

Maleficence



“Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil”

FRANK ARUNDELL

Maleficence

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First Electronic Edition

Cover: “The Temptation of St. Anthony,” Max Ernst, 1945

We know, when God is experienced, this is an event as real as an immediate sense perception or as one's own personality. Like them he must be missing in the spacetime picture. I do not find God anywhere in space and time - that is what the honest naturalist tells you. For this he secures blame from him in whose catechism is written: God is spirit.

Erwin Schrodinger

Man stands before the good and asks himself why it must be done and not rather its alternative, evil. For this, too, is a possibility In a world that no longer has enough confidence in itself to affirm the beautiful, the proofs of the truth have lost their cogency.

Hans Urs von Balthasar

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*Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from Evil*

We can experience the impact of evil every day if we are television viewers, moviegoers, or front page readers. Nothing of a sensational, maleficent nature escapes the economic aims of the purveyors of “news and entertainment”; or if you will, news as entertainment. The most sordid details of tortured lives are presented in order to shock us, amuse us, or elicit our sympathy, all in the interest of commerce. And as the people who bring it to us say: “That’s what they want,” so they believe they’re doing the right thing.

Many defenders of righteousness, under the guise of championing the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights, and other amendments, have all but made a mockery of the document’s original intentions, using a pseudo-philosophical premise that claims malleability. All well and good; until “we, the people,” begin to realize that although time changes, what is right in principle, ought not change, except for the better. No one has the right to want to make things wrong based on emotional libertine concepts.

The power structure today is in the hands of the New Class. People who are repeatedly told by the constitutional clerisy that the fundamental document on which their nation rests requires tolerance of obscenity, sexual deviance, abortion on demand, or the banishment of religion in public places, all in the name of “rights” and the emancipation of the human spirit,

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are likely to absorb the lesson as the only outlook proper for a decent person.

Robert H. Bork

The question then becomes ... who has the authority to proclaim what is right and what is wrong in the public arena? In a representative, democratic republic, the people's politicians are the authorized agents who make decisions by formulating and enacting the laws everybody lives by. Although much is known about the political class, super inquiry is a necessity. Still, it's almost impossible to know the (intimate) thoughts and reasonings of politicians. Since a vast majority of them are lawyers, they are skilled in rhetoric, and depending on their degree of talent, can often mean (yes) when saying no, or (no) when saying yes. We may get a little closer to their true intentions by scrutinizing their voting records, which, of course, we hardly ever do. We give them the leverage to vote their conscience on matters of great importance to us. So it is, "we the people," from whom their authority stems. The power they wield ought not be minimized, especially if power is the ultimate corrupter as it is purported to be. Let's go a bit deeper.

Where, or from what or whom does the (populace) derive its power? I am not going to answer that question by quoting passing references in the Constitution or the Declaration about Providence or the Creator or other theistic notations. A culmination of (like) opinion can wind up as either a majority or a minority; or coalitions of somewhat like opinion can join forces for the wresting of power. In free societies, majorities rule, though notwithstanding certain percentile obligations for adopting new legislation.

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The bi-cameral and tri partied branches of the U.S. government could be considered, for the purposes of this essay, to be the most advanced (though cumbersome) form of representational government in the free world. Fortunately, for us, most of the time, this experiment in self-rule works!, even if it's not to everyone's liking. Now, since the source of power for governing, obviously comes from those governed, and since the majority (in most cases) rule, can we then establish as a fact that the majority is mostly right in it's conclusions? Of course not.

Right or wrong is established, individually, by an (existing) moral code learned and subscribed to across the whole span of one's life. It is moderated by the gift of good conscience known by the mind beyond (consciousness). In other words, knowing we (know) does not mean we know what's right or wrong. This is the private morality that crosses over into public judgments.

A guilty conscience for doing wrong things should be a happy situation. (Guilt) is a sign of a healthy conscience - which brings on (remorse) and then searches for forgiveness; it then tries to redirect (consciousness) to understand truth and to do right, even if wrong feels good or "everybody's doing it." Post-modern psychology tries to blunt or blind the conscience in order to cure the feelings of anxiety or guilt which comes from doing wrong. Once the conscience is blinded, a false freedom of consciousness alone allows the elimination of responsibility to anything other than feelings. Individual erroneous consciences joined together in the perpetuation of a wrong or an evil, can grow into a movement and become an evil majority (or minority). This is a danger every rational society faces.

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History is rife with frightening examples of societal breakdowns coming from a lack of (guilt) on the part of the citizenry. An obvious one has been the practice of slavery of every kind, for centuries, everywhere in the world. Another, the forces of imperialism, motivated by a sense of superiority and bent on economic gain, supported by a nation's populace, is another prime example of the absence of guilt and lack of compassion. Nazism, Communism, Socialism and many other "-isms" that require the acquiescence of the majority to place power in the hands of a perverted few thinking they are doing the right thing is all too common. We know this from the horrific deeds of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, etc., or to even take it further, the Mafia, Pro Choice adherents of the abortion disaster, the Drug Cartels, etc. What is right doesn't matter; because, though the people are conscious of negative conditions, their (conscience) is in error. They have turned their backs on what is right.

Both liberals and conservatives alike may say: "who has the right to tell me what is right or wrong? I make up my own mind. I decide what is right...for ME!" Jeffrey Daumer, Son of Sam, Timothy McVeigh, Dr. Joseph Mengele, Richard Speck, Cho Seung- Hui, all, it is said, experienced no guilt because there was no discernible conscience; their conscience appeared to be dead. There was no righteousness, to use a tired religious word.

