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## Wisdom as Loving Knowledge in Dag Hammarskjöld's *Markings*.

THOMAS RYAN

### ABSTRACT

The inter-relationship of the affective and the cognitive is an issue in the spiritual and moral fields of the Christian tradition. Drawing on the analogical use of the 'spiritual senses' together with insights from virtue ethics, this article investigates wisdom as loving knowledge in Dag Hammarskjöld's *Markings*. The article has five stages: first, the various forms of love present in Hammarskjöld's reflections are outlined; second, after a brief explanation of affective/cognitive aspect of the spiritual senses, it probes a representative text in *Marking* on the process of knowing and loving God; third, it analyses key passages in the journal concerning wisdom as a virtue; fourth, in the light of the theology of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and contemporary approaches based on the second-person perspective, the Gift of wisdom is examined in the journal leading to some concluding observations.

### **Bio:**

Thomas Ryan is a retired Marist priest who lives in Sydney, Australia. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Catholic University and an Adjunct Associate Professor of the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, Australia. Other than chapters in books, he has had numerous articles published nationally, (e.g., *The Australian eJournal of Theology*, *The Australasian Catholic Record*) and internationally (e.g., *Theological Studies*, *the Irish Theological Quarterly*).

There has been a recent resurgence of interest in the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld and, specifically, in his personal journal *Markings*, published after his death (1961).<sup>1</sup> Studies generated by the publication of Hammarskjöld's diary, often present the word 'Yes' as a central theme bringing unity to his relationship with God and its ethical demands.<sup>2</sup>

Inspired by this recent trend, I engaged with the text of *Markings*, beyond the handful of passages often quoted in the public domain. In the process, I became conscious of an aspect of Hammarskjöld's religious consciousness that warranted further attention, hence, this article.<sup>3</sup> The article has five stages: first, the various forms of love present in Hammarskjöld's reflections are outlined; second, after a briefly explaining one facet of the spiritual senses, it probes a representative text on the process of knowing and loving God; third, it analyses key passages in *Markings* concerning wisdom as a virtue; fourth, in the light of the theology of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and contemporary approaches based on the second-person perspective, the Gift of wisdom is examined which leads to some concluding observations.

### **The 'Yes' of Love**

Hammarskjöld's faith, his 'Yes' to God of 1953 (noted above) indicated that 'something new had come; it meant union with God, living in the hands of God, receiving rest and strength from him – and thus it also meant new integrity for the 'I', ('the wonder: that *I* exist'<sup>4</sup>) integrity instead of chaos, freedom instead of the bondage of self-centeredness.' Yet, even until the last prayer of his final year, it was 'a faith at battle with the risks of returning chaos and ever threatening self-centredness.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Lipsey has been a key influence in this process. Roger Lipsey, 'Dag Hammarskjöld and *Markings*: A Reconsideration', *Spiritus* 11 (2011), 84-103, at 85; and *Hammarskjöld: A Life* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> 'For all that has been- Thanks! To all that shall be – Yes!'<sup>2</sup> The ethical implications of Hammarskjöld's faith is again captured in his words 'The only value of a life is its content – for *others*' and 'In our era, the path to sanctification necessarily passes through action.' Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, translated by W.H. Auden and Leif Sjöberg (London: Faber & Faber, 1964), 87. Also, Bernhard Erling, *A Reader's Guide to Dag Hammarskjöld's Waymarks* (St. Peters, Minnesota, 1987) available at [http://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/rg\\_to\\_waymarks.pdf](http://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/rg_to_waymarks.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> This awareness arose as part of a fuller theological treatment. See Thomas Ryan, "'Yes!' And 'Thou'" in Dag Hammarskjöld's *Markings*: A Theological Investigation', *Irish Theological Quarterly* 81 (2), 2016, 119-137.

<sup>4</sup> *Markings*, 102.

<sup>5</sup> Gustaf Aulén, *Dag Hammarskjöld's White Book: The Meaning of Markings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 145.

For Hammarskjöld, central to faith is the ‘union of God to the soul’ (St John of the Cross).<sup>6</sup> Union with, and life in, God were centred on *Imitatio*, a key idea arising from the Gospels and Hammarskjöld’s acquaintance with the medieval mystics. *Imitatio* is the invitation to fellowship and discipleship with Jesus the ‘Brother.’ It is fulfilled paradigmatically in Jesus in sacrifice as self-surrender to God and to others through forgiveness and in love unto death. Authentic self-realisation is only found in self-transcendence, in self-surrender. Self-surrender, as a sharing in the divine life in Christ, is inseparable from responsibility for others within the framework of one’s vocation.<sup>7</sup> For him, it was a call to serve the world and mankind which he saw as a ‘service to God.’ The love of God, revealed in Jesus, the cross, sacrifice and forgiveness, is ‘ultimate reality.’<sup>8</sup>

As revealed in *Markings*, these faces of love are reflected in a prayer from *Markings* that captures the Trinitarian texture of his consciousness of loving union with God and its centrifugal orientation.

Thou who are over us,  
Thou who art one of us,  
Thou who *art* –  
Also within us,  
May all see Thee – in me also,  
May I prepare the way for Thee,  
May I thank Thee for all that shall fall to my lot,  
May I also not forget the needs of others,  
Keep me in Thy love  
As Thou wouldest that all should be kept in mine.  
May everything in this my being be directed to Thy glory  
And may I never despair.

