

The Origin of Evil and The Grand Inquisitor

Ancient wisdom ... attributes the birth of Kosmos and the evolution of life to the breaking asunder of primordial, manifested UNITY, into plurality, or the great illusion of form. HOMOGENEITY having transformed itself into Heterogeneity, contrasts have naturally been created; hence sprang what we call EVIL, which thenceforward reigned supreme in this Vale of Tears.

“The Origin of Evil,” H.P. Blavatsky

Ancient Wisdom (*Gupta Vidya*) teaches its students to discriminate between BE-NESS, or ESSE, and conditioned existence, Being, transforming itself into Many-ness, characterized by heterogeneity, ceaselessly cycling in space-time. All manifest being is flux, possessing, in whole and in parts, no inherency, no-thing.

Humanity, with the exception of Mahatmas, Sages, Rishis, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, remains caught within the vast fields of heterogeneity and, being self-conscious beings, has formed attachments to the unreal through desire and aversion, through likes and dislikes springing from an illusory sense of a separate self, “the dire heresy of separateness.”

Thus, viewed from the standpoint of the highest metaphysics, *Evil* is *one with* manifestation itself, with the appearance of heterogeneity from the ONE UNITY. From the standpoint of incarnate human existence, *Evil* results from lives lived, from choices made in ignorance of the One Reality, made from the axis of a *self* separate from others, from life itself.

The unenlightened mind, thinking itself separate, thinking itself to be a *person*, makes choices (conscious or otherwise) based upon likes and dislikes, upon comparisons and contrasts, both rooted in an atavistic desire to hold-on, to grasp onto separative life, to others, to things, ideas and institutions. According to Gautama Buddha’s primary and fundamental teaching, “suffering is.” What is meant by *suffering*? Succinctly: suffering is *either* having what I do not want *or* wanting what I do not have. Thus, *want* is the cause of suffering. This *want* he called *Tanha*, grasping. To grasp requires an *agent*, a subject, a self. Self and grasping arise together, are inseparable. Were there no sense of

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a separate self, and, hence of grasping, there would be no evil, as we know it, in this world.

The spiritual life, seen in relation to these sad facts of human existence, consists in seeking to recover a sense of Ontological Unity, seeking to *realize* “The Self of All,” the Self with so very many names. All true teachings of the spiritual path emphasize the need to transform mind and heart through meditation, contemplation, ethics and skill in action.

At the same time, it must be said that manifestation, life itself is not *evil*, per se. *Evil* results from how human beings *see* manifestation, and, seeing it as this or as that, seeing their self as this or as that, how they *think* and *act* in regard to how *it* is seen, to what it is *seen as*. In time, the ardent student comes to realize that how he or she *sees* it, what they *see it as*, constitutes a fundamental *choice*, and, being so, can be changed, can be brought into alignment with the Teachings of the Wise.

Were it not for contrasts, for polarities, there would be no notion or awareness of the possibility of spiritual striving, of looking towards the Light, of alleviating suffering, of one’s self or others. Yet, these contrasts themselves are in no sense absolute. Darkness has no inherent existence. It is, quite literally, the absence of Light. If we are in a dark room and turn on the light, the *darkness* has not *gone somewhere else*. It was an absence, a privation of Light. So, too, with *Evil*. It is the *absence* of “The Good,” the *absence* of conscious awareness, realization of “The Good.” *Evil* is ignorance, is lack of Knowledge. It is deeply embedded within every human breast. It is “an atavistic heirloom,” buttressed by karmic tendencies.

Buddha taught humanity to see in the sensuous existence of matter misery alone. “The Origin of Evil” states:

...his efforts were to release mankind from too strong an attachment to life, which is the chief cause of Selfishness—hence the creator of mutual pain and suffering...his doctrine shows evil immanent, not in matter, which is eternal, but in the illusions created by it: through the

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changes and transformations of matter generating life—because these changes are conditioned and such life is ephemeral.

Evils are shown to be not only unavoidable but necessary. If we are to discern good from evil, light from darkness and appreciate the former, we can do so only through the contrasts between the two. In his *esoteric* teachings, Buddha “reveals to the *Arhat* all the glories of LIFE ETERNAL *in all the Homogeneousness of Consciousness and Being.*”

The spiritual path may consist, for some, in overcoming gloom and despair that results from eyes being downcast, riveted to the earth. Thus, looking *within*—centering consciousness, with continuity, upon the *inner being*—brings gradual escape from “the great serpent of illusion.”

