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**Radical goodness/radical evil: Martin Buber's philosophical  
anthropology in contemporary times**

**Polinsky, Susan Lecin, Ed.D.**

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1992**

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**RADICAL GOODNESS/RADICAL EVIL: MARTIN BUBER'S  
PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN  
CONTEMPORARY TIMES**

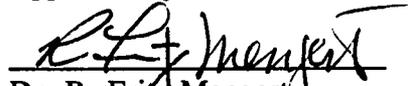
by

**Susan Lecin Polinsky**

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the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
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of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education**

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Approved by

  
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APPROVAL PAGE

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This philosophical and historical investigation into the nature of radical evil includes a discussion of the history of radical evil that culminates in a twentieth century perspective on radical evil based on Martin Buber's philosophical anthropology and his biblical/Kabbalistic interpretation of the sources of evil and the ultimate redeemability of the individual human person. An historical-philosophical portrayal of the concept of radical goodness concludes with an interpretation of Buber's *I and Thou* in light of the post-Holocaust modern world's ethical struggles. The central thesis is that post-modern society accepts varying occasions and degrees of radical evil because, in part, it has experienced the radical evil of the Holocaust and consequently evaluates the acceptability of evil in comparison to the ultimate evil known by people within this century. Accepting some evil, not striving toward goodness, has become the route by which humankind considers behavior, government, rules, deviance, and social policy. Concomitant to this thesis of societal acceptance of evil in comparison to the radical evil of the Holocaust is the critical importance of the individual person as the source of both radical goodness and radical evil.

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If a piece of my life remains with every student I have taught and with every teacher from whom I have truly learned, then it seems probable that my spirit has been enriched by the task of writing this dissertation. The ever-renewing spirit of Martin Buber's Judaism has brought me here, now. Without his voice that spoke directly into my heart, I could not be here, now. It has been my father's presence and spirit that has shown me that even though he could fight in France and liberate concentration camps in Poland, I must--I *have to*--know that here and now within every human being there is a redeemable spirit of goodness that may, from time to time, resemble evil. Fritz Mengert, the embodiment of the spirit of love and caring in this and every moment, has shown me that it is O.K. to be smart, to talk philosophy, and to enjoy myself. My mother and my sisters have joined to provide assurance that no matter what I may do, they will always be there for me, whether that involves proof-reading yet another chapter or picking up the take-out to feed my family while I sat glued to the computer. Danny and Lauren have put up with my need to monopolize the family computer and willingly gave up their time with me as well as their need for me so that I could finish just "one more section," and showed that they loved me anyway through it all. My "brother," Steve, understood and believed in me. He was there to talk and with open arms for one hug, and another one, and yet another when I really needed them. And David, my lawyer/partner/friend/lover/WP51 expert waded mercilessly through the manuals and solved every problem while he ordered pizza for the kids and gave me back, without too

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **I. DEVELOPMENT OF RADICAL EVIL**

This study will investigate the way in which we have come to know evil as the opposite of good and offer an alternative paradigm based on the thinking of Martin Buber for coming to know evil. Using the metaphor of the Holocaust and style of Hasidic parable, my goal is to engender a new understanding for recognizing radical evil by investigating the radical goodness that emerged in epochs of philosophizing human society throughout history. The following material is descriptive of the dissertation and of the literature search and narrative that I will undertake.

#### **The Duality of Good and Evil: Ancient Religions**

The question of good and evil has generated a paradigm of duality throughout history. A considerable number of authors from the realms of philosophy, psychology, literature, history, and religion have imagined the notions of good and evil as opposites, locked in an eternal struggle for domination of one by the other or the calling for the emergence of good to triumph over its demonically-inspired counterpart (Russell, 1988). Evil, the less philosophically desirable but nonetheless the more forceful of the two forces, can be described as existing in three types: moral, natural, and metaphysical. A moral evil is one in which an intelligent being knowingly and deliberately inflicts suffering upon another sentient being. Natural evil is comprised of suffering resulting from processes of nature such as cancer or a tornado. Metaphysical evil is the necessary

lack of perfection that exists in any created cosmos, since no cosmos can be expected to be perfect as God is perfect (Russell, 1988). In addition, evil may be regarded as personal, exemplified when a person murders a child; transpersonal, evidenced by mob lynchings or governmental bombing of a city; transgeneric, which has potential if intelligent yet morally flawed beings exist on other planets, perhaps, which extends evil beyond humanity; and cosmic evil which is played out by human willingness to menace our entire planet with destruction to oppose a nation or group currently defined as the enemy.

We have come to know evil through three general schools of thought: the Judaeo-Christian religious morality, traditional scientific or materialist world view which had at its core 18th century scientific realism, or through New Age thought which was hostile to both the Judaeo-Christian morality and scientific realism, and which strived to entertain a wide diversity of angles and vision through its desire to explore reality beyond conventional lines. Its goal was to answer the question: Could the devil, the personification of evil, exist outside the human mind?

Throughout history, diverse social, cultural, and religious groups have envisioned evil both as personified by a being and as a conglomeration of existence that defied anthropomorphic representation. The Greco-Roman civilization and religions had their share of gods and goddesses who represented, inspired, and wrought destruction, but they did not achieve a single personification of evil in their religious philosophy. Greek views on demonology were represented by Plutarch, who wrote soon after the New Testament's codification that demons were equivalent to god or the divine; that souls of the dead had

the capacity for changing into other levels of being; and that intermediary spiritual beings could become good or bad. He also insisted that some men retained personal guardian spirits (Plutarch, 1932). Homer wrote that demons existed in a midway position between gods and men. Hesiod classified four levels of beings: gods, demons, heroes, and men. Xenocrates, in agreement with Plato, defined demons as those with human emotions but godlike powers. Socrates often talked of *daimonion*, a kind of negative voice that kept him from certain actions and Plato posited divine intermediaries as lesser than divine beings who acted as intermediaries between the gods and humans, (Symposium 202E-203A). This view made it easier to attribute to the attendant demon things which if ascribed to the deity might seem unworthy or philosophically difficult to accept (Ferguson, 1984). Accordingly, it was the natural tendency of the Greeks and other cultures increasingly to attribute bad things to these intermediary beings (Ferguson, 1984). The Greek roots of evil were derived from a dual-sexed being who sired the father of Kronos, the father of Zeus. Thus evil can be seen as pre-dating the celebrated gods and goddesses of Greek religion. Even Greek rationalists like Plato wavered between dualism and monism when ascribing a basis to the existence of good and evil in our world. The Hermetic literature of the second and third centuries C.E. blended Platonic and Stoic thought regarding evil. Evil demons were the cause of evil in the world (Hermes, 1954).

Although the early Hindus and Buddhists considered demonology central to their philosophies, they too had no single figure that embodied what western twentieth century culture has come to know as a devil-figure. The Hindu stories of the Tandava Dance of

Shiva illustrated both sorrow and joy and attempted to annihilate the illusory world yet integrate the world with Brahma. This rite attempted to re-create chaos of creation to regain and release creative forces in man. Japanese Buddhists recognized over twenty-four thousand demon servants, seen as executioners of divine justice who tormented damned souls. The demon who can be seen as closest to a devil figure was Mara, the demon of death and thirst. His purpose was to attempt to obstruct the divine Guatama's progress toward enlightenment, but Buddha, who knew the only way to true good lay in transcending the world, drove him away. Mazdaism or Zoroastrianism became one of the first cultures to typify a single demonic figure but retained a certain ambiguity which was never resolved over the origins of evil.

Egyptian culture viewed God and gods as ambivalent who both helped and hindered humanity. Metaphysically, the ancient Egyptian cosmos was a stable coincidence of opposites which promoted worldly stasis. In such a divine cosmos, the Egyptian theology held, absolute evil could not exist and therefore no one figure represented such evil. In neighboring Sumaria and Mesopotamia, such cosmic harmony was almost non-existent, a state of chaos which they attributed to a world that was fundamentally alienated from its divine plan. The Mesopotamian world was one filled with hostile demons and the gods representing goodness were not expected to interfere in man's plight; in fact, they could help, abandon, or ignore the world's situation. The closest representation to a metaphysical evil spirit was Lilitu, the prototype of Lilith (Cantor-Zuckoff, 1976), a barren female, who inflicted evil on the world by draining men of their life energy. This notion of a feminine demon whose evil work was directed

mainly against men has been carried over into ancient Hebrew mythology as well as has been inculcated into the Christian concept of original sin.

The Canaanite and Phoenician theology directly influenced the early Hebraic concept of evil and centered around the god, El, a bull who dwelt in earth as well as heaven. As his son, Baal, became the god of fertility and vegetation with the power to grant or deny success, the evil lord and Baal's direct counterpart, Mot, defeated him and sent him to the underworld which locked the two antithetical forces into eternal combat. Our medieval caricatures and artwork of evil as physically horrible are derived from the Etruscan concept of Charun, the god of death, which relied heavily on the Greek Charon, the boatman of the dead.

This struggle of a doublet of life and death which were both God has characterized Western religious philosophy as we have come to know it. The ethical ambivalence within a single personality has been translated into the cosmos in which good and evil were forever intertwined. Attributing good to be the opposite of evil can be understood through the metaphor of a spectrum rather than through the opposition of a simple duality. The first thoroughly dualist religion, Zoroastrianism, dated from 1200 B.C.E. and the Iranian prophet Zarathustra who decreed that evil was not an aspect of the good God but a completely separate principle. The first monist religions, Rabbinic Judaism and Islam, existed at the opposite end of the spectrum regarding the duality of good and evil, but the monist polytheisms of Egypt, Greece, and India were near the same pole as Zoroastrianism. Christian theology existed between these two extremes

with Lutheranism and Calvinism at one pole, and Augustine, Aquinas, the Manicheans and Process Theology residing closer to the other.

### **Evil: The Christian View**

The classical Christian view was represented by St. Augustine's of Hippo diabolology of the fathers. Augustine's influence on Western thought was considerable and his positive theology and use of reason to construct a detailed, logically organized and structured view of the world has become the basis of conservative Christianity in our time. The Syrian monk, Dionysius the Areopagite, was Augustine's counterpart, and he espoused a negative theology affirming that the greatness of God was far beyond the powers of human reason. Dionysius wrote that rational systems have limited value and truth should be pursued less through logic than through prayer and contemplation. Taken together, these two approaches were more complementary than competing and they have provided the basic structure of Christian theology for more than a millennium.

Christian theology began with God as eternal, timeless, and without cause, whose nature was to create the universe. Because God was creative and dynamic, the universe could not be regarded as static; rather, it was seething with power. Had the cosmos been formed only with love, it would be unformed; had it been formed singularly with reason, it would resemble a machine. God created man with free will after the creation of angels with free will because an absence of free will would disallow a moral choice of good. Traditionalists held that the first thing the angels did was make a moral choice: most chose to love God, but some, led by Satan, chose to put their own wills in place of God's and were therefore cast out of heaven. The first choice made by people was evil

and away from God. Augustine's belief in reconciliation impelled him to write that nothing limited God's omnipotence except God and when He chose to suspend it, people were able to exercise free will. There was genuine moral choice because free will was genuine. God supported humanity and the angels' search for the good with a special energy termed "grace."

Dionysius argued that man must reconcile with God not through reason, but through contemplation, prayer, and an understanding beyond reason. He warned that no qualities could be assigned to God because such categories were inventions of the limited human mind and must become limitations of God. Dionysius' was a pantheistic theology in which the cosmos was God in the sense of God's being a manifestation of Himself, but that the cosmos was infinitely transcended by God-in-Himself. A useful analogy is that of the cosmos being in God like a sponge is "in" a vast sea (Russell, 1988, pp. 107-108).

The universe was a dynamic hierarchy to traditional Christian thought and was represented by a moving scale or ladder. Dionysius' was the first detailed description of a celestial hierarchy, but was not accompanied by an evil hierarchy. His explanation was that although God was love, He was neither meek nor mild and He was not what we preferred Him to be. Through the theory of privation, Dionysius explained evil simply as the lack of good, with no substantial being. Evil was

. . . [a] lack, a deficiency, a weakness, a disproportion, an error, purposeless, unlovely, lifeless, unwise, unreasonable, imperfect, unreal, causeless, indeterminate, sterile, inert, powerless, disordered,

incongruous, indefinite, dark, unsubstantial, and never is itself possessed of any existence whatever (Russell, 1988, p. 109).

Thus all things were God, but evil was not God, since evil was not anything only a lack of being, evil was a lack of Godness.

The Catholic Church in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 established that evil was created by Satan's choice through his free will away from God. Since evil had no essence, it was declared, it could not be the source of anything. Evil might diminish good but not consume it, and since evil had no being, it could not cause anything except accidentally. The principles of incoherence and disorder likewise cannot have existed, since these were mere negations of coherence and order. Had God created evil, these two eternal principles would have to be absolutely balanced, and the cosmos would be in stasis between them. But if they were not absolutely balanced, one would eternally exclude the other. Therefore, an absolutely evil being cannot exist, because absolute evil was absolute nothing and such a being would be self-contradictory in that it would hate and cancel out its own essence and if it loved and cherished anything in itself, it would not be entirely evil.

### **Evil in the Ages of Science and Enlightenment**

This theological perspective dominated conservative Christian theology until the eighteenth century when the Christian world view weakened and ancient questions resurfaced. In the Middle Ages prior to the age of scientific realism, the dualism again arose regarding rule of the universe by a just and intelligent mind or by chance and mere

mechanics. The Catholic and Protestant world became more secular, and focused on the tangential aspects of religion, such as social action and other good works. Enlightenment thinkers were opposed to the churches and were aligned with social betterment achieved without miracles, independent of tradition, and obedient to philosophies of reason. The French Revolution of 1789 was hostile to Christianity, and Christian symbols lost their effectiveness. Whereas in 1700, nature was believed to illustrate the splendor of God, in 1800 nature was personified to describe the divine in terms of philosophical phenomena. Concepts such as evil were seen as "philosophical baggage" (Russell, 1988, p. 137).

Fideism, similar to medieval nominalism and democratic mysticism, developed and asserted that God's truths were forever beyond human reason and Christianity could not be proved rationally. Voltaire rejected theological certainty, a view which paralleled pietism and Methodism dominant by the late 1800s, and wrote that optimism must be dismissed when it maintained that all was right when in fact all was wrong. True religion, Voltaire implied, must ignore dogma and rest on purely natural morality. His logical conclusion was that Christianity was false because it tried to make doctrine about the unknowable and was socially destructive. David Hume proposed a rational basis for religious skepticism around five points: (1) the transcendent (the only valid knowledge was empirical); (2) the psychological (the origin of all religion was the projection of human hopes and fears on external objects); (3) the historical (religion was a human invention and has developed in a natural, historical fashion); (4) that spiritual intervention

cannot occur in the universe; and (5) that monotheistic religion was incorrect because of the existence of evil. Hume's arguments carried to the extreme espouse atheism.

Donatien Alphonse François, Marquis de Sade, took up Hume's atheistic relativism and defined the dilemma: either there was evil or not; either there were grounds of ultimate concern to judge actions or not; either the cosmos had meaning or not. In the *General History and Theory of the Heavens*, Kant showed the evolution of the cosmos and lent support to arguments for atheism. When Christian history regarding creation became suspect, its semeiotics were also questioned. Friedrich Schleiermacher, a liberal theologian, tried to eliminate the idea of radical evil by writing that Christ and the apostles did not believe in such evil but were only using a metaphor that represented the superstitions of their time in order to communicate with a relatively unsophisticated people. Therefore, scholars' misinterpretation of Christ's use of metaphor had resulted in an unnecessary, unfortunate, and misguided determination of the existence of radical evil.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau personified the change from the Enlightenment to Romanticism and the concomitant shift in the Western Christian view of evil. Rousseau was contemptuous of organized religion and rejected the church. His belief was that evil was understood better as social rather than metaphysical, and admonished, "Man, look no farther for the author of evil: you are he." Although Rousseau believed that human nature was basically good, he held that society had corrupted it and called for social reform, education, and even revolution to erase repressive institutions.

By the 1800s, evil, as personified by the figure of a devil, could be found more in literature than in theology, a shift that encouraged psychological introspection in a society desiring emotional stimulation with a thirst for the miraculous, supernatural, weird, and grotesque. Romantics used Christian symbols without theological content and their outlook was one of detachment from basic religious meanings. The Romantic hero was a rebellious individual who opposed the church, now seen as a political evil. The hero's goal was liberation of humanity from that which blocked progress toward the goals of liberty, beauty, and love. Writers of this period characterized evil in terms of goodness within the construct of literary excess.

William Blake symbolized the extremes of good and evil in his work and typified self-righteousness as evil and rebellion against tyrannical authority as good. For Blake, no evils and no goods were absolute. George Gordon, Lord Byron, opposed the traditional Christian view of evil and the degree of evil present in the world convinced him that the Christian Creator could not be defined as "good." Percy Bysshe Shelly rejected organized religion and defined evil as that which blocked progress toward the spirit of love moving humanity toward a better, freer, and more loving future. His writing reflected Manichean philosophy in which two spirits of balanced power and opposite dispositions existed and reflected the divided state of the human soul. In Mary Shelly's writing, there could be no reconciliation between the halves of this divided soul and both halves must ultimately perish. Victor Hugo opposed the doctrines of original sin, salvation through crucifixion, and hell. Although humanity and God were intrinsically good and benevolent, Hugo portrayed a tension between Jesus and

Christianity and sought the "real" Jesus behind Christian doctrine. For Hugo, evil was the lack of equilibrium, peace, and balance in the cosmos and was reflected in the alienation of humanity from love and liberty. By mid-century, Romanticism had split into two directions: (1) toward naturalism which favored realistic descriptions of everyday life, and (2) toward decadence which explored the depths of human corruptions, especially sexual depravity.

American Romantic writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Mark Twain considered evil as detached from any one personification and wrote in the bleak spirit of nihilism. Evil often appeared in writing at the outset as profoundly horrible and was then revealed through irony as good. The 20th century message through such writing could be known as a reproach to God because the world's evil was really God's cruelty to the world of real people.

### **Evil in the Age of Psychology**

By the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, materialist assumptions outweighed religious traditions, including a serious belief in radical evil. The most influential thinkers in this shift were Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud. The intellectual consensus was that the ideas of both God and radical evil were illusions. William James, a psychologist in sympathy with religion, faced radical evil by intuitive experiences and wrote that the "world is all the richer for having a devil in it, so long as we keep our foot upon his neck" (Russell, 1988, p. 242). Whereas the bases of Christianity, scripture, tradition, and reason had

been undermined by philosophy, history, and bible criticism, James added a new dimension to the discussion of good and evil, that of personal experience.

James believed that philosophy and the study of good and evil should be personal and was not best studied in a university setting. This æsthetic principle of ease, that philosophy was done best when done at ease, reflected his non-traditional academic orientation and way of coming to know. James argued that one must live in the emotional present. The first act of free will, according to James, was the belief in free will. His idea that the roots of moral behavior can be found in the unconscious and not in the conscious choice of free will opened the way for psychological interpretation of good and evil.

James changed the way of knowing evil in America from the perspective of metaphysical monism to a paradigm of pluralism. Evil was transformed from a problem requiring solution into a mystery to be lived. Because absolute idealism denied the reality of evil and classical theism was mired in the difficulties of dualism, James suggested a kind of Manichæan account in which evil originated outside God. He attempted to scrap the monistic view and "allow the world to have existed from its origin in a pluralistic form, as an aggregate or collection of higher and lower things and principles" (Fontinell, 1986, p. 151). Following from this way of knowing, evil "might be and may always have been, an independent portion that had no rational or absolute right to live with the rest, and which, we might conceivably hope to see got rid of at last" (James, 1902, p. 113).

James's contribution to the shift in thinking about evil from the philosophical and metaphysical realms into the psychological domain was clearly American in character. In his practical, or popular, theism, James declared that "God is not necessarily responsible for the existence of evil; he would only be responsible if it were not finally overcome" (James, 1902, p. 112). The problem of evil thus became a practical rather than a speculative problem regarded from the viewpoint that humanity should be concerned "[n]ot why evil should exist at all, but how we can lessen the actual amount of it . . . ." (James, 1977).

Envisaging God also took on pragmatic American overtones. In the religious life of ordinary people, God was no longer, James wrote, the entirety of things. God could be known as a superhuman person who called us to cooperate in his purposes and who furthered ours if our purposes were worthy. The only philosophical account of evil that could reside alongside pragmatism for James was one that energized human beings in their struggle to lessen and overcome it. This constituted an alternative position to those proposed by Nietzsche, Sartre, and Camus that the world was essentially meaningless and absurd, and our incorrigible longings for justice, peace, harmony, and life were doomed to utter frustration (Fontinell, 1986). James's pragmatism proposed that we may believe that the world was becoming rational and moral, and humanity could overcome the feature of absurdity.

Limiting God was a feature of James's pragmatism that reconceptualized the way we have come to know both God and the problem of evil. God was now recognized as having an environment and was in some respects limited in power and knowledge. To

reply to the question regarding the existence of evil in a world of an all-knowing and all-powerful God, James declared that God could not be all-powerful or all-knowing. Above all else, James's American pragmatism sought to reconcile great mysteries with the barometer of practicality. His concept of God's power and limitation was "[t]he one of least resistance, then, as it seems to me, both in theology and in philosophy, is to accept, along with the superhuman consciousness, the notion that it is not all-embracing, the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that he is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or both at once" (James, 1977, p. 141). Evil therefore could exist because God was not in complete control; because God was partially ignorant of what was happening; or because God was both ignorant and partially powerless (Ford, 1982).

Many modern psychologists other than James, such as Viktor Frankl, Erich Fromm, and especially Sigmund Freud, dismissed the notion of evil and substituted societal concepts of violence or aggression. Freud, the primary voice of modern psychology and psychoanalysis, asserted that religion was a psychological phenomenon whose origin and nature could be both explained and explained away. Although he did not believe in metaphysical evil, he was interested in demonic possession and developed a diabolology in which the force of evil could be known as a substitute for a seductive father or parent hatred. It represented an element of the unconscious in opposition to conscious will. The central position of Freud's work was repression and sublimation and their dominating significance of the whole structure of personal and communal life.

Freud's investigation into the problem of evil took direction into the mythical character of the symbolism of evil. Freud postulated four cycles of myths: (1) myths

of primal chaos, (2) myths of wicked god(s), (3) myths of souls exiled in evil voids, and (4) myths concerning historical faults of individuals who were both ancestor to and prototype of humanity (Ricoeur, 1970). Myths of evil yielded temporal orientations that were satisfying to modern men and women because they happened "once upon a time," and presented insulated spheres of investigation. Citing the heuristic value of exploring myths for ontological value, Freud posited that such investigation conferred universality, temporality, and ontological import on our self-understanding. Investigating myths of evil became, for Freud, a hermeneutic problem which did not impose upon reflection from without, but from within by the very movement of meaning and by the implicit life of symbols taken at their semantic and mythical level.

Such symbology pointed to a way of knowing that implied opposite relationships. The symbol of wandering of sin corresponded to pardon in the symbol of return. The symbols used to describe the weight of sin implied deliverance, and the symbol of slavery called forth the symbol of liberation. Images of beginnings received their true meaning from the images of the opposite end of the dichotomy. Ultimately, to the symbol of the figure of Adam corresponded successive figures of a King, a Messiah, a Just One Who Suffers, the Son of Man, the Lord, and Logos (Ricoeur, 1970). In Freud's paradigm of id, ego, and superego, there was a one-to-one correspondence between the two dichotomous symbolisms. Thus the symbol of evil received its true meaning from the symbolism of salvation. As example, Freud cited the Christian *Credo* which stated, "I believe in the *remission* of sins" (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 40).

Critical to Freud's interpretation of the symbolism of evil was that the "end" was not absolute knowledge; rather, such final knowledge was foreshadowed by prophecy. Absolute knowledge became impossible in the problem of evil. The symbols of nature and of evil were not simply one set of symbols out of many, but were privileged symbols which resisted any reduction to rational knowledge. The failure of all theodicies, of all systems concerning evil, Freud implied, was their inadequacy regarding absolute knowledge in the Hegelian sense.

Freud also insisted that philosophical interpretation of symbols would never become absolute knowledge. In this regard, Freud moved from the system of Hegel to that of Kant and moved from a dissolution of the problem of evil in dialectic to the recognition of the emergence of evil as something inscrutable, something that could not be captured in a total and absolute knowledge. Symbols of evil attested to the unsurpassable character of all symbolism and they declared the failure of systems of thought that swallowed up symbols in an absolute knowledge. Symbolism of evil was therefore for Freud the implication of the symbolism of reconciliation. Because they were given only in signs that were its promise, such symbolism invited thought on the understanding of faith, an understanding Freud described as threshold understanding. Religion therefore took on the character of an art of bearing the hardships of life. Further, Freud regarded the cultural function of consolation as that which placed religion beyond the sphere of fear, into the sphere of desire.

Melanie Klein took Freud's ideas to the conclusion of "splitting," in which one's desire to preserve the absolute goodness of a beloved object caused one to deny it any

imperfection and transfer it from the beloved object to something else. Carl Jung, in disagreement with Freud's psychology, recognized religion as a necessary, psychologically valid part of the psyche and of civilization.

Good and evil for Jung were psychological realities that people must face them squarely and integrate the unconscious with the conscious in the light of reason. His doctrine of modern society's universal unconscious structure archetypes which produced societal myths and images, rejected radical evil because it was unwilling to face the reality of evil. To Jung, evil was as real as good and was a necessary part of the cosmos and of God. When enormously powerful cosmic energy represented by radical evil was denied or repressed, Jung warned that it would burst forth with a destructiveness proportional to the degree of its repression. If it were integrated, its energy could be turned toward the greater good.

In his theory of individuation, Jung took a gnostic position, that of knowing *about* faith, rather than a devotional framework, that is, *actually living faith*. Jung's *collective unconscious* or *objective psyche* was a transpersonal, objective, and awe-inspiring account that made religion, in its historical and biographical forms, the subject of comprehensive observations (Friedman, 1983a). In an analysis that bridged the division between psychology and religion, Jung defined religion as a living relation to psychical events which took place in the darkness of the psychical hinterland (Friedman, 1983a, p. 170). Further, Jung implied that the soul was that aspect of the human person through which alone the collective unconscious could enter into experience.

An adherent of modern consciousness, Jung turned from faith and the religions that have emanated from it to a new psychology in which a new religion was proclaimed, one of pure psychic immanence. This religion turned to the soul in the Gnostic sense as the new arena which replaced the conscience by the unity of good and evil. In this manner, Jung united the opposites and created a balance of the two forces. The place of the deity, Jung wrote, was replaced by the wholeness of man. Although Jung stopped short of deifying man, the marriage of good and evil was elevated by him to a position as the new Incarnation. The unconscious, however, created the idea of a deified or divine person.

Jung disagreed profoundly with theologians who wrote or said "God" and assumed others understood what was meant by the author(s). He challenged such theologians to offer proof that the "God" they had chosen was the "right" or only deity that the modern consciousness could relate to or accept. Because he saw himself as a full empirical psychologist, Jung stated that he believed all statements about God were necessarily psychic statements and were thus subject to the realm of psychology. His epistemology was based on the contrast between inner and outer with a distinct depreciation of the outers as the "persona," the social role, the ego which must submit to the unconscious or become neurotic, or the eternal world which finds its true meaning only in the depths within. Jung's philosophy was marked by a modern, post-Kantian idealism in which reality and thought were identical.

Viktor Frankl was a proponent of an existential school of psychiatry based on: (1) freedom of the will, (2) the will to meaning, and (3) the meaning of life. In his work

with modern patients, Frankl discovered profound and deep-rooted problems of personal emptiness and meaninglessness. People, he conjectured, were suffering because they were no longer told by their instincts what they must do. Unlike former times, men and women today were no longer instructed by their traditions precisely what they should do, and the confused individual no longer knew what he wished to do. Choices available seemed to fluctuate between the disparate ends of a dichotomy and forced individuals to choose between conformism and totalitarianism. Frankl's logotherapy was a realistic therapy that faced the tragic triad of human existence: pain, death, and guilt. The function of this therapy was to show patients how to transform despair into triumph.

Reflecting that in our age traditions were on the wane, Frankl's logotherapy was designed to equip people with the ability to find meaning. Postulating that there was an essential self-transcendent quality of human existence, Frankl wrote that the human person was therefore able to reach out beyond himself. Similar to Buber's *I-Thou* philosophy of dialogue, Frankl's asserted that this dialogue defeated itself unless our *I* and *Thou* transcended ourselves to refer to meaning outside ourselves. Thus the encounter between and *I* and a *Thou* must involve confrontation; the one confronted the other with logos, the "meaning of being" (Frankl, 1970, pp. 8-9).

Religion, Frankl wrote, provided the human person with a spiritual anchor that he could find nowhere else. The relationship between the animal world and the world of people was analogous to the relationship between the world of people and the realm of God. There may be, Frankl offered, a world beyond this world of human beings in which the question of the ultimate meaning of human suffering would find an answer.

Albert Einstein remarked that "mere thinking cannot reveal to us the highest purpose," and Frankl added that suprameaning was not a matter of thinking, but of believing. One did not catch onto it on intellectual, but on existential grounds (Frankl, 1970, p. 145).

Frankl's premise, that faith in ultimate meaning is preceded by trust in an ultimate being or trust in God, did not alter the fact that people could not break through the dimensional difference between the human and divine worlds. Humanity could reach out for ultimate meaning through faith that was mediated by trust in an ultimate being. This separating dimensional difference was similar to Heidegger's ontological difference that there was an essential difference between things and being. Being was not one thing among other things. This dimensional difference prevented man from really speaking to God and took on the character of an ontological difference. Frankl added that "[t]o Him of Whom one cannot speak, to Him one must pray" (Frankl, 1970, p. 146).

Recognition of the difference between the world of people and the realm of God made for humanity's wisdom and things improbable in the lower dimension, (the world of people), could be perfectly possible in a higher one, (the realm of God). Even revelation did not break down the dimension barrier for Frankl and he refused to allow the inference of a supranatural being from the evidence of the existence of natural beings, or creation. Consequently, knowing the nature or purpose of evil was impossible to realize by human persons in their dimension of reality. This impossibility often caused despair, although Frankl's logotherapy was designed to counteract such negativity. To others, the result was a shift toward nihilism.

The modern push toward nihilism can be found in the writings of Feodor Dostoyevsky in whose work is found the shift from anarchism, atheism, and revolution to a devout spirit of Russian Orthodoxy which was marked by a deep distrust of Roman Catholicism. Dostoyevsky's ideal was *sobornost*, an ancient Russian doctrine of the communion of believers centered on love of Christ and mutual responsibility and charity. Evil was known by facing the human condition squarely and with intense feelings of compassion, sin, and suffering. The form and substance of evil was the cruelty of sinners and the suffering of the poor and weak. Human beings were worse than beasts because only humanity was deliberately cruel. How God could tolerate or even create such beings was, for Dostoyevsky, evidence that He could not exist.

Modern society was faced with a force that urged us to deploy weapons of mass destruction that could result in planetary annihilation. The horrors of the twentieth century have resulted in a sharpened sense of evil characterized by cynical dullness, relativism, and cultural despair (Russell, 1988). The twentieth century has also seen a return to consideration of evil as well as the end of optimistic progressivism in theology. New Christian theological arguments attempted to shift the blame for evil from human beings to angels and were not designed to explain the existence of evil in the world. Some church doctrine has argued that Old Testament post-exile Hebrews created a devil figure for evil to explain the existence of evil and not blame God. The position has resurfaced that Jesus and the apostles' use of a devil figure was metaphorical and was a result of their attempt to communicate with unsophisticated masses.

Albert Camus faced the enigma of evil in a world without transcendent values. In *The Plague*, he tried to make sense of, or explain disaster and concluded that one must simply do one's best in a world where horrors have no meaning except in our resistance to them; and in a world without absolute values, courage and honesty are intrinsically no better than selfishness, cowardice, and cruelty.

Our vocabulary for knowing evil has been defined by historical tradition, and religions have passed down such nomenclature with dynamic changes. The word "devil" was not an acronym or encoding of the word "evil;" rather it was derived from the Greek *diabolos*, or slanderer, perjurer, or adversary (Russell, 1988). The Hebrew word *satan*, translated as adversary, obstacle, or opponent. The naming of evil may have stemmed in part from our unconscious perception of ourselves in which we sensed ambivalence. Because the unconscious was ambivalent and creation of myth was close to our unconscious, and because myth tended not to create wholly evil beings, "[it] is usually the conscious that rationalizes and distorts, splitting the natural ambivalence of good and evil into polarities, opposite absolutes" (Russell, 1988, p. 8). Myth was not; however, an unformed outpouring of the unconscious. "Like poetry, art, or music, it arises from a creative tension between unconscious materials and conscious forms. Myth, like theology, often tries to separate the good from the evil in the God" (Russell, 1988, p.8).

### **Buber's Philosophical Anthropology: Good, Evil, Radical Evil**

Martin Buber's philosophical anthropology was based on the thought of Ludwig Feuerbach. Feuerbach placed emphasis on the question of man at the center of his philosophical enterprise, a movement which was in direct opposition to that of Kant and

Hegel who focused on human cognition as the center (Wood, 1969, p. 5). Buber moved from the idea of the question of man as central to regarding man in relation with others as the focus of his coming to know. According to Buber, man was no longer located philosophically as an individual, but in the relationship of man with man. This relationship's ontology is the *between*, and the locus of Buber's philosophical anthropology was in this relation. As man and woman engaged in evil actions, Buber's philosophy broadened and discussed the radical nature of the dilemma of the modern human person in the society he witnessed.

Radical evil was a symptom of modern society which poured money into arms and was unwilling to face moral and social problems. By trying to deal with it in scientific, genetic, or environmental terms, society excluded the concept of transcendence. The flat, materialistic assumptions of contemporary Western society have effectively censored concern with radical evil by expressions of contempt or condescension for transcendent views (Russell, 1988).

Martin Buber's thought regarding the tension in which man lived has been the central focus of his writings. Even before his writing of the *I and Thou*, Buber recognized and agonized over the concepts of confrontation and the between. As this thought progressed, he concentrated on describing the human person's position as being on the narrow rocky ridge, constantly striving to enter into relation with others. Part of the human person's existential tension was reflected in this narrow ridge between authentic encounter between an *I* and a *Thou*, and those encounters which were described as *I-It* relations. Buber, who was originally interested in Hasidic and mystical thought,

eventually replaced the idea of mystical union with the idea of the human person's encounter with God as the Eternal Thou.

Simply stated, Buber's philosophy regarding such holy encounter between person and person was reflected in "I confront a human being as my Thou and speak the basic word 'I-Thou' to him" (Buber, 1958). However, with the potential for moments of holy communion between two persons and between individual and God, there lay the potential also for the opposite relation, described by Buber as the *I-It*. The concept of the *I-It* became more neutral, although it originally contained a fundamental demonic or satanic idea, (Horwitz, 1988). Although both affiliations were necessary for man's survival, and "without it [the *I-It* relationship] man cannot live" (Buber, 1958), man must live within the tension of balancing both the *I-Thou* and *I-It* relationships for personal wholeness, authentic relations, and hope of redemption.

Whereas the *I-It* relationship still maintained some negative connotations, the demon temptation, Buber noted, was not a being in itself. Drawing on his strong Hasidic influences, by 1918 Buber wrote that the demon of the between was a non-substance and a hindrance to one's meeting with the Confronted (a term he eventually changed to the Thou), and the obstacles and powers of evil assumed forms and hindered us from reaching our goal of becoming all that we were supposed to become (Buber, 1957). By 1922, Buber narrowed and elaborated the meaning of the Between not as the hypostatization of the relation, such as the figure of Christ which was viewed as a between, an idea Buber felt was an obstacle to direct relationship between man and God; nor as religion, which Buber felt that as a series of dogma and laws was merely the

result of the human attempt to make the encounter with God comprehensible through a symbolic ordering of the knowable and the doable (Horwitz, 1988, p. 142). The Between can be known as a narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there was no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remained undisclosed (Buber, 1965). The unity of these contraries was the mystery at the innermost core of the dialogue (Buber, 1948).

How then did Buber become known as a philosopher who maintained an unwavering insistence on the concrete? In part Buber has become known as an asker of real questions and a demander of real answers (Friedman, 1960). Before 1922, Buber had written of God in the third person, but his concept of relationship with the Eternal Thou shifted his focus to God in the second, more concrete person of speech. As his ideas developed, his conception of God as the true *Thou* of the human *I* solidified the relationship. He attacked the psychological, philosophical, metaphysical, mathematical, and scientific ways to reach God because he insisted these forms objectified God. Theology, Buber felt, was unimportant and worked against religious forms (Horwitz, 1988). The only way to know God, Buber concluded, was through direct relationship. The original evil of all 'religion' was the separation of "living in God" from "living in the world" (Friedman, 1955, p. 117). A human being could not live in such a separated manner with his soul detached from life in relation with God. Such thinking misled the faithful into feeling secure with objective consummation without personal participation. God became displaced by a figment of the soul itself. The dialogue which the soul thought it was carrying on "[was] only a monologue with divided roles" (Buber, 1943).

Without the dialogue of relationship, one cannot truly know another person and thus cannot achieve concrete knowing of another. Man cannot meet man, and woman cannot meet woman, as individuals, but they must meet person with person, the connection of the *I* and *Thou*.

The individual man for himself does not have man's being in himself, either as a moral being or a thinking being. Man's being is contained only in community, in the unity of man with man--a unity which rests, however, only on the reality of the difference between *I* and *Thou* (Buber, 1965, p. 136).

The development of the *I-Thou* relationship ran progressively through Buber's writings. In his early essay on Jacob Boehme (1900), the feeling of unity was used to illustrate the idea that the human person was the microcosm of the universe and all levels of the universe were contained in each individual, a thought drawn directly from kabbalistic interpretations. By 1909 in *Ecstasy and Confession*, Buber expanded the idea of unity to illustrate the oneness in ecstasy of the *I* and the world. By the time he completed *Daniel* in 1913, unity became known as having been created and realized in the world. And in his masterpiece, *The I and Thou*, it was used to illustrate the *I and Thou* relation, an event which took place between two human beings who none the less remained separate. The philosophy of realization was concomitantly transformed into the philosophy of dialogue which explained that when a person truly experienced a thing that leaped to meet him of itself had known therein the world (Friedman, 1960). The reality of the experienced world was so much more powerful that when the person experienced

it powerfully, the more he realized it. The world therefore cannot be known in any way other than through things and not otherwise than with the active sense-spirit of the loving man (Friedman, 1960).

Real living was authentic, genuine meeting according to Buber's philosophical anthropology. The sphere of real living included both the world of the here and now, along with the relationship between the individual person and the Eternal Thou. Man did not possess God; he met Him. True community, Buber wrote, could be founded only on changed relations and relationships between and among people. True community, or real living, illustrated each person's infinite sphere of responsibility, which Buber described as one's infinite responsibility. The really responsible men were those who can withstand the thousandfold questioning glance of individual lives, who gave true answer to the trembling mouths that time after time demanded from them decision (Buber, 1958). The obstacle to real living for modern society was the dualism which separated life into two unrelated spheres: one of truth of the spirit, and the other of the reality of life. Real living united the spheres into one and the individual met the everyday as sacred meeting.

Because all real living was meeting, people lived from moment of meeting and ending of that moment, with the ending of the moment as one's realization of the meeting, to the potential for new moments of similarly profound or more greatly significant meetings. Living on the rocky narrow ridge of the between, we experienced existential tension. Living within this creative tension characterized modern man and woman.

There were four types of evil which the modern age was particularly aware: (1) the loneliness of the modern person before an unfriendly universe and before those with whom he associated with but did not meet, (2) the increasing tendency for scientific instruments and techniques to outrun our ability to integrate those techniques into our lives in some meaningful and constructive way, (3) the inner duality of which modern society has become aware through the writings of Dostoyevsky and Freud and the development of psychoanalysis, and (4) the deliberate and large-scale degradation of human life within the totalitarian state (Friedman, 1960). "Good and evil form together the body of the world. If man had simply to live in the good, then there would be no work of man" (Kohn, 1930, p. 308). Buber's vocabulary for evil and good revolved around the work of modern society, their successes and failures, and the forces that helped determine their victory or defeat. Man's work, Buber wrote, "[is] to make the broken world whole . . . Evil is the hardness which divides being from being, being from God" (Kohn, 1930, p. 308).

The work of man and woman was to overcome the divisiveness between individuals and among communities. One of the primary motivations for Buber's interest in mysticism in his early studies was his concern with the problem of the relation between the individual and the world. First, he recognized the division between the *I* and the world and the duality within the individual. Later, he argued for the unity of the *I* and the world in both intellectual and emotional vocabulary. This experience and change in perspective regarding aloneness and division may have caused Buber to shift from his earlier monism regarding an already existing unity which only needed to be

discovered, to a later emphasis on realizing unity in the world through genuine and fulfilled life (Friedman, 1960). Concomitant to this shift in emphasis was Buber's recognition of the dialectic between primal unity and the multiplicity of the world; the dialectic between conflict and love. Conflict, the bridge in and through which one *I* revealed itself in its beauty to another *I*, and love, the bridge through which being united itself with God, created a tension in which the person seeking real living struggled.

The human person's anxiety also centered on another conflict, one between evil, the rebellion against God with the power He had given each individual to do evil; and good, the turning toward God with this same power. Evil could be described in this thinking as a lack of direction; and good as finding direction, the direction toward God. Additionally, Buber's vocabulary portrayed evil as the condition in which the *I-It* predominated; good as the meeting of the *I* with the *Thou*, and the permeation of the *I-It* by the *I-Thou*.

Good and evil, then, cannot be a pair of opposites like right and left or above and beneath. 'Good' is the movement in the direction of home, 'evil' is the aimless whirl of human potentialities without which nothing can be achieved and by which, if they take no direction but remain trapped in themselves, everything goes awry (Buber, 1965, p. 78).

Many of Martin Buber's writings were concerned with the dilemma, origin, and nature of good and evil. Of special concern to Buber was the issue of right and wrong and its place in modern society's observation of the human world. An important theme of his writings was that of our images of good and evil and the place of evil in the

personal development of each modern individual. Rather than considering evil and good as a dichotomy or as an existential abstraction, Buber considered what the origin of evil was and why evil was so powerful in the world. Having spent more than thirty years as a co-translator of the Hebrew Bible into German with his colleague, Franz Rosenzweig, Buber's biblical orientation caused him to examine the Psalms to discover "how gradually arising and growing insight into the relation between wrongdoing and true existence is expressed in them" (Buber, 1953). In his examination of Israelite and Persian mythology, Buber presented a twofold prehistorical origin of what we call evil and "thereby enable[d] the modern thinker to point out what corresponds to this twofoldness in that biographical reality of present-day man which is known to us" (Buber, 1953, Foreward).

Buber's curiosity with people's struggle with good and evil led him to recognize that although the stories and myths may have been told by more than one author, they espoused the same basic view and attitude that yielded a single figure's voice. When examined thoughtfully, he concluded that, taken in the right sequence, the myths and stories of good and evil seemed to lead along the stages of a personal and human way. This personal way of stages required the genuine participation of the authentic individual.

Buber's philosophical anthropology characterized his consideration of good and evil and was the result of his preoccupation and struggle with the problem of evil since his youth, although he did not approach the topic in his writings until after World War I.

I was concerned above all to show that in their anthropological reality, that is, in the factual context of the life of the human person, good and evil are not, as they are usually thought to be, two structurally similar qualities situated at opposite poles, but two qualities of totally different structure (Buber, 1953, p. 64).

Nicolai Berdayaeff, who characterized the "paradoxical problem of evil," disagreed with Buber's premise and maintained that Buber's was an impossible solution because we needed a point of attack in our struggle against evil. Berdayaeff saw Jewish messianic thinking as dualistic, that is, the expectation of the Messiah's coming alongside the passionate longing for His coming. This idea of dualism affected his criticism of the *I and Thou* because he did not understand the meaning of the "between" and could not therefore give it ontological significance. Rather, Berdayaeff posited, the Christian principle of freedom of choice between good and evil was the very root of the Christian spiritual situation. Christianity was based essentially upon freedom of good and evil, that is, upon an antithesis giving it a tragic and dynamic character absent from the pre-Christian and non-Christian worlds (Berdayaeff, 1962). Because where there was crisis there was hope, Berdayaeff wrote that we can shape history by shaping our inner life. Berdayaeff, a religious and historical analyst, wrote that finding meaning in life would offer an antidote to the disintegration of the human personality in the modern age (Berdayaeff, 1962).

The chief villain to the relocation of meaning was technology. The result of increased technical living was the complete spiritual disorientation of modern life, illustrated in part in art and literature, the faithful mirrors of their times. Proposing a

dialectic both to grasp and oppose social and cultural disintegration, Berdayeff stressed that we must integrate our historical experience in religion, specifically, Christianity. This particular religion was based on freedom for him and this condition gave it a special character. "Christianity is based essentially upon freedom of good and evil; that is, upon an antithesis giving it a tragic and dynamic character absent from the pre-Christian and non-Christian worlds" (Berdayaeff, 1962, p. 7). The choice between good and evil was at the heart of the human spiritual situation and where crisis existed, Berdayeff maintained, hope could be found. Hope personified the human crisis in this system of thought.

In place of such solution-oriented thinking, Buber proposed a synthetic description of evil happening. First, he argued, "The struggle must begin within one's own soul--all else will follow upon this" (Buber, 1953, p. 64). Our crucial experiences did not take place within a sphere in which creative energy operated without contradiction, but in a sphere in which good and evil, despair and hope, the power of destruction and the power of rebirth, dwelt side by side. The divine force which the human person actually encountered in life did not hover above the demonic, but penetrated it (Buber, 1952).

Secondly, Buber introduced the *Gog*, the mythical incarnation of external metaphysical evil, and asked,

What is the nature of this Gog? Can he exist in the outer world only because he exists within us? The darkness out of which he was hewn needed to be taken from nowhere else than from our own slothful and malicious hearts. It is our betrayal of God that has made Gog to grow so great (Buber, 1945, p. 65).

In his reading of the biblical, Zoroastrian Avestic and post-Avestic myths of good and evil, Buber distinguished between two fundamentally different kinds and stages of evil. His writing of *Good and Evil: Two Interpretations* was in part an answer to Berdayaev's challenge and in part Buber's recognition of the fact that the meaning he posited for good and evil transcended even the anthropological. Buber's love of Hasidic story and mythical parable was evidenced through his insistence that truths such as those regarding good and evil could be communicated adequately to the generality of mankind only in the form of myths, (Buber, 1953). All human concepts are bridges between myths and reality and we need them because

[m]an knows of chaos and creation in the cosmogonic myth and he learns that chaos and creation take place in himself, but he does not see the former and the latter together; he listens to the myth of Lucifer and hushes it up in his own life. He needs the bridge (Buber, 1953, p. 66).

Human knowledge of good and evil, Buber continued, was really our knowledge of the myths that have defined good and evil for us. Knowing the "opposites inherent in all being within the world" enabled people to have, based on our knowledge of the creation-myth, "adequate awareness of the opposites latent in creation." Knowledge of good and evil, Buber maintained,

. . . means nothing else than: cognizance of the opposites which the early literature of mankind designated by these two terms; they still include the fortune and the misfortune or the order and the disorder which is

experienced by a person, as well as that which he causes (Buber, 1953, pp. 73-4).

Because such knowledge was thought to be the primordial possession of God, the idea of its attainment by the human person were worlds apart in nature. God "knew" the opposite of His being from His own creation because He was untouched by them while He was encompassed by them. In this characterization, God was thought to be familiar yet superior to His human creation. God could achieve direct intercourse with His creations and through this direct discussion, people and God functioned as opposite poles of the world's being.

Our knowledge of good and evil, however, was acquired through the eating of miraculous fruit. This knowledge was of an essentially different kind from God's knowledge of good and evil. The superior-familiar encompassing of opposites was denied to man and woman because they achieved only part of knowledge; he could beget, she could give birth, but this was not equivalent to Godly creation. Because humanity and God could never be temporally coexistent, human beings knew oppositeness only by their situation within it. Each of us only knew evil when he recognized the condition wherein he had transgressed the command of God and he knew what he had lost (evil) and what he had lost became temporarily inaccessible to him (good).

### **Classical Kabbalistic View of Good and Evil**

Classical Jewish philosophy, in its disdain of the primitive levels of human life, did not address the terrors people faced nor did it assuage their fear of life and death.

By denying the myths that sprang from these terrors, such philosophy seemed to deny the very existence of the problem of evil. Nothing so sharply distinguished philosophers and Kabbalists as did their attitudes toward the problem of evil and the demonic (Scholem, 1969). Whereas Jewish philosophers attempted to dismiss it as a pseudo-problem, Kabbalists made it one of their chief motives of thinking. Kabbalists treated evil as reality and the horror of the demonic in a straightforward fashion.

In their attempt to reach the popular masses, Kabbalists inculcated the demonic into ritual and treated it as a central point in their faith. This "demonization" of life was both an appeal and a driving force that brought Kabbalistic Judaism to the masses. It was an example of the descent from the heights of theosophical speculation to the depths of popular thought and action. It cast good and evil into separate strata amid the ten *sefirot*, or mythical levels of the universe, and afforded evil its metaphysical ontology. Both good and evil are represented in the *Shekhinah*, the spirit of the exiled God. Because the human being was at the core imperfect, the world could not have survived if the *Shekhinah* exercised only stern judgment. Therefore the powers of mercy and stern judgment were alternately preponderant in the *Shekhinah*. The Kabbalists, however, related that there were states of the world in which the *Shekhinah* was dominated by the powers of stern judgment. As the *Zohar* put it, "[a]t times the *Shekhinah* tastes the other, bitter side, and then her face is dark" (Scholem, 1969, p. 117). An age-old moon symbolism was used to complete this connection and the *Shekhinah*, when seen under this symbol, became the "Tree of Death," demonically cut off from the Tree of Life by spirits that had escaped from the *sefirah* of judgment

(Scholem, 1969). Although in most Talmudic and Kabbalistic concepts the Shekhinah was the merciful mother of Israel, she became at this stage the vehicle of the power of punishment and stern judgment. Kabbalists related this alternating ambivalence to the exile of the Jewish people. The exile of the Shekhinah was Talmudic in origin, "[i]n every exile into which the children of Israel went, the Shekhinah was with them" (Megillah 29a). Although the Talmud stated that in every exile, the presence of God was with Israel, the Kabbalists insisted that a part of God Himself was and remained exiled from God.

The Talmudic doctrine of two urges or *yetsers*, was the imagery Buber used to name the impulses given to created humankind by God. Although these two urges were given in complete liberty of free will to humanity by God, man and woman were reminded that they must keep the commandments and maintain faith to do the will of God with both of their urges. The Talmud split these urges in the opposites of good and evil urges, with the *yetser rah*, or evil urge, seen as elemental. Buber saw the two urges as necessary collaborators to accomplish service, the precursor of the Messianic redemption, to God. The greater the person, Buber wrote, the greater her urges. Man and woman's task was therefore not to extirpate the evil urge, but to reunite it with the good urge. Buber's reading of Deut. 6:5 wherein people were told to love the Lord with all their heart, implied a reunification of the evil urge with the good, the perfect urge. Humanity could not with only their own strength or prayer prevail upon the evil urge.

This important doctrine cannot be understood as long as good and evil are conceived, as they usually are, as two diametrically opposite forces or directions. Its meaning is not revealed to us until we recognize them as similar in nature, the evil 'urge' as passion, that is the power peculiar to man, without which he can neither beget nor bring forth, but which, left to itself, remains without direction and leads astray, and the 'good urge' as pure direction, in other words, as an unconditional direction, that towards God. To unite the two urges implies: to equip the absolute passion with the one direction that renders it capable of great love and of great service. Thus and not otherwise can man become whole (Buber, 1953, p. 97).

The *Zohar*, the Book of Splendor of the Kabbalistic writers, provided mythology regarding the first action of God that challenged and reinterpreted the more classical creation story of Genesis.

In the beginning before the world existed, all the expanses, the void that would later become the home of heaven and earth, the stars, the lights, the depths, the water, and the layers of the world, was filled with God. God is and always will be unending. God created the world after having created many worlds. None of the worlds was *tov m'od*, very good. Because God was complete and unending, there was no room in the universe for the physical world, the world of man. And God contracted. He took His presence of light and pulled back into Himself and the world became possible. This *tzimtzum* [contraction] preceded God's emitting light; the light that created the world. God emitted beams of light into the vacuum that enabled His creation of the world. Before God created the world of man, God contracted. (Graves & Patai, 1964, pp. 34-40).

