

Perverse Criticism

Document 5
August 2000

I'm already thinking of what this is going to be called. Maybe: "I've had enough." That should ring a bell in everybody's irritated heart. But more likely: "The Question of Good and Bad." It's the issue of the day. We're living in a world that is poisoned with peoples' subjective good and bad. And everyone is going around making judgments. That's what we got used to, even though it drives us crazy. We're continually looking over our shoulder for someone's criticism or compliment.

What becomes obvious is that even all you nice people got poisoned. You hardly know how to think other than in terms of 'I like', 'I don't like', 'it's good', 'it's bad'. It drives you crazy when anybody puts those kinds of eyes on you. But the poison is in the system – that's exactly the eyes you put on everybody else. And I'll give you a few cute little examples, maybe, if we're lucky.

As my new brother in-law in Montreal said – and maybe he knows it from deep within himself, or maybe he saw it in some science-fiction movie – "If the force be with you." In this country we say 'im yertze hashem' (God-willing). Occasionally a 'sophisticate' might say: "You know, it's really an issue of 'chesed' (Grace)."

With our usual thinking we can twist and turn in sixteen different ways, and still end off in a corner. What is needed is to open to Grace. And our 'good' and 'bad' are two steel doors blocking out Grace. Grace can't get through our good and bad.

(To Uzi): Good to sit straight – it's also good to breathe. Before you can breathe, you have to relax, and in order to relax you must breathe. Another 'the chicken or the egg' dilemma. You don't know 'how' to breathe – 'it' breathes. It's best not to touch it, just to pay more attention there – not to mess with it. You can't be sensitive there unless your body is relaxed. Sometimes when people get excited, they say: "That took my breath away!" In the world we're living in now – everything takes our breath away!

I tell you, you will begin to see more and more of the slipping and shifting pieces of judgmental poison that are already in your system and which you took so completely for granted. Exactly the things you complain about in other people are the things you are doing every day, over and over again.

That realization should bring a certain humility. Not guilt – humility, and a certain resolve to watch what comes out of your mouth. First of all for your own sake, and secondly to stop the circulation of negative energy. Because when you're angry, and you see something 'wrong' – then of course you are 'right'. Negative? No – 'you're right'. It's just the same way everyone else tells you, that 'they're right' – and causes you to burn inside!

Look – parents, somehow, run their own show. Somebody takes some kind of responsibility. Someone has got to bring in the money, someone has to clean, someone has got to do a lot of different things. And the kids are told: "Do that." or "Why did you do that?" or "Why don't you help me?" And the kids go . . . "Oh yeah?!" Eventually they learn to hide.

Then see what happens when you get busy with something that you believe is important. You think that the whole world should stand up and support you – no? You become convinced that you are doing ten times more than anybody else, as they're just sitting there, and you're on your last breath – so you ask them to make you a 'cup of coffee'. But you don't feel you should have to ask – you want to tell them! If you're not ready for a 'no', then you're really not asking, you're telling. Hum! You don't have to be a parent to 'assume'.

(To Uzi): I don't want to interrupt your own review of this recent 'years effort' that you put in in one week. A years worth of data and maybe six months necessary for digestion, or six years, I don't know. So don't worry about clearing it all up in the writing that I suggested you do. Just put down the few things that you can remember – it might be helpful to look back at in the future. Catch me? Good!

You see, now I'm talking very sweet. To be fair, to be clear, you don't always have to be so sweet – you just have to be aware of what your mood is, your emotion, before you open your mouth. Before you even ask yourself what it is you are going to say – to sense 'where you are'. If you're in irritation or anger or frustration, in agitation of any kind, and you can't recognize that as 'negative' – then I suggest you take some lessons in sky-diving or something. I don't know, go to India and learn to play the flute.

§ Cigarettes and whisky
 and wild, wild women
 they'll drive you crazy
 they'll drive you insane . . . §

Na'ama's reactions are so expressive – you should be in a position to shoot her – move the camera. You know they have tape and CD players where the music triggers rows of colored lights. The lights go up and down to the rhythm and intensity of the music. Deaf people can 'listen' to music just by looking at the machine. And that's what Na'ama's face is like, sometimes, with all the colors and changes of expression. That's what Na'ama is – walking multi-media!

