

Jalal Toufic

The Resurrected Brother of Mary and Martha: A Human Who Lived then Died!

01/06

e-flux journal #30 — december 2011 Jalal Toufic
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To be fully alive and *then* die physically, a state most people mistakenly view as being ours in general, a given, is actually an exceptional state. What would it take to achieve what we assume our condition to be? It would take no less than being resurrected by the Christ, “the life” (John 11:25). Yes, to be fully alive and then die physically is not the condition of all humans, but is rather the exceptional condition of the New Testament’s brother of Mary and Martha, the one who was resurrected by the Christ, *the life*, and hence was, until he died physically, solely alive, rather than, as we, mortals, are, dead while alive. Following his resurrection by *the life*, the brother of Mary and Martha was no longer really a mortal; in that he was no longer really a mortal, i.e., no longer dead while alive, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha had become what the Arabic word *hayawân* indicates, alive, alive to the highest degree, and an animal. When he picked some heads of grain and ate them on the Sabbath, the Pharisees did not say to him, “You are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath”! Indeed, whatever the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha did, people did not consider it as condemnable, unconsciously treating him as an animal, one to whom the values of Good and Evil did not apply (animals did not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil). In order to resurrect, one’s call to the dead by the name he had while alive must be such as to re-differentiate this name from every name in history (in “his” dying before dying [“This autumn, as lightly clad as possible, I twice attended my funeral, first as Count Robilant (no, he is my son, insofar as I am Carlo Alberto, my nature below), but I was Antonelli myself”], Nietzsche writes: “I am Prado, I am also Prado’s father, I venture to say that I am also Lesseps.... I am also Chambige ... every name in history is I”),¹ and such as to overcome the over-turn that undoes the dead’s turn to reply to the call in the labyrinth of undeath;² but it never occurs to those mortals living then to call the resurrected, because, at the most basic level, he no longer needs the call since, as is the case of most animals, he faces himself in the mirror naturally, i.e., since his facing himself in the mirror is not the result of a successful interpellation, and, at a derivative level, because he happens to be facing the mortal whenever the latter needs him to be in that direction. From the time of his resurrection to his subsequent physical death, no one called the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha. But *he* called; about the ninth hour after he was given again spirit by the Holy Spirit, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha cried out in a loud voice, “My God, why have you left me poor in world?” After the Holy Spirit infused the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha again

with spirit, that is, after the latter could no longer be considered only an animal, the “wise men” of that time felt that he was “no good”³ – notwithstanding that, fully alive, he could not be evaluated, was beyond (or rather below) Good and Evil⁴ (Nietzsche: “Judgments, value judgments on life, for or against, can ultimately never be true: they have value only as symptoms, they can be taken seriously only as symptoms, – in themselves, judgments like these are stupidities.... *the value of life cannot be estimated*”).⁵ The resurrected brother of Mary and Martha proved to be a bigger problem for the Pharisees than Jesus, since the latter still affirmed the Law (“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” [Matthew 5:17–20]), while the former’s transgressions, his “strange actions,” went on becoming more blatant and flagrant. While it may have been for the glory of God that Lazarus was resurrected, it was certainly not for the glory of the Law. It is to the discredit of Paul that in none of his letters does he mention the real resurrected, the one through whom the question of whether the Law has been abrogated/made inoperative with the resurrection, at least in the case of the resurrected, is to be really raised. How come no Christian has written a text or epistle to the people of Bethany titled, *Twilight of the Law*, in which a section is titled, “The Problem of the Resurrected Brother of Mary and Martha”?

“Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ‘Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.’ ... ‘Leave her alone,’ Jesus replied. ‘It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my

burial.⁶ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me” (John 12:1–8). Is that all?! Was there no dialogue worth reporting other than the one between Judas and Jesus? Wasn’t there a dialogue between the life and the resurrection and the resurrection and the life, between the Christ and the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha? I imagine the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha turning to Judas and saying: “What a petty view of poverty you have! You are talking about those who are poor only in a secondary sense, since they have a world, a whole world. I am poor in world.” I imagine that he then said to Jesus, “I heard that you asked rhetorically, ‘What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?’” (Matthew 16:26), then lamented, “Now that you have given me my life back and that the Holy Spirit has infused me with a soul and spirit, why have you, through whom, as far as one can tell, the world was made,⁷ not also bestowed a world on me?” I imagine that Jesus answered him with these words of Nietzsche, who would later sign some of his final letters with “The Crucified”: “I teach to you ... the creating friend, who always has a complete world to bestow.”⁸ The resurrected prayed then to God, the world-creating friend, to bestow a world on him. And God the creator of worlds (it may very well be that God does not create [out of nothing] the things/events, for example Earth, wheat field, crows, Julius Caesar’s crossing the Rubicon in 49 BC, but rather creates and bestows a world, makes it possible for us to experience these as a world – while it may be the case that when one goes mad, one actually perceives and experiences more of the “universe” or multiverse than one does normally, even so one becomes poor in world then) bestowed a world on the resurrected, henceforth his *waliyy* (friend). There are at least three risks of resurrection: that the one who returns be another – this danger is averted when the one doing the resurrection is the life, the Christ; that the one who returns be only a *hayawân*, both someone who is only and fully living and an animal – this danger is averted with the reinfusion of spirit in the resurrected by the Holy Spirit; and that the one who returns to life be poor in world – a condition that can be remedied through the bestowal by God the world-creator of a world on the resurrected. It seems that the resurrection demands to be the act of the Trinity: the Christ, the life, gives the resurrected back life; the Holy Spirit gives him, who is then only alive and therefore really solely an animal, spirit; and God the world-creator creates a world and bestows it on him.

Given that the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha did not remember anything that happened to him in death,⁹ at first his two sisters

02/06

e-flux journal #30 — december 2011 Jalel Toufic
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were apprehensive that his memory was overwhelmed by what he underwent in undeath and that he would no longer remember them or remember very little of their previous life together. Instead, unlike with other people, who would have needed age revivification in order to re-access much of the early years of their childhood, which was otherwise occulted by infantile amnesia, and notwithstanding that he could not be hypnotized since he no longer dreamt when he went to sleep¹⁰ – it was as if he had done all the dreaming he was ever to do in his “four days” (John 11:17) in the undeath realm, where he felt that he had spent an eternity or an infinite time – the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha could remember the slightest, minutest incidents of his and his sisters’ common childhood, recounting to them childhood events that they had long forgotten as well as ones they denied vehemently ever having happened given that these involved what seemed to be perverse sexual experiences. One of the prerequisites for fulfilling Jesus Christ’s enjoinder to be like little children (“And he said: ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’” [Matthew 18:3]) is to fully accept oneself as a child, one’s childhood, including one’s sexuality then, that is, not to repress much of it, as implied by *infantile amnesia* (before Jesus Christ’s many miracles, what most took aback his acquaintances was that he remembered everything from his childhood – will we one day discover new Gospels in which Jesus Christ, who did not undergo *infantile amnesia*, often refers to his childhood, *exactly as if he were reliving it?*). Moreover, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha never forgot the name of a relative or had a slip of the tongue, etc., thus he had no need, at least in the context of this world, to interpret what he did. What Deleuze and Guattari write about the female protagonist of Henry James’ novella “In the Cage,” a telegrapher with a “prodigious talent for interpretation,” actually applies far more to the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha (and to others in their perceptions of and dealings with him): “She ended up knowing so much that she could no longer interpret anything. *There were no longer shadows to help her see more clearly, only glare.*”¹¹

Didn’t Judas intuit during the aforementioned dinner given in Jesus’ honor in Bethany and attended by the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha that he and the eleven other apparent disciples of Jesus were not the latter’s true disciples, that the true disciple of the life and resurrection was Lazarus, the resurrection and the life, and so felt less qualms when it

came to betraying the one he no longer considered his Lord? Jesus Christ, the life and the resurrection, had only one disciple, whom he loved (“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” [John 11:5]), Lazarus, the resurrection and the life, whereas his apparent disciples, one of whom betrayed him and the other eleven abandoned him as soon as he was apprehended, if they were the disciples of anyone, it was later of the Holy Spirit. The disciple of the one who when “some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from you,’” answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:39–40), is Lazarus, someone who was four days in the grave and who when Jesus called him, “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43), left the realm of death and followed him (to life). And yet, following the death of Judas, “said Peter, ‘It is written in the Book of Psalms: ... ‘May another take his place of leadership.’ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.’ So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, ‘Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.’ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:20–26). In their search for a replacement of the dead Judas, the remaining apparent disciples surely managed to skip the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, the Christ’s one real disciple!