Eastern wisdom teaches that spirit has to pass through the ordeal of incarnation and life...before it can reach experience and knowledge...and may return to its original condition of a god, plus experience, ending with omniscience...It can return to the original state of the homogeneity of primordial essence only through the addition of the fruitage of Karma, which alone is able to create an absolute conscious deity, removed but one degree from the absolute ALL.

“The Parable of the Grand Inquisitor” (*The Brothers Karamazov*, Section “Pro and Contra,” Dostoevsky), wrote H.P. Blavatsky, “is the most profound characterization of the nature of evil ever penned.”

Below, we have paraphrased this characterization taking place in Seville, Spain during the Spanish Inquisition.

In a vast courtyard in front of the cathedral, hundreds of people mill about aimlessly. Into their midst, Christ silently appears. Instantly recognizing the Christ, all the people bow down in deep reverence and devotion. He radiates pure Light; people are healed in that moment.

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The massive door to the cathedral opens. The Grand Inquisitor, garbed in his Cardinal's robes, steps out. Seeing him, the people turn away from Jesus, bowing towards the Grand Inquisitor who, pointing a finger at Jesus, bids his private soldiers to arrest and deliver Him to the dungeon beneath the cathedral. This is done. He is put, alone, into a small, barren cell.

At midnight, the Grand Inquisitor enters the cell, telling Jesus that he, the Grand Inquisitor, wishes to “explain our work, which is nearly complete.” He first affirms the divinity of Jesus and the truth of His Teachings. Of this he has no doubt. Yet, Jesus and His Teachings, though true, are not “for the many,” lacking, as they do, the ability to live them out. They are *incapable*, for example, of loving their enemies, of turning the other cheek. Thus, by teaching them to do so, Jesus has imposed upon them a burden too great for them to bear and, in *believing* these teachings to be true, yet unable to live them, Jesus has, in his ignorance, simply imposed upon them “a great burden of guilt.” Thus, “we have sought to *correct Thy work*,” to relieve them of their guilt. The Grand Inquisitor tells Jesus: *Having advanced far along the Path You taught, we turned around in order to save the many from themselves.*

The Grand Inquisitor knows people find “absolutely free choice” terrifying. They do not want it. What they want is “miracle, mystery and authority,” to be relieved of the *burden* of free-will, and, hence, of responsibility. Thus, the Grand Inquisitor and his Church have *corrected* the Teachings of Jesus. This they have done out of *compassion* for the many, whom they do not wish to *suffer*.

The Grand Inquisitor then explains to Jesus the “brilliant scheme.” The Church has taught the people, from an early age, to absolutely, never, commit certain actions, that to do so will lead to perdition. These forbidden actions *are precisely those actions we know they will be unable to refrain from doing*. When they act in these manners, they will be guilty, fearful of perdition. But, being compassionate, we teach them that if such actions are committed, they must *come to us and confess them*. This they haltingly do. They are then *forgiven*, told never, ever to repeat those actions—*which we know they will*—given a penance to perform and go away, their burden of guilt relieved, gone. The actions are repeated. The confessions and pardons are repeated. The people become more tightly

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bound to the Church's ability to forgive. *Thus, they lay their greatest burden at our feet—their absolutely free will.*

The Grand Inquisitor gives Jesus examples of *our use of miracle, mystery and authority*, which are what the people *truly* desire—absolutely free choice, assumption of personal responsibility being beyond their limited abilities. *We give You the few who quest for freedom. We, ourselves, are here for the many: the feeble ones.*

His mono-logical *explanation* to Jesus complete, the Grand Inquisitor says that if He is willing to leave, to not again teach what He taught the first time He was here, He will be allowed to leave. If He insists upon remaining, upon teaching, He will be put to death. Jesus, not having spoken a word, rises, walks to the Grand Inquisitor, bends down, kissing him on his pale, cold lips and leaves the cell, utterly disappearing.

The Grand Inquisitor “felt the kiss of Jesus for the remainder of his days.”

All human beings have the One Light within their hearts. All human beings have Jesus, Krishna, Buddha and *all the rest* within their hearts. The One Divine Essence is within all and, thus, can be sought and found by all through treading the ancient, well-worn Path of the Predecessors. Hence, our devotion and gratitude should go to those Great Beings who, sacrificing Themselves, are born, again and again “for the enlightenment of all sentient beings.”

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