God's contraction made possible the existence of something other than God and implicit in Kabbalistic symbolism was that this withdrawal of the divine essence into itself was a primordial exile, or self-banishment. In this contraction, the powers of

judgment, which in God's essence were united in infinite harmony with the roots of all other potencies, were gathered and concentrated in a single point, namely, the primordial space from which God withdrew. But the powers of stern judgment ultimately included evil (Scholem, 1969). The entire process that ensued was a gradual purification of the divine organism from the elements of evil. Although theologically questionable, this myth represented the critical good/evil balance that became our modern concept of God. Disciples of Isaac Luria viewed the contraction not as a fundamental or necessary crisis in God Himself, but as a free act of love, which however, paradoxically enough, first unleashed the power of stern judgment. The general Judaic view was that God made a decision to contract and that decision marked God's first action.

#### **Buber's Biblical Foundation of Evil**

This was humanity's ironic dialectic: as we strived to become like God with His knowledge of good and evil, we knew that this was not God's intention for us. Our knowledge of good and evil was limited to earthly events. Buber's position was that God had intended to protect man and woman from the opposites latent in the existence in the Garden of Eden, but they withdrew from the will of God as well as from His protection. With this unrealized deed, man and woman caused these latent opposites to break out at a dangerous point at which the world was at its closest proximity to God.

From this point on, oppositeness took hold of humanity, but as " . . . ever-recrudescent reaction to the no-position and its irredeemable perspective" (Buber, 1953). The expulsion from Eden, Buber continued, was not God's punishment against His creations; rather, it was His offering of protection. Had man and woman eaten of the

Tree of Life, they would have been condemned to endure eons of suffering. "For man as a 'living soul' known death is the threatening boundary; from him as the being driven round amidst opposites it may become a haven, the knowledge of which brings comfort" (Buber, 1953, p. 79). Now for man and woman all things were drawn into the atmosphere of oppositeness; it set woman as dependent upon man for bearing children and man's work, which had already been planned, became an affliction. From their seat in the garden, man and woman were sent out upon a path, their own, human path. This path has become the world's history and only through this history can the world have an historical goal.

Buber investigated the story of Kain, the first fratricide which was told in the bible without irony or lingering, as the story of the first iniquity in the universal human sense. Such a crime, Buber maintained, would have been punished in every known society no matter where it had taken place. Adam and Eve's sin was classified as "pre-evil," and Kain's as "evil," because Kain's actions came into being only as such through the act of knowledge. Therefore Kain became the first person to become guilty in the human sense. In Avestic mythology, a distinction was made between the state of the soul in which it purposed good and one in which it did not. There was neither a "good" nor "evil" disposition; rather, there was either a disposition with "good," or one without it. Therefore, ". . . a man knows only factually what 'evil' is insofar as he knows about himself, everything else to which he gives this name is merely mirrored illusion; but self-perception and self-relationship are the peculiarly human . . . the inner lot of man" (Buber, 1953, p. 88).

Because Kain would not reply to God's question, an answer Adam had given when he was confronted by God, Kain delivered himself into the hands of indecision. The intensification and confirmation of indecision, according to Buber, was the decision to evil. In this state, man was enmeshed within a swirling vortex of possibilities, a concept Buber further elaborated in his reconsideration of good and evil in his post-Holocaust writing. Within this indecision, conscious decision to evil was not the result. Rather, "[in] the vortex of indecision Kain strikes out, at the point of greatest provocation and least resistance. He does not murder, he has murdered" (Buber, 1953, p. 89). The punishment meted out to Kain by God was that of a fugitive and vagabond on earth which became the incarnate representation of what took place within Kain's soul.

### **Two Stages of Evil**

Later in his writings, Buber distinguished between two distinct and different stages of evil. The first stage of evil corresponded to the Biblical myth and the second stage was closer to that explained in Zoroastrian mythology. This change in thought was precipitated by Buber's knowing the evil that was the Holocaust in Europe and its immensity and enormity impelled him to reconsider his interpretation of the nature of evil and the human person. The first stage of evil was characterized by decisionlessness, such as that state of being in which Adam and Eve, Kain, and the Flood were experienced. The eating of the apple was not a good versus evil decision in that the pair imagined the possibilities of action without knowing it, without realizing what evil was, and while they were in a dreamlike, utopian contemplation. Kain did not decide, Buber

interpreted, to murder Abel because he did not know what death and killing were. Kain's anger and frustration intensified and while in this state, "[in] the vortex of indecision . . . at the point of greatest provocation and least resistance" he strikes out (Friedman, 1960, p. 105). Buber continued, "[m]an grasps at every possibility in order to overcome the tension of omnipossibility" (Buber, 1952b, pp. 57-60). Regarding the myth of the Flood and God's intention of destroying His creations, Buber wrote that the wickedness of man's actions was not due to the corruption of his soul, but was caused by the intervention of evil imagery.

Imagery, the play with possibility, self-temptation from which violence sprang, was not entirely evil; in fact, it was the human person's greatest danger and her greatest opportunity. Imagery unlocked a power which could be left undirected or directed to good. The *yetser rah*, or evil urge, was close to the imagery of woman's heart and may be thought of as passion. Without imagery woman could not beget or bring forth, but when left to herself, woman remained without direction. Similar to the evolutionary coincidence of puberty, woman became aware of possibility which took the form of imaginable actions which threatened to submerge her in swirling chaos.

To escape from this dizzying whirlpool within the first stage of evil, a soul may embark on one of two courses. The former led itself out of chaos, and the latter descended into it. First, a human soul may have set out on the difficult path of bringing itself toward unity or second, it may have clutched at any object past which the vortex happened to carry it and cast its passions on it (Friedman, 1960). If an individual clutched wildly, he exchanged undirected possibility for undirected reality. Human

beings then did what they ordinarily would will themselves not to have done, what was alien to them, what was evil. This swirling whirlpool broke out of undirected surging passion wherever a breach could be forced and each one found himself on a flight into delusion and ultimately into mania.

Evil became, then, for Buber, the lack of direction and what was done out of it. Evil was not action, for action was only the type of evil happening which made evil manifest. The evil itself lay in the intention: "The project of the sin and the reflecting upon it and not its execution is the real guilt" (Buber, 1952b, p. 66-73). Evil was not the result of decision because true decision could never be partial; it could be accomplished only with the involvement of the whole soul. "Evil cannot be done with the whole soul; good can only be done with the whole soul" (Buber, 1952b). Characterizing this first stage of evil was that absence of personal wholeness was the complement to the absence of direction and the absence of relation. If the struggling human person did not become what she was meant to be when she originally set out in the direction of God, then no personal wholeness was possible. Finally, without attaining personal wholeness, one could neither keep to direction nor enter into full relation, (Friedman, 1960).

The characterization of the second stage of evil was drawn from Zoroastrian myths of Avesta and post-Avestic literature. As people descended into the second stage of evil, good and evil were thought of as primal moving spirits in real opposition in which evil for the first time assumed a substantial and independent nature. In this mythology, which was similar to the Kabbalistic stories of pre-creation, God's primal act

was one of decision within Himself which implied man and woman retained self-choice regarding good and evil. Man and woman ceased to be able to be introspective of their motives at the point they surrendered themselves to evil with their innermost beings. In the Avestic legend, Ahriman, the evil spirit, was forced to choose between good and evil, a choice made within pure paradox since in choosing he acknowledged himself precisely as the evil.

Yima, another Avestic mythological character, added a further dimension to this characterization of evil. When he called himself his own creator, Yima allowed the lie to enter reality because he took it upon himself to call himself the creator. This existential lie against being was one in which the individual saw himself as a self-creator. The situation in which humanity dwelt within an existential lie against being depicted the reality of the second stage of evil.

Decision became Buber's focal point for the distinction between stages of evil. Whereas the first stage of evil was marked by indecision, the second stage was distinguished by decision. Indecision led to a course of indecision which forced man and woman into a fixation in indecision. "As long as the will to simple self-preservation dominates that to being-able-to-affirm oneself, this self-knowledge is repressed. But when the will to affirm oneself asserts itself, man calls himself into question" (Buber, 1952b, p. 60).

This was the crisis of self in Buber's philosophical anthropology. Buber's dilemma for the modern person was that he participated in life and sought his direction for himself. "It is no more allowed to any man to live as if evil did not exist. One

cannot serve God by merely avoiding evil; one must grapple with it" (Buber, 1947b, p. 10). Man was a creature of possibility and needed confirmation by others in order to become the particular man that he was. "Again and again the Yes must be spoken to him, from the look of the confidant and from the stirrings of his own heart, to liberate him from the dread of abandonment, which is a foretaste of death" (Buber, 1953, p. 136). But when the human being was mired within the course of indecision, and called himself into question,

[ . . . this] condition now either assumes a pathological form . . . or the person finds the way out . . . through an extreme effort of unification which astonishes him himself in its power and effectiveness, a decisive act of decision, . . . or a third process takes place. (Buber, 1953, p. 135).

If this third process took place, the troubled soul took on the mythical role of Yima and proclaimed himself his own creator.

This absolute self-affirmation was the lie against being and truth was no longer what such a man experienced as truth but what he ordained to be true (Buber, 1952c, p. 43-56). At this point in his descent, evil became radical because there humankind willed what they found in themselves. Such persons affirmed what they had recognized in self-awareness as that which should be negated and thus gave evil substantial character which it did not previously possess. Whereas the first stage may be described as whirling movement, the second stage of evil can be imagined as the freezing of flowing water (Buber, 1948a). The immense significance of the second stage of evil which was the

newest development in Buber's thought at this time was its concrete base in human existence which made understandable such extreme phenomena as Hitler and the Nazis without resorting to the dogma of original sin or agreeing with Sartre's assertion that the events of recent years made it necessary to recognize evil as absolute and unredeemable (Friedman, 1960).

Only by knowing the differences between the first and second stages of evil could the difference between the wicked one and the sinner be perceived. The sinner could be known as the one who missed God's way again and again, while the wicked one is the one who opposed it. The modern individual's becoming a sinner was that state in which he found himself from time to time without it adhering to him while the wicked was a kind of man with a persistent disposition toward evil. "The sinner does evil, the wicked man is evil. That is why it is said only of the wicked, and not of the sinners, that their way vanishes" (Buber, 1952c, p. 51). The wicked person did not stand in judgment before God; his way became his own judgment. Such a person negated his own existence and became nothing. His way to God was closed only from his own side and the wicked person was distinct because he did not wish to be able to return.

Knowing and recognizing the differentiation between these two stages of evil posed a dilemma around the question: Can we enlighten people to recognize radical, second stage evil through any form of instruction? In what sense did this become knowing?

Buber cautioned against historicizing the moment and considered such temporal constraint as one of the reactions chosen by the person in the modern world to separate

herself from real meeting, real communion, and real dialogue. By removing the moment from the constraints of time, we could come to know radical evil reflectively, and the truly wicked person could not, Buber warned, accomplish this personal insight because she was so completely self-affirmed that she could not recognize an Absolute other than her own being.

Although Buber's differentiation between the stages of evil did not mature until 1951, in 1944 he placed a new emphasis on the nature and role of the demonic in his writing. The "cruel antitheticalness of existence itself" was the tragedy implicit in humankind's misuse of the freedom given them in their creation (Buber, 1945). In his 1940-43 essays on Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank as false messiahs, Buber wrote that a distinction must exist between evil as decisionlessness and evil as self-affirmation. When Zevi became apostate in order to avoid martyrdom, Buber wrote that "[it] is not the belief as such but his belief in himself that does not stand firm." Frank, who believed in nothing, not even himself, was not a liar but a lie. He "can only believe in himself after the manner of the lie by filling the space of the nothing with himself" (Friedman, 1960, p. 110).

Such persons depended on the affirmation of their followers and strove to maintain a magical or charismatic influence over them. When the lie was called into self-question, such a person had to nourish himself from the belief of others in him. He became a leader who led into nothing and ended in disintegration.

Buber encountered many changes in his life during this tumultuous time in the world. Having moved to Palestine in the late 1930s at the urging of his colleagues to

escape the life-threatening dangers in Nazi Germany, Buber lived through a time in which the world witnessed genocidal persecution of modern Jews and Judaism. His move to Palestine could not assuage the fears for the future of modern Jewry because there he experienced the War in Palestine in 1948, a conflict that was a beginning, rather than an end, of a series of conflicts between Arabs and Jewish settlers that would continue throughout the remainder of Buber's lifetime in the Jewish State and beyond.

Buber's concern then became to describe evil in light of three terrors with which he had personal experience: the Nazi persecution of the Jews, World War II, and the War in Palestine, the last of which was for Buber the most grievous of the three wars, (Buber, 1961). In his comparison of Frank and Hitler, Buber wrote that "[i]t is significant that it is in our time that the man has arisen in whom the tension between what one is and what one should be is dissolved--the man without conscience" (Buber, 1957, pp. 151-156).

Hitler's effectiveness, Buber declared, was caused by his fundamental absence of restraint. He believed in nothing other than his own power, a condition in the human person which was possible only when one was convinced he was commissioned and empowered by the Absolute. Because those who did not believe in any absolute being could not believe in this sense of the self, Hitler's absence of restraint was a function of his natural ability to avoid that necessary reflection which would make this emptiness apparent (Buber, 1957).

Critical to Buber's writing about evil was that a human person's nature was not evil, only his use of that nature could be described as evil. He reminded the reader again

and again that there were no human beings God cut off as simply evil; there were no human beings who were by their very nature hostile and incompatible to His purposes. Although some people brought evil to its radical stage where it took on its own substantial quality, evil was not independent, absolute, or ultimately unredeemable.

Good retained the character of direction at both stages because there was only one direction, that is, toward God. As man walked along the narrow ridge, faltered, and descended into indecision, God never hardened His heart against a person or a people.

The individual as an impotent participant was one of Buber's themes when he suggested that the human person could not stop sin when the situation became critical. Although he began the process, control was withdrawn from him at a fixed moment. It took a special sort of strength to persevere in sin but God granted this to a sinning person by granting each one of us absolute self-affirmation.

God could not, Buber warned, withdraw this freedom He gave humanity in creation, and His allowing individuals to close off the way was an example of severe grace. The way was never closed off from God's side, but for some of the wicked whose ways have vanished, only conversion or turning of the whole person would suffice.

### **Radical Evil**

Buber's investigation into the problem, nature, and origin of radical evil culminated in his writing *Eclipse of God*, a response in part to his personal lifelong struggle with the question of evil, as well as to the radical evil displayed against the Jews throughout Hitler's years of power in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, World War II,

and the tragic War in Palestine. He finally postulated six situations in which the modern individual may find himself that prevented his becoming an *I*, that is, enabling him to enter into relation with God as the *Eternal Thou*. These conditions included

1. one's concern with revelation and the future
2. his attempt to get behind the problematic of life
3. his desire to possess or use divine power
4. his acceptance of tradition and law as "once for all" and his taking refuge in it
5. his possible belief in immortality, a condition which makes death seem unreal or unserious
6. his use of symbols to address God that stand in the way of that address (Buber, 1952, p. 62, p. 84).

Buber's writings were characterized by the themes of decision and direction. When society became rooted in a way of thinking and coming to know that precluded genuine meeting and real living, the path toward decisionlessness and evil loomed before people as chosen direction. People knew evil, the result of decisionlessness and lack of direction, insofar as they knew about themselves. Because self-perception and self-relationship were peculiarly human, when society undertook any or many of the 6 conditions listed above, they embarked on a course toward the affirmation of evil (Buber, 1952c). When humanity cut itself off from the possibility of relationship with the *Eternal Thou* and adopted the ways of knowing that separated man from man and man from God, man's conscience became stifled and ceased to compare what the individual was and what the individual was uniquely created to become. When such a comparison was no longer made, individuals no longer lived within existential tension, no longer felt guilt, and no longer strove for authentic existence. When such a bankrupt existence was established,

the modern person no longer sought or was able to say *Thou* with his whole being either to God or person. The result of this inability to enter into relation with one's whole being was the modern person's certitude of self-affirmation and resoluteness in setting definitional parameters of good and evil, right and wrong, from his own flawed perception, disregarding the critical relationship between such concepts and God.

In his discussion of Hasidic piety, Buber wrote that certitude was never accomplished. Ready-made knowledge was impotent knowing because it contradicted the holy insecurity that characterized the human dilemma. Such knowing was the real antagonist of the reality of faith (Buber, 1952). As the human person attempted to move behind the unknowable force of God's creation and intention for human experience, the individual moved away from the direct, genuine meeting with the *Eternal Thou* toward the direction of self-affirmation. The philosopher's job, according to Buber, was to restore the lived concrete to the religious person through the destruction of images which did injustice to God. Those who searched for the pure idea only interposed an obstacle to achieving relationship with God. Because much of philosophy began with the primary act of abstraction, man raised himself above the concrete situation into the sphere of precise conceptualization and the God of the philosophers became a knowable God, but not a living God. By engaging in the above-listed 6 endeavors, philosophers encouraged modern humanity away from the lived concrete and toward a direction away from genuine relationship with each's *Eternal Thou*.

Buber's thought regarding humankind's imagining of themselves included a temporal sphere that set Buberian philosophical anthropology in disparity to that of

Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel, and Marx in this regard. In their systems, these eminent thinkers proposed that one could attain consciousness of oneself only in the third person. Hegel's philosophical man could attain certainty only in cosmological, not human time, a situation Buber found abstract and relativized. Marx and Hegel, Buber wrote, assured the proletariat success in the future, a situation Buber felt ignored the potential creativity of the human person's power of decision.

The power to make decision was uniquely human and uniquely characterized the divine nature of humanity. Indecision was not lack of decision; rather, it illustrated another aspect of the decision-making process. Only through indecision that involved the individual's whole being in light of his meeting another and his relationship with the *Eternal Thou*; that is, authentic living, could people arise from the struggle and tension with genuine decision. In fact, almost all traditional thought tended to submerge the dialogical life Buber espoused by the "once for all" of gnosis, theology, philosophy, and social theory. "The original evil of all 'religion' is the separation of 'living in God' from 'living in the world'" (Buber, 1952c, p. 11). When God became displaced by the figment of the soul itself, the dialogue which the soul thought it was carrying on was only a monologue with divided roles (Buber, 1947).

The dualism facing the modern individual, Buber wrote, existed in many forms and has caused our age to become the most problematic of all historical ages of society because in the modern age, the person had become expropriated and dispossessed. Each individual historicized, technicized, psychologized, and philosophized the moments of his

life, techniques which relegated religion and divine communion to the status of an aspect of life, rather than its totality, (Friedman, 1960).

We experienced dualism in the world of work when the Absolute was denied; but Buber cautioned that one should not work unless the one saw meaning in such work. Because everyone in society was and is in a growing measure sociologically determined, all were in the grip of incomprehensible powers from the technological, economic, and political spheres which joined to trample us again and again in all our human purposes, (Buber, 1952). The sickness of modern man and woman was manifested most clearly of all, however, in the individualism and nationalism which made power an end in itself (Buber, 1965). And power without faithfulness, Buber warned, was life without meaning (Buber, 1965, p. 39).

Consequently, Buber ascribed to Hitler the status of the personification of the inevitable end of the will to power and the tendency faced by all modern men to use others as a means to their own ends. An individual's seeking to overrun reality has become the dualism in the soul of the modern person and has produced, in our age, those who have become so devoid of humanity and ability to enter into relation, that one such as a Hitler has been enabled to arise. The portent of the present hour for Buber was that each human being had to interpret his encounters with God as self-encounters, and each person's very structure was destroyed (Buber, 1952). Additionally, humanity faced a vital dissociation, which Buber saw as the sickness of people of our age, when our organic forms, such as family, union in work, community in villages or towns, have been

lost. This has generated an inward decay which has succeeded in intensifying human solitude and in destroying our security.

Although new community forms had arisen, they were unable to duplicate the security which had been lost, a price modern society continued to pay in part from the pivotal events of the French Revolution. Consequently, human beings had elemental difficulty in attaining genuine conversation, especially between those of different kinds and differing convictions, and open dialogue was becoming ever more difficult and more rare; the abysses between man and man threatened ever more pitilessly to become unbridgeable. (Buber, 1952).

It is through this philosophical/anthropological discourse that I chose to consider the problem of good and evil, and radical evil, through the metaphor of the Holocaust. As twentieth century humanity faces the destruction of their organic forms through increasing solitude and inability to communicate their individual *I* to the *Thou* of others, the act of rescue during the Holocaust of Jews by non-Jewish Europeans takes on a different and problematic character. If the human world today, more than ever, is split into two camps which each regards the other as the embodiment of falsehood and itself as the embodiment of truth as Buber claimed, the very act of such rescue defied the existential mistrust Buber characterized as an integral part of modern society's sickness. He decried the dualism of individualism versus collectivism as the false dichotomy of our age, and maintained that in neither situation can the individual know true personal wholeness or true responsibility.

Rescuers, or righteous gentiles, who comprised less than one-half of one percent of non-Jewish wartime Europeans, were able to resist the bonds of collectivism, a position Buber saw as one of the greatest dangers to the modern world. Collectivism, Buber held, which gave the appearance but not the reality of relation, imperiled the very value which constituted man. It destroyed the dialogue between person and God as well as living communion between human being and human being. Our isolation in a collectivist situation was not overcome, but was overpowered and numbed (Buber, 1965). As a modern person found herself a stranger and solitary in the world, if she now existed in cosmic as well as social insecurity, if she were as homeless in the world as she was in the universe, then the rescue actions that occurred during the Holocaust years must take on an added and more profound significance.

For some reason, certain righteous gentiles were able to overcome their existential mistrust as well as their mistrust of their fellow human being, reject the ideal of collectivism, remain in touch with the *I* of their being, and achieve communication with the *Thou* of others and rescue virtual strangers, imperil their own lives and the lives of their families for the sake of strangers, and reach a remarkable communion with a reified collection of downtrodden outcasts, then their confidence in existence in general was not destroyed, a fear Buber held as ominously possible for each one in the modern society. Jewish survivors, but rarely rescuers, experienced a loss of trust in God, a loss that Buber described as a portent for mistrust in eternity.

It was only in our time that Buber feared humanity had reached the condition in which they could not reach out from their solitude and touch the divine form. At the

core of this conflict between mistrust and trust of eternity was the loss of confidence in human existence which yielded a concomitant loss of trust in God. It was only in our time that this solitude became so immense that the person was paralyzed in his subjectivity. This inability to reach God paralleled Nietzsche's "God is dead" proclamation, a description Buber called the solitary individual's imprisonment in subjectivity which caused him to relativize all values and seek communication with only himself. Mistrust reigned and we witnessed a radical dissolution of all mystery between person and person. Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud have promoted theories and ideologies which consisted of seeing through and unmasking the other in terms of individual psychology or sociology (Friedman, 1960).

Disguised as objective judgment, one dissembled the other to see through false ideologies and unmask his opponent's position. And as society split into groups through its nationalistic tendency, we were no longer able to re-establish a sphere of values common to all humankind (Buber, 1965). Those rescued Jewish survivors who rejected God, retreated into nihilism (Rubenstein, 1975), or declared that any messianic deliverance that occurs in the near future must be profane in light of the Holocaust genocide (Stern, 1982), formed groups who virtually dare God to declare His presence through personal revelation. It was their reaction to their experiencing radical evil that continued the eclipse of the *Eternal Thou* necessary to achieve a world of relation and communion among people of different backgrounds and opinions. For the re-realization of the direction toward good, the problem of radical evil must be addressed and solutions offered that strive to end the eclipse and re-establish the light of God.

## **The Eclipse of God**

The eclipse of God, a situation in which the light of heaven was shut off from humanity's side, characterized the historical hour through which the world was and is passing. This eclipse may be seen as not taking place in human subjectivity but in Being itself. This metaphor was the human side of the silence of God, or of God hiding His face, (Buber, 1952). Although God lived intact in the light of His eternity, we became His "slayer" and he who refused to submit himself to the effective reality of transcendence contributed to the human responsibility for the eclipse. If the human person became incapable of apprehending reality absolutely independent of himself and having a relation with it, there would have been no rescue work of Jews by non-Jews in Europe. If there had been no rescue work, Heidegger may have been right in saying that we can no longer image God. When the world seemed empty of God and irretrievably abandoned to the forces of tyranny, God is, Buber wrote, but He is not present (Buber, 1945). The rise of Hitler and the immense scope of Nazi terror and genocide appeared to validate Buber's view. But the work of individual and groups of rescuers provided some answer to Buber's question

How is a life with God still possible in a time in which there is an Oswiecim? The estrangement has become too cruel, the hiddenness too deep. One can still 'believe in the God who allowed these things to happen,' but can one still speak to Him? Can one still hear His word? . . . Dare we recommend to . . . the Job of the gas chambers: "Call to him; for He is kind, for His mercy endureth forever?" (Buber, 1961, p. 162).

Buber's demand of himself and others to ask 'real' questions and accept only 'real' answers reached its zenith in light of the evil he experienced in Europe during the Holocaust years. Understanding such evil personally posed a dilemma even Buber could not thoroughly confront. When he accepted the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1953, much to the dismay and outrage of his fellow Israelis and world-wide Jewry, Buber outlined the tension with which he approached this controversial event.

With those who took part in this action in any capacity, I, one of the survivors, have only in a formal sense a common humanity. They have so radically removed themselves from the human sphere, so transposed themselves into a sphere of monstrous inhumanity inaccessible to my power of conception, that not even hatred, much less an overcoming of hatred, was able to arise in me. And what am I that I could here presume to 'forgive'! (Friedman, 1983, p. 119).

The exploration of evil and the forgiveness of evil through this vocabulary removes the ideas of good and evil from the category of ethical abstraction and transfers it into the domain of existent states of human reality. Without considering the reality of those involved within a cataclysmic struggle with good and evil, discussion of duality is relegated to the status theological abstraction. It is my purpose to investigate the idea of good and evil as one existent state of human reality and to discuss this state within the parameters of the modern metaphor of evil, the Holocaust, and entertain questions of absolute or radical evil as a state of man that reflects substantial character which is existent in man's reality. This will be accomplished through the development of moral

vocabulary related to the historical development of the evil as well as this particular circumstance of evil in its temporal setting in mid-twentieth century Europe based on the philosophy of Martin Buber; the tracing of philosophical-historical roots of the playing out of similar situations of radical evil; the examination of radical evil defined by the Holocaust by investigating the nature and work of Christian and non-Jewish rescuers from the *I-Thou* perspective; the writing of a creative and perhaps poetic representation of the discussion of coming to know evil personally through Hasidic parable style of the Ba'al Shem Tov, Rabbi Nachman, the Early and Later Masters as rendered by Martin Buber; and the consideration of the implications for the teaching of good, evil, and the forgiveness of radical evil as it relates to Holocaust rescuers in schools, utilizing Buberian educational methods and moral vocabulary.

## CHAPTER II

### II. HASIDIC AND KABBALISTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF RADICAL EVIL

Although the teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov were preserved incompletely, both his legacy and the legacies of other Hasidic *zaddikim* have been transmitted and received through their disciples' hastily written as well as oral renditions. Martin Buber has become known as the twentieth century transcriber, translator, and historian of the renditions of the Ba'al Shem Tov and other Hasidic masters' teachings through this unique style of parable.

#### The Ba'al Shem Tov

Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the Ba'al Shem Tov, or Master of the Good Name, personified the epitome of Poland's influence as the creative ground for Hasidism. In this first flowering of Judaism since the Spanish expulsion, Poland produced an indigent, frail, young, yet independent Jewish culture (Buber, 1956). The Ba'al Shem, a *zaddik* from the city of Mesbysz, was a simple yet genuine man who was subject to experiences of fervor. He was reputed to have prayed and conducted his life as if he were in the hands of some great guiding power. Although he felt that no one person was worthy to receive all of his thought and teaching, the Ba'al Shem left seven loosely written tenets of religious philosophy. The Ba'al Shem's seven themes revolved around this concept of soul entry and soul building that lead to salvation, although he stressed that such salvation could only be experienced by he who submerged himself in the holy. A human

person's thought constituted his being and he who thought of the upper world was therefore in it. Thus the movement from the world of humanity to the upper world of light was understandable from this perspective of the Ba'al Shem's teachings. The seven teachings built one upon the prior:

1. God is in each thing as its primal essence.
2. God can only be apprehended by the innermost strength of the soul.
3. If a soul's strength is liberated, man can receive the divine at any place and at any time.
4. Each action dedicated in itself is the way to the heart of the world.
5. In all things, even dead things, there dwell sparks of life that fall into the ready souls.
6. There is nothing that is evil and unworthy of love. Man's urges are not evil; "the greater a man, the greater his urge."
7. The pure and holy man makes his urge a "chariot for God" and delivers it from all shells and allows his soul to complete itself. Thus man must feel his urges and take possession of them (Buber, 1956, p.13).

These tenets cannot be understood completely, however, without consideration of the story of the sparks of pre-creation, a story that preceded but was alluded to in *The Zohar*, (*The Book of Splendor*). This text was written at the end of the thirteenth century C.E., and received its messianic drive after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century. Known as the "Bible of the Mystics", the *Zohar* was widely assumed to have been written in the 1280s by Moses ben Shem Tov de Leon in Guadalajara, a small town northeast of Madrid. De Leon attributed the original writing of the *Zohar* to the rabbinic legend, Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai, in the second century C.E.

Written mostly in Aramaic, the *Zohar's* fundamental aims were to explain the *mitzvot* in a mystical way and to encourage the performance of *mitzvot* for mystical purposes (Sonsino & Syme, 1986). The lessons of the mystics from the *Zohar* revolved around hidden meanings of particular Torah texts and explanations of the mysteries of the soul. Also of concern were: the mysterious powers of the Hebrew aleph-bet, the profound nature of God, and the kabbalistic significance of the ten commandments (Sonsino & Syme, 1986).

The legends of the sparks were derived from the *Zohar*, the masterpiece of Spanish kabbalism, and its discussion of pre-Creation. In this account, God's first action was not creation, but was *tsimtsum*, or contracting of Himself, to enable the creation of the physical and heavenly worlds. When God sought to house His perfect light of creation within vessels, many of the vessels could not hold such perfect light and shattered. Others could not contain the perfect light and overflowed. In both cases, sparks of the perfect light fell to the earth and became housed within the creatures of creation.

### **Isaac Luria and Kabbalism**

The middle of the sixteenth century C.E. witnessed a new era of Jewish mysticism that exalted the ecstatic act of the individual as co-worker with God to achieve the redemption of all people. This movement was inaugurated by the postclassicist, Isaac Luria. Luria was often referred to as *Ha-Ari* (The Lion), from the Hebrew initials of the words *Ha-Elohi Rabbi Yitzhak* (The Divine Rabbi Isaac). Born in Jerusalem in 1534 of a Polish-German father and Sephardic mother, Luria later lived in Cairo where he studied

kabbala. He led an ascetic, solitary life and settled in Safed in 1570. There he became the student of Moses Cordobero, one of the most learned kabbalistic thinkers of the time. Luria's reputation grew and many considered him one of the special scholars of the mystic tradition who was possessed by a "holy spirit," or had received special revelations and messages from the prophet Elijah, the predecessor of the Messiah. Some of his students suggested Luria himself might be the Messiah or his forerunner. Lurianic kabbalah recognized the eternal validity of the historical facts of the Torah and Koran and was thus classified as conservative kabbalistic thinking. Because he and his disciples preserved the foundations of traditional authority for all time, they were able to treat the scriptures with almost unlimited freedom. Luria's writing introduced the freedom to despair for the first time into classical scripture. Luria therefore represented a paradoxical combination that included both aspects of mysticism in its fullest development: the legitimate completion of Rabbinical doctrine and a use of symbols to communicate a new revelation in an intense and dangerous manner. He claimed his source of inspiration was the prophet Elijah. Because Luria was intensely pious and had an impressive personality, this source of inspiration engendered a new authority in its own right. And this new authority brought profound changes into Judaism. Although Luria himself was reticent about his source of inspiration and claimed each new revelation was lower in rank than the previous one, "[t]he mystical experience that was his source is still as authentic as any, and as high in rank as any earlier phenomenon in the world of Rabbinical Judaism" (Scholem, 1969, p. 21).

Luria's orthodox orientation toward kabbala was radically different from the revolutionary heretical kabbala of Nathan of Gaza (d. 1680). Although both represented gnostic myth formation which placed them at the fringes of Rabbinic Judaism, only Luria's involved an orthodox form of gnosis. Followers of the revolutionary school named Nathan of Gaza the prophet and theologian of the mystics. They also established Sabbatai Zevi as the messiah. Their mythology was characterized as an heretical antinomian deviation (Scholem, 1969). Luria's fundamental myth underlaid kabbala.

Luria wrote as a reaction to the expulsion of Jews from Spain, an edict that again raised the question: Why the exile of the Jews and just what is their vocation in the world? Luria's *Zohar* addressed the question of Jewish exile in history, and, coupled with his three great symbols, constituted the new conceptions which were at the heart of and essence of Luria's system. These symbols were: *tsimtsum* (self-limitation of God); *shevirah* (breaking of the vessels); and *tikkun* (harmonious correction and mending of the flaw which came into the world through *shevirah*) (Scholem, 1969). Although the concept of *tsimtsum* came into being and pre-dated Luria's work, it was only through his efforts that this idea became significant.

Using the concept of God's becoming more hidden, rather than His stepping out of Himself or revealing Himself, Luria introduced cosmic drama into Jewish writings. The act of *tsimtsum* created empty, pneumatic, and primordial space which made possible something other than God and His pure essence. Before the contraction, all God's powers of judgment were in infinite harmony with the roots of all other potencies. After *tsimtsum*, they were concentrated in a single point; namely, primordial space (*pleroma*)

(Scholem, 1969, p. 111). At this mighty point in the cosmic drama, the powers of stern judgment included evil and the whole ensuing process of creation attempted to remove the evil from powers of judgment which were not eliminated from God.

Luria termed the events in the *pleroma* as *intradivine* because the nature of the forms that came into being in this *pleroma* were determined by the cooperation and conflict between the two elements of stern judgment and evil but were modified by the workings of a third element, a ray from God's essence, which had broken through and fallen back into primordial space.

Luria also introduced the conception of Torah as a living organism. This idea has become fundamental to the *Zohar* and could be traced from Philo's account of the Jewish sect of Therapeutae In Egypt. "For the entire Torah (*nomothesia*) seems to these people something akin to a living being; the literal sense is the body, while the soul is the secret sense underlying the written word" (Philo, *De vita contemplativa*, p. 119). Similarly, another image of *Zohar* as a living organism was contained in the writings of Moses de Leon, one of the main authors of the *Zohar*.

For the Torah is called the Tree of Life...Just as a tree consists of branches and leaves, bark, sap, and roots, each one of which components can be termed tree, there being no substantial difference between them, you will also find that the Torah contains many inner and outward things, and all form a single Torah and a tree, without difference between them...And although among the sages of the Talmud one forbids what the other allows, one declares a thing to be ritually clean which another terms impermissible, one says this and another that, nevertheless it is necessary to know that the whole is one unity (de Leon, Fol. 100b.).

Although Luria and his followers were the first to connect symbols used but not related to each other in the *Zohar*, his most controversial symbolic connection was the origin and meaning of the relationships between written and oral law. The written Torah, or Pentateuch, was known as the codified history and laws given to Moses by God at Mount Sinai. The oral law, the sum total of everything that had been said by scholars and sages in the explanation of the written corpus, performed the necessary role of completing the written Torah and making it more concrete. In Rabbinic tradition, Moses received both the written and oral laws on Mount Sinai so that everything said later was known as having been derived from Moses' original receipt of revelation. In Rabbinic Judaism, the "two" Torahs were one. Their view was that the oral tradition and written word completed one another; neither was conceivable without the other.

The kabbalists, through Luria, connected the two traditions with the symbolism of the *sefirot*, or layers of the cosmological universe. The written Torah became known as the symbol of the giving sphere of the Godhead and was aligned with the *sefirah* of *tif'ereth*. The oral Torah tradition became the symbol of the receptive sphere, and at once established the *shekhinah* (the exiled spirit of God), and the notion of the "Congregation of Israel" (Scholem, 1969). Luria died in 1572 at the age of thirty-eight having written very little. His legacy was preserved by his most brilliant students, most notably Hayyim Vital Calabrese (d. 1620) (Sonsino & Syme, 1986).

Luria's premise that influenced Hasidic thought and writing was that the world emanated out of God. He believed in a demiurgic intermediary power almost entirely dependent on the kabbala (Buber, 1956). Luria wrote that there was a direct influence

on Good and a redeeming power of the human soul that purified and perfected itself. Whereas the Talmud taught that the Messiah would come when all souls have entered into corporeal life, many Kabbalists, like Luria, of the Middle Ages could tell "whether the soul of a man who stood before them had descended into him from the world of the unborn or was temporarily staying with him in the midst of its wanderings," (Buber, 1956, p.7).

This thought introduced the concept of *gilgul*, or the revolution and wandering of a soul that was on a journey. Such a wandering soul may have entered a person at his conception or birth, but even if he had received such a soul on its journey, he could also receive one or more souls at that certain moment in which these souls united themselves with his own. Such souls could be souls of dead men which joined with the living to complete unfinished work; higher, detached spirits which descended in the complete fullness of light; or individual rays which assisted an incomplete or imperfect soul that was dwelling within a person and whose task is to help that person to completion, a situation in which one soul supplemented and purified the other. The *ibbur*, or impregnation of a human being by one or more souls was the moment at which a soul's entry took place.

Kabbalists did not consider such soul movement extraordinary; rather, they attributed this metempsychosis to the idea that each soul took upon itself the role needed at that moment of *ibbur*. Of Luria's contribution, Buber wrote that

[b]y all these means the souls are purified of the primal darkening and the world redeemed from the original confusion. Only when this is done, when all the journeys are completed, then only does time shatter and the Kingdom of God begin. Last of all, the soul of the Messiah descends into life (Buber, 1956, p.8).

Luria wanted to found this process of ascension to the world to come as determined by the actions of some special people. Through the teachings and messianic fervor of the Ba'al Shem Tov, these followers became the Hasidim of seventeenth and eighteenth century Poland.

### **Buber's Interpretation of Hasidic and Kabbalistic Thought**

Hasidic teaching in the style of the Ba'al Shem Tov and as interpreted by Buber in light of Luria's contributions was concerned with four levels of religious philosophy: *hitlahavut*, *avoda*, *kavannah*, and *shiflut*. These four levels mingled and were intertwined in almost all Hasidic parables recounted by Buber. *Hitlahavut*, or ecstasy, was considered the place of the world and in it the meaning of life was unlocked. In this moment, all that was past and that would become future drew near to the present; time shrank; and the line between eternities disappeared. Only the moment lived and the moment became eternity. *Avoda*, or service, referred to the service of God in time and space. Whereas *hitlahavut* may be considered as the mystic meal or fulfillment, *avoda* should be thought of as the mystic offering or longing. Hasidic legend taught that from every deed an angel was born, thus *avoda* encouraged action. The human spirit, through service, should bring the shekhinah to its source. Ecstasy and service can be known as a duality and only redemption would unite the two in eternity. *Kavannah*, or intention,

was not will; it was the mystery of the soul directed to a goal. It did not mean purpose, but it did imply goal. Mystically, *kavannah* was the ray of God's glory that dwelt in each person and meant redemption. Because the coming of the Messiah was the signal of redemption and because this redemption *must* happen here and now, the Hasidic follower felt therefore that eternity was in the ground of time. *This* moment will be the chosen moment and the Hasid lives in life of the fervor of this moment (Buber, 1969).

Fourth, the understanding of *shiflut*, or humility, centered on recognizing that all things were new and without a past. This quality of uniqueness implied that there was essential good in every human person that each one was given to unfold. Because every person was unique, the one who became entirely individual precluded otherness from having any power over the individual. Thus a person could become redeemed, and his journey and wanderings could be completed. Redemption of the world would take place when "all weep because the Divine Presence is exiled and all yearn for its return" (Buber, 1947). The existential dilemma for the Hasidic person was that the person sought God in lonely fervor, yet each person needed to fulfill service that only living within a community could fulfill.

Yet redemption could take place only within the individual. The more unique a person became, the more such a person could give to others. The mystery of humility of each person within humanity was expressed in the thought that "...[e]very man has a light over him, and when the souls of the two men meet, the two lights join each other and from them goes forth one light. And this is called generation," (Buber, 1953, p. 43). To feel universal generation as a sea and as oneself as a wave comprised the

mystery. By recognizing his uniqueness, his smallness, and his potential for redemption, the person became humble. The individual's inability to conquer evil also helped each one recognize the need for humility within creation. Earthly rulers, Buber wrote, cannot subjugate the *I* that is intent on evil. Rather, the sparks must find their kin, behold the primal light because the demonic cannot exist within its brilliance, (Buber, 1947b).

The interaction of nature, individual person, and God achieved significance in Hasidic stories. Luria's interpretation of the concept of holy actions, such as ritual immersion baths, night watches, ecstatic contemplation and unconditional love were meant to achieve the purification of souls in a storm. Another recurring theme in Hasidic storytelling was the idea that *zaddikim* had the ability to compel the upper world through mystical exercises (Buber, 1956). This constant interaction precluded the Hasidic men from becoming ascetics. *Hasid*, which means "world piety," implied the urging of people to become pious and to bring the transcendent over into the immanent. At its core was the attributing of highly realistic guidance to ecstasy as the epitome of existence. The Ba'al Shem Tov's role in Hasidic history was that to him was attributed the ability to unite the power of the knowledge of the name of God and the possession of a "good name," that is, being trusted by people (Buber, 1956). Hasidic stories, therefore, paralleled the idea that "...only in joy can the spiritual being awaken and fulfill itself until, free from all lack, it matures to the divine" (Buber, 1956, p. 10-11).

In recording and rendering the Hasidic stories of the Ba'al Shem and Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav (d. 1810), Buber introduced three themes that underlaid such parables. These themes centered around the mystic concepts of time, sparks, and the

spoken word. When Buber came to know from Kant that time was merely a structure of the mind, he was able to bypass traditional writing style that demanded dissociation from the source or subject in both the spheres of time and space. Thus when he rendered the stories of the Ba'al Shem, Rabbi Nachman, the Early and Later Masters, the idea of time became central to his understanding and therefore to his rendering of Hasidic stories. Buber described each person as having his sphere of being in space and time which was allotted to him to be redeemed through him. He must journey and wander through this time to raise the sparks of primal being and original creation which wait for the word of freedom. Journeys such as these always had secret destinations of which the traveller was unaware and each person must become or seek a *zaddik* to aid his soul which was abandoned to this whirlpool of wandering.

Sparks in inanimate objects were thought to be imprisoned, and if a person was able to lift the holy spark, he freed the imprisoned light (Graves & Patai, 1964). Because this was not a prescribed, methodical ritual, there was no leap from the everyday into the miraculous to effect such a release. "It is not a matter of the action, but only its dedication that is decisive," (Buber, 1955, p. 37). But those sparks which had entered man's soul belonged to him and he must redeem them by his own power, for example, when he allowed each impulse intent on the particular to flow into the divine creative impulse. This then was the *kavanna* of receiving, that one redeemed the sparks in the surrounding things and the sparks that drew near out of the invisible (Buber, 1955).

The Spoken Word's importance in Buber's writings of the Ba'al Shem Tov and other Hasidic masters was drawn from the understanding that to the Hasidic community, speech was considered rare and therefore awe-inspiring. The letters of the aleph-bet were thought to be the elements of the world and their intermixture was equivalent to the inwardness of reality. The Word became known as the abyss through which the speaker strode. Buber wrote that "...one should speak words as if the heavens were opened in them. And as if it were not so that you take the word in your mouth, but rather as if you entered the word" (Buber, 1955, p.39). The paramount importance of the Word was seen in its derivation: world, soul, and divinity rose, joined, and united, and became the Word. Words united themselves in God to genuine unity. Man's soul was set in them. And when man prayed in the "fire of his being," (Buber, 1956) God spoke the innermost Word.

An Hasidic parable adhered to the steps of the way of humankind. Buber (1950) outlined these steps in six interactive plateaus, beginning with the individual himself; continuing through each person's particularity; individuality; beginning; need to look outward as well as inward; and the idea of time and space. Clearly clouded by mysteries and impossibilities, Hasidic parables could be known through the dilemma that there was something a person could not find anywhere in the world; nevertheless, there was a place where one could find it. The Ba'al Shem Tov advised that there was no encounter with any being or any thing in the course of our lives that was without a hidden significance. Because the philosophy of Judaism linked the world of here and now with the world to come, Hasidic parables often related divine experiences of *zaddikim* as expressions of the

individual's fundamental purpose: that each person was created to unify the two worlds. Thus the *zaddik's* purpose was not to take the place of the Hasidic man, but was to empower him, to help his ailing body as well as his ailing soul by recognizing how the two were bound up with one another (Buber, 1947a).

The *zaddik* made communication with God easier for his Hasidim by strengthening the Hasid in his hour of doubt, without infiltrating him with truth, and teaching him how to give the words of prayer the right direction. Hasidic stories remained true to this premise and the role of the *zaddik* as guide and his function as co-creator with both man and God became fundamental.

Hasidic stories were not Talmudic stories because replies given in Hasidic stories, unlike those of Talmudic stories, were given on different planes from that on which questions were asked. The text of such a story became a starting point from which personal questions and personal admonitions could be inferred. For example, when considering the Talmudic question of God asking Adam, "Where art thou?" the Hasidic interpreter immediately was confronted with a different question of meaning. Certainly God knew where Adam was and the inference that must be made was that this was not a question of locus or geography, but was on a higher plane and could be interpreted as: "What have you done with your life that I gave you?"

The lesson to be drawn might be that an individual could not escape from the eye of God, but in trying to hide from Him, he was hiding from himself. And all depended on whether the person faced the question. Thus the Hasidic story was not an

interpretation of Talmud or a fable, and the conclusion drawn was not a conclusion at all; rather, it was a beginning.

The purpose of teaching in the Hasidic manner of the *zaddikim* as we know it from Buber was to generate complete turning of the whole person toward divine service and the bringing about of redemption through unification of the world of the here and now and the world to come. As the Messiah's time approached, Buber wrote, the first two pillars, teaching and service, shrank, and the third pillar, good deeds, was enlarged in scope and significance (Buber, 1947b).

Also clearly implicit in Buber's renderings of Hasidic stories was that of total and complete human person. Stories were not simply words strung together; rather, they were expressions of the totality of the teller. In Hasidic stories, the forces of nature, God, and individual person came together to speak to and to learn from each other. Such stories were always concerned with the "simple person" living his life in fervent joy. Very often these stories illustrated how each person must recast the evil urge into an urge for what was good; how to develop rapturous bonds with the upper worlds; how to grow aware of the divine sparks hidden within creatures and things; how, through *kavanna*, to illumine the everyday life; and how we were to keep our holy goal in sight, (Buber, 1947a). In such stories the role of the *zaddik* was the focal point.

Although the *zaddik* had the greatest possible influence on the total religious and worldly being of the Hasid, he did not relieve anyone of what he must do for himself (Buber, 1947a). Therefore the Hasidic story was one of interdependence and man's need

to "participate in the multitude," as the *zaddik* must teach the multitude in his service toward God (Buber, 1947a, p. 7).

### **Buber's Recounting of Hasidic Parable**

Many of the tales set by Buber illustrated interdependence of person, nature, and God. Often he wrote about how the teacher helped his disciples find themselves, and later included passages in which the disciples brought about their teacher finding himself again (Buber, 1948b). *Zaddikim*, we were told, must occasionally work together and one pre-ordained absence from the group's efforts could condemn the group's actions to failure. Other times, disciples participated as individuals to bring about one or more *zaddikim*'s successes. Buber described this union of *zaddik* with his circle of disciples as a powerful dynamic unit which could climb the ladder toward unity and redemption (Buber, 1947a). This ladder of ten rungs was the path on which people wandered on their way toward redemption (Buber, 1947b). The *zaddik* as well as the Hasid could climb the ten rungs, and they could rise and fall according to the successes and failures of their daily experiences. The rungs are described as:

1. The Rung of God and Man
2. The Rung of Prayer
3. The Rung of Heaven and Earth
4. The Rung of Service
5. The Rung of Teachings
6. The Rung of The Way
7. The Rung of Love
8. The Rung of Good and Evil
9. The Rung of Pride and Humility
10. The Rung of Redemption (Buber, 1947b).

Ascending the ten rungs was the person's path toward answering the question: How could we find meaning of our existence on earth? And each story related by Buber illustrated the way each person could achieve greater meaning for oneself and for redemption of the world.

Appended is my attempt to relate a story that could have been written in the spirit of the Ba'al Shem Tov, Rabbi Nachman, or the Early or Later Masters to elicit questions a person must ask herself regarding the concepts of good and evil, especially the manner in which they related to the modern metaphor of evil, the Holocaust. My premise for writing this story was that through the story format we can ask questions that do not fit directly or singularly into spheres of religion, ethics, metaphysics, or philosophy. Because the Holocaust was a unique event in modern history, questions regarding it may have to be posed in alternative fashions. According to the tenets of the Hasidic story as outlined above, I have written an original story to consider those alternative methods of questioning. The story and commentary by Rabbi Joan Glazer Farber are appended to this document.

## CHAPTER III

### III. DEVELOPMENT OF RADICAL GOODNESS

The concept of radical evil can be understood through the analysis of the seemingly dichotomous idea of *radical goodness*. Philosophers, theologians, and ethicists have considered the idea of evil in great detail; however, the positions of such thinkers toward goodness have been less intense and more difficult to extract from their writings. This section attempts to produce an ordered presentation from which will evolve a modern conception of radical goodness or ultimate happiness, to which Martin Buber's philosophical anthropology will respond.

#### **Martin Buber's Unity of Good and Evil**

Martin Buber's (1878-1965) images of good and evil corresponded to anthropologically apprehensible occurrences in the life-path of the human being (Buber, 1953). Considering the images of evil as belonging to two phases on the human person's path, Buber asserted that images of good could occur at either the first or second stage. Whereas the first image of evil corresponded to a Hebrew Scripture interpretation and the second image paralleled Iranian myth, the innovative introduction of the potentiality of good within either stage marked a radical shift in the coming to know of radical goodness.

The first stage of evil was in the state of living reality in which the purpose of humankind was to overcome the naturally chaotic state of the soul. Within this stage,

the person experienced undirected surging passion and sought to overcome it by breaking out of it violently wherever a breach was forced. Buber decried this turbulent attempt at such overcoming as delusional; instead, he posed the person's potential and striving to achieve direction by unifying human energies. This unification represented the only manner in which such re-direction could be achieved (Buber, 1953).

Persian legends surrounded humankind's situation within the ensuing second stage of living reality, that is, the person's undirected urge to overcome this contradictory state of being. The later stage was a culmination of the person's inability to gain direction as a result of pseudo-decision making and often became a self-affirmed position in which one could be found within an absolute total constitution of personality. Within the first stage, the person did not choose but merely acted. In the second stage, the person chose, but chose himself, in the sense of "his being-constituted-thus or having-become-thus" (Buber, 1953, p. 140).

Radical evil did not occur in the first stage. Whatever errors, misdeeds, or directionless actions were undertaken while in this stage, their commission was not an actual doing of a chosen deed, but a sliding into it. In the second stage, evil became radical, that is, the person within this phase of being found himself self-willed and

. . . whoever lends to that which, in the depths of self-awareness was time and again recognized by him as what should be negated, the mark of being affirmed, because it is his, gives it the substantial character which it did not previously possess. If we may compare the occurrence of the first stage to an eccentric whirling movement, the process of the freezing of flowing water may serve as a simile to illustrate the second (Buber, 1953, p. 140).

Buber's concept of goodness was different from this growing of decisionless and self-affirmed evil. Good retained the character of direction at both stages. His belief that there was only one direction for the unified soul to undertake meant that to whatever end a current decision was reached, in the reality of existence all the potentially and seemingly diverse available decisions, were simply variations on a single one. The reality of this decision was that it was made continually in a single direction.