Justification today is what some do to make his or her actions appear right; that is, in conformity with a false individual sense of right in order to assuage honest feelings of guilt and to redirect blame. The question then becomes: if a person's good conscience is dead, can he or she truly be guilty? I mean, after

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all, if there is no good-conscience to manage consciousness, why should we, and how could we, admit to guilt? Does the (feeling) of no-guilt on the part of individuals give them the (right) to do anything they please without paying a price? If people refuse to believe in they're doing wrong, who can hold them accountable for their personal belief? This, I'm afraid, is one of the great evils of our time, a relativism admitting of no necessary sense of what is right, but strictly a vast grey area of individual human decision, manifestly construed as being right without the benefit of a good conscience.

The secular law is established to set the standards for us to live in peace and harmony, with enough "liberty and-justice for all" attributed to the effects of compound good consciences. If a legitimate government, put in power by a people who are blind to the right thing, generally, that government is required to follow the (will) of the people; or in the case of totalitarianism, the people must be comfortable following the will of the dictator; or they are bound in conscience to revolt. In many cases of the past, populations were sufficiently tainted by lies, that they were unable to come to right conclusions apart from the power elite. Most Germans understood the Jews to be the cause of their troubles in the 20's and 30's as a result of Hitler's propagand machine. Most Americans went along with the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court (Taney), to declare that "freed" slaves be returned to their owners after having crossed state lines, tacitly approving of slavery. Marxist Leninism and Stalinism, with the approval of the people of the Soviet Union, allowed the elimination of any who declared against the power structure. The French people exceeded the purpose of their revolution by attempting. to eliminate the

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whole “upper class.” Mao did the same in China; only on a grand scale. Examples go on and on!

From the earliest times, erroneous consciences have been the primary cause of accepting wrongs considered to be right. Guilt was not an issue, Guilt makes people unhappy; eliminate guilt and everybody lives happily ever after. Post Modernism blames religion for imposing guilt on us all. Utopia will only come when all guilt is completely eliminated from our psyches. Every human being has a perfect right to be wrong, since he or she is (alone) the master of his or her own fate. Isn't that correct? If it is correct I believe we're heading for anarchy! Eventually we will all be dead, so eat, drink and be merry.; “Make the most of what ye yet may spend,” right or wrong tends not to matter much. Rules, they say, are made to be broken. We are free—Freud considered the sense of guilt “the most important problem in the development of civilization” and the ground for the “destructive instinct”. We shall cover Freud's view a little later on.

Is conscience imposed, or instinctive? Is it a part of consciousness, or an independent phenomenon; baggage from our animal nature? It seems to be the old question of (nature vs. nurture). Now, guilt can really only be understood as the sinking and embarrassed (feeling) as a result of committing, or thinking of committing, a (wrong); so the question then becomes: what is a wrong? Humans are sensitive to wrongs, and by observing symptoms of consternation in each other - are wont to use the expression: “What's wrong”? Or if one individual (feels) another mis-guided or-incorrect in their actions or judgments, the expression: “What's wrong with (you)”? is often used. In the authoritative judgment of a

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professor; when a student has provided an answer to a quiz which does not fulfill the academic requirements, he or she will mark that answer wrong! A mother will (correct) a child from counting a second orange five, instead of two.

In the above examples, it appears we're dealing strictly with the use of common or acquired knowledge. That is, knowledge that the mind (can) access once it has been shown what (is) wrong - as opposed to what (is) right. Acquired knowledge is gained by experience. The brain/mind is processing new information all the time, provided the brain has that physical capability. Consciousness, per se, can make mistakes - it can come to wrong conclusions (without) conscience. Prof. Le Doux's example tells of a person, seeing a twig or a branch on a road, mistakenly (thinking) it's a snake and reacting with fear. In the brain's wiring of conscious, states, the wrong receptors may be hit as opposed to the right ones - predicated on our pre-human and human experiences, proving that the mind can be fooled - or lied into believing, as we have previously shown. Here's another question! Before humans walked on earth, were there wrongs, in a generic sense? Did the early creatures (know) right from wrong? Could the tree-shrew, for example, feel guilty for doing something wrong? I think not! It appears that only when life moved to higher forms, and brains got to work better, we became smarter and eventually wiser. So could there be wrongs in primordial times? No!

When the earth was created, there may have been chaos, but, it looks like only the right moves were made for everything to tum out the way it did. In the gradual course of evolution, the right (decisions) or functions led the way. Obviously wrong, in

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a general sense, did not exist. Here we are again - at the same old juncture, Benedict XVI wrote:

History can never be detached from God and then run smoothly on Purely material lines. If man's heart is not good, then nothing else can tum out good either. And the goodness of the human heart can ultimately come only from the One who is goodness, who is Good itself.

Did the force that started the whole shebang create or permit right and wrong to exist and grow side by side? The answer has to be a qualified (no). Since a (right) has to have an absence of right to (be) right - that absence came to be known as wrong. Wrongs never did win. Like the second orange, after time, can't possibly be counted as five. Unfortunately I know many people who believe it should, and say you're closed-minded, if you don't count: 1,5,3,4,2, etc. That's simply because they confuse relativity with relativism. We're not just talking language here. Now, chance has two functions, (don't get into percentages) (win) or (lose). So when and if chance began everything, there had to have been (equal) possibilities since that (is) the nature and the essence of chance, losing as the opposite of winning. Beginning with chance, winning is (always) accompanied by losing, unless the game is rigged. Whenever something wins, something else loses.

