

BELLS

The bell exists in my body. The sound of the bell consists in my reaction to it.

INTRODUCTION

My research in connection with the feminine archetype has led me in recent years away from the study of ancient goddesses and to the Christian Virgin and Mother of God with all of her attributes. To these belongs the bell.

The full meaning of this earthly vessel – the *vas sacra*, as the bell is called in the Catholic faith – became clear to me during a profound personal experience: In the spring of 2013, I heard about the dedication of nine new bells in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. One of them – the Mary bell – was to ring out again from the cathedral for the first time in 200 years. It was said to be the largest of the newly cast bells and the one with the deepest tone -- a drone or *bourdon*, as the experts call these bells. What an experience!

I traveled to Paris. Thousands of people had gathered on the plaza in front of the Cathedral of the Mother of God to witness this event of the century. They had waited hours for a place to stand in front of the church. Now, crowded together, they waited for the first tone. Then the first bell was struck. Its name is Gabriel, in honor of the Angel of the Annunciation.

Immediately a great quiet spread across the square – one could have heard a pin drop. The full, deep *bourdon*, Emmanuel, rang out, the oldest and only original bell of Notre Dame, and then, returned to the *sonnerie* after a 200-year absence, the new Mary- *bourdon* joined in. The two massive sounding chambers began their mysterious dialogue. The crowd listened in quiet reverence to the bells as well as to the beating of their own hearts. A giant TV monitor showed the interior of the belfry, and we could follow the slow, rhythmic swinging of the

sacred vessels hanging there. With ears and eyes totally engaged, reverently focused, people began to sway along with the bells, happily, freely and in gentle harmony. The rhythmic movement of the bells was repeating itself in the audience. For some just as an internal sensation. People began to smile. The adoration of God through the senses, described to us in so many medieval documents, in that moment became something tangible for the 21st century secular *modern man*.

And then the bells of the north tower chimed in. At first as a simple melody, then a longer peal; a bright progression alternated with a darker phrase, and in between, always in regular intervals, the singular, deep tone of the Mary bell. All of the combinations, the changes, were performed in this manner, culminating in a concert of all ten bells. Even the jingling of the little bells in the *fleche*, the small, third tower of Notre Dame, joined in. The words of the newspaper reporter were confirmed:

Ten magnificent bells peal out. Half of Paris gets goose bumps: Notre Dame sounds again as it did before the Revolution. Just as fully and beautifully.

The atmosphere on the square in front of the Cathedral was filled with joy and emotion and the pride of the people. Something had been returned, something that had belonged to them, but that had been lost somehow. How, why, who could know? The heavenly sounds brought that something back: The notion of a connection between heaven and earth. The bells proclaimed this secret. They are God's living messengers.

Yes, it is true what the mayor of Paris said in his welcome speech: a great gift had been given to the people of Paris – the pervasive clamor of daily traffic will now always be interrupted by this splendid concert of the bells, ringing out over everything else, just as those gathered were witnessing in that moment. As I listened to the full sound of the peal, there in the middle of the endless crowd of people on the square in front of the cathedral, it felt as if the hearts of everyone

around me were beating in mine so that I thought it would burst. A profound ache and a great joy coursed through me simultaneously.

We all know such feelings. Experiences of a deep bond with others. With life and death. With people we do not know, of whose personal lives we know nothing, and yet they are in that moment closer to us than our nearest and dearest. What is this – how does it happen?

That night I had a striking dream:

After a long trek in a seemingly endless labyrinth, I hear a sound and look around in puzzlement. Where is this deep, mellow sound coming from? There is nothing anywhere around me. Then I look down and see that concealed in my folded hands a bell is ringing. I open my hands, and there resounds a mighty peal of countless bells. A window opens and I see out into the world. The labyrinth disappears.

Often one falls out of touch with the connection between one's self and the world. In our many personal involvements we forget the simple humanness that binds us to all living things. Evidently the unconscious mind reminds us that the sound of the bell makes this connection and dispels the darkness of the solitary wanderer. It is this wisdom of the collective unconscious which was sensed and experienced by all those present at the Notre Dame celebration. And this wisdom connects us to each other. In the symbol of the bell we experience the mediating aspect of the Mother of God, in whose honor this cathedral was built 850 years ago.

