

November 5, 2003

- *Good and evil*

God illuminates your lives and the lives of all human beings constantly, with love and the offering of true peace. Your lives are filled with so many challenges, and those challenges contain within them questions—questions about life, questions about your place within that life, questions about sorting out what is important, and above all questions about knowing what is right. All of your issues can be distilled into the question of where is God, what is right, and who you are.

You know that God is everywhere always, unceasing. You know in principle about what is right, but you wrestle with who you are and where you are. The question of who and where includes your concerns about what is good and evil, and where you belong in that realm of good and evil. Every society has a concept of good and evil, but no two societies fully agree. Is there an absolute good? Is there an absolute evil? In knowing the answers to these questions, you are perhaps more equipped to recognize where you are and who you are.

Is there absolute good? We can assure you there is such a state. Absolute good is all that is done which benefits God's creation. This includes human beings, the natural environment—everything that exists. What is good for you as individuals must be good for you collectively. If it is good for individuals and is not seen as good for all, it is not a part of absolute goodness.

Your life should be directed in a search to acknowledge what is absolutely good. There are no secrets. God does not make it difficult for you to acknowledge and recognize absolute good. Curiously, it is the human condition that tends to obfuscate that vision. It is the preoccupation with self that prevents many from seeing the totality of which they are a part.

What is absolutely good? Love. There is no human being that does not benefit by love. There is no element of creation that does not benefit by love. There may be differing kinds of love. You do not love a plant in the same way as you love an individual, and yet you can be loving toward a plant, concerned for its growth, its nurturing, its health, valuing it for its ability to create that which you need to live—namely oxygen. Human beings, the plant world need each other, but it is also true that human beings are more than capable of destroying the plant world. Human beings can love the earth and all that it brings forward—the nourishment, the food, the presence of minerals, the provision for the air that you breathe and the water that you require. Being loving and the importance of loving and being loved is absolute good. Everything that we encourage you to seek in your lives begins with the absolute good of love. All else comes from that.

Love that is nonjudgmental supports, affirms, strengthens, provides meaning, communicates, upholds, builds. That is what love can do. Those are the qualities of the

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spirit that are sought. The manifestations are many. But the presence of love is the absolute good. When you are vulnerable and when you are loving, fully loving, fully vulnerable, there is no room for anything else for your relationship to others and your relationship to your world become all consuming. All that you perceive as good in the world is the direct result of love.

What is it that is ultimately, fully evil? All that is evil comes from human sources. Those actions are devoted particularly and specifically to self. It is true that every individual is in part divine, and equally so with all individuals. But an individual who is consumed by self has no room for relationships with others. Being consumed by self is the absolute and ultimate evil. A murderer, a rapist, someone who has been responsible for the suffering of many, you consider to be evil. In terms of absorption by self and of self, such a label is appropriate. No one is 100% evil, for the divine presence always lies within. Therefore, the individual who commits horrible acts against others is not completely evil. You may condemn that individual, that person's actions, attitudes, but that individual is not completely evil. But if we wish to identify traits, perspectives that are in themselves evil, it must be the absorption, the total attention being drawn to the self.

It is natural to have individual needs. When you are hurting, you rightly wish for comfort, but such concerns for self are not motivated by a disdain for others. Rather, such concerns are governed by the willingness to be vulnerable. You wish help from others because you need the help of others. The concern for self, the absorption of self that we refer to, is fixed upon a belief that others have no value, that you have value—Is based on a rejection of the importance of others. It is oriented only toward your own individual needs. Such disregard for others is evil. No individual must remain within the clutches of evil thoughts because no one is fully evil. There is always the potential to complete that bridge, to allow that bridge to provide communication in both directions: being loved and becoming loving.

Your world is filled with individuals absorbed by self. Some seek great power and influence over others, whether that be physical power, emotional power, intellectual power, economic power. But all individuals have the potential to change because of the divine presence within.

The question is raised whether there are evil forces, implying organized forces representing evil, that are fighting organized forces representing good. If one considers these evil forces as somehow working in concert, we can say that is not the case. There are those who are committed to perspectives which by our definition are considered evil, but there are no evil spirits that are literally in conflict and fighting the spirits of good. This is because the spirits of all human beings are good. Good cannot fight good.

It can be helpful for some to believe that evil forces are at work, as if the devil had recruited its own help. Although such is not the case, seeing life as a potential for

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improving what is good, strengthening what is good, and reducing the influences of what is contrary to that can be most helpful. Such a view of good and evil can assist in understanding that there is good behavior and that there is behavior contrary to what is good. It is not so important whether one believes in an evil force per se or not. What is important is your recognition to seek what is really good.

God has created all. Everything of that creation is inherently good. Everything contains the potential for good. Uranium contains the potential for good, but it can be grossly abused. Human beings contain the potential for good, and yet that goodness can be grossly abused. There is nothing in nature that is inherently evil. There are no evil animals. There are no evil plants. There are no evil minerals. There is no water, no gas that is evil. There are no individuals who are evil. There are no spirits that are evil. All that has been created is inherently good.

All that has been created has as its potential goodness and benefit—goodness and benefit that is to be shared, not kept within. It is not the natural state of being for a mineral to be beneficial to self. It is beneficial as it mixes with others. There is no plant that can survive being beneficial only to itself. Plants need other plants and animals to survive, and plants are in themselves beneficial to other plants and animals and minerals. There is an interdependence that characterizes absolutely all of creation. Thinking that human beings are somehow fundamentally different from the entirety of creation is shortsighted and faulty.

We urge you always to be affirming, to be giving, supporting, uplifting. It is not because we think it is the right thing to do, but rather it is because this is how you were created, and this is how all has been created. You are a part of that total creation. You are not in any way separated from it. You are good because you are inherently good. Your behavior might be evil but you are good. Think upon the common goodness of all that has been created. Everything that is is ultimately dependent upon something else. All must relate. There is nothing that is created that exists in self. The evil that you observe in life comes only from a misguided insistence upon the domination of self—self as an individual, self as a set of beliefs that somehow dominate over others.

You are not in the end selves. In the end, you are a community, you are a totality, you are comprised of the very elements of the inanimate earth that surrounds you. There is a congruous relationship that you all share. You are all the same ultimately, and that is a moving potential for total good, for love, respect, and an acknowledgment of your shared beginning from God. What a blessing it is when you acknowledge your connection to everyone and everything! Let that acknowledgment guide you in your daily lives.

You are a part of God. You are God's creation. Rejoice in that wholeness!

Amen.

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