For those of us who say God began everything, at least as it appears in our acquired consciousness, from the beginning winning has been the only thing. Right decisions or fluctuations continuously came out on top. There was no (chance) of losing. Isn't that evolution as we know it? Wrong or evil didn't exist before man appeared.

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Now if God created man (as) himself, he certainly gave him a full measure of his own freedom. That gift (if you will) surely did not make man his own creator but a created creature - exercising his freedom (from) the Creator. With the first of these creatures something went very wrong. Along with pure freedom, obviously came absolute choice; that is, either to do what was right (or) oppose what was right - freely. God did not make zombies.

What went very wrong? Why would a omniscient, omnipotent, perfect (being) (God) test his creatures to the point of having them exercise their freedom in opposition to intrinsic good? This is the question that even Augustine was not able to answer. I believe everybody knows that as human beings, we are certainly more (graced) or gifted than the animals. Further, who will deny the enormous strides humanity has made just from the year 1900 in almost every category of understanding? However, no one can deny the huge evils that have accompanied the (good) in the same time period. But, does (evil) stand side by side with (good)? I think not.

The good, or God, has been with us always, as it has been from the very beginning. The big bang was good. Every particle and sub-particle in the chaotic primal state was good. There was no wrong way simply based on the outcome. We determined what might have gone wrong only lately! When man in a general sense, reached a high point in the evolutionary chain, he knew what was (good) for him. Unlike his forebears (if you'll forgive the pun), there was now not only a need to eat, but (good) to eat. Not only a need to sleep with security, but (good) to do so. Mating was fundamental and good. Health was good to have,

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comfort was good. Life was (good). Love was now known and good. Every good he experienced, now that he had emerged from Good itself, was perfectly known to him and her. The primary good, the most unique and valuable gift as opposed to the other (primates), was complete freedom, the consciousness of knowing you know; (self) consciousness. They could imagine beyond. They had an (inner) self and a mind's eye, albeit a naive one. A reversion to the animal state was a critical possibility, but any reversion was now (contemplated) as a backward move, a wrong. The (life) of the good had been breathed into our life, and we could never go back to a less than human condition. Did the Creator give us this as a test? I don't believe so. How could (All Goodness) tempt? According to W. Blauvelt, "Our words 'tree' and 'true' are from the same root (the Tree of Knowledge is almost redundant) ."

"No one experiencing temptation should say, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God is not subject to temptation to evil, and he himself tempts no one. Rather each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire conceives and brings forth sin, and when sin reaches maturity it gives birth to death." (James 1: 13~ 16)

That would be a disconnect from the "giver of life." We became human as conscience was added to consciousness and spiritual existence was the Spirit's life in our life. Knowing the good but choosing the alternative was the nascence of evil. The human developmental process had begun - and culminated in the Incarnation. A resolution of the effects of death waited for the Resurrection of Christ, when even death itself became a good! Chance was merely choice. No one gambles who knows he will surely lose. Winning is still "the only thing." The (good)

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is a never-ending stream of light which human freedom can, and often does, reject.

Religion invented a tempter to excuse itself. Good can't lose ... people lose the good Without this dynamic nothing has meaning; to submit that God may have created evil, leaves man a desperate victim of chance. How utterly absurd That thought has all the surety of an erratic solenoid stuttering between alternatives; anxiety provoking indeed. So (free) man created the wrong that was to become evil, a personification of which became known as the devil. God's gift to man, his freedom, became man's slavery in the truest sense. Adam knew God as the power that gave him the freedom to reject his own sense of the good. Every time we reject the (good) which we know in conscience, out of consciousness, we reject God, the One and only Good. "We could never judge that one thing is better than another, if a basic understanding of the good had not already been installed in us." (Saint Augustine)

Man simply became law unto himself. Not until much later was the good-law, or God's law, materially given through one man on Sinai. The eschatological clock was set. No one knows for certain when Moses received the "Law" but modern scholarship ranges from between ~ 1500 BCE to ~ 1100 BCE. The Exodus most likely took place around 1480~ 1400 BCE. So here we are - about 3500 years later (depending on how the years were counted); having all our civil and moral law principally based on the Ten Commandments, plus the teachings of Jesus Christ; particularly with his expansion of the decalogue, and in his own being as a fulfillment of the law itself; this is the world most of us in the West know .. Let us

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pick up a little on (Freud) at this juncture, to see how he worked it out in his “talk-therapy.”

For almost a century the theories of Freud, in conjunction with Adler, Jung, Ferenczi, Jones, Sachs, Abraham and Otto Rank dominated the world of psychiatry. Millions upon millions of people have gone through psychoanalysis to relieve varying degrees of neurosis and anxiety. Trying to find the source and the means of eliminating feelings of (guilt) was Freud's lifelong undertaking. It is only lately, with great strides in the field of psycho, pharmacology that Freudian methods have substantially subsided. Today's doctors have taught us to drug our emotions. In 2001, Jared Diamond, Ph.D., an author, was quoted in a piece from the New York Times lamenting the fact that Freud is so terribly under, appreciated.

Freud was a lifelong atheist. Peter Gay wrote in his biographical introduction to *“Civilization and Its Discontents”*:

Freud had grown up with (no) religious instruction at home, came to Vienna as an atheist, and left as an atheist - with persuasive scientific arguments. “He was privileged to work under professors with international reputations, almost all German imports and tough-minded positivists who disdained metaphysical speculations about, let alone pious explanations of (natural) phenomena. Even after Freud modified their theories of the mind - in essence barely disguised physiological theories - he recalled his teachers with unfeigned gratitude. The most memorable of them, Ernst Brucke, an illustrious physiologist and a civilized but exacting taskmaster, confirmed Freud's bent as an unbeliever.” I need not go into depth here about Freud's life and times; but I have made some interesting

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observations with regard to his theses on psychological abnormalities and how to treat them with his “talk, therapy.”

