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What Canst Thou Say?

Friends • Mystical Experience • Contemplative Practice

*You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this: but what canst thou say?
Art thou a child of Light and hast thou walked in the Light, and what thou speakest,
is it inwardly from God? —George Fox*

Evil

Conversations with Lucifer

*How have you fallen from the heavens,
O morning star, son of the dawn!
How are you cut down to the ground
You who mowed down the nations!
You said in your heart:
“I will scale the heavens,
Above the stars of God
I will set my throne.”*

—Isaiah 14: 12-13

Without recognizing it, I began conversing with Lucifer a long time ago. Often I have asked myself how this unwanted conversation arose. To this day I cannot explain how it happened or why. I only know that I did not choose it. At first I had no name to describe these eruptions. Finally I settled upon the image of Lucifer, the archangel whom God loved best, calling him “Morning star, Son of the dawn.” At his creation Lucifer felt he embodied perfect power, yet he fell while trying to usurp the highest position in Heaven. In my conversations with Lucifer I have learned more than I ever wanted to know about the evil of self-adoration, excluding all others. If you choose to read further, I will tell you stories of conscious choices of power rather than grace.

I have seen the face of Lucifer. It burns with fire and brilliance. My artist son painted a picture of it once. I remember walking downstairs into his bedroom and seeing a portrait that

frightened me with its evil energy. My son once said to me that he was curious why I was always attracted to the Light while he was attracted to the dark side of things. To protect my son and our household I took the painting of Lucifer and put it in the dumpster. My son has never forgiven me for this exorcism nor has he fully understood why it was necessary. Maybe he will understand some day as he matures in his spiritual life. I am assured that I could not have acted otherwise.

Sometimes it is essential to be misunderstood.

Here is a story of another encounter. My sister has struggled all of her life with a brain disorder. We have a name for this illness, but we have no name for her second battleground with Lucifer. She has “mental brilliance” as well as a mental illness. In my experience these two aspects have often combined into a fierce and frightening force that causes her to lose her own personality. You may be asking how

Maurine Pyle

From the Editor

Evil is an especially difficult concept for Friends because we take a positive approach, “answering that of God in every one.” I accepted the assignment as the editor for this issue because I was not sure how I feel about evil. I have had marvelous spiritual experiences that other people labelled as “the work of Satan.” I believe that the dualistic approach of naming as evil anything that is other than one’s own group is a basic problem in the world today and accounts for much of the oppression, violence and wars.

But am I naïve? I read about genocide in Darfur and Rwanda. My cousin was brutally attacked by a man who broke into her home. How can I say that evil does not exist? How can we acknowledge evil exists without expecting it to befall us?

The evil of the world—rape, genocide—is represented in these articles. We meet Lucifer and Satan. But fear not, dear reader, there is also a message of hope—love can overcome it all.

Judy Lumb
Editor for this issue

Vanity

"If somebody is vain, this means he thinks he knows better than somebody else, he is better than somebody else, he wants the attention of people, he wants to occupy the center of the stage. What does he accomplish there? What is the obstacle? Anybody can be loud and, let me say, display poor manners. All it requires is to have an impulse to do it and follow it through. There is no obstacle to poor manners if you wish to display them. And if then you are proud because you have called attention to yourself, that's not pride. That's vanity. You call it pride, perhaps, but it is vanity." —Abraham A. Low

(Manage Your Fears Manage Your Anger, p. 198, 1995)

This is so apt to our discussion of Lucifer. Lucifer's primary characteristic was the "vanity of knowing better" — even better than God.

—Maurine Pyle

I can tell the difference between her psychosis and her desire for power. There is a distinct difference.

When my sister experienced a mental breakdown a few years ago, she was constantly restless and could not be calm in her mind. Medication was not working to control it. I was speaking to her every day trying to offer soothing words as an antidote.

I am very familiar with the manic side of my sister's world. However, one day I heard someone else's voice on the phone. A voice of pure rage, different in timbre from hers and powerfully threatening. Without even thinking, I began to chant over and over, "Out in the name of Jesus Christ!"

The rage-filled voice was increasing in power, threatening me with annihilation. Then I said quietly to the entity, "This is not my sister, and I am hanging up now."

I am sure that I was being called into service to exorcise Lucifer. My sister's struggles have not just been about her mental illness. She freely admits to me that she has always had a desire to overpower others with her brilliant mind.

