

Not to be reproduced, quoted or otherwise copied without written permission of the author.

**THE TENTH ORDER:
LUCIFER THE FIRST ETHICAL BEING, AND
THE PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL**

**COLLEEN D. CLEMENTS, PHD
ADJUNCT CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
AND
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

INTRODUCTION

IF LUCIFER CANNOT BE SAVED

“I know of a good old lady who prayed daily with great fervor and piety that God might have mercy on the Devil and save him.”

Paul Carus, *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil*

The idea really came from out of nowhere, suddenly. One moment, it was not in my mind, and the next moment it was. It had to do with only one word, “Lucifer.” It struck me, unrelated to anything else I had been thinking about, that a name that meant “bearer of light” made no sense in describing what culture identified as the personification of evil and the prince of darkness. Why Lucifer? What had demonization done? What connection could this have to my main work in bioethics or ethics?

At the time, I had a deadline, a second deadline, to meet for my editor, having promised to write a book on bioethics for the series *Advances in Bioethics*. I had not yet started the first page, but I knew I had an ethical obligation to meet my commitment to him. The strange thought that had popped into my head had to wait its turn, although it was permanently there, and not always in the wings. By the time the bioethics book was written, it was clear that I wanted to dedicate it to Helel ben-shahar, bright son of the morning, and in the Latin, Lucifer. In the bioethics book, I had already begun to see the connection between Lucifer and the categories of good and evil that, although humanistic, might have some connection to the organization of the perceived universe. That book, *Postmodern Malpractice: A Medical Case Study in the Culture War*, argued for seeing Lucifer as the mythic model for the future in ethics, but only briefly, in bare outline.

I was also reading Jeffrey Burton Russell’s history of the concept of a personification of evil, the steps in the demonization of Lucifer, the essential part the concept of Lucifer would have to play in any definition of creation, and the struggle to address the problem of the existence of humanly-perceived evil. Lucifer was not bound and imprisoned in the

abyss with the angel's key. Lucifer was the fallen angel with the key. Ethics begins with Lucifer and ethics ends with Lucifer.

That will seem a bizarre statement until the argument of this book is fully put forth and detailed. It runs counter to the most known of the ancient and classic traditions, although it is not counter to many less popularized, older, and more accurate and complex interpretations within those traditions. There are viable Jewish, Islamic and Christian traditions which deal with Lucifer in different terms than the archfiend, hideous deceiver and enemy. In those less-popularized but perhaps more profound traditions, Lucifer(Iblis) is described as the perfect lover of god. Again, he may be called the Mal'ak or helper of god. He is sometimes given the role of the eldest son of god who created this imperfect universe. There are strong reasons for these varying interpretations, central to the problem of a monotheistic god and central to the problem of evil in the cosmos. There is an even stronger reason, that our first ancestors learned for the first time about good and evil, understood that there were right and wrong choices, from Lucifer. Human ethics, in the religious traditions, actually begins with Lucifer. Human ethics, in the naturalistic and nontheistic tradition of which I am a part, also begins with the concepts Lucifer embodies, and in a crucial way. The conclusions in this book apply to modern secularisms, naturalisms and humanisms every bit as much as to transcendent theisms. This is a critique of postmodern ideology, which dangerously politicizes all social institutions and all attempts at learning. It is a critique of closed naturalisms that describe a static cosmos and that violate the values of open science. It is a critique of current humanisms that replace self-respect with pathologizing the human being and elevating renunciation. It is a critique of the secular public square.

An ethical evaluation or judgment of the created cosmos (whether by sentient or chance creation) also begins, actually is made possible, with Lucifer. Some interpretations of the cause of Lucifer's fall describe his "sin" as a refusal to accept reality or accept the creation's natural order as it stood. Lucifer does not submit to the static nature of the creation and makes a value judgment as a result, the second mythic value judgment made about creation. The creator sees this static order as pleasing to himself; Lucifer introduces change and a dynamic order by seeing it as unacceptable, evil. At that point, ethics has entered creation and has dared to evaluate it. For that act of

ethical freedom, Lucifer and the tenth order that follows him is thrown down from the cosmic regions onto the earth or floating above it or underneath it, depending on the religious interpretation. Waiting for the ethical being is the abyss, the pit, the bottomless, the void, the dragon of chaos. And this is partially accurate, because Lucifer has introduced chaos theory into the static natural order, has looked at systems, patterns, fractals, and chosen a controlled state over a steady state.

There are other key points in this creation of ethics. In the Pseudepigrapha, The Secret Book of Enoch, Lucifer is described as the head of an order which follows him in his refusal to accept or bow down. Enoch describes the “incorporeal ten troops of angels,” and there is also reference to a third of the angels following Lucifer in asserting moral agency. After all, moral agency requires a free mind, a will that is not restrained, and a sense of the power to decide between good and evil. Blindly, unthinkingly following orders and commands is not an ethical act. At that mythic point, one order of angels in the cosmos achieved moral agency, making the only choice that could be made if the ability to think freely and fully about questions of good and evil is to exist in the cosmos. The ethical choice was for freedom and self-striving, and at that moment, creatures capable of being ethical existed. Such freedom to choose, change, and grow was interpreted again as a “sin,” and the order capable of developing a dynamic system found itself “damned” to the dynamic systems of our perceived universe. With them came the second prerequisite for ethics.