Freud had been well educated in the writers of the enlightenment, as well as the later philosophers such as Hegel (1770-1831), Husserl (1859-1938), Kant (1724-1804), and the poet Heine (1797-1856), etc. His total emersion in physiology in the early part of his studies, and his atheism, left little doubt that he would wind up as an extreme positivist in his approach to the treating of psychopathologies. For Freud there were ostensibly two parts to the mental world. The external world, consciousness, represented by the ego (theI), the part that deals with reality; and the internal world, the un-conscious, represented by the id and the super-ego. The id, Freud says, is the source of all “instinctual impulses, and reveal themselves as derivatives of Eros,” the reservoir of the libido. In essence it is “primitive, man” (or woman) “buried” in a sub, conscious. Over time, the id has become restrained, or let's say modified, by the ego and the super, ego before it is given to overt expression. With regard to the ego and the un-conscious super 'ego Freud explains: “What means does civilization employ in order to inhibit the aggressiveness which opposes it, to make it harmless, to get rid of it, perhaps?” “His aggressiveness is introjected, internalized; it is in point of fact sent back to where it came from - that is, it is directed towards his (or her) own ego. There it is taken over by a portion of the ego which sets itself over against the rest of the ego - as super 'ego, and which now, in the form of (conscience) is ready to put into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that the ego would like to satisfy upon other, extraneous individuals. The tension between the harsh super-ego and the ego that is

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subjected to it, is called by us the sense of (guilt); it expresses itself as a need for punishment.”

It is impossible here to go into the complex relationships between the ego and its counterparts. It suffices to say that the super-ego, according to Freud: “actually originated from the experiences that led to totemism.” To simplify, without hooking into Oedipal manifestations, one could say that the super-ego is a result of a harsh upbringing, particularly by a “father-figure.” An. extension of that would be (all) authority figures represented by religious restrictions, and inevitably, the scourge of a wrathful and angry God. “Thou shalt not” etc. Freud, without faith, could very conveniently and easily blame the (myth) of a “creator god” for a good deal of the mental anguish discovered in people's psyches. This was common in an age where pure science, masquerading as pseudo-religion, tried to roll a stone over the tomb of God forever. Here's how Sigmund explains the hopelessness of religion:

Religion restricts this play of choice and adaptation, since it imposes equally on everyone its own path to the acquisition of happiness and protection from suffering. Its technique consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner-which presupposes an intimidation of the intelligence. At this price, by forcibly fixing them in a state of psychological infantilism and by drawing them into a mass delusion, religion succeeds in sparing many people an individual neurosis, but hardly anything more. There are, as we have said, many paths which may lead to such happiness as is attainable by men, but there is none which does so for certain. Even religion cannot keep its promise. If the believer finally sees himself obliged to speak of God's 'inscrutable

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decrees', he is admitting that all that is left to him as a last possible consolation and source of pleasure in his suffering is an unconditional submission. And if he is prepared for that, he could probably have spared himself the detour he has made.

Freud was a Jew, although certainly not a religious one. Though he mentions the word “soul” several places in “The Ego and the Id” (and) in “Civilization and Its Discontents,” the term “soul” is not to be found in either index (perhaps only in these publications from Norton).

Remembering the treatment of the Jewish aspects of soul on p. 21 of my “Soul, The Name of Man,” I was curiously struck by the similarity between The Zohar (a classic work of Jewish mysticism) and Freud's “parts of his mental world.”

Nefish: the lower or animal part of the “soul” Freud's Id

Rauch: the middle “soul” or spirit

Freud's Ego

Neshamah: the higher “soul”, Higher Self or super “soul”

Freud's Super-Ego

For a man who gave no credence to metaphysics, I find the comparison salient. Perhaps the good parts of his Jewishness were not lost on him. I really do not think that Freud was too far off the mark. The only difference I find between his concept and the one which I'm trying to put forward is this. I believe, on faith with scriptural references and tradition, that the “super-

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ego” is not a result of the ego's repression of the id, but a “conscience” installed by the intrinsic good (God) at a given time in the course of evolution; and that (guilt) is not only a good, but a necessary bulwark against the aggressiveness of the animal nature of man. Anxiety is then a result of the total freedom of mankind (without) a trust in God; and in particular, a complete misunderstanding of redemption. For me, that's why (truly) religious people (or believers) are pretty happy.

Freud seems to agree: “that is why religion succeeds in sparing (many) people an individual neurosis.”

Knowing Jesus Christ's life (or God's life) is in one's own life, could have replaced talk, therapy with God talk, therapy for many. People are afraid or anxious about prayer - because many believe that they would simply be stupidly talking to themselves, since God has never been revealed to them. What despair! Perhaps they should wait for a catastrophe and then cry: “Oh my God.” Perhaps the Elephant in the kitchen is not visible because he is too (close) to be discerned. It is possible many have lost sight of the (scale) of the power of God. They just see a large grey mass and shrug their shoulders.