THE MARY BELL

The very first bell of the cathedral for which it was named, the Mary Bell, was lost long ago. The new Mary Bell was not to join the other eight newly forged ones in the north tower, but instead was brought into the south tower. In that tower all the time since the French Revolution, only one other bell has sounded there - also a *bourdon*, named Emmanuel. Emmanuel was the only bell left of the famous Paris peal. All the others had been melted down for cannons or cannon balls. Later, four replacement bells were hung in the north tower to accompany the *bourdon*, but they were of inferior quality. A large bell to match the sound of the original Mary Bell was never created, and the ringing sounded lopsided, shrill, not in harmony with Emmanuel.

The *bourdon* Emmanuel, newly cast under Louis XIV in 1685 and revered ever since, is considered by experts all over the world to be the finest, most resonant bell ever cast. Its composition and construction were analyzed according to the most modern scientific methods, its formula was copied, and the nine new bells now were crafted to be as close as possible to this single original.

The bell is said to have been first named Emmanuelle, a feminine name, and to have hung next to her sister bell, the *petit bourdon*, Mary. The two *bourdons*, Emmanuelle and Mary, rang in harmony with the other bells. Stories and legends shed some light on this relationship and provide information about the meaning of the bells in the folk tradition as a complement to ecclesiastical interpretations. The folk tales tell of two sister bells that wish to remain together and to be heard: deep female voices that speak to mankind about the relationship between heaven and earth, life and death, and about all earthly and mortal things.

Before the French Revolution, the pealing of bells had been much more extensive. Between 1163 and 1792, twenty different bells raised their voices to

heaven in Paris. The sacred vessels were then taken down and turned into cannons and cannon balls in almost all cities and villages, all except for Emmanuel in the south tower. Because of a decree that each church could have only one bell, it was declared the state bell and renamed *Emmanuel-Ludovica-Theresia*, eventually becoming simply *Emmanuel*. Its sister bell, Mary, is said to have disappeared one day. If we pursue the assertion further, however, we learn that it was destroyed, in fact by means of a machine built expressly for this purpose. The revolutionaries worked for weeks constructing an infernal tool to destroy the Mary Bell. This tragedy is retold in Victor Hugo's masterpiece *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Why Emmanuelle was later given the masculine name Emmanuel, however, is a matter of speculation. *Emmanuel* or *Immanuel* means: *God is with us*. In the Bible, the name is used in association with Jesus Christ and refers back to the prophecy of Jeremiah, that a virgin would bear a son and call him Emmanuel. The prophecy is repeated in Matthew 1:23 and immortalized in the fresco, *Mother with Child*, in the Catacombs of Rome.

It is as if the reunion of the two *bourdons*, Emmanuel and Mary, has recalled the prophecy and given it new vitality. As a symbol of the feminine in the church, the Mary bell has been returned to her original and rightful place beside the great *bourdon* Emmanuel, who had tolled alone for more than 200 years in the south tower.

What does it mean that, on the eve of Holy Week 2013, the famous ring was to be fully reestablished and that God was to be honored with the entire original orchestration – including the feminine? The feminine, which has been worshipped as the Madonna with the Crown of Stars in Notre Dame since the Middle Ages, and which, at the outbreak of the French Revolution, had instead to be worshipped as the Goddess of Reason? Are we reminding ourselves that the Word of God, embodied in His Son, was born of a woman?

In 1793 the Mary statues were torn from their niches and replaced with a representation of the Goddess of Reason. This was the figure of a beautiful young woman standing proudly in classic dress, reminiscent of Pallas Athena, complete with lance, cap, a protractor as the symbol of balance, and a scroll of laws. Her festival, the Festival of Reason, was celebrated on November 10, 1793. In the processions, instead of the statues, particularly beautiful, carefully costumed actresses seated on thrones or standing on pedestals were carried around to be adored. They declaimed solemn texts on the victory of reason, the triumph of liberty, equality, and fraternity. This practice did not last long, however. Suddenly they all landed in prison.

What does it mean that the Christian Virgin and Mother of God should come again to be honored in her cathedral, and that she is experiencing renewed veneration in the form of a bell, this deeply feminine symbol, hung next to the long solitary Emmanuel *bourdon* in the south tower of the Mary cathedral – this earthly attribute of the Queen of Heaven wrought of metal and stone?