The following moments in the old texts include a cosmic battle, struggles for spheres of influence, possibilities of mistaken or cruel choices, complexities in evaluating what is good and what is bad, and the upheavals of dynamism that create suffering and destruction. The creation is now a system like chaos theory or complexity theory, with tenuously-maintained controlled states, not a perfect balance, harmony or steady state. It is alive and complicated, with all that entails. We have begun the evolving sense of what is good and what is evil, we cannot be certain, we appreciate unwanted consequences that are an integral part of a good choice, we watch the changing and integrated system as we try to partially intervene in the dynamics. The history of ethics has begun, the third point of the Lucifer texts.

There is one last development described in the texts. Lucifer now teaches the mythic human ancestors, Adam and Eve, how to think ethically. He prompts Eve to reach for the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, opens her less-than-animal mind to seeing and evaluating the world around her beyond the static Garden of Eden, and through her instructs human beings, changes them so that they become creatures with a learning program and a capacity to understand ethics. At this point, additional sentient being, humanity, arises within the system, and human nature and ethics are bound together. Somewhere in the complex cosmic system, there are functions which are now self-aware, growing, and making ethical choices. Value has come to creation.

Such a story would seem to have a hero, but demonization has replaced the actual import of the tale. Demonization is a side-effect of ethics, an unwanted, irrational effect, but there nevertheless. The enemy, the opponent, the one who disagrees, the one whose value choice conflicts with our interests is routinely demonized if defeated. And Lucifer and his tenth order were defeated. The name remains, the name the Cathars argued showed Lucifer's divine origin, but the demonization has been the extreme model for all subsequent demonizations. Aquinas argued that fallen angels could not be saved, based partly on a scholastic assumption that angels lacked the capacity to choose between good and evil, and partly on earlier tradition. Cassiodorus, Gregory, and John Damascene insisted that fallen angels were forever damned, with no hope of being saved. Eriugina's view that all creation will be drawn back into god, including the fallen angels, was the minority view. Eternal damnation was the consequence for introducing ethics into the cosmos and into the human species. The complexity of ethics itself, that it could sometimes be unnecessarily cruel or even bloodthirsty, fell on Lucifer's shoulders. History shows an orgy of constructing tortures for the fallen angels, sometimes mental but mostly terrible physical acts; of portraying these beings as hideous beyond belief or common sense; of making fun, degrading, dehumanizing, in the crudest ways; of insisting that the beings who lost the battle will remain the outcasts, the despised, the beaten physically and psychologically forever; of decreeing that no hope will be allowed. To add to the cruelty, the saved and anointed can look at the demonized in torment and enjoy the suffering forever, degrading themselves as well. Ethics too has a dark side. It can be abused to support demonization and sadism. But that historical abuse did not fall with

Lucifer. Our human species has managed to develop that on its own within our world, and to sometimes justify it by referring to the wishes or orders of an all-good deity.

Can Lucifer be saved? As a myth and symbol, I will argue he is already saved in the adequate philosophic reading of the old texts and the application to ethics. But it is also possible to reread those texts in a scientific and historic framework rather than a mythical or religious frame. I argue that modern society makes false assumptions about the thinking and writing of previous civilizations, stereotyping their messages to us as poetry, symbols, story-telling, and the supernatural. There are other viable interpretations, and our culture makes too narrow a channel for the flow of ideas. We now more fully recognize the probability of sentient life in the cosmos, and the possibility that space explorers could be another reading, a more sensible reading, of those histories. Perhaps we should respect the authors who felt they were describing reality, and at least look at the hypothesis that human beings may have known Lucifer in the full sense of knowing a being. That too would save Lucifer, especially from demonization.

If Lucifer cannot be saved, what are the implications? In addition to being a tool for human cruelty in the world (demonizing and then torturing those who oppose our interests such as witches, Muslims, Cathars, Bosnian Serbs, etc.), ethics becomes morphed into a static demand for obedience and submission. One of the essentials for ethical thinking, free minds, must be suppressed. Power rather than reason becomes the standard for morality, or rather, for a power strategy masquerading as morality. The human learning program must be devalued and replaced with manipulation, and the future of our species darkens and perhaps dies. Intent on demonizing the weak and defeated, or the different, demonization produces personification, the personification of a natural consequence of diversity or of a malfunctioning human evaluation/behavior. One entity then becomes a sacrificial being to be burdened and tortured because of the suffering integral to existence -- an opponent and enemy. One of Lucifer's many names is Satan (from the Syrian Satanael with the last letters meaning "lord" dropped), and in the Israelite tradition, this is a class name ("satan") meaning opposer or enemy.