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<sup>6</sup> *Markings*, 91. Aulén, notes that the translation of the Swedish word as ‘marriage’ gives quite the wrong impression. It suggests that Hammarskjöld might have understood the union as a form of the Bride Mysticism that, in fact, he never refers to (Aulén, *White Book*, 42).

<sup>7</sup> Aulén, *White Book*. 148.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 148, 151.

For I am under Thy hand,  
And in Thee is all power and goodness.

Give me a pure heart – that I may see Thee,  
A humble heart – that I may hear Thee,  
A heart of love – that I may serve Thee,  
A heart of faith – that I may abide in Thee.<sup>9</sup>

Noteworthy is the Trinitarian sense of the first four lines where Father, Son and Holy Spirit are addressed, respectively, as ‘over us’, ‘one of us’ and ‘within us.’<sup>10</sup> Erling notes the chiasmic pattern of the following lines where we find an inverted mirror of that pattern: of the indwelling Spirit ‘in me’ to be visible to others, of preparing the ‘way’ of the Son (like John the Baptist) and gratitude to the Father as creator and guide of one’s destiny.<sup>11</sup> This is repeated in the final stanza but centred now in the heart: to hear as ‘under’ the Father; to serve in imitative love of the Son; to ‘abide’ in God through the Spirit. This Trinitarian prayer offers a compressed expression of Hammarskjöld’s spirituality and its moral impulse. This brings us to our next consideration.

### **Love and the Spiritual Senses**

The Trinitarian prayer above has a religious context and content, one that is clearly interpersonal, participative and oriented towards action. Hammarskjöld’s journal entries, with their affective texture and mastery of rhythm and images, reflect a man of a poetic sensibility.<sup>12</sup> In the texts that follow, this needs to be kept in mind. Further, as with any literary text or work of art, meaning is not only stated (in the words) but also suggested (in images, metaphor or symbols) and associated with tone and mood. Meaning can be conveyed by what is said or not said, by polyvalent and tensive symbols, by understatement or by

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<sup>9</sup> *Markings*, 93.

<sup>10</sup> Lipsey, *Hammarskjöld: A Life*, 197.

<sup>11</sup> Erling, *A Reader’s Guide*, 113.

<sup>12</sup> W.H. Auden, a friend of Hammarskjöld, notes the ‘extraordinary extent of Hammarskjöld’s knowledge and understanding of poetry’, *Markings*, 14.

silence. We read ‘between the lines’, aware there can be a ‘surplus’ of meaning or that some things are just inexpressible and can only be intimated.

With this in mind, *Markings* discloses more concerning love and Hammarskjöld’s consciousness of God’s presence in his life. One text from 1955 is strikingly representative of how Hammarskjöld’s religious consciousness is in continuity with a long-standing tradition. Before examining that text, some background may be helpful.

In understanding and articulating the presence of God, analogous recourse to the ‘spiritual senses’ has deep roots from early in the Christian tradition.<sup>13</sup> A specific focus from that wider discussion offers an investigative window and hermeneutical tool, particularly as this investigation progresses.

Writers such as Thomas Gallus and Thomas Aquinas hold that, concerning our rational capacities of knowing and loving, *intellectus* is oriented towards truth and *affectus* towards the good. With regard to the spiritual realm, it is *affectus* that tastes, touches and smells and *intellectus* that sees and hears. Priority here is given to *affectus* in experiencing divine things.<sup>14</sup> The ‘certainty of the intellect’ (in sight) rests on the ‘security of the affect’ (affective response in faith).<sup>15</sup>

For Aquinas, ‘taste’ best describes the experience of divine goodness. Unlike touch, which entails contact from the outside, taste enables us to have ‘inside knowledge’, namely, ‘from inside what we are tasting’, namely, God ‘within us.’<sup>16</sup> In spiritual things, something is first tasted and then seen. Again, there is an acknowledged overlap or co-inherence of these modes of ‘apprehension’, namely, of love and knowledge. This is encapsulated in the words of

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<sup>13</sup> See Paul Gavrilyuk & Sarah Coakley, *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity* (New York and Cambridge UK: CUP, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Boyd Taylor Coolman, ‘Thomas Gallus’ in Gavrilyuk & Coakley, *The Spiritual Senses*, 140-158 at 147.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Cross, ‘Thomas Aquinas’, in Gavrilyuk & Coakley, *The Spiritual Senses*, 174-189 at 188.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Postilla super Psalmos* 33,8 cited in Tony Kelly CSsR, *The Bread of God; Nurturing a Eucharistic Imagination* (Pymble, NSW: HarperCollinsReligious, 2001), 89.

Gregory the Great (cited by Aquinas) that ‘love itself is a form of knowing’ (*amor ipse notitia est*).<sup>17</sup> As Andrew Louth sums it up:

The soul wants to know God more and more because it loves him, and loves him because it knows that he is supreme Truth and Beauty. Love and knowledge of God are united in the kind of knowledge we have of God, namely wisdom, *sapientia*.<sup>18</sup>

Here, Aquinas offers a needed caveat. However much we come to know and love God in this life it is, nevertheless, a union with one who is beyond our comprehension and as one unknown. We do have a natural desire to see God and to find the light. But given the limitless radiance of God, our human knowledge of God is still vespertilionine: since the bat cannot bear the sunlight, it engages with its environment through radar-like soundings.<sup>19</sup> Further, McIntosh reminds us that it could be said that in ‘mystical contemplation it is not the mystic who knows and loves but rather the mystic is the one *known* and *loved* by God.’<sup>20</sup>

This brings us to the 1955 text in *Markings*.

