix 3, article 18).

As regards the new concept: god(?): every man will add other subjects to his or her god(?). So god(?) will be different for every human being. The first commandment is so at odds with the new meaning of god(?). We delete that first commandment.

The second commandment

This commandment doesn't exist in the Catholic commandments. Catholics don't have problems with the manufacturing of a depicting, and rightly so. Because God

don't care about if He is honoured with or without an image. In his supreme wisdom he will accept that some mortals need a tangible image in order to worship Him. Others will worship God without a tangible image: it doesn't matter. The making of an image or the imagination in ones mind, can't be seen as a mortal sin and certainly is no undermining of the faith.

Also this commandment seems to be dictated in the distant past to stand out from the competition. A typical 'by human created' commandment and in this time of no use. Delete that second commandment.

As regards the new concept: god(?). It is located anterior to the hand that mankind constructs or imagines an image of what he does not understand or may contain. Perhaps helps such an image as an effort in the right direction to understand it. It therefore belongs not at home in the commandments, but would be in a different place helpful as an encouragement. Something like: we recommend everyone to make an image to learn more of the concept of god(?).

We come to the third commandment

Of course no one likes it when someone shouts your name if he beats on his thumb



with a hammer. Obviously it is unpleasant to hear your name when someone is fond of anger. Those are human emotions. The cry, what am I saying, the yell of a name is just air displacement along a larynx at a given state of the tongue and oral cavity. Air, larynx, oral cavity and tongue those - as the religion says - are created by God. It will not bother Him in His endless wisdom, in fact: he will turn his other ear to the yelling human being for even more imprecations (free interpretation of Matthew 5:39).

These are just words that are pronounced in a fit of anger or pain. The infinitely wise God will see these words in its perspective. The priest or predecessor, on the other hand (in his strive for a harmonious society) will disapprove the link with the name of God as a shocking behaviour.

Everything points here on a by humans created commandment. Finally, we look to the weight of this commandment 'thou shalt not curse'. We compare it with the commandment 'thou shalt not kill'. Then we can say that the first non outweighs the latter. I therefore propose to remove this commandment from the Ten Commandments and move it as a customary code to the 'Big Book of Etiquette'.

Also in the light of the new concept: god(?) there is no problem if someone hits his thumb with a hammer to yell out 'god(?)'. But bystanders will be surprised: after all, you may assume that the victim understands and knows where the pain comes from. Therefore he uses the concept of god(?) on a wrong manner.

The fourth commandment

Six days work and a day's rest. It looks like a requirement of the Trade Union. For centuries, people couldn't comply with this mandatory commandment because of appalling living conditions. And still nowadays it is sometimes bitter need to do at least some work all seven days of the week. That is without prejudice to that man has the need to rest. Now that is enshrined in the Charter of universal human rights of the United Nations (article 24) it is no longer need to mention it. Later in this presentation, we come back to this subject with the introduction of a new commandment. This commandment can be deleted.



The fifth commandment

Why is this commandment limited to just the father and the mother, need they extra protection? Has not each individual need for honour and/or respect? Respect, I find it a better word in this context. Every living thing needs to be treated with respect. And what about the environment? Should we not ensure that both plants, animals and even humans do not perish by human activity?

The command is then: You should responsibly deal with nature, especially with your environment and you have to respect every living being, particularly your fellow man.

