Chapter • I

INTRODUCTION

The obsession of mankind with the problem of evil is as old as the history of human existence. The primitive man of the pre-historic period suffered evil; the sophisticated man of the complex modern society is also experiencing the cruciating pangs of evil. Life is a unique blending of good and evil. It is, however, a baffling problem to define evil. Since evil is subjective and relative, it is better to define it in juxtaposition to good. It would also help to comprehend evil better if we approach the words good and evil from theological as well as from non-theological perspectives.

'GOOD' AND 'EVIL' AS NON-THEOLOGICAL TERMS-

Evil is one of the constellation of words that must be defined in relation to each other, e.g., right and wrong (moral terms describing human volitions and actions) and good and bad (referring not to what we do but to the experiences we undergo). Often evil is used to cover both the wrong and the bad — both wrong volitions and bad experiences. Taking bad as opposed to good, it appears that "its basic meaning is that which we dislike, do not welcome, and would shun. That which all men would shun is the opposite of happiness, namely the state of misery,
reflecting the non-fulfilment and radical frustration of our nature.\(^1\)

"We have seen that from our human point of view, unaided by religious faith, the good is that which we welcome and the bad is that which we would shun. The analogous theological definition will be in terms of the divine purpose for the created world. Whatever tends to promote the attainment of that purpose will be good and whatever tends to thwart it will be bad. The full and irreversible fulfilment of that plan would be the complete good sought by God in His good in relation to His creation, whilst any final and irrevocable frustration of that plan would constitute irredeemable and ultimate badness.\(^2\)

In the ethical sense evil is the absence of good or unsatisfied desire. But these definitions do not suffice. To define evil as the absence or opposite of good we will be faced with the problem 'what is good' and the answer is bound to be subjective and relative since it depends on individual standpoint. Again, to define evil as unsatisfied desire, presupposes that desire itself is not evil; if it is, its frustration is good rather than evil. And on the top of it to find supreme good in the satisfaction of desire, and evil in its frustration, ignores the possibility of a higher and external moral imperative taking precedence over more personal desire.

Again from the theological point of view evil is that which does not conform to the will of God. Though apparently it appears to be

2 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
simple but in fact it poses great problem because the will of God is manifested by both direct command and by permission. Evil, like all other things, can only exist by divine permission and in this sense its existence is not contrary to the will of God. But the thing in itself and the fact of its existence are not the same thing. The will of God may permit the existence of an evil which in itself is directly opposed to that will; and such permission does not implicate God as the author or the cause of evil. It has always been perplexing. If evil is mere negation of good, it has no real existence. In fact the good exists in a lesser degree than is to be desired. The existence of the so-called evil means, therefore, that the universe is not perfect. Then it is no reflection on the goodness of God that He is pleased to let the world progress through imperfection to perfection. Such a progression is analogous to what is seen in the animal world. Relativity is another element in the problem of evil. Often under circumstances and in some relations a thing may be evil which is not really evil ultimately (cf. Partial evil, universal good - Alexander Pope, Essay on Man). But we cannot judge the circumstances because our knowledge is only partial as only a portion of the reality lies within our ken.

There are discernible many shades of evil -- social, political, religious, moral and metaphysical. Evil poses so great a problem because of the challenge it throws to the foundations of many religious beliefs as evil in the world seems inconsistent with the view that the
world was created and is maintained by an omnipotent and all-loving
Creator. Of course since the fundamental tenets of creation and the
role of God in the process of creation are different in different
religious beliefs, the acuteness of the problem of evil differs from
religion to religion. Let us discuss in brief the reaction of different
religions on the face of the problem of evil and also their endeavour
to justify, or at least to understand, the fact of evil.

One of the earliest religions of the world is Zoroastrianism
which was founded on the teaching of the prophet 'Zarathustra' (popularly
known as Zoroaster and hence the name of the religion), flourished in
Persia and remained dominant for more than thousand years till the
advent of Islam. The scripture, known as Avesta (or Zend-Avesta)
consisting of various hymns, treatises and poems, deal in good details
the doctrine of creation and the problem of good and evil.

