The Good, The Bad and the Self-aware

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We often hear the terms "Absolute Good" or "Absolute Evil" being used in context of some historical figure or another. When we are based on a dualistic world view, yes there well might be such absolute dualities. However, we do know that "One man's meat is another's poison". So, there is a concept of the relative nature of what we consider Good or Bad, depending on the perspective.

Such a perspective is called a "Categorical framework", and these categorical frameworks are what enable us to categorize, label and identify objects. "Now what is an object?" one might ask.

An object something that is an item of inquiry, by you, the subject. So what then is a categorical framework? It is the framework (or combination of frameworks), that define our reality, as we know it in our everyday lives. An apple is an apple because of a categorical framework that identifies it as such. That being the case, now, imagine a scenario where there is a group of individuals on this earth, who are allergic to something contained in the apple, such that, consumption of the apple would lead to serious illness or even death. To such a group, "an apple a day will not keep the doctor away". So, while the rest of the world considers an apple to be a "good" fruit, this group would consider it to be a "bad" fruit.

That, my friends is the case of Good and Bad/Good and Evil in this world. There is neither absolute Good, nor absolute Bad while we live in the world of categorical frameworks.

The problem of absolute good or bad, comes from the perspective, that the universe is dualistic, but there is a single source from which existence arises. A separate God, who creates this universe and all it's inhabitants, including us. This we consider to be Absolute Good. And therefore, as an anti-thesis, anything that
turns us away from God, is Evil. And an entity is conjured of, a source of Absolute Evil - call it the Devil, Satan, etc.

If we look at the world from this perspective, the concept of absolute good and absolute bad starts to make a bit more sense. This however leads to other problems. Interpretations of what this source is, for instance. Is the God a being that Christians worship, or Muslims or Hindus or Jews? Each of these seem to have a different set of teachings attributed to this God, in the form of deities, prophets, Saints and so on.

Often, there seems to be mutually contradictory positions held by these different interpretations. In that case, who is right? A devout christian, who follows the words of his/her tradition literally, might consider a Muslim, a Jew to be lesser people of the same book, or someone like a Hindu who seems to "worship Idols of False gods", a heathen, someone who is destined for eternal damnation, in a terrible realm of great suffering and agony - Hell.

For a Hindu, who is comfortable with the concept of variety in Deities, an orthodox Christian or Muslim might come across as being naive, or even ignorant, in their "blind faith".

So, we see that even in this concept of an Ideal Absolute Creator, there are categorical frameworks that suggest different soteriology, and therefore, create qualitative variations in that "Absolute Good" itself.

If, however, we understand that we are the eternal, infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss that appears to manifest as the countless objects in the material universe, including in the form of the body-mind entity that we are, as humans, our perspective would gain a little more constancy.

Then, we would start to look at "good" and "bad" in a very different way. Before we can proceed further, let us first put to rest the claim made in the previous paragraph. You might be moved to inquire as to "How can we know that we are the eternal, infinite,
Existence-Consciousness-Bliss", as suggested?

The answer is simple - through Self-inquiry. Consider this --

We were conceived, developed from a zygote into a baby in our mother's womb, and after nine months we entered this world, crying and screaming. Then we grew older, progressively, our bodies and minds changed. We say the bodies "aged" and the minds "matured". There is however one thing that didn't change. The feeling of "I".

When we identify ourselves, we say "I am so and so" and then further "I am son or daughter of so and so" and then further more, "I live in such and such a place and belong to this or that group". Further we say "I am a doctor, an engineer, a teacher, and so on". It seems that our identity is hinged something other than our own self.

We look at our body and say "This is my body". Our mind formulates thoughts and our body acts accordingly. But when we break all of that down, cut away all the material trappings of country, language, profession, property, religion, etc; it is "my mind, my body" that we come down to.

Yet, we don't say "me mind, me body". The mind and the body belongs to me. Who is that me? The answer comes back - "I am". So tell me, you, this complex being of bones, flesh, blood and gray
matter, grew from a zygote into what you are today (young person, middle-aged person, old person). Yet your "I" sense has remained unchanged, when you strip away all the "I am this, I am that" kind of thinking. All the cells in your body, even the cells in your brain, where you think your "consciousness" exists have died and rebuilt themselves entirely, over and over again. Yet you, the "I am", remains unchanged. How then can you say, that your consciousness is a function of your body, made of matter. Matter that is impermanent and ever changing...
So ask yourselves this, my friends - "Who am I?" and listen for the answer. You will find that you are the eternal, infinite, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss!

This (above) is called Jnana, or knowledge, in that, it is the knowledge of one's Self. Anything else is called avidya, or ignorance. Why ignorance? Because they divert the attention from the Self to appearances. A person who knows without an iota of a doubt, what their True Nature is, is called a Jnani. All others are ajnanis (or ignorant).

So, what is Good, while one goes from being ignorant, to becoming One with Knowledge? Anything that holds the attention to, and points back to the True Nature. What then is Bad? Anything that takes the attention away from the Self, and leads the mind back to the World of objects.

Once the ajnani transitions from the world of ignorance to Self-knowledge, he is then a Jnani. Then, the world too will be constantly known as the product of his own Self. There will no longer be any separation of the Self from the World, but there will no longer be an identification with the limitations of Body and mind.