Nietzsche: “There was really only one Christian, and he died on the cross” (*The Anti-Christ*, #39).¹² If by “there was really only one Christian,” Nietzsche was referring to Jesus, then his assertion “he died on the cross” is false since *the life* (John 11:25) did not die (“They slew him [the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allâh’s messenger] not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them ...” [Qur’ân 4:157] – someone else, a look-alike, was crucified in his place), indeed cannot die on the cross or in any other manner: “‘Pretend to weep, my friends, since poets only pretend to die,’ says Cocteau in his film *The Testament of Orpheus* (1960). How pretentious can some poet be at times! Notwithstanding Cocteau’s assertion, it is not

poets, but *the resurrection and the life* [actually the life and the resurrection], Jesus Christ, who could have said to the [genuinely Christian] mourners around his body, ‘Pretend to weep, since Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life [actually the life and the resurrection], only pretends to die.’”¹³ If one considers that Nietzsche does not include in the term *Christian* the Christ but only some follower of his, then Nietzsche’s assertion is accurate; this one and only Christian is the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha. I propose the following add-on to Nietzsche’s assertion: “There was really only one Christian martyr, and he died on the cross.” Is Lazarus to be considered a Christian martyr because had Jesus Christ not lingered two days where he happened to be (“So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days” [John 11:6]) but instead immediately went to Bethany and miraculously cured him, who was then gravely ill, Lazarus would not have died at that point? That Lazarus died for the glory of God does not make him strictly speaking a *Christian* martyr; what makes him a Christian martyr, possibly the only Christian martyr, is that he lived for the cause of the Christ, of the life, and he could do so only by no longer being a mortal, i.e., dead while alive, but instead solely alive. Trusting Nietzsche’s intuition that the only Christian died on the cross, I deduce that the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha was crucified (“Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him” [John 12:9–11]). If one includes the Christ in the term *Christian* in Nietzsche’s assertion, then there were really only two Christians, the life and the resurrection, Jesus Christ, and the resurrection and the life, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha. In Lebanon, Christians say, *al-masîh qâm, haqqan qâm* (Christ rose [from death, i.e., was resurrected], truly he rose); they should rather say: *Alî’âzar qâm, haqqan qâm* (Lazarus rose [from death, i.e., was resurrected], truly he rose). The word order in John 25, “I am the resurrection and the life,” is inaccurate – the life, even if it is crucified, cannot die and therefore cannot be resurrected.¹⁴ The assertive sentence must be: “I am the life and the resurrection” – “I am ... the resurrection” here means: I am the one through whom the resurrection can happen. It is the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha who can say, “I am the resurrection and the life”; I can very well imagine that when his listeners did not understand what he just said, the resurrected

brother of Mary and Martha *told them plainly*: “I’ve been resurrected – by the life – and thenceforth can only be alive – until I physically die.” It is a great mark of a disciple of the Christ and indicates a true *imitation of Christ* when his description is mistaken for that of Jesus Christ: the one who used to be called Lazarus is the resurrection and the life and he died on the cross.

