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## ON “THE ROLE OF SATAN IN EVOLUTION”

### Sources

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- (1) The Second Coming of Christ. The Resurrection of the Christ Within You. A revelatory commentary on the original teachings of Jesus. Paramahansa Yogananda (also: “SCC”)
- (2) Love is a Radiant Light. The Life & Words of St. Charbel. Hanna Skandar. Angelico Press (also: “LRL”)
- (3) The Awakening of Faith. The Classic Exposition of Mahayana Buddhism. Asvaghosa. Dover Publications (also: “ASV”)

### Contents

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The following are some considerations from public sources on evil (Satan) and its role in evolution.

From the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda.

From the very beginning evil existed to delude man and influence his free choice. How easy it is for the majority of people to be tempted materially, to languish spiritually and do the very things that will hurt themselves. The warfare of animals preying on each other, the battle of opposites and destructive forces in nature, predatory germs, delusion’s power to effect wrong judgment in man, infinitely creative temptations to do wrong even against better judgment, distinctly show that there is an objective evil force that tries to destroy the evidential expressions of the Infinite Good. [SCC, 138]

Did evil have its origin in the plan of a good and perfect God? The Lord Himself answered prophet Isaiah: “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee (invested thee with thy powers and attributes), though thou hast not known Me... I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things”. (Isaiah 45:5,7) The illumined *rishis* of India similarly perceived: “... Joy, sorrow, birth, death, feat, courage...these diverse states of being spring from Me alone as modifications of My nature...I am the Source of everything; from Me all creation emerges.” (God Talks with Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita X:4-5,8) [SCC, 139]

Whitin the creative Holy Ghost Intelligence are all the governing laws and principles that manifest, sustain, and dissolve every part and particle of the Lord’s universe. The Holy Ghost inherited from Spirit the independence to create and govern within the mandated vast scope of the manifesting powers endowed to it. This Creative Power, which gives birth and nurture to creation, is referred to in Hindu scripture as Maha-Prakriti, Great Nature, the potential of all becomings. When this power goes forth from Ishvara (God the Father of Creation) as Intelligent Creative Cosmic Vibration, it takes on a dual nature. As Para-Prakriti (Pure Nature) it creates and expresses all good and beauty in harmony with

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the God-tuned immanent Kutashta Chaitanya (Christ Consciousness). Its divine nature is magnificently expressed in the causal and astral heavenly realms. But as the Vibratory Power descends into material manifestation, it becomes conjointly a deviant Apara-Prakriti (Impure Nature), creating through the circumscriptive laws of gross matter and the uttermost density of delusion. [SCC, 140-141]

These two aspects of Prakriti correspond to the Christian designations of Holy Ghost and Satan. The Holy Ghost in tune with Christ Consciousness creates goodness and beauty and draws all manifestations toward a symbiotic harmony and an ultimate oneness with God. Satan (from the Hebrew, literally “the adversary”) pulls outward from God into entanglement with the delusive world of matter, employing the mayic cosmic delusion to diffuse, confuse, blind, and bind. Thus, Satan is defined as an archangel that fell from heaven, a force fallen from the grace of attunement with the Holy Creative Vibration of God. Jesus said: “I beheld Satan as lighting fall from heaven.” (Luke 10:18) The divine Cosmic Vibration with its creative light became a divided force (Para- and Apara-Prakriti). The satanic or apara aspect asserts its independence and turns from God and the heavenly realms to ply its wiles in the grossest region of duality, contrast, inversion, oppositional states, and mortality. Because it enshrouds matter and engages man in the most deceptive confusion of mayic delusion, Jesus referred to this satanic force as a devil, a murderer, and a liar. “The devil...was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). Satan originated as the natural consequence of God’s desireless desire to divide His Sea of Oneness into waves of finite creation – a power of independent will that would wield the laws of material creation to manifest and sustain its existence. The plan of Spirit was that this conscious Cosmic Delusive force should be endowed with independence in order to use maya and avidia to create God-reflecting finite objects out of Holy Ghost cosmic vibratory energy, in harmonious attunement with the divine Christ Intelligence present therein. Perfect gems in mines, perfect flowers, perfect animals, and human soul-luminaries residing on perfect planets where thus created, brought forth as material manifestations from the heavenly astral and causal realms. That is why in the Christian Bible we find the ideal Adam and Eve communing with God, so naturally and simply in the abundant Garden of Eden. After a harmonious existence - a perfect expression of form, health habits, and modes of existence on the stage of time, without suffering, disease, cruel accidents, or painful premature death – all created forms were to return to God. Just as rainbows come and go, or as motion-pictures can be created for entertainment and electrically switched on or off at will, so all created things were to exist as pleasant, mutually entertaining pictures on the screen of space and time, and were to resolve into their pure essence in God at the end of their cycle, after the drama of that period was perfectly played. Thus originally all Cosmic Energy, being vibrated by the Holy Ghost and Christ Intelligence, was flowing Godward, creating perfect images from astral light turned inward to reveal God. The conscious Cosmic Delusive Force, with its independent power from God, saw that if the cosmic-energy manifestations of the Holy Ghost Vibration were to dissolve back into Spirit according to the divine plan, then its own separate existence would also cease.