It's been confirmed, that children learn negativity from the people around them. It's not 'natural' – there is no normal place in the emotional center for negativity. All negativity is a false something.

Just by talking about this my face goes into contortions, into the pain. As I try to think of some examples I have to allow in all that poison. I know that energy well enough to be able to survive the pain.

Actually, I don't feel I'm really suffering. I'm not suffering – but my nervous system is. I don't mind 'it' suffering because 'it' is here in life to suffer – because it's a mess down here. And I'm here in life to learn. So, 'it' suffers and I learn – so I don't mind. As a matter of fact it's a blessing.

Everyone's jumping for pleasure when the one thing the soul needs is the TRANSFORMATION (digestion) of the ENERGY OF PAIN !

Everybody's avoiding! They want to get high, they want to have a good time, they want to make love, and they want to have children – 'hup di doo!' When it doesn't work out they open Disneyland in America, in France, in Japan. Incredible acres upon acres of 'feathers to tickle you under the arm' – so you could have a 'good' time. Oh, yes – it's for the children. Actually it's not really for the children, it's for the adults – because if you don't give the children some kind of a good time they drive you crazy. You go ask the

adults why they are taking the children to Disneyland. It's the same reason they send them to those miserable schools – to get them off their back. They haven't got the vaguest idea of what else to do with them.

Na'ama, I feel I'm weakening – come sit over here besides me. This will give Adam something better to shoot than my 'wrinkled face'. I've got a beard, white beard, only two teeth – but no wrinkles. Aren't I lucky?

(To Na'ama): Hands up.

\$ Pat 'a cake, pat 'a cake
bakers man,
bake me the cake
as fast as you can.
pat 'a cake, pat 'a cake
bakers man,
bake me the cake . . . \$

There you go. Someone played that game when they were three years old – so whenever they feel like doing something 'good', they bake a cake. Everybody's baking cakes – haven't you noticed?

If you take yourself too seriously, it's a clear sign of exaggerated egoism. Because, what you're taking 'seriously' is not even you – it's habit. And habit shouldn't be taken seriously. That comes under the heading of 'non-identification'. It should be looked at, observed, and separated from. Theoretically you understand that – right? Well, maybe you've got another twenty years to work it out in life.

Hagit, if you don't sit up straight you are going to develop a belly like mine. You, Na'ama, are okay – you're all belly! But one needs a good belly for digestion – that's good.

Good – you see I'm saying it's 'good'. I tell you, our 'good' and 'bad' are very subjective notions. And it's not our 'bad' that's really the problem – it's our 'good'. Because the moment you have a 'good' – if something happens that isn't 'like it' then it's 'bad'. Before

you can have a sense of bad, you have to have a very fixed sense of good. Before you can know what 'should not be', you're quite convinced, whether you realize it or not, that you know what 'should be'. And maybe you're even right as to what 'should be' – but the big thing that you've neglected is the question of what 'could be'. What 'should be' and what 'could be' are not the same thing. Work has very much to do with knowing the possible from the impossible, under varying circumstances.

For the best understanding of 'good' – the word 'useful' should be employed. Good has to be connected to something – it has to have a context. The word 'good' is too loose, too vague, too subjective. 'Useful' can have a clear meaning – within a context.

I opened up Document Three with the word "Tamara". And then I commented that when she left the room there was some kind of space left open. I didn't want to put her on the spot so that she would be forced to go around proving to everyone that she wasn't 'so important'. She really doesn't take herself as so important, but she has her way of expressing herself, like everyone has. She also takes on certain obligations that not everyone recognizes so clearly. When she talks it sometimes comes out 'mechanically'. She admits to that, but hopes that it also comes from a true sense of what's useful, relative to whatever is 'going on here'.

