

The Good, the Bad and the Balance

When I was very young, I remember asking my grandmother why there were so many people suffering in the world. She told me that it was because of the evil deeds committed by them in their current or previous lives. The child in me accepted that answer and that was that. Few years later, as my rationale and logic grew, I felt a discord in me that I never had before. I realized that the answer she gave me was woefully inaccurate and limited to an older era of thought.

Almost every culture, religion or civilization, has one thing in common—the concept of good and bad. Often personified by entities that are physical manifestations of these concepts, these beings inspire the “goodness” in people and severely condemn the “badness” in them. I often wondered about the purpose of these virtues. Aren’t we all supposed to strive for being good people? Should it not then be our goal to remove every form of evil that exists in our lives?

My eternal reflections about my views drove me to greater depths. I wondered why evil existed in the first place. Why didn’t the world have only good people? Why through evolution, did we not get rid of vices? We could have had an everlasting Utopia and all of humanity would know bliss.

My quest for the answer drove me to the Eastern concept of Duality (To be more specific, the Yin Yang symbol). At its core essence, the symbol represents the circle of life, balancing good and evil (symbolized by the colors white and black). The unusual thing however, is the spot of evil that lay latent in the good and the fragment of good that was rooted deep in the evil. This novel approach at looking into good and evil cemented my belief of its importance in our lives.

Evil can probably be aggregated as the occurrence of one or more vices namely, Wrath, Greed, Lust, Gluttony, Sloth, Pride and Envy. All these vices seemingly cause chaos and destruction in the lives of man when they are ubiquitous in large quantities. However, whether they do serve a purpose in our lives can only be known by understanding what each of them stands for.

Wrath, anger or rage for that matter, fills a person with energy. This energy can be hazardous if stored somewhere in the depths of our psyche. But this same energy can be harnessed and channeled and make one reach great potential. Greed, avarice, want, all stem from the basic desire of humans – need. A need gives purpose and makes one

realize what one wants. Lust is simply the prequel to procreation, without which we would probably have died out centuries ago. Gluttony and Sloth are just the overindulgence of eating and sleeping. Anyone for that matter requires a break from the banal motions of life's monotonies by gorging on a wonderful meal or taking a day off from work. A smidgen of Pride, makes a man worthy of respect after all why would someone love a person who doesn't even acknowledge the importance of his ownself-worth? And finally, Envy is what propels one to compete. This competition leads to the transformation of one to someone better and ultimately makes us who we are.

People have this notion that evil in all forms must be eradicated. This just proves to be an impossible venture as good and evil are the two sides of the same coin and without one, the other cannot last. We all have angels as well as demons within us; no one is different in that regard. It is how well we control these facets of our being that decides our self-worth. Maybe one day we can realize this nugget of truth and accept this about ourselves. And then comes the balance when we are happy as well as sad; angry as well as calm; lazy as well as active; and so on. And that day we shall truly be better human beings transcending to the next level of evolution.

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