

Ethics, spirituality and care: a potentially fruitful relationship?



The Rt Revd Christopher Herbert.
PhD

Definition of Care:

The provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance and protection of someone or something.

OED

Feel concern or interest; attach importance to something.







Care happens when one person, forgetful of self, reaches across the gap that exists between people and gives total attention, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual to the other person so that that person might discover wholeness and well-being.



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...to revalue care as a complex and dignifying process and as an opportunity to contribute to the flourishing of care-recipients, families and care-givers...

International Care Ethics Observatory.

Care is a dynamic inter-human process...





Caring about; taking care of; care receiving;
care giving.
Joan Tronto.

What does it mean to be human?



Interim Summary: Care.

Definitions are important.

Care is a dynamic process involving not only the patient and the care-giver but extends to include families, loved ones and the wider community.

Spirituality.

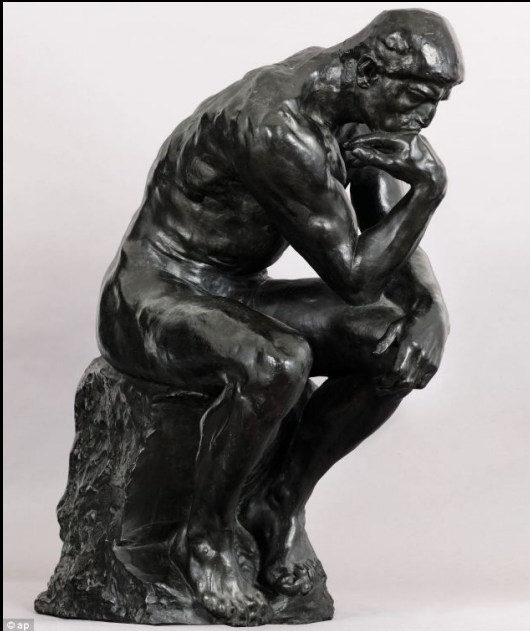
Definition of spirituality:

...relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things.

OED.

“It is widely recognised that the spiritual is a natural dimension of what it means to be human...”

NHS Scotland 2009: Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy.





...those beliefs and practices that relate to the
human search for meaning in life...

NICE Quality Standard March 2016.

...that dimension of our individuality and shared humanity which is beyond definition...it can be described but only inadequately, and cannot be satisfactorily encapsulated...

How are the words “soul” and “spirituality”
used in ordinary discourse?

Bless the Lord my soul, and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

Psalm 103, v.1.

For the ancient Jewish people body and soul are indivisible; for the classical Greeks body and soul can be separated...

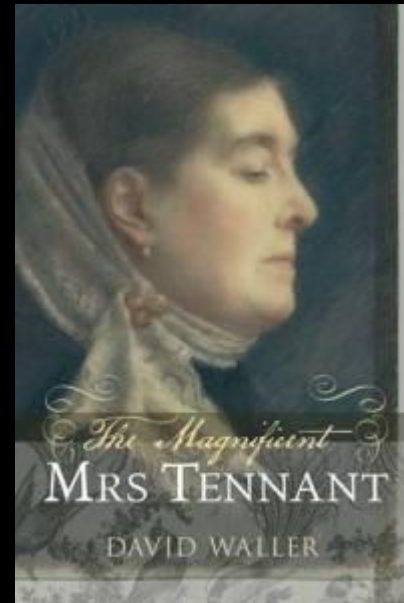


“Matters touching my soul”

Laurence Sterne 1713-1768.



...why shut me out from your sweet face, the
sun which warms my soul?