Zarathustra's God is known as Ahura-Mazda ("The Wise Lord"),
who has the attributes of a sky-God, like the God 'Varuna' of Hinduism.
The religion is monotheistic. Zoroaster denouncing the cult of Gods of
popular religion, equating such beings with evil spirits who seduced
men from the worship of the one Spirit. "The belief in the malicious
opposition to the purified religion that he preached and the incompati-
bility of Ahura-Mazda's goodness with the creation of evil led Zoroaster
to conceive of a cosmic opposition to God. He mentions Druj (The Lie),
an evil force waging war against Ahura-Mazda" (The Encyclopedia of
Philosophy, Vol.6, p.381).
Then the question arises as to who created this evil spirit or at least, who tolerated its existence? If Ahura-Mazda did not create, or even tolerate, evil-spirit and if its creation and existence are beyond the realm of Ahura-Mazda, then the latter obviously loses claim to omnipotence. And on the other hand, if it is He who created or tolerated evil, then His claim to being 'all-merciful' is shattered. To cope with this apparent contradiction the theologians have dealt in detail the whole process of creation.

Historical time was divided into four eras, each lasting three thousand years. In the first era, God brings the angelic spirits and the prototype of creatures. Since God creates by means of thought since He foresees Angra-Maniyu (which is evil incarnate), the latter comes into existence. During the second era the primeval man and the primeval ox exist peacefully. But in the third era the Evil Spirit, Angra-Maniyu, succeeds in attacking and destroying them. From the seeds of these primeval beings men and animals arise and there is a mixture of good and evil in the world. The last era, beginning with Zoroaster's mission, will culminate in the final divine victory and the universe will then be restored to an ever-lasting, purified state in which the saved, now immortal, sing the praise of Ahura-Mazda.

This explanation fails to justify the existence of evil. If Angra-Maniyu arises through the thought of Ahura-Mazda, then the evil comes from the Creator. To get rid of this dilemma, another theory is
put forward which holds that both \textit{Ahura-Mazda} and \textit{Angra-Mahayu} issued from a first principle, \textit{Zarvan} (Infinite Time). \textit{Zarvan} is beyond good and evil since only with the realm of finite time is the contrast between good and evil meaningful.

"He preached an ethic based on the social life of the husbandman, the good man being one who tends his cattle and tills the soil in a spirit of peace and neighbourliness. The good man must also resist the worshipers of the \textit{daeva} (gods) who, together with the evil spirit opposed to \textit{Ahura-Mazda}, threatens the farmers livelihood. These ideas probably reflected the social condition of Zoroaster's time and country, when there was a transition from the nomadic to the pastoral life. The deeva-worshipers would then represent band of nomadic raiders, and the new purified would be a means of cementing a settled, pastoral fabric of society." (Ibid., p. 261). This amply shows the social aspect of religion.

\section*{The Hindu Concept of Sin}

\subsection*{The Pathway of Good and Evil}

"A concept appearing frequently in Vedic literature which, it is suggested, illustrates a degree of moral awareness and which contributes to the Vedic concept of sin, is that which is portrayed in the similes in which the action of one's life are likened to a 'pathway'. The prayer is sometime offered which expresses to the Deity
the desire that the good pathway might be known to the one praying”

(George Rees Jensen: Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis entitled The Hindu
Concept of Sin kept at Delhi University Library, (cf. Lead me to the
path of good from the path of evil; transfer me from darkness to
illumination).

In Upanishad evil is something negative. It is not intended
in the creation but it is the negative of good as negation of light is
darkness. Upanishad says that originally there was only Atman or
Brahman. It was the Supreme Unity. At some stage it desired to be
many. Hence it manifested itself into many and hence the world. First
of all the Atman manifested in the form of Mahat (like Nous of Platonism)
and then out of Mahat came Ahankar (ego); out of Ahankar came Manas
(mind); on the other hand came five Tan Mantras and out of those the
five Bhutas -- the Sky, the Air, the Light, the Water and the Earth.

It is owing to the separatist tendency that we have hatred
towards others and fear of others. If this separatist tendency is done
away with, all will be Brahman. In diversity there is evil and good
but in unity (i.e., Brahman) there is none since unity is beyond good
and evil. In the diversity what is harmonious is good and what is
discordant is evil. Exclusive diversity is perceptible (visible) owing
to ignorance. If ignorance is removed, diversity is gone. Ignorance is
something personal and not something universal. If an individual could
understand the real purpose of the ultimate the feeling of suffering will
change to good to him. This is the supreme Vedantic position.
But as per theory of *Karma* whatever evil is there it is not the creation of God or because of the 'ignorance', rather it is because of the cumulative effect of all the bad deeds of the inhabitants in their respective previous births, e.g., in a *Mela* (fair) there is *Dhula* (dust); but the organiser had not created this *Dhula* deliberately but it is because of the cumulative effect of all the individual striking the earth.