NINE NEW BELLS

For weeks before the inaugural *sonnerie*, the nine new bells were exhibited in the center nave of the cathedral, where everyone could view them. 30,000 people are said to have filed past and admired these works of art. People were permitted to touch them, leaving countless handprints on the shimmering surfaces. The eight bells were arranged according to size, and before them all stood the ninth, the *bourdon* or drone, Mary, whose darker color also set it apart from its brightly gleaming sisters. A special process was used to give it the exact color of Emmanuel. On its exterior, a medallion depicts the Mother with Child and Crown of Stars, a beautifully worked copy of the statue in Notre Dame. Texts of the Epiphany and the Wedding at Cana are inscribed below the bell's crown. Below these is the Ave Maria. On the inside are the dates of the first Mary Bell, which hung in Notre Dame from 1378 to 1792.

Common among all the bells is the Cross and the motto of the 850th anniversary celebration of the cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris. It is the quotation of the holy Saint Augustine: *via viatores querit. I am the path which seeks travelers.* This is the common and binding element. Each bell, however, has its own motif – a sentence of the Angelus prayer and a frieze composed in unique numerology. Each has its own name, also a godfather, and godmother, and two godchildren. The historical reference to the name of a famous patron of the church, a cardinal, a martyr, or even to the Angel Gabriel or to the Virgin Mary is also inscribed on the insides of the bells, in addition to the names of the godparents and the trademark of the foundry.

The new bells of Notre Dame were dedicated on February 23th, the day of Pope Benedict's retirement.

All the children of Paris were called upon to witness the ceremony. They were gathered in groups and led in processions through the city along four different

routes to the cathedral. There they lined up on both sides of the nave, forming a frame around the bells, which were now ready for their christening.

The godparents lined up with their children, and the Cardinal began to consecrate each bell in a special ritual. First he called out to the two godchildren of each bell: *What name do you give the bell?* They then spoke its name. Then he addressed the godfather or godmother: *What do you say to this name?*

The person so addressed then recited the inscription regarding the origin of the name and the relationship to the person for whom it was named. Then the Cardinal addressed the bell directly and reminded it of its duties: *You must ring in the name of God and in the service of the church. Speak loudly and be not afraid.* These were his words. Finally he stepped forward with the godparents, pulled the rope and let the bell toll three times.

This was followed by songs and prayers delivered by various speakers, among whom was a little girl dressed all in white, who read a personal text directed to each bell from a book held for her by a priest. The Mary Bell would be baptized in a later, separate ceremony.

An ancient tradition was being carried on in this consecration.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE BELLS

The first mention of a bell consecration was made by Pope John XIII in A.D. 968. The consecration, with its ritual washing, anointment, and name-giving *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, does not differ from a christening or a priestly ordination. The church does decline to baptize inanimate objects, and the formulation, *ego te baptizo*, is carefully avoided. The rituals bear a striking resemblance to each other in their procedures, however. The churchly bell dedication corresponds entirely to the ritual of baptism. The Trinitarian formulation is even used. The bell is made Christian. The people make no distinction here. The bell receives a name. The people say, “The bell has been given a voice.”

The following very practical account of a bell consecration was made by a 16th century bursar:

The cost of bestowing Christianity upon the bell was six shillings and 3 pennies.

In many places at the close of the ceremony, everyone gathered would strike the bells with a mallet provided for that purpose, so that its sound, its name, could be heard. It is noteworthy that the actual consecration in Notre Dame proceeded also according to the old tradition, with the touching of the bell ropes and striking of the clappers, as well as with the direct addressing of the bells as they were christened. The recitations corresponded in their content to age-old rituals found in surviving texts, as we can see in a Spanish prayer from A.D. 700:

Look down with grace and indulgence and bless these bells wrought of metal. Let them be truthful as the little bells on the robe of the High Priest Aaron, so that the entrance to Your house opens when these which we dedicate to You ring out, and so that the faithful will gather to praise You and to pray: As they ring

out, may Your strength let those who hear it receive reverence for You in their innermost hearts.

In earlier times, consecrations were also held in front of the church. On the evening before, the celebration was heralded by cannon fire, which continued well into the following day. The mayor in full official dress, along with the parish council, accompanied the bell to the church. There it was hung in a tree or from a scaffold or was placed on a trestle inside the church.