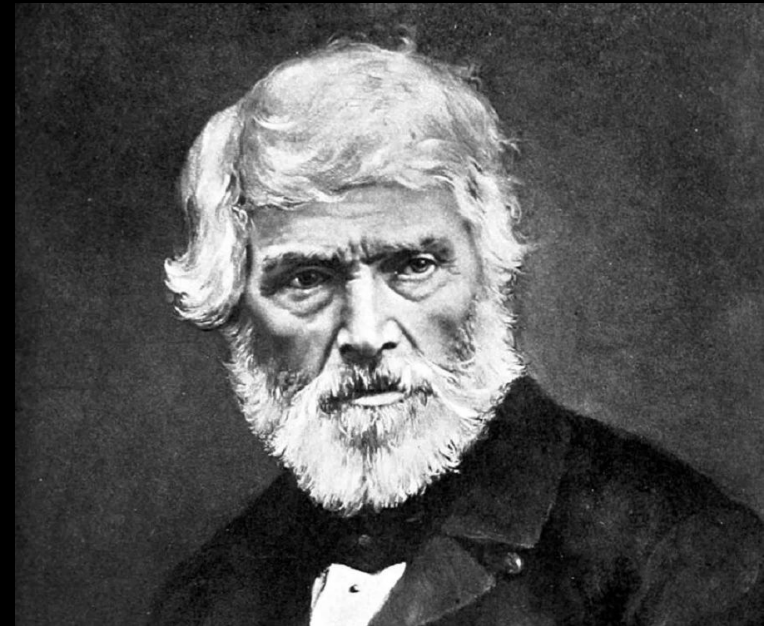


“...in the language of the Koran ...one word-*nafs*-means both self and soul...this soul is raised in me: only by learning the ways of accountability do I rise to the condition of a free being, who realises his freedom in his deeds. Hence the soul can be corrupted...”

Roger Scruton.

Does it ever give thee pause that men used to have a soul---not by hearsay alone or as a figure of speech, but as a truth they knew and acted upon! Verily it was another world then...but yet it is a pity we have lost the tidings of our souls...we shall have to go in search of them again or worse may befall us...

Thomas Carlyle. 1795-1881.







Frank Auerbach.b.1931.

NIALL
FERGUSON

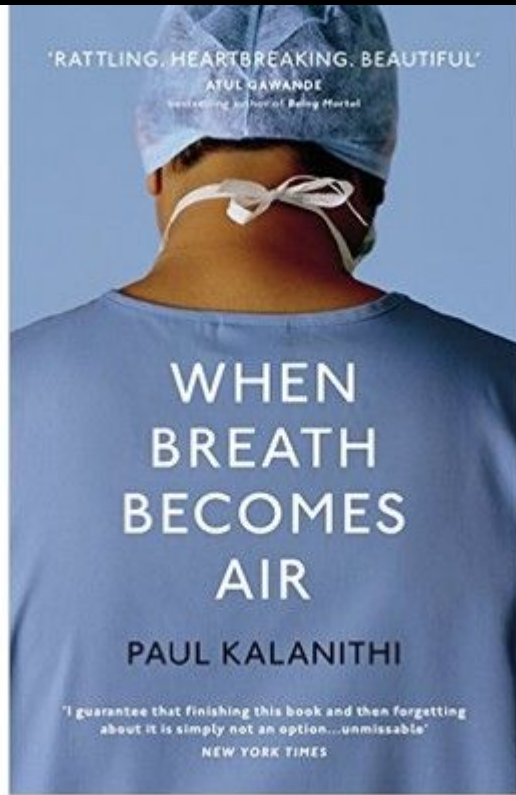
KISSINGER
1923-1968: THE IDEALIST



“In so far as any biographer can know the truth of another’s soul...Ferguson succeeds.”



“A watch has a soul...”
Jean Claude Biver, CEO TAG Heuer.



“...the call to protect life...and not merely life but another’s identity; it is perhaps not too much to say another’s soul---was obvious in its sacredness.”



Paul Kalanithi.(1977-2015)

“...in the end, even with the most regimented of systems, it’s not about the machine, it’s about the ghost. It’s about the soul of the athlete, it’s about that impossibly elusive thing they call team spirit...”

Simon Barnes 2016



...where words will not go away, it is because they express something of immense importance. Resilient words are to be treasured. They have hidden resonances and meanings which deserve our careful and humble attention...



Cour Salaya, Nice.

“Soul” embraces, explores and expresses ideas about:-

The Self.

Our Inmost being.

Conscience and integrity.

Self-knowledge.

Love and human relatedness.

Moral choice.