And here we go, I guess, with Document Five. In writing, it may become clearer and open to reflection. But I don't want to rely on that. It could take six months before this comes out as a booklet and by that time you might have driven yourself crazy with your own bullshit. And if you do, there will likely be a 'posse' out there ready to hang me to the nearest tree, because it would 'obviously' be all my fault. That's the risk I run.

I haven't followed the news so closely but they just had a big gathering at Camp David, USA, trying to make peace between the Palestinians and Israelis. They 'thought' it was coming to a final something. Arafat, Barak and Clinton were there. It went on for weeks but they didn't come to any conclusion. One of the things that the newspapers quoted, was Arafat saying something to the effect that: "If I bend or make compromises – they'll kill me!" Maybe that statement was taken out of context, but it seems that's what he said. Some Israeli, there, commented: "A leader shouldn't worry about that!" Well, in the end,

they might indeed kill him – that was the fate of Sadat and Rabin.

The last Prime Minister (Bibi), was ex-'sayeret matkal' – probably the top commando unit in the world. He knew all the possible ways you could kill a person. When he moved into the Prime Minister's residence he had barricades put up, the windows changed and a whole lot of other safeguards. And when he moved around Jerusalem it was in convoys with the sirens going, loud-speakers, and all traffic forced to 'freeze'. He didn't want to get killed! The new Prime Minister, Barak, it seems, is not so paranoid although he is also ex-'sayeret matkal'. We read a newspaper article, so we know all about it. Oh, they probably exaggerated Arafat's comment. He was hunted-down for years. I don't think he's really afraid of being shot – probably thinks that there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that that's the way he's going to go.

I was talking to Adam's brother, Jacki, yesterday. When I met him he was eight and now he's twenty. This was the first time I had an exchange with him. I mentioned to him that there were a few 'religious' people around, over the years, that if I wasn't a 'Jew', they might actually have killed me. Maybe they'll do it yet. But if they are religious, they are likely to be a little bit hesitant. I mean, to kill a Jew? – ooh. They'd think a few times. Took them a while before they decided Rabin had to go. I'd never thought of myself of being heroic in any particular way, but if I would have to worry about 'who likes what' I would never get any work done!

In the history of this country there is more than one case of Jew killing Jew. There's this dramatic story that the 'right-wing' can never forget. The sinking of a ship! What is the name of that ship? 'Etzel' (right-wing extremists) were bringing in arms.

Na'ama : 'Altalena'.

Alan : Altalena. The State was just proclaimed. Etzel was bringing in a shipload of arms to fight the Arabs, and Ben Gurion says: "Turn it all over to Hagana (recognized army)." And they say: "No." And he says: "Sink the ship." And they do it.

That's one of the things Sharon and Bibi and the right-wingers will never forget or forgive. I wasn't around here at that time, but it seems they hunted down the 'extremists' – hunted them down. Anybody know who else got shot?

Hagit : Arlozorov.

Alan : Arlozorov – I heard the name. I don't know who or what he was. But they killed for Israel, for the people, for the sake of the people's security, soul, or whatever. And there are a few people around who think I'm a danger to all these beautiful souls. I don't know, I'm not concerned. I've seen so many dances around here that I've learnt how to move with it all. And if you're quick enough on your feet no one steps on your toes. They threaten – oh ho. They know what's 'right'!

To sum up, maybe, this issue of 'good and bad'. Everyone is so anxious to 'give their opinion'. Tamara brought me up some pie. I didn't know where it came from. I said: "What is it?" And she said: "Well, some people liked it, some didn't – everybody had some kind of an opinion." When I heard that it reminded me of what I was thinking of, earlier, on this very issue. I said: "I'm going downstairs." She went: "No, no, but I asked them, I asked them." Okay, I wasn't going to exaggerate the situation – it was an opportunity.

