

Chapter Four

“They are Evil”

Remember that it is not he who reviles you or strikes you, who insults you, but it is your opinion about these things as being insulting.

—EPICTETUS

Certain people hardly ever talk about themselves and their problems. Instead they are voicing something like an agenda. Some want to eradicate evil, some want to save the world from abuse, some are against taxes, others think tomorrow is doomsday, still others believe that people can live without governments, divulging conspiracies as the ultimate truth.

It is easy to conspire. It unites people in what I would call ‘rebel thinking’ and what in France is called ‘Fronde spirit.’ This kind of uniting in small groups is dealt with in the I Ching in Hexagram 13, ‘Tong Ren (Uniting with People).’ The I Ching talks

about ‘rebels uniting in the wilderness.’ The 3rd Line of this Hexagram reads in my own interpretation:

You may not be entirely clear about your motives. You also may lack a public spirit and hold narrow views. Your ambition may be greater than your potential for realization: this brings about inner friction and works counter to coherence. You may realize that those around you have an agenda and do not really cooperate with you. Thus for a certain time not much can be achieved.

—See Peter Fritz Walter, *The Leadership I Ching: Your Daily Companion for Practical Guidance*, 3rd Revised, Updated and Reformatted Edition, 2017.

The judgment of the I Ching is that those people cannot bring about great projects, only small projects, because their vision is too limited.

As long as you see the world through the glasses of an agenda, you make it fit that agenda. But of course, you make it fit only in your mind, not in outward reality. The world stays the same before and after your observing it.

An *agenda* is a comfortable way to look away from your problems, whatever they are, in order to avoid dealing with them. So instead of observing yourself, you observe ‘the world out there,’ judging certain

people or groups of people, governments, bankers, pranksters, the ultra-rich or whatever. This gives you a certain creative freedom. You rant and rave, and you find that your life has a meaning because you are attacking 'those of evil intent.' They are this and that, they bring about injustice and widespread poverty, they are 'an elite of ruthless bankers and blind politicians;' they are 'corrupt, have no morality, and are profiting from widespread ignorance.'

But what about yourself? *Are you morally superior?* Are you sure to know everything? Are you always just? Are you free of greed? Are you sure that if tomorrow somebody offers you one million dollars for doing something evil, you will refuse on the spot? Are you incorruptible? Are you better than the rest of humanity? Why do you believe that? Is it because you are convinced that you behave flawlessly in all and every situation? Is it because you are convinced that you are heading toward the light, while 'they,' in your view, are heading toward darkness?

Have you ever been honest enough toward yourself to ask these questions? And if you ever did, was it a comfortable feeling, or a queer feeling? Now, I have nothing to tell you. I just wanted to make you

aware that if you wish, you can easily do away with illusions or delusions—and face yourself.

What will happen when you do that? I do not know what will happen for you, but I know something will happen. Perhaps you are afraid that you will wake

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up from your negative hypnosis, that you will wake up to life, and to a positive, responsible approach to living in this world?

You may be afraid to go this way for then you have no more justifier for your own inadequacies. In such a liberating moment of insight, you are going to face 'them,' precisely because you have done away with your agenda.

Now I would like to ask you honestly, is that a good or a bad development for you? Think about it. I am sure you know the answer!

There is something interesting I have observed with people. The more *morally integer* they are, the less they talk about 'those, who are evil,' and the more magnanimous they are, the less they are morally

integer, the more often they talk about 'those who do evil.' Here is a good example. I have often observed, while in hindsight and after having suffered theft and robbery that those who are thieves and robbers virtually on a daily basis rant against 'thieves and robbers!' Have you ever observed that?

When you have observed it, you may also have pondered what may be the psychological reason for such behavior? Well, in psychology this is called *repression and projection*. It is a psychic complex. When you close your eyes toward your weaknesses, you repress them from your conscious mind. At the same time you will project them upon others who then serve as 'scapegoats' for your own repressed thought content. What then happens is that you see in others what you actually should become aware of as being part of yourself.

In that sense, to open your eyes and look in the mirror is a liberating process. It dissolves the projections and does away with the repression. As that happens, the repressed thought content becomes conscious and you become aware of the feelings, the dispositions, the inclinations and desires that you repressed because you felt you could not handle them and that they would endanger you.

Now you see that what endangered you was paradoxically the very fact that these desires were unconscious, while from the moment you rendered them conscious, you gained control over them. This is so because human consciousness is self-cleaning and self-renewing; but the condition is that you put an *act of will* first: you need to render conscious all that you have previously repressed.