In Freud's secular, progressive concept the (ego) is victimized in two ways. One, the animal-nature, i.e., “the wellspring of the libidinous and aggressive tendencies,” continuously pulls the ego towards regression; to activities that are animalistic, wrong for man, evil, if you will. On the other hand, the good, represented by the super-ego, i.e. (Conscience), the “voice” of the intrinsic goodness of the Spirit along with authoritative monitory-warnings coming from people's upbringing (if there are any), pulls the ego towards (human) nature, the “right

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thing”, the nature that, eventually, Jesus assumed. This nature is accompanied by guilt feelings that help cancel out (wrong) choices; unless, of course, the conscience has been habitually blinded. If the conscience is blinded to the good - and the “id” rules the “roost,” man reverts to the instinctual, libidinous and aggressive activities unchecked; we then have basically, much of the world as we find it today. What Freud was missing was faith in a merciful God, who proved his love for his creatures by way of the cross. There was no way, in Freud's time, and with his background, that he could have conceived of such an alternative, since there was nothing beyond his empiricism. Freud was his own god, whose passion was to cure us of our guilt— something Jesus had already done in the first century.

Historically, there were and indeed still are many more malefactors who, at least philosophically, were determined to “save the world,” not only with adulterated “spiritual” concepts but by offering an egalitarian utopia. We have already mentioned many. They recede into history but often leave a residue behind which serves to help form brand new atheistic and “religious” based concepts. Generally, they are bent on beating down the “collective conscience” with renewed vigor, and committed to side-stepping “the good.” One need only mention the world-wide terror network; lying to itself in the name of God, supported by power crazed despots and institutions bearing only evil intentions like the massacre of 9/11. This newest world threat is much more dangerous because it is a case of religious, madness, whose followers' consciences have been fatally blinded by a small clique from a 1.3 billion member religion. The Jihadists have clearly shown their intentions with a long string of violent acts, justified by a slanted historic viewpoint. If given a respite for renewing their

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energy, they will resume, making the “Crusades” and the “Wars of Religion” look like child's play, as countless innocent human beings will be slaughtered. This is a perfect example of how a small minority can bring the whole world to turmoil and conflict once again, as a result of the erroneous consciences of a very few.

Human beings are both a created and (creative) creatures. Creativity, as such, is active in every form and stage of our lives. Creativity does not only apply to the arts and sciences. The genius of doing things better, more efficiently, more beautifully applies pretty much in every endeavor we undertake, from scrubbing floors to composing symphonies. When we employ our “creative' imagination” it doesn't much matter what the task happens to be. As thinking, self-respecting human beings, every involvement calls for putting out the best we have to offer in order to get the (satisfaction) of doing things - good! . It's not so much that we expect to be rewarded for extra effort, but this feeling of accomplishment is reward in itself for doing more than the requirement. When we do “good things” there is an air of calmness about it after the fact. I wouldn't say joy or elation, just a feeling of having done good.

The question arises: can we be creative doing wrong or evil? Certainly the freedom of our imagination, i.e. (the gift from the source of Ultimate Freedom) allows that choice. Freedom would not be freedom at all were it not for the option of doing what it (wills). So in full consciousness we can choose to channel our creativity to the alternative of the good. It was the freedom of not to do the good that man lost his innocence, knowing “The Good” and rejecting “him”. Freud's “Taboo” goes far beyond proto-man's state, it reaches back into the

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innocence of the animal state; what was good for the animal is now (with Love) not good for man as a demi-god, a son of God, so to speak, since we have been made in God's (image). The evil person claims that the good are deluded by their goodness - which in reality is calling God a liar. Evil always submits that goodness is unexciting and boring. Any defense of what is good, out of fear of falling into wrong is a defense of ultimate truth, a tacit agreement to respect, at least, the grace of God. The love of God requires surrender; a decision not many of us want to make. Freedom itself has become the (new) god since history has taught us not to trust authority.

Now there is always the possibility that after a lot of repetition (habit), we may become complaisant - as our efforts become routine. It is possible we may abridge our thinking about (what) we're doing and habitually just do it. Laying aside thoughtfulness immediately opens up the possibility of carelessness as chance enters the picture. When taking a chance on something we can never be sure of the outcome. There is always the possibility of less than the (preferred) result. Creativity, even of minimal tasks, requires a certain degree of attentiveness with a desire to exceed what is ordinary. It is the nature of "creativity" to transcend the mundane.

It is interesting to note, at least by observation, that a majority of people appear to be comfortable (with) the ordinary, it's something they get to know well; no need for exertion or any surprises! The commonplace is easier; prosaic. Critical thoughtfulness wanes, and the ebullience of (creativity) fades and becomes unavailing. Imagination, invention, originality and ingenuity is replaced, after a while, by tedium and boredom. Absolute freedom gets tangled up with anxiety,

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ambiguity and equivocation, until, finally, there is no interest left to create. We become negative and even fearful of, as they say, “thinking out of the box”; afraid of criticism perhaps.

This small excursion into the effects of human freedom tends to explain how conscience and, indeed, consciousness itself can be blunted, numbed, de-sensitized by (self) deprecation. In situations like this, drugs, alcohol and depression can easily replace the natural “highs” resulting from creativity. There's not enough good around, and many who think they are doing good, or God's will, may be deluded; “By their fruits you shall know them” (Matt 7:20).

Consciousness, conscience, and creativity constitute man's freedom. In order to stand against “maleficence,” one needs to reach for the meaning behind these human attributes. So far, no one truly has been able to define consciousness with the same degree of certainty that creativity can be defined. Let's explore the concept of (consciousness); surely without (it) we couldn't define anything.

To paraphrase Descartes, “I am conscious, so I think I am.” It is much too simple to define consciousness as awareness. We are continuously (aware) on so many levels that the word is really inadequate to express the phenomenon. I'd rather think “alive, ness”, if there were such a word, would do better to distinguish the condition of consciousness. Let me try to explain it rather than define it.

