



### The Banality of Evil

Auschwitz was Maximilian's Calvary.

One must therefore understand the Holocaust and Auschwitz if one truly wants to understand Maximilian and the impact his life offered not just to one man but to all of humanity.

When we think of Adolf Eichmann, one of the chief implementors of the Holocaust, we often think of two things. First of all, an individual, a criminal;

But secondly and more importantly he is a symbol for evil in the world.

His individuality is important only for the sake of delving deeper into the broader spectrum of evil;

Its reality, its form, its causes and manifestations in the world.

Evil is usually thought to be something demonic, where men and women filled with pride and envy are spurred on by a powerful hatred for good.

Eichmann was none of this.

He was "ordinary." He was "thoughtless."

He would do anything to advance his own selfish ends without really "thinking" about why or how or who he was hurting.

Instead he shielded himself from his own "thoughts" and conscience.

So much so that he could plead "not guilty" to each count of genocide. Half a dozen psychiatrists declared him as normal and a minister who visited him in prison said he had some very "positive ideas".

No horns or tail were evident!

The danger of evil that is banal, is that it is so subtle.

It fooled the entire country of Germany and even a few Jewish elders.

It is not so obvious as nuclear weapons.

Instead it slowly worms its way into the social and personal consciousness like a spiritual and moral cancer.

People must not only reflect on what is best for them but also what is best for society.

Eichmann only cared about himself.

So much so that he did not see or hear or feel the suffering of others.

The sad and horrifying truth is that Eichmann only "thought" of himself and never "thought" of anyone else.

How does one live in a family, society, a world and not "think" about others?

"Think" about their lives, their joys, their sorrows, their suffering and their pain?

Adolf Eichmann's evil flowed out of his refusal to "think," not out of a deep desire to do evil.

Many people are not aware of the evil they do, because they do not stop to "think" about it. They silence their conscience and inner voice with clichés, stock answers and rationalizations.

Eichmann however was the incarnation of Evil in its most Banal form, in that he was able to never think about what he was doing or the cries, or the tears, the gassing and the murder of millions of Jews and others.

This is the most horrifying evil of all.

For he was able to go home to dinner, kiss his wife and children good night and turn the light off and go to bed thinking he had done a good days work.

Hannah Arendt once wrote, "Most evil is done by people who never made up their minds to be or do either evil or good. " This is why Jesus said, "be either hot or cold, for if you are lukewarm, I will spit you out. Rev. 3:16

Prayer :

When I no more behold thee, think on me.

By all thine eyes have told me, think on me.

When hearts are lightest, when eyes are brightest, when griefs are slightest,

Think on me.

In all thine hours of gladness, think on me.

If e'er I soothed thy sadness, think on me.

When foes are by thee, when woes are nigh thee, when friends all fly thee,  
Think on me.

When thou hast none to cheer thee, think on me.  
When no fond heart is near thee, think on me.  
When lonely sighing o'er pleasure flying,  
When hope is dying,  
Think on me."  
Mary Queen of Scots from Prison

Questions and Meditations :

1. Where is there evil in the world?
2. How do I know what is evil?
3. How is the unreflective life not worth living?
4. Am I hot, cold or lukewarm?