

People can operate out of one of two emotions, love or fear. Both emotions will color ones outlook, actions, and decisions. Depending on whether we are acting from fear or love we will shape our views and experiences to match. Ethical systems are a structure designed to help us make our decisions from a place of love rather than operating from a fear centered perspective. When we see life from a place of being fearful most of our decisions become self-centered. To open ourselves to love allows us to take in the bigger picture and make decisions based on the good of others and ourselves.

I firmly believe that there are only two emotions, namely, love and fear. Everything else that we call emotions are aspects of these two. Happiness, joy, ecstasy, peace and the other emotions we call positive are all outcomes of being in a place of love. On the other side, we express our fear as anger, hurt, sadness, despair, loss, etc. To evolve means to recognize our fears and choose to let go of them and operate from a space of love. On the surface, this may seem an easy task, yet it is daunting. So much of what we do and are is fear based, moving beyond this is a major challenge should we choose to take it on.

We learn from a very young age to be fearful. We receive numerous messages from parents and others telling us not to do things, not to touch, to be careful, etc. Most of these messages are sent as a way to protect us and to teach us what not to do to stay safe. Our parents and primary caregivers, for the most part, do not intend to instill fear in us. It happens as an effect of trying to teach a child how to be safe in an often dangerous world. Yet, most parents would say that “No” is one of the first words a child learns. We learn to take in negative messages much more readily than positive ones.

Some would say we are born into sin. I don't see it that way. Sin is a product of fear. When we view ourselves as separate from others we open the door to sin. If we hold the belief that we have to protect what is ours, get as much as we can and not let others see our weakness we open the door to sinful actions. In a religious context sin is viewed as a separation from god or as Childs stated it (p. 33): "Sin is, then, understood as a disruption of that pattern in which we find ourselves profoundly alienated from our true being: divided within ourselves and divided from God and from each other." In Childs's quote we could substitute the word fear for the word sin and the statement would still be valid. We live in fear when we feel we are alone and separate from others and what we deem our spiritual source.

Fear is the cause of the ills that face the world. Operating from fear and separation we are unable to look beyond ourselves. We can not and will not see the connectedness that we all share. Our concerns are only about our needs and wants and other are left to fend for themselves. This leads to hurt and bitterness amongst people and nations. We need to control ourselves and others to keep the fear at bay.

Most of us don't like to express that we are fearful. We are taught not to show it or even acknowledge it. Instead we express it in other ways, the most dangerous of which is anger. Anger is an active way to avoid looking at what makes us afraid. We turn our fear of loss, separation, inadequacy, or injustice outward and place it upon others as if it is something they are doing to us. This then allows us to react to them with anger and aggression, doing so we feel as if we are doing something. In fact, all we are really doing is avoiding looking within to see what lives beneath our anger.

Love is the opposite fear, but what is love? We speak of many types of love,

romantic love, the love between parents and children, love of our country and the love of chocolate are all expressions of this thing we call love. Yet, what we are talking about here is something a bit different. Childs (p. 30) and numerous others have used the term agape to describe this type of love. The American Heritage Dictionary defines agape as “in a state of wonder or amazement”. The “wonder or amazement” that I see in the type of love we are talking about is that which sees beyond the trappings of another, that sees to the heart hidden beneath the other's fear. We all possess within us a place that has been undamaged by the world. A piece of us that has not been hurt by all the fear, masked as anger or hatred, bitterness or sorrow. I see this piece as our divine spark, yet we can as easily see it as our perfect humanity. When we recognize the commonness that we both share in this perfect place, when we reach out and speak to that part, that is agape love. Stephen Paul said it this way: “what a joy to recognize ones self in another's eyes”.

As I view it, we are at war with ourselves. The war is between our ego, which acts to protect us and keep us separate from others and our Divine spark, which knows only love and guides us to extend that to others. This is the classic battle of good versus evil. The ego can and will make decisions that are viewed as hurtful, sinful and evil, all while telling us that is what we need to do for our own protection and well being. Our Divine spark urges us to share only love. Between these two polarities the actions of the world play out. When we look at the world we see that it is predominately ego (i.e. Fear) driven. To change the world we don't need great plans, we only need to change our minds. When we shift from allowing our ego to make decisions to following our divine spark, the miracle happens, the world changes. As A Course in Miracles states it (p. 77): “Whatever you accept into your mind has reality for you. It is your acceptance of it that

makes it real". This is the source of the battle between good and evil, the conflict within each of our minds. Where we chose to put our focus, that is what becomes real and that is what is expressed in the world. We each need to choose, do we walk with our ego and live in pain, fear, and separation or do we walk with our divine self and be a source of love and healing?

One would think this choice we all need to make is a simple one, be part of the whole and live in peace and plenty or be alone and afraid. Yet, as world history and human interaction shows we all most often choose the ego and its path. The nice thing about choices is that we can always choose anew. Even after a lifetime of choosing the ego as our master we can make a new choice and in doing so begin the recreation of the world. Ethical decision making is an attempt to bring our Divine self to the ego.

Unfortunately, this just continues the problem. We may make better decisions but they do not become a natural part of our being, we are only trying to control the unruly child of our mind, our ego. The sane choice is to choose to let go of our ego based self and only give reality to our Divine spark. The difficulty is in learning how to make our choices from love. We can begin by understanding how the ego works. By understanding that we can start to become aware of which we are operating from, fear or love.

The ego does not operate in the present, that is the domain of love. The ego only places its attention on the past and future, this is how we know it from love. If our thoughts are dwelling on past wrongs or events, or placing hope on future happenings we are making ego based decisions. It is only when we can quiet ourselves, let go off past and future, that we can hear the voice of love. In this moment there is no past or future, no guilt or shame, only I and my brother and we are one. From here I can (we all can)

extend only love. A Course in Miracles calls this the Holy Instant and defines it as  
(facim.org)

the instant outside time in which we choose forgiveness instead of guilt, the miracle instead of a grievance, the Holy Spirit instead of the ego; the expression of our little willingness to live in the present, which opens into eternity, rather than holding on to the past and fearing the future, which keeps us in hell; also used to denote the ultimate holy instant, the real world, the culmination of all the holy instants we have chosen along the way.

This is our way out of the traps of the ego and the only tool we truly have to make things different.

Love and fear, the ego and the Divine, this is the struggle of humanity, as we choose so we make the world. All of our morals and ethics are tools to bring us back to this choice. The ego likes to make matters complicated, since in complication lives confusion, from here the ego draws its power. The path beyond ego is a simple one, yet very threatening. To “sit quietly and know that I am God” (ACIM) is the most threatening thing the ego can encounter. It is at this time that the ego knows that all that it is, is a lie, and this, it does not want to face. We want to place our God and devils outside ourselves, yet this is just another tool of ego. We are both, good and evil, but only one can have power. If we choose to align with the ego, we create a world where evil is real and separation is truth. The simple change of mind to align with Godness is all that is required to change our thinking and heal the world.

## References

Childs, J. M., (1992) *Faith, Formation, and Decision*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress

Foundation for Inner Peace (1985), *A Course in Miracles* Glen Ellen: Foundation for  
Inner Peace

Foundation for Inner Peace, web resource, Glossary retrieved on November 12, 2003  
from <http://www.facim.org/acim/glossary.htm>