To Sankara evil is an illusion. He gives the examples of rope in the darkness -- it is inexplicable because in semi-darkness it will appear like a snake but when light is on, it is perceived as rope. Now the problem is what about the snake? Was it there previously or not? It was not physically present but it was present in conception. It is *Maya* (illusion). It is *Aishya* (ignorance) and as such it defies definition. This is the source of all evil, in the sense, that it brings perversion or distortion in our knowledge of *Brahman*. This *Maya* has two-fold entity -- *Abaran Shakti* (power of covering) and *Bikshan Shakti* (power of projection). Shankara follows the Upanishadic version in opining that the element of *Maya* obscures or hides *Brahman* from the naked eye because otherwise the eye would have been dazzled and secondly the power of projection reveals itself in the manifestation of all these worldly objects -- but if the eye is Divine or Higher then it can stand the sight of *Brahman*. Plato also took a similar stand which in turn influenced Shelley profoundly.

This *Vedanta* of Sankara (beginning of 6th century A.D.) is the
most prominent of the versions of the Vedantic philosophy. It is only Sankara who has treated 'evil' so emphatically. But others (Ramanujam of 11th century being the most prominent of them) have taken the stand that there is no Evil in the world — to be more precise, there can be no Evil because the universe is the manifestation of Brahman, and since Brahman is all good, there can be no place for Evil whatsoever. Evil has no cosmic entity — it exists only in the individual mind because of the narrowness of the souls or Jeevas — then the question arises as why this narrowness of the soul which is the part of Brahman. Ramanujam contends that this is owing to some deeds of their respective previous lives.

Sankara's is Monism (Adwait), Ramanujam's is Qualified Monism (Vishistadwait) and Madhavacharya's is Dualism (Dwaita-bad). Madhavacharya contends that world and soul are different from Brahman though they are dependent on Brahman but not vice versa. He further contends that Brahman is bereft of evil but the world and soul are full of evil because of the bad deed of the souls. In answering the question as to why did the first soul commit some evil deed, he says that since the universe has no beginning, there is no such thing as first evil. This is of course, an evading answer.

According to Sankhaya there are two basic entities — Prakriti and Purusha. Prakriti remains inactive, it is unconscious or ignorant, homogeneous or dormant whereas Purusha is multiple, knowledge, conscious, heterogeneous. Normally before creation Prakriti and Purusha remain
separated but somehow (which Sankhya does not explain) when they come together the Prakriti is activated receiving the reflection of Purusha. Then comes Evil when the reflection claims to be the original (as in the case of a mirror the virtual image vies for the post-entity of original object) -- hence this suffering, pain and all sorts of evils. Thus the confusion between the original and the reflection is the source of evil. When this confusion (which is ignorance) is removed, evil is removed also.

Yoga is based on the metaphysical concept of Sankhya. About eradication of evil Sankhya says that the Purusha must be conscious of the fact that it is not bound by the reflection and there is no question of salvation. By being aware of the fact the Purusha can automatically get rid of this bondage and there can be no evil. But Yogins say something different. They opine that mere intellectual conviction won't do. We are to go to the root. The root is the psychic point of intermixture of Purusha and Prakriti where the consciousness of Purusha is intermixed with the unconsciousness of Prakriti and this intermixture is effected by mutual modifications. This process should not bring confusion between the consciousness of Purusha and the elements of Prakriti. Mental modifications are just waves on the water. If the waves are there reflections will not be visible. If these waves are subsided then the consciousness of Purusha will only be there and no intermixture of the elements of Prakriti. When this consciousness is constant this is Samadhi (unconscious consciousness) and through Samadhi one may get rid of the world and the evils.
Yogin philosophy is the practical aspect of Sankhya’s philosophy. They say that there is some middle point between the transcendental consciousness and the worldly sense — the Samadhi consciousness and mental modifications — separate the former from the latter, and there is Samadhi as free from all evil.