As a child, I learned about "lost souls" from my clairvoyant mother who taught me how to seek them out

and give comfort. She had a gentle persuasive way of collecting these people around her and healing them. By watching her I learned how to listen intuitively in the Spirit. But her lessons could not prepare me for intimate struggles with Lucifer, God's challenger on earth. As I matured in using my spiritual gifts, I became aware that I was being taught how to remain fearless in the face of evil. I was also given insight into my own potential for evil. The lesson I was learning was the need for constant vigilance, keeping myself in the Light, and knowing my own evil nature.

When I invited my friend Bob to move into my spare room, it was because he had become too mentally ill to live alone. Bob was a friend and mentor to many people, renowned for his wisdom and generosity, and yet he also suffered from rigidity, greed, and isolation, depression and despair. Bob was a wealthy man, yet clung obsessively to his money to protect himself and control his environment. He had an intense fear of God. His was truly a paradoxical personality. Bob was wise in many ways but he was afraid of "letting go and letting God." He used to tell me, "I prayed and I prayed and nothing happened." I often reminded him that bargaining is not the same as prayer.

I was aware that Bob was in a dangerous state of mind, both spiritually and mentally. Before he came to stay in my home, I had told him he that had to follow three conditions—he must follow his doctor's direction, he could not speak of suicide, and he could not curse God. I discerned that Bob was a "lost soul."

My journal entry from that time reads: "I try hard only to use the words given to me by Spirit when speaking with Bob. There is an evil spirit that has a hold on him. I am his soul's guardian."

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He had become incapable of taking care of himself, so I provided for his daily care with help from his friends. For a short while he appeared to be getting better. Then there was a sudden change when he turned shadowy and rebellious. One day he called me a religious fanatic. I retreated to an upstairs room that I had set aside as a quiet space for respite. Bob knew that this was a room he could not enter while I was in prayer. He followed me into the room. When I looked at him I saw the visage of an angry, gnarly gnome with a wicked grin on his face. He impishly reached for my Bible and opened it to read. Before he could say a single word, I quoted "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity" from the Book of Ecclesiastes. He looked quite surprised saying, "How did you know that I was going to read that passage?" I replied, "Because it is the most sarcastic line in the Bible."

So I set the boundary that he could not challenge and threaten me in my home. I asked him to leave. Suddenly he became plaintive, supplicating me to change my mind. I was resolved, not trusting the truth of his words. Lucifer had overtaken him; only a remnant of his true nature was visible. When he left the house, he turned to say humbly, "Thank you for all that you have tried to do for me." A few days later I heard

"[One] ... characteristic of the devil's moral theology is the exaggeration of distinctions between this and that, good and evil, right and wrong. These distinctions become irreducible divisions. No longer is there any sense that we might all be more or less at fault, and that we might be expected to take upon our own shoulders the wrongs of others by forgiveness, acceptance, patient understanding and love, and thus help one another find the truth. On the contrary, in the devil's theology, the important thing is to be absolutely right and to prove that everybody else is absolutely wrong. This does not exactly make for peace and unity among men, because it means everybody wants to be absolutely right himself or to attach himself to another who is absolutely right. And in order to prove their rightness they have to punish and eliminate those who are wrong. Those who are wrong, in turn, are convinced that they are right...etc."

—Thomas Merton

(*New Seeds of Contemplation*. New Directions Publishing Corporation, NY, 1961, p. 97)

that Bob had died at his own hand.

On a small table next to my bedside sits a framed photo of Bob, my dear friend and mentor. Next to it is a gift from him, a lapis lazuli turtle from Patagonia. I keep these as a small shrine to his memory. He was always afraid that he would be forgotten. I remember Bob each night before I go to sleep and pray for his soul's eternal rest.

George Fox writes eloquently of his own experience with darkness:

"And I cried out to the Lord, 'Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils?' And the Lord answered that it was needful

I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions and in this I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also an ocean of darkness and death, but an ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness, and in that also I saw the infinite love of God and had great openings."

Are we willing to learn the full lesson that George Fox was trying to teach us as Quakers? He experienced both the Ocean of Light and the Ocean of Darkness. He was willing to do so to learn fully what God was trying to teach him about the nature of humanity. Jesus says that he has already overcome the world. I rest in this truth. Although the spirit of contention remains throughout our world and we see it every day in stories of greed and warfare, we are also assured that Christ has come to teach us himself. Each day I turn to him with humility in prayer asking for his guidance as I walk in this vale of tears. Alleluia!

