

## Dialogue between Giordano Bruno and God

A semi-moral work of the 21st century

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(English translation by Wendy Piemonte)

**God:** Oh, look who's here, that good soul of Giordano Bruno, born Filippo Bruno! Look, you seem to smell quite strongly of fire and smoke, as did that Savonarola who is now remembered by man more for his chair than he is for his preaches. Where have you come from?

**Giordano Bruno:** I've come here to you directly from Campo de' Fiori, in Rome. If you look down, you will still see some sparks from the stake on which I was burnt by the Roman Catholic Church in your name.

**God:** Good heavens, why is that?

**Giordano Bruno:** You should know very well, you know everything!

**God:** Wait wait, let me have a look in my book on life and death. Ah, yes. Here we are, it says that you were sentenced for heresy. Or rather, I see that you have been excommunicated several times here and there from the countries of the Old Continent – which now goes by this name ever since Columbus discovered America, if you can call it a discovery, since I have always known that America existed - because of a considerable number of heresies. You said that Ario's thought was less damaging than it was believed to be; you were excommunicated by the Calvinists in Geneva for slander; you liked Erasmus from Rotterdam; you maintained that there is no afterlife for souls because they reincarnate and therefore there is no reward or punishment for them - so what is my reason for being here?; you defended the theories of Copernicus, which were smoke in the eyes of the dominating religion; you were excommunicated by the superintendent of the Lutheran church of the German city of Helmstedt; in Venice Giovanni Mocenigo denounced you for disdaining religions, for not believing in the Trinity and in transubstantiation, for believing in metempsychosis, for denying the Virginity of Mary and the divine punishments; some said that you had the fame of being an atheist in England also. You even had the daring to reproach the judges who sentenced you with these words: *Maiori forsan cum timore sententiam in me fertis quam ego accipiam*, which in the vernacular is "Perhaps you are shaking more in pronouncing this judgment than I am in listening to it". Well, you were really looking for trouble. What have you got to say for yourself?

**Giordano Bruno:** If you examine my curriculum carefully, you will see that I have also disserted and written about mnemonic art. You, whose memory is infinite, will surely remember that he who, according to the Roman Catholic Church, you had sent to the Earth to redeem humanity, one day spoke to the crowds about the Parable of the talents.

**God:** Yes, yes. It is found in Matthew. I remember that it concerned a master who, needing to leave his house and his property for a certain time, gave five talents to one servant, two talents to the second, and one talent to the third. Upon his return, the first two servants returned twice the amount received, having put it to use. The third instead, who had simply hidden the talent he received out of fear, returned only that. And the master, praising the goodwill and faith of the first two servants, rewarded them by giving them much authority and having them take part in his joy, while the third lazy servant was thrown into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. But what has the Parable of talents got to do with this?

**Giordano Bruno:** It does, it does. I was sentenced for having used the only talent you gave me.

**God:** What talent are you speaking of?

**Giordano Bruno:** “The only talent you gave me, dear God, was the talent of reason. I used reason and I made the most of it, as you can well see from the bibliography of my works.

**God:** I see, I see. You have written a mountain of treatises. Browsing through these here and there however, it also seems to me that you made a distorted use of your reason.

**Giordano Bruno:** Forgive me, God, but I must humbly point out that the reason is not mine, it is the reason you gave me.

**God:** Now, listen, my dear philosopher. Are you saying that your heresies are simply part of the talent I gave you?

**Giordano Bruno:** They are, if you think carefully. It is your reason, because my reason descends from yours, you must admit this is so.

**God:** Are you saying that I am a heretic too?

**Giordano Bruno:** So it seems. In fact, in the history of man, wasn't your image perhaps repeatedly burnt in your name by those who, once again in your name, considered the others, who were also speaking in your name, to be the fiercest heretics and your enemies? And, by burning me, didn't they also burn you who, according to them, made me in your image and likeness? And wasn't Jesus crucified on the Golgotha because saying that he was your son was a heresy in the eyes and in the cloudy vision of the Sanhedrim?

**God:** However, others to whom I gave the talent of reason were able to make the most of it, by drawing conclusions that were not the same as yours. What have you to say about this?

**Giordano Bruno:** Like you, your reason is infinite, but when you gave this to man, who is finite, it took on a multiplicity of finite facets. So, each used the talent of your reason in his own way, like the winemaker who produces Aglianico del Vulture and the other Barolo instead, or like the farmer who decides to grow Tropea onions whereas the other grows Lamon beans on his land. All are products of quality, but different. Instead, think of the person who leaves the land uncultivated. He is the person in the parable who does not make any use of the talent that is given to him.

**God:** I must admit that your reasoning flows as smoothly as the excellent olive oil that is produced on Italian land and is not as heretical as it may seem.

**Giordano Bruno:** But in the end, when speaking about heresy, does it matter that much to you, what man thinks about you, your nature, shape and substance?

**God:** To tell the truth, apart from the fact that man cannot know how I am made, because if he did he would have understood me and as such would be God himself, what man thinks of me counts even less than nothing. I alone am God, the only God, under all the skies and over all the latitudes, however you want to think of me.

**Giordano Bruno:** So how do you judge man then?

**God:** You know very well that I, as is written in the Gospel, in the person of my son have only condemned those who harm children, the Scribes and Pharisees, and the merchants in the Temple.

**Giordano Bruno:** So, you didn't condemn those who didn't think as you did, but those who boasted that they were following the rules and guidelines set out in the Writings to the letter and those who achieved profits by taking advantage of the Temple. That is, those who condemned me, in the name of you, who should be the sole universal God, whereas you are the sole God just for each of the variations that condemned me, and yet for each of these not the same God as the other sole Gods for the opposing variations.

**God:** That is so.

**Giordano Bruno:** So, my question again is: how do you judge man?

**God:** The parable of the talents says this. I judge him on his doings.

**Giordano Bruno:** Well, it's up to you to judge. I did not bury the talent, I did not leave the land uncultivated, I did not silence reason. As you can see in the book where everything is written, I used the talent of your reason that you gave to me and this is why those who buried theirs burnt me on the stake.

**God:** How can I say that you are wrong, since now, as you did when you were alive, you are using my reason which I gave to you as a talent? Come, my son, you truly deserve to sit at my table.