The word “awareness” is subjective; its tension is inward, not outward. The “I” is what's aware. It demands input from external sources, and we, as organisms, are born with it. When

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we're awake we are vigilant sensing agents. If consciousness is the inherent knowledge of (supra life) in relation to our own life (our subjectivity), that understanding is both deterministic and probabilistic. Planck's statement: "Prom the outside, objectively considered, the (will) is causally tied. Prom the inside, subjectively considered, the (will) is free," is correct. At conception we all are given life. The source of that life, as all life from the beginning, I believe, is an act of God. This (probability) is no less true than any other probability that has ever been offered. The thing that makes the (God-probability) more believable is the fact that for us humans, it has been the single most widely understood conscious recollection of (all) time; the connecting metaphysical link to the Primal Cause beyond the limits of space/time. From a deterministic viewpoint, (Planck's objectivity), the mind is the {brain} at work. Neuroscientific proofs are evident. Reason and will are mind processes and are accompanied by neuronal and chemical activity in the brain. Mind though, "subjectively considered," is implicit to the working of the brain, so that consciousness is "mind over matter." What Bohm called "the implicate order." Bohm said: "Meaning is the bridge between consciousness and matter. Any given array of matter has for any particular mind - a significance. The other side of this is the relationship in which meaning is immediately effective (in) matter." In other words, every action of a conscious human being has meaning which directly effects the (matter); that is, the substance which mind and body are made of; (mind) affects the (organic whole), i.e., embarrassment, elation, guilt, joy, etc. Reason and will are so closely coordinated (in the mind) that time between thinking and doing is being measured in microseconds by neuroscientists. (There is a whole area of study here with regard to faith.)

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Volition is a decisive act of reasoned matters by biological matter. We may act and (not) act (at will). The question becomes, are we free to act. All (conscious) human acts have the two facets as well, determinism and probabilism. A deterministic response is a spontaneous reaction to physical stimulation (reflex action). Probabilistic volition is a deliberated response to a choice of actions (reflected action). The mind is conscious of reflex action after the fact; however, it is conscious of reflective action before the fact by milliseconds, minutes, weeks or even years. The individual mind's ability to reason and will, places the responsibility of an act directly with the person who is doing the reasoning. Though there are extenuating circumstances that prove exemption, generally, they involve the application of law.

It's a fact that social norms or mores differ throughout the world, still, inner deliberation is unique to each and every conscious individual. No matter where you live, man's individual freedom is limited and fallible. The exercise of freedom does not imply the right to say or do (anything). It is false to maintain that man, the subject of this freedom is an individual who is fully self-sufficient and whose finality is the satisfaction of his own interests. So, then, is the will really (free) in the true sense of the word? In the true sense - the mind is free, but the will is not; the will has restrictions, and those restrictions are deliberated by the faculty of reasoning. In that process of deliberation the free mind is aided by conscience which is either aware of the (good) consequences that are available in a conscientious life, or the opposite option which rejects good and reverts to the instinctual, libidinous, selfish and aggressive activities coming from one's evolutionary

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“former-being,” Freud's Id. So freedom 'for human beings of conscience, is not entirely free. That's why the forces of “evil” in the world go to extraordinary efforts to eradicate conscience and establish power and control over as many people as possible. This happens also on a one on one basis and in families. As Planck says: “from the inside, the will is free” ... but only free to choose. Freedom is of another nature, not limited to space/time. Pure freedom is an abstraction as is truth and knowledge. No relativity of any kind can be applied to those (known-about) unknowns. It is my belief that they are the essences of God ... omnipotent, omniscient, omni-amorous and infinite. The “meaning,” to use Bohm's word, behind: “I am who am,” is ultimate freedom.

Since we have generally covered conscience in the above, we should move on to ”creativity“ as (it) relates to freedom.

We are free to think what we wish and imagine what we will, before we act. Our phantasms and fantasies, within, are a product of the mind and brain employing all its functions: memory, reason, perception, intuition, sensation, etc., yet this activity of thought is organized behind the complex veil of contemplation and consideration with its indeterminate features. The ”feelings” that accompany artistic expression, engage the neural networks as well and are physically and directly affected with thought patterns. There's a “willingness” to act; to become the cause of an effect - as the whole person, both mind and body interact. Determinism (and) probability spill out in one form or another as a “creative” act of the will. Just as with any act of human will, the creative act stands the test of conscience, it can either embrace the good or reject it. I would ask this question: can a “creative” act of the will which

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rejects what is true or honest and performs fallaciously, produce good “art”? The answer to that question is: since the will is free (to choose) and can reject the “good“ and falsify to obtain an end, I suppose that endeavor could be considered art; but, who is to tell? An expert or an authority, in his or her own right, could be making judgments based on spuriousness as well. The whole concept of human creativity with regard to freedom of will falls within the context of choice, but regarding the abstract quintessence of freedom itself, any human creative endeavor (should) conform to the good, the true, the beautiful, etc.; the ”meaning“ (in) ”the implicate order.“ Consciousness, conscience and creativity are woven together in a unity of freedom with (our) lives and the ”supra life“ of the Spirit.