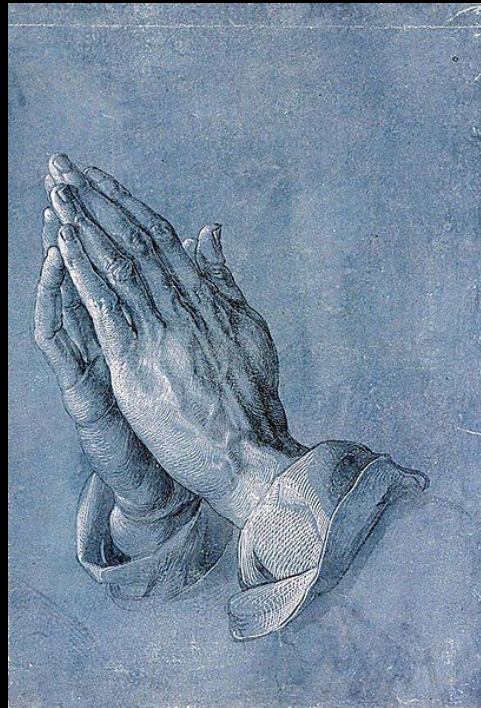
The mysterious wells of our humanity.

...and for some, it includes a relationship with the
Divine.

Soul = Spirituality?

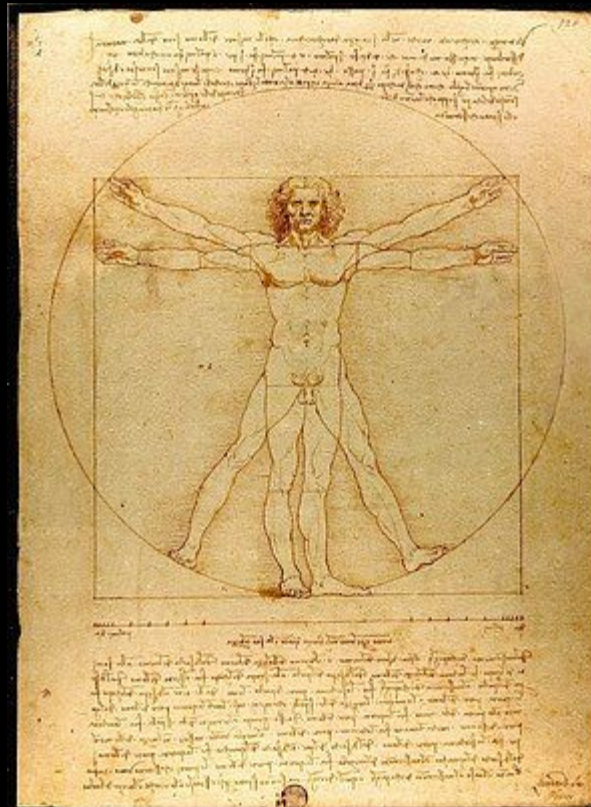


Spirituality...those activities, thoughts and patterns of behaviour by which we give expression to our souls...



“Spirituality can be defined as the search for meaning and purpose in life, which may or may not be related to a belief in God or some higher power.”

Johnstone, D and Mayers, C
British Journal of Occupational Therapy 2004.



Spiritus (Latin), Pneuma (Greek) + Ruah (Hebrew) are all concerned with the stirring of air, breeze, breath and wind.



Spirituality consists of “experiencing a deep-seated sense of meaning and purpose in life, together with a sense of belonging. It is about acceptance, integration and wholeness... the desire for wholeness of being lies in the essence of what it means to be human”

Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Meaning and purpose.
Connection and relationships.
God/gods/the transcendent Other.
Transcendent Self.
Vital principle.
Unifying force or integrative energy.
Personal and private.
Hope.

McCarroll, O'Connell, Meades

Belief in a power greater than oneself.

Purpose in life.

Faith.

Prayer.

Meditation.

Group worship.

Ability to forgive.

Ability to find meaning in suffering.

Gratitude for life which is seen as a gift.

Post, Puchalski, Larson. 2000.

“Spirituality is like a bird: if you hold it too tightly it chokes; if you hold it too loosely it flies away. Fundamental to spirituality is the absence of force.”

Rabbi Hugo Gryn



Spirituality, by definition, is that realm of our humanity which is beyond definition...but which we know to be profoundly real.