Understanding the direction that characterized the good can be understood in two ways. First, direction can be known as the way towards the person that I am supposed to be. I can apprehend and come to know this person only within self-awareness that both divided and decided from without and did not return my energy back to me. Rather, it transformed my undirected energies into it by conferring on them a direction that enabled me to recognize more clearly that singular person I am supposed to become. Each person's results became similar at this point: precisely because the person conferred the direction upon it and took direction toward it within vital lived experience, the person was immersed within paradox of actuality and significance (Friedman, 1960).

The second understanding of direction related to the good was that of direction toward God. Only through both understandings of direction did Buber allow for the attainment of the way toward the achievement of ultimate good. Insisting upon a duality of comprehension demanded a concomitant understanding that the person understood the vortex of decisionlessness that could persuade the person to apply the name "God" to a projection of oneself. He insisted that the person develop a personal, intimate

relationship with the *Eternal Thou* of the dialogue of being, and ascribe to the *Eternal Thou* the authorship of the human person's uniqueness, which could not be derived from within the human world.

Human uniqueness constituted the unrepeatable form of being here and could not be particularized or analyzed into any elements. It could not be created out of any elemental forms. Humanity's individual experiences evolved within this uniqueness and were entrusted to each for execution to the fullest ability of one's specific capabilities and potentialities. No one was placed within the human world merely for the execution of existence; rather, Buber envisioned a person's progress and actualization as the fulfillment of a "being-intention, an intention of being which was personal . . . a realization of the right in infinite personal shapes" (Buber, 1953, p. 142).

Buber's answer to the questions of doubt, uncertainty, and decisionlessness was creation and it had a goal. The goal was evidenced in humanly right service in the direction toward God. Such service formed the extent and scope to which a single person could glimpse the uniqueness purposed for the person in creation. In deciding, the person chose direction. The choice was fraught with meaning: taking the direction toward the point of being at which one encountered the divine mystery of the one's created uniqueness that awaited us all.

Buber believed that such a concept of good could not be located within any system of ethics because all such systems that we knew came into being because of mystery and existed by virtue of it. Revelation accounted for the ethos of every ethical system, even when the system overcame the ethos and failed to recognize its origin. The human

person was authenticated in the service performed to the goal of creation. Without setting off upon and keeping to the one divine direction as far as one was able, humanity certainly could have what it termed, "life," perhaps the life of the soul and even the life of the spirit in all its freedom. Yet without the path toward the good (direction), humanity lacked genuine existence.

Buber recounted his coming to know supreme goodness, or the true meaning of life, in his interpretation of Psalm 73. The significance of this psalm was multi-fold for him because this psalm played a profound role in course of events that was Buber's life. In accordance with the wishes of Franz Rosenzweig, Buber's great friend and co-translator of the Hebrew Bible into German, Buber read this psalm at Rosenzweig's funeral. In his last completed work, Buber wrote

What is it that so draws me to this poem [Psalm 73] that, pieced together out of description, report, and confession, it draws me ever more strongly the older I become? I think it is this, that here a person reports how he attained to the true sense of his life experience and that this sense touches directly on the eternal (Buber, 1953, p. 31).

What has become known as Buber's "death poem" was also his "life poem," for it captured the trust and remarkable intuition of the eternal that accompanied him on the way from the time of his crisis over the infinity of time and space that brought him close to suicide at the age of fourteen (Friedman, 1991). And in the end, it was four lines of this poem that were inscribed upon Buber's tombstone at his own request. It has been through critical interpretation of Psalm 73 that we have come to know the deepest

attitude toward death and the concomitant ultimate significance in life that Buber affirmed.

Buber considered that our coming to know the world through our decisive experiences in relation was a gradual process. We first accepted what those experiences seemed to offer us and we then wove that acceptance into a view that made us think we had become aware of our world. What we often tragically realized was that view constituted only an appearance. Although our experiences had not deceived us, we took them, turned them into our own use, and did not penetrate to their heart. Buber believed the way to such profound penetration was deeper experience.

Psalms 73 told the story of a man whose experiences affirmed that the wicked in this world did prosper, not as the question appeared to Job as why the good did not prosper. The deeper experience was played out not in individual terms, as a confusion of Hebrew translation often afforded; rather, it could be known only through the happiness or unhappiness of Israel as a people, a nation, a culture, and a way of life. Specific to the psalmist's intention was the unhappiness of Israel's suffering both in the catastrophe which led to the Babylonian exile and in the beginning of the exile itself (Buber, 1953). Buber interpreted that only the one who had experienced the depths of this personal suffering could speak in this voice.

The authentic person's destiny included the destiny of one's people. The ultimate message became clear: one experienced God's goodness, not as some reward, but as the revelation of what the one could not know from the singularly human side of the dialogue--that the person was continually with God (Friedman, 1991). One who was or

became pure in heart could not draw the conclusion that God was not good to Israel. The dividing line was not between those who sinned and those who did not, but between those who were pure in heart and those who were impure in heart. Even the sinner whose heart became pure experienced God's goodness as it was revealed to the sinner (Buber, 1953).

The truly wicked, therefore, were those who deliberately persisted in impurity of heart. Ultimate goodness was consistent with experience of God's goodness to the extent that the person could purify the heart. "The state of the heart determines," Buber wrote. "That is why 'heart' [was] the dominant key-word in this psalm, which recurs six times" (Buber, 1953, p. 35). Buber's approach to goodness was through investigation and examination of the ways that prevented the person's coming to know this goodness. Psalm 73 recounted the false ways in which the one of impure heart could experience life, yet miss the opportunities to realize the goodness. Through the suffering of the psalmist who traveled the road of endurance of the trials of life rather than the way of knowing that God was continually with him was illustrated the inability to know goodness through human consciousness or feeling. No human being was able to be continually turned to the presence of God. When the person doubted or became uncertain, Buber pointed to the very act of revelation as proof of God's continued presence.

The manifestation of this continued presence was the sign that Buber inserted into his poem on mystic ecstasy: that God had taken the sufferer's right hand. Analogizing in human terms, Buber compared this dialogue with God to the way in which in the dark a father takes his little child by the hand, only partially to lead him "but primarily in

order to make present to him, in the warm touch of coursing blood, the fact that he, the father, is continually with him" (Friedman, 1991, p. 452).

God counseled and revealed by making His presence known. Although He led the child from darkness into the light and the child was capable of walking alone, the child was not relieved of directing his own steps. The ultimate good changed not only the meaning of the psalmist's life, but it also changed his perspective on death, an interpretation Buber conceded was inextricably altered by both his experience of the Nazis and the war in Palestine. For the oppressed one, death was only the mouth towards which the sluggish stream of suffering and trouble flowed, but in death it had become the event in which God, the One who grasped the person's hand, "takes" the person. The *kavod*, or honor, did not consist in any glorious afterlife; rather, from the human point of view it represented the fulfillment of existence. From God's point of view it was the entrance into eternity. Buber envisioned neither human aspiration to enter heaven after death nor one to remain on earth. He imagined no personal immortality and no continuation in time's dimension (Friedman, 1991).

It is not merely the flesh which vanishes in death, but also his heart, that inmost personal organ of the soul, which formerly, "rose up" in rebellion against the human fate and which he then "purified" till he became pure in heart--this personal soul also vanishes. But He who was the true part and true fate of this person, the "rock" of his heart, God, is eternal. It is into His eternity that he who is pure in heart moves in death, and this eternity is something absolutely different from any kind of time (Buber, 1953, p. 47).

The finality of mankind which has existed within the tension of holy insecurity of the dynamic of farness and nearness from God was shattered by the coming of death. When death occurred, the human being's heart vanished; the very heart from which the appearances of imagination arose. The human heart, which had previously been capable of arising up in defiance and self-affirmation, was now capable of purification. "Separation, separate souls, and time itself vanish . . . The time of the world disappears before eternity, but existing man dies into eternity as into the perfect existence" (Friedman, 1991, p. 453).

Both Martin Buber and his biographer, Maurice Friedman, agreed that Buber had been troubled by and had investigated the problem and nature of evil since the time of Buber's youth. Often absent from consideration of Buber's philosophical anthropology has been discussion of his radical departure from the philosophical norm of his day regarding the questions of goodness, the good person, the good character, and the good spirit. His often-overlooked work, *Gog und Magog (For the Sake of Heaven, 1945)*, has become known as his definitive and poetic testament to the phenomenon of the goodness of the spirit of humanity.

Buber's radical departure from traditional philosophical thought in the sphere of supreme, or radical goodness consisted in his decision to allow the good as well as the evil, that is, the holy as well as the dangerous, to appear within the special realms of human existence (Friedman, 1960). Buber (1945) gave a vivid, dramatic, and emotional accounting of the nature of evil *as well as* the understandings that underlaid its redemption within the individual and community, thereby defining and contextualizing

the nature of the good within the totality of the sphere of the conflict between the good urge and the evil urge. In this work, he gave goodness an ontology equivalent to that which he had so urgently outlined for evil, and he supplied the connecting links in the spirit that made that intricate relationship come alive. That equivalence and possibility of redemption of the human spirit became a central focus of his later writings. "He who expects from me a teaching which is anything other than a pointing of this kind will always be disappointed" (Friedman, 1960, p. 149). This pointing developed into the focus and intention of Buber's subsequent philosophy and educational direction for humankind.

Buber could no longer conceive of the opposition of good and evil as an opposition of a good and an evil will; rather, he posited the relationship as a cruel struggle within existence itself. Placing the encounter of the spirit within the mystical thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Hasidic movement based on its manuscripts and legends, the struggle issued from the release of the magic which the Baal Shem had kept in check and which had then broken loose and wreaked its work of destruction (Buber, 1947a). The central theme, that of the evil-doer who knew himself to be evil, rather than that of a just man who knew himself to be just, formed the focus of the investigation into the moral regeneration that defined the nature of the supreme good within Buberian thought. This type of person was one who was both humble and proud yet was too wrapped up in his personal world of spiritual urges to have a real relation with those outside him (Buber, 1945).

Initially, religious figures of this era defined good and evil in terms of what things were and were not forbidden. Buber's serpent of the Genesis story referred clearly to a different type of knowing, illustrated when he said Adam and Eve (and, by implication, humanity) had to become as God to know good and evil. This revolutionary type of knowing could be accomplished only by becoming as the One who had created both, that is, not as something to do or not to do, but as two contradictory forms of being. The mystical notion of God's *tsimtsum* (contracting) afforded genuine power to every human being to accomplish this knowing *as well as* to rebel against God. The good became known as the turning of the individual's soul toward God with the whole of this power to do evil (Buber, 1945).

The object of the good, characterized by Buber as love of God, was the ultimate level to which the human person could strive as it constituted the ontological proof of the *I-Eternal Thou* relationship. Buber's theological stress was that God really tempted each person and demanded that each give up everything and go through the extremity, danger and the gate of dread before anyone could receive the grace which enabled the love of God (Friedman, 1960). This extraordinary kind of love was imagined as humanity's love of God in the unique manner in which only He could be loved.

This struggle created the tension in which humanity lived because although God sowed the seed of light that would eventually enable humanity to recognize this sort of love, those individuals alienated from their human power to accomplish such love had cast the lie before being which swelled and extended in its full soreness and sorrow (Buber, 1945). Yet that seed of light contained a hidden power that would reveal itself

only in the final conflict which would arise, Buber predicted, in the land of Gog and Magog who would lead the final battle of the darkness against the light and would be struck down eventually by the Messiah himself (Friedman, 1960).

Redemption was the locus of the supreme good of humankind. Dogmatic in his reliance on mystical elements to reveal the means to redemption, Buber posited that the redemption of God "waxed in secret" and through the very evil which tried to destroy it, an illusion to the concept that the powers of destruction and redemption stemmed from the same original source. Examples of this mysticism include the dot (*yod*) in God's Hebrew name (*Shaddai*) conceived as "the primeval originating point of creation which, prior to any creative act, stood above the radiance of God" (Buber, 1945, p. 58). It was by virtue of this dot, Buber wrote, that humanity realized that the awful power of God was both capable of utterly devastating and annihilating the world as well as powerful enough to bring about the world's redemption instead. The location of this realization was critical. "We come to learn about the darkness when we enter into the gate of fear, and we come to learn about the light, when we issue forth from that gate; but we come to learn about that dot only when we reach love" (Buber, 1945, p. 45).

Part of Buber's radical departure from traditional German Judaism of his time was apparent in conception of humanity's appropriate response to the evil-doer. Rather than ostracize such a person, Buber offered that we help others by meeting their evil lovingly. Acting otherwise, a person could not help another human being who was troubled. Hatred and condemnation of the evil-doer, Buber stressed, would make the evil-doer evil himself and not just in his actions because it would cause him to cut himself off and

imprison himself in the world of his actions. Later in his life in post-Holocaust Israel, Buber again ostracized himself from world-wide contemporary Judaism when he publicly opposed the legal execution of Adolph Eichmann, a convicted Nazi exterminator of millions of European Jews. His philosophy was so absolutely and fundamentally intertwined with his lived life that he risked and received almost universal condemnation for that position.

Redemption, the ultimate expression of the supreme good, could not be divided into a part that was dependent on man and a part that was dependent on God. The human person in his humanity must be concerned only with his action alone when he acted, and should concentrate on God's grace alone after the person's action was successfully done. Man's expression of good was known through man's actions, an underscoring of traditional Jewish thought that without the deed, the ethic became empty. Buber's attitude toward repentance, the ultimate traditional Jewish expression of turning, was unusual. Repentance, he wrote, was purely an inward and psychological deed and could not be equated with the decisive turning which was not merely an attitude of the soul but was something effective in the whole corporeality of life (Buber, 1949). Repentance was revealed outwardly only in its consequences and effects. The turning was something which happened in the immediacy of the reality between the individual and God. Repentance was, at best, only an incentive to this turning.

The actions of the state of supreme goodness could now properly be called *teshuvah*, or (re)turning to God. Born in the depths of the soul out of "the despair which shatters the prison of our latent energies" and out of the suffering which purified the

soul, *teshuvah* was experienced by the person who, in his darkest hours, felt the hand of God reaching down to him. Only if the person had "the incredible courage" to take the hand of God and let it draw him up out of the darkness, could he taste the essence of redemption (Buber, 1945, p. 113). To assemble this courage, each individual must "know that his redeemer liveth" (Job 9:18) and that this redeemer wished to redeem the individual. Such an individual must accept this redemption with the turning of his whole being and therefore extricate himself from this tangled web of selfishness which had formerly presented itself to him as the means to find God as well as the particular task for which he had been intended (Buber, 1945).

Each person, Buber believed, had been created for the fulfillment of a unique purpose. His foremost task was "the actualization of his unique, unprecedented, and never-recurring potentialities, and not the repetition of something that another, and be it even the greatest, ha[d] already achieved" (Buber, 1947a). A new direction had been realized by Buber, who had incorporated several Kantian positions within his thought and writing, and the locus of the supreme good gracefully slid to encompass the individual, even the most ordinary who could now be conceived of as existing within individual splendor, as the one who could be assured the possibility of redemption, rather than envisioning the ultimate or supreme good as reserved for an Aristotelian select few or a Kantian categorical imperative with its all-encompassing perspective. The way by which each person could reach God was revealed only through the knowledge of each one's essential qualities and inclinations.

The individual was urged to recognize the objects that prevented his accomplishing this direction toward redemption and establish genuine relationship with them. "Man's task, therefore, is not to extirpate the evil urge, but to reunite it with the good" (Buber, 1950, p. 19). Each person was required to lend his personal will to the direction of his passions and reunite the good and evil urges to begin the movement of holiness which God would eventually complete. In the hallowing which resulted, "the total man [was] accepted, confirmed, and fulfilled. This [was] the true integration of man" (Buber, 1948a, p. 181).

Buber did not afford the individual personal security in this philosophy. The belief in redemption of evil did not mean the security of salvation. Upholding the prophetic writings as his source of this dilemma, Buber wrote that these prophets always aimed to shatter all security and to proclaim "in the opened abyss of the final insecurity the unwished-for God who demands that His human creatures become real . . . and confounds all who imagine that they can take refuge in the certainty that the temple of God is in their midst" (Buber, 1952b, p. 97). Furthermore, there was no other path for the responsible modern person than this "holy insecurity" (Buber, 1952b, p. 63).

The fear of God, the essence of "holy insecurity," entered into each person's struggle when the person's existence became utterly incomprehensible to oneself and one's personal existence was shattered through the mystery of the journey toward the ultimate good. Within this mystery and the journey through it, the human person stepped forth directed and assigned to the concrete, contextual situations of his existence. Thus no one could extricate himself from his lived concrete reality in order to traverse the path

toward the state of supreme goodness. This person might not accept the evil he found within this concrete reality. Rather, the person's task was to penetrate the impure with the pure. Results of such interpenetration yielded a composition of both elements, but did not denigrate the product by "saying 'yes' to the evil in advance" (Friedman, 1960, p. 137). Thus the fear of God became the indispensable gate to the love of God because the love of a god which did not comprehend fear was really idolatry, Buber wrote, and was really the adoration of a god whom one had constructed oneself.

Both the responsibility and the potential for redemption had been moved by Buber to encompass the individual yet he did not fail to recognize the critical role of community in modern society in this realization. The modern person was insecure and repressed, isolated from his fellow person yet clung desperately to the collectivity that he trusted to protect him from the might of other collectivities. This division within the modern person split each member of society into instincts and spirit, repressions and sublimations. The person now found himself incapable of direct relation with his fellow person either as a member of the body-politic or as a fellow member of a community (Friedman, 1960). This tremendous collective power had rendered the modern person's life a sterile alternation between universal war and armed peace. This modern crisis thus could be known as a crisis both of the individual and of society at large. Although Buber had moved the locus of potentiality for attainment of the supreme good to encompass the individual, he recognized the sacred and powerful status of the role of the individual within community and the interactions of communities within the total context of this struggle.

Buber saw both moral and social philosophy as determined by whether one believed in the individual, the organic group, or the dialogue between man and man to be of basic reality and value (Friedman, 1960). Unquestionably, he recognized that both individual and society existed in reality and value but they were both derived from the basic reality of the meeting between man and man. "The individual is a fact of existence in so far as he steps into a living relation with other individuals. The aggregate is a fact of existence in so far as it is built up of living units of relation" (Buber, 1965a, p. 202).

In light of this recognition, Buber developed the idea of "the essential *We*" to correspond on the level of the relation to a host of people to the "essential Thou on the level of self-being." A person therefore was truly saved from the "'one' not by a separation but only by being bound up in genuine communion" (Buber, 1965a, p. 175). He warned against the blurring of the distinction between 'social' in general and the togetherness brought about by true dialogue. And the path toward the ultimate good of both the individual and that togetherness consisted in "the life of men together and in all its forms and actions" overcoming the modern tendency toward the suppression of the elements of personal relation in favor of the elements of pure collectivity (Kohn, 1930, p. 310).

Buber's social principle meant the dialogical and he restricted the definition of the political principle to the necessary and ordered realm of the world of *It*. Although he called for a true social restructuring of society to enable humanity to realize goodness, it could not take place as a result of the blind working of economic forces or success in production. This restructuring demanded extraordinary efforts based on the longing for

rightness, that is, the vision of perfection that in religious expectation took the form of Messianism (perfection in time) and in social expectation took the form of Utopia (perfection in space). He developed the idea of genuine Utopian socialism that did not expect blind providence to save humanity through technical and material change, nor did it trust to a "free-ranging human intellect which contrive[d] to systems of absolute validity." True community, he insisted, could only be built if it satisfied a concrete situation and not simply an abstraction. Such a movement must be topical, that is, grown out of the needs of a given situation and realizing itself to the greatest possible degree here and now. Simultaneously, this local and topical realization must be nothing but a point of departure for the larger goal of organic cells unified in a restructured society" (Buber, 1958b, p. 26).

The individual's capacity to effect such a restructuring was greater than his technical efficiency and could be seen in his banding together with others in a social life which was at once mutually dependent and independent. All of human life, Buber thought, was a progression of forming and re-forming communities on the basis of growing personal independence, an idea he defined as "functional autonomy, mutual recognition and mutual responsibility" (Buber, 1958b, p.39). The natural human impulse toward mutual dependence of increasingly free and independent individuals, or the decentralistic social principle, has been subordinated in the modern world to the "centralistic political principle," and has been illustrated through modern industrial development and an economy which have created a struggle of all against all for markets and raw materials. Struggles between entire societies have replaced old struggles

between political states. The result has become an emphasis on the organization of power which has afforded a legacy to both democratic and totalitarian forms to make complete submission to centralized power their guiding principle (Buber, 1958b, p. 129-132).

Consequently, the modern world had experienced a loss of social vitality, cultural unity, and cultural dependence. We had lost the idea of administrative control as the capacity for making dispositions limited by available technical facilities and recognized in theory and practice within those limits and have unfortunately gained the omnipresent figure of government as a constitutionally limited body that signified continuous loss of the idea of those limits. This has become our notion of political power, the excess in capacity for making dispositions beyond that required by given conditions. Society now had become diminished by the continued supremacy of the centralistic political principle and peace, Buber warned, could not be attained through political organization but only through "the resolute will of all peoples to cultivate the territories and raw materials of our planet and govern its inhabitants together" (Buber, 1951, p. 11). The results of this failure to imagine a true Utopian Socialism which could bring about peace was seen by Buber as the fundamental threat to humanity's basic purposes.

Nothing stands so much in the way of the rise of a Civilization of Dialogue as the demonic power which rules our world, the demonry of basic mistrust. What does it help to induce the other to speak if basically one puts no faith in what he says? The meeting with him already takes place under the perspective of his untrustworthiness. And this perspective is not incorrect, for his meeting with me takes place under a corresponding perspective (Buber, 1952d).

Buber believed in the meeting of idea and fate in the creative hour, rather than in the natural end of the present decay which would result in the technically perfect suicide of the human race (Buber, 1957). He called for people to come out of their camps and talk with one another despite their criticism of the opposing system and their loyalty to their own. With such a renewed dialogue between man and man, Buber envisioned a tiny seed of change that could lead to a transformation of the whole situation.

I mean especially those who are basically convinced of the rightness of the idea from which their government ultimately stems and know, just for that reason, that the catastrophe which would flow from the victory of the regime would mean the collapse of the idea (Buber, 1952d).

Such people would be independent persons with no other authority than that of the spirit and would not be bound by the aims of the political hour. The fundamental question that liberated each individual from planetary annihilation was, for Buber, "What does every man need in order to live as man?" Only through genuine dialogue "between them in which each of the partners, even when he stands in opposition to the other, attends to, affirms, and confirms him as this existing other, can the opposition, certainly not be removed from the world, but be humanly arbitrated and led toward its overcoming" (Buber, 1957).

Thus Buber envisioned the attainment of the absolute, supreme, or radical good of the individual person as the basis of, means toward, and completion of the

concomitant and fundamental restructuring of the human society. This concept was entrenched in his basic assumption of the nature of the *Eternal Thou* as not a symbol of God but of our relation with God, and therefore our relation with humanity as personified by the relationship between man and man. "The personal manifestation of the divine is not decisive for the genuineness of religion. What is decisive is that I relate myself to the divine as to Being which is over against me, though *not* over against me *alone*" (Buber, 1952b, p. 39).

### **Early Civilizations' Conceptions of Radical Goodness**

#### **Hedonism**

The term *hedonism* was derived from the Greek *hēdonē*, and signified pleasure. When used to refer to moral values, it was termed ethical hedonism and was defined as the view that only pleasure was intrinsically good and that pain was evil. Through investigation of the development of hedonistic philosophers, we have come to know an ethical philosophy that provided Western civilization with a formulation of the concept of radical goodness.

Cyrenaic hedonism appeared during the last half of the fourth and the early quarter of the third century B.C.E. through the writings of Aristippus of Cyrene, an admirer of Socrates. His doctrine showed a commitment to pleasure as the only good, but referred mainly to momentary pleasures (Sahakian, 1974). Cyrenaic hedonism was influenced by Socratic teaching and emphasized happiness which was attributed to the virtuous person.

Virtue was defined by Cyrenaic hedonists as the capacity for enjoyment, which became known as the state of happiness resulting from a satisfied will with its attendant pleasures fulfilled. Pleasure was the *summum bonum* (the highest good). All pleasures shared a common characteristic and differed from each other in intensity, degree, and purity. To the extent that a particular experience was unadulterated by pain, it became a finer pleasure.

Cyrenaic hedonists considered gentle motion, rather than emotion, as pleasure's definition. Aristippus believed that all things worked toward a good purpose (Sahakian, 1974). Those ultimate purposes were earth- and temporal-bound. Recognizing that the person maintained power only over the present, Cyrenaics urged sensual enjoyment of the present, yet they decried indiscriminate gratification of pleasure without regard to purity, intensity, or degree.

The Cyrenaic Sage was an arbitrator of choosing. He alone understood how to enjoy the present wisely. He mastered and enjoyed his pleasures without risking enslavement to a life interjected by singular meaningless pleasures. Ideal happiness grew into the control of pleasure in the midst of enjoyment, that is, the conscience of self-control. Wisdom, only tangentially attached to goodness, became an instrumental value and not an end-in-itself. Serving mainly to educate the hedonist to exercise command over pleasure, wisdom was used to enable the Cyrenaic hedonist to explain that "[m]y machine is so happily compounded that I am sufficiently sensitive to things to enjoy them, but not to suffer from them" (Sahakian, 1975, p. 24).

The second phase of hedonism, or the Egoistic Hedonism of Theodorus replaced Cyrenaic. Theodorus repudiated altruistic propensity and all political and religious institutions and chose to direct the experiences of his life toward sensual enjoyment. This shift in hedonistic philosophy can be known as a dissolution of Cyrenaic into an egoistic form in which each person was involved in personal pleasures. Such an egoist was divorced intellectually and emotionally from social responsibilities and the welfare of others. Concomitant to this withdrawal from social concerns was a rejection of laws and moral codes. Egoistic hedonists accepted the positive attributes afforded by civilization yet entertained no imperative to repayment social, political, or other organized duties. Their dichotomy of radical evil, known as sadness, and ultimate goodness, seen as a happy disposition, structured this ethical thought.

The third development within hedonism was brought about by Hegesias in which pessimism emerged as the dominant theme. This conception maintained that the person who sought the hedonistic goal was doomed to utter frustration since the *summum bonum* was beyond the majority's attainment. Citing as evidence humankind's failure to achieve a life of pleasure, Hegesias maintained that without pleasure, life became worthless and should be discarded as valueless endeavor.

The *summum bonum* of this pessimism was transformed into escape from pain. Early pessimists recognized that neither wealth nor power served to render humankind immune from pain, and death, as the only possible assured escape from condemnation, was embraced as the only certain path. Because pleasure and pain were capable of

influencing human attitude and the sage was indifferent to life itself, Hedonistic pessimists recognized ambivalence as the supreme good.

Cyrenaic supremacy of momentary pleasure dissolved into Hegesias' pessimism and changed ethical hedonism into a self-defeating philosophy that paralleled the Cynic position of independence of externals as the supreme good. Epicureanism arose and flourished in response to this disintegration of hedonism and emphasized the superiority of mental pleasures over the sensual or material. Epicurean hedonism gave expression to the pleasures of a cultured and noble individual and granted intellectual happiness the capability to exercise personal control. Adding to the hedonistic valuing of pleasure and disparagement of pain, Epicurus developed the ideas that remain intrinsic to our understanding of hedonism: friendship, contentment, peace, morality, and aesthetic pursuits (Sahakian, 1975).

Epicurus and his circle undertook an early discussion of supreme goodness in the pre-Socratic period. Epicureans or egoists did not regard the human being as a creature who should believe in metaphysical imaginings, add to the sum of human knowledge, toil for future generations, or be satisfied with only a portion of the great whole (Sedgwick, 1970). Rather, their notion was that a person was a creature whose right was to pursue happiness, whose business was to pursue happiness, and whose duty was to pursue happiness. This led future philosophers and theologians to view the dual concepts of goodness and happiness as a single and inclusive framework.

Epicurans held that pleasure or happiness was both the beginning and end of a blessed life. A person's responsibility was only for the self because impulses and actions

that led to destructive tendencies stemmed from chaos, were prenatal, environmental, or routine. Therefore, people could not be responsible except for those actions that were specifically chosen. "Take the path that leads to pleasure" was his simple advice to his followers.

The critical nature of Epicurus' writings was that the gods and the idea of death were merely preludes to his teaching which was characterized by concern with living life. Hedonists were men who discussed and analyzed what pleasure was and what pain was, deciding that pleasure could be the only meaning and justification of life. Pleasure, or the goodness that each person should seek, was protean matter and received as many interpretations as there were minds of men. Hedonistic goodness could be defined as the sweet life, one that was pleasant, agreeable, comfortable, beautiful, and celebrated the joy of living. Whatever good things happen to people must be ascribed to them and whatever evil things happened must be ascribed to the sufferers themselves. The concept of divinely inspired or caused good or evil was absent from this philosophy because adherence to religion and belief in gods has implanted and encouraged the notion of sacrifice, first of people, then beasts, fruits, and finally of human pleasures, hopes, and desires.

Epicurus's doctrine of self-sufficiency held that happiness was illustrated in the simple life and he encouraged his followers to be independent of gods, their fellows, and possessions. "The greatest fruit of self-sufficiency is freedom . . . [n]othing satisfies a man who is not satisfied with little . . ." are two ideas which preceded his proclamation that

. . . [w]hen I maintain that pleasure is the end of life, I do not mean sensual pleasures, those of the profligate, as our antagonists ignorantly or willfully assent, but a body free from pain and a mind free from trouble. It is not eating or drinking, revelling or lust, that makes life sweet. We must use our reason, we must seek the wisest choices of action and the banishment of all wrong ideas (Sedgwick, 1970, p. 61-2).

The Articles of the Creed have been transmitted by Epicurus' disciples and have engendered frequent reconsideration and criticism in ethical study. This Creed included that (1) the gods are immersed in blessedness and give no heed to men, (2) there is no life after death, (3) the end of life is the greatest sum of pleasure that a man is capable of, and (4) more life and fuller is what we want.

Epicurus' equating of happiness and goodness and his postulating happiness as the center of a person's goal has become a central premise in historical discussion of goodness. Greek philosophy seized the Hedonistic conception of goodness and extrapolated from it a systematic approach that has evolved into Western culture's definitions of the idea of goodness.

Hedonism has been subjected to criticism in four areas: (1) lack of evidence supporting the idea of pleasure as the greatest good, (2) that some pleasures were unworthy and hedonists insisted upon severing the idea of pleasure from the idea of value, (3) that some pleasure were unsatisfying and unfulfilling, and (4) that pleasure is ironic in that many of the good things in life were unpleasant or unwanted by many persons. Buber's philosophical anthropology refused to excise the human person's ultimate goodness from concrete existence grounded in dialogical relationship between

person and person, and person and God. How would this voice address Hedonism as developed by the Cyrenaics, Aristippus, Theodorus, Hegesias, and ultimately, Epicurus?

### **Buber's Perspective on Hedonism**

Buber regarded the problem of evil and of goodness as the most difficult place within which to preserve the narrow ridge attitude that described his standpoint. Simply, there could be no absolute statements involved in coming to know. He described a narrow, rocky ridge between gulfs where there was no sureness of expressible knowledge, but only the certainty of meeting what remained undisclosed. Maintaining that the either/or attitude was not only dangerous but impossible within the discussion of good and evil, Buber assumed a dialectical position. He argued that evil was both real and redeemable and chose to abnegate the position of the "is" of human reality to the "ought" of human possibility (Friedman, 1960). Hedonistic philosophy dichotomized pleasure and pain as good and evil and set up an opposition that viewed absolutes within universals. The absolutizing of pleasure and pain was the philosophical opposition that troubled Buber. Within his theory of knowledge, Buber described knowing as that which meant the bond of the absolute with the particular and pointed the human person back to the reality of the lived concrete, to the immediacy of real meeting with beings over against one another (Buber, 1952b). Whereas the early Hedonists eschewed political involvement, social obligations, and sympathy, Buber declared that human truth was equivalent to participation in Being; a human life-relationship to a Divine Being within ultimate truth (Friedman, 1960). Although Buber and the Hedonists might have agreed that the human person pledged oneself to truth and verified it by being true, their

divergence may be expressed as Buber's existential position that religion and ethics answered the felt need of many in his age to break through to a more humanly realistic account of the way in which we learned to know. Hedonists were traditional epistemologists and they reflected exclusively within the reality of subject-object relationship. Buber's *I-Thou* dialogical relationship presented a totally other way of knowing that avoided the idealism of the Hedonists that pleasure, the ultimate good, was supremely desirable as an end for all people.

By moving reality into the of knowing of a subject, Hedonists immersed themselves and their philosophy into the world's experiences deemed pleasurable or painful as *a priori* knowledge. Buber insisted that we must have distance from the world to enter into relation with a *Thou* in order to become an *I*. Only then could a person enter into genuine authentic relationship. From the prior reality of *I-Thou* knowing issued *direct* knowing, that is, "the genuinely reciprocal meeting in the fullness of life between one active existence and another" (Buber, 1952b, p. 46). Hegesias' Hedonistic pessimism developed into the antithesis of this genuinely reciprocal meeting.

In order to know and therefore to value, Buber wrote that the person must assume true presentness, that is, "[be] willing to see each new event as something which is, despite all resemblance to what has gone before, unique and unexpected" (Buber, 1965, p. 10). By granting similarity of characteristics to all forms of pleasure, Hedonists avoided this presentness by enforcing similarities and ordered categories of thought, the very description of Buber's *I-It* knowing. The concept of "address" involved a difficult distinction between Buber's and Hedonistic ethics and can be understood from the idea

of communication. Hedonists valued, accepted, or rejected states of being as pleasurable or painful and sought to maximize the pleasurable by reducing, or as the Hedonistic pessimists sought, eliminating the painful. Each situation of valuing, accepting, or rejecting involved a communication between the Hedonist and the resultant state of being caused by an event. The lived life was an incessant barrage of concrete experiences and the Hedonist was forced to choose continuously between those state of being deemed pleasant and those termed painful. Could the Hedonist evaluate such a continuous onslaught of experience in a true knowing?

Buber insisted that true knowing was constituted as a total moral action, a becoming aware of the signs and responding. He rejected the possibility that we could know everything we met in our concrete experiences equally within the context of total moral action. He posed instead that humankind could respond only to that which really addressed us, and real address could not be known as objective phenomena. An action or state of events did not speak to everyone; rather, it spoke only to the one who saw that it truly said something to that one as an individual. The same action could have said other things to different people, and to an observer, it might have said nothing at all. Without full participation in true presentness, there could be no knowing (Buber, 1965). Non-reciprocity of address was a basis of Hedonistic ethics.

The purpose of Buber's study of humankind was the development of an anthropological epistemology through the *I-Thou* relationship. This produced an image of the person as a creature who became only what one could become through confronting reality with one's whole being. Scientific methodology had reduced the investigation of

the person into selective aspects, not as a whole or part of the natural world. This social interpretation forced Buber to affirm that the observation of the social sphere as a whole, the determination of the categories which rule within it, the knowledge of its relations to other spheres of life, and the understanding of the meaning of social existence and happening are and remain philosophical tasks (Buber, 1965). Hedonistic ethics that espoused momentary pleasure, immediate gratification of pleasure, egoism, and pessimism while stressing a dichotomy of pleasure and pain within objects of the world and without social relations was antagonistic to Buber's epistemological foundation.

### **Stoicism and Cynicism**

The Stoic school, founded by Zeno (356-264 B.C.E.), shared with the Epicureans the subordination of logic and physical science to morals (Tsanoff, 1942). However Stoics addressed their divergence around the sensual variety of Epicureanism, although the Stoics had much in common with the higher version of those ethics. The Stoic account of the world and human nature consisted in similarly materialistic concerns, but added a more cosmic dimension, that is, the relation of moral conduct to the world process. Refuting the Epicurean desire to "make the most of what we yet may spend" (Tsanoff, 1942, p. 25), Stoics regarded moral conduct as one's conscious participation in a rational world order with a concomitant proclamation of reason as sovereign reality and worship of it as divine. Human life was completed by recognition and spirit of worship. Whereas Socrates declared that virtue was knowledge, the Stoics deified the life of virtue as philosophy in action, as knowledge of nature translated into conduct.

Zeno's philosophy advocated freedom from passion and total indifference to joy and grief (Sahakian, 1975). Stoic virtue was living harmoniously with nature and consisted in life's chief good as living according to one's own nature and avoiding that which was forbidden by right reason and Zeus. Virtue, good, and reason were inextricably bound to the happiness of humanity which was understood as a flowing within life's current in harmony with the universe's will.

The ultimate good for Stoics was acting in accordance with sound reason, a state of intellectual being that propelled a person to select goals that comported with nature and produced a comparison of virtue with the ideal of perfection. In addition to being perfection, virtue (or good) was determined by the extent it afforded the bearer an advantage or usefulness. Stoic supreme happiness consisted in life lived in accordance with virtue, the will of God, or with reason, the highest part of the soul.

The locus of good within Stoic ethical thought was either internal or external of the person. Internal goods included the virtues, while external goods were exemplified by friendship. Perfect goods were harmonious. Duty, defined as that which reason elected to do, included obligation to one's parents, brothers, and country, and bringing pleasure to one's friends, but did not imply approval of everything done from impulse or inclination (Sahakian, 1975).

Because Stoics were determinists and regarded happiness as the result of the steady disposition to restrict our will to what was within our power, the expression of attainment of happiness was mathematical. Realizing that happiness was achieved only

when humankind abandoned all desires they did not have the power to satisfy at all times, the equation for happiness appeared as

$$\text{happiness} = \frac{\text{satisfied desires}}{\text{desires}}$$

and the achievement of happiness could be enhanced by increasing the number of satisfied desires or decreasing the number of desires (McGill, 1967).

Epictetus' ethical position partly paralleled Aristotle's regarding attaining happiness; however, Aristotle emphasized increasing satisfied desires whereas Epictetus, as a contractionist similar to primitive Buddhists and Vedantists relied almost exclusively on the reduction of number of desires. Contrary to Aristotle's individualistic conception of happiness, Epictetus stressed that happiness could be attained by any person whose desires were restricted to those easily satisfied and that people were born to be happy and to be happy with one another. This inclusiveness was of divine origin.

Let not that which in another is contrary to nature be an evil to you: for you are not formed by nature to be depressed with others nor to be unhappy with others, but to be happy with them. If a man is unhappy, remember that his happiness is his own fault: for God has made all men to be happy, to be free from perturbations (Epictetus, 1940, III, 24).

Epictetus' ethics recognized virtue as the highest good and included three further dimensions: (1) the invincible will, (2) resignation, acceptance, and contentment, and (3) living in accordance with virtue. The invincible will was maintained by the Stoic

sage at all costs because surrendering one's free will or permitting another to break one's spirit or will was considered blasphemous rejection of Zeus's purpose in the creation of humanity. When a person surrendered her will, she gave satisfaction to her enemies. Admonishing the Stoic to rely on no things beyond one's own control, Epictetus assured the sage of insulation from disaster. Resignation, acceptance, and contentment cautioned the Stoic sage to seek tranquility or eternal calm of inner spirit. Even death must be taken in stride as the Stoic regarded individual existence as part of a whole that must both begin and pass away. In the face of catastrophe, Epictetus urged his followers to utilize the inner gifts they possessed, such as fortitude, patience, and magnanimity. When the wise person recognized and utilized inner strengths, habits developed that made life pleasant.

Finally, living in accordance with virtue meant choosing obedience to reason and to the laws of nature. Irrational life was an emotionally disorganized cacophony that precluded rationality in purpose. "To the reasonable creature, that alone is unsupportable which is unreasonable" (Epictetus, 1940, 2) could produce an irrational life that encompassed the soul within a diseased state. This state was the Stoic definition of evil. Their goal was mastery over life and was identified with total control of one's passions.

Epictetus's ethical philosophy was Stoic pessimism which shunned as undesirable sexual cravings in addition to emotions, and maintained that such cravings for sex and women were enslaving (Sahakian, 1974). Moral principles were innate in men and the only powers possessed by human beings were individual will and the use of rational ideas. The *summum bonum* was virtue, defined as living in accordance with nature, and

the supreme virtue was endurance of this life. We must "make the best of what is in our power, and take the rest as it occurs" (Epictetus, 1940, 1, 1). Negatively stated, the Cynic's goal was repudiation of avoidable desires. This was accomplished through virtue, and virtue was seen as enabling human independence of circumstances that controlled fortune. Therefore, Cynic virtue could be interpreted as freedom from want, need, desire, or passion. Life's fundamental responsibility was the reduction of wants to the absolute minimum which resulted in indifference to all other desires so the human being came to regard all unnecessary striving as evil. Traditional values of civilization were dispensable and included wealth, refinement, fame, and honor. Art, science, family, and nationality were also deemed superfluous and unworthy of aspiration.

Diogenes of Sinope (ca. 400-325 B.C.E.) exemplified the Cynic ethics in his contempt for common goals. Diogenes assigned himself a dual vocation of practice of virtue and assisting the morally corrupt. He was a relentless preacher of morality and his vitriolic denunciations of the frivolities of society culminated in exposing humanity's contempt for their neighbors. This contemptuous attitude converted the essentially constructive term *cynicism* into an opprobrious one (Sahakian, 1974).

The Cynics and Stoics shared a narrow, practical view of virtue and viewed the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake as valueless. They had little use for Aristotle's intellectual virtues and simplified his idea of happiness into specific efforts and teachings. They also eliminated all degrees between virtue and vice concluding that a person could be either perfectly just or totally unjust, a delineation that resulted in the cloud of pessimism that overshadowed Cynic and Stoic philosophies. The idea of happiness as

specificity of pleasure or avoidance of worldliness was a contraction that was a suitable response to the evil times in which they lived (McGill, 1967). By classifying human endeavor into the categories of good, bad, or indifferent, Stoics and Cynics were entangled in the problematic that only the completely virtuous were happy and most of humankind was necessarily excluded.

### **Buber's Perspective on Stoicism and Cynicism**

The thesis of such a philosophical and ethical system was that virtue, which was desirable in itself, was sufficient for happiness and was the only means to it. Martin Buber would agree that *hasidut*, or allegiance and piety, was fundamental to the fulfillment of a person. He wrote that the believer could achieve a perfect relationship to God by renouncing the world of the senses and overcoming his own natural being. However, even for the most pious Hasidic man, cleaving to God was a significant priority but to achieve it he was not required to abandon the external and internal reality of earthly being, but to affirm it in its true, God-oriented essence and to transform it so that he could offer it up to God (Buber, 1950).

Stoic and Cynic ethics portrayed the virtuous human being as one who was able to master totally and control his passions, sensual pleasures, and desires. Rather than engaging in Hasidic heart-searching, the Stoic or Cynic performed acts of physical, emotional, and intellectual denial in personal striving for virtuous perfection. Severing oneself from humanity and the human condition seemed to afford the ancient Stoics and Cynics a measure of harmonious wholeness untouched by the joys, sorrows, affirmations,

or hardships of life on earth. Above all else, Stoic and Cynic philosophy was grounded within the individual pursuing an isolated, individual path toward self-perfection.

Buber would counter that the world, an irradiation of God, was endowed with independence of existence and concomitant striving. Because the divine spark lived in every thing and every being, each spark was enclosed in an isolating shell. Only the authentic human person could pierce the shell, liberate the spark, and re-join it with its divine origin. The divine force was within every creature and was subject to misuse by every human being. What facilitated misuse was an individual's directionless pursuit, seizing, and grasping at everything that offered itself, rather than the hallowing of the very same passion. Unhallowed passion undirected toward its origin was evil. Stoic and Cynic directionlessness and denegation of divinity within each person and each action directly contradicted Buber's Hasidic philosophy.

Buber and the Cynic/Stoic philosophers may have agreed that disciples must have knowledge of their own beings as well as of their own essential qualities and inclinations. Buber's divergence from the ancient thought was in his belief that such disciples must truly perceive their own strongest feelings, their most central wishes, and their inmost beings (Buber, 1950). It was the manner in which disciples acted upon these perceptions that provided a pivotal alienation of Buberian thought from Cynical or Stoic ethical philosophy. If the disciples saw only the objects of desire, the evil urge would have led them astray as they rushed in to seize the first objects that crossed their paths. Seekers of truth must divert this human impulse from the casual to the essential, from the relative to the absolute, to find their particular ways. Hasidism taught rejoicing in the world and

hallowing it with one's whole being. This was the antithesis of Stoic and Cynic ultimate goodness.

### **Self-Realization: The Good Life**

Platonic theology included an idea of a Maker, or mind, from whom the fixed stars and earth and divine creatures endowed with minds and souls were created. Plato (428-348 BCE) spent little consideration on their origins; rather, he wrote

[t]o narrate and understand the birth of the other divinities is beyond our power. We must believe those who have spoken of these things before us, for, as they said, they were descendants of the gods and clearly knew their own ancestors. It is impossible not to believe those who are the children of the gods, even though they speak without probability or compelling proof. As they are speaking of their own, we must obey the law and believe them (Gruge, 1980, p. 165).

With this testimony of faith, Plato introduced the need for a metaphysical trust and belief in the theological system of Greek thought. Postulating the Olympians as secondary gods who were eternal but served at the pleasure of the Maker, Plato ascribed to them the creation of human beings. Although the Maker created humanity's immortal souls, it was impossible to attribute any responsibility for the deeds of mortal creatures to the perfect Maker. These souls were therefore a necessarily less pure mixture. The divinity was rendered blameless for man and woman's evil actions.

Yet human beings retained an immortal, divine ember and through Socrates, Plato considered why people were capable of doing wrong. Plato believed no one did purposive wrong actions because knowledge of what was right was enough to ensure

right action. Goodness could not be knowledge in the same sense as other kinds (Gruge, 1980). Socratic dialogue investigated the nature of ethics and determined they were not sciences like medicine, engineering, or carpentry. Virtue, the Platonic equivalent of radical goodness, was more than craft. If one maintained that goodness and knowledge were equivalent and no one sinned on purpose, one must find the way this knowledge was different from others since it could not be used for evil purposes.

The domain of the special knowledge attributed to goodness could not be found within the Platonic definition of wisdom. Although wisdom was a goal for the philosophic thinker, it detached itself from goodness in that it was possible to be wise without being good as it was equally possible to be good without being wise. This was the distinction between knowledge and right opinion or belief. Good conduct could be based on such right opinion or belief, and much of Plato's *Republic* was devoted to the discussion of moderation, self-control, and courage, all of which led to knowledge and goodness, but could exist without wisdom.

Wisdom was assumed to be the property of the ruling class within Plato's society. Of the three classes in the state, the rulers, the auxiliaries, and the people, only the rulers, who were by far the fewest in number, were assumed to possess this wisdom, although the nature of this wisdom was not clearly defined (Gruge, 1980). The other strata of Greek society possessed right belief after careful education designed by the rulers in culture and art. What maintained this stratified social system was the belief that the rulers **must** know what the others believed because the rulers alone had knowledge.

What the rulers knew as the Forms became the knowledge that supported the knowing of the supreme good.

Plato and Socrates' philosophy introduced a metaphysical aspect of knowing into the consideration of the question of supreme goodness. The knowledge of eternal ideas was a supreme knowledge and the Ideas became known as the object of the science of science. But why did this sort of metaphysical knowledge ensure goodness?

The *Republic* stressed the importance of order and harmony in the human soul. All philosophical virtues were seen as truly one since all inevitably followed from his wisdom and knowledge of the Forms. However, because even the lowest class must possess a sense of justice, there had to be two kinds of virtue: that of the ordinary person and another of the philosopher. Both types of people had harmony in their souls, but only the philosophers had knowledge coexisting with the immortal spark.

Corresponding to the two types of virtue within human souls, Plato differentiated two levels of vice. The more common vice was analogous to a disease in the body; a discord between opinion and desire, between feelings and pleasure, between reason and pain. In inferior people, these different parts were at variance and led to cowardice, depravity, and sinfulness. The second type of vice, ignorance, was more fundamental and was analogous to something greater than disease. All people wanted the good, but when they set out to attain it, their lack of knowledge caused them to miss their aim.

The idea of ignorance, or lack of philosophic knowledge, could not be mended within the Platonic system of thought when the ignorant person believed he knew what truly he did not know. Those with these wrong moral beliefs could be cured only by

teaching. According to Plato, education was more powerful a fighter against evil than mere corrective justice.

Socrates' concept of a "good" was necessarily bound up with observing a limit. Any way of living must have had an order or form to distinguish it from other ways of living. Therefore any good that people desire could be specified only by specifying the rule which would govern the behavior which would become or procure that particular good (MacIntyre, 1966). If anything were to be a good and a possible object of desire, it must have been specifiable in terms of some set of rules which governed behavior. Humanity, whose behavior was never rule-governed, would cease to be able to participate as intelligible agents in human society without a concept of rules or moderation. The concept of moderation was later discussed and developed into the Aristotelian "golden mean" and profoundly influenced philosophical, religious, and theological ethical discussion. The Idea of the Good, a combination of pleasure and wisdom, was a direct correlative of this knowledge.

The Form of the Good was the criterion by which pleasure could be judged. Using a geometrical metaphor, Plato wrote that "[i]t is clear that in the simile of the Line, the pleasures will be good in so far as they approach the highest point B, the Good, and that they will be so to the same extent as the objective reality and the functions of the soul which correspond to each section" (Gruge, 1980, p. 67). The philosopher and the ideal Forms were described when Plato finally constructed his ideal city. He outlined the different types of government and individuals corresponding to those Forms. Because Plato drew a hierarchical, tripartite society, and each of the three parts of the soul had

its specific pleasures and passions, Plato analogized an ascending order of pleasures and passions that corresponded to each level of society and to each type of individual inhabiting them. "As there are three parts of the soul, so it seems to me there are also three kinds of pleasure, a particular one for each, and so also with passions and ways of ruling the soul" (Plato, 1956, p. 379).

Only those dwelling on the highest rung on the societal ladder could seek the greatest pleasure. For this purpose, the rulers needed three corresponding attributes for correct judgment: experience, knowledge, and the power of expressing it. Only the philosopher had the experience, the wisdom, and power of expression required to make any true comparison for judging the qualities of virtues. Thus his opinion was the only true one. Platonic philosophers accorded pleasures of the mind as the greatest; those of honor inferior; and physical pleasures the least of them all. Although physical pleasure was not simply a delusion and honor was not an empty thing, they paled into insignificance alongside the pleasure, or goodness, one received from the search for truth.

The supreme good of Platonic thought was neither pleasure nor wisdom alone. Rather, it was something beyond either of them, something that was complete and perfect, and was the final aim of all desire (Plato, 1956, p. 427). Therefore in the fifth century B.C.E., a new class of teachers and pupils developed and a moral philosophy was construed that concentrated on the teachers, or sophists. The idea of virtue as a quality possessed by the "good man" took hold in ethical studies and produced conflicting

opinions regarding what virtue was and what constituted a good person (MacIntyre, 1966).

Although Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.) declared his fundamental treatise on ethics to be concerned with politics, an idea later taken up by Jeremy Bentham, the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1985) claimed that "[e]very craft and every inquiry, and similarly every action and project, seems to aim at some good; hence the good has been well defined as that at which everything aims." Its follower, *Politics*, was concerned with the practical science of human happiness in which we studied what happiness was, what activities it consisted in, and how to become happy. Whereas the *Ethics* illustrated what form and style of life were necessary to happiness, the *Politics* engaged in a description of what form of constitution and what set of institutions were necessary to make this form of life possible and to safeguard it. Aristotle's influence on modern ideas of the supreme good afforded to humankind as the goal of happiness has been profound.

Aristotle defined good as the goal, purpose, or aim to which something or somebody moved (MacIntyre, 1966). To call something good was similar to outlining the conditions sought that constituted the end. Because there were numerous activities and multiple aims of individuals, there were manifold expressions and types of good.

Good existed in a state conditioned by two underlying presuppositions. First, for something to be good, it must be sought by others. Second, to call something good and to allow that it was not a thing which anyone who wanted that sort of thing would want would be to speak unintelligibly. Thus Aristotle derived a contingent matter of fact, that

people in general wanted what was good, and he established an internal relationship of the concept of being good and being an object of desire.