He had no need for the divided responsibility in which others seek to be safe from ridicule, because he had been granted a faith which required no confirmation – a contact with reality, light and intense like the touch of a loved hand: a union in self-surrender without self-destruction, where his heart was lucid and his mind loving. In sun and wind, how near and how remote---. How different from what the knowing ones call Mysticism.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Gregory the Great, *Homelia in Evangel.* 27:4, cited in Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea Vol. 4 St John* Cap. 15: v.15 (London: St. Austen Press, 1999), 486. ‘For while we love the heavenly things we hear, we know them by loving, because love is itself knowing.’

<sup>18</sup> Andrew Louth, ‘Bernard and Affective Mysticism’, in Benedicta Ward (ed.) SLG, *The Influence of St Bernard* (Oxford, SLG Press, 1976), 3. Wisdom and its association with ‘taste’ will be explored later in this article.

<sup>19</sup> *Summa Theologiae* 1.12.13 and 1.1.12.1 (henceforth *ST*).

<sup>20</sup> Mark A McIntosh, *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (Malden MA: Blackwell, 1999), 70 (italics in original).

<sup>21</sup> *Markings*, 100.



Erling argues that this forms a separate text in the Swedish version and also in Hammarskjöld's original manuscript. This clearly separates it from the previous three lines which it is agreed refer to the person of Jesus.<sup>22</sup> On that basis, contra Aulén, Erling (with van Dusen and Lipsey) holds that this text is about Hammarskjöld himself.<sup>23</sup> It is certainly consistent with earlier passages in his journal that give insight into Hammarskjöld's religious consciousness. The language of, and mood conveyed by, the text resembles other entries where Hammarskjöld describes his experiences of the 'unspeakable' by drawing on nature and human experience rather than using explicitly religious idiom or images. It is almost as if spirituality is hidden within the secular. Nevertheless, Hammarskjöld observes 'a landscape can sing about God' (89).

In this entry, with the nature imagery there is an accompanying sense of personal relationship and closeness that converges with our comments above about touch and the primary role of affectivity – 'like the touch of a loved hand.' The contact with reality is immediate – 'light and intense', requiring no confirmation. The intellect's 'certainty' is underpinned by an affective 'security.'<sup>24</sup> The recipient is passive, receptive to the action of God, to a gift (faith 'that had been granted'). Its fruit is union, bringing self-surrender without self-annihilation (the move from union to *agape* but also the finding of the true self). From here comes his sense of a unified rather than 'divided' responsibility. Again, there is intimated the mutual co-inherence of knowledge and love ('heart was lucid and his mind loving').<sup>25</sup> Overall, the mood conveyed is one of serene receptivity.

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<sup>22</sup> 'He broke fresh ground –because, and only because, he had the courage to go ahead without asking whether others were following or even understood' *Markings*, 100.

<sup>23</sup> Aulén's reason is that Hammarskjöld's usual practice was to use the second person when referring to himself (*White Book*, 27). Yet, there are passages where Hammarskjöld combines 'he' and 'you' (see *Markings*, 65, 88-9) or speaks of something in objective mode which is clearly consonant with his own spiritual experience (e.g., concerning 'mystical experience', *Markings*, 108).

<sup>24</sup> Earlier, Hammarskjöld speaks of a knowing 'without knowing' in a 'vision in which God is' underpinning self-surrender. *Markings*, 83.

<sup>25</sup> Aulén does not modify this translation. Erling's rendition is 'clarity of feeling and warmth of understanding', Erling, *A Reader's Guide*, 131.

Mystery as immanent/transcendent or kataphatic/ apophatic is suggested in ‘sun and wind, how near and how remote.’<sup>26</sup> While the use of sun (light) and wind imagery may not be explicitly Christian in intention here, their suggestive quality is certainly consistent with Hammarskjöld’s use of those images elsewhere to capture his experience of reality and of God (to be clarified later).

His final ironical comment about the ‘knowing ones’ betrays his understanding of ‘Mysticism’, namely, that it is not an escape from life. From the medieval mystics Hammarskjöld had learned that love meant an overflowing of strength when one lives from true self- oblivion in service of others together with openness to life, whatever it brings.<sup>27</sup> In this, Hammarskjöld returns to the morally responsible orientation of mysticism with its ‘concrete and sober commitment to humanity and this world’ that has a ‘long ancestry.’<sup>28</sup> Later in 1955, he outlines his understanding of ‘mystical experience’, as ‘Always: *here and now*’, a mystery constantly present for one ‘free from self-concern’ that matures ‘before the receptive attention of assent.’<sup>29</sup> This balances the earlier passage. Now there is more emphasis on the everyday nature of ‘mystical experience’, namely, that is not a matter of special experiences for special people. In this, Hammarskjöld is distancing himself from more privatized and elitist trends emerging with the modern period.

Where does this awareness of being ‘touched’ by God lead? This brings us to the virtues.

## **Virtue and Wisdom**

While virtues such as faithfulness, courage, humility and patience are expressed in Hammarskjöld’s various entries, there is also the presence of one significant virtue, specifically, wisdom. Coming to know ‘the only real thing, love’s calm unwavering flame...’<sup>30</sup> creates a union and singleness of heart, hence, giving light that transforms how we

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<sup>26</sup> Aulén, *White Book*, 43.