Rogier van der Weyden: Portait of a Lady.1460.

Ethics.

Ethics = moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity.

OED.

Ethics is about how we ought to live. What makes an action the right or the wrong thing to do?....the goal is wisdom about how to live our lives.

Peter Singer

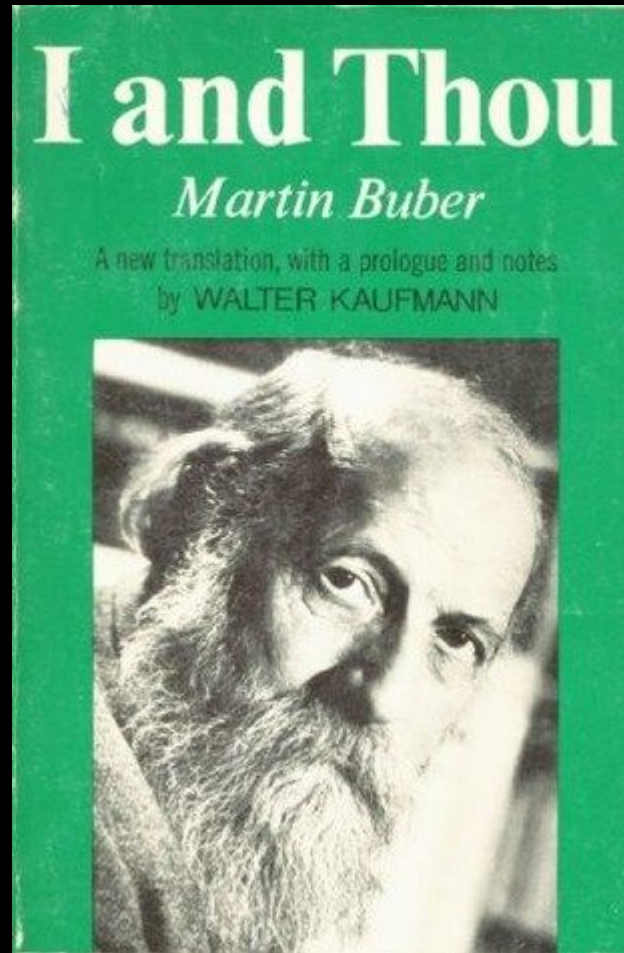
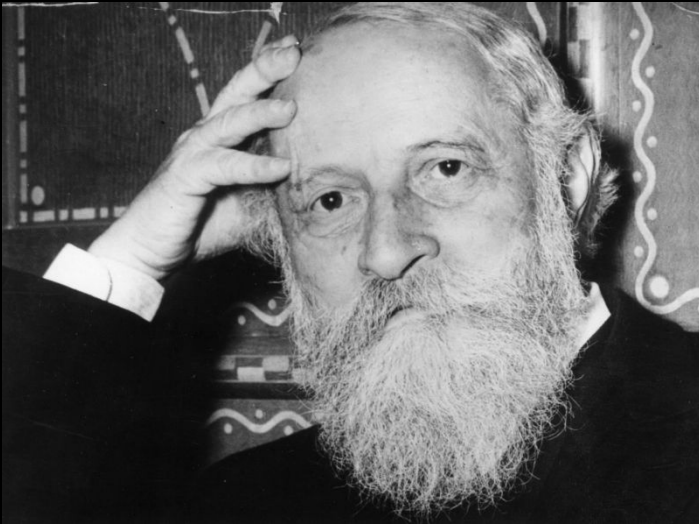
‘Ethics is always a work in progress.’

Deborah Bowman, Professor of Ethics and Law, St
George’s, University of London.



What can I know?
What ought I to do?
What may I hope?
What is man?

Immanuel Kant
1724-1804.



Martin Buber 1878-1965.









Personal autonomy



No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

John Donne 1634.







1. Does the concept of personal autonomy provide a stable and adequate foundation for our thinking?

2. How do we interpret, express and explore the concept of inter-relatedness in a PDOC situation?

3. Does your hospital have an Ethics Committee?

4. Should your hospital have a 'chaplain', a person whose professional role it is to embody and explore spiritual issues?



“The only thing that matters in art is what cannot be explained.”

Georges Braques.



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