

Daily Meditation 03/28/2022

Three Understandings of Evil

Good morning.

We continue our meditations on the topic of evil, which is so in the headlines these days, and remember some of the lessons we've been sharing that've come out of here. Such as, that good does come from evil, which we're seeing in the Ukrainian situation today.

So much generosity, and courage, and camaraderie, and community is being formed in resistance to the invasion in Ukraine. And the whole generosity of human species come forward, in terms of willingness to sacrifice for the sake of others. And we see this not just in Ukraine, but in Poland and all the other countries that are taking in refugees, and all the generosity and volunteering that goes with that. And the sacrifices that countries are making about cutting economic ties with Russia and the rest.

The topic of evil is very complex because it brings many angles to it, but it is morally evil, is unique to the human species.

There's physical evil. We're going to talk about that. We'll talk about choices that humans make to destroy. As Erich Fromm put it, the necrophilia in life, the love of death and making death happen, is in conflict with biophilia, the love of life. That's what mystics call the Via Positiva. And he says necrophilia grows when biophilia is stunted. So, this passion for living, the love of life, the Via Positiva, has to really step up in a time when necrophilia is on the rampage.

And again, it's not just the war against Ukraine, it's the war against Mother Nature that is evil, and the war against democracy and in favor of autocracy that carries a lot of shadow and potential evil in it also. And so much of it begins with lies. And Truth is another name for Divinity. And so, lies are, well as the tradition says, Satan is the father of lies.

But in today's meditation, I'm kind of summarizing two or three, becoming three now, angles on understanding evil.

So, there is the traditional definition of evil as privation of good. As I point out, Carl Jung wasn't satisfied with this understanding of evil.

I had been having a dialogue for years with a Jungian about Jung's reservations about that understanding of evil. And I think I've come to a kind of conclusion in what I share today: the trinity of evil.

And I compare the "privation of good" definition of evil with the idea of God as Father or Creator or Mother, a Mother of Goodness, the Father of Goodness, the Creator of Goodness; that existence as itself is intrinsically good. And you find that in Genesis 1, among other places. Hope for your heart and soul.

But I think evil is more than just a privation of good. And, in that way, I companion with Carl Jung. I think there's an energy and a force in evil. And if you've ever experienced evil directly, face to face, for example, you know that. There's a force and a presence. And even St. Paul talks about that when he says our struggle is against "powers and principalities." Those are names for angels and spirits. Evil spirits are named there. And we spoke about that yesterday, or two days ago, in our meditation.

But then Jung offers the idea of evil as shadow. And that, too, has been a very useful terminology.

And, for me, that evil as force and energy, to me, corresponds to the Antichrist insofar as the opposite of Christ inviting everybody to call on their energies and the force of compassion and of love. Now the evil as shadow I kind of connect to the idea of the Holy Spirit, because shadow is directly related to Light, of course, and it is a presence in our midst, as is Holy Spirit.

So evil is an unholy spirit or unholy spirits. So, in that way, I'm understanding evil as like a trinity, or an anti-trinitarian, an anti-Trinity experience, because it challenges the good. It challenges the liberating and healing and redemptive energy which corresponds to the second person in the Trinity, and it challenges the Holy Spirit.

So I think this language might be helpful for us understand more the power that evil carries with it.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.