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| Week 6 Supplementary materials:  Image – Chagall: Parting of the Red Sea (1966)  Scripture reading: Exodus 14 – The Parting of the Red Sea  Sufi Story: **The Guardian of the Well**  Article (Extract): **‘Thoughts on the Nature of Evil’** James A. Hall and Jeffrey Raff |

**Exodus 14: The Parting of the Red Sea**

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, ‘Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, “Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians”? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.’ But Moses said to the people,

‘Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.’

Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and

his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.’

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel.

And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, ‘Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.’

**The Pursuers Drowned**

Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon

their chariots and chariot drivers.’ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

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| **Sufi Story:**  **The Guardian of the Well**  There was a man who had trouble controlling his anger. He lost his wife and friends on account of his anger, and finally his neighbours had enough of his rage and demanded that he see a Sufi Master for help.    The Master told him to go into the desert and sit by a small oasis. His job was to draw water from the well and offer it to all who passed. He went to the oasis, which was tiny, surrounded by an abandoned garden and a dried-up river. For many years all went well, he kept his temper and as guardian of the well, he drew water for all who passed.  One day a man rode up on a horse and the guardian of the well went to greet him. | He offered the man his pitcher of water, but the arrogant man knocked the pitcher aside and would have ridden on if the guardian had not caught at the bridle of his horse. He offered the pitcher again, for his instruction was to give water to drink to all who passed.  The man on horseback ignored him, at which all the anger held down for so many years rose up in the guardian of the well, so that he physically hauled the man from his horse and, in his furious rage, beat him so hard that he killed him.  At that moment, the abandoned garden began to bloom and the dried-up river to flow, for the man he had killed was a notorious tyrant and his people had been set free by his death. |

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Article (Extract): **‘Thoughts on the Nature of Evil’**

James A. Hall and Jeffrey Raff

Good and Evil are the overarching opposites of all experience. Each exists only in relationship to the other. Without their relationship, both would cease to exist.

Are all judgments of good and evil personal judgments? Is there also archetypal evil? Is there a metaphysical absolute evil?

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**Kabbalah and Evil**

No other tradition has wrestled with the problem of evil more than the Kabbalah. In the bible of the Kabbalists, the Zohar, one may find several different theories about the nature and origin of evil. The dominant one, which had an impact on later writers, is that evil originated from disharmony within the Tree of Life. This Tree, extending from the lower worlds to the most sublime levels of divinity, is actually an image for God Itself. If all is well within the Tree, divine light flows from the highest levels through the intermediate levels into the feminine vessel at the bottom of the Tree who, in turn, passes it into our world.

When all is well there is no room for the appearance of evil.

However, according to the Zohar, all is not well. There is disharmony in the Tree which severs the relationship between masculine and feminine aspects of God and, in particular, diminishes the ability of love to hold judgment in check.

When judgment is not balanced by love, it is so harsh and unforgiving that it creates evil itself. The imbalance between judgment and love generates a conflict within the godhead, but, as a result of this conflict, evil emerges outside the Tree and exists there forever.

There are several causations given for the imbalance within the divine Tree, but what is significant is that it is disharmony that gives rise to evil. Once it emerges, evil takes on an independent existence and forms the “other side” which forms its own tree and wages war on the divine Tree. This is not necessarily a permanent condition, however, for the Kabbalist, through prayer, ritual, and intention, can correct the imbalance and destroy the root cause of evil. In the natural order of things, there is no evil which only results as an accidental by-product of creation. Rather than emerging from its own metaphysical reality, evil originates from disharmony within the divinity.

**Christianity and Evil**

Christianity has not solved the problem of evil. It flirts with two great metaphysical forces, Good and Evil (or God and the Devil), but always opts for the final supremacy of God. Lucifer is only a “fallen angel” whose true place is in the heavenly court.

Nowhere does Christianity see two equal cosmic forces locked in eternal combat: who, if not God himself, is responsible for the creation of Satan? The story of Job, as seen by Jung (1952), is the culmination of the Old Testament: Job sees that “You (Yahweh) are not a man” (Job 9:32).

When Yahweh finally appears to him, Job hopes for an explanation of why he, an honest and just man, had been sent such undeserved afflictions. Yahweh seems unaware of any ethical dimension whatsoever. He overwhelms Job by recounting his creative acts. Job does not so much see evil in Yahweh as he sees a mass of unbalanced forces (as in the Kabbalah and Taoism).

Job accepts that he cannot expect justice from God as long as God is primarily identified with His power, His omnipotence. Job realizes that God himself is evolving. Thus Job is able to say, “I know that my redeemer liveth” (Job 19:25). That is, Job intuitively knows that God will evolve in himself the ethical sense that Job already has: to distinguish Right/Wrong and Good/Evil.

As Jung sees it, God realizes that Job has surpassed him by developing his moral and ethical sensibilities and that he, God, will have to experience the world as a man. In Jung’s view, this led directly to the Incarnation.

**Evil and Disharmony**

There is another source for the view of evil as disharmony. In the writings of the great Sufi mystic Ibn ‘Arabi one finds a very

similar theory. According to Ibn ‘Arabi, God has many different names, each of which is living power in its own right. Each name has attributes associated with it and these are not always good.

For example, the name Anger can be destructive in the extreme. Ibn ‘Arabi offers the view that Anger is only evil if it is not balanced by the other names. All of the names taken together form a perfect whole, and if each is allowed expression in the right time there is no evil associated with it. In God all of the names are perfectly balanced, but in the human they are not.

It is up to us, then, to find a way to express all of the names at the right moment. If there is time to be angry and I become angry, there is no evil, for the act accords with the time. If it is a time for anger and I find myself unable to be angry and try to love instead, I actually create evil by throwing all the names off balance. Once more, evil has to do with balance and wholeness, for the same act done in the right moment is good while done in the wrong time constitutes evil.

We are now in a position to ask the question as to whether the human psyche creates “good” and “evil.” This is a complicated question that allows for no simple answer. The understanding of evil requires that we differentiate it to some degree. As the Kabbalist might say, there is evil and there is evil.

Keeping in mind our discussion of balance, we might make an initial differentiation between relative and absolute evil. When a society or collective decides that one attribute is evil and another good, we must conclude that this is a relative evil that owes its definition to the human mind. For example, in some collectives anger is forbidden or taboo, and people who act in an angry fashion are punished. Anger is evil because it promotes loss of control and may cause damage to other people.

This seems valid to many, but, from the perspective of a balanced whole, there is a time for anger.

*[In the Sufi story of the Guardian of the well, retold above]*, redemption for the angry man did not entail giving up his anger but in knowing when anger was appropriate.

**Absolute Evil**

There is another kind of evil however. This is the evil caused by the nature of imbalance itself. In the Kabbalah, the imbalance within the Tree gives rise to the forces of darkness called the “other side.”

The evil of the Other Side is not relative, nor is it created by the psyche. It resembles what Jung thought of as absolute evil, with one important difference. The Other Side is not part of life; it is an aberration caused by the imbalance in the Tree. If this imbalance is healed, then absolute evil is banished. It is not part of the natural order of things, nor does it resemble a dark side of God. Evil does not arise from the unconsciousness of God but from a wound in the universe that can and must be healed.

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*The above is extracted from a longer article, ‘Thoughts on the Nature of Evil’ by James A. Hall and Jeffrey Raff. This was published in the ‘JOURNAL OF JUNGIAN THEORY AND PRACTICE VOL. 8’, NO. 1 2006 and can be found at: http://www.junginstitute.org/pdf\_files/JungV8N1p19-30.pdf*