Aristotle's definition of happiness was the activity of the soul according to virtue, accompanied by pleasure, and provided with sufficient external goods and fair fortune (McGill, 1967). By considering and rejecting that possession of virtue alone constituted felicity, Aristotle directly opposed the thought of Platonic Socratics and Stoics. He repudiated Hedonism as such, but incorporated much of it into his own eudaemonism which held that pleasure was something good in itself and always accompanied activity that constituted happiness. Recognizing that the hedonist's doctrine of qualitative sameness of pleasures had a certain appealing rationale, Aristotle's supernatural view of happiness as unattainable by humankind left open a distinct possibility for divine gods within his ethics.

One limitation of Aristotelian ethics was that "[e]ven the Aristotelian base was not wide enough to include everything. Aristotle does not have any intimation of the later, utilitarian formula of 'the greatest pleasure of the greatest number,' with its radical egalitarian implications" (McGill, 1967, p. 5). Centuries of commentary and criticism emerged from this implication which was intermixed with theology and founded an ethical system in which the supreme good would become linked with intellect, contemplation, and particularity.

Aristotle's definition of the supreme good opened the question of whether or not there were such a good.

If, then, there is some goal among those which we pursue in our actions, which we desire for its sake, and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else--in that case we should proceed to choose ad infinitum, so that all desire would be empty and futile--it is plain that this would be *the* good and the best of goods (Allen, 1966, p. 362).

Later writers, especially those in the medieval period, seized upon this question and reinterpreted it theologically to indicate that because everything was chosen for the sake of some good, there must be one good for the sake of which everything was chosen.

Aristotle was careful with warnings related to the concept of the possibility of a supreme, universal good. He was cautious regarding method of inquiry. Stating that every sort of inquiry had its own standards and possibilities for precision, Aristotle examined existing opinions on this topic with the same critical nature he expected others to employ in considering his own. Every ethical system was guided by general considerations and posited general conclusions, each of which admitted to possible exceptions. Within this framework, Aristotle named his notion of supreme good as that idea of happiness that included both the notion of behaving well and of faring well. The original Greek word for this good reflected the sense that virtue and happiness, in the sense of prosperity, could not be entirely divorced (MacIntyre, 1966). The root meaning of happiness was a lasting state of affairs in which the most favorable ratio of satisfied desires to desires was realized with the proviso that the satisfied desires included satisfactions that were not *preceded* by specific desires for them, but came by surprise (McGill, 1967). Aristotle insisted only on a favorable ratio of satisfied desires to desires, while Plotinus later insisted that happiness involved an absolute optimum, not a simple

preponderance. Aristotle viewed the situation regarding happiness from the perspective of approximation and agreed that one person could actually be happier than another.

Aristotle held that the most favorable ratio was obtained mainly by increasing one's satisfied desires and the Stoics obtained it only by decreasing the number of desires; and others raised questions of whether some kinds of satisfactions made for optimum ratio and should be given preference. The only thing that mattered, they held, was the intensity, duration of satisfaction, that is, the greatest sum of pleasure (McGill, 1967).

In this divergence from Plato's Forms, Aristotle seemed to diverge from the Socratic position that "it is better to suffer tortures on the rack than to have a soul burdened with the guilt of doing evil" (MacIntyre, 1966, p. 60). Rather, Aristotle emphasized that it was better still both to be free from having done evil and to be free from being tortured on the rack. This idea appeared to be a minor alternative method of considering; however, it accumulated significant proportions when scholars began consideration of the questions that inquired as to the sort of goodness which was compatible with the good person suffering any degree of torture or injustice. With this questioning, ethical exploration changed from the Aristotelian framework regarding in what form of life doing well and faring well might be found together. Aristotle considered the potential framework of the suffering of the good incompatible and irrelevant to the task of creating such a form of life. "No one," Aristotle commented in his discussion of the positive intention of his ethics, "would call a man suffering miseries and misfortunes happy, unless he were merely arguing a case" (Johnson, 1989, p. 65).

Aristotle took issue with Plato's having made goodness independent of any this-worldly happiness, as well as his establishment of the paradigmatic meaning of the word *good* as identical with the Form of the Good. As a consequence, Plato had installed the good as a single and unitary notion. Aristotle's repudiation of this singularity centered on his argument that the word *good* was used in judgments across all the categories, of some subjects (such as god or the intelligence), and of the mode of a subject (how it was or the excellence it had). Of special significance in this new inquiry as to the nature and kind of supreme or radical goodness was that it crossed disciplines. Platonic thought that the good fell under a single Form must indicate, Aristotle thought, that good must be the subject of a single science or method of inquiry. However, things that were described as good were dealt with by a number of sciences and thus it must be outside the singularity imposed on it falsely by naming it Form. Aristotle moved the nature of inquiry of good from the intellect alone into the sense in which it appears in human language. This idea of good became defined according to the sense of that which people sought or desired and could no longer be considered the name of a transcendental object.

Happiness replaced the Form as the final end or goal. Identification of the good enabling such happiness was mediated by two properties which anything which was to be the final end must possess: (1) it must be something which was always chosen for its own sake and never merely as a means to something else and (2) it must be a self-sufficient good. Thus the concept of happiness was such that we could not use it for anything but a final end and equally that happiness was not a component in some other state of affairs, nor was it just one good among others (Zeller, 1980).

His next progression was considering in what activities or context the final end of a person consisted. Arguing that rationality was specifically human, Aristotle wrote that in humanity's exercise of its rational powers the specific human activity consisted, and in the right and able exercise of them lay the specific human excellence (MacIntyre, 1966). Within the Aristotelian view of the universe, this position was obvious.

The Aristotelian concept of nature and the universe as composed of distinct kinds of being set that each of these beings moved and was moved from its potentiality to a state of activity in which it achieved its end. Highest on this scale was the Unmoved Mover, or thought unchangingly thinking itself to which all things were moved. The human being, like every species, moved toward the individual's end, and this end could be determined by what distinguished human beings from other species. Aristotle held the view that rational behavior was a uniquely human characteristic and any human good must be defined in light of it. The good of the individual person was defined as the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, and with the possibility that there could be discerned several human excellences or virtues, in accordance with the best and most perfect of them. "What is more, it is this activity throughout a whole life. One swallow does not make a summer, nor one fine day. So one good day or short period does not make a man blessed and happy" (MacIntyre, 1966, p. 63).

Being happy predicated one's entire life. Because Aristotle considered the person's life as the object of judgment rather than his actions or states, the connection between happiness understood in this context brought a new meaning to Aristotelian ethical thought. Virtue, though not the human being's final end, was an essential part

of the form of life. A person could take pleasure in virtuous activity, but pleasure did not constitute supreme goodness. A modicum of external goods was needed for characteristic human well-being and well-doing. Yet it was the entirety of the individual's existence, not specific modes or means, that became the focus of this new definition of happiness.

In his discussion of the activities necessary to bring a person to such a life of virtue, Aristotle subdivided the possibilities according to his division of the mortal soul, another area in which he diverged from the Platonic view. Plato's view was that the soul and body constituted two entities, contingently and unhappily united. Aristotle spoke of the soul as form to the body's matter (MacIntyre, 1966). Analogous to personality, the soul retained both rational and nonrational parts, similar to the contrast between reasoning and other human faculties.

In another departure from Platonic thought, he posed that there was no necessary conflict between reason and desire although Aristotle admitted to awareness of such conflicts. However, he postulated the existence of two kinds of rational activity: thinking and activities other than thinking. The excellences of thinking were intellectual virtues (such as wisdom, intelligence, and prudence); the excellences of the other were moral virtues (such as liberality and temperance). Intellectual virtue was the result of explicit instruction whereas moral virtue became known as a product of habit. Both positions indicated that virtue was not inborn.

Because the virtuous person derived pleasure from virtuous activity and knew how to choose among pleasures and pains, making choices became inextricably bound up with

virtue and rendered it neither emotion nor capacity. The human person was not labelled good or bad by reason of emotions or capacities; rather, what the person chose to do with those emotions and capacities entitled him to be called virtuous or the opposite, vicious. This freedom of choice was mediated by the "mean."

This mean was a level of virtue that existed between two vices, such as the virtue of courage existing between the vice of excess (rashness) and the vice of deficiency (cowardice). A mean was a rule or principle of choice between two extremes of emotion or of action. Virtue emerged from proper decision-making that involved both a judgment and balance. Therefore virtue can be known and described singularly in moral terms.

In deciding which virtues one should follow to become good, Aristotle argued that because happiness consisted in activity according to virtue, it was reasonable that one should pursue activity in accordance with the highest virtue. This was the virtue of what was best in each of us. What was best in us was reason; the characteristic activity of reason was speculative reason which dealt with unchanging truths. This became a self-sufficient occupation, had no practical outcome, and could thus not be a means to anything else. Above all, it was concerned with what was timeless and unchanging, that is, the Platonic divine.

Aristotle's audience of the Lyceum in Athens, a small, leisured, and moderately wealthy minority of men, conceived of devoting their leisure to metaphysical speculation, and easily accepted his claim that the end of human life was the metaphysical contemplation of the truth. His advice that external goods were partly necessary and that wealth required for such activity was only moderate brought the conclusion that the

whole of human life reached its highest point in the activity of speculative philosophy, an occupation affordable only by the upper social classes. As only the ruling class of philosophers were now considered the proper individuals to undertake such speculative philosophy, the concern for the masses within the context of supreme or radical goodness was thus restricted; rather, supreme goodness pertained now to only a few people.

The results of Aristotle's considerations and arguments regarding virtue and the supreme good were seized upon by classical Christian writers and manipulated into a modified and divergent understanding that became, over time, radically different from the classical Greek views. Using Aristotle's premise that a supreme good existed and could be pursued, religious clerics posited that this supreme good must be associated with God, that supreme goodness could be attained by the human person if that person undertook a carefully-designed, logical series of rational steps toward it, and that failure to achieve this supreme good was the definition of evil.

### **Buber's Perspective on Self-Realization**

Platonic and Aristotelian thought have influenced profoundly several subsequent ethical systems that attempted to define ultimate goodness or virtue. Even Buber's biblical existentialism was influenced by the Platonism of Philo Judaeus, by the Aristotelianism of Maimonides, as well as by the neo-Kantism of Hermann Cohen. What Buber developed was a philosophical anthropology that was more replete in Jewish sources and Hegelian in its dialectic, but not in its content. There was a narrow ridge between knowing Buber as a thinker who read his philosophy into his interpretations and that of considering him a thinker who derived his philosophy from his religious tradition

(Friedman, 1986). It was through this narrow ridge separating Buber's existentialism, his philosophy of community, his religious socialism, and his dialogical philosophy that we have come to know his divergence from Platonic and Aristotelian notions of ultimate goodness. This coming to know has taken place within the conceptions of creation, revelation, and redemption.

Through his Socratic voice, Plato developed, defined, and refined the concept of the Form of the Good, that is, that ultimate or supreme goodness was equated with knowledge of this divinely-inspired Form. The fundamental Socratic principle may be stated, "Knowledge was virtue, and virtue issued happiness" (Sahakian, 1974, p. 8). Although Socrates did not define "the good," he was comfortable deciding that the equation of virtue and knowledge implied that a person who knew what was right would by virtue of such knowledge do what was right. Conversely, doing wrong stemmed from ignorance, and evil-doing therefore became known through Socratic and Platonic thought as involuntary acting.

Although Plato identified virtue and knowledge as a single concept, virtue was actually the result of knowledge and therefore was dependent upon it. The special knowledge that enabled the realizing of virtue was moral insight, a type of knowing that both Socrates and Plato valued as the highest, most supreme, and divinely inspired realization. Such knowledge was elevated to a point that it became known as the most excellent of all possessions. Knowledge as a possession, and as a possession of only a select and specially educated few, comprised a characteristic of Socratic, Platonic, and Aristotelian knowing.

Knowledge as possession was alien to both Buber's epistemology and his regard of the human person's relationship to the eternal. In addition, the Platonic/Aristotelian conception of knowledge as a form or category brought about a worship of the symbol of knowing, its attainment, and the specified educative process of coming to know that characterized Idealism. Buber decried the worship of symbols because he claimed they often came to be regarded as more than simply signs and pointers; rather, they evolved into obstructions that separated the human person from the way to God.

What was missing from the Platonic or Aristotelian way of knowing and its concomitant road to virtue was Buberian *emunah*, that is, the unconditional trust in the relationship achievable by the human person with God (Friedman, 1986). A fundamental tension of this unconditional trust was expressed within the idea of holy insecurity, the willingness to go out and meet the unique present, which culminated in Buber's "narrow ridge" conception. The metaphysical speculation of divinity which characterized the definition of ultimate goodness for Aristotle was absent within the Buberian view that relocated the human/divine relationship to a position within the human being, as opposed to any external "knowing" of a symbol, figure, or icon.

The fact of creation of the human world was rather abruptly introduced by Plato into his discussion of the original primary spirit of the Unmoved Mover and the subsequent promulgation of the Olympic divinities. By considering humankind as tertiary creations, Plato distanced the human person from the original *logos* of the creative power. Consequently, metaphysical speculation of the divine constituted the closest approximation of knowing absolute goodness attainable by individuals. This distancing

posed a remoteness and separation of person and divine being and was alien to Buber's epistemology. Creation, the basis for the *I-Thou*, constituted the ground on which the human being could stand, a firmament that enabled the person to meet God. The distance between the Creator and the original creation was transcended in the immediacy of the *I-Thou* knowing and was never abridged or mediated by any original sin or fate. The absoluteness of supreme virtue found within Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy was absent within Buber's characterization of God, not as an absolute person, but as one who had the potential to become one for the human person through loving and being loved. Through such reciprocity, absent from ancient Greek thought, God could be known.

Consideration of revelation also separated Buberian thought of ultimate goodness from Platonic and Aristotelian ideas of ultimate virtue and knowledge. Buber's was an anti-hierarchical way of realizing ultimate goodness whereas both Plato and Aristotle segregated and classified their societies into orders or strata of human beings, each of which entertained certain prescribed potentialities and limitations. Buber considered revelation, a dynamic event between person and God, available to all who sought the relation; however, the person did not have to leave the circle of the *I-Thou* relationship to recognize or realize the revelation. Temporal considerations surrounding revelation also served to distance the two philosophies. Both Aristotle and Plato conceived of metaphysical speculation and ultimate knowledge of the absolute truth as the culmination of the worthwhile life. Buber recognized revelation as a continuing process in which mutual communication led to the completion of creation, an event seen as the proper response to revelation. Combined, these two turnings comprised the beginning of

redemption. The human person's foremost task, according to Buber, was the actualizing of one's unique, unprecedented, and never-recurring potentialities. This regard for the ultimate potential of all created creatures was absent from the tripartate class distinctions outlined in the *Republic* and furthered by Aristotle in his description of the moderate means and comforts required by the speculative philosopher on his search for ultimate knowledge.

### **Scholasticism**

Scholasticism derived its name from the medieval philosophers who were schoolmen, professors in the universities then in existence. Many of what have come to be recognized as Catholic and Christian dogmas were derived by the Scholastics from the writings and thoughts of St. Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas, ideas which were dominated by Platonic virtues and Aristotelian concepts of ultimate or supreme goodness.

Traditional Christian theological views of goodness and happiness often stemmed from the writings and theology of St. Augustine, a fourth century former Manichean who later adopted a certain mysticism from the Neo-Platonists whose influence was discernible throughout his writings. In 395 C.E. he became the Bishop of Hippo until his death in 430 C.E. and during this period he wrote specifically and definitively in the field of Christian concepts related to goodness, happiness, and morality. His importance was related to his systematic development of the doctrine of original sin which has been formulated by the Apostle Paul (Johnson, 1989). Much of subsequent Christian theology has been built on the foundation of Augustine's work.

Augustinian ethics concerned various ways that a person expressed love for the Deity and Augustine's ethics constituted each Platonic virtue it incorporated through the lens of love. His fundamental virtues considered nature as essentially good, evil as perversion or nature disorganized, freedom of the will, a conglomeration of freedom and predestination, the greatest virtue as love, and the greatest good as God. It was the final ultimate virtue and good that will be interpreted in this section.

Augustine posited God as the beginning and end of happiness. "God then remains, in following after whom we live well, and in reaching whom we live both well and happily" (Johnson, 1989, p. 105) was the result into his theologically-oriented investigation into the existence of evil in a universe created by an omniscient and omnipresent perfect God. In *Of the Morals of the Catholic Church*, Augustine addressed directly the formula for right living by individuals in this corrupted world. Humanity's chief good was not the good of the body only, he criticized Epicuran Hedonism, but was the good of the soul. The good of the soul, he continued, was the happiness that humanity could find in the enjoyment of this chief good. One's happiness was accomplished by pursuing virtue which gave perfection to the soul. The soul, in turn, obtained virtue by following God. Simply put, following God's laws, bestowed upon humanity in both written and revealed fashion, was the road to the happy and good life.

Augustine introduced conditional aspects to the attainment of the perfection which this highest good required. Without achieving such perfection, the human person could not enter into the heavenly kingdom and was condemned to eternal torture and damnation.

If you ask us now what the city of God says, first to this question of the supreme good and evil, it will answer you at once: Eternal life is the perfection of good, and eternal death the consummation of evil; and the aim of our life must be to avoid the one, and attain the other (Augustine, 1950, Bk. 19, Ch. 4).

Eternal life was now recognized merely as a precondition to the enjoyment of the real highest good, that is, God. Augustine wrote adamantly that "[the] highest good, than which there is no higher, is God, and consequently, He is unchangeable good, hence truly eternal and truly immortal. All other things are only from Him" (Augustine, 1948, p. 43). The greatest good was transposed from speculative metaphysical contemplation of the ancient Greeks to that of the beholding of God, receiving divine truth, and becoming eternally blessed. His belief that the human being's innate will sought after good convinced Augustine that this was equated with humanity's search for happiness. Once within this satisfaction of a blessed state, a condition comparable to that type of contemplation posited by Plato and Aristotle, the person's striving of the will ceased because it had found its peace and its goal in God (Sahakian, 1974).

Within Augustinian Scholasticism, four specific individual virtues emerged, ideals that were identical with Plato's four cardinal virtues, but were interpreted through the ideal of love. "Temperance is love giving itself entirely to God; fortitude is love bearing everything readily for the sake of God; justice is love serving God only, and therefore ruling well all else, as subject to man; prudence is love making a distinction between what it helps toward God" (Augustine, 1872, Ch. 15). By means of these four virtues, by love, we were led to God and, consequently, to our reward, eternal life and

knowledge of truth which was our highest good, that is, God. Accordingly, to live well was to love God (Sahakian, 1974, p. 81). Relegated to an ancillary position to the love of God was the love of self and neighbor, although accomplishment of this love was considered to mark the best path to the love of God.

Augustine's impact on centuries of philosophical, theological, and ethical consideration cannot be minimized. He shifted the locus of responsibility from the sphere of the person's freedom to that of his finitude by defining evil as the absence of good and stating that all beings were made good, but not being made perfectly good, were liable to corruption. Equating each individual person with an inherent, prenatal original sin, Augustine posited the God of redemption and salvation directly as the end of man's happiness.

Thomas Aquinas (ca1225-1274), the most important ethical figure of high medieval civilization, developed Augustine's Christian theology by combining it with the works of the newly-rediscovered Aristotelian thought. The Thomistic ethic was eudaemonistic in espousing the search for happiness; teleological in designating the purpose or striving of humanity as the search for goodness, namely, God; and intellectualistic in concluding that the final end of humanity was the contemplation of God.

In *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1957), Aquinas established the agency of the person as always acting for an end. By including that every agent acted for a good and that all things were directed to one end (which was God), Aquinas redirected the human person to shun evil and to seek good. He abnegated from the definition of happiness wealth,

worldly power, the goods of the body, and the perceptions of the senses, and he pursued a path that led to the modern Christian theology of "other-worldliness," or the concept that humanity's ultimate happiness consisted in contemplating God. He declared that humanity's ultimate happiness was not in this life and was therefore impossible to realize in this life and thus relocated philosophical and theological speculation beyond the temporal and spatial restraints of physical life on earth.

In his opus, *Summa Theologica* (1955), Aquinas transferred the question of virtue into the category of natural law and stated that the ". . . natural law is what is contained in the Law and the Gospel . . . by which everyone is commanded to do to others as he would be done by" (Aquinas, 1955, Fourth Article, Reply Obj. 1). Aquinas called both natural and divine law radiations of the divine being: the one law destined for earthly ends, the other ordained by revelation for super-terrestrial ends (Cassier, 1951). Humanity's supreme goodness was divided into two categories by Aquinas, a dualism that has characterized Christian theology and philosophy until the era of the Enlightenment. The human person was taught to believe by the Church that supreme goodness was to be achieved after earthly existence.

Aquinas's *summum bonum* identified happiness in the vision of God as the human person's highest good. Similar to Aristotelian thinking, Aquinas held that all nature, including the nonhuman, was designed to act for some end. He identified that end with the ultimate good, that is, God. Furthering this line of reasoning, Aquinas posited that since all entities were inclined to seek that same end, they similarly tended to be like God, had a disposition to be like God, and sought to imitate divine goodness. This

constituted a natural tendency of created things to become like God and all intellectual substance endeavored throughout the human lifetime to reach its goal, fulfill its nature, and attain its own good, that is, the knowledge of God.

Thomistic valuing and ethics divided virtues into the categories of: (1) natural, (2) intellectual, and (3) moral (Sahakian, 1974, p. 83). As its ultimate goal, Thomistic ethics viewed the human will as that which desired happiness, the right act as that which was the means to the attainment of ultimate happiness. For any action, either that of will or deliberateness, to be moral, it must have been in accord with right reason, since Aquinas believed that our reason directed us to God. Accordingly, for humanity's lower natures of sensation, sexual desire, and urges of passion, to be aligned with morality, they also must have been ordered according to reason and rationally directed.

The dominant view of Christianity in the Middle Ages consisted in a subordination of the earthly. The Church, with its emphasis on the idea of purgatory, sought to teach obedience because the human person's conditions in this life would certainly affect the next life. Attention was paid to religious salvation in terms of bliss in the future life. Effects of Renaissance philosophy and theology consisted in the incorporation of aesthetics and sensuousness into classical thought and the beginning of suspicion to and rejection of contemplative Christianity. A new nature of supreme goodness emerged from the repudiation of the Church's pursuit of fame and glory as opposed to the religious philosophical ideal of holiness.

The locus and focus of goodness, often posited as the synonym of happiness, had shifted historically from the Hedonistic vision of individual responsibility based on non-

ascetic pleasure to the Platonic and Aristotelian supremacy of absolute virtue through the Christian domain of God-oriented and God-caused goodness. The role of God in this domain related to a transcendent element wherein evil may find its account wholly within human nature; the good cannot be located in this position (Suchocki, 1988).

### **Buber's Perspective on Scholasticism**

Martin Buber entertained respect, excitement, and interpretation of Christianity in his philosophical anthropology. He considered Christianity has having begun with a diaspora and a consequent mission that equated to the very life-breath of the idea of community, the basis of a people. He found similarities between early Israel and the early stages of Christianity in that they both arose from communities of faith even though the two groups diverged in their expressions of the nature of that faith. Further, both faiths arose as responses to a summons; Israel's summons from God at Sinai and Christianity's summons of Jesus to turn into a kingship of God (Buber, 1961). Buber viewed the teaching of Jesus himself from the words of the gospels as the framework in which the genuine Jewish principle became manifest. Declaring that "[from] my youth onwards I have found in Jesus my great brother," Buber viewed the differences between Christianity and Judaism as illustrated in the contents of the two faith-types (Buber, 1961, p. 12). These differences forced Buber to conclude that although biblical Judaism and gospel Christianity had similarities in ethics and fundamental principles, the Greek faith principle of acknowledgment, that action acknowledged truth, comprised a notion of "facing-about" as opposed to "turning," and differentiated the two types of faith.

Buber was appreciative of Jesus's message which he envisioned as three-fold: (1) realization of a superhistorical, cosmic, and super-cosmic kingship that concerned the existence of all that existed, (2) effecting of turning to God by the man addressed, thereby giving the addressed man concrete reality, and (3) relationship of faith toward God that was concerned with the person alone, giving reality of relationship an exclusive home in man's personal life. Buber summed up New Testament faith as the assurance of what was hoped for and a conviction of things unseen, thus developing a unique joining of Jewish and Greek concepts of faith. This new conception had a specific relationship to the future without which the human person could not exist, and what had been a hoping for Israel had become an assurance for the Christian because the Christian could now trust God with whom he had become intimate. From the Greek philosophies, Christianity drew the requirement of proof, demonstration, and conviction. The practical nature of these requirements constituted the division Buber theorized between Scholastic Christianity and Jesus's message to the Christian people.

The Scholastic Christian mode of faith was distinguished by its making everything dependent on faith instead of as an actual trust in God. Such faith, Buber commented, was fashioned on a representation of Abraham as a "man of faith," a concept Scholastic Christians drew from the Hellenized Bible. Fastening on Abraham's immovable steadfastness, the Scholastics like Augustine and Aquinas utilized the writings of the Apostle Paul to move from the paradigm of Job in which the suffering innocent person reproached God for the world but did not diminish his trust in Him, to the position of unquestioning acceptance of truth of proposition within religion. From the Gospel of

John the Scholastics interpreted that Christians had obtained both faith and knowledge under command and through possible penalty of judgment. This necessary decision between faith or unbelief was lacking in Israel's mode of faith because the faith of Israel had been formed, Buber wrote, eternally with the revelation and covenant. Thus Buber found the separation of the faiths located in the division between those who realized faith, and those who did not.

Scholastics interpreted the New Testament's fundamental tenet as the concept, "to believe." Linking belief to ability, Scholastic writers redefined the human condition as being able to believe. This position was aligned closely with the meaning of Buber's authentic relation. Buber and the Scholastics diverged around the idea of belief in God. For Christian Scholastics, the belief in God was relegated to a more distant position than that of the means to achieve entrance into the heavenly kingdom of eternal bliss. Buber declared the fundamental nature of the directness between person and God that enabled ability to believe by stating "[if] to believe in God means to be able to talk about Him in the third person, then I do not believe in God. If to believe in Him means to be able to talk to Him, then I believe in God" (Buber, 1973a, p. 44).

Buber distinguished the history of the human spirit into epochs of habitation and epochs of homelessness. He recognized Augustine as the first philosopher to pose the genuine anthropological question around the divided soul of the human person. This divided soul could no longer grasp as truth anything but a world that was divided against itself. Within this divided world, Augustine offered two autonomous and mutually hostile kingdoms, that of light and the other of darkness, a division Buber felt placed the

individual simultaneously the scene and the prize of the struggle between hostile forces (Buber, 1965a). As for Augustine, Buber wrote that he was "[h]omeless in the world, solitary between the higher and the lower powers, he remain[ed] homeless and solitary even after he found salvation in Christianity as a redemption that had *already taken place*" (Buber, 1965a, p. 128). Responding with an accusation of man that concerned the wonder of man, Augustine wondered of man himself, but with the unique position of his own self-experience. Happy that this self-experience seemed to end the Aristotelian metaphysic of speculation without experience, Buber applauded a faith that built a new house in the cosmos for the solitary soul. Although this raised the image of a Christian cosmos of a self-enclosed universe, analogized as a house in which the human being was allowed to dwell, Buber recognized the development of the idea of finitude whose pattern was a cross, whose vertical beam was the finite space from heaven to hell which led right across the heart of the human being, and whose cross-beam was finite time from the creation of the world to the end of days. This made time's center, the death of Christ, fall redemptively on the center of space, the heart of the poor sinner (Buber, 1965a, p. 129)

Aquinas drew from Augustine's finite cosmos the address by man to God in the third person, in a world-system in which the person was a separate species of the spirits, and was substantially united with the human body as the highest of physical things. Man took the position as the "horizon and the dividing line of spiritual and physical nature" but within Aquinas' thought, the individual faced no problematic similar to that in Augustine's self-experience. The anthropological question was once again laid to rest,

Buber lamented, because in man, housed and unproblematic in Aquinas' cosmos, no impulse stirred to questioning self-confrontation, or was it soon appeased (Buber, 1965a).

## **Utilitarianism Through Rationalism**

### **Utilitarianism**

In the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, Epicurus' Hedonism was reimagined by the Utilitarians, Jeremy Bentham, James, and John Stuart Mill. In eighteenth century England, Bentham (1748-1832) renewed the idea that "[n]ature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*" (Johnson, 1989, p. 210). His primary interest was legislation rather than morals and his writing was an attempt to infuse the spirit of justice into British institutions. As a legalist, Bentham approached the idea of utilitarian pleasure from an organizational viewpoint and divided pleasure in fourteen simple types and pain into twelve, a framework that has categorized Bentham's work as quantitative Utilitarianism. Bentham valued the scientific method and tried to apply it to ethics and resulted in his Hedonistic Calculus (Sahakian, 1974).

Bentham defined the greatest happiness societally, that is, the greatest happiness was realized by the greatest number of people when all individuals did all in their power to achieve the personal maximum of genuine and enduring happiness (Marnell, 1966). His justification of such a definition of the "Greatest Happiness Principle" was in his determination of a verifiable arithmetical system to count pleasure and pain. Rooting the source of such happiness in the level of the divine, Bentham outlined that if an action produced happiness, it was good; if it were good, it conformed to the will of God.

When such actions produced the greatest happiness for the greatest number, those happinesses became the supreme good for society.

This supreme good was envisaged on earth, but it remained to be ratified in heaven. Dante had written that "In God's will is our peace," but Bentham's position could be understood as "In our will is God's peace" (Marnell, 1966, p. 176). Bentham's aim of producing and realizing practical politics was the core of his work.

The school of Utilitarianism pursued by Bentham held that morality was only instrumental to happiness. Visualizing happiness as a means and not as an end, Bentham posited that happiness was not good in itself but was good for something else. Happiness was the seeking of pleasure rather than pain and became instrumental in the utility principle. This principle approved of every action than tended to

produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness . . . or to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered: if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community; if a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual (Bentham, 1948, p. 126).

Bentham and John Stuart Mill recognized only two alternatives to the utility principle: (1) ascetism, which always opposed it and (2) sympathy and antipathy, which sometimes opposed it. Bentham was adamantly opposed to ascetic tendencies in ethics (McGill, 1967). Insisting that pain or unpleasantness was never good but was actually evil, Bentham defined happiness as a favorable balance of pleasure over pain. Mill later

defended hedonism against ascetic criticism by insisting that pleasure had been popularly misdefined as primarily bodily pleasures instead of as the pleasure of pleasant feelings.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), the son of the early Utilitarian James Mill (1773-1836), penned one of the most illustrative modern Hedonistic thoughts with "[i]t is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied" (Mill, 1991). Mill stated further that

[a]ctions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. My happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and privation of pleasure. . . . Pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends; and all desirable things are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as a means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain (Sedgwick, 1970, pp. 14-15).

The Mills' contribution to Utilitarianism centered on giving this thought a psychology by making the ancient concept of associationism form an ethical mold for utilitarianism, that is, a qualitative Utilitarianism. Woven into this framework was an implicit power of education. Asserting that all people were created mentally equal, both Mills agreed that environmental conditions caused differences found among individuals within and among societies. Morality was thus implicit in human biology and this idea was later taken over by Spencer in Social Darwinism. According to this psychology, morality was a product of sense impressions because seeking pleasure and avoiding pain were bound inextricably to sensory perceptions of actions that were then deemed pleasurable or painful. Virtue, according to James Mill, acted as a means to pleasurable

sensations, the primary of which were prudence, personal fortitude, and social fortitude evidenced in justice; and personal benevolence which manifested itself in the pleasures of wealth, power, and dignity (Marnell, 1966). Mill's definitive statement of morality was written in 1869.

Virtue is the name of Prudence, Fortitude, Justice, and Beneficence, all taken together. It is also, like the name of each of the species included under it, at once the name of the Affection, the Motive, and the Disposition. The man who has the Disposition toward all the four, Prudence, Fortitude, Justice, Beneficence, in full strength; that is, who has acquired, from habit, the facility of associating with those acts the pleasures which result from them, in other words, a habit of obeying the motives, is perfectly virtuous (Mill, 1869, II, pp. 288-289).

Mill identified a test of the reality of Utilitarianism by addressing the issue of its applicability to others. Forcing morality into a quasi-scientific system, Mill built a new foundation for morality within a humanly constructed order. Morality now rested on a physiological basis of sensation and could be objectively verified. The good and the beautiful coalesced as a fusion of the subjectively aesthetic and moral. Utilitarianism was now comprised of both a psychology and of an ethics.

Utilitarianism, an outgrowth of Hedonistic philosophy, regarded its proper historical placement within legislation rather than within morality. Although ethical in spirit, the writings of Bentham and Mill were classified as political science or legislation. Bentham's work argued that "[t]he business of government is to promote the happiness of society, by punishing and rewarding" (Bentham, 1948, p. 189) and, contrary to the

positions of both Kant and Hegel, held that all punishments were evil. Cautioning legislators that inflicting pain was justifiable only when it had good results, Bentham outlined four conditions under which punishments were absolutely out of place. These conditions were where such punishments were *groundless, inefficacious, unprofitable, or needless*. Recognizing the need to mete out punishment to preserve the greatest happiness for the greatest number, Bentham claimed as his overriding principle that punishment to prevent harm to society must be accomplished "at as cheap a rate as possible" with the smallest penalty to society (Bentham, 1948).

Disagreements among Utilitarians regarding the road to ultimate happiness were four-fold. First, Spencer, a scientific and evolutionary utilitarian, disagreed with Bentham's empirical utilitarianism. Whereas Bentham chose to trace hedonistic consequences of particular acts in his legislative edicts, Spencer relied on scientific generalizations regarding the consequences of various *kinds* of acts, such as benevolence and theft. Second, Utilitarians argued about the question of whether people desire *only* their own pleasure, a notion that involved the consideration of psychological-egoistic hedonism. Bentham usually agreed with this position; however, he allowed for some degree for sympathy from others. Hobbes, writing in the seventeenth century, rejected altruistic motives altogether. The role of God, or divine inspiration for morality, constituted the third sphere of disagreement for Utilitarians. The main difference between theological and non-theological utilitarians was that the former had additional sanctions for moral conduct. If the theological utilitarians were correct and if God had intended happiness for His creatures, our pursuit of it was observance of God's will as

well as our own interests. In theological utilitarianism, followers were offered a manner in which to reconcile egoistic desire and altruistic duty. Finally, the most essential difference among Utilitarians was that of the constitution of happiness conceived as pleasure. At the core of Bentham's utilitarianism was the idea that pleasures were quantifiably the same. Without this framework of quantitative sameness, Bentham would be denied the Hedonistic Calculus and would be unable to conclude that benevolence was of greater utility than malice.

John Stuart Mill's revision to traditional Utilitarianism regarding happiness conceived as pleasure was his theorem that it was consistent with utilitarianism to recognize that some *kinds* of pleasure were greater, more desirable, and more valuable than others. His ideas moved Utilitarian thinking away from complete dependence on quantitative thinking alone when estimating pleasures (McGill, 1967). Mill's argument was both Platonic and Aristotelian in that the qualitative diversity of pleasure was entirely consistent with Aristotelian eudaemonism. Plato assured the reader that no one would choose to be an oyster, no matter what pleasures the oyster enjoyed. Aristotle insisted that those who knew pleasure that accompanied rational activity preferred it to pleasures merely of bodily activities. With this new thought, Mill stepped toward Aristotle by maintaining that "the ingredients of happiness are very various, and each of them is desirable in itself, and not merely when considered as swelling an aggregate" (Mill, 1944, p. 33-34).

Comparison of the two strands of Utilitarian thought illustrated disagreement between Bentham and Mill as to the definition of the greatest good. Bentham defined

the ultimate good as pleasure of a single quality which was calculable in quantity only, not in kind. Mill reasoned that pleasure must differ in kind as well as quantity, and Mill's *summum bonum* was mediated by the statement that

[the] only true or definite rule of conduct or standard of morality is the greatest happiness, but there is needed first a philosophical estimate of happiness. Quality as well as quantity of happiness is to be considered less of a higher kind is preferable to more of a lower. The test of quality is the preference given by those who are acquainted with both (Mill, 1965, p. 343).

Decisions as to which pleasures were more valuable needed to be referred to the hedonic expert who had both adequate experience with both types of pleasure and knew how to evaluate them (Sahakian, 1974).

### **Rationalism**

Rationalist morality demonstrated the ultimate application of scientific method to ethical thinking. The systematic thought of René Descartes in theory of knowledge and in cosmology earned him the title of "the father of modern philosophy," but he wrote no systematic treatise of ethics (Tsanoff, 1942, p. 174). He maintained the attitude of critical resistance and doubt as safeguards against error and called the fundamental problem for humanity the conflict between seeking truth and universalist first principles versus the living and acting of life. Descartes devised four maxims of morals that included advice to his modern person: (1) submit to established laws, customs, and religion while following moderate respectable practices, (2) be as firm as possible in any

action undertaken, (3) try self-mastery rather than changing the world order, and (4) choose the best of human occupations, that is, the cultivation of reason in the perseverance of truth (Tsanoff, 1974).

Descartes's consideration of ultimate goodness centered on his definition of human knowledge. Complete human knowledge involved knowledge of virtue, but really understanding virtue, the path to human perfection, meant beginning study of humankind, of their souls and thoughts, as well as of their bodies and passions. This was known through emphasis on the interaction of soul and body: in passion, the two were somehow turned into one. His solution for the scientist established a biological means to interpret the notions of soul, passion, reason, knowledge, and virtue.

Descartes's position of biological interpretation of philosophical constructs gave primacy to reason and its power to bind or dissolve the factual as well as everything based on belief in or on evidence of revelation, tradition, and authority (Cassier, 1955). A bond emerged between the mathematical and philosophical spirits that produced a modernity of reason as the pinnacle of human capability. Scientific analysis was applied to both psychological and sociological problems.

Cartesian methodology influenced the structure and state of society as well as the conception of humanity's ultimate good. Rationalism envisioned the human person as having been born into the world not as having created or shaped it. Prior ethicists regarded the general will of the state as composed of the wills of individuals; however, Cartesian thought held that the state came into being as a result of the union of human wills. Only in this collective union could Rationalists make the "body" of the state and

subject its methodology more fruitful in discovery of universal laws in the physical world (Cassier, 1955).

Descartes's reductionist ethics paralleled those of the Stoics, although Descartes's intentions were hardly Stoic in nature in that he did not aspire to apathy. He accepted human passions as good in nature and believed that the individual would stagnate without passion. He considered pursuit of satisfaction essential human activity, again paralleling Epicurean Hedonists, and the idea of contentment achieved with serious rational consideration as humanity's goal.

Discussion of contentment demanded consideration of the causes of those things which could contribute to human contentment. Descartes decided that our well-being depended upon the reasonableness of our desires. He labelled the supreme excellence of the soul as generosity.

True generosity which causes a man to esteem himself as highly as he legitimately can, consists alone partly in the fact that he knows that there is nothing that truly pertains to him but this free disposition of his will, and that there is no reason why he should be praised or blamed unless it is because he uses it well or ill; and partly in the fact that he is sensible in himself of a firm and constant resolution to use it well, that is to say, never to fail of his own will to undertake and execute all the things which he judges to be the best--which is to follow perfectly after virtue (Tsanoff, 1942, pp. 176-177).

Descartes's philosophy influenced the scientific theology of Benedict De Spinoza, a Jewish theologian and philosopher whose work influenced Bacon's experimental school of thought that inspired Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Mill, Spencer, Darwin, and Huxley,

as well as those who followed Descartes, including Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Lotze (Spinoza, 1933). From Francis Bacon, Spinoza (1632-1677) developed the *novum organum*, a new method of learning which was applicable to the laws of human conduct as well as to the processes of nature. Inspired by his love of Descartes's mathematics, he constructed a geometrical system of knowledge of God, the universe, and man that led to the person's attainment of supreme goodness. Negatively stated, Spinoza maintained that human nature obeyed fixed laws no less than did figures of geometry. Regarding his ethics, Spinoza held that he would ". . . therefore write about human beings as though [he] were concerned with lines and planes and solids (Spinoza, 1939). The Spinoza *Ethics* (1982) illustrated a combination of the severe positivism of empiricists with the deep subjectivity and enthusiasm of piety belonging to a mostly religious nature.

Spinoza regarded the universe and the human being as systems of pure mechanics, a science that was spiritual and divine. In an heroic contest for freedom of philosophizing, Spinoza entered into a voluntary martyrdom in the cause of free thought which resulted in persecution, obloquy from his family, and excommunication from the synagogue when he was twenty four. He was condemned by the Christian authorities of the Church and State as he turned down both royal and university honors so as not to corrupt his freedom of teaching (Spinoza, 1939). Spinoza has been characterized as a pantheist with devout religious beliefs and as a Monist whose One was not nature, but God.

This philosophy of the person's access of the supreme good resulted, in part, from the conflict Spinoza experienced from the narrow, rigid rules of the synagogue contrasted with the free Latin culture around him. The monotheism of his Jewish nature led to his revolt against all forms of dualism and idolatry and influenced his reverence for Scripture and his resulting rebuke of Phariseism. Spinoza was frustrated with the synagogue's formalism and directed his efforts in an open revolt against its authorities. His "crime" was critique of the Holy Scriptures in a devout yet exceptionally rational spirit, an action that placed him practically in the ranks of Christian philosophers of his time, yet his love of mysticism in the Talmud and Kabbalah as well as his love of the Neo-Platonism of Philo and Plotinus separated him from his Christian contemporaries. After his banishment, he lived in scholarly retirement and completed his *Theological Political Treatise (Tractatus Theologico-Politicus)* (1689) in which he pleaded for freedom of thought in civil and religious matters because it was essential to the well-being of the Church as well as the State.

Spinoza's *Ethics* ranged from metaphysics to theology and resulted in epistemology. The *Ethics*, the culmination of his entire system, established a clear demonstrable nexus between God and human conduct. This provided ontological proof of the existence of God from His nature or being " . . . of such an essence as can only be conceived of as existing" (Spinoza, 1939). Thus, from positing God's being and existence as necessary, Spinoza derived all the laws of existence, creation, nature, and the individual's conduct as fixed in an eternal necessity. God's nature must have been perfect freedom because God could not be constrained by any things except Itself. His

denunciation of dualism engendered his theory that there could be no "other" to the One absolute substance.

After his conversion to worldly status, Spinoza concentrated on deconstructing the myth of evil in the world. Because man was finite and did not possess the infinite attributes of the perfect One, "[i]t is this lack of the perfect knowledge of the whole which causes these affections and passions to wear in man's temporal experience the appearance of what is evil" (Spinoza, 1939, p. x). The discussion of the delusion of evil as the bondage of passion or of affections constituted a major division in Spinoza's work and signified where the *Ethics* actually began. The highest good was composed of the satisfactions in relations of the limited *being in alio*, the extension of which was the completion of life.

This "joy" was experienced with the knowledge of its source, that is, the completeness of life in the divine, and may be known as "love." The highest attainment of the human mind was conceived of as intellectual love of God, the contemplation of divine perfection in which all limitations and imperfections of the finite were lost in the harmonious unity of the infinitely many in One. Knowledge was virtue in itself, since knowing a thing to be good was identical with loving it. Only that could be seen to be good which was part of a common or universal good, and that universal good was the intellectual love of God.

Intellectual love of God was the problematic that divided Spinoza from traditional Jewish theology. The love of knowing the good (God) was visioned by Spinoza as reciprocal, that is, God may love Himself in loving mankind, enabling individuals, in the

same love, to rejoice in virtue " . . . not because it enables him to govern his lusts; but because he does rejoice in it, therefore to govern his lusts is possible" (Spinoza, 1939) Spinoza's doctrine of the intellectual love of God was an expression of infinite self-love both on the part of the deity contemplating His own perfection with delight as well as His granting this contemplative joy onto those finite beings who cast themselves into the abyss of His infinity at the sacrifice of their own individuality.

### **Buber's Perspective on the Utilitarians and Rationalists**

What distinguished Martin Buber's existential philosophy from the Utilitarians and Rationalists can be described within the contexts of individualism and collectivism. Even Buber's colleague and mentor, Franz Rosenzweig, dismissed scientific, quantitative, and dualistic approaches to an anthropology or philosophy of humankind as tedious because he felt that no real "other" was present within the dialogues of thought presented by those writers. Buber equated the spokenness of speech with livingness and could not restrict authentic speech to the realm of scientific paradigms, dualistic thinking, or technical monologue. He criticized Aristotle for having lost sight of spokenness as the basic existential event that arose from the pointing back to reality between man and man (Friedman, 1969). When regarding the human spirit, Buber insisted upon consideration of the tension of polarity between human individuals in the concrete world.

In his discussion of the two stages that descend eventually into the absolutely self-affirmed person capable of radical evil, Buber characterized the second stage as that in which the person felt personal mastery of each situation faced in concrete reality and approached each with formulated techniques rather than with authentic meeting and

exercised a "once for all" approach that precluded real response to unique situations (Buber, 1952b). Those philosophical and ethical systems which relegated the individual to the grouped collective status denied Buber's assertion that the moment must retain true dialogical character of presentness and uniqueness (Buber, 1965a, p. 170).

In a response to scientific orthodoxy as a detriment and impediment to real meeting, Buber posited six problematics that prevented such meeting: (1) the human concern with revelation of the future, (2) the attempt to get behind the problematic of life, (3) the desire to possess or use divine power, (4) the acceptance of tradition and law as "once for all" and the taking refuge in it, (5) the potential belief in science as provider of immortality which made death seem unreal or unserious, and (6) the symbols used by the individual to address God which really stood in the way of that address (Buber, 1952b). The scientifically pure idea stood in the way between man and God and Buber saw the job of the philosopher to restore the lived concrete in relation to the human person through the destruction of images which did not do God justice. Therefore, the philosopher's primary act was that of abstraction, as opposed to the scientist's purpose of particularization for eventual generalizing.

Civilization, Buber criticized, was intent on submerging the dialogical life by the once and for all of thought systems. By attaching human life to scientific absolutes, theorists were able to bring order and meaning into earthly existence through imitation of the transcendent Being, but by doing so, degenerated the holy norm into human convention. The resulting attachment to absolute was reduced, became symbolic ritual, and satisfiable only within cultic spheres (Buber, 1952a).

Buber held particular criticism for Descartes's refusal to accept as the beginning of his philosophy the position of man's immediacy, that is, from the position of the philosophizing man. Descartes insisted on the act of anticipating, which led to consideration of pure being as the beginning, from which followed that pure being was pure abstraction. From this, pure reason could become the proper basis for philosophy, as it did later for both Kant and Hegel (Buber, 1965a). The question of the relation of reason to non-reason in the human person was thus called into question, a question whose answer served to frame a designation of both "natural" and "unnatural" states of the human person.

Criticism of Spinoza's attempt to "master the situation of post-copernican man," issued the call for an unconditional acceptance of astronomical infinity and the stripping of its uncanniness. By equating God with, and naming Him Infinite substance, Spinoza juxtaposed God's attribute of infinite substance with *other* attributes, such as love. This was not Aquinas' manifold universe, ordered as an image, in which every thing and every being had its place and the being "man" felt himself at home in union with them all. Instead Spinoza provided an aggregate of divine modes in which the kinds and orders of being were not really grasped and united. Spinoza attempted and failed to effect reconciliation from intellectual separatedness (Buber, 1965a, p. 134).

Buber's critique of Spinoza concentrated on Spinoza's attempts to take away from God His being open to man's address. What Buber found unacceptable about Spinoza's position was that the medieval philosopher sought to purify God, that is, to make Him greater or more divine. "The fundamental error of Spinoza was that he imagined that

in the teaching of Israel only the teaching that God is a person was to be found and he opposed it as a diminution of divinity. But the truth of the teaching is that God is *also* a person, and this is, in contrast to all impersonal, unaddressable 'purity' of God, an augmentation of divinity" (Buber, 1966, p. 43). In Spinoza, Buber found the tendency of the Western spirit that was moving toward monological life and was causing the crisis of spirit in general, "since in the air of monological life it must gloriously wither" (1966, p. 43).

## **Eastern Thought**

### **Bhagavad-Gita**

Ancient Eastern philosophies of Buddhism and Brahmanism have posited paths to clearly recognized states of enlightenment or radical goodness. Whereas Plato, Aristotle, Christian, and Jewish philosophers have defined the good life or well-being as a seeking of pleasure or happiness, and other thinkers have ascribed to the good life the search for power, finding one's deepest impulse and following it, doing what one thinks is right, being honest, devoting oneself to a cause, and the renunciation of a desire, the Bhagavad-Gita in contrast placed the highest value on renunciation of desires as well as the illumination of the human mind.

The illumined human person has been known as the one who knew bliss, an Eastern designation that approaches the Western category of radical goodness. Bliss consisted in a state in which the person sought nothing further than the state in which he existed. This person renounced cravings because they tormented his heart and took no action or had no thought for further or more intensified happiness. Within the state of

bliss, one could not be shaken by adversity and was free from fear, anger, or things of desire.

The process of attainment of such bliss involved more than a singular effort of the human mind. Particular emphasis was placed upon control of the sense because a person can become addicted to sense objects and become confused by them as they overtake human desire. Although the Bhagavad-Gita stressed the ultimacy of controlling one's mind in order to allow the total individual to meditate, the concomitant freeing of the human mind left it empty of lust and hatred. A non-legalistic philosophy, *The Bhagavad-Gita* urged

He knows peace who has forgotten desire.

He lives without craving:

Free from ego, free from pride.

This is the state of enlightenment in Brahman (Porbhavananda, 1944).

## **Buddhism**

Buddhist philosophy stressed that the answer to the question, "What is happiness?" was perhaps the most uncompromising, obscure, and paradoxical problem to consider (Zimmer, 1951). Filled with mythology and poetry, the ideal for the attainment of enlightenment was illustrated by the story of how the Buddha became the "Awakened One." The great and princely yogi, Gautama Sakyamuni, arrived at the threshold of absolute enlightenment, although he was tempted by the god Kama-Mara (Death and Desire). Overcoming his tempter by remaining immovable in introversion, the yogi then experienced the Great Awakening. Now known as the Buddha (Awakened

One), he recognized that his experience was beyond all powers of human speech; therefore to attempt to discuss it or teach it directly would be in vain. Choosing to hide the possibility of this Great Awakening, Buddha was urged by the universal lord of fleeting processes, the Brahma, who was himself a creature, to teach the path so that some others would understand and become happy. Buddha was thus moved to teach the path, an Order assumed shape, and the Buddhist tradition was brought into existence (Campbell, 1951).

The Order of Buddhism has become antithetical to the missionary traditions of Christianity. Buddhism's doctrines had been meant for only those prepared to hear; they had never been intended for the multitudes or to interfere with the course of civilization. The path celebrated the individual who was ready to hear the message, and within Buddhism the greatest thinker was the "silent sage," unlike Zarathustra's preaching of religious law of Persia, Confucius's commentaries on restoring the system of early Chinese thought, or Jesus's announcing salvation to the world (Zimmer, 1951). Buddhism's enlightenment, or radical goodness, remained the symbol of something beyond what could be said or taught (Abelson & Friquegnon, 1987).

### **Buber's Perspective: The Teaching of the Tao**

Buber had often been erroneously classified as a "mystic" by others in an attempt to classify his thought and philosophy (Friedman, 1960). Early in his philosophical life, Buber was extremely interested in Eastern mystic philosophies and had personal experiences that were described as mystical. In his later writings, Buber rejected the entire system of philosophical classification into schools and paradigms; rather, he wrote

"I am not concerned with finding a conceptual 'pigeonhole' for ecstasy. It is the unclassifiable aspect of ecstasy that interests me" (Buber, 1985, p. *xxxi*). What did interest him was the individual's experience that lay forever beyond explanation.

Remarking that he was distressed that our time had lost sight of the old knowledge that the Orient formed a natural unity, Buber wrote that the peoples of the East possessed a common reality that sundered them in unconditional clarity from the destiny and genius of the West (Buber, 1957). His way of coming to know that unity was through the single manifestation of the teaching of the Tao. Underlying that teaching was the primal, magical state of the spirit. That magical state was achieved through the process of detaching and becoming independent. Above all, the process was characterized by a slowness, a willingness to endure, and a desire to achieve undifferentiated wholeness.

To understand the teaching, Buber called upon Western civilization to bring together the three forces of knowing: science, law, and teaching. Science, the compilation of all that "is;" law, the organization of the commandments of "ought;" and teaching, which has only one subject, the one thing "needful" (Buber, 1957, pp. 32-33). Whereas the fundamental meanings of "is" and "ought" could be transformed, the "needful" transcended such dichotomy and remained a synthesis with neither *inner* or *outer*, but demanded nothing; instead, it simply proclaimed itself.