<sup>27</sup> Aulén, *White Book*, 43.

<sup>28</sup> Frans Maas, *Spirituality as Insight: Mystical Texts and Theological Reflection* (Leuven: Peters, 2004), 52.

<sup>29</sup> *Markings*, 108.

<sup>30</sup> *Markings*, 139, 140.

perceive reality, oneself and one's actions. This underpins Hammarskjöld's search for a moral path (virtue) and for wisdom, reflected in his 1959 entry from Psalm 51: 6, 'thou require truth in the inward parts, and shall make me to understand wisdom secretly.'<sup>31</sup>

Concerning virtue, in 1956 Hammarskjöld, citing Eckhart, refers to 'habitual will.'<sup>32</sup> Trust between God and the very core of a person embodied in the 'yes' of loving surrender is encapsulated in the term 'habitual will.' In this meeting of wills, there is a collaborative relationship that is not a loss of human freedom but its fullest expression. It also denotes an openness to, and creative influence on, the 'wills' and lives of others. 'Re-transformed into instinct' in the passage suggests the will's habituated tendencies to true values that we call virtues, dispositions that are second-nature and, in a sense, 'instinctive.'

Specifically, for the virtue of wisdom we look to 1958.

Only in man has the evolution of the creation reached the point where reality encounters itself in judgment and choice...Only when you descend into yourself and encounter the Other, do you then experience goodness as the ultimate reality – united and living – *in Him and through you.*<sup>33</sup>

Here, 'the Other' reflects his reading of Rudolf Otto and the idea of 'Wholly Other'. Using language of encounter, Hammarskjöld conveys his movement beyond the frontier of 'the unheard-of' (where 'desire is purified into openness') into a more immediate and embodied consciousness of the mystery of being and its revelatory power. Hammarskjöld appears to blend the language of interpersonal relationship and that of the Unitary God in alluding to goodness as a transcendental property of being ('the ultimate reality'). Elsewhere, there is a parallel use of beauty (to be explored later).

This passage suggests the participatory nature of the 'experience' of goodness. It is the sharing of, and between, two subjects. The resultant shaping of one's rational capacities, as

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<sup>31</sup> *Markings*, 147.

<sup>32</sup> *Markings*, 117. Erling, *A Reader's Guide*, 56:31.

<sup>33</sup> *Markings*, 139.

reflected in this and further entries (examined below), converges with a similar approach in the Christian tradition found, for instance, in the virtue ethics of Thomas Aquinas. As ‘one’ in God, we share in the wisdom and providence of the divine exemplar through affective consciousness, namely, an appreciation of God as the absolute centre of value, of good as the ‘ultimate reality.’ Again, we are images of God (the exemplar) in judgment, freedom and the capacity for self-direction, especially through practical wisdom.<sup>34</sup>

Second, Hammarskjöld’s longing for wisdom is further specified later (1959). He speaks of encountering the world from a ‘point of rest at the centre of our being’ where ‘to be *one* or *whole*, namely, single hearted, is

...to experience reality, not *in relation to ourselves*, but in its sacred independence. It is to see, judge and act from the point of rest in ourselves. Then, how much disappears and all the remains falls into place.<sup>35</sup>

A persistent concern for Hammarskjöld is to be attentive, to listen to his inner movements and to the reality of the world around him – whether social, political or in creation. There is an ongoing search for purity of heart, of being open to, and receptive to, reality, ‘the receptive attention of assent’ of the mystical attitude noted earlier. Here, it is couched in terms of bringing a ‘single heart’ from the centre of one’s being.

Seen within the spiritual tradition, this personal stance is resonant with Simone Weil’s focus on cultivating the ‘faculty of attention’ in which ‘we open ourselves to what is objectively there.’ In this way, we become ‘supple to reality’ and ‘have penetrated the object.’ Truthful knowledge emerges from the ‘spiritual activity of waiting.’ ‘We do not obtain the most precious gifts by going in search of them but by waiting for them.’ Appeal to Weil’s view of attention is made by Iris Murdoch (and also Rowan Williams). Murdoch writes that the direction of attention is, contrary to nature, outward, away from the self...towards the great

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<sup>34</sup> See *ST* 1.2.91.2 and 1.2. Prol.

<sup>35</sup> *Markings*, 148 (italics in original). Aulén suggests ‘single-hearted’ or ‘simplicity’ as best capturing the Swedish word rather than ‘humility’ (Aulén, *White Book*, 68).

surprising variety of the world.’ It is only when I look at something objectively am I taken beyond myself into contact with reality. ‘I am disabused of my selfish projections.’<sup>36</sup>

For Hammarskjöld, this attentive openness, without filters or projections, brings insight into reality when experienced in its ‘sacred independence.’ Wisdom’s secrets should acknowledge the autonomy of earthly realities (the secular realm) together with their claims concerning truth and goodness in moral evaluation and action from God’s perspective. Further, when we stand ‘in the righteous all-seeing light of love that we can dare to look’ this enables a way of ‘recognising’ and gaining ‘full insight’ into that ‘dark, counter-centre of evil in our nature’ (Original Sin) and reach a point of self-forgiveness.<sup>37</sup> This is associated with the need to ‘purify the eye of [your] attention until it becomes utterly simple and direct.’<sup>38</sup>

