

## THE MORAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN HOW ONE THINKS OF OTHERS

**"It is not my business what you think of me**

**for I can't do anything about what you think. "**

First of all you can do something about what people think of you for the more they see you do and hear you say the more information you give them about yourself. You will not be able to do anything about how they feel about you. It is possible for one to hate a really good person and know they are a good person but still have ill-feelings towards them.

Secondly, it was what Jack the Ripper thought of the women he killed that directly caused the Ripper murders. To say this was no concern of theirs is to say they have no rights. They have no right to life.

Thirdly, even if you suppose you can't do anything about what somebody thinks of you it does not follow that it is none of your business just for that reason. The law might not protect you and might let thieves rob you but you don't argue that it is none of your business just because you can't do anything about it.

**"It is best to think the best of people."**

If you really think that people are basically good, then if somebody tells you that you are ugly or stupid or both then you will be inclined to believe them.

The same happens if you think most people are good most of the time.

You will blame any obvious wrongdoing you see on human weakness or on some factor beyond your knowledge so you will not see them as evil when they actually are.

The woman who loves her husband will be happy as long as she thinks of nice things and sees only the sunshine in life. If she thinks of his dying her happiness will become pain. We switch off our perception of unsavoury possibilities all the time to be happy. Happiness is based on a lie, on self-inflicted blindness. Happiness must be a sin if religion is right that God forbids all lies and all deceit for he makes all things the way they are and is ultimately responsible for everything. To lie is to attack reality and what he has made and therefore to hold him up for condemnation.

If people know you only see the sunny side, then they can use that to manipulate you.

If you look up to people who put you down and are negative about you, you will end up thinking the best of everybody but yourself. If everybody followed your example all would be in misery.

**"I can't take my dog to the vet to have her put to sleep. So I am getting Sarah to take her."**

If it is right to have the dog put down and you believe that then you are getting somebody else to do the favour for your dog. Your love is emotional but is not real love. Real love celebrates the freedom and rights of the other person. The husband who rejoices in his wife's individuality loves her. The husband who feels great passionate love for his wife and beats her up may feel love for her but he does not love her. Feeling love for her does not mean he really loves her.

**"Before you judge my life, take a good look at your own."**

The Jews, according to the New Testament, were sinners though respectable ones. Despite lying in religious affairs and taking the houses of widows to finance the faith, they were looked up to. Jesus however condemned them for condemning others such as prostitutes and tax collectors. Jesus preferred the sinners who were looked upon as filth. The reason the condemnations by the Jews were considered to be so socially acceptable was because people believed that good people condemn sin in an effort to root it out. The leaders then were claiming to love the sinner and hate the sin.

When Jesus condemned the Jews for condemning sinners though they were no better themselves, he thereby rejected their excuse that they were condemning the sin and not the sinner. He said that you must not see the mote in your brother's eye when you ignore the plank in your own and that the judgment you pass on others will be passed on you so judge fairly (Matthew 7:1-5). He was admitting that you cannot love the sinner and hate the sin. They had to use this excuse because everybody would have hated them and they would have been hated by one another. Jesus was being purely spiteful for his

teaching left it wide open for his followers to take the same excuse! How? Because he taught loving the sinner and hating the sin too. If you love the sinner and hate the sin you have to hate the sins of others even if you are a sinner yourself. And Jesus said that all people were sinful. The Christians say they love the sinner but hate the sin and that they condemn the sin not the sinner which if true means they can condemn the actions of a person who is not as bad as they are. And if you can really love the sinner and hate the sin then why not condemn the actions of people who are worse than yours? Why not condemn people's sins because you want them to be better off than you and cleaner in the sight of God? When Jesus commanded the hatred of sin, he went as far as to say you should wish you could lose an eye rather than lustfully look at a woman with it, he was commanding the hatred of sinners and he knew it.

If you can really love the sinner and hate the sin, it makes no sense to forbid ANYBODY from judging their neighbour. To forbid is to acknowledge that the love is counterfeit.

The saying, "Before you judge my life, take a good look at your own" simply means, leave me alone to sin or do wrong. Give me the right not to be criticised. I don't give a damn what kind of world the attitude I am asking of you leads to. I don't give a toss.

**"John is bad but we mustn't let him think we are talking about him".**

Translation: John feels he should be bad and not gossiped about and we want to encourage his arrogance. It is all right for him to hurt others but not all right for others to hurt him. If he knows or thinks he is not being talked about it will encourage him to be bad.

Proprietor: "There I have mixed the cheap vodka with the good vodka".

Bartender: "That isn't right".

Proprietor: "You won't be drinking it so don't worry."

Translation: Just worry about yourself and nobody else.

**"It is because I love you that I hate what you have done."**

To love the sinner and not the sin is impossible for the sin reveals the kind of person committing the sin therefore to hate sin is to hate the sinner. It is never a person's actions you hate but the person because it is the bad character of the person, ie the person you hate. To say you hate somebody's sin is to say you are superior to them and know what is best for them. It is prideful. It is not helpful for people feel you hate them with their sin.

To separate the sin from the sinner is impossible. If you pretend that the sinner and the sin are separate you prove you know they are not by thinking of the person as a sinner. The love for the sinner is pretend love.

Christians love sinners so much that they still send them to jail to suffer sentences that make little sense. They demand a life sentence for a man who murders a dying old man and also a life sentence for the man who murders a young person. Christians admire the shopkeeper who forgives and forgets when a girl steals from his shop and they still admire him if he gets her jailed. Oh the hypocrisy!

"Walk tall and straight as if nothing has happened and show your dignity", is the advice given to a woman who says, "John climbed into bed with me and my husband found us and thought I had committed adultery with John. Now I have a bad name and I cannot face my neighbours or go to the club."

The advice urges you not to care what people think. It is very good advice if you decide to live up to your reputation or despite your denials you have been living up to it. The advice in fact surreptitiously encourages you to do this. It forbids you to take what other people think about you as a deterrent from doing wrong.

If somebody says something mean about you people often advise you to pay no attention to it and not get upset. This says that people who sue for libel are doing wrong and being irrational. It is advising the abdication of all concern for preserving one's reputation. If the gossip is thought to have little credibility that is only what people think. They could be wrong. People who believe the worst about others will take what the gossip says about you seriously. The advice is asking you to do away with the need you have for a good reputation. Without that need, you can do whatever you wish.

Religion urges people to do what it wants and what it says God wants even if everybody is against you. Jesus said that you are blessed when you are persecuted for practicing religion as he formulated it and if you are not there is something amiss

(Matthew 5). We describe the person who does not care what others think as a psychopath. Religion is dangerous. When religion commands such things it clearly has to enforce its will on its people for the sake of controlling them. Why? Because if religion trains me to ignore what others want and feel no need to go along with what they want then I will take this with me if I join another religion or decide to ignore religion and make up my own mind. I would be dangerous for example if I decided that murdering gay people was okay for God commanded it in the Bible.

"If you don't stop sleeping around, you will get AIDS. If you don't stop complaining about everybody, you will have no friends".

Focus on the word "will". There is no will about it. Many people sleep around and don't get AIDS. Many moaners have friends and misery does love company.

When people say bad things will happen to you if you do such and such, you may feel cared for. They would not be saying you will get AIDS or otherwise suffer unless some part of them hopes you will get them if you carry on living the way you are.

People don't like to be wrong. They want you to get AIDS or to have no friends when they talk to you as if you will suffer these things unless you change.

They are also trying to use fear to control you. They would not deter you if you wanted to be a fire-man or a soldier though the dangers there are greater.