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Without the Holy Vibration, there would be neither a reason for nor sustenance of the Cosmic Delusive Force. This thought frightened Satan; the sole purpose of his being - to keep these forms into manifestation - was threatened. So, for his own purpose of self-perpetration he rebelled against God, as an obstreperous general sometimes turns against his king, and started to misuse his cosmic powers. He manipulated the laws and principles of creation under his command to establish pattern of imperfections that would preclude their automatic resolution back into Spirit. Satan became as lightening falling from heaven because he turned the light of cosmic energy away from its focus on God and concentrated it on gross matter. The heaven-revealing astral light became the bedimmed physical luminaries of sun, fire, electricity, which show only material substances. [SCC, 140-141]

In whatever way it has been rationalized, Satan's fall started an enduring conflict between the God-tuned Holy Ghost with its immanent Christ Intelligence, and the matter-bent lover of finite creation, Satan. Satan has conjured an ugly counterpart for every beautiful creation of God in man's body and mind, and in Nature. God created a wondrous human form to be charged by cosmic energy, and to live in a free, unconditioned divine state; but Satan created hunger and the lure of sensory indulgence. For mental power, Satan substituted mental temptation; for soul's wisdom, Satan contrived perplexing ignorance; for the grandeur of Nature, Satan countered with the potentialities of warfare, disease, pestilence, earthquakes, floods – a horde of disasters. God made man immortal, to reign on earth as an immortal; Satan's evils bound man with the consciousness of mortality. Man was to behold the drama of change with a changeless immortal mind; and after seeing the change dancing on the stage of changelessness, he was to return to the bosom of Eternal Blessedness by consciously dematerializing his physical form. If Adam and Eve, the symbolic first beings, had not succumbed to the temptations of Satan, and their descendants had not allowed themselves to be influenced by hereditary ignorance, modern man would not have to experience heartrending, painful deaths through accident and disease. Man, being out of tune with God, has lost the power of dematerialization given to the original human beings, so he lives with the frightening prospect of the movie of life being prematurely cut off before he has finished seeing the whole perfect picture of his changeful life. In the temptation of Adam and Eve we see that Satan's evil was at work from the earliest period. [SCC, 141-142]

Reincarnation evolved from Satan's attempt to immortalize changeable flesh in order to keep creatures under his subjugation. Flesh, being subject to change, was not perdurable but fated to succumb to the ultimate change of the state called death. Immortal souls in bondage to the karmic law of recurrence could not go back to God with their Satan-engendered imperfect desires, so they had to return repeatedly to earth, through rebirth in new fleshly forms. [SCC, 147]

Satan has a subtle strategy for propagating desires: the introduction of pain, which is purely a mental phenomenon. The original humans had great self-control and a mind that was impersonally nonattached to the body, and so did not feel pain when the body was