Maurine Pyle is a member of Lake Forest Friends Meeting and former clerk of Illinois Yearly Meeting. She currently serves as the Field Secretary of IYM. She says that this article came to her in a mystical way. She doesn't have all the answers and continues to struggle with Lucifer.

Instructions for Authors

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Does Evil Exist?

Janet Ferguson

For years I have wrestled with the suggestion that there is no evil. How can this be in the face of all the war, crime, cruelty and depravity around us? I have mulled over the assertion in *A Course in Miracles*: “Nothing real can be threatened; nothing unreal exists.”

To me some of the teachings of the ancient Hindu Upanishads throw light on this perplexing problem. They also assert that nothing unreal exists, that the seeming evil around us is what Hindus call “maya,” the illusory world of the senses in which we are eternally embroiled. Above all this “creaturely activity,” as Friends call it, is the supreme Self, the everlasting, infinite Brahman, called God, Allah,

Perhaps evil is a creation of the human mind, as explanation of all that dismays us in our world.

Ultimate Reality, All-That-Is, Spirit, or whatever. In a 1931 address to the American people, Gandhi said, “whilst everything around me is ever changing, ever dying, there is underlying all that change a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and recreates. That informing power of spirit is God.”

Perhaps evil is a creation of the human mind, as explanation of all that dismays us in our world. In her inspiring, anonymously published book, *Christ in You*, Alice Mortly asserted that evil is designed to prod us into growth, as a seed is prodded into growth by the action of the soil, sun and rain. Adlai Stevenson pointed out that there is no evil in an atom; surely the great motions of the cosmos do not involve evil. Even the bewildering destruction of life by creatures feeding

on other creatures can be seen as part of a larger plan.

I am increasingly inclined to believe that evil is a human concept, not part of the divine order of things. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, “Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” And George Fox told us, “I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God.”

Janet Ferguson is a member of Atlanta Friends Meeting, a writer and activist.

Did God Create Evil?

Anonymous

Did God create everything that exists? Does evil exist? Did God create evil?

A university professor challenged his students with this question, “Did God create everything that exists?”

A student bravely replied, “Yes he did!”

“God created everything?” The professor asked.

“Yes sir, he certainly did,” the student replied.

The professor answered, “If God created everything; then God created evil. And, since evil exists, and according to the principle that our works define who we are, then we can assume God is evil.”

The student became quiet and did not respond to the professor’s hypothetical definition. The professor, quite pleased with himself, boasted to the students that he had proven once more that religious faith was a myth.

Another student raised his hand and said, “May I ask you a question, professor?”

“Of course,” replied the professor. The student stood up and asked, “Professor, does cold exist?”

“What kind of question is this? Of course it exists. Have you never been cold?”

The other students snickered at the young man’s question. The young man replied, “In fact sir, cold does not exist. According to the laws of physics, what we consider cold is in reality the absence of heat.

“Every body or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-460 °F) is the total absence of heat; and all matter becomes inert and incapable of reaction at that temperature. Cold does not exist. We have created this word to describe how we feel if we have no heat.”

The student continued, “Professor, does darkness exist?”

The professor responded, “Of course it does.”

The student replied, “Once again you are wrong, darkness does not exist either. Darkness is in reality the absence of light. Light we can study,

Evil does not exist, sir... Evil is simply the absence of God.

but not darkness. In fact, we can use Newton’s prism to break white light into many colors and study the various wave lengths of each color. You cannot measure darkness. A simple ray of light can break into a world of darkness and illuminate it.

“How can you know how dark a certain space is? You measure the amount of light present. Darkness is a term used by man to describe what happens when there is no light present.”

Finally the young man asked the professor, “Sir, does evil exist?”

Now uncertain, the professor responded, "Of course, as I have already said. We see it everyday. It is in the daily examples of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil."

To this the student replied, "Evil does not exist, sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is just like darkness and cold, a word that man has created to describe the absence of God."

"God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God's love present in his heart. It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat, or the darkness that comes when there is no light."

Editor: This allegory has been floating around the Internet for several years without any indication of the author. In 2004 a note was added that the student was Albert Einstein, but we found no evidence for that assertion.