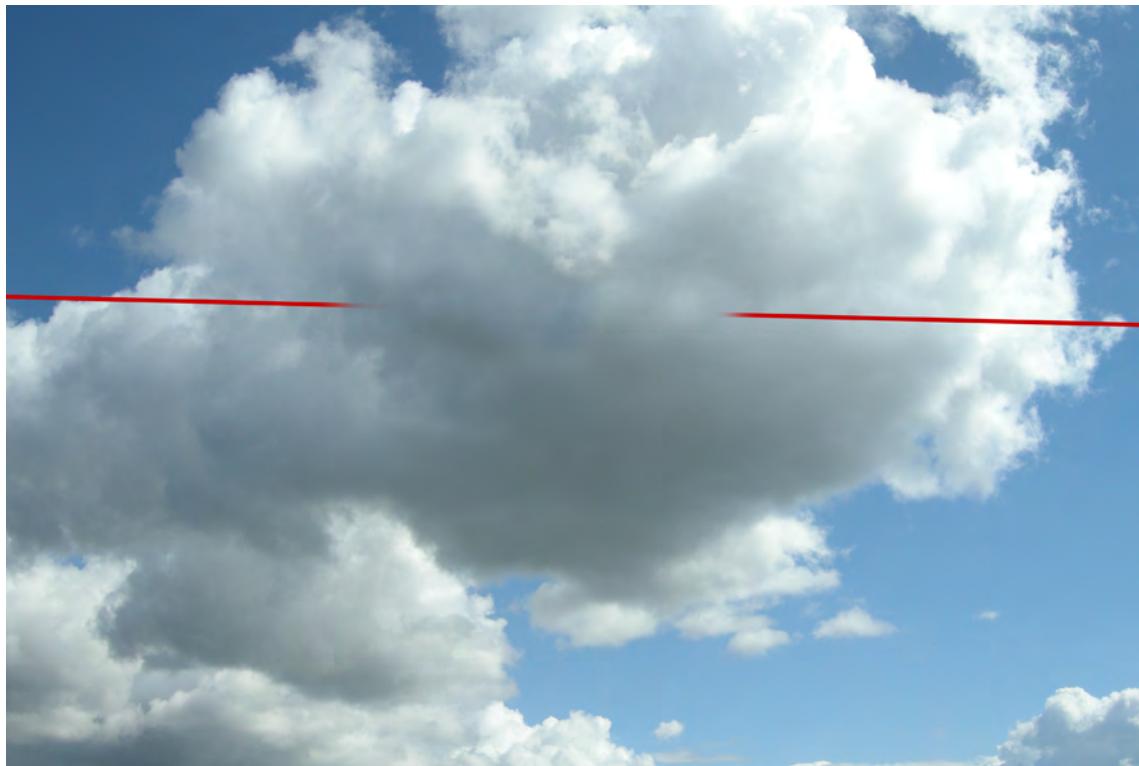
The sixth commandment

This commandment is still up to date. This commandment we fill on with the following addition: don't inflict pain (both physical and mental).

The commandment becomes: you will not kill or inflict pain (both physical and mental).

The seventh commandment

I sit there with it. Commit adultery or - in the broader sense of the word - to leave your partner if you don't see any perspective in your relationship. It is a typical



time-related phenomenon. In the past a divorce was an act that was to compare with an attempt of murder: spouses were dependent on each other. If one of the spouses was died, they immediately started to search a new spouse. Out of sheer necessity. Usually within a year they were remarried. The man worked on the land and the wife took care of the food and the children. The children were in turn for the spouses their insurance for their pensions.

But in these times of prosperity has the ending of a relationship - especially if there are no children - no far-reaching effects, with the result that only few couples stay together for a lifetime.

In short, a fashionable commandment that clearly is not dictated by the Supreme Being but is emerged out of the human mind. I'd to say: put it in the refrigerator until the moment that times are changing.