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injured. Originally, pain as a part of creation was simply a heightened sense of awareness to protect the fragile physical and mental instrumentalities from injurious clashes with the objects and laws of gross matter. But by increasing man's attachment to the body and ego, and thereby his mental sensitiveness to their complaints, Satan made pain excruciating. Every impingement of discomfort, physical or emotional, great or small, creates a desire for appeasement. Similarly with the affliction of sorrow imposed by Satan on the phenomenon of death: Death was to have been a conscious, happy transition from the changeful body to the Changeless Spirit. That was God's idea of death. Satan so influenced man's consciousness to desire lasting happiness in the physical body that death became a dreaded, painful parting from the mortal form, causing unconsciousness at the time of transition. Because of Satan's delusion, man fails to see the godly event that death was meant to be – a promotion, a liberation from toilsome, imperfect earth-life to perfect, everlasting freedom in God. Rather, the grief at being forced to depart the material playground engenders a Satan-devised desire to come back. Ultimately, however, Satan defeats his own purpose; for physical pain and sorrow are also prods that at last cause matter-weary souls to seek their preordained freedom in God. Emancipation is hastened by playing the living drama of a perfect life of health, abundance, and wisdom with a detached mental aboveness. Satan-engendered dualities of pain and sorrow are greatly lessened by a strong mind that does not exacerbate suffering by fear or nervous imagination. That is, if one can remove the consciousness of sickness and not fear illness if it does come; and not crave health while suffering from ill health, this helps one to remember one's own soul, the transcendent Self that has never undergone the fluctuations of either sickness or health, but has always been perfect. ("The Supreme Spirit, transcendent and existing in the body, is the detached Beholder, the Consenter, the Sustainer, the Experiencer, the Great Lord, and also the Higher Self" quoting God Talk with Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, XIII:22). If one can feel and know that he is a child of God, and as such possesses everything, even as his Father God does – whether be he poor or rich – he can be free. If one can believe in his soul-omniscience, even while endeavoring to add to his little store of knowledge, he can transcend the ignorance of delusion. All dualities belong to the domain of ignorance: fear of sickness and a desire for mortal health, fear of poverty and a desire for opulence, a feeling of inferiority from a lack of knowledge as well as a desire for a great intellect. Of course, if one is stricken with ill health, failure, or ignorance, this doesn't mean he should supinely continue in that state. He should rise the perfection within him to express outwardly as health, prosperity, and wisdom, but without acknowledging the pain of lack or the fear of failure. Man should know that his struggle for completeness is born of delusion: for he already has all he needs within his inner powerful Self. [SCC, 148-149]

God in His omniscience must surely have anticipated the origin of evil in the outgoing powers of His creative archangel. But even though delusive duality was the only means by which God could organize a cosmic play in order to enjoy Himself through His many selves, He assured that no convolution of His design would be outside the embrace of His Goodness reflected ubiquitously in the Christ Consciousness. This magnetic power of God's love would in time attract all beings back to Him through evolution into divine

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awakening. By an infinite display in nature and the like of man, God's Goodness advertises itself to impress and influence him to turn of his own free will toward the Abode of Bliss. Satan counteracts in every instance with deceptive, charmingly pleasant contrivances of temporary satisfaction to dupe gullible man into seeking permanent happiness in impermanent materiality. People succumb to Satan's offering because he puts honey in his evil pleasures; they taste nice in the beginning, but end in dire consequences. The Almighty could annihilate Satan in an instant. By divine fiat He could wholly subjugate the Satanic Force. Various world scriptures speak of partial dissolution of the earth because of excessive evils. As described in Genesis, much of the earth during Noah's time was devastated by a flood. But God does not illogically use His omnipotence to arbitrarily destroy His self-perpetuating creation, for that would contradict His own laws and the independence of action given by Him to Satan, empowering that Force to use these principles of manifestation. Since God gave independence to man as well as to Satan, He can free souls only with their permission and cooperation. Satan has created such a delusive attachment to the instrumentality of a physical body that even if God were at this moment to offer liberation to the masses, I daresay not many would be eager to depart this merry playground - to leave behind their accustomed bodily residence with their possessions and sensory opportunities. [SCC, 150-151]

The evil of delusion exists only in form, not in the essence of the Spirit. [SCC, 153]