According to the Vaishnavas (followers of Vishnu, the Lord who protects and rears the creatures. Vishnu is one of the three Gods of Hindu Trinity the other two being Brahma, the Lord of creation and Siva, the Lord of Destruction) cult absence of ‘Love’ is the root-cause of all evil and consequently Love is the panacea for all evils. The eternal union of Lord Krishna and Radha symbolizes the fusion of ‘energy’ and ‘love’ for the maintenance of the balance and equilibrium of creation.

According to Sri Aurobindo ignorance is the source of evil. Thus to him the whole world is not evil. The world is brought into being by Brahm (Satchidananda). Evil does not belong to Satchidananda though He is involved in evil. For Aurobindo Nescience means apparent ignorance and apparent non-existence. Originally there is no evil in Nescience (it being the creation of Satchidananda) but when Nescience develops into Energy, Energy into Matter, and Matter into Life, evil comes in, because Life is egoistic and self-centred. Owing to self-centredness it comes into conflict with Matter and other lives, it perverts the way of behaviour and thereby usher in evil. Initially this evil is of very simple nature but where mind comes in, this evil gradually becomes mor
severe and complex. Later on when Super Mind will dawn (which is
destined to dawn) suffering and evil will go. And if for the time
being we are able to develop supra-mental consciousness there will
be lesser evil and suffering. "Aurobindo explains the problem of the
good and the evil solely in terms of harmony and discord. He does not
believe in the creation of them by separate agencies. As the world is
essentially Saccidamada, it cannot be viewed in terms of any fundamental
polarity of the good and the evil. On the contrary, it should be
explicable uniformly in terms of a single principle. Accordingly, he
takes good and evil as positive and negative aspect of one and the same
principle. He compares falsehood and evil to darkness, while truth and
good to light. Just as darkness is mere absence of light, similarly
falsehood and evil are absence of truth and goodness." 3

Buddhist theory of evil is *Trishna* (desire). Lord Buddha says
that the world is evil and the root of the evil of the world lies in
*Trishna* or desire. So if one can stop the desire the world will stop
for him, i.e., the world will have no effect on him, i.e., the world
will stop existing for him and he will enjoy *Nirvana*. As per Buddha
there are twelve chains in the link of existence and this chain begins
with 'Ignorance'. From 'Ignorance' arises 'Desire'; Desire is followed
by Action (*karma*) and from Action we have Birth and Death and then
re-birth. So in his view also evil is owing to ignorance.

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3 S.P. Singh, *Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead on the Nature of God*:
Aligarh; 1972, p.129.
MUSLIM CONCEPT OF EVIL

Islam, which is the youngest and most codified of all major religions of the world, gave serious thought to the problem of evil and these thoughts are scattered all over the Holy Quran. Since Christianity and Islam are both based upon Hebrew religion, it is no wonder that the treatment of evil in one has some similarities with that of the other. Unlike Hinduism, and like Christianity, Islam is monotheistic, its only and Supreme God being Allah (There is no God except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger). Since Allah is the 'First Cause' and the 'Prime Mover' and anything is nothing but the manifestation of His loving personality, 'Evil', also owes its existence to Him. Faced with the dilemma as to how to account for the presence of evil in the scheme of His who is not only omnipotent but also all-loving, Islamic theology does not try to solve the contradiction in a round-about way. On the other hand, it very categorically says that Allah himself created evil to test Man's sincerity and integrity. He deliberately placed evil as hurdles on the path of Man because He had not created Man as 'automation' having no choice or freedom of will; on the contrary, He gave full choice and volition to Man to choose between good and evil and act accordingly, notwithstanding His warnings about the calamities that would befall Man should he opt for evil ways:

By a soul and Him who balanced it,
And breathed into it its wickedness and its piety,
Blessed now is he who hath kept it pure,
and undone is he who hath corrupt it!'

Islam does not treat evil as non-entity; on the other hand, it accepts the reality of evil and it urges the believers to beware of evil and to shun it. It takes into consideration various social and practical faces of evil such as usury, usurpation, lying, infidelity, cowardice, jealousy, hatred, stealing, profligacy and so on mentioning therein the punishment for the sinners.

CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF EVIL

Of all the religions it is Christianity to which evil poses to be a great problem because the concept of Christian God is a bit different from that of Gods in other religions. The fact of evil constitutes the one most serious objection to the Christian belief in a God of Love. In the Christian theology God is supposed to be omnipotent and all-loving and He is supposed to have created everything ex nihilo. If He is all-loving He will not allow evil to exist and if He is all-powerful He could destroy evil. But evil exists. It is a grave challenge to the faith of any Christian -- "a challenge that was bitingly summed up in Stendhal's epigram 'The only excuse of God is that He does not exist'. The enigma of evil presents so massive and direct a threat to our faith that we are bound to seek within the resources of Christian thought for ways, if not of resolving it, at least of rendering it bearable by the Christian conscience." Hence we

are faced with the problem: "Can the presence of evil in the world be reconciled with the existence of a God who is unlimited both in goodness and power."\(^5\) The constant preoccupation of St. Augustine in the fifth century and Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century with the problem of evil betrays the malady of the "popular belief about the supposed monolithic certitude of the Ages of Faith."\(^6\)

In English 'evil' is usually used in a comprehensive sense which comprises moral evil of wickedness and non-moral evils as disease and disaster. In German \(\text{D} \text{a} \text{l}\) is a general term, covering both moral and non-moral evils; whilst \(\text{R} \text{e} \text{a} \text{g}\) refers more definitely to moral evil. In French \(\text{i} \text{e} \text{m} \text{a} \text{l}\) can be used to refer to all types of evil. Moral evil is evil that we human beings originate: cruel, unjust, vicious and perverse thoughts and deeds; Natural evil is the evil that originates independently of human actions: in disease, bacilli, earthquakes, storms, droughts, tornadoes, etc. In connection with these latter, it is a basic question whether events in Nature which do not directly touch mankind, such as the carnage of animal life, in which one species preys upon another, or the death and decay of plants, or the extinction of a star, are to be accounted as evils. Should evil be defined exclusively in terms of human actions and experiences, with the result that events in the natural universe or in the sub-human world do not as such raise question for theodicy? There is another kind of evil which is called 'metaphysical evil' and which phrase refers to the basic


\(^6\) Ibid.
fact of finitude and limitation within the created universe.

Now let us try to understand the answer of Christian theologians to the problem of evil. "The accepted name for the whole subject comprising the problem of evil and its attempted resolution is theodicy. From the Greek 0 o's, God and justice. The word is thus a technical shorthand for: the defence of the justice and righteousness of God in the face of the fact of evil." But there is also a serious objection. It is contended that the very notion of a theodicy is impious. "It is said to represent a foolish pretention of the human creature, under the illusion that he can judge God's act by human standards. Instead of seeking to justify the ways of God to man we should rather be trying to justify the sinful ways of man to God." Monism and Dualism represent the only two wholly consistent solutions that are possible; and unfortunately neither of them is compatible with the basic claims of Christian theology. Monism, the philosophical view that the universe forms an ultimate harmonious unity, suggests the theodicy that evil is only apparent and would be recognised as good if we could but see it in its full cosmic content. Dualism is a theodicy, on the other hand, rejects this final harmony, insisting that good and evil are utterly and irreconcilably opposed to one another and that their duality can be overcome only by one destroying the other.

7 Ibid., p. 6.
8 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
The monistic philosophy of Spinoza finds expression in a formal metaphysical system. He saw reality as forming a perfect whole — that every thing within it follows from the eternal divine nature — "and saw each finite thing as making its own proper contribution to the infinite perfection. Thus every existing thing occupies a place within the system of universal perfection, and our human notion of evil as that which ought not to be is merely an illusion of our finite perspective." 9 "Nothing, then, is contingent, but all things are determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and to act in a certain manner." 10 Only God is free since He is not determined by anything outside Himself. "It clearly follows from what we have said, that things have been brought into being by God in the highest perfection." 11 Extending this doctrine Spinoza says "good and evil are not objective realities (entia reale) but mental entities (entia rationis), formed by comparing things either in respect of their conformity to a general idea or merely in respect of their utility to ourselves." 12 But Spinoza says that this approach is wrong because there are no general norms, like unchanging Platonic Ideas, to diverge from which is ipso facto to be imperfect. Thus a shrivelled tree, a lame ass, a diseased tiger, or a sinful man are regarded as defective specimens of their respective species. But God did not create eternal

9 Ibid., p. 23.
11 Ibid., I, 33, n. 2.
12 John Hick, op.cit., p. 25.
ideas of Tree, Ass, Tiger or Man but only the many particular trees, asses, tigers and men each of which is its own distinct and unique self. And behind the other type of comparison as to the usefulness of things to ourselves the human mind suffers from another delusion that everything in nature obeys a purpose and works towards some end. But in reality that does not seem to be true.

