

March 2025 COJ Retreat - Lecture 6

Before I begin the next session, there was a question left over from the previous one. Jamie's question is: When I talk about a secret sacred name, do I mean a real name in nomenclature, or do I mean that we understand our purpose?

I believe when I think about logos, our word, or "OM" our kind of primordial sound, I'm thinking about the creative principle. It's not just like an identity tag that distinguishes Sean from Deardra or Ethna or whatever. It's literally the vibration of creation, and that each one is unique. Every soul has a unique vibration that, as it's cascading out from the heart of God, there is a sound or a logos that differentiates it and gives it a special kind of personality.

That's not going to translate into the name on your baptismal certificate, but it's the vibration that's going to make your heart sing. You may be lucky enough to encounter it in the course of a lifetime. It may be a piece of music. It may be something that comes to you while you're walking in nature. It could be the birth of your own child—you look into your own child and you suddenly remember who you are. So it won't be an identity tag. It'll be a resonance, an acoustical logos that's going to transport you, and that will be the key to your mission as well. So it's both, Jamie.

On Christ Consciousness, Lucifer, and Ariman

We have a lot to cover this time, and I want to preface that I'm going to talk about Christ consciousness, Lucifer, and Ariman. I am not an expert on Rudolf Steiner. I've come across his work and find him very difficult to read, maybe because of the translations from German to English. I'm fascinated by him and regard him as a complete avatar, but I am not an expert in any way. There are people in this room right now like Richard and Michael Choy, and maybe Rose, who are much more familiar with his work than I. I'd like to include them at some stage in this conversation.

What I do know is that I've studied the Hebrew scriptures and world religious traditions. I'm aware that between 598 BCE and 529 BCE, the last two tribes of Israel were in exile in Babylon, subject to the great Zoroastrian religion that was much older. Zoroastrianism had reduced the pantheons of divinities down to two gods: Ahura Mazda, the god of light, and Ahriman, the god of darkness. That was my introduction to the notion of Ahriman—that it represented in Zoroastrianism the dark energy, whereas Ahura Mazda represented the light energy, and there's this battle between the two.

When the Jews returned from exile in Babylon in 529 BCE, they reduced the pantheon down to a single divinity, so you have monotheism for the first time in Judaism. This monotheistic god had to accommodate all facets of life, including darkness and light.

My understanding is that people like Rudolf Steiner are resurrecting the notion of Ahriman and Lucifer, with extraordinarily beautiful insights. I am not familiar with that material, but I have my own ideas.

My Personal Understanding

I believe that:

- The abuse of science and technology is the work of Ahriman

- The abuse of siddhis (the Sanskrit word for sacred gifts like prophecy and psychic abilities) and spirituality is the work of Lucifer
- Science plus conscience is the dance between Ahriman and Lucifer
- If Lucifer had humility, it would lead to service to Source/God
- If Ahriman had humility, it would lead to service to incarnated beings
- Unfortunately, Lucifer with power leads to service to self and disinterest in others
- Ahriman plus power leads to service to self and domination of others

In some sense, it's a dance between what are sometimes called ascending religions and descending religions. Christ is the balance between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic forces.

I believe that dark forces will constantly try to divert the evolutionary process. Lucifer is asceticism taken to the nth degree—ascending religions with total focus on the hereafter. So many monotheistic religions are what I would call ascending religions; the focus is on getting to heaven, and this earth is a place of temptation. That's the Luciferic impulse—a kind of aestheticism leading to disconnecting completely with the world and focusing on the afterlife. I would call it a kind of pseudo-mysticism.

Ahriman, for me, is a form of hedonism and represents descending religions with focus on the here and now—nature-based religions in the sense that there is no hereafter, no esoteric. It is just the world and what it has to offer us, the pleasures of the world. I would call it a pseudo-realism.

The invitation of duality is to walk the tightrope between Lucifer and Ahriman in order to grow into Christ consciousness.

The Sources of Evil

There's a word in theology for this: theodicy. It's the problem of evil. Why is there evil in the world? It is easily the most vexing existential issue that humanity faces.

Over time, there have been many historical attempts to make sense of why there's evil or darkness in the world:

- Theological attempts
- Sociological attempts
- Psychological attempts
- Philosophical attempts
- Scientific attempts

For me, none of them are completely satisfactory. I've tried to forge my own way through this morass over the years. I'll go over some of the historical, religious, and philosophical attempts to explain this, and then offer a theory of my own.