The ritual of the procession belongs to the oldest cultic activity of mankind. Let us remember the Isis procession along the Nile. With sacred reverence, the priestesses carried the attributes of the goddess: mirror, sistrum, and vessel for the water of life. A musical instrument, in this case the sistrum, always accompanies the ritual march. The procession usually took place in spring to coincide with the reawakening of nature. The ritual veneration of the deity lives on in the Catholic Feast of the Queenship of Mary as well as in the May festivals of folk traditions.

Now the bell was adorned with wreaths or flowers or white and colored ribbons, which both old and young had affixed to its crown. In some places it was decorated with crocheted handwork or *filet* lace done by the godmothers, later to be used in the making of ecclesiastical garments or banners. One also reads of a drape of white silk, artfully embroidered like a baby's special Christening dress. An ancient custom. An offering is adorned and presented to the deity as a gift from the people, so that in doing so they may be resurrected in the sacred realm. It is apparent from this that the bell signifies both an offering to God and a gift to mankind.

There were always witnesses present, the appointed godfathers and godmothers. Often they came forward voluntarily. Their names were solemnly entered in the

parish ledger. Often notables of the congregation were preferred for this office, but sometimes it was a woman or a couple from the village. Of course, one always hoped for as many godparents as possible. If a wealthy parish could afford several bells, this would mean a tidy sum of money. Luther once complained in connection with this practice: *Often a hundred godfathers pull on one bell rope.* It was further expected that the godparents would shower the children of the town with little presents – candies would be scattered about, the pastor would throw dried apple slices out of his window. Even little bags of coins were distributed. In some places, the bell would be filled with wine before it was hung, and everyone was permitted to drink a glass from it. A public festival with food and drink would then get underway.

The bell dedication was also celebrated in Protestant churches. Girls dressed in white accompanied bells garlanded with ribbons and sprigs of fir to the church. After the christening, there would be ample entertainment for the children, and the festival would culminate in a ball and concert. We conduct our dedication and inauguration ceremonies according to old customs quite like these still today.

After the ceremony, when the bell was to be hoisted into the tower, everyone would hurry back to watch or even to help. It must have pleased the people greatly that often they were allowed to enter the bell chamber and to ring the bell for the whole week afterwards.

People still talk about being deeply affected by a bell installation they once attended. There are also legends in the vernacular that tell of extraordinary events surrounding installations. There is a story for instance of a man who by himself carried a bell up to the belfry of the Church of Mary in Krakow, a bell that forty men together could not move. Another Hercules is said to have lifted a 300 kg bell into a tower unaided. And there are also lovely stories that tell of a specially made ribbon of pure silk, which alone had the strength to lift the bell into the tower after all other ropes had torn.

THE CHRISTENING

At the bell consecration carried out by Pope Gregory XIII, he gave the bell his own name, and since that time it is customary to name bells. Many names refer back to the donor's family name. Often it is a church patron or, as we have heard in the dedication of the Notre Dame bells, an honored pope or benefactor, for whom the bell is named. If the godparent has the say, the name usually comes from among the circle of saints. It is then as if the voice of the name source is heard when the bell tolls and speaks to the people.

With time bells also acquire more familiar or common names, which refer to their purpose: the afternoon and the evening bell, or the child's bell, rung at baptisms. The "poor sinner's bell," which is rung before weekday communion service with confession, goes back to the announcements of executions in earlier times. One could list many more designations still used in everyday life: the school bell, the courthouse bell, the mass bell. Also the tone of a bell can lead to its name. We can read of *screamers, drones, wailers, or nightingales*.

Old bells reveal their own names in their inscriptions: *My name is Mary; St. Peter is my name; I am called Anthony*. In many places there is a *Donna* or *Domina*, a *Susanna* or *Anna Susanna*. The latter name is considered the most popular name for bells. People often name their church bell simply *Susanna*, even if it was christened otherwise. The name derives from the inscription: *I am called Osanna (Hosanna)*. This Hebrew derivation is a cry of joy and supplication and means "save us", "help us". Bell inscriptions, whether on the interior or exterior surfaces, are usually Bible verses. The principal message and most common bell inscriptions are appeals for peace: *O rex gloriae Christe veni cum pace*. Sensibly enough, this message would ring out across the land at the outbreak of every armed conflict!