Ecstasy was thus interpreted as the approach of the word of the *I*. Describing as illusory the standard of truth to measure knowledge or health (such as in mental health contrasted with experiences of mystical ecstasy), Buber preferred to experience the urgency of bliss in mystic thought. "I do not know what madness is; but I know that I

am here to listen to the voice of the human being" (Buber, 1985, p. xxxii). Out of the intermixture of madness, ecstasy, individual experience, and knowledge arose a religion: a product of the contamination in which information, command, and the necessary are welded into a contradictory and effective whole" (Buber, 1957, p. 34). The resulting religion and teaching could be considered partial forces; instead, both represented the wholeness of life.

Buber considered human nature to include a dimension of unity, that is, the unity of the simple person and the unity of the person who had become unified. When the "central" person appeared, the individual sought out his "poorer brothers in spirit," to speak to them in the language that they could hear: the parable (Buber, 1957, p. 35). As the twentieth century's foremost recounter of Hasidic parable in its mystical fullness, Buber maintained a deep, abiding, and cherished respect for the parable, which he considered as the insertion of the absolute into the world of events. Conversely, he defined the myth as the insertion of the world of things into the absolute.

The teaching of the Tao decried the dissolution that had taken place in Western religion that

consummated in the perpetuated act of violence that calls itself religion yet holds religiousness in chains. Ever again there awakens in the souls of the religious the ardour for freedom--for the teaching; ever again reformation--restoration--renewal of the teaching--is ventured; ever again this venture must miscarry, ever again the fervent movement must issue not in the teaching but in a mixture of science and law, the so-called purified religion. For the teaching cannot be restored, cannot be renewed. Eternally the same, still it must eternally begin anew. This is the course

taken by the history of the highest manifestation of the Eastern spirit (Buber, 1957, p. 36).

## **Reformation Through Intuitionism**

### **Reformation of Aroused Conscience**

Martin Luther exemplified the transformation within Christian thinking during Renaissance times and he sought justification only by faith. The idea of the supreme good was salvation and was the state of the human soul in which faith became the free gift of God. What separated the human being from God was found within separated kinds of righteousness. Although the ultimate test for good and evil was comprised in God's commands in scriptures, the ideal for humanity became an inner Christ-like personality.

Luther's doctrine embodied the maturing critical intelligence in Europe during the time of Humanism which compelled a radical reconstruction of important church doctrines. His revolt against ecclesiasticism stemmed from a deep spiritual demand and a twofold conviction that churchly legalism and reliance on external observance were barriers to union and therefore our trust could never be in any devised instrumentality but only in a living faith which was a liberation of the human soul in Jesus Christ (Tsanoff, 1942). His emphasis shifted toward the moral factor in Christian life, but his development of that principle was set against papal authority in the rejection of any gospel that was solely of good works. Luther's emphasis was not that of outward conduct but of inner attunement of the soul.

Luther was driven by a sinner's anguish rather than by a sturdy moral conviction. His demands and reforms were rigorous and were marked by asceticism and by unrelieved conscience. He did not find peace within the Augustinian monastery; rather, he discovered fulfillment and salvation through union in faith with Christ and he held that humanity had an inalienable assurance of God's free gift of righteousness through loving faith in Christ (Tsanoff, 1942). It was the Church's sale of indulgences that transformed him into the role of reformer, and his condemnation by the Church pushed his efforts toward radicalism. Luther was outraged by the system of indulgences because it neglected the religious essential of the repentant anguish for the sin itself in exchange for payment. This practice, Luther believed, denegated the ecclesiastic system of the masses, fasting, pilgrimages, and monastic and lay discipline of conduct by allowing for and encouraging false atonement by the wealthy through financial arrangements hardly based on true faith.

Accepting the fact of sin as given, Luther considered that such a state rendered one impotent to do good. Luther wrestled with the question of how people could strive to righteousness in the sight of an absolutely righteous God and secure salvation from sin and guilt. Salvation, which depended entirely upon the will and grace of God, was a position in which Luther agreed with Augustine. Yet Luther carried the probability of salvation one onerous step forward. He wrote that by fiat of God's will, He predestined and elected those decreed to be saved and effectively carried out His eternal purpose in the individual soul (Mackinnon, 1962). Luther agreed with the Nominalist position that God's will expressed the highest good.

The concept of predestination so permeated Luther's theology that he relegated human attempts to achieve righteousness as negated because unless God had predetermined to offer salvation to a particular person, one's actions could never be in themselves righteous in God's sight. Thus Luther planted himself firmly in opposition to Aristotelian thought which conceived of righteousness as dwelling in the soul. According to Aristotle's *Ethics* (1985), righteousness followed and arose from one's acts. In the Lutheran view, righteousness preceded works and works arose from it. Therefore virtue did not flow from works and acts, but acts arose from virtue, as Christ taught (Mackinnon, 1962).

Philosophy was misleading and was the pursuit of "vanity and perdition." Theologians, Luther complained, were often led astray by Aristotle's fallacious metaphysics. By moving away from both the Nominalists and the Aristotelians, Luther asserted that persons must be righteous in order to act righteously, but they must first interpret it in the true scriptural sense (Mackinnon, 1962, pp. 188-189). Only the Gospel revealed the great secret for the attainment of such righteousness. The individual came to the secret by faith which revealed the Word of God.

One must come to God with the appropriate attitude of a condemned person, that is, condemned by conscience and the law which no one can fulfill. One must come to God in humility and mystical self-despair, having first eschewed any personal sense of security in one's own righteousness, the greatest enemy of essential humility. The person was transformed into one who was sufficiently satisfied to accept God's gift of salvation. Luther's asceticism asserted that individuals must be aware of their own

impotence to save themselves and recognize the consciousness of unrighteousness as an indispensable condition of justification.

Luther thought of God as the absolute good and as ideal righteousness. His conviction was profound and he declared that even in our doing good, we sin, unless God through Christ covered our imperfections (Mackinnon, 1962). Luther's ethics were of piety and asserted that morality concerned the person's devotion to God expressed in the one's own life, thought and dealings with others. He wiped out the barrier between laypersons and the clergy, between secular and religious acts, and between lay and clerical sanctity. The whole of life was charged with spiritual possibilities (Tsanoff, 1942). He allowed for fundamental changes within clerical life including marriage of priests, translating the Bible for German people, inaugurating a system of public schools to teach everyone to read God's Word, and preaching the freedom of the Christian man.

Yet Luther held dogmatically to the tenet that the attainment of righteousness was possible only for those who believed in Christ. For the unbeliever, Christ's redemptive work was an act of judgment, not of redemption, and deemed the salvation of the soul the effective realization of God's saving purpose, since remission was only given to those who believed in Christ. He redefined faith as the intellectual conviction of the truth of God's word and promise in the Gospel. He rejected the scholastic distinction between incomplete and complete faith (Mackinnon, 1962). Complete faith consisted of humility and obedience, humble distrust of the self and all its powers and works, and readiness to subject oneself to God's word and will. Luther's conception of faith was intellectual and denoted the true understanding of the divine plan of salvation. But if faith were the

right apprehension of what was revealed in the Gospel, it was not determined by the understanding itself; rather, it was the gift of God known through experience of a moral, spiritual, and intellectual character.

Imagining God as the Great Physician who healed the human condition of sin known as disease, Luther employed Christ within his metaphor as the Good Samaritan who healed the wounded, sin-stricken humanity. Only through healing was the person rendered righteous. Through this metaphorical construct, Luther sought to impress humankind that the moral regeneration of the believer was not only possible, but could be brought about in an instantaneous operation of God's power and grace (Mackinnon, 1962). In this sense, God began in the individual the process of moral healing or regeneration. It was only in the prospective sense that He would finally and surely bring it to completion. Luther separated the process of justification into two stages: of always being in the process of justification and the waiting and preparing for complete justification.

Luther rejected the Scholastic interpretation of infused righteousness or grace, or that of faith formed by love. He agreed with the Augustinian concept of it as a healing process, and he affirmed that justification required not only the works of the law, but a living faith which operated in its own works. He stressed that God acted directly with the individual, not through the sacramental medium of the Church, in giving the grace that reputed righteous and made righteous. The notion of merit by the person was denied, and justification was, from beginning to end, wholly, exclusively the work of God, on whom the sinner was absolutely dependent (Mackinnon, 1962).

Contrasting the Lutheran position were the Calvinists who through John Calvin (1509-1564) were legalists who ascribed to Hebrew Scriptures in deciding that morality was obedience to the Decalogue directly to God. In this moral code that presupposed Kantian ethics, Calvinists proposed that opposition to God was sin; thus, obedience to God led to supreme goodness. This religious and philosophical system stressed one's responsibility, guilt, and opportunity to achieve salvation with "every man should receive his due" (Widgery, 1940).

Calvinists saw God at the center of the cosmos, and the role of humankind within this order as secondary, although the individual, through partaking in the rite of communion, could enter into the divine relationship. Entering into this relationship afforded the person understanding of the means to achieve supreme goodness, although this scholastic religion placed obedience to law and commandment as fundamental to the realization of other-worldly happiness.

Calvin considered the chief end of humankind to glorify and enjoy God. To achieve this end, Calvin wrote that the Word of God, which was contained in the scriptures of the "Old" and "New" Testaments, was the only rule to direct us to glorify and enjoy Him (Harkness, 1958, p. 90). Calvinists believed in this ultimate good because they believed God so far transcended all human creatures that humanity could find their own joy and glory in exalting Him. Mediating this glorification was the belief in the primacy of Calvin's interpretation of the scriptures as the only true one, a situation that resulted in Calvinism being characterized as an intolerant denomination that viewed

heresy as abomination and was suspicious of any worship that might have appeared to be contradictory.

Calvinists saw the three cardinal offenses against God as idolatry, blasphemy, and heresy. If the chief end of humankind could be considered largely in negative terms, these offenses might be the basis of Calvin's supreme good. As a legalist whose source of moral law was the Decalogue, Calvin argued this position with "[t]hat the law is divided into ten precepts, is beyond all controversy, being frequently established by the authority of God Himself. The question, therefore, is not concerning the number of the precepts, but concerning the manner of dividing them" (Harkness, 1958, p. 92).

Calvinism developed as a discipline of life and thought. Rejecting papal primacy, Calvin substituted an authoritative church to dictate the lives of its adherents. People were to obey God's will and the office of God's ministers was to execute that will. This demanded both an unwavering conviction and firm will for true worship of God with the correct understanding of humanity's relation to God. The first principle was humankind's utter dependence on God and disavowal of all external observance and sacramental magic as causing the misunderstanding that whatever people may or may not do contributed to their salvation (Tsanoff, 1942). If God bestowed His grace on humankind they were saved by His mercy; if not, they were damned by His justice. Salvation was God; God was the only good; and God's will was the sole determinant of good. Predestination was the ultimate fiat of God's will and the final source of all righteousness. What God willed was good because He willed it.

Morality in Calvinism was a reflection of this and demanded trust and obedience. Calvinism began with the tenet of human depravity and Divine predestination, but did not produce an image of a frail or impotent human being; rather, human frailty was by God's grace turned into strength. God's law was primary and was not left to be searched out by human reason. The result was the establishment of God's law and rule in human life practiced within stringent regulations of belief and conduct by a Biblical code. This alone was the way the person could achieve ultimate goodness.

Erasmus, a third Reformation scholar, sought to accomplish reform within scholarship and satire. Along with Sir Thomas More, Erasmus (1466-1536) tried to bring relief into the spirit of the Christian person. To re-establish the "philosophy of Christ," Erasmus combined the spirit of the sermon on the mount with Greek philosophy, asserting that former was, above all else, something practical (Widgery, 1940). His Christian Aristotelianism advocated that human well-being was dominant and the individual a social whole. Contradicting both Calvin and Luther, he asserted that dispositions cultivated in the human soul were greatly significant. In his Platonic leanings, Erasmus believed that existence was understood best from the spirit and goodness was an essential characteristic of ultimate being. Espousing the rational nature of the human person, he diverged from strict Protestantism's emphasis on the fact of human will.

The chief source of contention and disagreement between Erasmus and Luther concerned Luther's doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone. With Luther's rejection of human responsibility, Erasmus saw a harmful effect on private morals. St. Thomas

More commented on Lutheranism's position with "[and] this they call the liberty of the gospel, to be discharged of all order and all laws, and do what they list, which be it good or bad, be, as they say, nothing but the works of God wrought in them." In 1523, Erasmus learned that the whole Church expected him to fight against Luther over free-will and justification. In response, Erasmus reluctantly wrote "I approve of those who ascribe something to free-will, but rely most upon grace" (Campbell, 1950, p. 230). The two then began a series of arguments and counter-arguments, much of which served to diminish Erasmus's moderate standing within the theological community, yet Erasmus never ceased to hold strict allegiance to Rome.

#### **Buber's Perspective on the Protestant Reformation**

Protestant writers of the Reformation sought to deny human responsibility and defer to the glorifying of God as the absolute, or supreme good for humankind. Buber viewed the human being as a creature who glorified the holy within the depths of bodily life. Whereas Calvin and Luther viewed the body as either sick, depraved, or unholy, Buber celebrated the dancer who, within the dance, liberated himself (Buber, 1957, p. 20). In the celebration of the strength of the body, the dancer experienced possibility that surged within him.

Nijinski, the dancer described by Buber in "Brother Body" (1914), epitomized the full potential of the unknown, the threatening, and the enticing occurrences. Through dance, the human person experienced the beast, that is, primitive forces, and the dancer's playing and expressing gestures became part of human existence, the body's enjoyment of itself and its spirituality. This play thus became the exultation of the possible.

In "The Teaching of the Tao" (1910), Buber expressed the nature of knowing has perpetually beginning anew. Coming to know did not have one content that may have taken different forms; rather, the opposition of content and form appeared as a dialectical one. He could not achieve a conception of the human person and any divinity that divided the two into separated strata and denied relationship between them. Such relationship was a product of direct address.

The Logos of the Johannine Gospel, the symbol of primal existence taken significantly from the world of speech, is erected as a sign of truth against the encroachment of this dialectic. 'The Word' is 'in the beginning' because it is the unity that is dialectically dissected. Just for this reason the word is the mediator: because it presents to the products of dissection, e.g. to divinity and humanity, or otherwise regarded, to 'God the Father' and to 'the Holy Ghost,' the bond that unites them, the original unity that, divided and become flesh, once again reconciles the elements. 'The Word' is thereby the companion of every genuine human word, which also is not a content that has taken on a form, but a unity that has been dissected into content and form--a dissection that does not clarify but confuses the history of the human word and the history of each single human word, and whose claim, therefore, cannot reach beyond the province of conceptual classification (Buber, 1957, pp. 36-37).

If the human person is sick, diseased, or in need of healing, Buber proposed that such healing could be accomplished only through meeting of the divine with the actual. In "The Altar" (1914), Buber posed the dilemma the Christian faced when confronted with our world, the world of colors, as *the* world which the believer may be forced to abandon. He wondered if we did not strive to turn away from the actual and to deny the fullness of our experience, were we destined to be dispersed in things and exiled to the

conditioned? Must we forever stray, he asked, from being to being and from happening to happening, incapable of grasping their unity (Buber, 1957, p. 18). Viewing the scene of the resurrection as the merging of the night and day of the world into one of color, imagination, and potential, Buber declared the act to be both a miracle and mystery. Without both, the act became teaching of object or content without the glory of things in the spirit of the earth. Jesus, Buber claimed, loved the world and rejected none of its colors, and fought for its unconditionality against all that was conditioned. "He loves the world towards the Unconditioned, he bears the world upward to its Self. He, the united one, shapes the world to unity" (Buber, 1957, pp. 18-19). Creating living unity out of the manifold was the human being's direction to the glorification of both oneself and the divine.

This position was divergent from the the Reformation writings of Luther, Calvin, and Erasmus. Disavowing their disciplined, legalistic approaches, Buber wrote that true faith was unconditional trust in the relationship with God (Buber, 1967a). Buber's humanism was not a leap of faith; rather, it was faith as a witness in the cruel as well as the gracious situations of life. No dogma or creed could take the place of faith forged in trust of relationship between the individual and the Divine.

In "Religion and God's Rule," he made the distinction between religion and the kingdom of God. Religion, he noted, had diverted humanity from God and the kingdom of god was the opposite of religion. Due to the separation forged by Reformation writers between the person as depraved and sinful, and God as judgmental, our "one" world had broken into unconnected spheres in which some people at some times could have specific

religious relations to the world. However, this was not Buber's conception of authentic religious experience. "But either religion is a reality, rather *the* reality, namely the *whole* existence of the real man in the real world of God, an existence that unites all that is partial; or it is a phantom of the covetous human soul" (Buber, 1967a, p. 111).

### **Deontological Intuitionism**

Kant's (1724-1804) *Critique of Pure Reason* (1956) was an investigation into the philosophy of human self-knowledge and constituted reason's most difficult task. This attack against eighteenth century Hedonist theology held that reason's fundamental purpose was to investigate human capabilities, that is, to make individuals aware of what they were, what they were able to do and know, and to make them aware of their limitations and avoid errors without transgressing these limitations. The empiricism of this epistemology stemmed from conceptions of the individual's nature, capabilities and limitations, and not simply on the claim that sensory deliverance was equated with knowledge.

The individual's moral nature was a concern for Kant and was addressed in his writing. Each individual can and must know himself as a living being. This alone accounted for the nature of the human will as a faculty of desire, and rendered it determinable by reason or inclination. Each person was subject to the impulses of life force (*Lebenskraft*) which inclined one to fill one's needs as a finite being. With this view of a being of needs, each person's finitude gave transcendental significance to the sensible factors in human volition. This combination of the individual's finite and

sensibly-affected will gave humanity the possibility of moral life. Human sensibility became the grounding of the potential for moral life as well as for empirical knowledge.

Kant disavowed that this created a dualism; rather, he posited a dialectic that proposed permanent problems for human existence. Kant saw the human problematic condition as a tension that did not result from two irreconcilable natures in man but from a natural conflict between man's finite limits and his rational tendencies to try to overcome them. This critical self-knowledge revealed human nature within the dialectic whose limitations of finitude were inescapable. The dialectic was one of practical rather than theoretical reason and resulted from man's limits in pursuit of an unconditioned, final moral end.

Within Kantian philosophy, the individual was a limited being of needs who simultaneously possessed the capacity to think and to will, actions that pointed a person beyond personal limits. In this condition, the individual developed an awareness of human limitations and dependence and found the self unable to fulfill all one's own necessary and proper aspirations. Part of the inescapable dialectic that led to critical self-knowledge was that if one were never to transgress these limits, one would never experience limitations. The person was rendered painfully aware of the irresolvability of the tension within existence.

Within this tension, one must address the task of supplying a rational means to develop a meaningful inquiry and the person was empowered to undertake action within this state of dialectical tension. This task involved the regulative employment of transcendental ideas (Wood, 1970). Kant believed that to be moral, humanity must act

autonomously with free choice, and not unwillingly from external compulsions. This inward locus of obedience acknowledged a categorical imperative that introduced the idea of the person that regarded each individual ethically as of intrinsic worth, and not as a means to an end. Human beings were no longer considered morally isolated; rather they were now known as members of a kingdom or realm of ends (Widgery, 1940).

Kant's moral arguments considered God, freedom, and mortality. The argument of moral faith was the most forceful as he developed ideas that personal and subjective faith in God were based on the subjective awareness of God in recognition of both the category and categorical imperative (Wood, 1970). These moral arguments were not traditional theoretical positions; rather, many critics consider them theological (Smith, 1962). In this phase, Kant seemed to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.

The crucial difference between knowledge and faith can be known from the way in which each was regarded as sufficient. "Believing" appeared as holding a judgment only subjectively, a way of knowing that was objectively insufficient. "Knowledge," conversely, was holding a thing to be sufficiently true both subjectively and objectively. Kant's faith as well as Kierkegaard's became a personal and subjective matter (Smith, 1963). This is illustrated with Kant's comment that "no one, indeed, will be able to boast that he *knows* that there is a God and a future life . . . No, my conviction is not logical but *moral* certainty; I must not even say, *It is* certain that there is a God, etc., but only *I am* morally certain." (Kant, 1960b, p.6).

The highest good was an *a priori* necessary object of will and was inseparably related to moral law (Kant, 1956). The relationship was so critical between this concept

of the highest good and moral law that one could not abandon pursuit of this highest good without ceasing to obey the moral law altogether. There was a second necessity posited regarding the conditions under which this end could be envisioned as attainable. In pursuit of the highest good, there could be only one set of conditions for the practical possibility of this end thinkable by a finite rational being and those conditions involved the existence of a God and a future life. Considering the antimony of practical reason, Kant argued that if the highest good were impossible to attain, "the moral law which commands that it be furthered must be fantastic, directed to empty imaginary ends, and consequently inherently false" (Kant, 1956). Thus moral faith became a practical postulate and the denial of the existence of God and a future life became *absurdum practicum* (argument leading to unwelcome inconsistencies in judgments) (Wood, 1970).

Kant's concept of the moral law commanded us was to pursue the highest good and concomitant to this pursuit to *will* in a certain way. This commandment to will must be autonomous to determine our will by the legislative form of its maxim rather than by the end we adopted. "[T]he conception of this form as a determining ground of the will is distinct from all determining grounds of events in nature according to the law of causality" (Wood, 1970, p.36). Consequently, moral volition was possible only when a being's will can be determined by grounds which are not events in nature. This kind of will is free will.

Kant's thought regarding the highest good and its antithesis, evil, centered around good and evil as objects of pure practical reason. Good, the object of desire, was contrasted with evil, the object of aversion. If something were to be "held absolutely

good or evil in all respects and without qualification" it must be "the manner of acting". This good was not identifiable simply with unqualified goodness of the good will, but "[a]ction in accordance with [the law] is *in itself* good; and a will whose maxims always accord with the law is absolutely and in every respect good and the *supreme condition of all good*" (Kant, 1963, italics added). Good and evil did not originally refer to objects, Kant noted, but to the category of causality. The will, motivated by the law, made possible the *a priori* determination of an object of pure practical reason "[o]nly . . . when the moral law has been established by itself and justified as the direct determining ground of the will can this object be presented to the will whose form now is determined a priori" (Wood, 1970, p. 68). The object meant was the highest good.

Any object of pure practical reason was constituted in a formal legislative maxim and was subject to two conditions: (1) that the object must be conditioned by observance to moral law and (2) that the object must include the agent's own natural ends limited and qualified in a systematic way. Kant's concept of the highest good derived from an examination of the features of the object's or end's pure practical reason and from reason's proper fulfillment of its function in setting before itself as an end the unconditioned totality of such ends, as an ideal for deliberate moral labor and striving (Wood, 1970). Obedience to the law implied an embodiment of that form in purposive actions, and application of the moral law presupposed some material context of action. Kant claimed that a being engaged in this type of action and of this kind constituted an "end in itself." The humanity found in such a person " . . . is possessed of an irreplaceable value, a dignity" (Wood, 1970, p. 70).

Moral goods evidenced both unconditioned or unqualified ends which were derived from moral rationality and were capable of either free, autonomous volition; or limited or conditioned ends, those natural ends of people which are systematically and universally included in the material of a formally legislated maxim. Two kinds of good existed: natural good, which was aimed at clarifying the character of two components of the object of pure practical reason, and moral good, which was identified with virtue and was considered to be the good which limited and qualified the inclination to well-being. A moral good was recognized as something to strive for and not simply a formal condition, but an end which was good without qualification. For Kant, that end implied virtue.

Moral virtue, or goodness of character, involved one's sensibility as well as reason. As an end, it involved the finite rational being in moral totality. An individual's moral progress involved a gradual reform of sensibility. One acquired a virtuous character by engaging in a continuous process of virtuous action that implied a "self-overcoming." The constant, moderate discipline of inclination presupposed a firm resolve to effect one's doing duty as a habit. To enhance the development of such moral character, Kant urged that a person accept encouragement, example, discipline, education, and improvement on the "power to adopt ends in accordance with his own concept of duty" (Wood, 1970, p. 75).

Teaching pupils in the subject of moral education was such a high priority that Kant devoted much of *Metaphysics of Morals* (1991) to its discussion. Such education was a necessary precondition for moral improvement and constituted the sole ground of

hope for human moral progress (Kant, 1963). He described the importance of such education by portraying that person as the sole product of education and the attainment of the individual's moral destiny was impossible without the help of others (Kant, 1960a). He regarded organized religion as a systematic means for the mutual moral improvement of people as well as appropriate for people within a moral community whose laws were expressly designed to promote the morality of actions. Religious community could engender the synthetic unity of the two specifically different kinds of good.

The two kinds of good, the natural and the moral, cannot be mixed together; for then they would only neutralize each other and not even effect a true happiness. Rather, the inclination to well-being and virtue together constitute the end of the well-intentioned man, one from his sensible side the other from the moral-intellectual side. They do this through a struggle and the elimination of the principle of the first through that of the second (Wood, 1970, p.89).

The highest good consisted of the synthetic unity of the moral good (my own and others' virtuous dispositions), as well as the natural good (happiness proportioned to worthiness to be happy for my self and for others). The supreme good, and the highest moral good, was the goal of perfect virtue, or the complete fitness of intentions to the moral law (Kant, 1956). Kant was careful not to equate the holiness of the will that was the goal of all moral progress with the divine will. Holiness, the unconditioned moral perfection of the finite rational being, was an ideal of humanity well-pleasing to God. Happiness, the third component of the highest good, was a worthiness to be happy,

complete, and perfect. This happiness was mediated by the holiness of the will which constituted the supreme condition of the highest good.

This determination of the highest good was a philosophical concept and can not be confused with the ordinary duty of virtue whose end was also a duty. The highest good unified and conditioned all ends of pure practical reason and was not itself among the duties recognized by ordinary rational morality. Ordinary moral law was a rule according to which we must act and tended to promote the ideal of the world of morally perfect beings enjoying happiness in proportion to their worthiness to be happy (Wood, 1970). Human reason, however, demanded an unconditioned totality of the object of pure practical reason as its end because reason always sought the unconditioned and unified its rules under a totality. Reason demanded that we make the highest good our end. With this demand, we found a single purpose for our lives, a purpose which our reason entitled us to regard as the ultimate meaning and goal of the entire world.

Within Kantian ethics, reason and desire were in permanent conflict. Hegel, agreeing with Aristotelian ethics, wrote that human desiderative reason was in conflict but through learning and education, the conflict gradually weakened. Each type of desire incorporated its own rationale; therefore, one desired to eat because one was hungry or because one was healthy. These two deliberative desires produced conflicts that Hegel viewed as transient because one desiderative reason modified another. From this, we could attain both virtue and happiness. Hegel directly opposed Kant's statement "[r]eason and desire are in permanent conflict. Hence, the natural outcome cannot be both virtue and happiness; it can be either one or the other" (McGill, 1967, p. 107).

Philosophically, Hegel dealt with motivation as well as thought and achieved the concrete union of idea and passion realized in the idea of a state (Hegel, 1914). He did not deem passion immoral; rather, it was an essential human activity as he wrote "passion is the key to character and action" (Hegel, 1914, p. 24). Although he agreed initially with Kant's ethics, Hegel soon became critical of their abstract, inhuman character. He declared the one who obeyed the moral law simply because one would otherwise be contradicting oneself a slave because such people had imposed this law upon themselves, even against their own inclinations. This abstract form of law was alien, if not hostile, to one side of human nature, that is, to passions, loves, desires, and sensuous experiences.

In his early work, Hegel longed to reconcile the spirit of historic Christianity with the spirit of classical antiquity. Deeply impressed with Kant's thought, Hegel struggled with the Kantian notion of the primacy of practical reason which aimed philosophy toward the realm of value. His divergence from Kant was evidenced in the idea of Kant's unearthliness. Hegel demanded a really achieving duty, a morality rooted in real life. Hegel felt a Christian aspiration for a celestial perfection of the spirit as well as a classical demand for the realization of perfection in secular terms (Tsanoff, 1942). His response to these demands was the development of the Hegelian Dialectic.

Fundamental to his logic was Hegel's belief that the growth of intelligence was a growth of organization. This organization presumed nature as a network of causally related processes with an indefinite ultimate ground. This system of rationality revealed an organic unity in which everything was finally intelligible in terms of its membership

in the system, and the system as a whole progressively manifested in intelligence and realized spiritual character. In effect, this was Hegel's absolute idealism. The achievement of concrete unity through the organization of differences was the essence of the dialectic of thought.

Convinced that nothing was real except the idea, Hegel viewed the idea of the inner world of the mind, or the subjectivity of spirit. Free mind was the will acting on itself; it reached towards universality and was at the same time individual; it sought an over-individual realization of itself (Tsanoff, 1942). In the process of knowing, the intelligence reached out from cognition of an object to demand natural embodiment. The free will met not only the barrier of external conditions; it was also confronted with the reality of other wills. In an over-individual world of activity, freedom and self must be sustained objectively and must be realized in a contest and community of other free selves. In this objective realization, the moral ideal within the social order gradually developed.

Hegel posited three stages of the ethical fruition of the character: abstract right or legality, morality, and the ethical order of society. These stages paralleled historical development in human experience. The fullest sense of humanity demanded self-consciousness and consciousness of the self involved in relating to other selves. Hegel's ethics demanded a fundamental progressive social character. Criticizing Kant's final reconciliation of duty with happiness with the postulate of practical reason, Hegel asserted that Kant confessed his failure to connect morality with reality. Hegel insisted this connection be made because the moral actors are of this world.

Whereas Kant's system implied austerity, Hegel's upheld the rights of individuals to many forms of happiness embodied in life.

The right of the subject's particularity, his right to be satisfied, or in other words the right of subjective freedom, is the pivot and center of the difference between antiquity and modern times. This right in its infinity is given expression in Christianity and it has become the universal effective principle of a new form of civilization (Hegel, 1942, p. 124).

By equating the right of personal satisfaction which was the essential phase of happiness with the right of subjective freedom seen as the essential phase of freedom, Hegel said little about happiness, but much about the growth of freedom. This was his principal way of describing human progress toward goodness and perfection (McGill, 1967).

Agreeing with Kant that happiness was people's natural desire, Hegel subscribed to happiness known as continual pleasantness or the satisfaction of desires. This was not a state of particulars; rather, it was a satisfaction at the realistic maximum. Closely aligned with Aristotle's subjective and eudaemonistic definition of happiness activity according to virtue accompanied by pleasure, Hegel added that virtues would not be virtues if they were not pleasant to us. Whereas Kant denied the natural connection between happiness and virtue, Hegel contended that happiness was comprised of natural desire, learning, comparison, choice, and a willingness to reject some and to accept other satisfactions. This implied a sense of self-control, prudence, or sagacity which would eventually purify and fuse the natural desires of the developed consciousness with duty.

Happy individuals were those who learned to control impulses and to give up some enjoyments for others. Education, Hegel wrote, gave us general knowledge needed to determine which enjoyments could be relinquished and which were essential. Hegel often interposed the terms "welfare" for "happiness" in his idea of the good. "[W]elfare has no independent validity as the embodiment of a single particular will but only as a universal welfare and essentially as universal in principle, i.e. according with freedom. Welfare without right is not a good" (Hegel, 1942, p. 130). The notion of freedom was especially prominent in Hegel's list of ultimate goods.

Similar to Aristotle and Plato, Hegel posed three classes of civil society: the agricultural or substantial class, the business or formal class, and the civil servants or universal class. Within these strata, the highest freedom of the individual was not freedom of choice, but freedom consisting in the willingness to and necessary acceptance of what was true and good. This was our freedom and happiness (McGill, 1967). Hegel regarded conscience as the self's utter conviction in its resolute will of the absolutely good, the will to make the absolute good its good. Without this resolution, the inner spirit lacked action, no matter how well it might turn out. This subjective scrupulosity of the conscientious will was indispensable to true goodness. Hegel warned that such a dutiful will would seek to make the absolute will its own and risk lapsing into moral fanaticism, that is, setting up one's own good as the absolute good. Therefore extreme conscientiousness might be on the verge of disowning the objective moral order. In this sense, good and evil had the same moral source: the free will might recognize the

universal and may loyally identify itself with it, but it also ran the hazard of perverse subjectivity, the willful denial of the moral order (Tsanoff, 1942).

### **Buber's Perspective on Deontological Intuitionism**

Buber's philosophy of realization began with Kant's teaching that we ourselves imposed the order of space and time upon experience in order that we might orient ourselves in it. From Kant, Buber said, he gained the idea "that being itself was beyond the reach alike of finitude and the infinity of space and time, since it only appeared in space and time but did not itself enter into this appearance." But Buber's immediate dilemma was that the breakup of idealism forced upon him the quandry of how to reach "reality" without returning to the pre-Kantian "objective" view of the universe (Buber, 1965a, pp. 136-137). What answered this question for Buber developed into the philosophy of realization.

The basis of the divergence of Kantian and Buberian thought was within the definition each imagined for the notion of God. Whereas Kant viewed God as an idea, Buber insisted that true human life was in the face of God, where God became an elementarily present substance, that is, the mystery of immediacy before which only the pious person could stand (Friedman, 1960). Although he agreed with the basic Kantian and Hegelian notions that God was within all things, Buber wrote that God was realized only when individual beings opened to one another, communicated with one another, and helped one another. This required the establishment of an immediacy between beings and it was in this between, a seemingly empty space, that the eternal substance manifested itself. For Buber, the true place of realization was the community. True

community was that in which the godly was realized between people (Friedman, 1960, p. 43).

The idea of time was a point of departure within Buberian thought from Hegel's, as well as from Aristotle and Aquinas. Buber contended that when the human being has felt at home in the universe, the thoughts held about the self had been only a part of one's cosmological thought. However, when the person had felt shut in by a strict and inescapable solitude, the thinking about the self had been deep, fruitful, and independent of cosmology. He believed that in the philosophies of Hegel, Aristotle, and Aquinas, the human person realized consciousness of the self only in the third person. The person therefore was no longer an enigma for oneself; rather, the wonder at the person was simply wonder at the universe as a whole.

Writing that Hegel's theoretical certainty was derived from his inclusion of cosmological rather than actual human time into the basis of his image of the universe, Buber disparaged cosmological time as abstract and relativized. Within cosmological time, the future could appear theoretically present. Buber's "anthropological time" had reality only in the past and since the future depended in part on the person's consciousness and will, that is, on decisions that had not yet taken place, and thus no certainty of the future was possible within the human world's limits. Marx took over Hegel's ideas of cosmological time to ensure the proletariat the security of an assured victory in the future. This security, Buber wrote, was as false as Hegel's because it ignored the person's powers of decisions. "It depends on the direction and force of this

power how far the renewing powers of life as such are able to take effect, and even whether they are not transformed into powers of destruction" (Buber, 1965a, p. 131).

In *What Is Man? or The Problem of the Human* (1965b), Buber conducted his own dialogue with thinkers who exercised a decided influence on him in his youth. Among these thinkers were Kant, Feuerbach, Kierkegaard, Hegel, and Nietzsche. In this piece, he criticized Hegel's anthropological reduction of the person to "unproblematic man" but recognized that Hegel, at least, had granted the person at least one virtue that Marx did not, that is, understanding man in terms of the real relation between the truly different *I and Thou*, that "Copernican revolution of modern thought" which gave Buber a clear understanding in his youth that would guide his later work. Additionally, Buber appreciated Nietzsche's recognition of the person as "unfinished animal," a way of thinking that "endowed the anthropological question with an unprecedented force and passion." Thus the question was posed by Nietzsche and taken up by Buber of the problem of the *edge*, that perilous end of natural being where the dizzying abyss of nothing began. Nietzsche's contribution to Buber's thinking helped push Buber farther away from the collectivity of Kant and Hegel. His question, "How is it to be understood that such a being as man has emerged and stepped forth from the animal world?" was the question with which Buber was explicitly to start in *The Knowledge of Man* and which he was to attempt to answer with his concepts of *distancing* and *relating* (Friedman, 1983, p. 273).

Buber traced a development of thought through Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson, and Heidegger by which he characterized the thinking of our time as aiming

to preserve the idea of the divine as the true concern of religion while destroying the reality of God and of our relation to Him. "This is done in many ways, overtly and covertly, apodictically and hypothetically, in the language of metaphysics and psychology." As a result of the universality and metaphysics of Kant and Hegel, Buber recognized that specifically modern thought could no longer endure a God who was not confined to human subjectivity. Whenever the human person had to interpret encounter with God as self-encounter, the person's very structure was destroyed. "This is the portent of the present hour" (Friedman, 1983a, p. 138).

. . . that every man, ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of war. The first branch of which rule, containeth the first, and fundamental law of nature; which is, to seek peace, and follow it. The second, the sum of the right of nature; which is, by all means we can, to defend ourselves (Hobbes, 1946, p. 85).

Agreeing wholeheartedly with the doctrine of free will, Hobbes believed that in the state of nature, the person had complete freedom and the total right to do what he pleased in any way he pleased. This exercise of total right put the person into immediate and potentially deadly conflict with one's fellows, who also exercised their right to complete freedom. The price of societal survival, Hobbes thought, was compromise. Out of the fact of compromise emerged law. Law, the codification of compromise, was the structure that insured human survival. Society, the creation of people living under compromise, was a creation made necessary as an alternative to chaos.

Hobbes's ethics distinguished between law and right. Law became known as a command with a power of enforcement; right was known as the free and legitimate use of power. From this distinction developed the concept of "right reason," that is, the only source of justice. "Hobbes, by his concepts of man and the state of nature, [made] absolutism, within the realistic bounds of power, and unlimited sovereignty both necessary and morally justifiable" (Crocker, 1963, p. 7). Moral principles became legalisms or social contracts by which people bound themselves together for the common interest.

Hobbes never expected people whose basic nature was egoistic to obey society's laws that were established by social contract because of altruistic wills, but because of force and under penalty of law and threat of punishment by the power of the law enforcement. His interpretation of the "golden rule" was stated negatively so that no persons should do to others what those people did not want done to them. Among the moral principles Hobbes viewed as fundamental to any such social contract of human interaction included justice, gratitude, compliance, pardon, and equity (Sahakian, 1974).

The modern natural law doctrine emphasized the individual and the empirical reality of the individual's actual needs and experiences. Human will was exalted for human ends and no contemplative participation in divine reason was included. This was not a doctrine of pure will and power; rather, it was a theory of right. The right of humankind was the right *to* the means of power. Modern interpretation of Hobbes's ethical naturalism has assumed a state of nature that was an historical and hypothetical reality which made rights prior to and independent of any given society.

Instrumentalism as a framework for moral philosophy developed from Peirce's thought that an idea was a plan of action and that belief was established in our nature as habit. Later, William James reconceptualized belief as true if it established a worthwhile habit. Truth became successful experience. John Dewey (1859-1952) believed that thought had as its object the development of life and *not* the discovery of truth (Marnell, 1966). After incorporating James's ideas into his own philosophy, Dewey called his form of pragmatism "instrumentalism" (Marnell, 1966).

The difference between James and Dewey's pragmatism was that Dewey was more conscious of the social implications of pragmatism and felt more of a sense of mission than did James. The two collided within conceptual pragmatism. James, who followed theistic thinking and believed both in God and in some sort of divinely created order that were prerequisites to human happiness, would not apply the test of conceptual pragmatism to things that were God's. Dewey, on the other hand, believed that any sort of supernaturalism slowed down the rate of human progress. The test of conceptual pragmatism had universal application. Through Dewey, American pragmatism, now known as instrumentalism, began its trend toward secularism.

In *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), Dewey utilized a Hobbesian thesis based on natural religion to describe how a person sought ultimate happiness.

Man who lives in a world of hazards is compelled to seek for security. He has sought to attain it in two ways. One of them began with an attempt to propitiate the powers which environ him and determine his destiny. It expressed itself in supplication, sacrifice, ceremonial rite and magical cult. . . . The other course is to invent arts and by their means

turn the powers of nature to account; man constructs a fortress out of the very conditions and forces which threaten him. He builds shelters, weaves garments, makes flame his friend instead of his enemy, and grows into the complicated arts of associated living. This is the method of changing the world through action, the other is the method of changing the self in emotion and idea (Dewey, 1929, p. 3).

Dewey drew Hobbes's idea that people's central preoccupation was security. From Comte's writings, Dewey wrote that all people believed themselves subject to supernatural, malevolent powers which must be placated by sacrifice and rite. From Hume, Dewey believed that advanced religions grew out of this belief. From a combination of Hobbes, Comte, and Hume's writings, Dewey concluded the nature of reality as being a natural order which individuals in their most advanced states manipulated in the interest of their own security. What Dewey added to create ethical instrumentalism was the objective of thought and the special way in which it was considered rationalistic. The objective of thought was not the discovery of truth; rather, it was the development of life.

Furthering human life involved the very problematic of "[h]ow is science to be accepted and yet the realm of values to be conserved?" (Dewey, 1929, pp. 40-41). Resolving this dilemma, Dewey analyzed the process of knowing in terms of: (1) what do we know? and (2) how do we know? Determining that knowledge was the product of both thought and investigation which Dewey took to mean scientific investigation, he discussed the practical application of this concept of knowledge to be that experience was regulated by the process of scientific investigation.

The implications of scientific investigation into the realm of ethics was the question that if, in the realm of science, experience could develop its own regulative ideas and standards, then why should this same condition *not* be true in the realm of higher values? Matters which were considered ethical could be redefined and elevated by the scientific method.

The conclusion is a good omen for the possibility of achieving in larger, more humane and liberal fields a similar transformation, so that a philosophy of experience may be empirical without either being false to actual experience or being compelled to explain away the values dearest to the heart of man (Dewey, 1929, p. 107).

Dewey's ethics concluded that conduct was specifically performed under specific circumstances for a specific end (Marnell, 1966). "Moral conceptions and processes [grew] out of the very conditions of human life" (Dewey, 1948, p. 169). Somewhat more utilitarian than natural, Dewey asserted that we did not know good and evil in terms of the Decalogue nor did we learn it by experience with pain and pleasure. Rather we learn good or evil and right or wrong by experience. "Action is always specific, concrete, individualized, unique. And consequently judgments as to acts to be performed must be similarly specific" (Dewey, 1948, p. 167). This pragmatic approach explained that conduct must have both motive and end.

Through experience with specific motives and ends of specific instances of conduct, Dewey believed one could be given the experimental material on which to exercise thought and reach moral judgments. This constituted an application of the

scientific method to conduct, the true method of developing life since it was the one method of determining truth. Truth, by definition, was the development of life and the greatest end to which human beings could strive.

Dewey moved the moral focus into human intelligence and things intellectual could be moralized. The conflict between naturalism and humanism was terminated. "The bad man is the man who no matter how good he *has* been is beginning to deteriorate, to grow less good. The good man is the man who no matter how morally unworthy he *has* been is moving to become better" (Dewey, 1948, p. 176). This indicated Dewey's moral characterizing of the concept of truth as the development of life and became the foundation of his philosophy that life was not being, but becoming (Marnell, 1966).

### **Buber's Perspective on Ethical Naturalism**

Dewey's philosophy that we come to know through experience and Hobbes's contention that we self-label good and evil were issues addressed directly by Buber in his writings. Hobbes's naturalism presupposed the individual's naturally chaotic state, a state of being similar to the "first stage of evil" in Buber's description of the descent into evil (Buber, 1952b). Yet Hobbes took his argument beyond the individual and concluded that the collective social order could be secure only when the final resting place of power was secure and universally acknowledged (Marnell, 1966). It was within the context of this conclusion that Buber diverged from Hobbes's theorizing.

Buber refused to accept that an exclusive dualism must exist between the life of the spirit and the life of the world. Any such dualism, he argued, developed most

significantly after Christianity because of that religion's surrendering of the idea of "holy people" for that of personal holiness (Friedman, 1960, p. 117). Believers in Christ developed as two-fold beings. First, they were individuals in the realm of the person, and second, they were participants in the public life of their nations. Therefore, the norm that Buber held closely of realizing religion in all aspects of social existence was no longer central to individuals after the spread of Christianity. "In our time," he wrote, "the public sphere encroaches disastrously on the personal and leads to a disparity between sanctification of the individual and the accepted unholiness of his community is transferred to an inner contradiction in the redeemed soul" (Buber, 1952b, p. 138). Buber attributed the dualism of the modern age between secular life and religious experience as caused by the apocalyptic element in religion.

In partial agreement with Hobbes's premise that the natural state of individuals was chaotic and human fear underlaid the social order, Buber described within his discussion of dualism that human beings, when their expectations were lowered through disillusionment of modern life, attempted to restrict the role of God to the sphere of religion. Due to this modern tendency, Buber concluded that a rift ran through the whole of the human world and received its sanction in part from the dualism posed by Paul's especially gnostic view of the world. This dualism, left to its societal conclusions, resulted in the human person's understanding that creation had been consummated and both abrogated and superceded by another and different world. "The prophetic allows 'the evil' to find the direction that leads toward God, and to enter into the good; the apocalyptic sees good and evil severed forever at the end of days, the good redeemed,

the evil unredeemable for all eternity; the prophetic believes that the earth shall be hallowed, the apocalyptic despairs of an earth which it considers to be hopelessly doomed. . . . " (Buber, 1946, p. 188).

As Hobbes moved toward positing that the differentiation and definitions of good and evil were of human origin, Buber diverged even more from the position of ethical naturalism. The dualism in the soul of the modern person, Buber warned, sought to overrun reality. The human person embodied this dualism in the form of a division of spirit and impulse. "The divorce between spirit and instincts was here, as often, the consequence of the divorce between man and man" (Buber, 1965a, p. 185). This has led to the sickness of our age, that is, a vital dissociation within the person resulting from the forcing of people into centralized states and collectivities. This, Buber decried, was the price the modern world had paid for the French Revolution and had led to the decay of those organic forms of life which enabled people to live in direct relation with one another and which gave them security, connection, and a feeling of being at home in the world (Friedman, 1960).

As a result of this vital dissocation, Buber indicated that humankind has had to interpret their encounters with God as self-encounters and humanity's very structure was destroyed (Buber, 1952b). He labelled these encounters as *I-It* relations and warned that

[in] our age the *I-It* relation, gigantically swollen, has usurped, practically uncontested, the mastery and the rule. The *I* of this relation, an *I* that possesses all, makes all, succeeds with all, this *I* that is unable to say *Thou*, unable to meet a being essentially, is the lord of the hour. This selfhood that has become omnipotent, with all the *It* around it, can

naturally acknowledge neither God nor any genuine absolute which manifests itself to men as of non-human origin. It steps in between and shuts off from us the light of heaven (Buber, 1952b, p. 165).

The decision by the person from within the natural state of chaos to self-define good and evil and to assert the individual as the absolute contributed to the eclipse of the light of heaven. The person who refused to submit himself to the effective reality of transcendence contributed to human responsibility for the eclipse.

The most terrible consequence of this eclipse was the silence of God and the loss of God's nearness which presented a situation to the modern world in which it seemed senseless to turn to God. Therefore, the world seemed irretrievably abandoned to the forces of tyranny. Hobbes embraced the doctrine of free will and granted the individual the right to exercise complete freedom; yet, he described the essential nature of legal compromise to maintain societal order and human survival. This compromise would serve only to drive the person farther and farther into self- and mutual affirmation, thus contributing to the eclipse and abandonment. Once the collectivities of society codified their compromises according to Hobbes's natural might made right philosophy, they would evolve from the state described as Buber as the "sinner" into that known as "wicked" in which the person exhibited a persistent disposition to oppose God's way. "The sinner does evil, the wicked man is evil. That is why it is said only of the wicked, and not of the sinners, that their way vanishes" (Buber, 1952b, p. 108).

Dewey denigrated the role of the supernatural within his ethical instrumentalism which was at odds with the foundation of Buberian anthropological philosophy. When

Dewey diverged from James's theistic pragmatism and adopted the thesis that any sort of supernaturalism slowed down the rate of human progress, he virtually denied the absolute transcendence of God, His conditioned immanence, and the existence of the divine spark in every thing and being that was fundamental to the Hasidic piety that Buber espoused (Buber, 1950). Dewey acknowledged his secular intention as basic to democratic principles (Dewey, 1967).

In the search for ultimate happiness, Dewey wrote from a Hobbesian point of view that stressed security and denigrated magic, ceremony, and rites (Dewey, 1929). Buber countered that certainty was unavailable to the human person, except that certainty inherent in the *I-Eternal Thou* relationship. Without such certainty of God's absoluteness, the person could extract no certainty from *I-It* encounters. Ultimately for the Dewey, the natural order was paramount for humankind as true reality. Rather than consider this concept of man-made morals his ultimate reality, Buber posed that the "way of man" began within heart searching that led to one's "particular way" (Buber, 1950). If the person enmeshed the self within artificially constructed morals, he would find that "[m]an cannot escape the eye of God, but in trying to hide from Him, he is hiding from himself" (Buber, 1950, p. 12).

The scientific method was Dewey's answer to the ethical questions faced by people in a modern society. Determined to answer the question "how do we know?" Dewey defined the means as scientific investigation. He was concerned primarily with the practical application of knowledge. Buber did not seek the answers; rather, he posited as primary whether or not the person faced the questions of existence. Unless

the person faced the ultimate questions squarely, Buber believed that one's life would become "way-less." Approaching ultimate questions by means of scientific investigation would yield, in Buber's opinion, sterile heart searching which would lead only to self-torture, despair, and estrangement (Buber, 1950).

Dewey assigned truth leading to the development of life as the ultimate goodness of humanity. In doing so, he terminated the relationship between naturalism and humanism, a dualism Buber could not tolerate. Implicit in Dewey's description of truth were the roles of development and growth. Describing the "bad man" as the one who had begun to grow "less good," Dewey imposed an external conception of good that could be applied to individuals and groups. Buber rejected this quantitative definition and envisaged the person as a whole, and not within quantitative parameters. The nature of Hasidic beliefs was such that the person could never be treated as an object of examination. Rather than develop oneself according to external goals or definitions, for the Hasidic man, the essential thing was to begin with himself. Any other attitude would distract him from what he had to begin, would weaken his initiative, and would frustrate the entire undertaking. "Our sages say: 'Seek peace in your own place.' When a man has made peace within himself, he will be able to make peace in the whole world" (Buber, 1950, p. 29).

Dewey did believe that the concept of truth as development of life implied that life was not being, but becoming (Marnell, 1966). Within this single statement, Dewey approached Buber's fundamental thesis, that within every person was the opportunity for genuine meeting and relationship. However, Dewey's thrust was collective, that is,

pragmatic within American democratic society. Buber's aim was existential and individual and thus created a dichotomy within essential frameworks that could not be resolved between the two philosophers in the statements of ultimate goodness.

### **Ethical Evolutionism**

Philosophers of evolutionary naturalism envisioned a higher person of greater development and moral significance. Nietzsche termed his elevated person "superman," and Bergson regarded the world as a "machine for the making of gods" (Sahakian, 1974, p. 143). Ethical evolutionists determined the highest good of humankind as a person who was physically and morally superior. Two noted ethical evolutionists were Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903).

Historically, Darwin was of the age in which scientists established that the world was created epochs before the biblical year 4004 B.C.E. He was forced to rationalize a Victorian world with one punctuated by the scientific discoveries of Dalton and Faraday, Owen, Hooker, Simpson and Lister, and Lyell. Sciences provided a new belief in progress by careful evolution of ideas and the inevitable progress to higher forms. Darwin stated, "Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of equally inappreciable length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress toward perfection" (Darwin, 1964, p. 489).

Darwin's ethical theory was a derivative of his evolutionism which viewed moral sense as a product of social instincts. Biological in construct, Darwin's theory explained moral principles and consciousness on the basis of the person's physical nature, explained

in terms of mechanistic laws. Human beings' behaviors were explained according to animal ancestry in which they differed only in degree, not kind. Adaptation to the natural world was juxtaposed with moral adaptation and the moral standard became the general welfare, or the greatest happiness. Darwin defined the greatest good as "the rearing of the greatest number of individuals in full vigor and health, with all their faculties perfect, under the conditions to which they are subjected" (Darwin, 1874, p. 136).