Self-criticism and a probing attention to self-centredness and duplicity are evident from the start of *Markings*. In 1941-2, we see Hammarskjöld engaging with the ‘dark, counter-centre’ with its impulse to cruelty, falsehood, spite and self-absorption. Twice he uses the image of the wolf to express the predatory, ruthless, even fierce side of himself. Yet, he is also determined ‘to gaze steadfastly’ into this aspect of himself ‘until he has ‘plumbed its depths.’<sup>39</sup> This determination to be attentive to his ‘dark’ side does not seem to maintain the same stringency as the journal progresses. Later, while he feels shame for his defects, he also has a sense of gratitude and a growing sense of God’s ever-present forgiveness and, even, as noted above from 1957, of self-forgiveness. He displays awareness that his sinful failures and resistances underline an emptiness that only God can fill. In the last analysis, using an image of the stage and the stage-manager, it is God who is in charge.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Myers, *Christ the Stranger: The Theology of Rowan Williams* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 110-111 citing or paraphrasing Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 46-76 and Simone Weil, *Waiting for God* (New York: G.P.Putnam’s Sons, 1951).

<sup>37</sup> *Markings*, 128.

<sup>38</sup> *Markings*, 95.

<sup>39</sup> *Markings*, 36-7.

<sup>40</sup> For these aspects see respectively *Markings*, 110, 133, 84, 98.

Overall, such insights from two to three years before his death mark a significant stage in Hammarskjöld's evolving consciousness. His union with God deepens his sensitivity to the importance of being attentive and receptive. In this way, perceptions, dispositions, judgments, choices and actions find their true objects and meaning through the life of the virtues. There is a resonating of one's being with that of God (the Other) by sharing the divine 'ethical space.' By being 'in' Him, what is truly good can be discerned and enacted in cooperation with God ('*through you*'), in practical wisdom. This is to be self-effaced in the Light 'so that it may be focused or spread wider.'<sup>41</sup> Hammarskjöld's is, like Aquinas, a sapiential vision with appreciative knowledge animated and directed by love's 'calm unwavering flame.' All this underpins two other excerpts noted earlier: 'The only value of a life is its content – for *others*' and 'In our era, the path to sanctification necessarily passes through action'.<sup>42</sup> There is a continuum of the mystical and the ethical. We turn now to another perspective on wisdom.

### **The Gift of Wisdom**

Before engaging with further texts in *Markings*, some theological background is needed.

The gift of divine grace permeates every aspect of the cognitive, affective and conative life of faith. Within the theological tradition, this is explained through the relationship between the different modalities of the virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Here, our concern is the infused virtues (faith, hope, charity) and the moral virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance). These are exercised in the first –person mode, namely, as the expression of a person's choice and actions under God's grace. They are habitual dispositions of the human person who grows in the image of God through reflection and freedom encapsulated in self-direction.

Alternatively, through the Gifts of the Spirit, one is disposed to be readily moveable by the Spirit to act in a manner that is beyond human measure. With the Gifts, action is primarily under the impulse of God in which the person cooperates. Sharing in the divine life entails

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<sup>41</sup> *Markings*, 133.

<sup>42</sup> *Markings*, 140 and 108. Aulén prefers 'sanctification' to 'holiness' because of its stronger sense of God's action and its centrifugal character (Aulén, *White Book*, 100).

the need for human capacities of knowing and loving to function beyond their human mode. They do so as attuned to the divine milieu of a shared relationship and through a modality that is not discursive or calculative but one that is instinctive, intuitive, immediate and supra-rational. There are four cognitive gifts: understanding (the grasp of something as true) and three gifts concerning judgment: knowledge (concerning created things; wisdom (for divine things) and counsel (for individual action).<sup>43</sup> Our concern is wisdom.

The traditional analogy to capture the different modes of the virtues and the Gifts is the progress of a boat. The use of oars to move the boat forward represents the role of the virtues. Putting up the sails to be propelled by the wind represents the work of the Gifts – the impulse and action of the Holy Spirit. With the virtues, it is our effort, albeit under the grace of God. With the Gifts, it is God's work but with our cooperation.<sup>44</sup>

Recent studies on second person perspective and Joint Attention offer further refinements in regard to the Gifts. The necessary condition for a minimal second-personal presence is a personal conscious interaction between two persons that is immediate, namely, a personal presence. This is proposed in the light of studies on those suffering from autism spectrum disorder which is characterised by diminished social interaction and communication. There is an impaired ability to form 'second person' or I-you relationships with the affective responsiveness that is needed in such a mutual presence.<sup>45</sup>

The analogy of the affective response entailed in the mutual presence and Joint Attention between, for instance, and parent and a child, has been applied to the modality of the Gifts. There is a shared attitude and response to a common object or state of affairs.<sup>46</sup> The mutual love or friendship in the union with God brings a shared response of love and common

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<sup>43</sup> ST 2.2.8.6. The other three affective gifts are fear, piety and courage.

<sup>44</sup> It is a misunderstanding to see this analogy in a sequential mode: the virtues are operational first and, then, at a certain stage of advanced virtue, the Gifts come in to play. The Gifts are given with the grace of Baptism, hence, are at work from the very start. The precise relationship between the virtues and the Gifts is beyond this discussion.

