

Doing the Right Thing Is the Right Thing to Do – Topic #31

When confronted in life with options
and we wonder which option to choose,
there really is no other option:
Doing the right thing is the right thing to do.

Do what you should, not what you can.

Saint Charan Singh

*The superior man understands what is right;
the inferior man understands what will sell.*

Confucius

*Do what you feel in your heart to be right – for you'll
be criticized anyway. You'll be damned if you do,
and damned if you don't.*

Eleanor Roosevelt

*He has honor if he holds himself to an ideal
of conduct though it is inconvenient,
unprofitable, or dangerous to do so.*

Walter Lippman

In this world where money, fame, name, power, position, celebrity and self-interest are rampant, it may be perplexing to know what to do when facing certain situations, especially if we're young and inexperienced in life. The answer, however, is simple. Regardless of the issue or problem at hand, the ethical person will always *do the right thing because it's the right thing to do.*

This begs the question, "What is the right thing to do? The right thing to do is the ethical thing, the spiritual thing, the honest thing, that thing that God would do. It's not a hard decision if we ask ourselves what we should do, listen to the answer and act on it. Oftentimes, however, our self-interest gets in the way and we end up serving ourselves rather than serving the highest and best good of the issue involved.

Saint Charan Singh says, *Do what you should, not what you can.* This is the spiritual solution. Yet, it's a fair bet to say that most people do what they can, not what they should. The typical business solution to making money is to "charge what the market will bear" and to serve the almighty "bottom line" of profitability regardless of the pain and hardship it causes others. This begs another question, "How much is too much?" How many CEOs and business tycoons charge inordinate amounts of money for things that people have to have for mere survival and for which people suffer greatly to purchase? Furthermore, how much do such CEOs take as compensation for their services? And is such compensation justified? How much money can one spend in a day?

Confucius says,

*The superior man understands what is right;
the inferior man understands what will sell.*

The "superior man" is he who has a spiritual and humanitarian foundation to his character and evaluates every situation for its ethical correctness first before considering its profitability. For example, are the alcohol, tobacco and drug industries doing what is right for the health and well-being of people or are they doing what serves their financial bottom line? The superior man would never do anything that would potentially harm, injure, debilitate or destroy another human being. The inferior man would and does do such things because his interests are for himself and himself only. Ultimately, his lack of compassion and right thought will be his undoing. In this world which operates under the great law of karma, what goes around comes around; what we sow, we reap; what we plant, we harvest; what we place onto the Circle of Life cycles back 'round to encircle us. It is an inescapable truth. Individuals who promote, market and distribute poisons and harmful products and services will one day be imprisoned by them. It's just a matter of time.

Of course we all know the golden rule: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.* This is a nice philosophy, but it's perceived to be just that, a nice philosophy. As it's written, there's no

call to correct one's behavior or act in a specific way. However, when the law of karma is attached to this statement, it's truth rings more clear.

*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you
because as you do unto others, it shall be done unto you.*

When the second clause is added, it changes the entire understanding of the *golden rule* because it transforms it from a nice philosophy to an inescapable law, informing the doer of the action that what he does to others will be done to him. So if a person lies to another, he will be lied to. If he lies to a million people, he will eventually have to endure a million lies. If he hurts others or makes decisions that will hurt, endanger, maim or kill others; if he steals from them or lies to them, he will someday have to experience the same amount of negativity he perpetrated on others, whether his payment comes due in this life or future lives. Nobody escapes his actions. No one is above karmic law. We all have to pay for everything we do in life. Therefore, it is an extremely bad decision to do anything that hurts, damages, destroys or impacts others in a negative way.

Walter Lippman's comment is apropos:

*He has honor if he holds himself to an ideal of conduct though
it is inconvenient, unprofitable, or dangerous to do so.*

In other words, the superior man does what is right, regardless of whether such action is convenient, profitable or safe for him. In our everyday actions can we say that we base our decisions on this ideal? Or do we consider what serves us first, with no thought as to how our decisions affect and impact others?

If we're to live a spiritual life, a moral life, an ethical life; if we're to express the highest ideals of what a human being can be, then when we're confronted with choices in this life it would be in keeping with life's highest ideals if we remembered that, *Doing the Right Thing is the Right Thing to do.*

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