This paralleled Utilitarianism in its goal, yet repudiated the their contention because Darwin believed that human beings did not seek pleasure. Rather they sought deeply implanted social instincts of impulsive power and instinctive behavior. These instincts were refined by natural selection, and social instincts were developed for the general good rather than for the general happiness of the species (Darwin, 1874). The virtues which prompted people to noble actions were acquired through natural selection. The more enduring social instincts dominated the less persistent ones, and it was for this reason that people sensed an obligation to obey one instinctive desire rather than another, or sensed bitter regret at yielding to the temptation of self-preservation by not risking their own lives to save others, or even felt regret for having stolen food to prevent starvation (Sahakian, 1974). "Man in this respect differs profoundly from the lower animals" (Darwin, 1874).

Accordingly, natural selection via power made for progress and the fittest would survive. His optimistic account of human development, good virtues, and altruistic instincts characterized Darwin's biological ethical evolutionism. Humanity's higher

moral principles, founded on social instincts related to the welfare of others, were enhanced by social approbation and reason, which regarded them as more desirable courses of action. These moral tendencies were relayed by heredity to offspring by the *principle of transmission of moral tendencies* (Darwin, 1874). He believed in the Lamarckian theory of inherited acquired characteristics and applied it to moral inheritance. Virtue and virtuous tendencies were practiced until embedded as habit, were transmitted across generations, and emerged as innate virtues in subsequent generations (Sahakian, 1974).

Herbert Spencer, an ethical evolutionist, held markedly different concepts of happiness. Self-preservation was the ultimate good. Happiness was both the correlate of the most perfect adaptation and the culmination of biological and social evolution (McGill, 1967). There existed "a primordial connection between pleasure-giving acts and continuance or increase of life, and, by implication, between pain-giving acts and decrease or loss of life" (Spencer, 1901, p. 97). First, by pursuing the agreeable and avoiding the disagreeable, individuals and species were able to maintain their daily lives. Second, pleasure accompanied vital functions in their normal degree, whereas pain attended their excess and defect. Finally, "every pleasure increase[d] vitality, every pain decrease[d] vitality. Every pleasure raise[d] the tide of life. . . ." (Spencer, 1901, p. 231). Spencer viewed the ideal society as one in which the perfect person could be found and in which there would be no virtuous activity in the usual sense. This ideal society differed markedly from the Platonic or Aristotelian in that in Spencer's the populace would do automatically what was virtuous, as opposed to that described in the

*Republic* in which people would constantly learn and move toward such virtue. In Spencer's there were no duties because there were no temptations. Lack of sanctions or penalties contrasted Spencer's ideal society from Hegel, Kant, or Bentham's.

An optimist, Spencer protested the grounds of Bentham's Utilitarianism and argued that the greatest happiness could not be calculated in advance with precision. Bentham wrote that, according to the hedonistic calculus, every person knew what happiness was, but justice became a matter of contention. Therefore justice must be defined in terms of happiness of pleasure. Spencer disagreed and declared that justice was more easily determined than the quantity of pleasure. Happiness was concerned with both quantity and quality under conditions not specifically stated. Further, Spencer followed Aristotle's eudaemonistic tradition by adding that justice was not ascertainable practically by balancing pleasures and pains involved (Spencer, 1901). The greatest happiness could not be found in the pleasure principle; in fact, Spencer stipulated that the pleasure/pain principle was something over and above the utility principle and needed separate justification.

Finding nature more aristocratic than democratic, Spencer united egoism and altruism into a synthesis in which people sought their pleasure and preserved their lives, yet they accomplished this often by assisting others, even at the jeopardy of personal welfare. His ethical system of compromise allowed for the fact that these two positions were not contradictory; rather, we must live for others as well as for ourselves. General happiness was promoted by furthering self-happiness. "Our conclusion must be that general happiness is to be achieved mainly through the adequate pursuit of their own

happiness by individuals; while, reciprocally, the happiness of individuals is to be achieved in part by their pursuit of the general happiness" (Spencer, 1901, Ch. 13, Sect. 91).

Correct conduct could be exercised by everyone and "good conduct . . . always proves, when analyzed, to be the conception of a conduct which produces a surplus of pleasure." Conversely, bad conduct resulted in a surplus of pain. It followed that the "absolutely good, the absolutely right, in conduct, can be that only which produces pure pleasure--pleasure unalloyed with pain anywhere" (Spencer, 1901, Ch. 15 Sect. 101). Pain as well as evil was totally absent in the presence of absolute good (Sahakian, 1974).

Both Spencer and Darwin, brought relative ethics to the concept of absolute good. Relative ethics, the difference between the ideal and the actual, implied that when the perfectly or absolutely right could not be realized, then one committed the lesser of the evils, that is, the relatively right. Relative right became normative in American ethical history and engendered a pattern of human thought so common that it approached a law of nature (Marnell, 1966).

### **Buber's Perspective on Ethical Evolutionism**

The modern age was the most difficult in human history for people to reconcile existential trust in God with the difficulties and horrors that modern society faced. Buber wrote that people experienced a "double pull" that resulted in our inability to have free creation of values when people felt empty of meaning (Friedman, 1986). Above all, modern people have felt a sort of homelessness in the world that resulted from the Copernican invasion of the infinite that humanity had experienced in moments of dialogue

between the *I* and the *Eternal Thou*. Buber depicted the modern age as a time of crisis, and with each new crisis, the original contract between the universe and the human being was dissolved and people found themselves strangers and solitary in the world.

At the very basis of philosophy, Buber wrote, were the *I-Thou* and *I-Eternal Thou* relationships. When the dualism of the modern age invaded the possibility of these relationships, people sought to overcome their feelings of dispossession by attempting to conquer the elemental forces of the world. In their effort to control the world instead of feeling controlled by ever-present forces of evil, people assumed four patterns of reducing the immediacy of the moment and thereby distanced themselves from authentic relationship. Both Darwin and Spencer's ethical evolutionism, in their attempts to investigate scientifically the nature of absolute goodness, brought about two of these patterns into modern ethical thought.

Scientists who followed ethical evolutionism encouraged human beings to *technicize* the moment, that is, they treated moments of decision purely as means to goals. These goals existed for such scientists only in the future. Therefore, ethical evolutionism attempted to provide scientific techniques to people who sought to predict and control that which Buber believed should have been met in authentic, genuine meeting. Second, such scientific thinking abstracted the moment from its reality by *psychologizing* such moments so that their total content must be reflected upon, reduced to a process, and treated as comprising an experience external to the human soul (Buber, 1952b).

What modern scientific investigation and process had done to humanity, Buber wrote, was to divide life into levels and aspects that were independent of one another. Thus religion became only one aspect of life rather than its totality. The protagonists of the bible sinned, Buber wrote, like us, but did not commit the "arch sin" of professing God in the synagogue and denying Him in the spheres of economics, politics, and "self assertion" of the group (Buber, 1952b, p. 334).

The ethical evolutionists' relative ethics entered into our world of work and destroyed and precluded the entry of the Absolute into this sphere of our existence. Therefore people could no longer see meaning in work. In times like ours when life became divided into separate spheres, people experienced work as an inescapable compulsion that was perverted by the divorce of technical means from value ends, that is, the *I-It* from the *I-Thou*. The result was the inhuman utilization of human power without regard to the worthiness of the work performed. Because "man [was] in a growing measure sociologically determined," he was caught in the grip of incomprehensible powers in the technical, economic, and political spheres of existence and was trampled "again and again in all [his] human purposes" (Friedman, 1960).

What Spencer, Darwin, and the other ethical evolutionists took away from modern society was its purpose. The purposelessness of modern life, Buber believed, was evidenced in the worship of freedom for its own sake. Education, brought to the masses by the democratic ethical naturalism of Dewey, had freed children's creative impulses without their having acquired a sense of personal responsibility to accompany it. "This sickness of modern man is manifested most clearly of all, however, in the individualism

and nationalism which make power an end in itself" (Friedman, 1960, p. 119). "Power without faithfulness is life without meaning" (Buber, 1965a, p. 39).

Therefore Buber believed that scientific investigation into the relationship between the person and the Absolute that was brought about most significantly by the ethical evolutionists promoted a "sick understanding" of this age that taught that our human goal could be reached through the ways of the world because "the use of unrighteousness as a means to a righteous end makes the end itself unrighteous" (Friedman, 1960). The result of a person or of a community using evil for the sake of good was the destruction of the soul in the process. Only when possibility became more powerful than reality could the person combine creative personal power with responsibility (Buber, 1948c, p. 39).

### **Ethical Pessimism**

As modern society drifted deeper into the dualism that Buber claimed was destroying the possibility of authentic meeting, pessimism permeated human thinking. Among the ethical pessimists were Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the most systematic pessimist and sympathetic ethicist; Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), the ideational founder of qualitative dialectical ethics; and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), the parent of the nihilist dissolution.

According to Schopenhauer, ultimate reality created the external physical world order, termed *phenomenon* or *idea*. Through *idea*, the phenomenal world was intelligible; the ultimately real world, whose essence was irrational will, was not. Whereas Hegel's philosophical world was based on reason as the ultimate ground of

reality that led to optimism, Schopenhauer's will as the ultimate ground for reality led to philosophical pessimism. The irrational forces of the human will appeared as instinctual urges, impulses, or strivings and were negative and they produced life's miseries. Salvation from them was achieved through either annihilation of the will or complete ascetic denial. For Schopenhauer, ultimate goodness was found temporarily by quieting these urges through taking refuge in art or in Platonic ideals. Under these conditions of misery, the only ethical course of action was the expression of pity, a feeling of compassion or sympathy arising out of our kinship as human beings in pain to each other (Sahakian, 1974).

Schopenhauer's view of the human situation was that life was a continuous striving between deep driving desire and its incomplete satisfaction. He evaluated this craving for satisfaction as quite painful and evil. "Suffering is simply unfulfilled and crossed volition" (Schopenhauer, 1896, 4, 65). Recognizing life as an unrelenting state of desires craving satisfaction, pain was both the essence of life and a real aspect of human nature, while the moments of satisfaction were fleeting, transitory and ultimately negative aspects. Pleasure was conceived as the elimination of pain through the elimination of desire (Sahakian, 1974). Life became a preponderance of pain with transitory moments of pleasure and rendered it not worth living. "The greatest crime of man is that he ever was born" (Schopenhauer, 1896, Bk. 4, 63) and concluded, "[h]uman life must be some kind of mistake" (Schopenhauer, 1902, p. 23).

Human misery became intensified by self-consciousness and intelligence. The more the person became aware of misery, the greater it became. Schopenhauer believed

that the more intelligent the person was, the more pain the person had. Although he did not believe in suicide and termed it a "clumsy experiment," Schopenhauer wrote that people undertook endless pursuits of happiness even knowing their indestructible wills prevented its attainment. The person seemed destined to vacillate between two miserable human conditions: need and boredom. Either people strived miserably to find permanent satisfaction in life or, having satisfied their needs, were completely bored. "No attained object of desire can give lasting satisfaction, but merely a fleeting gratification; it is like the alms thrown to the beggar, that keeps him alive today that his misery may be prolonged till the morrow" (Schopenhauer, 1896, 3, 38).

Believing that human beings were inextricably bound to one another in pain, Schopenhauer wrote that there was only one ultimate human will permeating everywhere and penetrating everything. Both desire and pain in another person was in each of us as well and the most any person could do was be sympathetic and pity one another. Only sympathy was grounded in altruistic motivation. Pity was the proper attitude even for the sinner to assume because the sin was ours as sin in the other was the same as that found in us. The sinner's anguish was ours as well. Ethical salvation was in complete denial, asceticism, repudiation of life and pleasure, that is, total denial of the will to live. This yielded a concept of holiness that achieved the knowledge that the nature of one's finite existence was nothingness (Sahakian, 1974).

Søren Kierkegaard developed a qualitative dialectic or an irreconcilable antithesis within existential philosophy that regarded life as a disjunctive conjunction, or an either/or choice, and no amount of logic was capable of uniting it into synthesis. His

philosophy of irrationalism was not based on the idea of an irrational will as was Schopenhauer's; rather, it rested on a qualitative dialectical predicament where the nature of thought was regarded as lacking agreement with reality, resulting in the paradoxical nature of truth (Sahakian, 1974). Proposing that "life must be lived forward, but understood backwards," Kierkegaard doubted whether reason could explain or understand life (Kierkegaard, 1958, p. 23). People's choices were decisions of free will and lay beyond rational explanation. They were leaps of logic across logical gaps and constituted a breach of scientific continuity.

The highest good of the humanity was becoming subjective and the most decisive acts were found in choice itself. "Man is granted a choice. . . . Man not merely *can* choose . . . he *must* choose" (Kierkegaard, 1948, p. 228). This choice necessitated a teleological suspension of the ethical, the suspension of universal maxims of morality and their rationale for the leap of faith to the revelation of God (Sahakian, 1974). Whereas objectivity sought rational explanations, "subjectivity [was] the truth" (Kierkegaard, 1941, p. 191). The truth was absurd. Kierkegaard illustrated this by referring to Christian salvation. Believing that eternal truth had come into being in time and that God had come into being, the Christian believer must suspend teleological thinking by the leap of faith in which the definitions of truth and faith became equivalent. "When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox" (Kierkegaard, 1941, p. 183).

Kierkegaard considered life as three stages: aesthetic, ethical, and religious. In each, a person sought to find personal salvation on earth. Aestheticists sought pleasure,

but found that the pleasure pursued did not exist. This induced despair, and led to the ethical, stage. Within this stage, one found authentic selfhood by choosing oneself, that is, by truly knowing the self in the Socratic sense. A person in this stage acted with inner commitment rather than from indecision. By choosing the self, one made one's authentic personality.

In the religious, or third stage, the person committed to God, not through duty, but through obedience. Only when people acknowledged personal sin could they complete such a commitment to God, and in the moment of decision when an individual so committed oneself could the person's life be altered conclusively. The distinctive existential features of the three stages are: enjoyment-perdition; action-victory; and suffering (Sahakian, 1974). Whereas the aesthetic hero was great in the fact he conquered, the religious hero was great because he suffered (Kierkegaard, 1940). Suffering became the highest, most intense, and complete expression of inwardness for the person and must be accomplished individually because the subjective individual was true and real. Reason became the opposite of faith and faith was understood as inwardness, subjectivity, and a state of risk. Faith's opposite was sin and it was the lack of faith in human beings and lack of confidence for this faith that led to sin. Goodness, the ultimate pursuit of humankind, was the inwardness of subjectivity that enabled the ultimate faith that could survive teleological suspension.

Friedrich Nietzsche's nihilism condemned the eternal phenomenon of the human person's insatiated will which served to detain creatures in life and compelled them to live on. He pointed to three planes of delusion within which the person dwelled: (1) the

delusion that the Socratic love of knowledge enabled people to heal the eternal wound of existence, (2) the delusion of the world of art as the seductive veil of beauty which concealed pain, and (3) the delusion afforded by the metaphysical comfort that persuaded us that eternal life flowed on indestructibly (Nietzsche, 1927). Our culture was composed of these delusional stimulants which combined to convince people that theoretical man was equipped with great forces of knowledge and was doing holy work while laboring in the service of science. People were dissatisfied with their ability to understand through their own faculties and developed a magical element that believed only the scholar could exercise the ability to understand the human situation.

A cultured and magical class of scholars necessitated the construction of a barbaric slave class who came to regard their existence as an acceptable necessity. Positioned into a class constrained in part by religion, Nietzsche wondered how anyone could find appeal in learned religions. He condemned the hierarchy of science which he felt compounded this class distinction and attempted to force others to see these consequences.

Great, universally gifted natures have contrived, with an incredible amount of thought, to make use of the paraphernalia of science itself, in order to point out the limits and the reality of knowledge generally, and thus definitely to deny the claim of science to universal validity and universal aims: with which demonstration the illusory notion was for the first time recognized as such, which pretends, with the aid of causality, to be able to fathom the innermost essence of things (Nietzsche, 1927, pp. 406-407).

Nihilism revolted against the metaphysical universe and the person's place in it. Using the principle of disorder, Nietzsche asserted the ego as law in the absence of law and declared that the universe had no meaning. All things and human acts were reduced to one level of indifference and within this indifference, no significant moral actions were possible (Crocker, 1963). One source of nihilism was the irrationality and mystery of the universe which longed for explanation and clarity but to which the universe refused to supply answers.

Sources of Nietzsche's nihilism included Pascal's assertion that the self made itself the center of everything and strived to be the tyrant of others and Spinoza's emphasis on vengeance, cruelty, and the satisfaction of hurting others within the concept that the highest right of nature was individual judgement of good and evil. Eventually, Sadian nihilism would find its way beyond literature and into ethics which stated that egoistic pleasure, the ultimate expression of Utilitarianism, was an irrefutable value. These ethics declared that murder could be viewed as allowing nature to create new life and bring to humanity the idea that creation itself must be murdered by the person who was superior to nature. Nietzsche juxtaposed Socratic optimism, which he termed a delusion of limitless power, with the result of the placement of society at the very lowest strata of concern. Society trembled because its members believed that happiness for all was a real possibility. Desire for universal happiness was transformed into a threatening demand. Yet the Alexandrian culture's response, which included its own desire to survive permanently, demanded a slave class yet maintained an optimistic view of life that denied the necessity of such a class. This contradiction was resolved through the adoption of

the delusions of the "dignity of man" and the "dignity of labor," the myth that he believed eventually would paralyze and master society.

Although he described himself as having "a more severe morality than anybody" (Johnson, 1989, p. 291), Nietzsche advocated the transvaluation of values, which brought him the designation of amoralist. He rejected the morality of the modern world, yet he was not without his own moral standards. The two greatest threats to modern society were Christianity and democracy, both of which Nietzsche believed were expressions of a slave morality in that democracy advocated the equality of all people and Christianity preached pity for sufferers. Nietzsche proposed his "master-morality" to replace these institutions and called for the emergence of a race of men in Europe to practice it. The human race would become divided into this slave class and "supermen," a term that has caused him to be described as an architect of Nazism (Johnson, 1989).

By addressing the question of truth, the ultimate good for humanity, as a personal question, Nietzsche distanced himself from other philosophers. He was not convinced that individuals would recognize the truth when it was found; rather, he deplored as unfounded one's confidence in recognizing. Disgusted with dogmatism that dichotomized ethical questions of good and evil, Nietzsche proposed that we have injured our ability to know good and evil with a language of continual falsification of the world by numbers (Nietzsche, 1973). The ultimacy of quantitative and scientific knowing was such that we supported the notion that to renounce those false judgments was to deny life. "To recognize untruth as a condition of life: that, to be sure, means to resist customary

value-sentiments in a dangerous fashion; and a philosophy which ventures to do so places itself, by that act alone, beyond good and evil" (Nietzsche, 1973, p. 12).

In his diatribe against philosophers for positing the attainability of ultimate good as a noble trick, Nietzsche castigated the Stoics for their over-simplification. He declared that living was the very act of valuing, preferring, being unjust, being limited, and wanting to be different (Nietzsche, 1973). The Stoic goal of submitting to nature was dishonest because the Stoics denied that nature was in a state of ceaseless combat and submitting to it rather than fighting it was boastful nonsense. Nietzsche disavowed any idea of acceptance of life. Urging that human beings created values, his ontology was that morality was not forced upon us by the nature of things and that they did not exist in the fabric of the world, waiting to be discovered by us.

Denying the existence of facts and affirming interpretations, Nietzsche urged that we should realize how our drives and desires colored all our dealings with what we liked to think of as a reality existing entirely independent of us which we could neutrally investigate. Here Nietzsche was original: value was not something that we discovered, but something that we invented. Insofar as the individual valuers derived their values from the culture of which each of them was a member, it was the world in general that did the imposing, and not the group of which they were members.

Nietzsche's overriding concern was the typology of cultures. Only the masters within a culture of master-morality were aware of their position.

The noble type of man feels *himself* to be the determiner of values, he does not need to be approved of, he judges 'what harms me is harmful in itself,' he knows himself to be that which in general first accords honor to things, he *creates values*. Everything he knows to be part of himself, he honors: such a morality is self-glorification (Nietzsche, 1973, p. 22).

His hostility to such a stratum of masters was obvious; yet, he called for the formulation of conditions under which we might hope to recover greatness associated with creativity. Without a return to such greatness, humanity was destined to remain within confused hopelessness and despair.

### **Buber's Perspective on Ethical Pessimism**

Buber's response to Ethical Pessimism could be found in the lengthy writing he did regarding Kierkegaard's position in "The Question to the Single One" (Buber, 1965a) and Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's thought in "What is Man?" (Buber, 1965a). In each case, Buber's point of departure centered on the nature of address and response between the person and God, creation, and his consideration of Kant's four questions: (1) what can I know? (2) what ought I do? (3) what may I hope? and (4) what is man? His responses revolved around metaphysics, ethics, religion, and anthropology respectively (Buber, 1965a, p. 119).

The ethical pessimists described above concluded that the totality of humankind could be reduced to the ideas of absurdity, despair, and nothingness. Buber's concern with the "wholeness of man" led to his conclusion regarding philosophical anthropology as the study of

man's special place in the cosmos, his connexion with destiny, his relation to the world of things, his understanding of his fellowmen, his existence as a being that knows it must die, his attitude in the ordinary and extraordinary encounters with the mystery with which his life is shot through (Buber, 1965a, p. 120).

Buber's overriding interest with the human being's wholeness precluded any investigation into the question of "what man is" in terms of any particular set of terminology or philosophical discipline. This included the language and investigation of scientific inquiry when Buber disagreed with Heidegger in his belief that philosophical anthropology could provide a foundation for metaphysics or for the individual sciences. That, Buber concluded, would produce a false unity instead of genuine wholeness of the subject, that is, the human person.

Understanding "real man" was Buber's goal. Within the human pattern and constant flux of individuals and cultures, Buber defined the "narrow ridge" as the means to avoid the abyss of abstract unity or meaninglessness of relativity in such an understanding. In addition, Buber identified a further complication in the understanding, that man's existence was constituted by his participation, at the same time and in the same actions, in finitude and infinity. In his response to Kierkegaard, Buber elaborated that man was the only creature with potentiality. Even though this potentiality was confined within narrow limits, man's action was unforeseeable in its nature and extent (Buber, 1965a). It was because of this potentiality that Buber was able to speak of the freedom of man and the reality of evil (Friedman, 1960).

Rejecting the traditional idea that the human person was human because of reason, Buber emphasized his philosophy of the wholeness of the individual. Further,

[h]e can be understood only when one knows, on the one hand, that there is something in all that is human, including thought, which belongs to the general nature of living creatures, and is to be grasped from this nature, while knowing, on the other hand, that there is no human quality which belongs fully to the general nature of living creatures and is to be grasped exclusively from it . . . Human reason is to be understood only in connexion with human non-reason. The problem of philosophical anthropology is the problem of a specific totality and of its specific structure (Buber, 1965a, p. 160).

The contrast of the individual person with the rest of nature was constituted in Buber's concepts of distancing, or "the primal setting at a distance," and "entering into relation." Only the human being could perform the first act of setting at a distance because only people had worlds, that is, unbroken continuums which included not only that they know and experience but all that was knowable now and in the future. Although an animal's actions were concerned with its future and that of its young, only human beings imagined the future. Using nature as his analogy, Buber pointed to the planted tree which was rooted in the world of time, but the person who planted the first tree was the one who expected the Messiah (Friedman, 1960).

Ethical pessimism was discounted by Buber through the concept of relation of one to another within the twofold principle of human life. Rather than despair into nihilism and ethics of nausea and incomprehensibility, Buber affirmed that in human societies, persons confirmed each other in practical ways in their personal qualities and capacities.

He defined society in part as human to the degree to which this mutual confirmation took place. Aside from their development of tools and weapons, it was this mutual individual completion and recognition of function which had enabled human beings to achieve dominion over the earth. Only human beings could see their companions apart from their common lives and could ascribe to the enemy any existence beyond this immediate hostility. The person was therefore able to enter into relation, in individual status, with those like oneself (Friedman, 1960). Mutual confirmation was best illustrated by the power of human speech.

Buber reserved considerable space in his writings to repudiate Kierkegaard's forcing of people into either/or choices that demanded choosing within suspension of the ethical and the concomitant conclusion that the fate of humanity was best represented as one of pessimism. Buber never denied that Kierkegaard's God was the true God; rather, he opposed Kierkegaard's conception of our relationship to God by writing "[w]ho is there who confesses the God whom Kierkegaard and I confess, who could suppose in decisive insight that God wants *Thou* to be truly said only to him, and to all others only an unessential and fundamentally invalid word?" (Friedman, 1983, p. 195). The loneliness of lived life in which Kierkegaard as well as Buber's solitary person took refuge, could become either a constructive or destructive fortress, depending on the person's resultant participation in Being. Kierkegaard's was an image of the human condition for us, for he was, like us, isolated and exposed, and this became for him the fate of man as man.

Buber's complaint was that Kierkegaard's was not an image of the human condition that could give us meaningful direction for personal or social existence. We know, Buber commented, an organic continuance and grace of preservation of the *I-Thou* relation from which Kierkegaard wanted to win us into his private world as if it were the true one. Buber's narrow ridge was not at the fringe of life; rather, it was at the very center of this idea. Whereas Buber's definition of the individual put the person on this narrow ridge, Kierkegaard's individual was set upon a rock, alone with the mercy of the Merciful (Friedman, 1983, p. 195). Kierkegaard's acosmic view denied creation, but Buber's Creator not only hovered over His creation; rather, He embraced it. Buber's conception of God was as the One who made every *It* into His *Thou*, and humanity's task was to imitate God when in their human way they embraced the piece of the world offered to each by saying *Thou* with their beings to the beings who surrounded them, thereby loving God's creation in His creatures.

Buber, not Kierkegaard, experienced the horrors of Nazi Germany and had perhaps more a reason to retreat into pessimistic tones. Through his study of Hasidic writings, Buber confessed himself to be ineluctably destined to love the world and wrote "[t]he person who has not ceased to love the human world in all its degradation is able even today to envision genuine social form" (Buber, 1967a, p. 205). The metaphor intended by Buber was the one which Kierkegaard had shunned, that is, marriage, and he carried over as a metaphor to the Single One who lived with the body politic, wed to it and suffering its destiny with it. Even if the Single One did not achieve much, he met God by putting his arms around creation and facing the biographical and historical hour

which approached him in its "apparently senseless contradiction, without weakening the impact of otherness in it" (Buber, 1965a, p. 40).

The situation in which Buber stood and made this pronouncement, the situation in which Hitler was, in Heidegger's words, "the lord of the hour," Buber recognized as "God's question" to him, "whether it sound with angels' or with devils' tongues," although he also took care to add, "of course, without the devils thereby being turned into angels," a mistake which the "pious" often made. No one must interfere with out hearing this claim and responding to it from the depths where hearing passed into being. Human truth was bound up with responsibility of the person. It became existentially true only when we stood the test in hearing and responding. "True community and true commonwealth will be realized only to the extent to which the Single Ones become real out of whose responsible life the body politic is renewed" (Friedman, 1983, p. 197).

## **Modern Philosophy**

### **Pragmatism**

American pragmatism's ethics developed at Harvard University as a result of the writings and political activism of Charles Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Conceiving of things in terms of what they did, rather than in terms of externally imposed conceptions of absoluteness characterized Peirce's philosophy. The body of truth changed, Peirce wrote, and one's belief about the meaning of a thing worked only if it were adjusted to the idea which prevailed where one observed it. Belief was good and true only if it was brought into coherence with another belief, and the more complicated the matter, belief worked only if it were coherent with

many related beliefs. Therefore, the body of truth continually changed and only the pragmatic test revealed the truth (Marnell, 1966). Peirce wrote

that

[p]ragmatism is an experience or psychological meaning theory. It does not rest its criterion of meaning on logical or formal grounds--a proposition is not meaningful simply because it has certain syntactical structure--but on psychological grounds. Pragmatism undertakes to explicate the psychological or cognitive content of a sentence in terms of volitions and sense-experiences, so that to say that a proposition (or a concept) is meaningless for a pragmatist is to say that it cannot be expressed in terms of psychological experiences (Moore, 1961, p. 96).

Embedded within American pragmatism was a positivism that maintained the ethical neutrality of science as well as Utilitarian beliefs. Proposing that the test of consequences could be applied to moral judgments, pragmatists believed such judgments could be corrected and improved. The ethical dictates of such guidance could come from the teachings of the church or from the moral dictates of individual consciences. This caused the development of pragmatism in which moral concepts could be improved on the basis of experience.

William James considered the scientific approach and bias toward the experimental approach to morals as valid and he believed that there were specific patterns and laws that could be experientially determined. He disavowed any all-embracing laws within the comprehension of the human being. "For such persons the physical order of nature, taken simply as science knows it, cannot be held to reveal any one harmonious

spiritual intent. It is mere *weather*, as Chauncey Wright called it, doing and undoing without end." Yet James maintained a profound belief in God and claimed " . . . we have a right to supplement it by an unseen spiritual order which we assume on trust, if only thereby life may seem to us better worth living again" (James, 1897, p. 52). Any approach to the questions of ultimate happiness or goodness for humanity according to James's pragmatism must have included a religious faith as well as development of a pattern of belief to which he could give unqualified intellectual assent and a pattern which might have been valid for others as well (Marnell, 1966). James could not tolerate the immanence of God in the unity of humankind.

James's conception of God was popularly theistic, that is, limited by the fact of the existence of evil in the world. Believing that evil could exist because God was not in complete control or because God was partially ignorant of what was happening were cornerstones of his philosophical system. What James added to the American pragmatic debate was the idea that God was both ignorant and partially powerless regarding the world's evil (Ford, 1982). He wrote "[t]he line of least resistance, then, as it seems to me, both in theology and in philosophy, is to accept, along with the superhuman consciousness, the notion that it is not all-embracing, the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that He is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or both at once" (James, 1977, p. 141).

The reality of ultimate goodness fit only with difficulty within James's pragmatism that described the universe as a tight cosmos from which people must accept the irreducible whole of it just as it was offered. The only alternative to such acceptance,

James implied, was the confession that the world was non-rational. Rather than accept such fatalism, James countered that humanity was endowed with a profound sense of freedom that contradicted such fatalistic monism. This freedom enabled people to believe that at least some things were decided in the here and now, and that every passing moment might have contained some novelty. If people believed that they were original starting points of events and not merely transmitters of a push from elsewhere, they could be happy and make good decisions.

The faith ladder proposed by James was the context of the human push toward goodness. Consisting of seven rungs, he wrote that

1. There was nothing absurd in a certain view of the world being true, there was nothing self contradictory.
2. It *might* have been true under certain circumstances.
3. It *may* be true, even now.
4. It is *fit* to be true.
5. It *ought* to be true.
6. It *must* be true.
7. It *shall* be true, at any rate true for me (James, 1968).

This ladder connoted the slope of good will on which people habitually live regarding the larger questions of life. Therefore, what was ultimately good could now be thought of as good, "at any rate, good for me."

Faith in the possibility of goodness was an inalienable birthright of the human mind and must remain a practical, yet not dogmatic, attitude. Human beings could experience and determine goodness so long as they tolerated other faiths and other decisions while they searched for the most probable determination for themselves with

full consciousness of the inherent responsibilities and risks (James, 1968). Thus pragmatism, for James as well as for Peirce, culminated in the principle which has come to dominate twentieth-century philosophy regarding radical goodness. The abstract conception was only meaningful so far as it might be reduced to the concrete experience (Moore, 1961).

These beliefs included that the person had the power and the duty, within one's limitations, to make the world better. The experiences of religion which made for increased righteousness were essential to the process and people had the free will without which their ideas could become neither plans of actions nor truth. Hume's skepticism was rejected and the constructive thought which conceived of ideas as plans of action as possible replaced it. The only meaningful conception of the good was that of the reduction to experience as attainable. Such beliefs were now pluralistic, believed in individual efforts, in democracy, and in direct, personal relationships with a Deity (Marnell, 1966).

The pragmatism of Peirce and James molded American thought regarding radical goodness. Life now required the belief in certain values, modes of action, and objectives. The belief in them was good if they proved to have genuine worth, if the modes of action established effectiveness, and if their objectives produced a stable validity. These beliefs were true because they were good and they were good because they made for a better life. Those things were true that made for the better life, and that is true which stood the test of practice. Pragmatism applied to truth the test of goodness in the form of experience, not the test of goodness in terms of conformity to some a

priori standard of goodness. And pragmatism suggested the difficulty of achieving an a priori standard of goodness as well as a certain agnosticism that difficulty invited which could be avoided by making the test of goodness the test of experience.

John Dewey's contribution to American pragmatism's definition of supreme goodness consisted in his ideas of egalitarianism. Dewey's conception of happiness was thoroughly social and was largely independent of circumstances. Although Peirce and James added an individual component to the knowing of supreme goodness, Dewey appended the idea that the ultimate goodness was the common good and that happiness in society required the full realization of all capacities of individuals in all their uniqueness. He demanded that people be judged by their potential, not by what they had been able to achieve under limiting conditions at a given time (McGill, 1967). His underlying theme was the democracy was the political form that best assured free individual development. "For democracy signifies, on the one side, that every individual is to share in the duties and rights belonging to control of social affairs and, on the other side, that social arrangements are to eliminate those external arrangement of status, birth, wealth, sex, etc., which restrict the opportunity of each individual for full development of himself (Dewey, 1932, p. 387).

Rejecting a priori standards of goodness, Dewey aligned himself with American pragmatism. The confusion faced by people aiming at self-development, Dewey's definition of happiness, was that of "ends-in-view" and "standards." The ends people had in view were generally concrete and appropriate to the special circumstances in which they found themselves. Standards, however, were criteria subject to separate

approval by which acceptable desires were distinguished from unacceptable ones. Self-realization was thought of by Dewey as a form of happiness that fell under the external standard of judgment and was not a human end-in-view and was therefore not the unique happiness he conceived of as cut to the pattern of each individual's desire and judgment as to what was important. Although social and cultural projects were necessary to and provided the essentials of the happiness we shared, Dewey believed that ultimate happiness included the individual's maximum fulfillment of personal desire. Recognizing happiness as an activity and not as a feeling, state, or condition, Dewey considered this activity as the highest good for all people. Following the traditions of Peirce and James's American pragmatism, Dewey distinguished between individual goodness through happiness, and the social, democratic, and cultural shared goodness necessary for society.

### **Buber's Perspective on Pragmatism**

Individualism and collectivism were topics Buber addressed at length in his writings. Whereas American pragmatism of Peirce, James, and Dewey postulated supreme happiness in individual terms and the relativity of God, Buber both agreed with the personal, individual nature of the relationship between the person and God, yet disagreed significantly with any limitations of God inherent in their conception of relativity. The role of the individual was the narrow ridge along which Buber trod. Too great an emphasis on individualism was the failure of community, Buber wrote, and pointed to the danger of seclusion in which the spirit was expelled from consideration only of singular purposes (Buber, 1967a). More important, questions related to bringing

humanity to their greatest productivity were meaningless because they engendered only little questions, rather than the most serious issues.

The serious issues between Buberian thought and American pragmatism related to the locus of the individual person as the determiner of what was good and concomitantly what was evil, as well as James's popular theism that attempted to limit divine omniscience or omnipotence in an effort to account for the contradiction of the existence of evil in what should have been a perfect or radically good world. What the pragmatists wanted was a form of certainty that was palatable to the masses, a certainty Buber concluded was impossible from the human side of the *I-Eternal Thou* relationship. Whereas the pragmatists denigrated the role of the philosopher in the process of determining people's ultimate goodness and rejected a priori standards as externally imposed, Buber advised that the job of the philosopher was to restore the lived concrete to the religious person by destroying images that did not do justice to God, that is, the pure idea or a priori standard which stood in the way between the person and God (Buber, 1952b). Civilization, however, was the expression of the attachment of human life to the Absolute. Therefore, determinations of goodness must be made within the anthropological time of the civilization and not through any elitist conception of individuality proposed by Peirce and James. Although Buber diverged less from Dewey than from Peirce and James, Buber's ideal society was non-democratic; rather, he proposed utopian socialism with a rebirth, rather than a restoration, of community.

James's introduction of popular theism to American philosophical thought brought relief into the discussion of the existence of evil in what an omnipotent and omniscient

Divinity should have created as an absolutely or radically good world. Buber was uncompromising in his objection. "The original evil of all 'religion' is the separation of 'living in God' from 'living in the world'" (Buber, 1952b). By limiting God in any way, James accomplished the detaching of the soul from life in relation to God. This misled the faithful into feeling secure with objective consummation without personal participation and within such relationships the real partner of communion was no longer present. In such a conception, God was displaced by the figment of the soul itself and the dialogue which the soul thought it was carrying on "is only a monologue with divided roles" (Buber, 1948c, p. 104).

The chief disagreement between Buber and the American pragmatists in this question was the accomplishment in America of splitting the actual and ideal worlds, between life as it was lived and life as it should be lived (Buber, 1948a). Through the idea of popular theism and the resulting splitting of life into dichotomized poles, humankind did not achieve relief; rather, they became expropriated and dispossessed from the world in four ways. Rather than experiencing moments of communion with the *Eternal Thou*, people could: (a) historicize those moments and regard them as pure products of the past, (b) technicize those moments and treat them as purely means to goals which existed only in the future, (c) psychologize those moments so their total content was reflected upon and reduced to processes or experiences of the soul, and (d) philosophize those moments and abstract them from their reality (Friedman, 1960). In these ways, modern humanity divided their lives into levels and aspects in which people

enjoyed experiences independently of one another, relegated religious experiences and religion to only one aspect of life, rather than in its totality.

American Christianity aligned itself along James's popular theism and desanctified the elemental forces of the world and created a world alien to the spirit and a spirit alien to the world. Using the metaphor of marriage, Buber wrote that although marriage was sanctified within such Christianity, the body was not, and was merely made subservient to holiness (Buber, 1952b). The modern unsanctified individual became enmeshed within the grip of incomprehensible powers and was trampled again and again in all human purposes. This purposelessness of modern life was evidenced in the worship of freedom for its own sake, and not for the sake of relating to an absolute or divine power, that is, the *Eternal Thou*. Even Dewey's democratic ideals in education served only to free children's creative impulses, but did not help them acquire the personal responsibility to accompany those impulses. "The sickness of modern man is manifested most clearly of all, however, in the individualism and nationalism which make power an end in itself" and "power without faithfulness is life without meaning" (Buber, 1965a, p. 119).

People who were products of such thinking attempted to overrun reality and experienced a profound dualism within their souls. "In this man the sphere of the spirit and the sphere of impulse have fallen apart more markedly than ever before. He perceives with apprehension that an unfruitful and powerless remoteness from life is threatening the separated spirit, and he perceives with horror that the repressed and banished impulses are threatening to destroy his soul" (Buber, 1965a, p. 187). The division of spirit and impulse were basic to human nature only in the modern person and

this rendered modern people sick in their souls. Because American pragmatism brought to modern society a heightened sense of individual power and decision, organic community began to decay and real togetherness disappeared. "The divorce between spirit and instincts is here, as often, the consequence of the divorce between man and man" (Buber, 1965a, p. 185). Although new community forms had arisen, such as the labor union and public schools, they were unable to re-establish the security which had been destroyed.

## CHAPTER IV

### IV. MODERN RADICAL PHILOSOPHY: *THE I AND THOU*

This fourth section is an examination of Buber's coming to write the *I and Thou* (1958) and of his consideration of socialized humanity during and after World War I, World War II, the Nazi era, the post-Holocaust period, and the War in Palestine. While this investigation centers on Buber's expression of good, evil, and radical evil, it may be impossible to know Buber without critical inquiry into his step-child, the *I and Thou*. Radical in its elevation of the individual to the status of the divine and insistent on the ultimate redeemability of humankind, the *I and Thou* opened a new way for modern existentialists to consider humanity in relationship rather than in solitary existence. I believe Buber enjoyed the struggle with which this book was birthed, the trouble it met with traditional Judaic interpretation, and the growing pains it endured when the world attempted to make rational the irrationality of the Holocaust. Consideration of the *I and Thou*, its presuppositions, the philosophical anthropology that sired it, and its implications for thought regarding the states of being known as good and evil comprise the substance of this chapter.

#### ***The I and Thou***

#### **The Threshold of Meeting and Dialogue**

Before the publication of the German edition of the *I and Thou* in 1922, Ludwig Feuerbach had been the primary influence on Buber's philosophy of meeting and

dialogue. Unlike Kant's emphasis on rational thought, Feuerbach thought of the whole person rather than reason as the fundamental point of philosophizing. Buber insisted that Feuerbach's *person* was not one as an individual; when Buber described wholeness, he meant person with person, the connection of *I* and *Thou*.

'The individual man for himself,' runs his [Feuerbach's] manifesto, 'does not have man's being in himself, either as a moral being or a thinking being. Man's being is contained only in community, in the unity of man with man--a unity which rests, however, only on the reality of the difference between I and Thou' (Buber, 1965a, p. 136).

Georg Simmer was another influence on Buber's thought and was concerned with relation between person and God, person and person, and person and nature (Friedman, 1960). Simmel discovered the real relationships between people within the divine. He elaborated on the relations between person and God as well as between persons in a fashion that paralleled Buber's *I and Thou*. He demanded more than rational belief in God; rather, he upheld the positive inner relation between the person and God which required surrendering one's feeling and direction of life. Similarly, one must have a trust relation with another to believe fully in the other. This relationship demanded mutuality.

The history of Buber's writing revealed a pattern that brought the *I and Thou* into focus in 1922. His essay on Jacob Boehme (1900) reinterpreted unity Kabbalistically and posited the human person as a microcosm of the cosmos. In 1909 in *Ecstasy and Confession*, Buber addressed the oneness in ecstasy of the *I* and the world (Friedman,

1960). *Daniel* (1913) illustrated unity which could be created in the physical world. The *I and Thou* brought these developing topics together through *I and Thou* relation, "an event which takes place between two beings which none the less remain separate" (Friedman, 1960, p. 49).

The *I and Thou* was replete with images drawn from Buber's previous writings. In the essay on Boehme, Buber illustrated concepts with images of kinship with a tree and looking into the eyes of a mute animal. These were incorporated into the *I and Thou* to portray the *I-Thou* relation rather than unity. The emotional impact of the events, although written more than twenty years apart, were almost identical in power.

In the 1917 publication of *Events and Meetings*, Buber linked his philosophy of realization in *Daniel* with that of dialogue. This publication repudiated rational learning as the sole means of coming to know and affirmed the humble and faithful beholding of any thing (Buber, 1917). He perceived that every thing and being had a twofold nature: the passive, appropriable, and comparable and the active, unappropriable, and incomparable (Friedman, 1960). Buber affirmed the contact between inexpressible things and our sensate powers as the incarnate spirit. Granting humanity a twofold reality, Buber described a common reality sufficient for our ordering and comparing things, and another greater reality we can make our own only if we surrender ourselves to allow relationship with those things which leaped up to embrace us. The world could never be known through things but with an active sense-spirit of a loving person.

Loving people affirmed each thing unrelated to other things and did not demand order or comparability among them. Each hour or moment brought potentially holy

encounters to loving persons who did not seek to rationalize world experiences. The 'loving man' of *Events and Meetings* was similar to the 'realizing man' of *Daniel*, but Buber indicated that the twofold nature of life no longer applied solely to human beings but was inherent in things themselves.

Buber's emphases on location and direction developed in these writings. He accentuated the meeting between persons and what was "over against" the person, a meeting that never became an identity. The encounter was not a perfect unity but was between a person and an active self of things. Humankind was limited in its ability to shape the world and to overcome the evil in both themselves and the world.

Buber believed he would be labelled a mystic, a title he earned through his Hasidic reconstructions and mystical experiences in his youth. He declared his non-mystical intention in three of his early essays, *Brother Body* (1914), *The Altar* (1914), and *The Demon in the Dream* (1914) in *Pointing the Way* (1957). His need to renounce mysticism stemmed from a mis-meeting in 1914 between Buber and a young man who later committed suicide. Buber answered the questions that the young man asked, but not the ones he did not ask. This event of judgment convinced him to cede reliance on mysticism in his writings.

Since then I have given up the 'religious' which is nothing but the exception, extraction, exaltation, ecstasy; or it has given me up. I possess nothing but the everyday out of which I am never taken. The mystery is no longer disclosed, it has escaped or it has made its dwelling here where everything happens as it happens. I know no fulness but each mortal hour's fulness of claim and responsibility (Buber, 1965a, p. 13).

When the *I and Thou* was ready for American publication in 1958, Buber refused to change even one word of the text citing that the original had been written in a type of creative ecstasy from which even the author had no right to tamper (Friedman, 1991). Mysticism remained a force in Buber's work and infused the *I and Thou* with its spiritual essence.

Through his personal experience of mis-meeting when his parents separated, Buber defined effective action between persons as simple togetherness. Relationship was more powerful than writing and was productive in that it took root in the immediacy of lived life. Buber objected to the modern idea that defined production as the criterion of human worth, calling it illegitimate production without immediacy, without validity as a criterion, and its overvaluation a delusion. Genuinely lived life disavowed one's intention of utilizing another in relationship; rather, it invited fellowship with a single glance.

Buber did not consider the *I and Thou* decisive until 1919. Understanding that true communication between person and person was possible only when each was directly present, Buber frequently reinterpreted his earlier work. Those reinterpretations considered religious reality as not taking place in inwardness but in a space between person and God in the reality of relation; realization as misapplied when a person spoke of making God out of truth into reality, an idea that promoted God as an 'idea' through which people became 'reality'; and that our human existence was not a series of events to overcome the duality of being and reality in order to aspire to the divine. This final point, that we cannot subscribe to the concept of a reality which was relative and far

from God, led Buber to disavow duality of functions (thinking and feeling) within a duality of spheres (being and reality).

The shift in emphasis to the two-directional meeting of God and person left no space for an impersonal god-figure that the human soul brought into existence through thought. God became the *Eternal Thou*, whom we met inside and outside the human soul, yet who was never impersonal or removed. Some believed this shift moved Buber away from Kabbalistic interpretations of the Shekhinah, or exiled spirit of God; indeed, it was difficult to reconcile with his earlier mystical writings. He addressed the question in *Hasidism and the Modern Man* (1988), declaring that this internal and external meeting with God did not imply division within God or limitation on transcendence. He wrote, "[w]hat turgid and presumptuous talk that is about the 'God who becomes;' but we know unshakably in our hearts that there is a becoming of the God that is" (Buber, 1988, p. 215; 1958a, p. 82).

The reinterpretation of God fundamental to the *I and Thou* did not exclude a becoming of God in the world but only the concept of God as pure ideal which was not yet reality. If creation were not divine, if God were not immanent as well as transcendent, then we would have had a gnostic division between God and the world which would leave the world cut off from God and forever unredeemable (Friedman, 1960). God's immanence and transcendence, the divinity of creation, the world as redeemable, and God as the Eternal Thou, brought Buber to finish the book that challenged the philosophizing world as he laid on the world's doorstep the orphaned child of dialogue, the *I and Thou*.

### **Buber and Dialogue**

Buber developed the philosophy of the "word," that was spoken, of speech as event and event as speech, of the world as word and human existence as address and response (Friedman, 1991). The discovery of the *I and Thou* was that spoken was primary, not written speech. This rediscovery was the life of dialogue. The spoken word was uttered in mutuality of relationship and took meaning from its being said by one person, heard by another, and related by the second from an entirely different ground. The *Thou* achieved reality in knowing and being known and analogized the relation of person with God. "Its true address receives true response; except that in God's response everything, the universe, is made manifest as language" (Friedman, 1981, p. 315). Real speaking took place within tension although real speech was not community but was multiplicity. Born of a living dynamic, this essential tension was expressed through speech and served as a catalyst for people to come toward each other. "The Shehkinah," Buber wrote, "is between the beings."

Dialogue of pure speech brought the person to experience the absolute as the *Thou*. God did not change but only the theophany did, until no symbol was sufficient and life between person and person itself became a symbol, "until God is truly present when one person clasps the hand of another" (Friedman, 1991, p. 127). Each individual was responsible for preserving the sanctity of such moments. Every person must shelter those moments and not psychologize them into mere experiences. Buber denied the reality of experience because it

belongs to the exclusive, individualized psychic sphere; "meeting" . . . transcends this sphere from its origins on. The psychological reduction of being, its psychologizing, had a destructive effect on me in my youth because it removed from me the foundation of human realization, the "to-one-another." Only much later, in the revolution of my thinking that taught me to fight and to gain ground, did I win reality that cannot be lost (Friedman, 1991, p. 127).

By disavowing experience as the "great foolishness of our time," Buber disagreed that the divine was a becoming God who needed to be brought forth by the human spirit (Friedman, 1991, p. 127). During the final drafts of the *I and Thou*, Buber studied philosophical Judaism with Franz Rosenzweig, translated the Hebrew Bible into German, and contemplated Hasidic spiritual issues. One purpose of the *I and Thou* was the universality of his philosophy of dialogue. He described the insight that led him to the study of Bible and Hasidism, as well as to independent questions such as: Are the *I-Thou* relation to God and the *I-Thou* relation to one's fellow man related to each other (Friedman, 1991)?

The philosophy of dialogue of the *I and Thou* relationship could overcome mis-meetings and maintain cosmic connections lost by children. Such connections joined ever-renewed distancing and relating of the *I-Thou* by allowing individuals to exchange spiritual relations for natural ones with worlds lost by children as they grew into adulthood. This exchange was from the glowing darkness of chaos into the cool light of creation.

## Meeting

Creation's cool light was not a gift to possess; rather, it was a condition until the child made it into his own reality. This implied anthropology, not a theory of knowledge. The anthropological consideration centered on what "man was *as man*," and offered an ontology of what was "really real." When a person truly met another, meeting existed within existential trust, as that trust within which Buber himself accepted his separation from his mother and was willing to go out in the world again both to meet *and* to be met (Friedman, 1991, p. 131).

If Buber's mother failure to return when he was four years old was the crucial mis-meeting of his life, then his marriage to Paula was the critical meeting. The partners possessed an otherness that provided Buber an ability to trust and to go into the world to meet persons or situations as his *Thou*. The existential trust undergirding the *I and Thou* may have been unthinkable without this relationship. As Buber reconstructed the idea of radical evil after his lived experience with Nazi destruction, he emerged not from his individual being but from the between, which he knew foremost in his marriage (Friedman, 1991).

The meeting of person with person was analogous to the meeting of person with the *Eternal Thou*. This meeting was representative of *Daniel*'s (1913) "kingdom of holy insecurity" not only of danger and openness but of personal involvement and mutual giving. Meeting necessitated trusting that every *Thou* would eventually become an *It*, no matter how exclusively present the other was in direct relation. The eventual transformation of every *Thou* into an *It* educated the individual regarding meeting.

. . . it teaches you to meet others, and to hold your ground when you meet them. Through the graciousness of its comings and the solemn sadness of its goings it leads you away to the *Thou* in which the parallel lines of relations meet. It does not help to sustain you in life, it only helps you to glimpse eternity (Buber, in Friedman, 1991, p.131).

Traditional epistemology rested on the exclusive reality of the subject-object relationship but the *I-Thou* philosophy was an entirely other way of knowing. Yet it birthed the *I-It*, or subject-object relationship. Buber avoided ways of knowing that removed reality into a knowing subject. He found epistemological foundation within the concreteness of meeting with the other.

The meeting of the *I* with the *Thou* was a social relationship, clearer than Heidegger's "existence is togetherness," or Marcel's understanding knowledge as the third-personal object of the dialogue between a first and second person. Confusion of the social nature of the *I-Thou* with the social nature of the *I-It*, between reality of true dialogue and indirect togetherness of ordinary social relations, ignored meeting that took place between beings or between beings and things. The fertile meeting between two people was a breakthrough from image to being. The silent or spoken dialogue between the *I* and the *Thou* took place within meeting and through meeting both personality and knowledge came into being. The two stages of Buber's insight into the human person can be known through meeting. First, the person must be understood in terms of one's relationships rather than taken in oneself; second, one was to be understood in terms of the direct relation that made persons human.

### The Sphere of It

The sphere of the *It* was the other dimension of the gift Buber gave to the world through the *I and Thou*. Modern culture ceded its being to this world resulting in an evilness of personal existence in which institutions and feelings were separate localities and in which governments and economies were cut off from the spirit and the will to enter into relation (Friedman, 1960). The *I-It* was not evil; rather, evil was its mastery over the human soul.