<sup>45</sup> See Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective in Aquinas' ethics: Virtues and gifts* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 41-50. Also, Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), 75-6. It must be noted that Pinsent relates his discussion of autism (a relational and affective deficit) to Aquinas's view that the infused virtues and gifts as dispositions can be present in children and in the intellectually impaired (ST 2.2.47.14 ad 3). See Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective*, p. 131, n. 95.

<sup>46</sup> Pinsent and Stump suggest that the failure to be 'moved' by the divine 'other' and respond to God can be understood, analogically, as spiritual autism. See Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective*, 61.

understanding and response to values that underlie moral judgments. For our purposes, with the virtue, wisdom's judgement is practical reason exercised in the virtue of prudence. Alternatively, wisdom as the Gift is a joint enterprise between God and the person. The judgement of wisdom is evaluative or appreciative in character moving the will to a certain 'stance', or as Stump describes it, to 'a conative attitude prompted by the mind's understanding.'<sup>47</sup> Its context is an interpersonal relationship with Joint attention and shared attitudes. Under the impulse of the Spirit, we share in the loving, judging, choosing and acting of God. In a sense, it can be said we share in the divine subjectivity, the divine knowing and love and in the Trinitarian relationships.

With this as background, we can now approach a 1956 passage in *Markings* that is strikingly consonant with this traditional approach to the Gifts, even using the principal analogy used to capture their modality. While commentators do not indicate whether Hammarskjöld was aware of the theology of the Gifts and its associated boating metaphor, his appeal to it is enlightening.

The *Wind* bloweth where it listeth –  
so is every one that is born of the spirit. (John III, v 8)

And the *light* shineth in darkness,  
And the darkness comprehended it not. (John I, v 5)

Like wind --. In it, with it, of it. Of it, just like a sail, as light and strong that, even where bent flat, gathers all the power of the wind without hampering its course.

Like light --. In light, lit through by light, transformed into light. Like the lens which disappears in the light it focuses.

Like wind, Like light.  
Just this – on these expanses, on these heights.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Eleonore Stump, 'The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions', *Faith and Philosophy* 28:1 (2011), pp. 29-43, at p.41.

<sup>48</sup> *Markings*, 112. Erling, *A Reader's Guide*, 56:16.



Erling suggests this entry possibly reflects ‘an experience on a cliff overlooking the sea.’<sup>49</sup> Hammarskjöld cites and comments on two passages from John’s Gospel building on two symbols for God that, as noted earlier, he uses elsewhere. For example, wind and light prompt Hammarskjöld to ponder God’s greatness and how good it is, despite one’s smallness, to be caught up in “that which alone is great.”<sup>50</sup>

In the scriptural section of the text above from two passages in John’s Gospel, the interplay of the affective and the cognitive is intimated (the hermeneutical window explained earlier). In affective mode, the wind clearly refers to the person of the Holy Spirit, with the implied scriptural connotation of love. Hammarskjöld sees himself as a sail in relation to the wind, hence, guided by divine love. In this, both the sail and the wind become wholly identified. Even when it is ‘bent flat’ (‘bound to the earth’ in Erling), the sail can harness the power of the wind while not impeding or constraining it. It is a collaboration done in love.

The cognitive aspect is conveyed in the second symbol where the light represents the incarnate Word from the Gospel’s Prologue, who, as the light in the darkness, is a divine beacon of truth (‘the Light of the world’, cf., John 8:3). Hammarskjöld sees himself, again, as so identified with the light that he acts like a ‘lens that focuses the light to new strength and intensity, but is not itself seen.’<sup>51</sup> A year later (1957) there is the corresponding passage where Hammarskjöld describes sanctity as ‘either to be the Light, or be self-effaced in the Light, so that it may be born, self-effaced so that it may be focused and spread wider.’<sup>52</sup> Intimations of growing light and insight are evident from 1952. He writes of being sustained by the strength and power from the air to a glider or like water for a swimmer together with the illuminating vision of being part of a magnetic field, in a timeless present, part of the Communion of Saints.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Erling, *A Reader’s Guide*, 156-7.

<sup>50</sup> *Markings*, 137. Erling’s rendition is ‘In your wind --. In your light --. How small is everything else, how small are we - and happy in that which alone is great’ (*A Reader’s Guide*, 57:52).

<sup>51</sup> Erling, *A Reader’s Guide*, 157. See also entry in 1957 *Markings*, 133 in similar vein.

<sup>52</sup> *Markings*, 133.

<sup>53</sup> *Markings*, 84.

The symbol of light used in this passage from John, its association with truth and its embodiment in the person of the Word could be seen as the culmination of developing mystical intensity and its associated insights. Five years earlier in 1951 Hammarskjöld has a breakthrough experience after a night in the mountains. He is unable to form a clear image of the One causing the experience and prompting the accompanying insight. That mysterious reality is hidden. He draws on nature and its images – the doorway to the ‘beyond’ and the inexpressible. He moves from the dark of night into the ‘pale gold of a new day.’ He is drawn by ‘Light without a visible source.’ All of this is convergent with the caveat noted earlier from Aquinas.<sup>54</sup> The spiritual awakening, the moment of insight comes suddenly (an answer to his original question and hope, to reach the destination where ‘life rings out’ in ‘a clear pure note in the silence’).<sup>55</sup>

Then – all of a sudden—the first blackbird’s piercing note of call, a reality outside yourself, the real world. All of a sudden – the Earthly Paradise from which we have been excluded by our knowledge.’<sup>56</sup>

This is not an insight from rational knowledge. It is a flash of meaning that ‘rings true.’ This resonating call from beyond is ‘something touching and tempting’ ...physical and concrete like a bird’s call.’<sup>57</sup> It still leads Hammarskjöld to wonder about the visible and the invisible, about the frontier bordering the beyond in whose depths are found beauty, harmony and inexpressible truth.

