

The Modern Relevance of God

SPECIAL PODCAST SERIES

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To embrace sanity is to accept truth, live love, and be good.

Norberto Keppe



Thinking with Somebody Else's Head presents...
The Modern Relevance
of God Special Podcast Series

Science and Spirituality



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The Origin of Evil

Richard Lloyd Jones: Welcome to Episode 8 of our Modern Relevance of God podcast series here on Thinking with Somebody Else's Head. I'm Richard Lloyd Jones.

So far, we've been looking at the nature of life and God, and how that knowledge has been pushed aside from our daily considerations and from scientific inquiry, obviously. The Enlightenment of the 18th century effectively closed the door on the previous scientific world view. Even the name given to this extraordinary scientific awakening tells us a lot: an enlightened knowledge, suggesting that all that went before was in darkness. The Dark Ages, the Medieval period, the Long Night of the Shadows.

Now, this is not to suggest, of course, that nothing good came out of the Enlightenment. Of course not! This marked the concretization of the scientific method. And the beautiful principles the Enlightenment thinkers brought, of democracy, individual liberty, freedom of expression and critique of religious authority, should all be revered as essential to our modern world. The freedom from superstition, squalor and medieval cruelty brought by the Enlightenment illuminate all the great documents we so honor today, including the great U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

However, in typical, throwing-the-baby-out-with-the-bath-water fashion, this cherished ascendance of reason that emerged out of the philosophy at that time, while successfully challenging the corrupted church authority, also diminished the importance of the religious themes that are still relevant to our understanding. The nature of man, the struggle between good and evil - those got buried, too. And where does that leave those iconic stories about the presence of evil in human experience? The stories from the sacred texts of all philosophies, what do we do with those now? How do we understand the depth of Dante or even Jekyll and Hyde or Faust with only reason at our side? Although we do have a rich, modern tradition of horror in books and movies, it's often phantasmagorical and extreme so as to be easily dismissed as fascinating but impossible. And so evil is portrayed as spinning heads and green vomit and impossible battles where Keanu Reeves is pushed through walls by the unleashed power of Hell.

Norberto Keppe's recent work has been concerned to reintroduce the analysis of evil and the evil influence in daily human life, but scientifically. The advancement he has made in seeing the spiritual battle between good and evil in more scientific terms is a huge step forward. And backward at the same time, reaching into the ancient knowledge and bringing it into the modern light, stripped of its superstition and fantasy. Welcome to Episode 8 with Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco.

Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco:

This started mostly officially with Descartes, I guess.

Jones:

Descartes, 1600s

Pacheco:

Rene Descartes, yes. And then it was like growing and growing. And in the 19th century, this was already something very well established, that demonology was something belonging to the past, a back ward view of life and spirituality.

Jones:

Yeah. We don't believe that anymore.

Pacheco:

The 20th century, my God, that was really a total hallucination in all areas, because then everybody denied the existence of evil in the world. People started to say evil exists only inside man or the human being. It does not exist outside the human being, in the human mind. Denying the existence of evil, denying the evil presence of this being. So people started to deny what is obvious. But to understand this more, it's important to have a more physical philosophy or metaphysical way of thinking, which goes to the primary causes of everything. What is the first cause of the phenomena?

So if you study the first origin of evil, it must be from an intelligent being, willful, intelligent, and this must not be God. Because God is only good, beautiful, and truthful. So God His essence does not allow any particle of evil or suffering. No suffering coming from God whatsoever. So where does it come from, this evil force, this malignant, suicidal, homicidal, destructive force, if we don't have it in our nature? So here comes physiology, biology, genetics, to state that all forces from nature, all forces from life are meant to preserve and to reinforce.

Jones:

And propagate life ...

Pacheco:

And propagate life, to preserve and propagate life. Never, ever to destroy it.

Jones:

Even the sexual instinct is about this, right?

Pacheco:

All instincts are for life, not against. So this evil instinct does not come from our genetics, from nature and even much less from its Creator, which is God. So what

happened then? So we need to pay attention to this revelation we got from our ancient civilizations that always for millennia knew about evil spirits or evil transcendental or physically invisible spiritual beings.

Jones:

Because Satan, Lucifer wants us to be ignorant of his existence. If we're ignorant of it, he has much more rein to move, you know. The New Testament talks about the devil and his demons many times. Jesus calls Satan the enemy, the evil one, the prince of this world, a liar, and the father of lies, a murderer. The apostle Paul calls him the God of this age. We should listen to what Jesus had to tell us when he came here over 2000 years ago, obviously ...

Pacheco:

And we should pay attention, He came exactly for this, otherwise he would not have to come.

Jones:

He would not have to come here.

Pacheco:

He came to advise us that we were following the wrong orientation, the wrong God, an upside down being. And he was all the time exorcising people, chasing out demons, healing and healing with mercy. And believing in what they said, not denying the suffering they had and knowing the cause. This matter of demons and demonology and evil is not only a matter of a church, for a religious person or religious people or a church. This is a universe problem. It's social. All civilization is impregnated by evil. If you do not understand in depth how entrenched we say in Portuguese?

Jones:

Ah, yeah, sure. Entangled. It's like,

Pacheco:

It's so entangled ...

Jones:

Inside everything.

Pacheco:

Evil is so much entangled in society, in the laws, in medical science, technology, physics, education, economy, all fields. So we suffer from the influence of evil of the devil, not only through our minds, which is the most common source of evil is through our minds. But not only this. All society is impregnated. So we should get together and do like a transdisciplinary study and fight the common enemy.

Pacheco:

I want to make clear that this separation between religious people and science, medical people, psychoanalysts is very, very harmful. They fight, they say, this is not a matter for science and scientists say, oh, this is an illusionary thing. We will not deal with spiritual problems. This is not our matter. It is. It's the matter of all of us.

Jones:

So we've cut this knowledge out of our study at great expense, as Claudia mentioned in that episode. One thing that's been noted is the increase in requests for exorcism rights, suggesting that acknowledgement of the battle between good and evil has been recognized in some quarters. It is an archaic idea, but with some significant relevance here in the early 21st century. It can certainly go some way towards explaining the presence of evil on the planet as a type of resonance with this original evil in the spiritual level of beings refusing the goodness of creation and falling to darkness, as portrayed in so much of the medieval literature and sacred beliefs in religious teachings. Separating out the experience as crazy, outmoded or irrelevant is probably not very wise. But separation from that divine knowledge is what we've done, at great expense. As Augustine said, "You have made us for yourself, oh Lord. And our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you." More on this pathological separation coming up in episode nine.

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