

## **EDITORIAL**

### **Spiritual Practice as Resolution of Seen and Unseen War**

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Issue 9 of MEΘEXIS Journal gathers research papers on a critical matter today: *war*. War can be not only apparent, as armed conflict, but also hidden, an inner tension and struggle. Do these sorts of conflicts have common strands? Do the origins of seen and unseen conflicts have the same source? Is this source on a spiritual level? If it is implied that this is the origin, can it provide a pathway to resolve conflicts and tensions? If so, can spiritual practice develop resolution strategies for the seen and unseen war? The impact of spiritual practice extends beyond the individual level; it reaches the community. This is because it implies the development of awareness not only of the self but also of others, recognizing that they share the same humanity. At the spiritual level of apprehension, such practice alters how we perceive reality. The struggles, tensions, and conflicts are seen from a different perspective, revealing the profound mechanisms and dynamics, as well as their sources and resolutions.

In the Issue, several approaches to the role of spiritual practice in conflict resolution are included, and we have gathered

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them in sections. The first is *The Role of Spiritual Practice in Dealing with War*, which comprises two contributions. **Andrei Christian Temistocle** in *A Scripturistical and Cultural Perspective on War; Saint Gregory Palamas and contemporary patristic view on conflicts in the plan of the unseen war* discusses, from a spiritual point of view, the causes of conflicts, the consequences of their emergence and maintenance, and possible solutions offered over time to overcome the conflict on a personal or community level. Tangible conflict or war is preceded, in most cases at least, by an unseen conflict or war, much more important, sometimes difficult to notice, war that takes place at the level of the inner man. The paper focuses on the views of Gregory Palamas towards personal or social conflicts, the preeminence of the processes that take place in the spiritual zone, in the above world, and, on the other hand, in a secondary frame, that is, the frame where these conflicts make their presence felt in reality. Andrei Cristian is also discussing the perspective of Nikolai Velimirovich, who emphasized the connection between the inner spiritual wars, their results, and the emergence and evolution of various conflicts, both civil and international. The author highlights the theological bond between the vision of Saint Apostle James and the principles outlined in Gregory Palamas' homilies. The discussion then emphasizes the disappearance of war and the essential search for the future of humankind in the 21st century. **Ștefan Soponaru**, in *The Flames of War and the Burning Bush of Prayer: A Spiritual Response to the Problem of War*, emphasizes the spiritual answer that a contemporary Romanian spiritual movement gave to the problem of war. The Romanian space, which has seen the horrors of the Second World War and of the Communist regime, witnessed the emergence of a spiritual movement that has attempted to face war through the means offered by the tradition of the Orthodox Church. *The Burning Bush* was a Romanian hesychast movement composed of intellectuals, clerics, and monks that sought to provide real spiritual therapy and a solution to conflicts, aiming to heal the diseases that led to war by embracing the ecclesial way of life existentially. The contact with war and the terror of history was an occasion for the members of the Burning Bush to cultivate an eschatological consciousness. Ștefan Soponaru points out that,

through the hesychast experience, the members of the Burning Bush movement worked on both personal and collective levels to restore their relationships with God, themselves, their neighbors, and their fellow men. Through martyrdom, some members of the Burning Bush testified about the peace of Christ that had settled in their souls, and this peace became a testament for future generations. Ştefan concludes that the spiritual inheritance of the Burning Bush movement passed away mainly through the spiritual families formed around its main figures and through careful dissemination of spiritual writings. In a period when atheism reigned in the country, the members of the Burning Bush movement discreetly preached, through their own lives, the message of peace and unity among people in Christ.

Another section of the Issue reveals a different approach to conflict resolution, concentrating on its inner dimension. This sort of struggle can take the form of a field battle, encompassing weapons, strategies, and training. It is illustrated by **Konstantinos A. Diamantopoulos's** contribution, *The Battle of Good and Evil Through the Rite of Exorcism According to Greek Christian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Perspectives*. The paper examines the challenging nature of exorcism and proposes viewpoints for further academic research. Exorcism is described as a spiritual case of warfare, and despite the worldwide incidents that have occurred, exorcists don't discuss or reveal the full spectrum of this kind of battlefield. He notes that without relevant sources, theological research and scholarship are becoming increasingly impoverished. In his paper, Konstantinos provides an analysis of the differences between the Christian Orthodox and Roman Catholic exorcism processes. The Orthodox tradition follows a traditional spiritual framework that does not explore the diverse aspects of demonic manifestations. Conversely, the Roman Catholic Church has established a comprehensive approach to exorcism. Nevertheless, the existing research literature is limited, and more scientific investigation is needed in this area. Discussing twentieth-century views on evil and the role of spirituality in discerning it, **Tone Svetelj** assesses hatred and rehumanization through the perspectives of Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil. He does so in his article, *From the Banality of Evil to Spiritual Attention:*

*Emancipation from Hatred and Rehumanization.* Tone examines Arendt's view of hatred through its political and systemic expressions, notably her concept of the banality of evil, which links widespread complicity to thoughtlessness, a failure of critical and empathetic engagement. She presents peace as an active, public state that requires plurality, political action, and ongoing judgment to oppose ideological suppression. On the other hand, Weil investigates the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of hatred, viewing it as a fundamental distortion of the human spirit, connected to the dehumanizing effects of force. Her approach to peace involves inner spiritual liberation achieved through attention, decreation, and acceptance of necessity. Arendt calls for vigilant public engagement, while Weil focuses on deep inner transformation. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and overcoming hatred, indicating that true rehumanization requires both external political action and profound internal change. The three totalitarian regimes and two world wars of the 20th century prompted deep reflection on the nature of hatred and the pursuit of peace. Achieving peace and freedom requires not only political action but also a profound inner transformation and the active cultivation of humanity within oneself and in relationships with others. Tone Svetelj, synthesizing their contributions, sees that Arendt and Weil, despite their differing emphases, provide a powerful dual framework for confronting hatred. Arendt calls for external vigilance and the continuous defense of political freedom and public discourse as essential safeguards against the structural and ideological manifestations of evil. She reminds us that the health of a political community depends on its citizens' willingness to think, judge, and act in concert. Weil, conversely, underscores the imperative of radical inner transformation and spiritual discipline as the means to liberate the soul from the ego's grip, which fuels hatred and illusion. She demonstrates that true rehumanization begins with a profound self-emptying and a receptive openness to truth and grace, notes Tone.