Historical Perspectives on Evil

Genesis and the Fall: Historically, if you begin with the book of Genesis, the first notion of evil is with the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter 3. How do you account for this notion where God appears to be cursing them? God says to Adam, "In the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread, you will sow seeds and the world will just give you thorns and thistles." And to Eve, "You will suffer in childbirth, your desire will be for your husband, but he'll lord it over you."

My understanding is this is a mythology written by a group of people who were recently nomadic pastoralists and now settling into an agricultural lifestyle, faced with completely different difficulties. Every culture wrestles with the reality of their experiences and tries to make sense of it. At that stage, childbirth was a dangerous process—it's still dangerous in some parts of the world. Infant and maternal mortality is huge.

If you're a monotheistic people who believe there is only one God, somehow God is responsible for this, or the covenant between God and us demands this. Similarly, as newly agricultural people with no history of agriculture, they struggled with thorns and thistles, getting crops they could survive on. So the stories are an effort to explain these realities.

One story is they sinned and got kicked out of the Garden of Eden for disobedience. But it doesn't make logical sense because until they ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they were amoral beings. You can't be immoral if you don't know what the rules are. You can be amoral without knowing the rules, moral when you know the rules, or immoral if you break the rules. But they were like children—they had no sense of right and wrong, were tempted, and ate the "candy and cookies," and God kicked them out.

What they're trying to explain is that they're living in a vale of tears, and there must have been a time when they didn't. There must have been a Garden of Eden, and somehow they were expelled. I personally think the Garden of Eden is actually the womb—the feminine principle that gives birth to life. It was not a curse; we weren't kicked out. We chose to be born. Out of the darkness of the feminine principle emerges the light of the child.

But in the thinking of the people at that time, there's a satanic influence, a kind of Ahrimanic or Luciferian influence, something trying to take us from this covenant with God.

The Book of Job: Fast forward to the Book of Job. This is actually an old Semitic story of just three chapters, but scholars inserted 39 chapters of reflection on the problem of evil. The simple story is about Job, a God-fearing man with many children, wealth, and servants. God boasts about Job's goodness. One of the "sons of God" is HaSatan (which we translate as Satan, but it means "the prosecutor"). Satan says to God, "It's easy for Job to be good—you've blessed him. Let me test him."

God agrees, and Satan first destroys Job's possessions. Job still blesses God. Satan then kills all of Job's children, and Job says, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Finally, Satan afflicts Job with terrible health problems, and Job begins to rail against God.

The middle 39 chapters show Job trying to understand why God would allow this suffering. Job's friends suggest he must have secret sins, but Job maintains his innocence. In the end, God essentially says, "Who are you to question me?" Job apologizes, and God gives him more children and wealth.

This simple story became a dissertation on the problem of evil, from around 550 BCE.

Jesus' View of Evil: In Jesus' teaching, he identifies two sources of evil:

1. Demonic activity - all illnesses (psychological, physiological, or sociological) are the problem of demonic forces intervening in human affairs. Christ's response to illness is to cast out the demons causing the distress.
2. "The world" - In the Gospel of John and the Dead Sea Scrolls, "the world" has a specific meaning: secularized society that has lost its connection to the divine. It's not Gaia or the physical world, but a radically secularized society or one where spirituality is reduced to fundamentalist religious tenets.

In John 14, Jesus says, "I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you, to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him." This is Christ consciousness—the new spirit of God that secularized society can't comprehend and fundamentalist religion doesn't understand.

The remedy for evil, according to Jesus, is the realization that "I and the Father are one. I am in you and you are in me, and I am in the Father." This is Christ consciousness in its fullness.

Paul's Sources of Evil: In the writings of Paul (around 40 CE), I can identify four sources of evil:

1. The flesh - "The good that I want to do I don't do, but the evil I don't want to do I find myself doing" (Romans). The flesh itself—incarnation—is a source of darkness.
2. The law - "Apart from the law, sin was dead. Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang into life, and I died" (Romans 9). Evil comes from making rules; the transgression creates discordancy, anxiety, guilt, or punishment.
3. Extraterrestrial entities
4. Demonic forces - "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians).

Augustine's View: St. Augustine (around 400 CE) was a Roman citizen from North Africa who lived when the Roman Empire was under assault from the Vandals, Huns, and Goths. For Augustine, rationality and reason are the essence of divinity—a divine being is ultimately rational, and the Roman Empire represented this rational order.