How to do that in practice? There are ways to go about it. One is called meditation, the other introspection. Both are essentially the same; the difference in terminology comes from the fact that meditation was developed in the East, and introspection in the West. But both lead to the same end.

As a further result you will then see that you feel no more need to talk about ‘them,’ for you will realize there are no ‘them’ and ‘us,’ that this antinomy is artificial, part of a mental construct, or ‘conspiracy.’

How does this process of awareness building help you to be more in alignment with yourself and less alienated? It helps you to be more connected with your true inner self because you have freed it from an inner split you were caught in. This inner split was

one between reality and ideology. You thought about yourself in a manner that was *schizoid*. On the one hand, you saw your real self as defaulted in the sense that it contained certain weaknesses but on the other hand, you wanted to create a flawless self, or ideal self. Hence, you split your self in two parts, the real self and the ideal self. The real

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self was you as you are, the ideal self was what you *should be* from an ideal vantage point. This inner split divided you, it fragmented you. The result of this fragmentation was confusion.

Q & A Session

Q. Why do you think that many people are voicing something like an agenda?

A. They have never started thinking independently, in the first place. They have taken over concepts and ideas from their parents and educators, other people, or the media and have distilled a neat little box in which

they threw all the ingredients, and this box became their 'agenda.' They use it as a shield in any situation they are asked for their real ideas, and it facilitates their lives enormously. But needless to add that they of course are intellectually dead.

Q. What do you think about conspiracies? Why are people thinking in terms of 'us' and 'them?'

A. That's another convenient life facilitator for it saves the concerned from critical thinking. Conspiracy thinking is not critical but emotional; it's another convenient shield against self-thinking and true awareness of reality.

Q. What happens when you see the world through the glasses of an agenda?

A. You will make it fit that agenda, in every possible way, even if you have to distort the facts.

Q. Are you morally superior? Are you sure to know everything? Are you always just?

A. I think the answer is obvious. You are not, and I am not.

Q. What happens when you take yourself at face value, without delusions, without making yourself up or down?

A. You are getting on a totally new track, the track of self-knowledge which is the most exciting track you can ever be on; and it helps you to truly understand others, for without self-knowledge, we cannot know others.

Q. Who, in your experience, are those who most condemn thieves and robbers?

A. Thieves and robbers.

Q. How would you explain the psychic process of repression and projection? How can it explain the making of 'scapegoats' in the entire course of human history?

A. When you repress something from the surface of your conscious awareness, it gets repressed into your subconscious mind. When that happens, as you are unaware of that repressed energy pattern—remember that all our thoughts and emotions are energy, as they are vibrational in nature—it will dominate you. But as you have blocked awareness of that pattern regarding your own person, as you have blinded that out, you will unconsciously project that pattern upon others, whom you will blame for it.

Q. What is the difference between meditation and introspection? And in what sense are they equal?

A. The difference is simply that the two approaches belong to two different cultural realms. Meditation has

been invented and is practiced in the East, while introspection has been invented in ancient Greece, thus in the West, and is practiced today by many people in our culture. What they have in common, or why they are equal is simply that both approaches try to explore our inner world and at the same time refrain from judging it. In other words, they are both ways of passively observing our inner movements, the movements of our thoughts and our emotional reactions to events, and to people. They thus serve us for building awareness and self-knowledge.

Q. How would you explain the inner split between reality and ideology, or between 'what is' and 'what should be?'

A. This schizoid split is the result of an inner war that those lead who have been conditioned through moralistic education. In this war, reality is blamed as being abrasive, barbarous or destructive, while at the same time an ideal is built, such as an ideal world, or belief system, in which all things are 'right and good.' Thus what such people do is to confront any problem not by analyzing its true nature but by finding an 'ideal solution' to it which means they are using not intuition, but conceptual thought and idealistic wishful thinking for solving problems. That's one reason why our governments around the world are not really solving our

problems, but just administer them. For most of them are caught in the trap of idealistic thinking.

Q. How does inner fragmentation bring about confusion?

A. When we are fragmented, we are not aware from which inner point of view we are thinking and arguing. As our being is split, we today defend this view and tomorrow that one, according to how we 'feel' about it. But this 'feeling' is a shaky condition as it is not based upon real insight but upon superficial perceptions. Perception can only become correct from the moment we overcome the inner war and become whole, and peaceful inside. Then we can begin to perceive the subtle reality that is what all great sages around the world have called the Subtle Truth, the Tao, or Enlightenment.