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04/06

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Jalal Toufic is a thinker and a mortal to death. He was born in 1962 in Beirut or Baghdad and died before dying in 1989 in Evanston, Illinois. He is the author of *Distracted* (1991; 2nd ed., 2003), *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (1993; 2nd ed., 2003), *Over-Sensitivity* (1996; 2nd ed., 2009), *Forthcoming* (2000), *Undying Love, or Love Dies* (2002), *Two or Three Things I'm Dying to Tell You* (2005), *'Āshūrā': This Blood Spilled in My Veins* (2005), *Undeserving Lebanon* (2007), *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster* (2009), *Graziella: The Corrected Edition* (2009), *What Is the Sum of Recurrently?* (2010), and *The Portrait of the Pubescent Girl: A Rite of Non-Passage* (2011). Many of his books, most of which were published by Forthcoming Books, are available for download as PDF files at his website: <http://www.jalaltoufic.com>. He is presently a guest for the year 2011 of the Artists-in-Berlin Program of the DAAD.

05/06

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1
From Friedrich Nietzsche's 5 January 1889 letter to Jakob Burckhardt, in *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), 347.

2
On the over-turn, see "Over-Turns" in my book *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition (Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo Press, 2003; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>), and "On Names: Letter to Lyn Hejinian" in my book *Forthcoming* (Berkeley, CA: Atelos, 2000), 179–194.

3
Friedrich Nietzsche: "The wisest men in every age have reached the same conclusion about life: *it's no good ...* Always and everywhere, you hear the same sound from their mouths, – a sound ... full of exhaustion with life, full of resistance to life" (*The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman; trans. Judith Norman [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 162).

4
One can go beyond Good and Evil in at least two other manners: by achieving the will, which eliminates one of the two terms, Evil (in the sense of what cannot be willed to recur eternally – even by the redeemer) – and eradicates death; and by having a Last Judgment. The Last Judgment is, paradoxically, God's way of implementing Artaud's program: to have done with the Judgment of God (*pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* [the title of his cancelled, 1947 radio broadcast]), since beyond the Last Judgment there is no longer Good and Evil given that these would still be judgments. Since there can be Good and Evil until the Last Judgment but not beyond it, Heaven and Hell are beyond Good and Evil. There's a General Judgment (aka Last Judgment) following the individual judgment, which is related to each of us as specific if not unique, because the General Judgment is one where everyone exclaims: "Every name in history is I." The General Judgment is a sort of Buddhist complement to Islam and Christianity, their Zen moment.

5
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 162.

6
And if we go along with the Moslem accusation that the Gospels have altered and suppressed some of what Jesus Christ actually said and did, might it not be that Jesus Christ's call to the physically dead Lazarus, "Lazarus, come out!" was preceded by these

words that are absent from the New Testament: "Call not those who are slain in the way of Allāh 'dead.' Nay, they are living, only ye perceive not" (Qur'ān 3:169)?

7
"The world was made through him [the Son]" (John 1:10).

8
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody*, translated with an introduction and notes by Graham Parkes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 54.

9
That in the New Testament the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha is not asked what he saw to the other side of death indicates that the New Testament revolves around life.

10
Once the Holy Spirit gives him, who is then only alive and therefore really solely an animal, spirit, and God the world-creator creates a world and bestows it on him, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, in so far as he did not dream but *always* had a relationship to objects as such, was very different from animals.

11
Deleuze and Guattari comment: "You cannot go further in life than this sentence by James" (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translation and foreword by Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987], 197. We are notified by Massumi in the corresponding note that the reported quote from James is actually his English translation of the French translation used by Deleuze and Guattari; the actual words in James' text are: "She knew at last so much that she had quite lost her earlier sense of merely guessing. There were no different shades of distinctions – it all bounded out"). And indeed, who has gone "further in life" than the New Testament's resurrected brother of Mary and Martha?

12
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 35.

13
Jalal Toufic, *Graziella: The Corrected Edition* (Forthcoming Books, 2009; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>), 67–68.

14
Those who consider that the Christ, the life, was resurrected must consider that his prior dying was his greatest miracle. Which is far more extraordinary in the era ushered in by the Christ, the life: dying or resurrection? In the case of a Christian, who is alive through

Jesus Christ, the life and the resurrection, it is death, rather than resurrection, that should be accompanied by wonders. Indeed, according to the accounts of the Gospels, when Jesus was purportedly resurrected no signs and wonders appeared in the world, but when he died, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split" (Matthew 27:51).

e-flux journal #30 — december 2011 **جلال توفيق**
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06/06