Jesus did not deny this Evil Force. His intuitive knowledge recognized this power as a conscious Satan who lured him with the patterns of evil arrayed side by side with the divine patterns of God. Addressing the objectified Force, Jesus destroyed its binding effect with the power of wisdom in his command: "Get thee behind me, Satan" – which is to say: "Let delusion be left behind my soul racing toward Spirit". It is folly to deny subjective or objective evil while one is still grappling with delusion. The urgent need is to be watchful and protect oneself from the destructive patterns of evil everywhere, as temptations within and imperfection and strife in Nature. One should never think it possible to best Satan at his own game. Just when one feels sure of invulnerability, the devil tricks his opponent with some ruse and the challenger loses. It is better not to enter into sport with his temptations. There are plenty of entertaining good games in God's playing fields in which to test one's mettle and prove oneself a worthy winner. One should rally the patterns of the Christ Consciousness-inspired goodness in one's conscience and reason, and in the presence of God as the harmony and beauty in all Nature. When the consciousness of goodness is strengthened, its light dispels the perilous darkness of Satan's evil influence. [SCC, 156]

From the teachings of St. Charbel (Homily: Acknowledge Your Sins So as to Kill the Evil That is in You).

The devil never shows his true face. He knows what man likes and what attracts him; he presents to him what he likes and what attracts him. He speaks to you about what you would like to hear. He shows you the things that you would like to see. He offers you the



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things that you would like to touch. He gives you to eat the things that you would like to taste. [...] He plays on your instincts and affections, on your ties and attachments, and on the slavery of your habits. [...] Everything that gathers and unifies for the good is the work of God. On the contrary, everything that divides and separates comes from the devil. He dominates man by means of the things in life. The more you get rid of them, the better you are protected against him. Conversely, the more you become attached to them, the more subject you are to the power of evil. The devil is the lord of this world; the more you plunge into it, the more you come under his domination; you may as well get rid of it so as to be free. Do not forget that you are not of this world, do not drown in it. [...] The devil hates the image of God and the human being who receives it. He wants to deform this image in man. To do that, the only method is to stop the work of the Spirit of God in man; then the only image that remains is that of the animal. [...] Remember that you cannot combat the devil unless you get down on your knees before God. [LRL, 88-90]

From the teachings of Asvaghosa on temptations and confusion generated by evil.

Some people scantily supplied with the root of merit may yield to the temptation of Mâras, tîrtakas, or evil spirits. [For instance] those evil ones sometimes assuming evil forms may frighten the practiser; sometimes manifesting themselves in beautiful figures, they may fascinate him; sometimes appearing in a form of a deva, or of a Boddhisattva, or even of a Buddha with all his excellent and magnified features, they may speak about dhârani or the paramita, or may give instructions about various means of emancipation, declaring that there is no hatred, no friendship, no causation, no retribution, or declaring that all things in the world are absolute nothingness, that they are in their essence Nirvana itself. Or they may reveal to the practicer his own past and future states of existence, they may teach him to read the thoughts of others, may grant him incomparable power of eloquence, may induce him to covetously for worldly fame and advantages. [ASV, 136-137]

Further, through the influence of those evil ones the practices may sometimes be inordinately susceptible to dissatisfaction or delight; he may sometimes be too misanthropic or too philanthropic; he may sometimes be inclined to enjoy drowsiness; he may sometimes not sleep for a long time; he may sometimes be affected by diseases; he may sometimes remain discouraged and indolent; he may sometimes rise all on a sudden with full energy, but only to sink down again into languor; he may sometimes, being over-skeptical, not believe in anything; he may sometimes, abandoning the excellent religious observance, enjoy himself in frivolous occupations, indulge in worldly affairs, gratify his desires and inclinations; he may sometimes attain to the samâdhi of heretics [i.e., tîrthaka] and, remaining in a state of trance a day or two, or even seven, and being supplied imaginarily with some palatable food and drink, and feeling very comfortable mentally and physically, he may have no sensation of hunger or thirst; he may sometimes be induced to enjoy female fascination; he may sometimes be very irregular in taking meals, either too much or too little; he may sometimes look either very handsome or very ugly in appearance. [ASV, 137-138]

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If the practicer get enraptured by those visions and prejudices, he will lose his root of merit accumulated in his previous existences. Therefore, he should exercise a deep and thorough contemplation, thinking that all those [heretical states of samâdhi] are the temptations of Mâras or evil spirits that take advantage of his deficiency in merits and his intensity of karma-hindrances. [ASV, 138]