**EVIL AS PRIVATIO BONI**

Among the Christian theologians trying to understand the problem of evil purely from the standpoint of a devoted Christian, the first name to be mentioned should be that of St. Augustine. Initially Augustine was not a Christian; he was a follower of that eclec faith, founded by Mani (215 A.D. - 276 A.D.), about a century and half earlier, which was known as Manichaeism. This faith dealt directly and explicitly with the problem of evil, affirming an ultimate dualism of good and evil, light and darkness. Augustine denounced Manichaeism and accepted Christianity because Manichaean portrayal of God as less than absolute appeared to him to be dangerously mistaken. Though his Christian faith led him to believe that there could be no evil or possibility of evil in God himself, even then his earlier subscription to Manichaean faith enabled him to probe deeply into the problem of evil with unique detached attachment and non-involved involvement.

As to the problem what is evil and how does it come to be he is
never an escapist in finding an answer. He does not deny the existence of evil nor does he minimize its virulence. He opines that evil exists and it is to be feared but asks whether that is evil which we fear or the act of fearing is in itself evil.

Augustine accepts the reality of evil and on the other hand, like a devoted Christian, he believes God to be Omnipotent and all-loving and to solve this apparent dilemma he turns to Neo-Platonism which is based on the writings of Plotinus (A.D. 204-270) and is supposed to be Platonism diluted with oriental mysticism. Plotinus's philosophy is that evil represents the dead-end of the creative process in which the Supreme-Being has poured out its abundance into innumerable forms of existence, descending in the degrees of being and goodness until its creativity is exhausted and the vast realm of being borders upon the empty darkness of non-being.

"Given that the God is not the only existent thing; it is inevitable that, by the outgoing from it, or if the phrase be preferred, the continuous down-going or away-going from it, there should be produced a last -- something after which nothing more can be produced; This will be Evil... This last is Matter, the thing that has no residue of good in it; here is the necessity of Evil."13

Augustine's most frequent phase to define evil is *privatio boni*, 'privation of good'. By privatio of good Augustine never means a

simple lack of goodness, in the sense in which a tree, for example,
lacks the spiritual qualities of an angel. It is not an evil to
have been created as a lesser rather than a greater good -- as a worm,
for example, instead of a dog, or a dog instead of a man. For according
to the principle of plenitude, there is positive value in the existence
of less exalted as well as more exalted forms of creaturely being in
a well-ordered scale. Evil enters in only when some member of the
universal kingdom, whether high or low in the hierarchy, renounces
its proper role in the divine scheme and ceases to be what it is meant
to be.

When such malfunctioning occurs it cannot be said to exist as
a separate entity; it is on the contrary, the absence of proper being
in a creature. "Thus evil has no positive nature; but the less of good
has received the name evil." Evil is negative, a lack, a loss, a
privation. 14

The only other prominent figure among Christian theologians
working for a theodicy is Saint Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274 A.D.). Thomas
Aquinas wrote profusely about the problem of evil but he did so in an
abstract and detached manner. He did not make any positive shift from
the stand of Augustine, rather he simply tried to improve upon the
latter. Unlike Augustine, Thomas Aquinas divided evils into those
affecting 'voluntary things' (i.e., angels and men) and those affecting

14 John Hick: op.cit., p. 53.
the rest of the creation. St. Thomas opined that in spite of the involvement of God in the process of creation, it cannot be inferred that the Universe is perfect in the sense that God could not, had He wished, have made a better one. This is a fundamental stand of the Augustinian-Thomist theodicy that although this world is a product of infinite goodness and power, its maker could, if He had wished, have created better worlds. Deviating from this tradition, Leibnitz believed that an omnipotent and infinite good Being, in creating a world, could make only the best that is possible. Though God is perfect, the matter with which He had to create this world was not perfect and hence He had to remain satisfied by creating the best that could be created out of those stuff and definitely it was not the best.