Facing Evil

Janet Mustin

Does an evil power exist? Is it just an absence of Good, or God? Evil couldn't be God's doing, etc. These philosophical flights of wonderment are fascinating to me, and amusing, too, because I know evil exists and has a powerful force of its own. And I know where it exists—in the mind. But doesn't everything?

I'm reminded of the sonnet:

*Oh the mind,
Mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer; no-man-fathomed.
Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there.*

—Gerard Manley Hopkins
Sonnet No.65

Three Overdue Questions from 1963

Carol Roth

Shivering, I stepped from the doorway of the closed shop into the pelting rain as the black car slowed, then stopped at the bus sign. A window rolled down and a hand beckoned.

You called out, "Hey, get in. I'll take you home. The last bus already left. Look, I have two children of my own. You can trust me. Come on, get in."

The car was warm. You looked about thirty-five, dressed in a suit, a white shirt, and a striped tie. Your gold cuff link glittered as you turned the knob on the radio to an Al Martino song.

I told you where I lived. You said you knew the town and seeing me so tense, encouraged me to rest my head back, to relax a bit until we got there.

It was so hard to see with the water beating down against the wipers. I didn't even notice that you had pulled into a park until we stopped. I got the door open and I started to run but I slid in the mud and you caught me.

You laughed and I screamed, over and over again. No one heard me, especially God, as cursing, you punched me and threw me into the vinyl covered back seat of the car.

Bruised all over, blood streaming down my legs, you let me out at the corner of my street. You pressed my torn, white cotton panties into my right hand. You winked, laughed and said, "Next time, little girl, don't wear any."

*Did you ever, for one moment, loathe what you had done?
Did you enjoy raping the virgin girl who dreamed of being a nun?
Are you out there, still alive, you bastard?*

Carol Roth is a former Editor of WCTS and a writer who has had her poetry and articles published in many other arenas.

I know that something in the mind can attack and tear one's life to pieces, in a way worse than a hurricane that destroys one's home or a gunman aiming to kill. This force can change the look of the world around one from good to evil, and it can hit anyone—really. No one is immune.

This knowledge came to me in college when, for reasons circumstantial, hormonal, genetic, who knows, I fell into a deep depression in which it

seemed there was no way, no way forward. Nothing was do-able. Walls were impenetrable. Time stood still.

But thanks to God in his goodness, who creates all things, there are forces of Good which can come to the rescue. My parents appeared, and instead of being given time to feed on itself, the evil which had befallen me was talked to, and fed and walked and bathed, all to very little avail. Pills were not an option then. One day when I felt

particularly disheveled, faceless, and stuck in my bad dream, a very kindly old doctor with an unruly shock of white hair came to see me, and, sitting there, looking at me intently, he said, “You know, you remind me of my daughter.”

Suddenly I had become a person with a face that reminded this dear gentleman of his daughter. I could no longer be an insignificant non-person. And so the healing began and the evil in my mind began to retreat.

Many years later a very minor incident occurred, but important enough to recall the power of evil. I have always had an interest in mystical revelation, in ESP and the like, and decided to read a book about the occult in history.

It was very fascinating and inspiring until I ventured into the part about “black magic.” Then, in reading about the strange methods used to gain control over people, the power of that evil force began to creep up my backbone. It was like a hand that grips and pulls toward a deep pit. I felt panic enough to grasp for something that might offer an antidote. I reached for the Bible, which opened to the Book of Acts, so I plunged into that; and, sure enough, good magic was revealed in abundance, and the threatening evil vanished.

Many people have trouble believing in magic, but life is magical in any case. Magical and miraculous. As Walt Whitman said: “Isn’t life a miracle and death a miracle? Whatever is beyond understanding is a miracle.” I have added to a belief in miracle, not a disbelief in the power of evil, but a faith that it can be overcome by the power of good.

Janet Mustin is a member of Lansdowne (Pennsylvania) Meeting and has written several articles for Friends’ publications. Her principle activity is painting and she has had a number of one person shows in the area.

Facing Evil: Genocide in Darfur

David Morse

The following are excerpts from an article published in the September 2005 Friends Journal (Vol. 51, No. 9, p. 6), ©2005 Friends Publishing Corporation <www.friendsjournal.org> Reprinted with permission.