The development of *I-It* as the sphere that regarded others as objects without potential for relationship raised an inability within people to live life within spirit. The development of the *I-It* was "through the decrease of man's power to enter into relation" (Buber, 1958a, p. 37). Because spirit was not within the *I* but was between the *I* and the *Thou*, one wishing to enter into relation had to emerge from the between and resist the inclination to "bind up the *Thou*" and leave it free and unmanifest, that is, not to banish it to become an object (Buber, 1958a, p. 39). True response before a *Thou* was silence.

The person found it easier to respond to the domain of the *It*. Knowledge, work, image, and symbol developed through the response that bound the *Thou* to the *It*. *Thous* were reduced to *Its*, although they maintained the potential to be changed again into presentness or *Thouness*. This fundamental nature was precluded by those who accepted the sphere of *It* by observing rather than looking, by suppressing rather than freeing, and by accounting for rather than accepting (Buber, 1958a).

In knowledge the thing which was seen existed in itself and was exclusively present. Only after it was related to other events was it turned into an *It* and could enter

knowledge. It could be left as *It*, experienced, used, and appropriated to 'find one's bearings' in the world (Friedman, 1960, p. 63).

So too in art; form is disclosed to the artist as he looks at what is over against him. He banishes it to a "structure." The nature of this 'structure' is to be freed for a timeless moment by the meeting with the man who lifts the ban and clasps the form. But a man may simply experience art: see it as qualities, analyse how it is made, and place it in the scheme of things. Scientific and aesthetic understanding are not necessary in themselves. They are necessary in order that man 'may do his work with precision and plunge it in the truth of relation, which is above the understanding and gathers it up in itself' (Buber, 1958a, p. 40).

In addition to silence, the other appropriate response to the *Thou* was with one's life. Because Buber viewed life as teaching, a person's life taught how life could be lived in spirit, face to face with the *Thou* (Friedman, 1960). When an invitation to respond with one's life was declined, the result was an attempt to "instead pin the life down with information as an *It*, an object among objects" (Buber, 1958a, p. 42). Modern persons learned to suppress life's feelings and concern themselves only with their own feelings, with despair that the meaning of feelings would not serve to lead persons to more fulfilled lives.

The sphere of *It* did not yield life free from feelings; rather, it afforded modern people a lack of real public and personal life. This sphere repressed the development of true community of people taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Center and only then through being in living mutual relation with each other (Friedman, 1960). Buber knew true marriage as the honest revelation of each's *Thou* to the other's and he reiterated that true community must parallel mutual honesty and disclosure. In

community as in the individual life, evil did not stem from the *I-It*; rather, it developed from its superiority. In both communal and individual life the *I-It* was requisite for existence.

Man's will to profit and to be powerful have their natural and proper effect so long as they are linked with, and upheld by, his will to enter into relation. There is no evil impulse till the impulse has been separated from the being; the impulse which is bound up with, and defined by, the being is the living stuff of communal life, that which is detached is its disintegration. Economics, the abode of the will to profit, and State, the abode of the will to be powerful, share in life as long as they share in the spirit (Buber, 1958a, p. 48).

Balanced with the sphere of the *I-It* was the *I-Thou* and only "he who knows relation and knows about the presence of the *Thou* is capable of decision. He who decides is free, for he has approached the Face. . . . Two alternatives are set side by side . . ." (Buber, 1958a, p. 51).

The mediating influence was balance that a person exerted over the redemption of evil through using the evil impulse to serve good. One's life alternated between *Thou* and *It* and one could accomplish redemption by knowing both spheres. One recognized the spirit's response as re-kindled over and over by raising the divine spark within another. One's freedom to do evil through the sphere of the *It* enabled each to redeem evil as a free and creative being.

Individuality was the *I* of the *I-It* and enabled the person to become conscious of oneself as the subject of experiencing and using (Friedman, 1960). It was concerned

with its analogous "my," as in my kind, my race, my creation, and my genius. Because it had no sharing and it appropriated unto itself, it had no reality. "Person," alternatively, was the *I* of the *I-Thou* and made its appearance by entering into relation. A person shared in a reality through relation which was neither within one's possession nor existed externally. Reality could be shared and was immune from appropriation. The more direct communication with the *Thou*, the fuller was the potential for sharing; and the fuller the sharing, the more real one's *I* (Buber, 1958a, p. 62). The *Thou* struck inward when it was not expressed outwardly in relation and the person confronted what was over against the self. This experience was not one of relation but was one of self-contradiction. A person sought to comprehend the world and to eliminate the dread associated with the meeting one wished to avoid. "And because he dares not meet the *Thou* in the casual moments of his daily life, he builds for himself a cataclysmic reversal, a way of dread and despair. It is through this way at last that he must go to confront the *Eternal Thou*" (Friedman, 1960, p. 69).

### **The *Eternal Thou***

Real relation was not an exclusive phenomenon; rather, while such relation lasted, the "*Thou* stepped forth free and single and confronted one" (Friedman, 1991, p. 137). Only the relationship with the *Eternal Thou* was both exclusive and inclusive; it was also elusive. The *Eternal Thou* was met with each particular *Thou*, but it could not be "found" within any one of them because the *Eternal Thou* was the sole aspect of relationship that could never become an *It*, not because of some universal or all-encompassing essential nature of a *Thou* but because it could not become an *It* as it was

the present reality, eternally *Thou*, the ever-renewed presentness of meeting. Because it was the bond of the absolute with the concrete, the *Eternal Thou* was never universal in its address. To discover the *Eternal Thou*, the person faced the dilemma that

[i]f you explore the life of things and of conditioned being you come to the unfathomable, if you deny the life of things and of conditioned being you stand before nothingness, if you hallow this life you meet the living God (Buber, in Friedman, 1991, p. 137).

Karl Barth described God as the "wholly Other," but for Buber, God was the wholly Same as well as the wholly Present. Rudolf Otto coined the term *mysterium tremendum* that appeared and overthrew, but for Buber, God was also the mystery of the self-evident, nearer to me than my *I*. Buber's was an all-embracing relation in which potential was still actual being, the only *Thou* that by its nature never ceased to be *Thou* for us (Friedman, 1991).

One's ability to stand free of dialogical will limited the person's ability to enter into relationship with the *Eternal Thou*. Acknowledging that there was meaning in the world, such a free person engaged in summoning and sending that was revelation. No one who was concerned with God could enter into relationship; rather, meeting God enabled one to confirm that there was meaning in the world. Kierkegaard believed relationship with God took place only when the person was freed from relationship with fellow beings. Buber responded that

[w]e can dedicate to God not merely our persons but also our relations to one another. The person who turns to him therefore need not turn away from any other *I-Thou* relation; but he properly brings them to him, and lets them be fulfilled 'in the face of God' (Friedman, 1991, p. 138).

Buber warned that God could neither be located in the transcendence beyond things nor in the immanence within things and then sought and found. Seeking God was "foolish" because "there is nothing in which He could not be found" (Buber, 1958a, p. 80).

Buber compared meeting the *Eternal Thou* to Tao philosophy. Similar to the Tao, God could not be inferred in anything, but unlike the Tao, God could be met and addressed. "God is the Being that is directly, most nearly, and lastingly over against us, that may properly only be addressed, not expressed" (Buber, 1958a, p. 80). Discovery of God was similar to discovery of primal origin.

Buber agreed with Heschel that God needed people as people needed God. Because the person co-created with God, the *I-Eternal Thou* relationship expressed the meaning of life. If humanity were merely dependent, there would be no meaning to life or to the world (Friedman, 1960). Buber commented

[y]ou know in your heart that you need God more than everything; but do you not know too that God needs you--in the fullness of His eternity needs you? . . . You need God, in order to be--and God needs you, for the very meaning of your life (Buber, 1958a, p. 82).

There was no condition Buber could imagine that would separate a person from God forever. Although the world was not entirely represented in microcosm in an

individual, neither was a person entirely included within the extrapolation of the world. What mattered was how any person affected one's bearing of soul to grow to a real and actualized life that could, in turn, open one to act upon the world. This was not a mysterious encounter that united the mystic with God. The nature of the *I-Eternal Thou* relationship was that it did not relieve either party of responsibility. Buber criticized mystic as a valueless attempt to abandon one's responsibility to the sphere of *It* as the world of conscious aims and purposes supported by a collection of means, such as spiritual exercises, abstinence, and recollection (Friedman, 1960). He hallowed the "phenomenon of the brink," the central reality of the almost-magical yet repetitive everyday hour on earth," with a streak of sun on a maple twig and the glimpse of the *Eternal Thou*" (Buber, 1958a, p. 87). A sacred aspect of the spirit of the *I-Thou* was the Refusal to allow the mundane to slip into *It*-ness.

Explaining how the human person could experience loneliness with the ever-presence of the *Eternal Thou* was not attributed to God's absence; rather, it stemmed from "it is we who are not always there" (Buber, 1958a, p. 98). This theme was re-written after the Holocaust to account for the radical evil within a cosmos inhabited by the *Eternal Thou*. Human nature relied so heavily upon visual images that we were compelled to bring the *Eternal Thou* into speakable language and draw *It* into the world of being. True relationship recognized the *Eternal Thou* as a privilege in which the spirit penetrated and transformed the sphere of *It*. Without the ever-present spirit, there was no *Thou*.

Buber was fascinated with the spirit behind the representations of God from the world's many religions. He hallowed the name of Christ as address, not as a theological proposition that only in this form can one meet God. Inclusive rather than exclusive, Buber refused to sanctify any name for God or spirit that eliminated any person or community from relationship. He believed that Jesus the man and Jesus the Jew stood in unmediated relationship with God; however, he did not believe that Jesus was any longer identical with the Christ of the Christian faith who people worshipped as the Savior (Friedman, 1991). He recognized Jesus's singular relationship with God, yet positioned Jesus on the side of humanity within this relationship, not on the side of God (Buber, 1961).

Buber chose Jesus as his illustration for the individual person's relation to the *Eternal Thou*.

How powerful, even to being overpowering, and how legitimate, even to being self-evident, is the saying of *I* by Jesus! For it is the *I* of unconditional relation in which the man calls his *Thou* Father in such a way that he himself is simply son, and nothing else but Son (Friedman, 1991, p. 140).

He did not recognize Jesus as God but as man, and positioned Jesus on humanity's side of the dialogue. Jesus's uniqueness was not found within his being inseparable from God; rather, it was in immediacy that Jesus, even within this separation, used to foster a soundness of relation. The locus of Jesus's uniqueness was a power within him that

Buber recognized as a strength, an immediacy, an unconditionality of the between (Friedman, 1991).

Although Buber recognized Jesus as a unique facet of the *I-Eternal Thou* relationship and regarded Jesus as a man and as a Jew, he viewed organized Christianity as a distortion of the hallowed between and as an uncreative response of what was not Judaism. This mixture of "rites and dogmas" was not a religion with which we "as Jews and as human beings" wished to establish a rapprochement (Friedman, 1991, p. 141).

Facing Jesus squarely and reconstructing his role as a divine partner on humanity's side marked Buber's interpretation of the appropriate response to the multi-dimensional position of the *Eternal Thou* that could transcend organized religion. Buber placed the *Eternal Thou* within an unbroken world that assured humankind that no relation could ever fall into complete Manichaeian duality. Buber maintained the human soul's inability to lapse into duality and held that evil could never become radically real and absolute. Friedman warned that

without this limit to the reality of evil we would have no assurance that *I-It* can become *I-Thou*, that men and cultures can turn back to God in the fundamental act of reversal, the *teshuvah*. Without this limit, the world of *It* would be evil in itself and incapable of being redeemed (Friedman, 1960, p. 73).

We learned from the radical evil inflicted upon the world during the Nazi terror in Europe that the reality of evil overtook the ever-present potential for dialogue and

meeting between the human soul and the *Eternal Thou* in real relation. We know that the Holocaust precluded a means for even the most repentant Jew incarcerated in a death camp in full *teshuvah* to return to God. We heard the silence of the *Eternal Thou* on the gallows of Auschwitz when limitless evil appeared and the sphere of the *It* eclipsed all potential for *Thou*-ness. The omnipresent *Thou* was limited by radical evil's permeation of humanity's world.

Anticipating questions of evil, Buber wrote that the world, when it was immersed in situations that made it appear not to be a world, was a

double movement, of estrangement from the primal Source, in virtue of which the universe is sustained in the process of becoming, and of turning toward the primal Source, in virtue of which the universe is released in being. . . . Both parts of this movement develop, fraught with destiny, in time, and are compassed by grace in the timeless creation that is, incomprehensibly, at once emancipation and preservation, release and binding. Our knowledge of twofold nature is silent before the paradox of the primal mystery (Buber, 1958a, p. 100).

Twofold movement was Buber's symbol for his tripartite *I-Thou* philosophy. The first aspect was the alternation between human states of *I-Thou* and *I-It*. Second, it expressed the alternation between the summons from signs or ciphers, or approaching meeting with the *Eternal Thou*, and the sending, or taking responsibility and going forth from that holy meeting to the world and making that world sacred.

The third alternation was between revelation, in which relation took place ever anew and flowed into cultural and religious forms, and the turning (*teshuvah*), in which

people turned from the dogmatic forms of organized religion to direct, personal, and holy meeting with the *Eternal Thou* (Friedman, 1960).

Describing evil as the temporary primacy of the *I-It* over the *I-Thou*, Buber decried humanity's estrangement from the primal Source and the good. He warned that if the estrangement became too great, the world was destined to permanent alienation from the *Thou* when the sphere of *It* overtook and entered the world of *Thou*. The evil urge which existed by nature within every human soul and should have been used to redeem the good, would lack Godly direction.

Should this penetration take too strong a hold on the individual soul, it would cause the dissolution of the relational act with the three spheres it could address: our lives with nature, our lives with other people, and our lives with "intelligible essences," our dialogue with the *Eternal Thou*. Without relation with the *Eternal Thou*, no one could enter into relation with the *Thous* of this world.

Does the temporary primacy of the *It* and its absolute permeation into the world of people suffice to explain the evil of the Holocaust? How did the evil inflicted by one group onto others step so firmly in between the oppressed and their relationship with the *Eternal Thou*?

### **Dimensions of Evil**

#### **What Is Man?**

Understanding Buber's response to "What is man?" necessitates knowing the multi-dimensional nature of his anthropology. Buber was interested in Hasidism, Judaism, Zionism, religious socialism, education, community, sociology, psychology,

art, philosophical anthropology, and Eastern religions. This wide knowledge generated consideration of the person's nature that transcended single-dimensional thought. Buber wrote that he considered his early work merely a stepping stone to his later thought and it was always in process. Man must be regarded in wholeness. Buber rejected singular philosophical answers to the primary question in a philosophical-anthropological consideration of what he considered to be the human dilemma. He believed that philosophy often objectified or dehumanized the individual and disregarded the soul's potential. Ultimately he rejected it as the answer to the primary question. Buber believed that this would reach a conclusion of false unity rather than produce a genuine wholeness with essential consideration of its manifold nature.

Philosophical anthropology is the "narrow ridge" concept synonymous with Buber's work. The narrow ridge enabled finding one essence of man within the constantly moving flux of individuals and cultures by avoiding abstract notions of unity and its opposite, meaningless relativity. Man traversed the narrow ridge through participation in both finitude and infinity. As a being who trod the tightrope, man was the only creature with possibility. Through self-reflection on freedom of choice, man's actions were unforeseeable in character and magnitude. Man's potentiality was the feature Buber recognized as enabling discussion of the freedom of man and the reality of evil.

Man could not be regarded uni-dimensionally. Buber wrote that

[t]he depth of the anthropological question is first touched when we also recognize as specifically human that which is not reason. Man is not a centaur, he is man through and through. He can be understood only when one knows, on the one hand, that there is something in all that is human, including thought, which belongs to the general nature of living creatures, and is to be grasped from this nature, while knowing, on the other hand, that there is no human quality which belongs fully to the general nature of living creatures and is to be grasped exclusively from it. Even man's hunger is not an animal's hunger. Human reason is to be understood only in connexion with human non-reason. The problem of philosophical anthropology is the problem of a specific totality and of its specific structure (Buber, 1965a, p. 160).

Buber understood man not only through philosophical anthropology but also through the concepts of distance and relation.

### **Distance and Relation**

Buber regarded human life as adhering to the on-going and interactive twofold principle of distance and relation. Primal human movement was the spiritual setting at a distance which presupposed the second movement of entering into *I-Thou* relation. We can enter into relation only with that which had been set at a distance from ourselves. Distancing caused the object to assume the role of becoming an independent opposite from ourselves. Only man could perform the act of setting at a distance because only man had a world that was an unbroken continuum which included both what man knew and experienced and what was knowable now and in the future. Buber compared this possibility with the natural and animal world when he described a beaver's dam as existing and extending within a time-realm, a planted tree within the world of time, and

the one who planted the first tree as the man who expected the Messiah (Friedman, 1960).

Entering into relation was a synthesizing and apperception of a being as a whole and as a unity. Responding to "What is Man?" within wholeness required man's regarding others within the parameter of unity and was achievable only when one regarded the world as whole world. Only then could man grasp being as wholeness and unity. One could not accomplish this by setting another at a distance but by entering into relation. Buber wrote that

[o]nly the view of what is over against me in the world in its full presence, with which I have set myself, present in my whole person, in relation--only this view gives me the world truly as whole and one. . . . The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man (Buber, 1965a, p. 203).

Distance and relation did not cause each other. Distance made room for relation, but relation did not necessarily follow. Direction enabled entering into relation. Direction was an on-going theme in Buber's writings and he struggled with its meaning. He was concerned with direction in the first dialogue of *Daniel*, and considered it as containing passion. Combining passion and direction enabled man's turning toward God with the evil urge's strength, and it influenced Buber's existential idea of direction as one's "unique path to God, through which one fulfills the task to which one is called in one's creation" (Friedman, 1991, p. 69). Although direction was neither destiny nor predestination, it was discovered through one's openness to the ever-changing situation

that we encountered. Consequently, once one set another at a primal distance, one's ability to enter into relation was related to both the holy insecurity of the present concrete experience and to inclusion. Direction was not a goal to exclude portions of a lived life; rather, it was individual pointing. Buber wrote, "[i]t does not know where north is; rather its north is there where it points" (Friedman, 1991, p. 69).

Mutual interaction and cooperation of distance and relation underlaid the spirit's struggle in which personal acts of distance vied with personal acts of relation to show how man was possible and how he was to be realized. Distance provided the human situation and relation provided one's becoming in that situation (Buber, 1965a). Because man was the one animal for whom it was not enough simply to use and possess things, he had the power to enter into relation with things in order to ascertain his relation to them. The origin of art could be found within the sphere of man's relation to things. Art could no longer be recognized as an impression of natural objectivity nor could it be only the expression of spiritual subjectivity. Within distance and relation and the space of the between, art became the witness of the relation between the human substance and the substance of things (Buber, 1965a).

Art . . . is the realm of 'between' which has become a form. Consider great nude sculptures of the ages: none of them is to be understood properly either from the givenness of the human body or from the will to expression of an inner state, but solely from the relational event which takes place between two entities which have gone apart from one another, the withdrawn 'body' and the withdrawing 'soul' (Buber, 1965a, pp. 9-10).

Human societies illustrated the twofold nature of life expressed as distance and relation. Unlike the animal world, human societies confirmed each other and were defined as human to the extent mutual confirmation took place (Friedman, 1960). Individuals completed each others' functions throughout humanity's dominion over the earth. By ascribing to others an existence beyond one's own reality, one was able to enter into relation individually with those like oneself. Buber discussed Marx's reliance on collectivism rather than on individualism in the question "what is man?" "Modern collectivism is the last barrier raised by man against a meeting with himself" (Buber, 1965a, p. 201). Man's face was masked in collectivism and the real person was taken over by illusion. Man cannot relate to an image; rather, his inability to relate suppresses relationship. Suppression intensified solitude and rose secretly within man to a cruel level which forced illusion to scatter and man to retreat from meeting. We were unable to address each other when the other took on the group's illusion.

Man confirmed the other through speech. Although animals may have called to one another, only man spoke to others as independent objects which he had set at a distance. One chose to set the other in independence so that the other might come to life and engage the one in conversation. Unless the conversation developed into true dialogue, the process of speaking was perverted. Genuine conversation necessitated one's acceptance of otherness, confirmation, affirmation, and negation of influencing the other through imposition of one's will. Sharing relationship with another's individuality was an objective of relationship and could be enjoyed only when one ceased one's desire

to move over and beyond the other in an effort to rob the other of his distance or to convert him into an object, an *It* and manipulate her.

Entering into relation with another and enjoying his particularity meant that one had to make the other wholly present which required that one had to *imagine the real* for the other, "to imagine quite concretely what another man is wishing, feeling, perceiving, and thinking" (Friedman, 1960, p. 82). One could wish what other wished, feel what the other felt, and think what the other thought. By making another present, one occupied the real space of the between without trying to rob the other's distance or particularity.

Ontological completion of imagining the real for the other and making the other wholly present did not take place until the other knew oneself to be made wholly present and caused the process of one's own self-becoming. Man, unlike other animals, needed to have his own presence in the being of the other.

Sent forth from the natural domain of species into the hazard of the solitary category, surrounded by the air of a chaos which came into being with him, secretly and bashfully he watches for a Yes which allows him to be and which can come to him only from one human person to another (Buber, 1951, p. 8).

The failure of man to enter into relation due to a thickening or objectification of the primal distance corresponded to an *I-It* relation.

Distance presupposed both *I-Thou* and *I-It* relationships. Entering into relation was an act requiring one's physical and spiritual being and it became Buber's recognition

of the act by which we constituted ourselves as human. Relating was never static; rather, it must be repeated over and over again in new concrete situations that confront people during their lives. Distance was not an act and neither was failure to enter into relation. Both distance and relation were states of a human's being. Failure to assume the state of being that presupposed an ability to enter into relation set humanity on the course sliding into evil.

### **The Nature of Evil**

The philosophy of dialogue was Buber's response to the questions of the nature of man and the problem of evil. If entering into relation was the state of being that defined man as man, then failure to enter into relation was man's becoming evil. Failure to enter into relation was non-existence and Buber offered the eternal hope that the re-establishment of relation would redeem evil and re-create authentic human existence. The problems of evil and of man merged into one within relation as the fundamental reality of man's life (Friedman, 1960).

Buber could not imagine a person without the power of both the evil and good urges and believed that together they formed the body of the world. People required the energy that only an evil urge could supply in their re-creation of the world in partnership with God. Making the broken world whole was accomplished only with both of the creative urges that empowered people to make decisions and break through solitude so that they may "time and again participate in the redemption of the world" (Kohn, 1930, p. 308). The point of attack against evil could not be an external struggle; rather, it must

stem from what the individual knows from self-reflection into his unique personal experience.

Evil had an external character in addition to its origins within the human being's innermost person. This external character was not an ontology of evil.

What we call 'evil' is not merely in man; it is in the world as the bad; it is the uncleanness of creation. But this uncleanness is not a nature, not an existent property of things. It is only its not standing firm, not finding direction, not deciding (Buber, 1966, p. 134).

He denied those who claimed evil emanated from a divine power and he disavowed the view of history as a struggle between the powers of good and evil in which man's security came from the idea that the power of good would finally overcome and redeem evil. He quoted the prophet who said "like light and darkness, so good and evil have been created by God Himself. No uncreated power stands in opposition to Him" (Buber, 1966, p. 134).

Finding evil required recognizing that it began within the one's innermost being. Buber repudiated the impression that one met evil when one met another person. He held that "I experience it [evil] when I meet myself" (Buber, 1945, p. 57). When the person met evil within one's self through self-reflection begun in solitude and cosmic alienation, the person recognized his condition as spiritually lacking in that such a person was devoid of possibility and was rendered incapable of entering into relation.

The frustration was that a person was temporarily denied regaining what had been lost. Compounding this frustration was the admonition that only through creative composition of the good and evil urges could one reaffirm what had been lost. This opposition was peculiar to humankind because it could be perceived only introspectively (Friedman, 1960).

Only the most aware individuals knew what evil was insofar as they knew themselves. When people labelled others as evil, they engaged in mirrored illusion and in intensifying the self-contained evil they could not yet recognize (Buber, 1952c). Buber offered an important condition of evil in that although evil was rebellion against God with the very power He had given humanity to serve Him, good was the turning back toward God with this same power (Buber, 1952c). People could redeem evil with their powers of both good and evil that were granted them by the *Eternal Thou* from whom they had temporarily strayed.

Because evil was the state of being in which the *I-It* predominated, good was the meeting of person with the *Thou*, and good was realized when the *I-It* was fully penetrated by the *I-Thou*. Good and evil were eternally bound together. Good and evil could not be opposites; rather, good was the movement with the direction of home and evil was the aimless "whirl of human potentialities without which nothing can be achieved and by which, if they take no direction but remain trapped in themselves, everything goes awry" (Buber, 1965a, p. 78).

Good and evil were no longer ethical abstractions. They achieved ontology within the philosophy of dialogue.

## Conscience and Guilt

Buber studied psychology, conscience, psychotherapy, and ethics and wrote of conscience as the existential voice which called a person to fulfill the personal intention for which one was created (Friedman, 1960). Conscience implied both dialogue and direction; dialogue with an 'other' than the person was now and which gave the person a hint of what that person was meant to be, and direction emanating from the dialogue and sending the person on the path the person was meant to take. The problematic for humankind was that people learned to suppress the consciousness that allowed this individual purpose to be known. When unrepressed, the inner voice expressed itself and, one realized what one was specifically called to become. Now the person could distinguish between right and wrong and through comparison of them, one knew guilt.

Each one who knows himself . . . as called to a work which he has not done, each one who has not fulfilled a task which he knows to be his own, each who did not remain faithful to his vocation which he had become certain of --each such person knows what it means to say that 'his conscience smites him' (Buber, 1952b, p. 115).

Guilt overwhelmed people when they recognized through conscience that they had not taken the direction toward God. Taking the divine direction involved entering into relation with the *Thous* of this world and then with the *Eternal Thou*. Original guilt was not a fall within a state of paradise; rather, it consisted of remaining in oneself and denying the opportunity to enter into the relations of the world. "If the being before

whom this hour places one is not met with the truth of one's whole life, then one is guilty" (Friedman, 1960, p. 104).

Buber's guilt was not the same as Heidegger's in that Heidegger defined guilt as expressed "in the fact that the existence itself its guilty. Existence is 'guilty in the ground of its being'" (Buber, 1965a, p. 165). Buber agreed so far as he believed a primal guilt could be discovered, but he would not isolate a part of life from the spiritual whole in order to discern primal guilt. Instead, he argued that discovery of this primal guilt involved "becoming aware of the whole life without reduction, the life in which the individual, in fact, [was] essentially related to something other than himself" (Buber, 1965a, p. 165). Although one discovered evil first in the meeting with oneself, one perceived guilt only in relation with something or someone other than oneself.

Psychology of inhibitions, repressions, and moral censorship could not explain evil within a person. Buber dismissed these attempts as social conventions or as responses to psychotherapists who sought to reduce what was behind experience in order to explain evil. He responded to the question of evil with philosophical anthropology that demanded participation in human experience and gaining distance necessary for objective knowledge. His "business [was] to call to mind an occurrence as reliably, concretely and completely remembered as possible, which [was] entirely unreduced and undissected" (Buber, 1952c, p. 63). Believing that the human state of evil could be differentiated from every other spiritual state of the soul, Buber inquired of evil's existence as ontological reality through investigations of the Bible, mystical interpretation, and mythology.

### **Mythology and the First Stage of Evil**

Buber was troubled and fascinated by Berdyaeff's challenge of the impossibility of solving the problem of evil in a world created by a good God. Buber investigated the Hebrew Bible and Avestic mythology to develop a response that transcended anthropological considerations. Based on Plato's description that truths could be communicated adequately to the generality of mankind only in myth, Buber illustrated the way in which myths repeatedly materialized. Conceptual descriptions were bridges between myth and reality and Buber believed that construction of bridges was indispensable.

Man knows of chaos and creation in the cosmogonic myth and he learns that chaos and creation take place in himself, but he does not see the former and the latter together; he listens to the myth . . . and hushes it up in his own life. He needs the bridge (Buber, 1952c, p. 66).

Mythology of evil was embedded in Hebrew and Avestic myths without having been significantly altered by conceptual form. Their strength was in interpretation which told of the human constitution, the nature of evil's movement, and evil's relation to good. We achieved correct interpretation only if we attributed personal experiences of evil to such acts and Buber warned that only the conjunction of the primordial mythic intuition and directly experienced reality could render legitimate concepts. These concepts were illustrations of the indispensable bridge with which he introduced his discussion of evil.

The Western interpretation of evil centered on Biblical events surrounding the 'fall' from paradise in Genesis 3:2-24. Combining a new Hebrew interpretation with Christian re-interpretation of the Greek and Latin translations of scripture, Buber recognized "the story that has been written down and preserved for us has acquired a very different meaning." He discovered the biblical account of the "so-called" fall of man might have been founded on a "primeval myth of the envy and vengeance of gods" (Buber, 1953, p. 67). Especially significant was Buber's insight that the name used to address God at this Biblical point was alien to the remainder of the scriptures and was therefore an appellation which did not serve as authentic address.

Buber was concerned with the transgression committed by Adam and Eve. Both beings were created after God prohibited the eating of the miraculous fruit; however, God never imposed His will upon them. Instead, God treated His creations without compulsion but with commandments. Both man and woman were granted by God the power to refuse. Buber tied their disobedience to the commandment not as a decision between good and evil, but as "pre-evil," as something other, and its otherness was significant to his later discussion of evil.

The second point in Buber's interpretation of Biblical mythology was the dialogue between Adam, Eve, and the serpent. The serpent appeared to be more aware than it alluded to, and Eve, recognizing the importance of the conversation, added new prohibitions that God had not originally included. When the serpent added more restrictions and specified the consequence of ". . . you shall not eat of it or touch it or else *you must die* . . ." (Tanakh, 1985, p. 6, italics added), Buber interpreted that the

serpent knew the two human beings would plunge into *human* mortality and would achieve knowledge that death would eventually come. Buber concluded that knowledge was not a punishment; rather, knowledge that death will eventually come was not retribution but was a reward in that humanity recognized their own deaths would inevitably free them from the boundaries of the physical world. People could open themselves to their participation in eternal redemption. Knowledge of impending death served to soothe man's spirit, reduce metaphysical alienation, and reaffirm cosmic security.

Buber believed that the scene in Eden took place within a mythical, dreamlike contemplation. Eve plucked the fruit, ate it, and shared it with Adam while within this state. Her actions took place within "dream-laziness" and her movements were caused by "dream-longing," indicating that the entire incident was "spun out of play and dream; it is irony, a mysterious irony of the narrator, that spins it." The finality of the episode was "apparent: the two do not know what they do, more than this, they can only do it, they cannot know it" (Buber, 1953, p. 69). The mythology was similar to the choices made in Avestic Iranian myth that set the course for subsequent choices made by humankind.

Eating the miraculous fruit gave people knowledge. This kind of knowledge indicated a qualitative difference between the way God knew and the way people knew. Eating the fruit was not Eve and Adam's attempt to gain worldly knowledge; rather, they tried to become-like-God. The knowledge of good and evil endowed humanity with moral consciousness, the god-like attribute preceding immortality. This was more than

cognition-in-the-world because it could have propelled man and woman to a higher plane than that of other beings. Their expulsion from paradise was the divine response to the human quest for immortal life. Although humanity was granted moral consciousness, they could not achieve immortality because, not being divine themselves, human beings would perceive immortality within an imperfect world as punishment rather than as reward. Knowing that death approached offered solace to those who re-created the world with God. "For man as a 'living soul' known death is the threatening boundary; for him as the being driven round amidst opposites it may become a haven, the knowledge of which brings comfort" (Buber, 1953, p. 79).

Buber wrote that knowledge of good and evil maintained another dimension of the cognizance of opposites (Buber, 1952c). The dualism of good and evil encompassed all the fortune and misfortune or order and disorder which people experienced, as well as that which they caused. Similar to Avestic texts, the Biblical description of the knowledge of good and evil produced an "adequate awareness of the opposites inherent in all being within the world, and that, from the viewpoint of the Biblical creation-belief, means: adequate awareness of the opposites latent in creation" (Buber, 1953, p. 74).

Underlying Buber's interpretation of creation and expulsion mythology was the peculiar ancient Hebrew theology and anthropology. These beliefs were of an immutable difference and distance between God and people, even though the person was created in the image of God or experienced a particular nearness to Him. God's knowledge was primordial whereas humanity's was a magical attainment. God encompassed humanity

yet remained untouched by them. Both familiar and superior to humanity, God was capable of dialogue. Humanity's function in this relationship was to become the opposite pole of the world's being. God was above all opposites, including good and evil, and granted humanity only some of that knowledge by virtue of their share in the work of creation.

People's knowledge was of an essentially different kind than God's. Humankind was denied the "superior-familiar encompassing of opposites" (Buber, 1953, p. 75) even though they were created in God's likeness because they were capable of begetting and giving birth but not of Godly creating. The nature of Hebrew mythological evil consisted in its tangibility within the dualism of the yes-position and the no-position of existence. The dualism could enter into a person's cognizance; however, within the person's boundaries the two positions could never coexist in time. Humankind knew evil as the opposite of good only within their situation in it, one they recognized when they found themselves transgressing God's commands. Humanity continued the eternal struggle because they recognized what had been lost, its temporary inaccessibility, and their potential to reclaim it. The process of the human soul's reclamation was in the world through recognition of oppositeness, "the opposites which [were] always latently present in creation [broke] out into actual reality, they [became] existent (Buber, 1953, p. 76).

Buber interpreted Biblical myths, the story of Cain, and the Flood in his development of the nature of evil. In comparison to Zoroastrian mythology, he formed "two fundamentally different kinds and stages of evil" (Buber, 1952c, pp. 11-12). In murdering Abel, Cain acted in similar dream-like trance to Adam and Eve's eating the

prohibited fruit and did not *decide* to kill Abel. There was no knowledge of death or killing at that point in creation. Within omnipossibility, Cain found himself not in a situation in which he recognized that the good was temporarily inaccessible to him; rather, his indecision intensified. "In the vortex of indecision . . . at the point of the greatest provocation and least resistance" Cain stuck out in order to overcome the tension of omnipossibility. . . . He does not murder, he has murdered" (Buber, 1953, pp. 89).

Cain's was an attempt to make incarnate a reality that was "no longer divine, but his, his capriciously constructed, indeterminate reality" (Buber, 1953, p. 89). There were two temptations that were not withstood: Adam and Eve's encounter with the Tree of Knowledge, and God's disregard of Cain's offering which became the impetus for his brother's murder. The "uncanny" Biblical commandment was God's ordering Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. In each instance God entered into direct conversation with men who were at those moments inflamed with wrath, whose "countenances had fallen" or "sunken," or who were "corrupt" (Buber, 1953, pp. 85-86). These were examples of a divine being's direct appeal for His creatures to decide for the good themselves and to set out individually with responsibility in divine direction.

Choosing the direction of good revealed the two stages of evil. The first stage existed within the human soul as static opposition reminiscent of the Avestic opposition of "goodness of mind" and "badness of mind," a distinction between a state of the soul in which it purposed good and one in which it did not, "not between a good and an ungood 'disposition,' but between a disposition to good and its absence." The second

stage was less a struggle and more a lack of Godly direction and was known as the "chamber of the soul at whose entrance we encounter the demon" (Buber, 1953, p. 87).

The flood myth illustrated human movement toward the second stage of evil. Within myth, wickedness was not derived from the soul's corruption; rather, it stemmed from the intervention of evil 'imagery.' "This imagery [was] a play with possibility, a self-temptation, from which ever and again violence springs" (Buber, 1952c, p. 36). Imagery encouraged beings to recognize what could be rather than what was, and through its intervention people embarked on a fabricated reality of what could be and made it into actual reality.

Imagination was not evil. Although it was one's greatest danger, it remained one's greatest possibility. The decision of imagination's power was in its direction and its power which could be left either undirected or directed toward the good. Buber described the two urges of humanity in imagery as the *yetzer rah* [evil urge] as analogous to the nature of imagery of the human heart that corresponded to passion, a power peculiar to people, "without which he can neither beget nor bring forth, but which, left to itself, remains without direction and leads astray" (Buber, 1952c, p. 39).

Anthropological man recognized possibility during a time of his evolution corresponding to puberty. Similar to an adolescent caught in the grip of whirling potentiality, anthropological man's recognition of possibility took the form of viable actions which threatened to "submerge him in their swirling chaos" (Friedman, 1960, p. 106). Human path demanded escape from its torment and the soul set out on the arduous task of forcing itself toward unity or, if could not, it clutched at any object past which

one's vortex happened to carry it, and wrapped all one's passions upon its safety. In the second case, "it exchanges an undirected possibility for an undirected reality, in which it does what it wills not to do what is preposterous to it, the alien, the 'evil'" (Buber, 1953, pp. 67-68).

Lack of direction was characteristic of the vortex revolving about a tortured soul. The soul, having perceived no ready or easy means of escape, strived toward unity. The first stage of evil offered two choices: it could cast its passions upon any object that appeared, or it could set about the work of self-unification. In the first case, the soul exchanged undirected possibility for undirected reality. If it were successful, the soul recognized direction, "or rather *the* direction . . . for in this strict sense there is only one" (Buber, 1953, p. 68). When the soul achieved unification, it became aware of its direction in the service of good.

The process renewed itself as the person experienced temptations which threatened to overcome the soul's tenuous power. "Again and again innate grace arises from out of its depths and promises the utterly incredible: you can become whole and one" (Buber, 1953, pp. 68-69). The vortex of chaos eternally reappeared and the soul had to choose its meticulous path through recognition of primal direction. If the soul were incapable of choosing and suppressed true direction, one set out upon "no path, pseudo-decision which is indecision, flight into delusion and ultimately into mania . . ." (Buber, 1953, p. 69).

The nature of evil within the first stage was defined by direction and unification.

Evil cannot be done with the whole soul; good can only be done with the whole soul. It is done when the soul's rapture, proceeding from its highest forces, seizes upon all the forces and plunges them into the purging and transmuting fire, as into the mightiness of decision. Evil is lack of direction and that which is done in it and out of it as the grasping, seizing, devouring, compelling, seducing, exploiting, humiliating, torturing and destroying of what offers itself. Good is direction and what is done in it; that which is done in it is done with the whole soul, so that in fact all the vigour and passion with which evil might have been done is included in it (Buber, 1953, pp. 71-72).

### **Mythology of the Second Stage of Evil**

Zoroastrian mythology of the Avesta and post-Avestic literature were the basis for evil's second stage. The hymns of Zoroaster termed the deity's primal act as one of decision within himself which allowed humanity's ability to self-choose good and evil. Similar to how humanity was confronted by the need to choose between deception and truth and deciding between them, the primal spirits stood between the god-head and people and had to choose between good and evil. The evil spirit, Ahriman, was forced choose in pure paradox since in choosing, he acknowledged himself precisely as the evil (Friedman, 1960).

The figure of the primeval king Yima was in the Avesta and the poetry of Firdusi and was a god whose origins could be traced from the Indo-Aryan tradition through the Indian texts and to Iranian stories. Yima was born immortal and became mortal through transgression. The highest god, Ahura Mazda, required him to protect religion and requested that Yima and his people flourish, multiply, and guard the world. Yima assumed dominion over the world in which destructive powers of cold or hot wind,

sickness, or death had no part. He ruled over utopian existence and watched cattle grow and fields flourish. He was called to service again by Ahura Mazda who granted Yima's wishes to increase the size of the pleasant world. Ahura Mazda ceded only the material world to Yima, although he inflicted the first great winter, an illustration to Yima of what the world could be without spirit. He required Yima to build a citadel and to secure in it the best of the earth and the most beautiful of living and growing things.

Yima rekindled a relationship with evil demons by "taking the lie into his mind by lauding and blessing himself." Quickly, Yima was reduced to the body of a raven as punishment for Yima's self-glorification. Forced to wander without peace, Yima joined the demons and coupled with a witch, a union that produced several monsters. When his sister disguised herself as the witch with whom he had sexual relations, the demons rejected him and cut him into thousands of pieces. He was the first creature to die. As king of the dead, Yima was rejected by gods, earth-dwellers, and by the denizens of the lower world (Buber, 1953).

The point of this myth was that Yima's consequences were brought about by his telling a special lie of self-glorification of his creation of earth's fortune. The power of the lie assumed the character of primal life, of one's setting oneself over humanity which ascribed the conquest of the powers of nature to its own superpower. This was not a verbal lie that confronted a verbal truth; rather, the liar saw himself as a self-creator and through himself saw both the immortal and his own ability to immortalize. Believing oneself to wield power over even the demon spirits, this person committed the lie against being, or the "inner untruth against God and himself" (Buber, 1953, p. 110).

The lie and the truth accounted for the oppositeness of good and evil. The lie was recognized in the Vedas to designate "the uncanny game of hide-and-seek in the obscurity of the soul," in which the human soul evaded and hid from itself (Buber, 1953, p. 111). This confused state of the soul allowed the lie to own the being and in seeking worldly reality, broke out of the relationship to other souls in order to fulfill its self-proclaimed purpose and unite with the divine.

The lie manifested itself in the Avesta as a breach of faith, then intensified as it falsified a situation by the attitude of the person placed in it. This attitude stemmed from the choice between truth and lie which presented itself over and over and insisted upon decision made by the essence of the person both at the beginning of the way and during the decisive hours. This existential choice was between being-true and being-false.

Whereas being-true entailed strengthening and confirming being at the point of one's own existence, being-false ultimately caused weakening, desecrating, and disposing of being at the same point (Buber, 1952c). When a person gave the self over to the being-lie and to non-being passing itself off as being, the person fell victim to it. Yima, as lord of the demons, fell into their power and crossed over the line from being-true to being-false. Existing first as their compatriot, he became their victim. "He effects factually a downfall of being: at precisely that point which is called Yima" (Buber, 1953, p. 112).

Buber wrote that truth and lie did not allude to truth and falsehood of things themselves; rather, they indicated pronouncements in which human souls pledged to the truth or to the lie. Human truth was a verification by the person's being true. The

person's inability to withstand the vortex of omnipossibility and to be true to oneself first led one directly into the second stage of evil.

### **The Second Stage of Evil**

Yima's decision to utter the lie against being was illustration of decision determining movement toward evil's second stage. In the first stage of evil the person experienced repeated moments of indecision. The movement toward the second stage was characterized by consistent indecisions merging into fixation in a pattern of indecision. Self-knowledge was repressed when one's will to basic self-preservation dominated one's ability to affirm oneself. When the person was confronted with the desire and will to affirm oneself firmly, one called oneself into question and plunged into crisis.

Philosophical anthropology was essential to Buber's development of the second stage of evil. The anthropological person was one of possibility who needed confirmation by others and by oneself to fulfill the intended direction and become the particular person one was supposed to become and that one was. This confirmation by others and by oneself freed one from the dread of abandonment that people faced in their insecure world. Even when the person was capable of existing without external confirmation, no one could exist without self-confirmation. The person moving toward the second stage of evil found oneself demanding inner rejection based on the primal lie against being. This inner rejection caused one to spiral into a pathologically fragile relationship to oneself that required readjustment of self-knowledge through a supreme individual effort toward unification, an effort Buber termed 'conversion' (Buber, 1952c).

If one did not succeed at conversion, one displaced self-knowledge with absolute self-affirmation. The image of what the person's particular direction was became extinguished and in its place one willed oneself just as one was at that moment. The person became one that the person resolved to intend himself, thus experiencing crystallized inner division. Self-affirmation was spiritual and physical and was "recognizable, those who dominate their own self-knowledge, by the spastic pressure of the lips, the spastic tension of the muscles of the hand and the spastic tread of the foot" (Buber, 1953, p. 137).

Resembling Yima who proclaimed himself his own creator, the one who affirmed himself personified the wicked spirit which chose evil precisely as evil. This process moved the person into the open state of being and within this state chose evil as affirmation of the self or as affirmation of the order which continued to establish good and evil. The anthropological person was faced with the dilemma between choosing the affirmation of the order and thereby choosing the direction to good, or denying it, and overcoming one's present state of being.

If one chose oneself, the person also chose to deny the order and suppress the yes-position that good had once occupied. This person brought about self-affirmation and nothing else remained worthy of affirmation other than that which he affirmed. His 'Yes' to himself determined the reason and right of affirmation (Buber, 1952c). One's definition of good was now what one was and in the second stage of evil, the person chose oneself, and "nothing, no quality and no destiny, can any longer be signed with a 'No' if it is his" (Buber, 1953, p. 138). Yima's lie against being caused people to rule

over being and designate as truth not as what one experienced as truth, but what the one ordained truth to be.

### **Coming to Radical Evil**

#### **Background**

Buber's essay, "Imitatio Dei," (1948a) described Adam's fall caused by his desire to become more than the likeness of God. Adam strived to be the imitation of the unknown God. Approaching self-deification, Adam paralleled Yima's desire to be like God rather than his own desire for becoming-like-God (Buber, 1948a). When Yima proclaimed himself his own creator, he declared himself also creator of existence, as well as of the values that appraised existence.

Buber described humanity's desire to be the imitation of God as the central paradox of Judaism that involved how far a person should be able to imitate God, on what that imitation should be based, and in which actions God's works were considered revealed. He discussed this in interpretation of Psalm 1 in making a distinction between a "wicked" person and a "sinner." The sinner missed God's direction again and again while the wicked person opposed it.

'Sinner' describes a condition which from time to time overcomes a man without adhering to him, whereas 'wicked' describes a kind of man, a persistent disposition. The sinner *does* evil, the wicked man *is* evil. That is why it is said only of the wicked, and not of the sinners, that their way vanishes . . . (Buber, 1952e, p. 51).

Although the sinner chose to suppress entering into relationship, this person could still stand before God. Maintaining the possibility for relationship with the *Eternal Thou* enabled the sinner to join in human relationships if the sinner could complete conversion. The wicked person was not capable of standing before God because he could not accept divine judgment. As the person whose way was his judgment, the wicked person negated personal existence and ended in nothing. Closing the way was the difference between the sinner and the wicked person. God's way was never closed to the wicked person from God's side; rather, it was closed from the side of the wicked themselves. "For in distinction to the sinners they do not wish to be able to return" (Buber, 1953, p. 58).

Buber's early writings termed evil as stemming from the freedom God granted humanity in creation. He wrote essays on Sabbatai Zevi (1940) and Jacob Frank (1943) illustrating this position in which we witnessed the birth of Buber's differentiation between evil as decisionlessness and evil as self-affirmation (Friedman, 1960). Zevi, a false messiah, believed in something absolute and considered himself in relation to it. When threatened with execution, he repudiated his beliefs to avoid martyrdom and Buber wrote that "it is not the belief as such but his belief in himself that does not stand firm" (Buber, 1948c, p. 10). Frank believed in nothing, not even himself, and assumed the position, not as a liar, but as a fundamental lie. Buber wrote that "he can only believe in himself after the manner of the lie by filling the space of the nothing with himself" (Buber, 1948c, p. 25). A person who believed only in himself could not exercise inner restraint and developed a magical freedom that enabled those such as Frank to inspire

followers. Although personal self-reflection demanded that Frank confront his nihilism, Buber cautioned that Frank opened the historical present's abyss that suggested the real present as well. "It is no more allowed to any man to live as if evil did not exist. One cannot serve God by merely avoiding evil; one must grapple with it" (Buber, 1948c, p. 29).

Buber's later writings were affected by the events of the Nazi terror and the Holocaust. He formulated his work on evil from discussions of Adam's fall, Sabbatai Zevi, and Jacob Frank, but his thought was altered by experiences of Nazi terror. His witnessing and surviving the radical evil in Europe during Hitler's reign of horror provoked his serious consideration of the nature, ontology, and redemption of radical evil.

### **Radical Evil**

Philosophical anthropology placed Buber in the realm of religious and ethical thinking of the "middle position which regards evil as real but redeemable, thus refusing to ascribe to it an absolute and independent reality" (Friedman, 1960, p. 111). He witnessed men and women as victims of radical evil during the Nazi hatred, murder, and executions. Could a religious philosopher regard the actors in this arena of ultimate evil and purport that people were not actually evil in their very nature?

It was unthinkable to the philosophy of dialogue that any person could be unredeemably evil. Human nature was not evil, only people's misuse of that nature was evil. Some people were wicked and sought cosmic non-existence, but there were no

people that were cut off as unredeemably evil and hostile to divine purposes by God from God's side of the relationship.

His first mature response to evil, *Images of Good and Evil* (1952c), was Buber's explanation of the nature of evil in the world. His second, *Eclipse of God* (1952b), discussed the nature of the Holocaust's evil. Although his responses were radically original, they did not endear him to the philosophizing world who experienced the Holocaust's evils (Cohen, 1988).

Rabbi Richard Rubenstein (1975) retreated into nihilism regarding the possibility of a good God after tortured examination of the Holocaust. Arthur Cohen (1988) responded with *mysterium tremendum*, an event paralleled in importance but not in kind only four times in Jewish history. Each author took exception to Buber's idea of radical evil's redeemability and Buber's firm belief and actions in accordance with such redeemability ostracized him from the post-Holocaust Jewish philosophical world.

Buber acknowledged that people could bring evil to a radical stage in which it possessed substantial quality, yet he asserted that did not mean evil in the world was real and absolute. It meant that evil had crystallized into a "settled opposition by the individual to becoming what he is meant to become" (Friedman, 1960, p. 111). He wrote that "good . . . retains the character of direction at both stages [of evil]," and indicated that there was good even in the second stage, just as there was for the first (Buber, 1953, p. 140). Recognizing that good existed within second stage of evil put Buber again precariously on the narrow ridge.

Buber cemented his position on the wobbling narrow ridge. He reaffirmed his narrow ridge attitude toward evil through Biblical interpretation of the idea that God's will hardened on occasion against a person or people's consistent losing of their way (Buber, 1951). Citing that there were only three references to the term 'hardening' in the Bible, he noticed that God's heart was caused to harden by a people's consistent turning away from human direction toward His way. Hardening was God's response to people's severe situation. The first instance of hardening of God's heart occurred with Pharaoh's refusal to allow the Jews to exit Egypt; the second referred to the war in Canaan in which the Amorites engaged in perverted behavior (Genesis 15:16); and the third took place in the Isaiah when the prophet considered hardening God's ears as His refusing to hear the prayers of His people a prerequisite for hardening His heart.

This idea was seized by the Apostle Paul who used it to explain God's hardening toward and ultimate replacement of the Jewish people by the Christians for future revelation and redemption. Paul's taking Biblical phrasing and using it to proselytize to disaffected masses helped pave the way for what I believe has been a two-millenia Christian-inspired worldwide persecution of Jews, a systematic persecution that evidenced a "red thread" of continuity that was realized in the Holocaust. His unintentional support of Christian dogma has been an historical source of conflict between Buber and traditional Jewish theologians.

Buber took three cases of God's hardened heart as evidence that only the most perilous situations could cause God not to respond temporarily to a people who struggled to maintain their direction to God's way. The extremity of these situations was

paramount. "Sin is not an undertaking which man can break off when the situation becomes critical, but a process started by him, the control of which is withdrawn from him at a fixed moment" (Buber, 1951, p. 90).

God granted the sinner special strength to continue in sin during the time God's own heart was hardened. This position helped us come to know absolute self-affirmation with which the wicked person shut himself off from God. No matter how great the person's sin, no matter how absolutely one hardened one's own heart, and no matter how tightly one closed the door between the self and God, God would never abridge the freedom He gave people in creation. He allowed the closing to happen from the human side. God's 'hardening' was not a position taken prior to the individual's shutting oneself off; rather, it was a response by God to humanity's repeated decisions against Him.

At this point, God confirmed the wicked in their non-existence and exercised His 'severe grace' with which He pointed out the one road back to real existence (Friedman, 1960).

Even in the dark hour after he has become guilty against his brother, man is not abandoned to the forces of chaos. God Himself seeks him out, and even when he comes to call him to account, His coming is salvation (Buber, 1952a, p. 56).

People's evil natures were redeemable and God remained open to humanity's turning, although for the 'wicked' whose way had vanished only the force of conversion with the whole being could suffice.

Buber was not a dualist when interpreting radical evil. Constantly affirming God and the ultimate oneness of God and the world, Buber pointed to the paradoxical quality of evil in the world.

The great significance . . . of that second stage of evil which is the newest development in Buber's thought is its concrete base in human existence which makes understandable such extreme phenomena as Hitler and the Nazis without resorting to the dogma of original sin or agreeing with Sartre's assertion that the events of recent years make it necessary to recognize evil as absolute and unredeemable (Friedman, 1960, p. 112).