Another deep probe into the reality of evil was made by the mystics all over the world. As mysticism is, as defined by R.L. Nettleship "the belief that everything in being what it is, is symbolic of something more", the problem of evil has too-deep a symbolical connotation with the mystics. For Plato, who is popularly called 'Father of Mysticism', evil had unique symbolical overtones. Plato was of the opinion that the visible world was an illusion, being an imperfect imitation of the perfect form which is in the kingdom of God. Every visible object in the world is a second-rate copy of the perfect 'original' of that particular type which is in Heaven. Hence for Plato evil has no entity, being an illusion. Plato's stand is very much akin to that of Sankarscharya, the Vedantic philosopher, who also treated the external
world as mere illusion. But Plato believed in 'dualistic' philosophy, the two cardinal entities for him being 'Idea' and 'Matter'. The world of 'Ideas' and what Aristotle called 'Platonic Matters' exist independently of each other according to Plato's belief. Plato further opines that Idea is real, Matter is unreal. Ideas exist in and for themselves; they have the character of substantiability: They are real, universal forms; they are the original, eternal, transcendent, archetype of things. They exist prior to things, apart from them and independently of them and are uninfluenced by the changes which things undergo. They are good.

Matter, on the contrary, is the substratum of the world of sense, nature. On this the world of ideas impresses its forms. Unimpressed by the ideas, matter is devoid of all qualities. It is formless, indefinable and imperceptible. It is evil.

The greatest of the modern Jewish mystics, Martin Buber, made a penetrating search into the problem of evil and he has something original to say. He opines that to a man the world is two fold as his attitude is two fold depending on the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks. There are two combinations of primary words: "I-Thou" and "I-It". Hence the 'I' of man is also twofold because the 'I' of the primary word 'I-Thou' is different from the 'I' of the primary word 'I-It'. Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations. Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about
existence. There is one significant difference between these two primary words: The primary word 'I-Thou' can only be spoken with the whole being; the primary word 'I-It' can never be spoken with the whole being.

"Just as the melody is not made up of notes nor the verse of words nor the statue of lives, but they must be tugged and dragged till their unity has been scattered into these many pieces, so with the man to whom I say thou: I can take out from him the colour of his hair, or of his speech, or of his goodness. I must continually do this. But each time I do it, it ceases to be thou."

"And just as prayer is not in time but time in prayer, sacrifice not in space but space in sacrifice, and to reverse the relation is to abolish the reality, so with the man to whom I say 'Thou'." 15 Apparently in a very round-about way Martin Buber tries to establish that the relational approach, i.e., 'I-Thou' is good and the other word, i.e., when one is wholly immersed in 'I-It', that stage is evil.

Karl Marx defines 'evil' from a different standpoint. In his system economical aspect of one's life is very important and the mode of production is of vital importance as it places different types of people at different places of society. For Marx, Exploitation is evil.

To 'matter' Marx gives the position of importance and he relegates 'idea' to secondary position. His system is known as

'Dialectical Materialism'. In his historical analysis of the progress of man, Marx observes that mankind has progressed and evolved through dialectics and through class-conflict and class struggle. In the primitive time there was no class system and that period is called against primitive communism when mankind collectively fought against the odd circumstances of nature for food and shelter. Then came the slave-system when one kind of people started living idly on the fruits of the labour of the other kind; the former was known as 'Exploiter' and the latter 'exploited'. With the passage of time came 'Feudal System' as the earlier slave system failed to cope with fast-developing problems of the complex and complicated human societies. In this system the feudal lords flourished usurping the fruits of the labours of the exploited serfs. In the third stage there is capitalism; here the exploited persons are the members of the labourer class who have nothing to sell except their labour. The fourth stage is socialism which means an end of exploitation. In this system one will work as per his capacity and will earn as per his work. Socialism will ultimately lead to Communism which ensures that every one will work as per his or her capacity and will get as per his or her need. When Communism will be attained on a global scale, there will be no exploitation and there will be no subjective evil. Then all the machineries of oppression and coercion such as prison, torture-cell, police, army will be unnecessary and then 'Control over matter' will only be needed and no 'control over man'.