My own interest in Darfur was first sparked by a small article in the back pages of the *Guardian Weekly* in the spring of 2004. It seemed that as Sudan’s decades-long civil war was winding down, the conflict between the Khartoum government in the north and rebels in the south had spread into the western region of Sudan known as Darfur. Arab militias, called Jajaweed—meaning “devils on horseback”—were driving black African farmers, who were also Muslim, from

As Friends we believe in goodness; we strive to see that of God in others. But if we fail to acknowledge the evil of genocide, then we have discarded our finest aspirations.

their land in an organized campaign of “ethnic cleansing.” Their rampage of killing and raping was supported by the Arabist government in Khartoum.

By the time that article appeared, this brutal campaign had been going on for more than a year. Tens of thousands of Darfurians had been killed, more than a million driven from their land. Why was I only now hearing about it?

Because it was happening in Africa, I thought. Indignation lodged in me for months. It was an outrage, but a distant outrage, like a small pesky splinter festering somewhere. Not enough to provoke me to action....

[Morse goes on to describe in detail his involvements and experiences in Darfur.]

Earlier in this account I described three obstacles I encountered in trying to gather my meeting around Darfur: the newness of the idea, the resistance we may all feel if committed to other causes, and the fluidity of the situation in Darfur. But in the end I have come to feel the greatest threshold of resistance is more rudimentary. It is our inability to confront evil.

As Friends we believe in goodness; we strive to see that of God in others. But if we fail to acknowledge the evil of genocide, if we look away when confronted with the slaughter of innocents, then we have discarded our finest aspirations. If we do not confront this genocide head on, if we do not actively seek nonviolent interventions before it is too late, then our posture of nonviolence has no moral standing and is only a posture....

In confronting evil, there is the possibility of love. For each of us, if we are willing to confront this genocide, there is some small step we can take.

We can educate ourselves, organize events, write letters, contribute to relief organizations. We can gather support of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act vigorously enough to make it a force in U.S. politics. We can join the nationwide grassroots and student-led movement to get pension funds and college endowments to divest from companies such as Petro-China that are doing business with Sudan.

We must be unstoppable. Unlike the tsunami, this is a preventable humanitarian disaster. To face it, I believe, requires a recognition of evil and a belief in the power of love.

David Morse is a member of Storrs (Connecticut) Meeting. His novel, The Iron Bridge, was reissued in paperback as Bridge Over Time (Rockway Press).

The Man Next Door

Zarinea Lee Zolivea

A few years ago, a noted child molester had just been released from prison, and word of his whereabouts spread rapidly in my city. Just around the corner from our house, he was living across from a children's park, and a day care center was right next door to his residence.

After an open city council meeting, our community decided that we would picket that Saturday and each subsequent day until he left town. I planned on picketing on Saturday. When the

*"The Gospel of Philip ... abandons even the modified dualism that characterizes the great majority of Christian teachings, based ... on the conviction that God's spirit constantly contends against Satan. Instead of envisioning the power of evil as an alien force that threatens and invades human beings from outside, the author of Philip urges each person to recognize the evil within and consciously eradicate it." —Elaine Pagels
(The Origin of Satan. Vintage Books, NY, 1995, p. 176-77.)*

day arrived, I walked to the park, only a few minutes from our house.

As I arrived, people were yelling nasty slogans in unison while holding picket signs. One person asked me to

pick up a sign and to join the group. But I could not do it. I thought about Jesus and the woman who had been caught in adultery. The penalty in those days was stoning. Jesus told the crowd he who had not sinned should cast the first stone. None could do so, and Jesus forgave her and said, "Go and sin no more."

I was sad for the man, and I felt compassion. I understood the crowd too, and frankly I felt uncomfortable knowing he lived where he did. I left with a prayer in my heart that another residence would be found for the man. That week he left town and went back to the state where the crime had been committed. I gave thanks for God's mercy and kindness.

I remembered what Gary Zukov said in *Soul Stories*: "Your heart will always tell you that everyone is important. It will tell you that no one is more important than you and no one is less important than you either." He also said, to paraphrase, that when you see yourself and others as great souls in the earth school, you can see a lot more of a larger picture. This statement may be a bit hard to comprehend, but with prayer and a heart that refuses to see others as completely lost souls, there is room for all of us to grow and mature beyond our limitations.

Zarinea Lee Zolivea is an attender of Friends Meeting in Claremont, California. She is a literacy teacher and writer of poetry and short articles.

On Teachers

Zarinea Lee Zolivea

Spirit spoke to me and said:

"Everyone is your teacher—all living creatures and every part of nature"

'Oh, Spirit, tell me how is this so?'