The eighth commandment

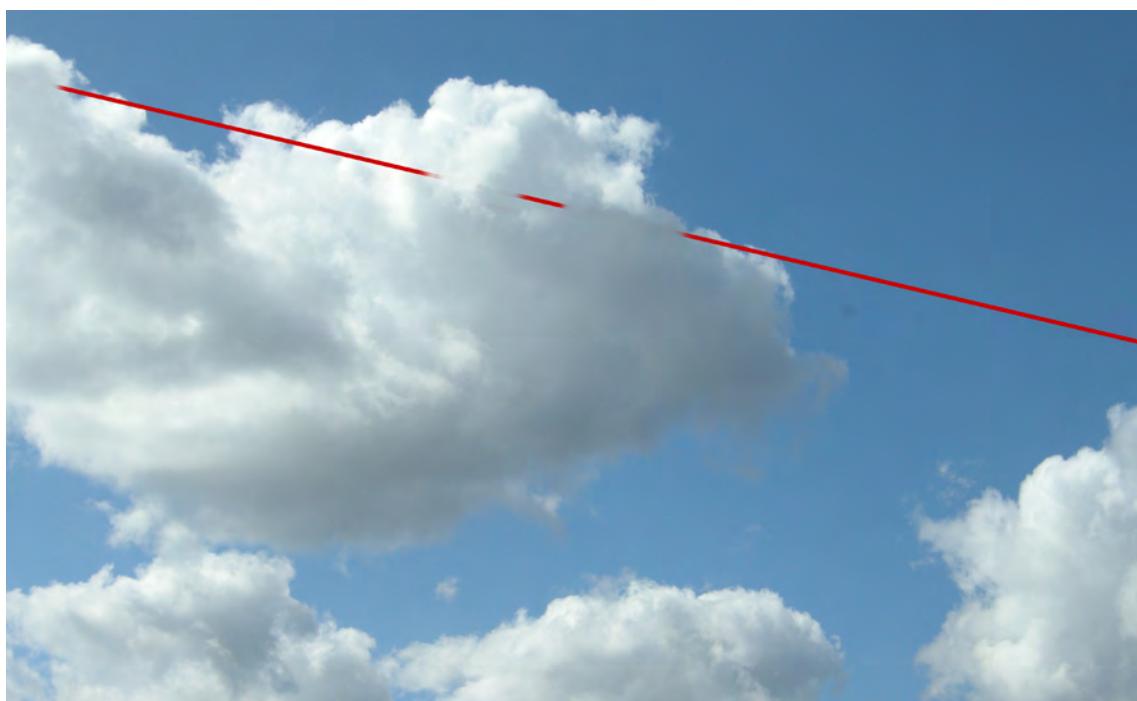
Along with 'do not kill' is 'not steal' one of the foundations on which our criminal code is built. We maintain this commandment.

The ninth commandment

A difficult thing. Don't lie to your neighbour. But every other person that lives further away may be deceived. If this is a commandment, that comes out of an almighty and endless divine spirit then the text must be as follows: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against nobody.' But is this realistic: always speak the truth? Only a Saint is able to do this. And there are even situations where the truth can have far-reaching consequences for others. Delete this ninth commandment and reformulate it (see the new twelfth commandment).

The tenth commandment

If you want exclude 'desire' (covet), than at the same time you exclude someone's drift to obtain something. For example: the drift to obtain, can also mean: to acquire knowledge. Covet, or less negative: 'desire' or 'the wish to have' is the driving force to start an action, the incentive to go to, or to discover how to obtain something or understand. There is nothing wrong with that, provided it is done in a fair and decent manner. To steal or take away are out of the question, but to obtain something through trade or negotiation are acceptable. Stealing is already captured with the eighth commandment: "you shall not steal", so that aspect we can leave



aside. That trade and the negotiation must take place on a harmonious manner, is regulated in the sixth commandment: "You shall not kill or inflict pain", that also excludes the suffering of mental pain. The word 'covet' has a negative content. It is better to replace it for the concept of 'the quest for change and renewal' and if that is not at the expense of someone's life, or is obtained through theft or unacceptable pain, then that is acceptable.