After some time of knowing Dina, her father began to ask me out for lunch. I don't know . . . but I didn't go. It was all quite understandable – he wanted to 'know me'. Now, this man was an ex-'extremist' – part of the 'fighting family'. He had been a Member of Parliament and a close companion of Menachem Begin. Very proud – very! Finally, I went to lunch – a large Eastern restaurant on Agripass Street in Jerusalem – Dina, her father and myself. The food came and he asks: "How is it?" Dina made some comment, like: "it's not so good". I turned to her and said: "There's no such thing as bad food." And her father gave out a big 'yes.' That may be the one thing he ever heard out of my mouth that he liked. This man had been locked up with others who were considered terrorists, in what is now Kenya, East Africa. He was in a prison camp – sent there by the British just before they got out of Palestine. You can imagine what they got to eat in that place. And, if the 'tachina' isn't exactly the way you like it? That 'complaint', for him, was like 'chilool hashem' (desecration of God's name). Millions in the world starving, and someone says: "Oh, I don't like this food so much."

We don't always check what comes out of our mouth. We say something negative and don't even realize that it's negative. 'Food not good.' "Oh, that's not negative, it's just a fact." A fact for who? A coolie in China? For a starving kid in an institution around the corner? You can't analyze each case by itself – but you can understand. What is this

negativity? Well, I guess you can give an opinion if you're asked.

Back to 'the pie' from the downstairs kitchen. Tamara came back later and said: "I found out that they actually liked it." Oh, isn't that nice, I feel so good now – oh. It's not exactly the point. We eat food here for the strength in it. It's also very good if it's done delicately, for various reasons. Before one talks – best to think a little bit.

That kind of nonsense doesn't stop just by you saying: "That's right, that's right, I'll never do that again." You'll never do 'that' again when you reach a certain level of maturity. Don't make yourself sick in the meantime if you made a mistake – that would be stupid. Then you would be identified with the wrong level in yourself, and be making a worse mistake than worrying about the food.

You know, it's so easy to complain when a person doesn't 'look at you right' – forgetting that you don't even know a fraction of what they are dealing with in life. And I'll tell you once again – I'm not in the business of 'playing favorites'. There's no way you can play favorites – because, ultimately, there's only ONE.

Now, if a person asks a question in an inappropriate way, or at an inappropriate time, because they didn't swallow, breathe, or think twice before they opened their mouth – you do not necessarily have to react. And certainly not become their teacher! You don't have to respond with another stupidity: "Oh, you said that, eh?" "Oh, that's what you think, ha!" That's what's going on all the time. A serious person doesn't get involved with unnecessary things.

It's good that Sunnybell (14) and Viola (15) were here together for a few days. It was quite a demonstration of what we're now talking about. They were getting 'insulted' twenty times every day. Why were they insulted? Things were happening that didn't seem 'right' to them – because they didn't know it from their own home, and they hardly know anything else. So, let them suffer a little bit, here, before they go 'out into the world'. As one of Shula's spiritual friends from California told her when she complained about something in Rosh Pina: "Well, I believe you've been in worse circumstances." So, Viola and Sunnybell will face a lot of things even 'worse' than they had to face here!

(To Hagit): You are deeply emotional, and it's very delicate at the moment. Probably, in

the past, when things reached this intensity, you would turn to tears. And you can do that if you wish – it's a very real place, I like it – if you don't mind. I'm not sadistic. If I repeat that too often, I'm going to have to question myself. But so far, I'm convinced – I'm not sadistic.

Someone said not so long ago and I've heard it a number of times before, when a fuse blows or they try to fix an electrical something: "The wiring in this building is shit." I'll tell you something – the wiring here is a hundred times better than when I found it. Again – this business of negativity! One could say: "You know, the wiring could be more professional." That's legitimate – if you're saying it to somebody where it makes any sense for them to know. But the thing that seems to give the biggest 'kick' is to find something 'wrong' – and to announce it. Nothing seems to give a person a deeper sense of 'identity' than to demonstrate that 'they know' something is 'wrong'. If you can say: 'The electricity is shit' – I mean – that turns you into a master-electrician!