But within all the darkness of a cataclysmic struggle between a defectively-conceived being of Darkness who was lost and confused, and the good and evil emanations of multiple levels of the cosmos (the Totalities), a kind and brilliant solution is found in the

Gnostic text, A Valentinian Exposition. All the beings in this cosmic struggle move toward receiving one another: "...the All will come to be in unity and reconciliation. For by this the Aeons have been increased; for they knew that should they change, they are changeless." Lucifer is recovered. Lucifer is recognized. Lucifer is received.

I now realize that my concern for the meaning of "Lucifer" was philosophically to the point, and critical for ethics, as I hope the arguments in this book will show. Lucifer or Helel ben-shahar have good and beautiful meanings. One means light-bearer and was on occasion used to describe Christ. The other name for Lucifer means bright son of the morning, also used to describe Christ, St. George and a Canaanite god, Helel ben-shahar. I can still remember a song I sang in choir as a child: Oh come thou Dayspring, come and cheer thy people with thine advent here" (Dayspring, Daystar, son of Dawn are all equivalents of Lucifer).

The beings of the old texts have not succumbed to total demonization yet, and still contain a hint of a much more sophisticated interpretation of man's place in the cosmos: (1) Looking at the full meaning of those texts can give us a better understanding of ethics and the problem of good and evil. (2) It can help us reach some conclusions about the domain or extent of ethics (cosmic or humanistic). (3) It can help with an adequate definition of good and evil. (4) It can introduce most completely systems bioethics into ethics, addressing issues of complexity and diversity as well as the possible neutrality of the universe. (5) It can shed a clean light on one of the most evil acts possible in ethics, demonization, and help prevent its spread in the modern world. (6) It might even unite the naturalist and the theist on the question of the problem of evil, expanding it to the problem of good and evil. (7) It can illustrate the oversimplification that monotheism represents, and question its ranking as a more developed expression of religious beliefs than polytheism. (8) It can ask for a re-examination of the mythic and religious framework for reading the texts of ancient yet very advanced civilizations. (9) It can supply a mythic hero for our time. This myth represents ethical humanity in history, and it is time we looked carefully at what the myth really means.

For all those philosophic and ethical reasons, I want to thank that odd thought that intruded on my work on the previous book. I should also acknowledge the significant influence Jeffrey Burton Russell's books have had as I pursued that odd thought. My

Ethiopian son-in-law's cultural history of caretaking the apocryphal texts from the beginning of this tradition renewed my interest in the Slavonic and Ethiopian books of Enoch, the Book of Adam and Eve, and the strange cosmic stories contained in biblical text. I remain as always indebted to the sources of my nontheistic naturalism: E.O. Wilson, V.R. Potter, Tad Clements, and, I suspect, Roman Catholicism, including the Polish Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph who taught me well. I still remember their Roman imperial names: Pulcheria, Prudentia, Lucine, Terentia, and especially Georgianna. Once I promised Sister Georgianna, who cared about me, that I would do nothing to harm the Roman church. She believed I would do something either very good or very bad in the history of thought, and I hope at the end of this book, the conclusion will be that it was good, not bad that was done. I want to thank John Maier for bringing me abreast of current reworking of Gnostic, Sumerian, Akkadian and Hittite texts, and all the creative ferment in Assyriology. His loaning me his book on Enki, "the clever god," is much appreciated. My psychiatry colleagues, including J. Richard Ciccone who believes in souls as well as psyche, have listened to my ethical reformulation of Lucifer and my bioethics, and have never fallen for the fad of the danger of Satanic Worship, even when the American Psychiatric Association ran a session on it for an annual meeting. Typical of the sensationalism that has characterized so much of the history of the idea of the devil, that session was standing-room-only, a harsh commentary on human thinking. Thankfully, my children and grandchildren believe critical thinking is a primary value and don't come to a premature consensus on anything, even Lucifer, allowing me to follow my questions wherever they may lead. I should not forget to thank Glenn Carter, who sang the lead in the London and Broadway revival of Jesus Christ Superstar, for unexpected encouragement of my book's beginning. Creativity is a shared journey and support is found all along the way, in many unique forms.

Finally, for the suppressed and vanished order of Dragovitsa, how important ethics was for you, that you were willing to die for it. We will sometime need that courage again.

"And the heaven and his earth were overturned by

the troubler who was beneath them all. And the sixth heaven trembled. For the chaos knew not who it was who destroyed the heaven beneath them. And when Pistis knew the scorn of the troubler, she sent her breath, and she bound him and cast him down to Tartaros.”

On the Origin of the World, Nag Hammadi Library

2002

Colleen D. Clements, PhD

Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry

University of Rochester School of Medicine,

and

Adjunct Professor of Philosophy

Rochester Institute of Technology,

and

Columnist, The Medical Post

2 Cobblestone Drive,

Fairport, New York 14450