

October 31, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

DARK MARGINS

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

"Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself. It is a silent justification affording evil acceptability in society."

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, *ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, ESSENTIAL WRITINGS*

Reflection

More frequently, I have been pondering the existence of evil in our world. Since it is Halloween, and the topic is being displayed across lawns and in media programming, it seemed like an appropriate time to revisit it. Pursuing definitions of evil, refreshing my memory of the seven deadly sins, and finding discussions about the vast beliefs about evil, one broad interpretation is that evil is profound wickedness, malice or injury. Chaos is frequently attributed to it. Let us just say the notion of evil can be complicated. On the other hand, it may be difficult to articulate, but I know it when I see it -- don't you?

For five years while working in a local prosecutor's office, I was in the Homicide Unit because that is where there was a vacant office. While my role had nothing to do with the legal or investigative functions of the office, the time spent there helped me gain insight into the passion and purpose of the office as well as the many expressions of evil in our world. More directly, I became aware of the vast array of ways that people are murdered. Over time, I saw the wages of domestic and child abuse, narcotic and human trafficking, hate crimes, extortion, and fraud. The "seven deadlies" and the Ten Commandments accordingly provide a measure of good and evil and help with deciding of whether certain crimes meet the threshold of evil.

There are some circumstances and events, however, where for me, there is no question or hesitation. Genocide, acts of hate based on prejudice, slavery in all its forms, discrimination and exploitation of people, exploitation and destruction of the environment for pleasure or profit, exploitation of or injury to the vulnerable, and incitation of acts of hate or destruction all seem to qualify.

The quote from Abraham Joshua Heschel raises the moral responsibility we all share to not sit idly by in the face of evil. How are we called to respond or confront acts of evil? What's God's expectation of us to do so? Where do any of us acquire the moral authority to oppose acts of evil? Well, scripture seems like a good place to start.



For Pondering

- How do you distinguish evil or acts of evil?
 - Where have you encountered evil along your life path?
 - How did God companion you through these dark margins?
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For Prayer

*“To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
I trust in you, my God!*

*Show me the path where I should
walk, O Lord;
point out the right road for me to
follow.*

*Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.”*

PSALM 25:1, 4-5

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