But it's nice to be able to complain – because it makes you 'somebody'. Now, that's just a little example. I could come up with a few others – maybe you come up with your own. Did you ever hear of negativity? Does that come from a positive emotional state? It's a 'bad' situation because the electricity is 'shit' – and you make yourself 'look good' by recognizing it. But it started with bad – that's the point. Your mouth opened, gave you a chance to talk, because you saw 'something bad'. It could have been the electricity, it could be another person's drippy nose. It doesn't make any difference – you 'love' to see something bad. How else can you be good? It's the issue of self-image and how you wish to be seen. Work is a different ball game. It's about self-knowledge, not 'image'.

If a person wasn't 'running off at the mouth' and reacting from the poison they picked up in society – all the stupidity, all the 'digs', all the criticisms – what then would they do? The mind cannot stand being inactive. If you leave it alone, it will do all the old shit. That is one of the things that make the Work Ideas so unique. Even if you cannot practice all that you already 'know' – at least there are things that you can ponder. You can remember that pondering is thinking and feeling about something at the same time. There is what to do: Self-Observation, Non-Identification – just to mention a few.

This is just where the expression comes in: "If you don't call on the Work – it cannot help

you." And god knows that you need help.

Now, maybe, you realize that you have been infected by everything, quite as much as all the people that you've ever complained about. You're infected with exactly the same stuff. It's massive – like a tidal-wave passing over us. Most people think that there's nothing to do but get in there and 'slug it out' – because 'that's life'. With a little reflection one comes to see that it just doesn't work. Everybody's been slugging-it-out for thousands of years – and the last 'slug' will probably be the hydrogen bomb.

There is what to do. There are a lot of 'small' things, appropriate to different situations. If you want a 'normal' life – then go get married, have some children, get a little house, build a fence around it and light Sabbath candles. That might not be a bad thing to do, by the way. The religious people have moved, at least, to a 'new head'. Well, by now it must be clear that you can't talk about 'religious people' anymore than you can generalize about any group.

Some people say: "You people in the Work, you know, you're snobs! You're this and you're that!" I don't know, what is that? It's nonsense. 'Everybody hates the Jews!' You know what Jews are? Here we have a bunch of Jews in this room and I can't quite see the similarity between any of them.

Anyone know what prejudice is? We have to decide whether religion is good or bad? I mean, how do you do that? The truth of the matter is that 'religion' is the only real issue. How it gets 'twisted' is something else again.

Religion is meant to raise you to a level of balance and connection with 'God'. That is, some Ultimate Right that has a 'rational' that we can't understand with our narrow minds of subjective 'good and bad'.

In the Work it's very 'simple'. 'God' being 'the next level up' – within you – where you are in a state of awareness and Non-Identification, a state of Love. There you don't get negative if someone doesn't make a 'joint' for you, because they should, because you did it yesterday, and if that's not right you don't know what right is. And it's true – you don't

know. 'Mechanical good' – anybody ever hear of that?

There are masses of Jews who were never in a synagogue and never read a Jewish text in their whole life. But you know what – they are proud to be Jews! "I'm a Jew, and I'm proud!" Ask any Jew – proud. Hum!

Anyone who gets proud because they believe they are 'In the Work' is stupid. You can't label yourself into sainthood or importance. If there is something there that you liked, that you found true, that you thought had value, and was 'workable' – then work it. No one else basically gives a shit. That's between you and what you think is true – and that's your business. Anyone with good-will would of course wish you the best – to say the least. But don't you slip into making an 'impression' on anybody – like some Jews want to make an impression, I don't know on whom – on the 'goyim'? "We are proud Jews." Oh yes! They have no idea what they are talking about.

Adam has more experience on camera than I have. But I'm still tempted to give some suggestions. Now I'm talking to you, so you look at me. How do you know where to point the camera? You see, you are 'god' relative to that camera. The camera is your servant. So god has to see – and then point the servant. The servant has to be ready to move, but god has to make the decision. So you are 'god' in this situation, and if god goes to sleep – the servant is dead. Bump!

That means: If the Higher in you goes to sleep – you're really dead, baby!