In the course of time, bell founders also placed their own marks on their handiwork. They would engrave on the precious vessel, for example:

I flowed out of heat and fire,

XY cast me.

Or one can read a more poetic formulation:

Bright clang, divide the hours for me, ring in feast and parting.

The best known text comes from Schiller's poem, *Das Lied von der Glocke*, *The Song of the Bell*:

I call the living – mourn the dead – shatter lightening.

The consecration of bells no longer serves as protection against demons as in the days of heathenism. Bells are no longer installed solely as fire or storm bells. They rarely toll in warning of an approaching army, and no longer function as voices of all the dark forces which can destroy a community. Such superstitions had to be dispelled. That was the underlying purpose of the baptism. It was about the sanctification of a profane object, about the divinization and transformation of matter into its spiritual essence. And with time, a village might have not just one or two small warning bells, but more of these vessels, these "crocks", as people called them, which are bound to humanity through their voices. Each of them had its own statement to make and wanted to be heard. Therefore they had to have names.

THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE BELL

The notion of a personified bell as we have seen it in connection with the consecration ceremonies is deeply rooted in the folk tradition. The bell is a living being. It is animate. Through its baptism, it becomes a child of God and a member of the congregation. It resides in the church tower and remains intimately bound to the life of the community. Indeed, it has always accompanied people from birth to death. It has marked the rhythm of the day through the ringing of the Angelus, the prayer bell, morning, noon, and night. The eleven o'clock bell announcing the start of midday is also a call to prayer in the Marian context. The simultaneous pealing of bells for Mass, at Easter, for processions, at a time of death, the ringing on Friday at 3:00pm, the hour of Christ's death, all draw on communal knowledge. The regime of bells affects our lives whether consciously or unconsciously even today.

It does the soul good to connect with it.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes in his sketch „Along the Oka”:

Mankind was always selfish and often less than good: but the evening bells rang out, floated over the fields, over the forest. They exhorted people to lay aside meaningless, earthly things and to devote their time and thought to the eternal. The ringing safeguarded human beings from becoming four-legged creatures.

A mutual sympathy exists between human beings and their bells. The destiny of bells is the destiny of mankind. They are bound to each other, help each other, and they protest if someone tries to separate them from each other. Folksongs, legends, and fairy tales all bear witness to this.

THE APOTROPAIC EFFECT OF BELLS

Just as an unbaptized child could be taken away by the devil and damned as a changeling, so could evil have power over bells. Therefore, contrary to all theological prescriptions, the churchly consecration of the bells means more than just a reverent custom to the people. It is different from the dedication of other religious objects because a bell has peculiar powers; it can do things, perform deeds. Yes, it can even speak. As a church bell in the Christian era, it must be wrenched from the powers of heathenness that lurk just below the surface, and it must prevail in the service of the church.

The driving out of evil spirits by making a racket and noise is an ancient folk superstition and survives in our Carnival traditions. Storms and pestilence, which arise from evil spirits, were combated with cannon shots; diseases could be driven out by striking a plowshare with a hammer and then placing it on the sickbed. All sorts of cymbals and little bells were used for these purposes. The practices did not arise in the service of Christianization in the 6th and 7th centuries, but were probably expanded under it. Little bells and ringers had been used to avert everything evil or as a warning of it. They had been attached to the battle shields of the ancients. The chariots of Roman generals were decorated with them. They were expected both to spread fear and to fend it off. A small bell was sometimes hung around the neck of a condemned criminal so that his evil glance would not harm anyone who happened upon him. Bells were rung during a funeral procession not only to emphasize the solemnity of the occasion but also to ward off demons. Often people in the procession carried hand bells for this purpose. Even the custom of hanging bells around the necks of cows and sheep was intended more to keep them safe from evil than to keep the flocks together.

Bells continue to possess such “heathen” powers in the folk imagination. This context of meaning is corroborated in the words of the benediction of the bells.