Augustine believed that when we are most rational, we're most godlike, and when most irrational, most ungodlike. He developed the notion that during sexual orgasm, humans are completely irrational, out of control. Since children are conceived at this moment, they are conceived in "original sin." Every child is imprinted with sin from conception, resulting in:

1. Darkened intellect - inability to understand the divine plan
2. Weakened will - susceptibility to addictions
3. Bodies subject to illness and death

Other Ancient Traditions: Many other ancient wisdom traditions wrestled with evil. The Sumerians, Greeks, and Romans had pantheons of gods constantly at war. Since humans were built in these gods' image, it was our nature to be warlike and experience evil.

These gods engaged in all kinds of debauchery and sexual depravity, including incest and intercourse with humans (found even in Genesis 6, where "the sons of God found the daughters of men attractive"). When the gods fought with each other, lesser gods would vent their frustrations on humans, making us the "dogs they kick" because they were kicked by greater gods.

In Hindu writings, there was conflict between the devas (gods representing order, truth, goodness) and the asuras (antagonistic demons), with their warfare sometimes affecting humans.

My Theory of the Origins of Evil

I've harvested these ancient traditions to create my own synthesis.

1. Sin as Breach of Taboo: In indigenous societies, sin is the breach of a taboo. There are important initiation rites; you aren't allowed divine encounters without proper psychological and spiritual preparation. If unprepared for divine encounters, you'll either become inflated ("Look what I have!") or go crazy from inability to handle the information. So the taboo is that you aren't allowed divine encounters until properly initiated, and sin is the breach of this taboo.

2. Sin as Breach of Covenant: The next historical notion is sin as breaking a contract or covenant between a god and a people.

3. Sin as Breach of Commandment: Later, sin becomes breaking individual commandments (e.g., Judaism's 613 commandments). Examples include the Code of Ur-Nammu (Mesopotamia, 2100 BCE), Code of Hammurabi (1770 BCE), and Torah (1250 BCE).

4. Evolution of Culpability: I trace the notion of culpability in Hebrew-Christian scriptures:

- "Passing the apple" - In Genesis, Adam blames Eve, Eve blames the serpent, and nobody takes responsibility
- "Corporate singularity" - One person sins, but the entire tribe is guilty (like saying only your finger that pulled the trigger is guilty of murder)
- The scapegoat - Confessing the tribe's sins onto a goat sent into the desert (Christianity later made Jesus the scapegoat)
- Generational punishment - God only punishes to the third and fourth generation
- Individual responsibility - Jeremiah and Ezekiel (600-550 BCE) rejected the proverb "The parents have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," saying only the sinner is punished
- Jesus' view - Pharisees making ridiculous laws are responsible for people's sins
- Tong-len - Jesus' life dedicated to wiping out evil's impact, breathing in the world's pain and transmuting it through love

5. Non-Terrestrial Influences: I believe in the influence of heavenly forces, non-terrestrial entities (extraterrestrials or extradimensionals) interfering in human affairs.

6. Free Will: The introduction of free will is a major factor. I was told in an encounter at Pina Creek that we're at a trifurcation point between homo sociopathicus, homo artificialis, and homo spiritualis. A being who seeded life throughout the Milky Way said they could predict planetary evolution accurately until free will was introduced—then "all bets are off" with many people making different choices.

7. Science Without Conscience: Science without conscience leads to life without meaning; technology without ethics leads to greed without compassion—the Ahrimanic impulse.

8. Loss of Spirituality: "God is dead" not because God was an illusion, but because we've lulled our inner divinity to sleep through consumerism. The solution to world problems isn't just fixing sociological systems, economic models, education, farming, or pharmaceuticals—it's reconnecting with our deep spirituality. Without becoming spiritual people, any fixes will fail.

9. Evil as Emergent Phenomenon: I believe evil is an emergent phenomenon—not built into the fabric, but something that emerges when the total is greater than the sum of parts. Like hydrogen and oxygen combining to form water (which couldn't be predicted from their separate properties), evil emerges from our choices.

I have analogies for this:

- A jigsaw puzzle assembled incorrectly—resulting in buckling, holes, and extra pieces—wasn't the creator's intention but emerged from assembly choices
- A cow and snake drinking from the same water source—the cow converts it to milk, the snake to venom; it's the processing that creates the difference
- "The Touch of the Master's Hand"—a battered fiddle produces cacophony in untrained hands but beautiful music in a master's hands; evil is taking God's handiwork and creating cacophony instead of symphony

10. Service to Self vs. Service to Others: We're all born on a spectrum from service to self (A Street) to service to others (B Street). As infants, we're naturally self-engrossed, but should move toward service to others as we mature, recognizing divinity in others like Mother Teresa or Gandhi did.

