

## The Cure for Evil

Suppose, we could take two aspirin tablets and be assured the forces of wickedness and sin (a transgression against moral principle) that I interpret as evil would be cured, that would be a wonderful solution. However, some people may not wish to take the cure. In fact, I'm sure there are those who would not. I believe the choice to commit an evil act is within people's reach and privilege of free will. Other than the nature sponsored acts of evil (which are referred to by insurance companies as Acts of God) we ourselves must accept responsibility for wrong doing and evil doing. Just as humans are responsible for starting wars and causing genocide, there are humans who do not.

My own interest in evil is miniscule yet I am aware it exists. Yes, my life has had its share of mishaps and more recently deceit perpetrated by close acquaintances and family members but for the better part of my 60 years I have been referred to by others as the "voice of reason" and even to be saintly! I don't go out of my way to immerse myself in learning about evil. Taking a close look at my own library of over 1,000 titles very few relate to subjects about evil specifically, except maybe for Stephen King who may be considered more a lover of horror stories. I do have a copy of Dante's *Inferno*, but will admit to not having read it yet. The closest I've come to really becoming immersed in acts of evil reside between the covers of *In Cold Blood*, by Truman Capote and *Helter Skelter*, by Vincent Bugliosi. So it seems I've not taken a liking to reading works or creative non-fiction about acts of evil. Without reference to the type of evil acts that appear in those stories one would have no knowledge of good as the ultimate desired virtue of the human race.

With that in mind I guess the usefulness of evil is the ability to help us realize that there is a greater good. No proof exists as to why evil permeates cultures of societies but the theodicy was presented by Augustine and others in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. That is, evil comes from a disordered desire; when something we are attached to is taken against our will. Augustine said everyone is the cause of their own evildoing. He did not blame or hold God responsible because being the all-good and powerful,

God's nature would be in conflict to an evil act. He absolved God of creating evil except for those unexplained "natural" occurrences, i.e. tsunami, tornado, asteroids crashing to earth and perhaps icebergs crushing cruise ships. Augustine wrestled with the daily temptations God presented that lead to evil as he states in his book, *Confessions*. "In the midst of these temptations I struggle daily against greed for food and drink. This is not an evil which I can decide once and for all to repudiate and never to embrace again, as I was able to do in the case of fornication." These are vices that humans still deal with daily. Those who believe in God's existence rationalize that God will punish them for acts of evil. So it seems this all-powerful creator deals out the penalty for actions not perceived as good in the greater plan of life. Thus, we might also conclude, our own death is a result of our ineptitude or perhaps punishment from God as one's savior.

Getting back to evil's existence and a cure, I find the moral evils most curable and most troubling for that reason. Having knowledge of the consequences of certain actions from one's experience or observation of others' actions to harm, murder, embezzle, cheat or deceive I think humans should stop doing those activities through their possession of free will. Evil doers should choose a better path for themselves. There's enough natural occurring evil and destruction to deal with into eternity. I suppose somehow the saying, "the lesser of two evils" allows people to justify a behavior determined not to be in the realm of good and virtuous. By the assumption that evil is necessary we can conclude a universal God of goodness and omnipotence does not exist and a comparison of evils explains human actions. The existence of free will is enough and it has been said by many early philosophers that it is better to have free will and evil by its misuse than to have no free will. In order to cure the evil "disease" that is detrimental to a world wishing to live in peace and prosper we all need to take a hard look at making a concerted effort to behave in a more acceptable and friendly manner towards our fellow humans. Lessening evil is more probable than a cure yet experiencing a life without evil would be a delight.