The Apostle Paul wisely invokes it in a verse of his letter to the Ephesians, when he identifies high places as the dwelling place of evil spirits:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)

This wickedness under heaven manifested itself also in storms. People were afraid of windstorms, hail, thunder, and lightening, which could destroy house, farm and harvest. Such catastrophes came from the devil. Evil spirits walked abroad in *high places*. But if one rang the weather bell that was blessed by the bishop and immune to all tempests, calamity could be averted. The sound of the bell recalls the trumpets of God and drives away demonic powers. This belief remained firmly rooted up until the Reformation, when the spirit of the enlightenment caused the need for such reassurances to fade. Even the Catholic clergy could not maintain the assertion that only prayer could dispel storms and had to acknowledge the scientific explanation given by physicists of the late 16th and 17th centuries, that it was the sound waves caused by the ringing of the bells that dispersed the clouds. At one point, the ringing of the weather bell was nearly forbidden, but the folk resisted such ordinances. It knew nothing of sonic concussion. The superstition stubbornly persisted. Still today in some places, the weather bell is rung when a storm is gathering. People find comfort in that. The coming weather will do no harm, and the tolling will break up the clouds, because the bell has been blessed by the priest especially for that purpose.

Often a weather bell is named for a patron saint of weather. St. Agatha is a good example. She averts the devastating consequences of witches at work behind storms and fires, killing frosts, and attacks by enemies. You'll be sorry if you don't respect the weather bell; it can work wonders! No sooner were the two big weather bells of Hemishofen replaced with smaller ones, than the town, long spared any bad weather, was ravaged by storms and frosts.

But ultimately it is always the Mother of God who is called upon for protection. Yes, she herself went to the Chapel of Loreto and rang the bells just as witches were about to send down a boulder to destroy it. There are stories about the shrill and fiendish scolding of weather witches. Somehow they are closer to humans than the devil is, and that is indicative of the banished feminine side of the conception of God as well as of the role of the Virgin Mary as intermediary to mankind.

THE BELL IN LEGENDS AND FOLKTALES

The knowledge of this relationship can be found in symbolic form in folktales about bells. These contain a valuable treasure of archetypical life which, combined with church history, lies hidden in the conventions of bell ringing. These tales tell again and again of the relationship of bells to people and of the interplay between them in the service of the divine.

One learns for example:

Whoever possesses more and larger bells enjoys greater esteem, power and wealth in dealings with other parishes and towns. For this reason bells became desirable prizes and were often stolen. In times of war, they would be captured and carried off, and therefore had to be protected, even closely guarded. They would be hidden, i.e. buried, provided they did not disappear of their own accord or simply shatter, for bells display a very particular behavior with respect to justice, order, and power. As soon as these fall out of balance, the bells will avenge themselves. They go missing, simply vanish, but one way or another, they are lost; they fly off through the air, sink into the ground, or hide out on the bottom of a lake, a river, a pond or a marsh. These waters are holy and are located near a ruined village, a town, or a monastery.

There the bells lament and call out.

A great longing speaks out of all the stories. The bells want to go back to their church tower, to their dwelling place among men, where they were once in communication with them, indeed where they were the link between heaven and earth so essential for mankind, between above and below, as intermediaries and transmitters, as admonishers and especially as companions. Man must be reminded to remain focused on the Divine. Bells obviously have a voice, yes, even a language. In their tower they were, so to speak, the guardian spirits of the community.

A wanderer, often a girl, hears the bell's voice, which shows her the way she has lost. This person then helps recover the bell. It is usually an unbaptized bell that wants to get into the tower, and therefore must be baptized. It indicates clearly where it wants to go and complains if the transport does not go as it should.

Tradition has it that these voices belong to imprisoned spirits who want to be set free. We have the image of bells as upside down pots, habitations of goblins and sprites, containers like boxes or crates, but in female form. The clapper is their vocal, imprisoned and shackled soul. With the sympathy and help of humans, they desire to be brought up out of the water or ground as if being born. Hidden bells appear on holidays, on New Year's morning, an Easter morning, on Christmas, and, in legends, often at noon of Midsummer's Day.

Sacrifices are also always associated with their recovery. So it is for example that one such holy pond, from which the voice of a bell is heard, is named "Sacrifice Pool" (*Opferweiher*). There are stories in the vernacular that tell of sudden large misfortunes, weather catastrophes, wars, but also of particular human behavior which a bell has rectified.

Ruthlessness, avarice, discord, and defilement of women -- along with the neglect of religious duties -- violate the consistent adherence to the bonds of the collective unconscious. One legend tells us that that the people of a certain village lived for many years in peace and harmony, but had gotten so used to it,

that they no longer observed religious holidays properly. So one day God sent a plague that caused all the children to die. This shocked the people and showed them the error of their ways, and they went back to church.