The third section discusses strategies for conflict resolution that combine new tools with ancient wisdom. **K.L. Sharma** proposes such an approach in *Nididhyasana as Existential*

*Assimilation: From the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad to Contemporary Philosophical Counselling*, which explores the classical Advaitic concept of Nididhyasana (deep contemplation) by tracing its origins in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad and examining its potential applications in contemporary philosophical counselling. Nididhyasana transcends mere meditation; it entails the profound assimilation of truth, following the stages of Sravana (hearing) and Manana (reflection). Sharma views Nididhyasana as a potent tool for existential transformation, particularly in contexts where philosophical clarity and ontological anchoring offer a viable path beyond modern psychological frameworks. Through a comparative and practical approach, the paper advocates Nididhyasana as an experiential modality that bridges the gap between metaphysical truth and practical life, intriguingly shifting the focus from problem-solving to ontological grounding. Contemporary counselling often emphasizes empathy, active listening, and cognitive restructuring. Sharma stresses that while effective, these tools primarily operate within the dualistic framework of subject and object, client and issue, and thought and emotion. Yet the Upanishadic model turns inward, not to analyze the contents of thought, but to transcend thought itself. It is a contemplative act not aimed at conceptual resolution, but at ontological anchoring. The author remarks that in philosophical counselling, Nididhyasana can open a new terrain. Nididhyasana, when integrated into philosophical counselling, reclaims philosophy as a mode of being rather than a body of knowledge. Its orientation is neither doctrinal nor psychological but existential. It does not simply resolve problems but reframes the problem space itself through a shift in being, a re-identification that dissolves the habitual boundaries between subject and object, knower and known.

The Issue is including a case study on the role of spirituality in critical times of history. **George Stoukis** in *The Contribution of the Orthodox Church and the Clergy to the Greek War of Independence (1821): The Case of the Monasteries of Boeotia*. The Greek War of Independence in 1821 is a pivotal milestone in the history of the Greek nation, the most significant event in the era of Modern Hellenism. Through this struggle, the long-desired freedom

and national independence of the Greek people were achieved. The Greek Orthodox Church played an invaluable role both before and during the revolution, contributing decisively to creating favorable conditions for the emergence of the modern Greek nation. The Christian faith, which bound the people together, also forged their national consciousness. The Church stood as a militant force: monasteries became centers of revolutionary activity, and clergy of all ranks actively participated in the uprising of the enslaved nation. George Stokis highlights the decisive role of the Orthodox monasteries and clergy in the struggle for liberation in 1821, with the particular focus on Boeotia, underscoring the pivotal support of the Orthodox Church and the monastic communities of Boeotia for the Greek War of Independence. The church actively provided both moral encouragement and substantial material assistance to the insurgent nation. The monastic institutions were crucial centers of resistance, facilitating logistics, shelter, and supplies for the fighters. Sukis concludes his research, stressing that while modern critiques occasionally portray the Church as complicit or ambivalent during the occupation, the historical evidence decisively reveals its unwavering commitment to the liberation of the Greek people and its integral role as a bastion of Hellenic-Christian identity and national resilience.

The last section features **Mikael Stamm's** contribution, *The Fate of the Excluded Middle Between Truth and Nescience. Mantras and other Senseless Truths in Indian and Western Philosophies*. The characteristics of language are evaluated when a primordial truth is posited in the paper. Mikael employs a method that maps key concepts according to their contextual application, divided into two conceptual domains: the domain of the primordial truth and that of its absence; each of them must reflect and exclude the other. These dependent exclusions highlight the problem associated with any attempt to reconcile the delineated domains. The possible ways to indicate truth imply the Indian use of mantras, described as self-validating, necessary, and essentially meaningless. This reveals a fundamental principle of originary speech beyond the scope of speakers, contents, and communicative purposes. The problem of the 'excluded middle' is highlighted by considerations of the possibility of sayings of a primordial truth,

while at the same time acknowledging the inherent problems of such a truth, that is, without being degraded into a mixture of our two conceptual domains (of nescience and truth), which carries within it an extension of the condition of nescience, indicates Mikael Stamm. A radically different truth requires a thinking that excludes any meaningful language of the 'middle' reflecting what has only been indicated as a transformative event. Such an approach demonstrates ways to diminish the semantic significance of meanings, creating space for the reception of the voice of Being. Even if the perspective described in the paper does not solve the problem of the excluded middle, it indicates the possibility of an occurrence, beyond any known causality, of an original linguistic event.

Discussing the role of spiritual practice in gaining deeper insights into the origins and ends of outer or inner struggles is a topic that warrants further investigation. Papers from this Issue provide insights into the spiritual ways of perceiving the deeper meaning of war and exploring diverse strategies for ending war, whether external or internal. It should be a factor to consider in today's geopolitics, especially since the roots of many tensions and wars around the world often stem from religious-based quarrels.