"Everyone has something to offer which you can learn from

Every living creature is your friend if you only make him so

Every crawling insect and every walking animal is here for man's enlightenment

The wind shall blow soft whispers of earth's fragments or howling gusts of torment

Both shall teach you about yourself—the nature of you

For in this way you shall learn who and what you are

You shall learn both the night and the day

The dark forces as well as the light to teach you true wisdom

Both are necessary

For in the darkness you shall find the day

As you see it you will discern the face of a little child

And the little one shall teach you wisdom

For out of the mouth of a babe shall the truth be told

As you journey along the pathway of life

May the innocence of childhood touch your soul

As you go forth into the world

May you become as a little child

For then you can enter the kingdom of heaven

For truly these little ones will have become for you your true teachers."

The Evil in Elijah

Linda Theresa

One night I met a stranger who confided the most deeply penetrating experience of his life. He had been wrestling with evil. One day the struggle had intensified and lasted what seemed like hours. He felt he was going to be overtaken by all the evil in the world. Then just when he thought he couldn't hold out a second longer, grace came through. He saw and knew the harmony of all that is. After an undeterminable amount of time in this bliss-like state, he recalled how he glanced down and saw the front page of a newspaper. He saw how everything there was connected. Even the placement of the articles was divinely ordained.

His voice was filled with reverence as he described the variety of the news reports on that page, and how perfectly God had ordained them. The experience had totally shaken and uplifted his experience of life. He could now see evil clearly, and he didn't rationalize it away, as so many of us do. As a child he had been told Bible stories that weren't complete truth. For example, the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:20-39) commonly ends with the display of God's power in the lighting of fire in water-logged wood. No one talks about Elijah's slaughter of the prophets of Baal who were unable to light a fire due to the powers of their God. (I Kings 18:40).

In talking with this stranger, I saw a man with deep conviction. He had seen the evil in himself and in the world and had not turned away, even though it felt as if he would be ripped asunder in the process. He no longer shrank from evil, and he wrestled with how best to serve society by sharing his new insight.

I met him shortly after he tried to convince a theologian that schoolchildren should be taught the full story

of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. I sensed both his strength and his frustration. For him to see clearly he had faced near-madness; now here he stood among his contemporaries challenging them to do no less of an heroic effort.

I never learned the man's name, but I wish him well. He is truly a prophet of our times. Just like the theologian who dismissed this man's request, I felt apprehensive to take on evil as he did. The prospect of encountering evil up close and personally sent shivers down my spine. Perhaps the hardest and most meaningful work we do in our lifetimes is to take a deep look into our shadow sides—both the golden shadow of virtue and the black shadow of evil.

Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and contemporary of Sigmund Freud,

He had seen the evil in himself and in the world and had not turned away, even though it felt as if he would be ripped asunder in the process.

created guided imaging to help people see what their conscious minds prevented them from seeing. Meeting this stranger helped me gain the courage to do Jungian imaging and see how I puffed myself up big to avoid feeling weak and powerless. The first insight shocked me, and subsequent forays into the unconscious realms took all the courage I could muster. We all have a Hitler within us, and if we don't do the work to face evil it will remain hidden from us. Even Elijah had his evil side.

Linda Theresa lived in Alamosa, Colorado and practiced Vipassana Buddhism to help her live with severe chronic pain. This article appeared in the WCTS mailbox moments before we learned of her death. Thank you, Linda.

Tapestry of Life

Lynn Kirby

My granddaughter asked me to be her birth coach. Together we went to classes, practiced at home, and went to the hospital. After his birth, looking into Noah's eyes filled me with gratitude and a sense of eternity. His gaze seemed deep, pure, and knowing. The whole family was thrilled with this sweet baby.

The following Sunday at meeting for worship my meditation went very deep. I thought of the babies that are born into families that love them deeply, that have yearned for their births. I thought of the babies who are unwanted, born where they are an overwhelming burden. I imagined loving, caring parents and parents who are too troubled to be able to love these helpless children. I saw situations of material riches and desperate poverty, psychological health and disorder, cleanliness and filth, joy and despair.

Different circumstances and families that infants are born into began to grow together into a giant, beautiful tapestry. It was not a picture, as most tapestries are, but a moving, changing blend of colors. Each tiny point was a person; every individual was represented. This living tapestry seemed like a way that God might see humanity, in all our beauty and ugliness.