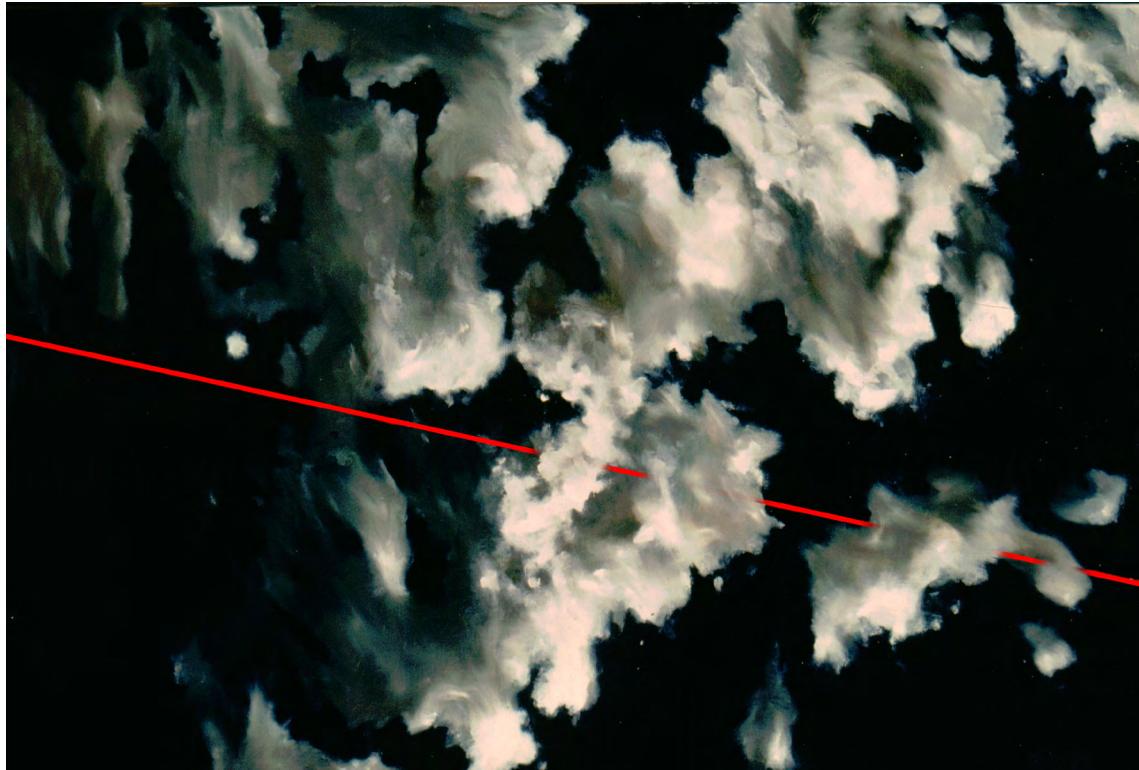
The tenth commandment is redundant and can be deleted.

In summary it can be said that we only maintain four commandments in modified form. For sure we must add another commandment.

The eleventh commandment

The human rights are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is obvious to start with this commandment (*see: appendix 3*).

The commandment reads: you must always respect the universal human rights, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.



Remains finally a weakness about: lying. I plead for the reformulation of the ninth commandment that gets the provisional working title “the twelfth commandment”.

The twelfth commandment

Because of the questionable ninth commandment: you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour, we formulate this commandment again. I can imagine that you are in a situation where a person does not comply with one of the commandments and forces you to say things (the truth) that could allow others or yourself in unacceptable

conditions. The twelfth commandment will arrange for an acceptable solution. The commandment is this: You will speak the truth under any circumstances so far as it don't brings others or yourself in (mortal) danger.

I have removed six commandments because they have only of interest for a religious community and have emerged out of ‘PR-considerations’. I added a commandment, and I have rewritten an other one. In case we adjust a new numbering, we come to the next commandments.

The five commandments

- 1. You must always respect the universal human rights, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.**

2. You should responsibly to deal with nature, especially with your environment and you have to respect every living being, particularly your fellow man.
3. You will not kill or inflict pain (both physical and mental).
4. You shall not steal.
5. You will speak the truth under any circumstances so far as it don't brings others or yourself in (mortal) danger.

Now suppose that humanity's accepts understanding the new concept: god(?).

Where will they get their grip, support and consolation comes from?

Grip: Well, they have one certainty: god(?) exists.

Support: They find support in the **five commandments**.

Solace: Consolation or solace will be found by coming together and talk to each other about all you want to discuss and perhaps to discuss each other's concepts of god(?). For those meetings are no needs of megalomaniac buildings that radiate greatness and power. The focus is on communication, the exchange of thoughts, feelings and opinions. More is not needed.

Believe

What about your faith? Do you believe that a supreme being created the world? Do you believe that you come in heaven after you die? Nobody has the right to take away that belief. It's your reflection. It's your image that you've made about your life issues. It's your version of god(?). But don't say that you know it for sure. And don't force others to believe the same as you do. It's just your imagination. And as long as there is no evidence that your fantasy is true, it stays your god(?).

What's different than before?

In the ideal situation, there are no institutions anymore (read: churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, etc.) that prescribe, preaching, proclaiming what you must believe. **That means the end of the religions** and at the same time of their doctrine and of their regulations. That may be the far-reaching result of this vision.