Another time, there were bells that had hidden themselves deep in the ground. Then a wild boar dug them up. And later a farmer found the litter of his fattest sow *in the deep kettle of a bell*.

Again and again in one's search for the meaning of the bell, one comes across the pig. The pig, like the steer, is sacred to the Great Mother. The Norse goddess Freya rides on the back of a boar, and the swine sacrifices of Demeter, Persephone, and Hygieia are well known. Everywhere a goddess cult is mentioned, we find a connection between the Great Mother and the bell. A healing and curative aspect is always there. The feminine-maternal, lost in the depths of the collective unconscious, needs to be comprehended and to connect with the conscious, in order to be able to perform its mediating function between heaven and earth, between spirit and body.

In one legend, it is said that the bell of the church of the Münsterkirchen monastery had lain in the ground for a long time. People would hear it from time to time. A girl, who had fallen asleep under an alder tree on the bank of a stream, dreamed that two wild looking men were brawling on the neighboring hill. At the same time she could hear the tolling of the sunken bell. When she woke up, she saw two young steers fighting on the hill. In their rage, they were trampling up the ground. The girl hurried to drive the animals apart, and there, where they had been fighting, she saw the crown of a bell sticking up out of the ground. She took off her belt, tied one end to the bell and the other to a nearby shrub, and hurried to the village to get people to dig it out.

This motif is embellished further in a fairy tale:

Once upon a time a bell was stuck in a marsh. Pigs rooting in the mud uncovered its crown. The swineherd summoned help, but no one dared enter

the marsh until finally a couple of brave fellows tried it and pulled the bell out. But the bell refused to be transported. A team of horses could not move it from the spot; the bell would not budge. Ropes and chains broke; the onlookers were baffled. Suddenly a beautiful maiden, who no one knew, appeared and offered to get the bell into the wagon.

Because of her clothes, which were striking in their difference from the local dress, she soon attracted everyone's attention. She wore a very short skirt, bright red stockings with blue gussets, yellow shoes, a waistcoat of black velvet, a heavy silver chain with a large coin attached, and a pointed straw hat decorated with a wreath of field flowers. She held a light walking stick in her well-formed hand.

(Gottschalk, Volksmärchen, 1846)

The men laughed, but with a handshake did what she told them, whereupon the girl said that every time the bells ring out from the tower and the people cheer: *Su fand, Mäggen band* – which means “A sow found it; a girl's ribbon pulled it out” – they should remember her. Then she disappeared and was never seen again.

The description of the girl speaks to memories of the attributes of pagan fertility goddesses lying deep within the soul of the people and suppressed by the conscious—the pointed straw hat crowned with flowers and the magic wand – but also to the denigration of womanly values by the *zeitgeist*. These memories apparently want to be recovered and to be connected to the spirit of Christianity. They call attention to the feminine, symbolized in the *earthly vessels* sunk in the ground. They desire to be brought up into the church tower as Mary bells so that they can tell those with ears to hear about the connection between heaven and earth.

THE HOLINESS AND HUMANITY OF THE BELL

The bell in its significance as signal, as *signum dare*, as telecommunication, to use a modern term, is obviously ancient. The stories, tales, and legends we have mentioned testify that this significance slumbers in the collective unconscious. They all tell of feminine values, which strive to resonate in the form of a bell, to be heard, to be peacemakers and companions.

As a container of hidden treasure, buried deep in the ground or resting at the bottom of a lake, the bell desires to be raised. As an attribute of the feminine, it reveals a deeply religious meaning in its symbolism. It allegorizes a perception within the unconscious which would like to become conscious so that it can act as a bond among people.

The emblem imprinted on the Mary *bourdon* -- Mary with Crown of Stars standing on the moon – encompasses the entire meaning of a *Mater Natura* (Mother Nature). It recalls the cosmic side of the Mother of God as Sophia, as creator of the world and as divine wisdom. Sophia is a universal-cosmic power. In her robe of stars, she forms a bridge from Isis as *regina coeli* to *Aphrodite Urania* and leads to the great *Woman of the Apocalypse*, pursued by a dragon, crowned with stars, wanting to give birth.

The bell brings the message and

The sound of the bell consists in my reaction to it



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