

Editorial: Ethics of love for neighbors and strangers

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Dear esteemed reader,

“Bodily experience of the stranger means a withdrawal in relationship, a distance in nearness, an absence in presence”, writes Bernhard Waldenfels in his contribution to this issue “Das vergessene ethische Stichwort: Der Fremde, die Fremde, das Fremde”. Determining who is a stranger always requires a coordinate system in which one determines who or what is foreign.

The discourse around who is strange to us and who is close to us, or who is “next” or “the neighbor” to us, is not only triggered by modern migration issues, it is already palpable in antiquity – e.g., in how the biblical texts react to migration experiences. The concept of “neighbor” stems from the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is inextricably linked with the commandment to love one’s neighbor, which is at the heart of the Torah / Pentateuch in Leviticus 19:18. The New Testament quotes the commandment to love one’s neighbor several times. The invitation to love one’s neighbor as well as to love foreigners (Lev 19:34) are central topoi of Jewish and Christian ethics to which reference is made again and again in current socio-political discussion. The reception history of these texts shows that the imperative to love one’s neighbor was abused for apologetic purposes, e.g., for promoting anti-Judaism. The point of contention was and is how universally the concept of “neighbor” should be construed. The rabbinical tradition of interpretation already contains a detailed discussion of who falls under the category of neighbor.

This issue of *JEAC* draws out different perspectives through the centuries to demonstrate the possibilities and limitations of the reception of love for neighbor and stranger. It contains analyses and evaluations from philosophical, biblical, Early Christian, systematic, and practical theological perspectives (that do not necessarily correspond to those of the editorial team). The editors hope to use this issue to facilitate and expand the discussion. We are grateful to Jutta Nennstiel, Susanne Patock and Janina Alexandra Elisabeth Serfas for their help with proofreading and typesetting.

A novelty of this issue is the “free contributions” section. The first article we publish in this section represents a response to the contributions in our first issue (*JEAC 1*).

The editors are happy to receive contributions in all categories of the journal (articles / dialogues / series of theses for discussion / reviews / miscellaneous) on the topic of this issue or other ethical topics dealing with ancient texts and traditions.

We sincerely hope for your enjoyment in reading it.

(Translated by Ulrich Volp and Justin Strong)