Carl Jung said we all have a shadow side. We all have hidden deep within us the ability to commit horrible acts, even those of us who think of ourselves as good people. We are said to have equal amounts of shadow and good. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist monk, says we have seeds of all things in us. The seeds we water and nourish are the ones that grow. If we water the seeds of loving kindness and compassion, that is what will grow in us. But if we water the seeds of hatred, rage, and greed, those could overtake our lives.

In my vision I gradually understood that every person had a particular role to play in this tapestry of life. Each point had a place and purpose in the whole design. I began to see that good and evil were both represented. Every color was there, and each shade represented a choice made about how to live a human life, whether positive or negative.

God created all that is. "All" includes evil as well as good. We think of Creation as perfect, and to us "perfect" means good. But in this vision I sensed that Creation includes evil. Evil is part of the whole, part of all that is. This beautiful tapestry represented it all, and to be complete it needed people to have chosen all possible ways to live and act toward each other.

At this point, I began to feel acceptance for everyone, even those whose lives might be considered evil. It seemed that this evil was needed to complete the design. A strange sense of gratitude for those who commit evil grew, based on the sense that without these ill deeds, the tapestry would have voids in it. With evil filling those spaces, not only was the tapestry complete, but by filling those spaces others would not be drawn into the void. And the example set by these deeds gives us a lesson in how not to behave.

Since that day, I have given this much thought. The idea of evil being an inevitable, almost necessary part of life on earth seems repugnant, and yet, that day it seemed so. But I still continue to dream of a world without evil. Do we really need it? Can we avoid it? Is there any one of us who say that our lives are completely free of it?

Lynn Kirby is a member of Stevens Point Friends Meeting in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. She is a retired teacher and librarian learning to become an activist to help reverse global warming.

Letter to the Editors

Dear Editors:

It's rare that Daniel and I can speak with those who have had such personal experiences [as described in the August 2006 issue on "Jesus"]. Why? Are experiences such as these really so rare among Friends? There seems to be an unspoken damper on sharing such experiences. Or, when they are shared, they are regarded as primarily personal, not for deep reflection as a group. I call such our "Kingdom experiences," as in the Kingdom of Heaven.

However diverse these are, and sometimes difficult to convey to others, they are spiritual transfusions much needed by all of us. They can carry us into territory far beyond mere "belief"—particularly beyond that of group consensus of "what Friends believe." They have the potential of opening us to what I term "Tree Trust" (as per my

article in *Friends Journal* of December 2005). This is the territory we need to enter together, and live from, if we are more fully to realize the gifts Jesus offers us.

I only wish that we could take these glimpses of depth into greater exploration together. It's tantalizing to know that these precious treasures exist in our Meetings, among Friends. Daniel's and my spiritual path is our primary focus—but what does this mean? Who ARE we, really, in relation to the great Unknown that we term God, or Spirit or the Unknown? Daniel and I would like to have the opportunity to be physically present with others who are focused on opening to this territory. Perhaps some day. . . .

Alicia Adams

Editors: We wonder if our readers would like to participate in a listserv that would discuss such issues. If you are interested, write WCTS at:

<whatcanstthousay@verizon.net>

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part of all that is.***

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May 2007

Unseen Hands

Editors: Kathy Tapp and Mariellen Gilpin

Nothing in death or in life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers...in heights or depths... nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38). Have you ever felt you were being helped by unseen hands? Who do you think your helpers were? What did you learn from the experience? How has it affected your spiritual journey? Tell us your stories.

Deadline: February 15, 2007

August 2007

Hospitality

Guest Editor: Maurine Pyle with Mariellen Gilpin

Do not neglect to show hospitality, for by that means some have entertained angels unaware (Hebrews 13:2). Have you made room in your heart for the other, the one who is different from you? Have you been challenged to shed prejudices and be taught by God through the stranger? What was it like? Did you have second thoughts? How did you make room for the other? In sharing the gift of hospitality, have you entertained angels without knowing it?

Deadline: May 15, 2007

November 2007

Feminine Aspects of the Divine

Editor: Judy Lumb

For in wisdom there is a spirit intelligent and holy ... she pervades and permeates all things because she is so pure. Like a fine mist she rises from the power of God, a pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty. (The Apocrypha, Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-5). What is your experience of the feminine in the Divine? Where do we find Her? How does She feed your spiritual life?

Deadline: August 15, 2007

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