‘Where does the frontier lie? Where do we travel in those dreams of beauty satisfied, laden with significance but without comprehensible meaning? Etched into the mind far deeper than the witness of the eyes. Where all is well – without fear, without desire.’<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See n.19.

<sup>55</sup> *Markings*, 31.

<sup>56</sup> *Markings*, 74.

<sup>57</sup> Frans Maas, *Spirituality as Insight: Mystical Texts and Theological Reflection* (Leuven: Peters, 2004), 82.

<sup>58</sup> *Markings*, 76.

Later, in 1956, from the text we have seen on the wind and the light, Spirit and Word, there is intimated an answer to his question here. Hammarskjöld's sense of the inter-penetration of light and lens is underpinned by the physical and embodied expression of the call from beyond, one that touches him and is alluring. The light may still not have a visible source, but now it takes the visible form of a personal revelation in Jesus, the Word made flesh. The truth, the axis of meaning, is now a person within history.

Again, Hammarskjöld is attempting to express an 'irreducibly simple experience' ('just this') through the compression of image and emotion in poetic and descriptive mode rather than through explanatory and theological language. Lipsey says that Hammarskjöld is thinking 'about two wills and their relation.'<sup>59</sup> Granted his use of synecdoche, this is true, up to a point. It is consistent with our elaboration above of the controlling metaphor used of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic theological tradition, namely, the Spirit symbolised as the wind acting on the sails to drive a boat forward. But it is not just a matter of 'will power' in a relationship, but the will as expressing personal love that seeks what is mutual and unifying. It is the person of the Spirit, of divine love that 'guides the boat' of spiritual progress. This is strengthened by the symbolic interaction of light and lens to capture the simultaneous presence and action of the Word and the association with truth. The interplay of wind/love (Spirit) with light/truth (Word) intimates the interpenetration of the affective and the cognitive (suggested in the 1955 text: 'his heart was lucid and his mind loving'). It points to a maintaining of the 'alliance' between intellect and will, knowledge and love, theology and experience', noted by Denys Turner.<sup>60</sup>

The fuller significance of the passage here, then, must be seen in terms of the sense of union, of mutual co-inherence of persons – Word, Spirit and Hammarskjöld – that forms its context in his spiritual development. It is a growth in knowing and loving *of* God and *from* God. Further, the use of prepositions (in, with, through, of) is suggestive of the Trinitarian dimension in Hammarskjöld's religious consciousness as reflected in the pattern of his prayers (noted earlier).

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<sup>59</sup> Lipsey, *Hammarskjöld: A Life*, 262.

<sup>60</sup> Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1999), 224.

Again, the implied sense of touch (especially of 'being touched' by God) from the metaphor of the wind on the sail must be balanced by that of taste as associated with wisdom (mentioned earlier). Reflecting on the meaning of his fellowship with God (Christmas Day 1955), Hammarskjöld cites the *Imitation of Christ*. The passage speaks of tasting God 'in Himself or in His works' which brings a sense of the 'infinite distance between the creature and the Creator.' The passage ends with a prayer to be enlightened that leads to being 'transported out of herself by the excess of her happiness' so that [the soul] 'binds herself to Thee with all her powers and all her motions.'<sup>61</sup>

In the following entry, he expresses his own personal experience of tasting and finding joy in God.

You take the pen -- and the lines dance. You take the flute -- and the tones shimmer. You take the brush -- and the colors sing. In this way everything becomes meaningful and beautiful in that space beyond time which you are. How then can I keep anything back from you? <sup>62</sup>

Erling rightly observes this is a celebration of God 'as the source of beauty.' The Creator that Hammarskjöld encounters is One who 'enlivens in a person every kind of competence, the ability to write, to make music, to paint. Everything becomes meaningful and beautiful because eternity interpenetrates time.'<sup>63</sup> Truth is mediated by the apprehension of beauty. In the next entry Hammarskjöld offers a vision of creation and eternal life as an expression of the interchange between time and eternity.

Again, in 1959, his entry is in haiku form:

Beauty. Goodness.

In the wonder's here and now

Became suddenly real.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Markings*, 105.

<sup>62</sup> Erling, *A Reader's Guide*, 55:54.

<sup>63</sup> Erling, *A Reader's Guide*, 142.

<sup>64</sup> *Markings*, 158.

While wonders do occur, Hammarskjöld does not want to base faith on them.<sup>65</sup> Here, he returns to his earlier insight that wonder is our primary impulse about mystery and what drives our quest for meaning.<sup>66</sup>

What emerges from these texts associated with taste is a strongly internalised sense of beauty, a form of knowing 'from the inside', noted earlier about taste. It is through this that the author is touched and drawn by what is 'meaningful' in the world (its truth, its goodness) in a movement of self-transcendence. As noted earlier, the taste for divine things in the gift of wisdom is normally associated with the appreciation of the good. In discussing wisdom as a virtue, we explained Hammarskjöld's awareness of an intimate appreciation of, and sharing in, divine goodness as a centre of value. These texts seen cumulatively indicate the interpenetration of the transcendentals of beauty and goodness as doorways to the truth in Hammarskjöld's apprehension of God and of reality. This confirms a point noted earlier that beauty, with goodness (and truth), are properties of being, of reality that Hammarskjöld not only is touched by and tastes but is called share.