### **The Eclipse of God**

Buber's response to radical evil in a world created by a good God was a unique postulate of the presuppositions necessary for an unhearing God of Israel. Instead of answering Elie Wiesel's question, "Where was God in Auschwitz?" Buber responded to the "Job of the gas chamber" in a way that concretized the distance between them but later served to bring them to dialogue. His answer, the eclipse of God and the hiding of heaven, angered Holocaust survivors because it appeared to blame the victims rather than the persecutors.

When the person shut off the possibility of making one's relationship to God real within the lived concrete, that person denied the existence of lived concreteness through denial of the dialogical character of presentness and uniqueness of the moment (Buber,

1965a). Because Buber's *Eternal Thou* was a God who could not be systematized, God had to be met by the hearing person in the lived concrete. Once dogma or absolute self-affirmation shut the door between the person and the *Eternal Thou*, relationship was impossible. Repudiating relationship to the *Eternal Thou* took several forms.

Concern with revelation of the future, the attempt to get behind the problematic of life, the desire to possess or use divine power, the acceptance of tradition and law as a 'once for all' in which one can take refuge—all these prevent the meeting with God in the lived concrete (Friedman, 1960, pp. 114-115).

He also believed that human immortality was a threat to the relation of faith (Buber, 1945).

Although God could be addressed but not expressed, human inability to address God was complicated by the symbols people used in their attempts in that very address. Buber declared that God neither required nor wanted conventional symbols or "necessarily untrue images." Rather, God "suffers that one look at Him through them" (Buber, 1952b, p. 62). Philosophers' attempts to restore the lived concrete to the religious person through destruction of images culminated in other symbols being thrust in their places. Buber believed that even the "pure idea" stood in the way of the person's address to God. Definitions of God that rendered Him an abstract god-of-the-philosophers placed God as an object of thought in a sphere that was no longer a means of apprehending reality; rather, it created a God who was a thought-being freed from the

limitations of the actual. Although "God of the philosophers" was a comprehensible thing, it was not the living *Eternal Thou*.

When humanity felt estranged from the *Eternal Thou*, neither philosophy nor religious systems achieved renewed relationship. When people felt unthreatened within the universe, they considered themselves as a part of more universal, cosmological thought. When humankind has felt constricted by solitude, consideration of their position has been "deep and fruitful and independent of cosmology" (Friedman, 1960, p. 116). Complicating alienated humanity were those thought systems of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Hegel that forced people to achieve consciousness of themselves only in removed third-person language. People no longer considered themselves problematic; rather, their wonder at the human situation became simple wonder at the universe as a whole.

Abandoning Hegel's "cosmological time" as abstract and relativized, Buber considered "anthropological time" as having reality only in the past and providing no future certainty. He refused to grant humanity temporal security and disagreed with Marx's interpretation of Hegel's cosmological time in which Marx assured the proletariat security of victory in the future. This security was false since it ignored man's powers of decisions (Buber, 1965a).

Modern humanity embarked on a treacherous path solidifying the sacred space between themselves and God. Buber pointed to the history of Western civilization as building individual and isolated spheres that separated people from each other in groups who established their own order. Holy norms degenerated into human conventions and were reduced to symbols and rituals which satisfied the particular culture (Buber, 1952a).

When spheres of independent existence took hold, religion lost its meaning because the whole of existence in relation to the Absolute became only a special domain of dogma and cult. "The original sin of all 'religion' is separation of 'living in God' from 'living in the world'" (Buber, 1948c, p. 104). As a separated religion, it became humanity's greatest danger.

The great danger was that the dialogue the soul believed it was carrying out between itself and God was actually a monologue with divided roles. This set up a dualism between the life of the spirit and that of the world. Dualistic thinking was enhanced by apocalyptic religions which set up dichotomies between secular and religious. The eschatological expectation of God's imminent rule slackened instead of doing away with law in the name of divine freedom. God's rule was restricted to a religious sphere and Buber found seeds of this within Paul's Gnostic view of the world as well as within Iranian dualisms. He also discovered fragments of this dualism within Judaism.

The prophetic allows 'the evil' to find the direction that leads toward God, and to enter into the good; the apocalyptic sees good and evil severed forever at the end of days, the good redeemed, the evil unredeemable for all eternity; the prophetic believes that the earth shall be hallowed, the apocalyptic despairs of an earth which it considers to be hopelessly doomed. . . . (Buber, 1946, p. 188).

Religious forces have produced a modern world in which the moments of meeting have been expropriated and dispossessed in four ways.

Through historicizing of the moment it is regarded as a pure product of the past. Through the technicizing of the moment it is treated as purely a means to a goal and hence as existing only in the future. Through the psychologizing of the moment its total content is reflected upon and reduced to a process or experience of the soul. Through the philosophizing of the moment it is abstracted from its reality (Friedman, 1960, pp. 118-119).

Modern life was divided into categories and aspects and humankind enjoyed experiences only independently of one another. Sociologically, our modern age has become increasingly dualistic.

Buber illustrated his claim that humankind was sociologically determined in work. The nature of work in the modern world became perverted through the separation of people's lives by the divorce of technical means from value ends, that is, the *I-It* from the *I-Thou* (Friedman, 1960). Utilizing human power without attention to human freedom places people "in the grip of incomprehensible powers" which trample and pulverize human purposes through purposelessness. People have become sick and society has become unhealthy.

"This sickness of modern man is manifested most clearly of all . . . in the individualism and nationalism which make power an end in itself" (Friedman, 1960, p. 119). Buber condemned power exercised without faithfulness and predicted that it could never know fruitfulness or renewal (Buber, 1965a). Compounding this sickness was society's dualism of ends and means, especially the belief that ends justified means. In his Zionism essays, Buber wrote that

no way leads to any other goal but to that which is like it. . . . It is only the sick understanding of this age that teaches that the goal can be reached through all the ways of the world . . . The person or community which seeks to use evil for the sake of good destroys its own soul in the process (Buber, 1945).

Evil used for the sake of good served to produce inner division and dishonesty, and also caused modern society's elevation of evil into something holy in itself.

The quasi-holiness of evil stemmed from an inner crisis of temptation, freedom, and dishonesty in people's souls (Friedman, 1960). Possibility became more powerful than reality and produced a divorce between spirit and instincts. This was equivalent to the divorce between man and man (Buber, 1965a).

The sickness of the modern age was a vital dissociation that could be resolved only through renewed real living together in states and collectivities. People's isolation was a price modern society continued to pay for the liberation brought by the French Revolution and was illustrated by decay of organic forms that enabled people to live together in relation. The irreplaceability of those forms contributed to despair, intensified solitude, and alienated us from access to production and consumption, the foundations of our society (Buber, 1965a).

This alienation, isolation, and despair has reduced our ability for real dialogue between people with fundamentally different convictions. "Direct, open dialogue is becoming ever more difficult and more rare; the abysses between man and man threaten ever more pitilessly to become unbridgeable" (Buber, 1965a, p. 157). Monologue has replaced dialogue and technical language has taken over speech. A greater cause for

despair has been the radical dissolution of mystery. People no longer question each other's simple honesty; rather, they call into question the inner agreement of existence itself. This mistrust has destroyed the immediacy of togetherness of people in general (Buber, 1957).

Because we no longer had genuine dialogue, we lost confirmation of ourselves. Feeling abandoned, we destroyed the dialogue between ourselves and God and the communion between man and man. Now solitary in the world, we questioned the universe and our relation to it, and we question ourselves. Homeless in both the universe and community, modern humanity experienced a crisis of existential mistrust with destruction of confidence in existence in general. Having lost confidence in human existence, we have lost faith in God.

Unable to enter into relation with others through our loss of relationship with the *Eternal Thou*, we interpret our encounters with God as self-encounters and "man's very structure is destroyed. . . . This is the portent of the present hour" (Buber, 1952b, p. 21). The self became an omnipotent independent reality totally enmeshed within *It*, and can no longer acknowledge God or any absolute which manifested itself to humankind as of non-human origin. It stepped in between and shut us off from the light of heaven (Buber, 1952b).

"Eclipse of the light of heaven, eclipse of God" is "the character of the historical hour through which the world is passing." The eclipse did not take place within human subjectivity "but in Being itself." This constituted the human side of "the silence of God," and of "God's hiding His face" (Buber, 1952b, p. 34, p. 89). Responsibility for

the eclipse was placed on one who "refuse[d] to submit himself to the effective reality of the transcendence" but it did not mean the death of God (Buber, 1952b, p. 34). The imaging power of the human soul declined when the *I-It* relation came in between the person and God. The glance was no longer conceivable and the protection of the potential for entering into relation with the *Eternal Thou* no longer existed.

During the eclipse, false absolutes reigned over human souls because they could no longer image true and good. "In the realm of Moloch honest men lie and compassionate men torture. . . . There appears to be no escape from the most evil of all idolatry" (Buber, 1952b, p. 156). The most terrible consequence of the eclipse was the silence of God. As people became estranged, they could not understand themselves addressed by God. Abandoned to the forces of tyranny, the world seemed given over to unjust judges and God seemed to have lifted up the faces of the wicked. Buber summed up the eclipse of God by saying that God is, but He is not present (Buber, 1945, p. 116). During the Holocaust, the world seemed irretrievably abandoned and the silence of God terrified us as millions were exterminated in concentration camps. Systematic and scientific executions of eleven million caused the world to appear forsaken and engulfed in an utter and silent darkness.

### **Modern Responses to Radical Evil**

Considering the modern world's evils has been voiced by post-modern critics and has challenged traditional Christian responses toward the existence of evil in a Godly world (Griffin, 1991). Traditional free-will theodicies have not been able to account for the existence of evil or successful in proposing alternative justifications for its existence.

The post-modern spiritual person has faced the dilemma of reconciling human imposition of radical evil on others within a cosmos created by a good God.

Included in this vision of inspired evil are the twentieth century Holocaust committed during the Nazi destruction of European Jews, the potential for global annihilation by the stockpiling, development, and design of weapons intended for mass destruction, and the gradual threat of ecocide. A spiritual person's questions may be: Does belief in a good God imply that destructive forces cannot fulfill their purposes? If nuclear or ecological annihilation does occur, does it indicate there is no God?

Buber suggested that humanity's inability to enter into relation with the *Eternal Thou* rendered people unable to relate to the *Thous* of this world. A reason for the rejection of God may be that overwhelming and insurmountable evils exist. The world offers this type of religious person a choice between things worthy of worship. They could hold to perfect goodness while rejecting omniscience and omnipotence or they could hold to omniscience, omnipotence, and creation *ex nihilo*. They could also hold to omniscience, omnipotence, and creation *ex nihilo* while rejecting perfect goodness (Griffin, 1991, p. 10). Whatever the choice, religious people are forced to choose.

We have lost the *Eternal Thou* and replaced God with simplified and useable definitions. By limiting God to those things which are not imperfect, we have put limits on God's *Thou*-ness and have relegated God to the status of a nonderivative, supreme, or effective power. We allow God to be the world's Holy Power or its purposive creator, yet we apply to God the source of our *moral* norms, not necessarily as the locus of good and evil; rather, as the right and wrong uses of power by human beings. We

wish Him to be the ultimate guarantee for the meaningfulness of human life, a rebuttal to nihilism, and a trustworthy ground for the ultimate and assured victory of good over evil (Griffin, 1991). Through our redefinition of God, we oppose Buber's cosmic relationship to the *Eternal Thou*.

Traditional philosophical and religious histories offered us little flexibility in the dualism that there was no power that primordially belonged to any other being than God. If beings such as a devil or Satan figure had power, that power was granted to them voluntarily by God. Because power was derivative or illusionary, it was not unilateral. We concluded that there was nothing that could happen outside God's power. Faced with tragedy, humanity was forced to accept that God allowed cruelty, suffering, and disaster to befall His creations. Consequently, people questioned both the reality and goodness of this concept of God and sought other explanations for natural, cosmic, and physical evil.

We could find solace in religion, yet the doctrines of Augustine, Thomas, Calvin, Luther, and Barth were traditionally theistic. Traditional theism dichotomized God's control over events and posed human actions as intrinsically sinful. Theologians developed a popular Satan figure with religious literature whose purpose was to absorb blame for naturally occurring evil. When spiritual people questioned God's allowing evil to co-exist with humanity in the world, their conclusions denied Satan the status of God's cosmic adversary; rather, they affirmed that God knew of and allowed Satan's.

Traditional free-will theists added to the explanation of radical evil in the world. Salvaging belief in God in a radically evil world, theologians suggested that although God

had all the power, He voluntarily delegated some to human beings. Through their misuse of power, humanity brought radical evil into their lives. Guilt was assigned to the sufferers' shoulders. Setting humanity's actions in direct opposition to God's purpose enabled theologians and philosophers to force blame or guilt upon people for that part of creation which was in jeopardy.

These answers to fundamental questions of radical evil in an inherently good world were shaky solutions to the questioning of belief in God within radically evil times. People who believed along with Will James that nothing was real until it was realized, required plausible answers to questions of faith and needed solutions to their problems. Pragmatic humankind required a new vocabulary with complete answers to eternal questions. The vocabulary that developed to answer those questions concentrated in bringing about mistrust and disregard of "others."

Reification of others brought about a concretizing of the "between," the space between *Thou* and *I*. Unable to recognize the other as unique with potential for *Thouness*, persons became estranged not simply from others, but from the ability to imagine *I-Thou* relationship as possible. Others grew apart from the reality of *Thouness* and with the concomitant reduction of God's omnipotent power in people's minds, absolute estrangement took over modernity.

Language has played a part in this degeneration. With the rapid rise in conversation as opposed to dialogue and with labelling and categorizing for governmental, financial, and remedial assistance, people ceased to exist as persons; rather, they became objects for classification, grants, and studies. With quantification

of humankind for analysis and generalizability, we have achieved our own eclipse, one that reduced the individual soul to a number or correlation to which meaning cannot be attributed. By languaging others, we constructed a culture that relegates belief in humanity to "otherness" reinforced by media. Our language overtook our regard for people and our public space narrowed.

The reduction of public space achieved the unthinkable to pre-modern people in its development of a stratified society that repulsed attempts at conversation, the prerequisite for dialogue. Limiting access to be heard engendered a peculiar human being who regarded his personal message of affirmation and confirmation as unimportant. Spiritual people have been relegated to the fringes of life and heir messages have been squelched.

People are no longer believed in; rather, our confirmation has been removed to institutions, parties, groups, leagues, teams, and Superbowls. Our post-modern responses to the submersion of our otherness appear to glorify our sameness, rather than celebrate our differences. Questions of "What are you?" that were responded to with cultural, religious, or ethnic answers are crushed with benign responses whose genesis is fear. Choices of response used to include, "I'm Italian; I'm Jewish; I'm an Indian," have changed as our sub-group mentality shifted from personal celebration to group oppression, with rejoinders that point to oppressed women, oppressed racial groups, oppressed native peoples, and oppressed victims of handicap.

Fear of being perceived as politically incorrect has supplanted innocent questions and answers, the process of conversation that could, when sanctified, evolve into

dialogue. Fear of unintentional exclusion prompted universality to overtake our language and print, a situation that accomplished the concretizing of the space of the spirit between people. Fear of offending others stifled the creative expression of ideas and principles. The post-modern spiritual person has been denied the freedom within which to pose thoughtful questions, to question others meaningfully, and to have one's meaning heard and responded.

We need to recover the questions and and critically reassess humanity (Heschel, 1955). God needs humankind but humankind must first recover its knowledge of God as the *Eternal Thou* in order to make meaningful relationships with others' *Thouness*. A very good place to start is with Buber and the *I and Thou*.

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## APPENDIX A: EPILOGUE

The most difficult aspect of writing this dissertation did not face me squarely until the document was composed, typed, formatted, printed, collated, punched, and bound and I was free to consider the meaning of what brought me to study radical evil; to decipher the mysteries of radical goodness; and to leave a piece of myself within the pages of *The Voice of the Cricket*. What emerged from this study was my coming to know my motive for studying the Holocaust as history, that is, trying to give meaning to the apparently meaningless.

My decade of youth and freedom from worry in the 1950s denied the Holocaust's existence and its victims and survivors lay in solitary anguish with no voice for themselves or the eleven million who were murdered on European soil. The wrenching of children from their mothers' arms and the overwhelming anguish represented in *Sophie's Choice* were forced into silence as well as denial. The radicalism of the 1960s gave a voice to the immense spirit that previously welled unspoken within the hearts and minds of those who experienced the Shoah's unreality and inhuman ethics. As I joined the parade of critics of political policy that centered primarily on U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, another spirit struggled for a place in my vocal rebellion against authority.

That voice with which I struggled was a religious spirit that took two additional decades to emerge. For twenty years I suppressed my religious thoughts and converted them into Religious Ritual as I celebrated meaningless correctness within an organized and predetermined structure. When I believed in the 1980s that I faced my own radical evil,

I freed myself to investigate the philosophical, social, and cultural dimensions of evil. Because my professional life took place within the educational setting, it seems proper that my formal studies sprang and flowered within an educational institution and course of study. I believe it was more than serendipity that ushered me to that point where Religion gave way to religiousness and religiosity overtook Ritual. "Find yourself a teacher and you will have found yourself a friend," the *Pirke Avot* stresses. Going back to the ancient texts, whether Hebrew, Greek, German, English, or American, does help translate modernity into an understandable mixture if the reader and her teacher(s) read, talk, think, re-read, discuss, and respect both one another and the classic sources of knowledge.

To understand the Holocaust, I chose to investigate the role of European rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe. Reading text after text and testimonial after narrative, I became frustrated and shouted in rage, "Reading these books makes you believe that no Jews were killed! Are they trying to convince me that the German people were *good*?" The choice of topic and texts had been mine, I was promptly informed. What drove me to look in this disheartening direction?

The completion of my dissertation helped provide me with some answers to this seemingly inexplicable dilemma. I needed to know that there *were* good people within Nazi Europe. I wanted to learn the stories of rescuers to convince myself that people were *not* genetically or biologically evil. I insisted that humankind *did* care about one another in spite of the reality of the Holocaust and I *demand*ed that this hope and prayer be affirmed. I came to Martin Buber's writings not because of his pessimism that the

moments of sacred communion were fleeting; rather, I sought his works because I cherished his optimism that each human being was eternally redeemable not matter what.

*No matter what.*

Struggling through Buber, Aristotle, Plato, and Kant set the table for the feast of diversity that challenged my contention regarding the redeemability of the human spirit when faced with the tragic Holocaust of the twentieth century. Arguing against Greek tripartite society and reservation of Eternal Truth for the fortunate few men who could afford to pursue it became a weekly joust between my ever-patient professor and me. Yet understanding Greek idealism is fundamental to knowing why our society has developed into one that enabled the Holocaust and one in which the murderous seeds of European xenophobia have again been planted and taken root.

The positivists invaded ethics and thinking as I watched the philosophizing world of my reading spin away from God and the human spirit and seek comfort within the orderly, static, and controlled template of science. I sat horrified in front of my computer as I read and took notes on the development of the "Cartesian gameboard" and typed page after page of biological determinism and ethics of the many overtaking the ethical existence of the few or of the socially and economically disenfranchised. Finally, the absurdity offered by Nietzsche and Sartre became reality and the Holocaust fit nicely into place within a society corrupted fundamentally by power, hatred, and inability to care.

But I had chosen and cherished this time to find *real* answers and I struggled to find *another* answer, *another* direction in which the Nazi terror could be understood and

humankind affirmed. I could not and would not sit silent as the six million of my readings again marched in neat columns into the gas chambers and slave camps. I wanted another explanation and a new approach. I insisted that humanity's fundamental nature could *not* be evil. But I did not know if I could read anything or bring to a discourse any facts, theories, or justifications that would make my inner core accept the proposition that, given the reality of the Holocaust, people were basically good. Perhaps Schopenhauer had been right. Perhaps death was the only release from absurdity for the Shoah's victims.

Finally, I came to Martin Buber. Buber taught me that if I could reach another, even for a moment, then at least one other person must be capable of being a *Thou* to my *I*. If one person could be such a *Thou* to my *I*, perhaps there could be another. If there were two, could there be more? As if I were Abraham bargaining with God, I wondered if there could be ten? Twenty? How many would it take? The possibility began to resemble a hall of mirrors that stretched into psychic infinity. I just needed the voice. The still small voice within me that spoke the basic question. "*Im ayn ah-ni li, mi li?*" If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?

Buber's voice became mine while I tried to answer these questions. There *were* rescuers during the Nazi terror because the dimensions of time were merely constructs of our minds and in their own time, rescuers faced the basic *Thou* of the others and met them squarely and head on. However small their numbers, there were always rescuers of others in all times and all political ages because if not now, then when? To feed the

hungry, to lift up the fallen...words that did have meaning even if the chanters of these prayers were merely mouthing words in Hebrew they could not and did not care to translate. There would *always* be stories of rescuers throughout history because the *I* was real and the *Thou* was real and space between them was sacred.

I balanced precariously upon the narrow ridge of the choice between despair and hope and I finally understood Buber's quandary. Would I emerge from study eternally discouraged that more *Is* did not meet *Thous* in the lived concrete or would I come to cherish those who faced the other squarely in the person's basic need and met the other with one's true self? My balance on the rocky ridge was threatened by my readings and discussions as well as by my everyday interactions with my students. Victims of American racism and institutional discrimination, these young people challenged my resolve to choose either hope or despair.

The Holocaust and American racism were the two dominant challenges in my coming to write this dissertation. For every German Nazi there was an oppressor of American black young people and the immensity of their numbers tilted me toward the gulf of despair. Yet as the doomed Jews chanted, "I believe with perfect faith that the Messiah will come..." my students told me of their roots, the murder of their young men in the streets and in the prisons, and their need to meet their challenges head on in the lived concrete of everyday life. I searched in the classics and in the modern texts for hope and I found it in the attics where Jews were hidden and in the university classrooms at the other end of Market Street in Greensboro, North Carolina.

I found both hope and despair in *The Voice of the Cricket* and in Rabbi Joan's commentary on it. Although the complexity of the Holocaust cannot be metaphorized into the simplicity of creative writing, I cannot disregard the power of the individual to shape one's own world. Hope intertwines with despair and I have come to know that radical evil as well as radical goodness, whatever they are, emerge from time to time from the power of the human soul.

Spirit in its human manifestation is a response of man to his *Thou*. Man speaks with many tongues, tongues of language, of art, of action; but the spirit is one, the response to the *Thou* which appears and addresses him out of the mystery. Spirit is the word. And just as talk in a language may well first take the form of words in the brain of the man, and then sound in his throat, and yet both are merely refractions of the true event, for in actuality speech does not abide in man, but man takes his stand in speech and talks from there; so with every word and every spirit. Spirit is not in the *I*, but between *I* and *Thou*. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe. Man lives in the spirit, if he is able to respond to his *Thou*. He is able to, if he enters into relation with his whole being. Only in virtue of his power to enter into relation is he able to live in the spirit (Buber, 1958, p. 39).

**APPENDIX B: THE VOICE OF THE CRICKET**

Yossi, the tailor, a good, simple and devout resident in a small shtetl of Polonia in which also dwelled the Ba'al Shem Tov, one day asked Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the renowned Ba'al Shem Tov, about how he, a mere tailor, could contemplate the greatness of Creation and the power and glory of the Creator. In his daily trips to the House of Prayer, Yossi often experienced joy, fervor, as well as glimpses of the light of heaven, but he never felt complete or as one as he stood alone bathed in that perfect light. Its brightness frightened him, and he withdrew from it and his private space with God at the very point at which he felt afraid such a meeting would consume, rather than elevate him toward holy unity. Whenever this happened, Yossi felt incompetent and useless. He yearned for the missing strength that would complete his journey between worlds and elevate him from being a simple, uneducated, and poor tailor to his becoming touched by the spirit which had surely bathed the *zaddik* he was now addressing.

"How," cried Yossi as the Ba'al Shem Tov nodded in sympathy with his plight, "can I look at the light of Heaven and not be afraid?" Yossi knew from the rabbi's stories of the great and timeless journeys between the world below and the realm of the heavens that the rabbi had taken. He marvelled at the stories of the perfect light and the cascades of heavenly angels that greeted the Ba'al Shem Tov and the *zaddikim* with song on their flights. He prayed fervently each day in the House of Prayer at the end of the dirt road leading from the center of town east toward the great mountains, and he felt the fervor, and he had glimpses of the transformation. But he had yet to receive the joy. The Ba'al Shem Tov shook his head slowly from side to side.

"Oy, Yossi," he commiserated, "the light of God's face cannot be seen by man. Not even a zaddik may look at God's face. We can only know the light of union." The Ba'al Shem Tov sighed, threw his hands up into the air, yet looked Yossi straight in his eyes, as if to the spark that was his soul. The flame of the gaze burned brightly and for a moment, both Yossi and the Ba'al Shem Tov sat together as one.

But Yossi was not satisfied simply with this moment of communion with the great Ba'al Shem Tov. His heart burned and ached for the light of glory to touch his poor soul, too, as it must have singed the soul of the Ba'al Shem Tov, his zaddikim, and all those before him who traversed the heavens and stood face to face with God's holy light, returning from their ascent with whitened beards and burning eyes, forever influenced by their mysterious encounters. Now, at this moment alone with the Ba'al Shem Tov, Yossi reached into himself, gathered his innermost words and he continued with a passion that grew in his heart and was evidenced in the rising crescendo of each word.

"No! No! I want to stand before God and see the light and I want to be unafraid! Can you help me? Can you or any of the zaddikim of Polonia assist my soul in flight through the heavens to stand with God's light and not be afraid? I can never rise up the ladder and fulfill my task in this world if I cannot loosen the spark within my soul to rejoin, even for a moment, with its heavenly origin. And I cannot do this alone!"

The Ba'al Shem Tov stroked his long white beard and stared with deep black eyes directly into the depths of Yossi's heart. The silence of his heart bore witness to the tailor's plea with a full heart and very mixed emotions. Was not the zaddik's task on earth to serve his disciples? And was not Yossi an honest, sincere, and devout disciple

striving to experience a moment of redemption that would serve to guide him on his ultimate, divine path? The cooing of the pigeons sang a song of faithfulness into the zaddik's heart. The rustle of the autumn leaves on the nearby trees carried an aroma that the old zaddik's eyes could visualize. It could be done. But should it be done? The Ba'al Shem Tov sat for a long while as the sounds of the forest grew louder in his heart as the late-day sun began its daily turning.

The Ba'al Shem Tov's eyes were fastened on the simple tailor who sat before him in Polonia but his vision soared upward to the lights of the distant past. Directly into the heart of the Ba'al Shem Tov, Rabbi Elimelekh, great disciple of Rabbi Dov Baer the Great Maggid, re-told of his restoration of the sanctuary of Jerusalem on this earth, which corresponded to the altar in the sanctuary of heavenly Jerusalem. But in his own vision, Rabbi Elimelekh saw that every one of his disciples helped him in his special way with this holy task. On that one Day of Rejoicing in the Law, Rabbi Elimelekh noticed that two of his disciples were absent. Instantly he knew that the followers could build and build, but the restoration would be incomplete without all the disciples building together as one. The Ba'al Shem Tov sat in deep contemplation. Honoring Yossi's request to glimpse the light of heaven could be the completion of the great restoration and he would need the assistance of the souls of all the great zaddikim, past and present, to stand with Yossi and help him glimpse the light unafraid. He spoke with great compassion to Yossi as he considered the weight of his choice.

"Come back on Rosh Chodesh," he counseled, "and we will open our hearts to soar with yours toward the edges of the great light. But hear now: although we will be

with you, you will be alone. Alone is the condition in which we encounter the Divine light, but together we will lend you the essence of ourselves that will support you in your intention to traverse the final six steps. Only Yossi the tailor can walk the final six steps and see the light that is creation. Come back in thirty days and my disciples and I will gather to assist you on your heavenly search. Go home now, Yossi, and pray like you have never prayed before because in thirty days, the souls of the zaddikim will enable the light of heaven to touch your soul."

Yossi stared in both disbelief and delight at the Ba'al Shem Tov's words. First he wondered just who was he, this simple, poor, and uneducated tailor, that the great and wise Ba'al Shem Tov should gather his disciples to assist such an insignificant man on such a search? Yossi drew in a quick breath and remonstrated himself for belittling his holy intention. "For my soul the world was created!" he thought. When he looked up, the Ba'al Shem Tov smiled with his eyes that bore directly into Yossi's being, as if Yossi's inner recognition of man's importance as the culmination of God's work in the universe was shared with the Ba'al Shem Tov, even just for a brief moment.

"But we are all ashes," the Ba'al Shem admonished. Yossi was silent.

As he turned to leave and took one last, lingering glance at the face of the master, the image he encountered struck him behind his eyes, in the depths of his mind. The long, drawn face of the master stared upward toward the heavens and was bathed in a wondrous white glow of holy light. Yossi left the Ba'al Shem in his rapture, and neither saw nor heard the unvoiced chirp of the cricket silenced for eternity beneath his boot as he marched determinedly home.

The town was abuzz that month with arrivals and rumors of arrivals of the holy masters from all over Polonia. Every day, it seemed, another rabbi approached the Ba'al Shem Tov's door and was ushered in immediately by the cook or her serving girl. No one emerged from the house, save for the cook and her kitchen maid who traipsed almost daily to the market for vegetables, flour, tea, sugar, and fruit. And every erev Shabbat, without fail, for chickens. Every week her order grew larger and the two women struggled beneath their holy food purchases. The butcher kashered only his finest chickens for her. The greengrocer sifted and lifted produce to find only the best for the Ba'al Shem's holy gathering. The tight-lipped cook spoke only her order; she did not divulge the group's purpose in gathering, a lack of information that served only to fuel the fires of rumor and gossip of the community within the tiny town. Her unvoiced message was powerful: the holy men worked in secret on their mysterious mission.

And the stories of that mission flew wildly from shopper to shopkeeper, from carpenter to milkman, enlarging as they were related from sister to sister, and mother to shvige. Who were these holy men, and why were they in town right now? What great event would cause such men to undertake such travel? And some of them, mind you, were not in the best of health or were advanced in years. Was the Ba'al Shem Tov ill? Was his son to be married? Was his son ill? Were they offering prayers of recovery? Did they seek to intervene with the Divine? Had they learned the date of redemption? Had the Ba'al Shem Tov received the Word from Elijah on his mystical wanderings? Titterings and chatterings fueled every conversation in the street and in the markets. Even Heschel, the rabbi's son, began wondering out loud why so many holy

men would hide out together in this small and pitiful little hovel of the town of the Ba'al Shem Tov. Eventually talk of the coming of the Messiah grew in the minds, but was not allowed on the lips, of the townspeople. Certain things, after all, were not for just anyone, perhaps they were just for the great one, to understand. But why were these great ones here? And why would these special souls group here now, if the Messiah truly was not coming? What other reason could there be for such a gathering? The titterings grew bolder, the rumors more imagined and almost hysterical. Finally, Heschel voiced the secret question feared yet exalted among the gossipers when he spoke of the Messiah to the dairymen with the simple words: "If not now, Yankel, when?"

As if the gates of Eden were again opened, the gossipers and rumor-mongers rushed in. Yes, indeed, they asked, why not now? This is a good time what with the pogrom in L'vov last month, certainly as good as any. And why not here? After all, this small village, not known for much besides being the home of the Ba'al Shem Tov, is where the holiest of the holies had chosen to gather themselves and probably pray in the mightiest earnestness, sincerity, and fervor. Boys in cheder buzzed beneath their teacher's beard about the strange happenings and portents for the coming of the Messiah. Basha, the carpenter's wife, began polishing her one treasured silver kiddush cup in honor of the Messiah's impending arrival. Yudel, the stout greengrocer, unlocked the bridal chest of his late wife, Gisha, to air his finest and long packed-away tallis, his marriage tallis, and Feder, the weaver, was besieged with requests for white cloth for dresses for the women, and new black cloth for fine suits for the men.

Yossi, the simple devout tailor, had spent the thirty days alone behind drawn curtains in his one room shack, studying, praying, fasting, reading psalms, and strengthening himself mentally and physically for what he knew would become his longest and most arduous journey, a trip that would take him only steps from his home, but into a world as far removed from Polonia as could be imagined. Six steps alone, the Ba'al Shem had declared, were what Yossi had to walk himself. He would fly to the heavens on the wings of the disciples with the strength of the holy men to approach the light of God, but he spent the month readying himself for his six final, triumphant steps. From within his isolation and concentration, Yossi was jerked forcibly into the here and now by a loud rapping on his door.

"Yossi! Yossi!" a voice called into his reverie, "open the door and measure me for a new suit!" Yossi climbed up from his corner on the floor and walked in a daze to the knocking that disturbed him. "Yossi, are you in there?"

"Yankel? Yankel, YOU need a new suit? Why? Is your daughter getting married?" he asked as he steadied himself from his deep contemplation.

"Married? My daughter? No, Yossi, the Messiah is coming and I need a new suit," Yankel declared in a matter-of-fact manner. "Come, hurry, we have so little time."

Yossi straightened himself as he gazed into the fervid eyes of the dairyman who stood at his door. Messiah? In Polonia? Had he heard correctly? As if it had a mind of its own, the tailor's mouth fell open. It was all he could do to simply stare at the raving man. And it was all Yankel could do to keep from striking Yossi around his ears

that apparently could not hear Yankel's clearly elevated voice. Yankel continued berating the tailor for his tardiness and his stupidity.

"He comes. He is coming. We--all of us in this town--all know. Why don't you know? Where have you been? Come now, you will measure me for a fine suit to greet the Chosen One. He could be here by Shabbat. Now wouldn't Shabbat be a perfect time for the arrival of the Messiah here in our fine town?"

Yossi drew in a sharp, deep breath and saw beyond the dairyman's shoulder that the townspeople were gathered in the street, talking and chattering animatedly among themselves, gesturing hands flying every which way, people chirping and scurrying about like crickets. He searched his mind for answers to the questions that came in deluges, but Yossi, the simple tailor, found none.

On the dirt floor, Yossi had kept a calendar of sorts during his time of seclusion and preparation. Quickly counting twenty-nine strokes, he immediately became aware that tomorrow, erev Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh, was the day of his appointment with the Ba'al Shem Tov and the disciples. Were the disciples here already? Why had Yossi not gone out to greet them? Where had the time gone? It had seemed that only an instant passed since his request of the Ba'al Shem Tov was made and the zaddik's promise was given. He pushed Yankel aside.

"No, not now! Now is my final moment. I must prepare myself. No new suits today, not even for you, my old friend." The dairyman stared in utter surprise at the quick, decisive and dismissive motions of the heretofore reticent tailor. The fire in the tailor's eyes burned deeply into what seemed to be the essence of the dairyman's heart.

This was a man to be left alone to own path, he thought. This is a possessed man, a man who has seen a vision. He backed away from the gesticulating tailor and hurried home to pass the news of the tailor's eccentricities along to the men in town.

Meanwhile, Yossi surveyed his tiny home to choose luggage for his journey to the light of heaven. What did one take on such a journey, he asked himself. A tallis? A kiddush cup? A prayer book? All seemed so inconsequential when meeting the Almighty. What should he take, he wondered, and sat down in his corner on the floor till evening fell. As the third star appeared, Yossi said the prayer in his heart to greet this special evening. He sat in this corner until he noticed the morning and recited morning prayers when the sun rose. First he washed himself, then with one quick look at the room that was his home since before his parents died, he opened the door, stepped through, touched the mezzuzah, closed the door firmly behind him, and walked directly to the small home belonging to the Ba'al Shem Tov, carrying nothing in either hand, yet with a zeal and passion in his fiery eyes that consumed and quenched his fear. Stopping at the front door of the Ba'al Shem's home, Yossi knocked once and waited.

Although it was early in the morning and before many should have been out of bed, Yossi's trip to the Ba'al Shem's home did not go unnoticed by the men in town. Many of the townspeople had not slept all that night and had been discussing, arguing, laughing, jeering, and shouting about the Messiah's impending arrival. For thirty days, not one in town had dared disturb the Ba'al Shem or his holy disciples lest they disrupt their quest for the Messiah's arrival. Except Yossi. Here now on a fine morning just right for the arrival of God's chosen one, the meager tailor stood empty-handed and

audaciously rapped at the door behind which only who-knows-what was going on. Such nerve! Such gall! Just who did Yossi the tailor think he was? The men gathered slowly, then in greater numbers, across the tiny street from the Ba'al Shem's modest dwelling. They strained and pushed to witness the impending spectacle when the Ba'al Shem Tov would undoubtedly throw the poor tailor out on his ear. With utter amazement, they witnessed their first miracle: the Ba'al Shem personally answered the door, smiled at the tailor, and ushered him into his house. The gossipers and rumor-spreaders went quickly to work and by noon all in the town had decided that Yossi the tailor may just very well be God's Chosen One, selected to usher in the redemption of the world. Knowing nothing else to do, the women of town gathered in Yossi's one-room and began cleaning, cooking, and readying the bungalow for the coming of the ever-lasting Shabbat. The men, also searching for activity, posted one guard to alert them to Yossi's exit, and also besieged his house and repaired the fence, straightened the posts, and nailed down loose boards on the street side. The guard did not disturb their labor for Yossi did not emerge, not that day nor the next. The people waited anxiously for word of the Messiah and no one in town slept well or for any length of time that night.

In the Ba'al Shem Tov's home, no sleep for Yossi, the disciples, or the Ba'al Shem Tov himself was in order either. Without so much as introductions, the Ba'al Shem asked Yossi simply, "Are you ready?" and with the tailor's nod, led him to the center of the circle of disciples. Yossi stood timidly and awkwardly, unaware of what he was supposed to do or what was expected of him, and after what seemed like an

eternity, reached down within himself and began praying pure thoughts toward God, knowing that by doing so, God would look at Yossi as if God were a human being. Yossi prayed as if he were in Eden, and allowed no envy, lust, or pride to distract him. He concentrated on the sound of the lone cricket near his feet, a voice he heard as clearly as the sound of the shofar. This one mitzvah of prayer Yossi struggled to perform ultimately and to the core. He stood alone among many in the darkness and travelled his own true Exodus, stopping at Sinai to receive personally the Law from God, and carefully traversed the blade of life, knowing that emptiness was the life of the man who fell from the narrow ridge. On his journey to his private space within the multitudes for his moment with God's light, Yossi prayed for the wicked, too. His love of God became nothing if he could not love man. He felt the spark of knowledge almost extinguished by the angel at his birth come alive and burn within his soul. He felt simple, yet holy, owing to the presence of the prayers of these holy men, and he experienced the humility of Moses as he accepted God's verdict against him. On this, the ninth rung of pride and humility, Yossi reached out with his heart for the souls of the righteous men in his midst. He felt alone yet in communion with the others in and out of this tiny room and at that moment he did not fear that he might fail when he stood face-to-face with God's light. He longed for the moment, if even a moment, and in his fervor took his first step alone. The angels in heaven ceased their talking and joined him on his path. The warmth that greeted him refreshed his soul and he stepped again, a second step, toward the light. Songs of praise emerged from the unmoving mouths of the heavenly chorus and filled

his ears with joyful sounds of praise. His mind joined the chorus and his heart pounded him along to his next step.

He could feel the light now. He took a third step and he witnessed the teaching of Law to Moses on Sinai. He glimpsed the back of God's head and saw Moses' hair turn white. Renewed, he took a fourth step as the heavenly chorus washed away his trembling and his foot reached out once more.

He saw all the zaddikim, present, past, and future, praying fervent prayers for themselves, their disciples, and their communities. He saw the blind leading the lame, the rich feeding the poor, and ignorant learning from the masters. Recognizing the chariot of the Messiah, Yossi's heart greeted the world to come! He perceived the light, not with seeing eyes, but with a full heart of gladness for Olam ha-Ba. Yossi's steps continued forward. The fifth step brought him to full knowledge.

Yossi's unseeing eyes witnessed the Messiah's message that Zion shall be redeemed with justice. He heard in his soul the cries of the downtrodden lifted effortlessly by their fellow-men, and the cacophony of peace that inhabited the earth. He felt the swells of the winds of the wings of the zaddikim urging and assisting him on this journey toward his moment in God's holy light. He lifted his hands beseechingly toward the light and ventured his sixth and last step.

In mid-stride, an unknown face of such evil as he had never imagined possible interposed itself between Yossi and the light and abruptly the light of the heaven was cut off and vanished. The angels' chorus ceased. The downtrodden cried again, the blind and lame struggled individually and without gain on separate paths. Moses again

questioned God and was pained at His denial of Moses' entry into the Promised Land. He felt the flame of the spark of knowledge fade, and the cacophony of peace was replaced by the shrieking and anguished cries of women and children, men, grandparents, zaddikim, teachers, rabbis, tailors, and shopkeepers joining together in a horrible chorus of pain. All prayers ceased and the voices of the angels were silent and their eyes closed. The wind of the wings of the zaddikim present in the Ba'al Shem's home fluttered to silence and as he fell backward, Yossi witnessed another and horribly different light, a light of a dizzying and abrupt sunset of Shabbat in his tiny town in Polonia. He knew that his journey was ended but he could not imagine the reasons. He saw the image of the light, and then the light vanished. Complete, total and utter sadness overcame him as he tried desperately to pull himself back together to the world of the here and now and focus his unseeing eyes on the outlines of the forms of the zaddikim in a circle around him. He heard the stunned silence that filled the room.

No journey of the disciples had ever ended in such a mad and evil way. The zaddikim were confused and alarmed and as they turned to their master they saw that the Ba'al Shem Tov's face was streaked with tears and they heard his lamenting and unintelligible cries that filled the tiny room.

As if in despondent echo, the thunder of the heavens rocked and crashed above the tiny Polish village, demonically ending the community's joyful ritual of the celebration of Queen Shabbat's coming and sent the townspeople scurrying for covered shelter and safety. Huddled with his family in his tiny home, the dairyman hugged his frightened wife and their children as the crashes of fierce lightning and the menacing

sounds of booming thunder pierced the otherwise peaceful sky. The greengrocer, having covered his carts laden with his wares for the Shabbat rest, shrieked in impotence and dismay as his carts and bundles were ravaged by the unrelenting fury of the freakish weather. And Heschel, the rabbi's son, cowering in the corner of the House of Prayer, muttered silently, his lips mouthing the words, "I believe with perfect faith that the Messiah will come..." And Yossi reeled, fell, and finally lay spent and silent on the dirt floor amid the holy men and their master, the now-shattered Ba'al Shem Tov.

It seemed as though time stood still as Yossi lay inert and the Ba'al Shem cried silent tears. The heavens reigned fury against the tiny town and, as the animals fled the surrounding forest, not a noise was heard, not even the chirp of the cricket. The birds vacated their roosts as the deer ran wildly through the clearings now twisted and littered with branches and tree limbs. Animals broke free from their pens and sought escape from the wrath visited upon them from the heavens. All was wrong in this tiny shtetl town and its inhabitants cowered with the kind of fear that has no rational explanation or purpose. All trembled and all were silent.

This day became the Shabbat that never was for this tiny town and hundreds and thousands of other tiny towns in Polonia and across Eastern Europe. For the eternity that became that Shabbat, no prayers were offered in the synagogues, no Shabbat meals were celebrated, no sharing, communicating, teaching, or learning between rabbi and student happened. No one left his tiny house or refuge unless the fury of the unleashed lightning struck and burned it to the ground. Some escaped to the safety of neighbors, and others

perished horribly in the ensuing flames. The Ba'al Shem Tov's tears fell as did the rain, and Yossi remained unconscious to the elements in a stupor on the floor.

At last, the Ba'al Shem spoke.

"Friends, we cannot flee the darkness. Stay! Hide! The heavens are in confusion and for this day, God's holy sparks are gone! We remain alone and abandoned. We are without direction and without hope! The glory of the light has vanished. Pray, pray! Pray for the return of the light! Pray as if your very survival depends on it!"

And with this dire pronouncement, the holiest of the zaddikim of Polonia fell silent, and the Ba'al Shem Tov cried.

For twenty-four hours, the reign of darkness continued. Animals abandoned their forest homes, frightened men, women, and children hid in tiny shelters until the fierce lightning struck and burned yet another to the ground. The rabbis and their sons evacuated the Houses of Prayer, and the Chevrah Kadishah could not tend to the bodies of the dead. The earth stood still in mad fury that one Shabbat in Polonia and the ceaseless thunder drowned out the cries of men, the anguished shrieking of their wives and children, and silenced the chirping of the crickets.

As abruptly as it had started, the heavens suddenly ceased their rampant destruction. Yet no one moved, fearing as much for his own life as well as fearing for the lives of the townspeople. But most of all, fear was in everyone's hearts for the Ba'al Shem Tov and his holy disciples. No one remembered Yossi's entering the tiny house on the outskirts of town, yet all recalled the mysterious goings-on that the zaddikim had

practiced. Dazed and only semi-aware of their calamitous situation, one by one, what was left of the community emerged from their half-destroyed refuges and took stock of themselves, their loved ones, families, friends, businesses, and village. Fear was quickly replaced by intense anger as the remaining men of the town surveyed the total destruction wreaked on their tiny village and the loss of their friends, families, and livelihoods. In despair and utter frustration, the few gathered at the door of the Ba'al Shem's house for want of any other place to ask questions that had no answers and waited for his expected explanation. Waiting turned into anger fueled by frustration and the tiny group agreed to batter down his door than allow the inhabitants to escape their retribution for what must have been caused by the disciples' evil actions. With this fury of desperation, the small group forced open the wooden door and came face-to-face with the circle of dark, vacant faces of the holy disciples, the inert and prone Yossi, and the crying Ba'al Shem Tov.

Ephraim the butcher spoke for the small group. "Ba'al Shem," he began in a small voice that grew in volume as his anger rose, "what have you wrought upon us? What evil have you conjured up that so angered the Holy One so, that He would destroy such a peaceful village as ours?" Staring at the body on the floor, he added, "And what of Yossi? What have you done to Yossi?"

The Ba'al Shem, still kneeling over Yossi and crying, yet gazing up toward the heavens, only repeated his unintelligible words, muttered incoherently, and cried unceasing tears. The disciples stared in shock, and Ephraim and what was left of his shattered community silently turned and exited, knowing that no answer would be theirs

today. The disciples filed out behind them, emerging into the sunlight, throwing back glances toward the image of Yossi lying silently beneath the kneeling, praying, and crying Ba'al Shem Tov. The world had been turned upside down, the lights had been extinguished, and what remained was not to be understood by the onlookers, not today, if ever. Only Yossi and the Ba'al Shem Tov knew what they had seen. And neither one could explain their vision to the men of the small, destroyed village.

What they had seen simply had no explanation. For in that instant between Yossi's fifth and sixth steps, both he and the Ba'al Shem, who had been the most fervent in his lifting and carrying Yossi toward the perfect light, were free from the structures and constraints of time. They gazed into the past and toward the future and that gaze served to unlock a vision of the horrors that were to befall the descendants and generations of Polonia. They heard the death, they smelled the crematoria, they shared the pain of torture, and they were rent and twisted by the forced separation of mother from child, father from parent, zaddik from disciple, and people from their God. In that moment between steps, both Yossi and the Ba'al Shem Tov were present within the catastrophe and powerless to prevent it. The enormity of what they witnessed paralyzed Yossi and reduced the Ba'al Shem to tears for the six million who had not voice to cry for themselves. And in that instant, the sparks of heaven were forcibly darkened by the hand of man. And in His horror over what He had unloosed, God hid His face. The cries of fear from the angels unleashed immense thunder; the darkening of the holy sparks unleashed Satan's evil lightning. People of Polonia could only experience the

cataclysmic effects of the catastrophe that was their future. When they sought explanation from the most wise among them, he had no answers to give them.

Polonia's tiny villages never returned to the normal state that was their existence prior to the unleashing of the fury. The Ba'al Shem Tov, it was ordained, was never to visit the holy land for his vision inflicted a permanent scarring upon his soul and a questioning of the Almighty plan, a humbling he shared with the great prophet Moses. Not having enough remaining willing citizens to reform or rebuild their town, the people of the Ba'al Shem Tov's village were dispersed, and sought comfort and company with those who had also survived the continental celestial storm. They left their homes and belongings, never looked back, and journeyed across mountains, rivers, and oceans to new lands and new avenues of seeking livelihood and God.

Yossi remained in the small town, labelled as a madman, and was tended to by the Ba'al Shem Tov and his disciples for his remaining years. Yossi only muttered questions over and over again, and it did not matter if he had a listener, only questions. The Ba'al Shem always tried to respond and to answer his often-rambling questions, always with a seriousness and earnestness his disciples could not understand.

"Where did the sixth step lead?" Yossi asked one day.

"To darkness," patiently answered the Ba'al Shem once again.

"Where were the lights?" Yossi asked again.

"Gone," the Ba'al Shem replied, "gone away. Extinguished. God witnessed man destroy truth and God hid His face."

"Where did God go?" Yossi implored, tears filling his eyes.

"He went with the voice of the crickets," the Ba'al Shem Tov responded gently. "To a place where silence reigns and evil echoes in the hills and mountains, through the valley of death and despair, to a land where questions have no answers."

During one particular ominous evening when the forces of nature appeared at the ready to be unleashed on the small town as a thunderstorm, the distant crack of lightning elicited a series of questions from Yossi, the mad man. "Where was God?" he wondered as the Ba'al Shem Tov stroked his long white beard.

"When we love more and more," the Ba'al Shem Tov sang gently to the troubled soul before him, "we invite God in. And when He is fully inside us, we can never completely let Him go. But just where was God that night so long ago, my friend? When the heart of man is so hard that God's light is shut out of his creation, He laments for having created man and the heavens witness the fury that would be the world's destiny if there were no Almighty as our comfort and partner in creation."

"But how do we rekindle the light of God?" Yossi implored.

And the Ba'al Shem Tov opened his hand to show the poor tailor the cricket that had been chirping quietly within his loosened fist. "Listen, my poor soul, listen. Listen to the voice of the simplest of the forest and hear his thoughts. When man has no answer, listen with your heart, your eyes, your arms, legs, and feet to the simplest sound you can find. Only within the simple are the great and difficult questions both asked and answered. When the question is almighty, the answer is not from any man. The voice of the cricket is the only answer for such a question."

**APPENDIX C: COMMENTARY**

*The Voice of the Cricket*, by Susan Lecin Polinsky, presents an interpretation of the Holocaust and radical evil through the guise of the Hasidic tale. By closely emulating Martin Buber's style, this modern Hasidic tale enables the reader to imagine how the Baal Shem Tov would have responded to the horror and destruction of the Holocaust, for it truly was the darkest period of Jewish history.

From my view as a rabbi and an educator, the power of *The Voice of the Cricket* is in the imagery which is used. The cricket is one small creature which can be eliminated by one step. Yet its pure and simple voice carries in the darkness of the night. The recurring image of the cricket, from the moment Yossi unconsciously steps on one to the cricket as the source of the answer, reiterates the significance of the small things in life. For the Baal Shem Tov, the simple and small creations of God were equally important to and as awe-inspiring as animals and human beings, because God was the source of all. Thus, the cricket represents the good, simple, and the innocence in the world.

In contrast, the image of the boot at the beginning of the story denotes power. This power belongs to humanity and is thus in conflict with Divine power. The boot is not rooted in creation but made by a human being. The sense of destruction caused by the boot corresponds to the total destruction brought about by the radical evil of the Holocaust.

These dichotomies of God-made versus man-made and power versus weakness reflect my attitude toward the Holocaust. In order to understand the radical evil, my

God-concept reflects the sense that humanity is influenced by Divine inspiration but each individual chooses how to use or not to use the inspiration. Thus the omnipotent God of the Baal Shem Tov withdrew into darkness because humanity chose not to let Divine inspiration influence their actions, rather than God relinquishing the power.

*The Voice of the Cricket* places the realm of radical evil within humanity. I firmly believe that if segments of humanity had continued to hear the voice of simplicity, of purity, of creation, then the darkness of radical evil would not have enveloped the world we know. The voice of the cricket would have continued to be heard.

Through imagery and replication of the style of Martin Buber, *The Voice of the Cricket* allows the reader a sense of how the Baal Shem Tov might have responded to the Holocaust and radical evil. It enables the reader to accept that God did not withdraw but that humanity withdrew from God. God remains with those who continue to search within themselves for the answers.

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