I believe we have all experienced the virulent, embittered and libidinous tendency in much of today's art, with its obvious commercial objectives. How does the casual observer, listener or reader tell whether a ”contemporary“ work of art is good? No matter the technique, if the work has ”meaning,“ the good, the true and the beautiful always come through. Appreciating the arts is certainly not a trivial pursuit. It is enormously rewarding only after due consideration and sincere reflection. The mind of a beholder, any beholder, without experience, can easily be mislead. Monetary value is often more important than ”meaning“ in many works. Some people paint, compose, write, dance, preach, sculpt and (all) the rest, with only the motivation of shocking the public, often producing appalling (or) benign works calling them by the name of art! In honest “creative” works, there is an echo of Creation itself, (man) being “a created creator.”

The artisan and an artist are two different individuals. The artisan has (skill); the artist has that, plus the (unlearned) ability

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to go beyond the mundane into the abstract and daring realm of beauty and truth, and having the courage to come as close to it as is humanly possible. One simply cannot call himself or herself an artist! No true beauty calls herself beautiful; no saint calls himself or herself holy.

Art can and often does project the negative. In “true” art, though, the negative is usually a “lesson” being taught; it's the (lesson) that is good, beautiful and true. It is possible that certain “lessons” can turn out to be politically or socially motivated half truths, that is, beautifully executed propaganda. Purveying what is ugly, deceitful, and vile for its own sake, is a direct assault on “the good” and of its nature can't be true art. Art, when it is true, does not drag us into a “cess .. pool.” Anti .. art is the cleverness of evil posing as good and is legally protected in a “free” country. The creative mind has many options with freedom to express itself, still, aU volition bears the scrutiny of good conscience. When a person of “talent” displays works that disclose a perennial psychological weakness, the conscience is over-ridden in favor of an aversion to the good, it is often a cry for healing from the “artist.”; Works of this nature are either pure technique or pure emotion, the ”meaning“ of which is known only to the ”artist” or not known at all. If one wishes to call it art, one is certainly free to do so. Often the works of the insane, of animals and children, find a market. Art is meant to communicate on an intelligent level.

This is a perfect segue to our next thought, where a magnificent work of art, “The Book of Job” in the Old Testament of the Bible - tells the story of an eminently sane man shaking his fist at God for completely different reasons. The “Wisdom Literature” of the Old Testament includes Job as the first book;

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then Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. The book opens extolling Job as “blameless, upright, God fearing and turning away from evil.” He was the man who had everything; rich by every standard of the time. He had a wonderful family, huge holdings in property and livestock, very many servants, etc . . . Job was lacking nothing, and despite all of his wealth he was a (good) man: charitable, generous and loving.

Many scholars believe the book of Job was written before Moses, that would be pre, 1500 BeE, however there is no certainty as to its origin. According to Christian Classics Ethereal Library (CCES.ORG): “The historical events appear to be set in the 'Patriarchal' period (i.e., sometime between Noah and Moses). It would make Job somewhat contemporary with Abraham.” Like much of the sacred literature it has very important points to make regarding human, beings relationship with their origins. The perplexity Job faced after losing (all) that he had, including his family; and being left with sickness, despondency, and utter bewilderment, is not unlike many contemporary situations. men and women face today. Why does a merciful God allow (good) people to suffer? Why does the all-powerful Deity permit evil to exist - while (he) is all good? When we look at what is going on in today's world, isn't it simply human frailty to hold on to faith as our strength, our “saving grace”? Should we concede, along with other angry men and women that “faith” is “the opiate of the people,” and throw in with those who are convinced that chance is our only origin and will be our pitiful end? Why shouldn't we accept the spurious, scientific explanations of the secular, progressives, whose mind's eyes are closed to anything beyond pragmatic determinism and materialism? In other words, what good is

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God to those who are suffering? “My disease isn't his disease”! If we're made in God's “image” why aren't we (perfect) like him, her or it“! ”We didn't ask to be born“! (Life has been made cheap.)

I believe it had to have been much easier to rail against the unseen God of the Patriarchs than against the promises of Christ; still ... there were those who after seeing his miraculous works insisted on more being done for them with the words, ”He saved . others; he can not save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross (now) and we will believe in him. He has put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For did he say, 'I am God's son'?“ (Matt. 27:42).

No matter what befell Job he persisted in the goodness of God, even though he didn't quite understand it. In those days it was thought that ”evil“ was the result of individual sin; Job proclaimed his having (not) been a transgressor, and demanded of God the reason for his terrible misfortunes, while not betraying God's goodness. Right at the beginning of the book, the writer of Job sets one thing straight. Satan, always the antagonist, was found among the ”sons of God“ being presented to the Lord. The Lord asked him: ”From where do you come?“ Satan made it clear:

”From roaming about on earth and walking around on it.“ Immediately we understand that the personification of evil has not come from (goodness) but from among men. In order for the writer to make his point, he had ”the Lord“ make a deal with ”Satan.“ The dialogue between them is marvelous:

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The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. "

Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to your face."

The LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

From that point on Job suffered every imaginable woe and affliction, but never wavered in his standing with goodness. Despite his "friends'" admonishments to have him admit his sins, his perseverance was conspicuous in his famous remark:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

"Through all this Job did not sin Nor did he (blame) God."

It is interesting to note the words of Nicodemus here (John, 3). When meeting with Jesus, this well-to-do Pharisee and leader of the Jews, admitted that no one could perform the signs that Jesus performed "unless God were (with) him." When Jesus

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explained that one must be “born from above” to see the “Kingdom of God,” thinking this to be incredulous, “Nicodemus said, 'How can anyone who is already old be born? Is it possible to go back to the womb again and be born?'"

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

”That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

“Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

”The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit. “

Nicodemus said to Him, ”How can these things be?“

Jesus answered and said to him, ”Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?

“Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

”If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Back to Job. The many questions and remarks Job put to the Lord could easily be put to him today. Here are just a few:

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“What are human beings that you should take them so seriously, subjecting them to your scrutiny?”

. “Suppose I have sinned, what have I done to you?”

“Why do you choose me as your target?”

“I can not believe he would listen to what I said, he who crushes me for one hair, who for no reason wounds and wounds again ... ”

“For he is not human like me: impossible for me to answer him or appear alongside him in court ... ”

“But am I innocent? I'm no longer sure, and life itself I despise!”

“Your hands having shaped and created me, now you change your mind and mean to destroy me!”

“I tell you God has wronged me and enveloped me in his net.”

Through all of his complaints, Job still maintained being on the side of goodness; he was as much perplexed as he was persistent. Until finally God answered him with all the creative power that the book's writer could muster. God's answer to Job is what has made Job one of the most dramatic and dynamic books of scripture. This led Victor Hugo to say: “Tomorrow, if all literature was to be destroyed and it was left to me to retain one work only, I should save Job.”

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God speaks now to Job:

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Now gird up your loins like a man;

And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell Me, if you have understanding.

Who set its measurements? Since you know.

Or who stretched the line on it?

On what were its bases sunk?

Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together

And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or who enclosed the sea with doors

When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; When I made a cloud its garment

And thick darkness its swaddling band, And I placed boundaries on it

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And set a bolt and doors,

And I said, 'Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop'?

Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, And caused the daum. to know its place,

That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it?

Today, how would (we) answer this blistering rebuttal to complaints about (our) infirmities, our indispositions? What grievances should we offer regarding our illnesses and disorders, against our maladies, afflictions and anxieties. Should we excuse ourselves by saying, “Sorry, we simply do not (see) the goodness of God.” Is it normal for us to be inconsiderate, rude, and even hateful of others? Is it human to malign or ignore the wonderful gifts which have been granted to us; can we consider the taking of life as commonplace? These concepts “roam about on the earth” and “walk around among men and women.” They are not from the goodness of God, who is Goodness itself! None but the despots say that life should be a utopia. The Writer of Job pulled out all the stops and admonished Job with all of his creative power, as he expounded on the goodness of the Lord which many of us take for granted.

In Chapter 40, Job's short reply to the God “out of the whirlwind” speaks volumes in just five lines:

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“Still speaking to Job, Yahweh said:

Is Yahweh's opponent going to give way? Has God's critic thought up an answer?”

Job replied to Yahweh:

My words have been frivolous:

What can I reply?

I had better lay my hand over my mouth. I have spoken once, I shall not speak again;

I have spoken twice, I have nothing more to say.“

This is followed by a second discourse which is even more powerful than the first. Finally, Job was restored and lived for “another 140 years,“ ”then old and full of days, Job died.“

In Job's case, death was not an evil, since his soul lived with the Spirit of the goodness of God. The ”patience of Job,“ as we say, is demonstrated by his faith, i.e., his resignation to the goodness he knew in his ”heart.“ There was no (chance) of Job's condemnation. His spirit was one with the Spirit, in the goodness of the Creator!

Fast forward to the village of Capernaum two miles short of the mouth of the Jordan River as it enters the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was an important center in Jesus' ministry. It was here in the synagogue, where Jesus taught, healed the

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”demoniac“ and cured the ”paralytic“; here, most scholars also agree, was the house of Peter.

During the Roman occupation the Italian Cohort was presumed stationed at Ceasaria, nearby. Along with the many works that Jesus performed in Capernaum, one stands out as truly amazing. As this ”Jewish healer,“ who was preaching the coming ”Kingdom of God“ entered the town one day, a Centurion, a Roman officer who commanded one century (100 men) of the nearby cohort, implored him, saying:

”Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented. “

Jesus said to him, ”I will come and heal him.”

But the centurion said, ”Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

”For I also am a man of authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it.”

Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, ”Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.

”I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast

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out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that very moment.

What is amazing about this particular healing is that it was done for a “barbarian,” an occupier, an “enemy” of the majority of the Jews. It was the Centurion who demonstrated utter (faith) in Jesus’ powers. Jesus not only complied but “marveled” at his “belief” and noted that he had not found anyone in Israel who had demonstrated such faith. Linking this to Job’s belief (but) perplexity, this Roman officer put a (trust) in the Lord that others would not permit themselves. He was not distracted by skepticism and cynicism and recognized the potency of the (faith) that Jesus was teaching.

The Big Bang was the one gigantic theophany of all time; it was the day “without yesterdays” as Lamaitre would claim; he being the one man who hypothesized on the glorious expansion of the “singularity”; the beginning of time and space - before which there was “only” God; only the Good “from whom all good things come.”

Maleficence is man’s doing. His insistence on imposing his will on the will of God jams “heaven” into reverse! Many will sadly be successful, bury the conscience and reap their “reward.” I have no idea what that may be, and what that “darkness” outside is, where there’s a “gnashing of teeth” ... I cannot even imagine.

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“Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, just say the word and I shall be healed.”

For many of us - our faith may not be as strong as Job's and the Centurion's, but we do have hope and love to help us in our journey to (see) the goodness of God in all things. There is no joy in derogation, depreciation, disparagement or deceit; no satisfaction in anxiety and impatience.

Can we “bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion ”]

No, we are merely mortal, and our safety is in the arms of an eternal, loving God whom we know through Jesus Christ our Lord! Essentially, the road to this conscious understanding is “mind over matter,” once touched by the Word of God in good conscience. “Mind” simply has to be made-up: and that's our choice.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.” (John 15:4)