

The Philosophy of Value (7)

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Chapter IV The Philosophy of Value as the Guiding Principle of Life Paragraph II Criterion for Value Judgement

I

In our daily life, we sometimes succeed or at other times fail, rejoice or abandon ourselves to grief. This is the result of whether or not the value judgement passed on our daily life problems was correct. Therefore, it is most necessary to establish the basic principles for guiding daily life which are the criterion for value judgement. When the criterion for value judgement are considered from experience in our actual lives and on the basis of principles described from the beginning of this book, they can be classified as follows.

1 Beauty and Ugliness

It is foolish to ignore gain and loss by adhering to like and dislike, not to speak of good and evil.

Though no one can like loss and dislike gain, there are some persons who judge things by their momentary feelings, eventually missing a precious gain and suffering

a heavy loss. Everyone knows that a little child sometimes overeats and that some persons decide whether to get married or not by their likes or dislikes only to regret it later, even though marriage is important in their lives. Many people are liable to do so in their daily lives. Some will not discard their biased views on religion which is the fundamental problem of life, because of their likes or dislikes, adhering to the religion handed by their ancestors. So they do not even consider the interests of themselves, their families and res publica. The proverb “Good medicine is suffering in mouth” teaches this point. One should bear the bitter taste for one’s interests, not to speak of good.

2 Gain and Loss

It is foolish to ignore a far-reaching great gain and loss, being allured by an immediate small one (Penny wise, pound foolish)

Those who are deceived by sweet talk and who get involved deeply in a false religion by promises of “Sickness can be cured” or “You can make a good profit”, will suffer a heavy loss, because they are allured by an immediate small gain ignoring a far-reaching great one. The cowards who do evil one after another despite their awareness of the dark world in which they live for fear of small harm if they try to flee from it ---these persons are also fools.

3 Good and Evil

To ignore good and evil by adhering to gain and loss is evil.

Gain and loss are permanent when compared with like and dislike which are momentary and ephemeral. Similarly, good and evil are social and general when compared with gain and loss which are individual. Therefore, those who do evil

to public profit of the society and the state, allured by their individual and family interests, are called wicked. Misers devoted to the pursuit of wealth and nouveaux-riches from black-market are so produced. Actually, members of the Diet and government officials who cling to their honor and positions without carrying out their missions, are similarly called wicked, even though they does not violate the law of the state. Religions, which supposedly arose for the salvation of sentient beings and have already lost their power, are still well-treated as established religions by society and hang out their shingles of religion merely to thrive and survive. These are typically wicked.

We call such people wicked, since there can be neither individual security nor individual happiness without consideration for society.

4 Good and Evil

Doing no good is evil and doing no evil is good. Good and evil here mentioned are of minimum degree, but the result is as such

People misunderstand that doing no good is good and different from evil and that they don't care about doing no good as long as they violate no law. Herein lies the roots of the contemporary social evil with the result that dogmatic and hypocritical people hold the influence. Doing evil and doing no good are only different expressions of same effects. However it is contemporary common sense that doing evil is obviously evil but doing no good is good because doing no good is different from doing evil.

Suppose that I defrauded you of 1,000 yen and that a friend of yours neither checked my action nor warned you, though he/she knew it. In this case, both I and he/she must meet your anger. As a result, both I who did evil and your friend who did no good are similarly evil. Moreover, your friend who knew your danger and did

not warn you may be said to be much more evil.

Next, let us put aside your friend and consider you and I enter into direct negotiations. If your life-force is very vital, a wicked will be unable to find any chance to defraud you. Considering so, it is needless to say that I who defrauded you am evil, but you who did not do good and was defrauded is evil. It is not only because you suffered immediately a personal loss of 1,000 yen, but because you made another person do evil. After all, this is due to your feeble life-force. Not only a wicked with vital life-force may be punished, but a good person with feeble life-force may be punished. The person suffers immediately a loss to his/her daily life and furthermore suffers spiritually and in the end he/she may become ill or go bankrupt.

As was illustrated above, both the wicked with vital life-force and the good with feeble life-force are to blame for doing no good in part for social evil. Everyone teaches that doing evil is sin, but does not accuse of doing no good. This is unreasonable and does not provide any fundamental means for preventing social evil.

5 Major good and Major Evil

To oppose major good, being contended with minor good, can be doing major evil. Even minor evil can be doing major good, if it opposes major evil.

It is of course difficult to resist major evil, but it is more difficult not to disobey and to respect major good. Therefore, only from the viewpoint of value, we can affirm the assertion that all kinds of medium and minor good fall into major evil.

For example, suppose that you need a light at dark night, and though I have many electric lights and paper lanterns, I lend you one of the paper lanterns. After running an errand with the paper lantern despite feeling the inconvenience, if you come to know that I had a much more convenient electric light and kept it secret from you, you would hate me rather than appreciate for the paper lantern you

borrowed. In other words, the lantern is useful only when an electric light is not available or when it goes out. Therefore, when an electric light appears, you feel first of all that a paper lantern is “inconvenient” and “dim”. The same can be said of the value of good. Minor good is useful before major good appears, but after major good appears, if you disobey or be envious of major good, minor good turns out to be major evil.

A person with minor good is envious of major good, likes to be praised by vulgar crowd, and has neither courage to oppose major evil nor generosity to become intimate with major good. These are some characteristics of minor good. He/she has the conscience not to like evil, but has no courage to do good.

On an idealistic theory separated from our daily life, we may find it quite difficult that minor good becomes major evil when it opposes to major good, but this fact is unconsciously recognized in our actual lives. It is common that you do not greet a not-so-close person when you meet him/her on the street, but things are quite different with relatives. If you happen to meet your brother or sister on the street and they do not greet and turn their faces away with an indifferent way for some unknown reason, you and your relative will become estranged each other much more than a not-so-close person on the street, and naturally you and your relative will come to hate each other like enemies. In this sense, it may be explained why some traitors within an organization must be considered as traitors within the walls and more carefully watched than strong enemy from outside, because the close members may wound other members fatally.

The above mentioned is neither a new discovery of mine nor a product of my originality. We live unconsciously in conformity with this law. Moreover, Nichiren Daishonin who is the True Buddha in the Latter Day of the Law clearly pointed it out as follows.

- 1) The fault of opposing major good in favor of minor good and renouncing the true teaching in favor of provisional teachings will result in minor good turning

major evil, just as medicine changes into poison and one's relatives become enemies. This is a fault difficult to mend. (Letter to Shimoyama)

- 2) Though a person may do good, in the course of doing a single good deed he/she accumulates ten evil ones, so that in the end, for the sake of a small good, he/she commits major evil. And yet, in his/her heart, he/she prides him-/herself on having practiced major good----such are the time we live in. (The recitation of the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters)
- 3) By clinging to the minor good of reciting Amida Buddha's name, they deprive themselves the major good of the Lotus Sutra. Thus minor good of the Nembutsu is worse in its effect than the major evil of the five cardinal sins. (The Sutra of True Requitall)
- 4) For example, if one murders one's parents, then no matter how many causes for major good one may create, one's efforts will not be acceptable to heaven. But if one kills an enemy of the Lotus Sutra, even if that enemy should be one's father or mother, this great crime will turn into a cause for major good. (Reply to Jibu-bo)
- 5) You should understand from the above that even if one performs a good deed, should it be an act of minor good that destroys major good, it will cause one to fall into the evil paths. (Encouragement to a Sick Person)