The co-inherence of goodness, truth and beauty is distilled in a passage that immediately precedes the passage on wind (Spirit) and light (Christ) explained above.

A poem is like a deed in that it is to be judged as a manifestation of the personality of its maker. This in no way ignores its beauty as measured by aesthetic standards of perfection, but also considers its authenticity as measured by its congruence with an inner life.<sup>67</sup>

Three criteria for evaluating a poem also apply to our human actions: the aesthetic, the authentic and the ethical. One could couch these in three questions: does the poem have integrity, harmony and proportion in its form that enables it to bring light (insight) to the

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<sup>65</sup> *Markings*, 125.

<sup>66</sup> *Markings*, 33.

<sup>67</sup> *Markings*, 112.

reader? Is the poem a sincere and honest expression of the poet's innermost response to life? What sort of personality is being revealed, namely, the character of the poet?

In these three questions can be found a compressed expression of the interplay and co-inherence, successively, of the beautiful, the true and the good as much in human action as in a poem. If beauty is the truth that shines out, namely, it manifests itself, goodness is truth appreciated as a value to be pursued. For Hammarskjöld, the criterion of the authentic life (as true, good and beautiful) is one lived for others. One phrase captures this: when one reaches a point of being able to give without expecting a response, then '...Love has matured and, through dissolution of the self into light, [it] becomes a radiance...'<sup>68</sup>

Taste, then, for Hammarskjöld, is an 'inside' knowing of beauty and of goodness that opens up to truth. Here is found the gateway to mystery with its summons to self-transcendence. Nevertheless, his taste for God prompting the desire to act as God would act in relation to the world mirrors what was discussed earlier about Hammarskjöld's insights into wisdom as an element in his religious consciousness. There, it was couched in terms of virtue and the first person modality. Now wisdom can be seen as the Gift. It is a sharing in the divine 'taste.' From the Spirit's wind acting on the sail, there emerges a common attitude, shared judgment about true value and subsequent action. With the second person perspective and the role of Joint Attention, the context is more explicitly interpersonal. Within friendship, a divine-human cooperation is prompted and guided by the action of the Spirit. It is the realisation of Hammarskjöld's comment: 'Not I but God in me.'<sup>69</sup>

Again, one cannot ignore how, in 1955, in addressing issues of conflict, Hammarskjöld reveals his awareness of the need to somehow 'enter into' the subjectivity of the 'other.' He wants to shift

the dividing- line in my being between subject and object to a position where the subject, even it is in me, is outside and above me –so that my *whole* being may become an instrument for that which is greater than I.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Markings*, 112.

<sup>69</sup> *Markings*, 127.

<sup>70</sup> *Markings*, 64. See Erling, *A Reader's Guide*, 53.

For him, faith is being ‘one in God and God [is] wholly in you.’<sup>71</sup> Its expression is in the polyvalent and participatory symbolism of wind (truth, the Word) and light (love, Holy Spirit). In this, Hammarskjöld is again expressing an entering into ‘the subjectivity of the ‘other’ but now it is of the Trinitarian ‘Others.’

To sum up. We see this sharing of subjectivity reflected in the identification with the movement of the Spirit (wind on the sail). It is intertwined with the presence (and action) of the Word through Hammarskjöld’s use of the symbol of light in relation to a lens. The role of Christ in the work of the Spirit through the Gifts is often muted. As Anthony Kelly notes, the gift of wisdom is ‘at once a tasting and an attunement to the reality of the crucified and risen One mediated in the life of the Church.’<sup>72</sup> Because of our union with Incarnate Wisdom, that wisdom which is uppermost amongst the Gifts brings a sharing in Christ’s ‘taste’ for divine things and in his judgement about divine realities. Hammarskjöld’s blend of wind and light addresses this issue poetically and, by implication, theologically (while acknowledging his particular understanding of the community of the Church). The gift of wisdom is a share in the wisdom of Christ, who, has been given the Spirit ‘without reserve’ (John 3: 33) and, for Aquinas, possesses all the Gifts ‘to a pre-eminent degree.’<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion

In *Markings*, with its blend of image, compressed emotion and distilled insight, we have the reflections of a very private man. Scholarship has uncovered many of the sources that shape and inform Hammarskjöld’s religious consciousness and spiritual quest. Our considerations have (hopefully) illuminated convergences within a long-standing tradition. On the textual evidence, Hammarskjöld’s articulation of wisdom, as loving knowledge, emerges from the author’s groping and growing awareness of being known and loved by God. Again, through his use of image, symbol and language, he is enabled to integrate the voluntarist and

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<sup>71</sup> *Markings*, 139,

<sup>72</sup> Anthony J Kelly, ‘Faith as Sight? Toward a Phenomenology of Revelation’, *Australian eJournal of Theology* 19:3, December, 2012, pp. 180-194, at p. 189 citing *ST* 2.2.45.2. .

<sup>73</sup> *ST* 3.7.5.

intellectualist strands that have, at times, been separated in that tradition. For that, we are indebted to Dag Hammarskjöld.

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