Infidels

And what about the unbelievers? The infidels exist only in the consciousness of those who stick to the religions. For those who accept the new concept: god(?), the infidels don't exist. After all, everyone has his fantasies, his faith and no one knows it for sure until the moment that there will be an answer on his or her questions that are housed in his or her concept of god(?). This gives the word 'believe' back to its old meaning. It will only be used if you are not sure of something, like the weather of tomorrow or the faith in a better future. What you do know is that god(?) exists.

On to a better world!

Bob Lindner

January 18, 2016

Appendix 1

Example of how religions use their authority to influence the behaviour of their followers.

Deception

Muslim clerics claim that Muslims, after the death of a martyr, in heaven be rewarded with 72 (?) virgins. Now I know, of course, not whether there is a hereafter and not what happens to you after death. Because of the new concept: god(?) I call it simply god(?). If I make an image of such an occurrence, then I have a fantasy (believe), that there is no body after the death. I am wondering how such a Muslim without a body can handle with the situation with 72 virgins, which also don't have a body.

And imagine: What happens after you die if you do end up in a body? It seems to me that the chance is extremely small (having regard to the diversity of living organisms in the afterlife, from which one may make a choice) that in that case a human body will be chosen. Imagine that you end up in the body of a crocodile. Well, the 72 virgins will immediately run away. At least, if they are in a human body. The chance if that is true seems to me also extremely small. For example: it seems to me more obvious, that they change in a tree or grasshopper. In that case the crocodile will feel pretty cheated.

Moreover, the story of the 72 virgins is a typical example how a man is thinking. This is in turn an indication that man creates all religions.

It is like a box of cakes, which, upon returning at home, it turns out to contain only stones. In that case you want to run back to the pastry shop to claim your money. And you will point out that you do not want to be misled by the pastry chef. In the case of the 72 virgins, the 'pastry chef' is still on the other side.

But yes, at a faith community knows you never sure if there are cakes or yet pebbles in the box. It is a belief. And if you find out the truth, it is at best a hundred years later.

Appendix 2

The shepherd and his herd

The comparison "the shepherd with his sheep" is centuries old, the writers of the Bible already used it. And let's not forget the shepherd dog who assists the shepherd to keep the herd together.

Humanity is seen as the flock of sheep, our leaders as the shepherd and the shepherd dogs appearing everywhere in different guises, I don't need to give any further examples, everyone can think of that.

For our questions, uncertainties and doubts, we seek answers and support from our fellow people, in particular from those who are open for it or have knowledgeable about that. These are parents, teachers, experts, clergy and so on. In short: with our leaders in the broadest sense of the word.

By leaders I do not only mean presidents, party leaders, leaders within a religion, but also teachers, parents, the influencers on the internet, the facebookers with many followers, friends and girlfriends. But don't forget: you are also a leader ..! How so?

Everyone has a specialty that someone else wants to know about it or ask questions

about. At such a moment you are also a leader.

In short, both a sheep and a shepherd are hidden in each person.

We play the role of sheep if we feel insecure, need support, if we want to feel safe and protected within a group.

On the other hand, if we play the role of the shepherd, we enjoy our expertise and the attention we receive. We are proud of ourselves.

But, beware: there are negative sides to both roles. The sheep in us can become too dependent or a blind follower. In the role of the shepherd, it is tempting to abuse your power.

Now we switch to religion. Let me state first and foremost that religion has done much good in the past and is now still a support and anchor for many. But religion also has its dark side and that is because religion is led by people.

Religions are old and based on old habits, behaviors and wisdom. Precisely because of those old values and norms, adjustments to current norms and values are extremely slow or are resolutely rejected because they are at odds with the old values. It is precisely because religions stick to old values and norms that you can label the organizational structure around religions as very conservative. And with it their leaders.

And if you are also aware that leaders (shepherds) can abuse their power (think of the persecution of Christians in Roman times, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the iconoclasm, the struggle in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants and recently the Salafists and their jihad) then I advise you to think twice, no, three times before you join a religion ...

After all, you are strong enough to find support for the new concept of god (?) And your immediate environment.

The very best..!

Appendix 3

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts that have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in

the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,
Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,
Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it is independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

- (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
- (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission that did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

- (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

- (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will be expressed in periodic and genuine elections that shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

- (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a

democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.