I am aware of how messed up our world is in many ways. I have written numerous articles in the Alternative Voice and other publications about the complex problems of our planet. But in those same articles I have included hope for opportunities to solve problems and change things for the better because I am at heart an optimist—a realistic optimist who appreciates the practical application of scientific, philosophical, and spiritual facts and ideals in day-to-day life.

Why am I such an optimist when I am so aware of evil (yes, I dare to use the e word)? Because I am also aware of the presence and power of goodness—goodness residing deep within individual persons and goodness in various groups aimed at improving some aspect of civilization.

In fact, I believe that there is a pattern of goodness present on our planet, a reservoir of potential goodness for us humans to pull from.

I think that a divine pattern is present in the particles of space as well as in the particles on this world, a pattern that can partially be seen through telescopes and microscopes. And this divine pattern—cosmic and earthly, huge and humble—is always good and beautiful. (Yeah, yeah, this is getting to sound a little too metaphysical. But hang in there. I think this is important for you to explore a bit.)

Evil is anything outside of that divine pattern, anything that deviates from the pattern’s truth, beauty, and goodness. There are degrees of evil just as there are gradations of perfection and love within divine pattern. There are billions of ways to manifest the reality of divine pattern—materially, mindally, and spiritually. There are ways to relate to each other and to our natural world that are of goodness, and there are ways of relating to persons and the planet that are evil.

Let’s talk about the daily practice of goodness. I live by the philosophy of always returning good for evil—something Jesus taught as well as other great spiritual teachers who lived before and after him, Lao-Tse probably being the earliest proponent of this doctrine. Now, it is not always easy to return good for evil, but it is exciting to try to every moment of my day. Yet how can I, or you, return good for evil if we do not know the difference?

It is indeed true that we freewill human beings choose between good and evil almost every moment, between divine pattern and some distortion of it. Or we at least choose between a lower and higher way or try to determine the lesser of two evils or the better of two goods. More often than not, most people choose unconsciously and reactively rather than being fully conscious of the choice they are making—whether in matters that may seem miniscule or something of more substance.

So, mindful living, responsible living is being able (to the best of our ability) to discriminate between what is good and what is not so good or downright evil.

In order to return good for evil, we must BE AWARE of the presence of evil in ourselves, in others, and in the systems, policies, and practices of the dominant culture that rule the world through multi-national corporations that determine governmental, economic, and societal values. We need to become aware that the practice of evil results in very unhealthy earthlings and a very unhealthy earth.

Besides causing planetary confusion, evil results in universe disharmony. Yes, that is getting cosmic, but we do need to BE AWARE that we are not just planetary citizens, we are indeed citizens of a universe and that decisions to do good or evil do have a ripple effect in the universes of time and space.

In studying the tomes of spiritually-oriented tenets (especially The URANTIA Book), I discovered that goodness is always related to divinity—God/the Creator/the Universal Father. We must BE AWARE of that link to God (or whatever name you want to give to the First Source and Center) that we each have, that
The practice of goodness is also related to healthy family, spiritual, social, and civic activities. Isn't it so? Let's read on and dance on.

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1 The URANTIA Book, p. 552
2 Ibid., p. 193
3 Ibid., p. 138
4 Ibid., p. 1458