



What is Goodness?, by Rabindranath Tagore

The question will be asked, "What is goodness?" What does our moral nature mean?" My answer is that when a man begins to have an extended vision of his self, when he realizes that he is much more than at present he seems to be, he begins to get conscious of his moral nature. Then he grows aware of that which he is yet to be, and the state not yet experienced by him becomes more real than that under his direct experience.

Necessarily, his perspective of life changes, and his will takes the place of his wishes. For will is the supreme wish of the larger life, the life whose greater portion is out of our present reach, most of whose objects are not before our sight.

Then comes the conflict of our lesser man with our greater man, of our wishes with our will, of the desire for things affecting our sense with the purpose that is within our heart. Then we begin to distinguish between what we immediately desire and what is good. For good is that which is desirable for our greater self. Thus, the sense of goodness comes out of a truer view of our life, which is connected view of the wholeness of the field of life, and which takes into account not only what is present before us but what is not, and perhaps never humanly can be.

--Rabindranath Tagore, in Sadhana

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