

Daily Meditation 03/27/2022

The Dual Nature of Evil

Good morning.

In today's meditation on evil, I talk about a dual nature to evil.

And I wrote Carl Jung, who had a long fight with his friend. In fact, the fight broke up their friendship. Victor White, English Dominican. And they were friends; they corresponded. And White visited him in Geneva, or Zurich. Zurich.

But they broke up over the theme of the privation of the good--that definition of evil which St. Augustine uses and what Thomas Aquinas used and Victor White very much stuck to. That did not cut the mustard, entirely, for Carl Jung. He felt that it was missing something.

Now, it's very likely that he went too far in identifying evil with God. But he was trying to make a point, I think, that there's more to evil than just the privation of good.

Now, the privation of good is a very important naming of evil, because original blessing or original goodness, which is a name, a phrase that Thomas Aquinas invokes often; the goodness of the world has to be a starting point for our understanding of ourselves and our place in this world. When I say it has to be, I think if we're going to be healthy, it needs to be.

And there is more to evil than the lack of good, the privation of good. That's what I feel, and I think Jung was feeling that, too.

And I invoke St. Paul, who says "I struggled against the powers and principalities." Well, these are spirits, powers and principalities. These are angels. These are among the naming of the angels in the scriptures.

And so he's saying that our struggle is against spirits or spirit beings and about ghost horse. And the indigenous traditions talk about evil spirits; that there are evil spirits.

And as I say the names in the Bible, we don't have to run with those, we can improve on those names: Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub. Okay. But I think we have new names, and we should call them for what they are: racism, and sexism, and anthropocentrism, and militarism, and narcissism, and so forth.

But there's something spiritual about them; they are an energy in themselves. They are evil spirits. And they're spirits because they can be anywhere and everywhere. And they can penetrate our psyches in our

selves, in our individual selves, but they can also penetrate organizations and societies and institutions, which of course are run by human beings. But they're smart, and they utilize human beings to penetrate institutions and structures that can do evil.

And I think we see a lot of this-- what the Kremlin is about today in Ukraine, about things that the CIA has done over the decades, and Wall Street, and the Vatican. So, wherever people gather, there is this energy that can be misused, and for very evil purposes.

So I do think that there is this other dimension to evil besides being a privation of good. It is also an anti-good energy, an anti-good force.

And I employ the language, which I'm hesitant to do because it gets overworked by people who don't know themselves very well. But that language of Christ and Antichrist that we find in the apocalyptic literature in the New Testament, that is another way I think of saying this, that the Antichrist, if you think about it, is a force. It's an energy for ill. And so that's another effort to name this almost unnameable reality of evil.

So, all this, I think, helps us to wrestle with the goings-on, the history that is laying out for us today--that humans can be participants in evil; that humans can be hijacked, if you will; taken over by evil forces. And humans can choose evil; can choose to oppose the good and to choose to even oppose the sacred.

It's truly the opposite of evil--not "good;" the opposite of evil is "the sacred."

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.