Every thought, word, and action moves us along this spectrum, and each of us has a "center of gravity" somewhere on it. When we camp at the "service to self" end, life becomes about survival and selfishness, which becomes greed, which becomes fear, which becomes anger, which becomes violence—and evil arrives.

11. Cosmic Forces: I reference Nikolai Kardashev's typology of civilizations:

- Type 1: Can harvest all planetary resources sustainably
- Type 2: Can harvest their entire solar system
- Type 3: Can harvest their entire galaxy
- Type 4: Can harvest the universe (my addition)
- Type 5: Can harvest all parallel universes (my addition)

If an extradimensional or extraterrestrial civilization were Type 3 or 4 but not spiritually evolved, we would simply be a resource for them. Human emotion might be their energy source, and they might foment evil and wars on our planet to feed themselves emotionally or psychologically.

12. Projection: Carl Jung's idea of the shadow—that we all contain shadow material. For Jung, the shadow is 80% unrealized potential (abilities never activated due to circumstances) and 20% repressed trauma. Rather than deal with our shadow, we project it onto others:

- Projecting onto another person leads to interpersonal conflict
- A community projecting onto another community creates prejudice
- A nation projecting onto another nation creates propaganda and war
- Humanity projecting onto nature leads to environmental destruction

Projection is a double-sided illusion—failure to see ourselves as we are and tendency to see others as they're not. We need "retrojection"—recognizing that others serve as screens showing what's in our hearts, then taking back our projections to work with our own shadow material.

Discussion with Experts

[Michael's comments]: In Steiner's cosmology, Lucifer, Ahriman, and Christ are beings. Lucifer was the most light-filled angel who believed he was God—this is "false power." Ahriman (Satan in the Bible) represents "false powerlessness"—making us forget our divine nature. These forces keep us from Christ consciousness.

[Richard's request]: I liked what you said about Lucifer and Ahriman but would love to hear it again.

[Revisiting the concepts]: The abuse of science and technology is Ahriman's work; the abuse of siddhis and spirituality is Lucifer's work. Science plus conscience is the dance between them. With humility, Lucifer would serve God, and Ahriman would serve incarnated beings. With power, Lucifer leads to service to self and disinterest in others, while Ahriman leads to service to self and domination of others.

Lucifer leads to false asceticism (pseudomysticism), focused on the hereafter; Ahriman leads to hedonism (pseudorealism), focused on the here and now. Christ consciousness emerges from the dance between these forces—like the vesica formed by intersecting circles, shaped like a vagina because it's the birth canal for our evolutionary process.

[Question about nature and God]: Looking at nature's beauty and wrongly inferring that the tree is God or nature is God is reducing the totality to a particular manifestation. Christ consciousness recognizes the divinity in all beings—every tree is a holographic fractal of the divine, not the totality of God reduced to one manifestation.

[Question about focusing on individuals]: By recognizing the divine in an individual manifestation, you're not creating separation but connecting to ultimate source. Falling in love momentarily recognizes the divine in your beloved, connecting you to source.

[Question about light and darkness]: I follow the "80/20 rule"—80% of my energy focuses on the light, but 20% confronts the darkness. The four faces of compassion are confirmation (encouragement), cooperation (playing our roles), compensation (making up for others' mistakes), and confrontation (calling out what's wrong).

[Question about yin and yang]: They are not symbols of good and evil. Both light and dark are necessary and good. The darkness of the womb is the fecund ground from which life emerges—Eckhart's "the godhead", the "nothingness" which is the potential for everything. The yin-yang symbol shows a spot of white in the black and black in the white—each born from the other.

Every person should develop both yin and yang qualities—Jung called this the "sacred union" of male and female energies. The ideal evolved person brings forth both. Some community members have stronger yang abilities, others stronger yin, and all are needed. Within an individual, sometimes you need yang energy (protecting a child), sometimes yin (breastfeeding).

[Amy's question about Gaia]: In Irish mythology, the king of Ireland married the land of Ireland yearly—gods as archetypes of culture, goddesses as archetypes of nature. If famine came, it showed the king wasn't keeping his covenant.

Have we broken our covenant with Gaia? Absolutely. Indigenous peoples worldwide recognize this—the concept of Pachamama in South America, the 13 grandmothers from indigenous cultures trying to open our eyes to what we're doing to Mother Earth.

Ahriman seduces us into seeing technology as the only way forward—artificial intelligence meeting all our pleasure needs. Lucifer tempts us to become disconnected mystics. Our job is to repair the covenant, refuse to become homo artificialis, and instead become homo spiritualis.