

Live And Let Live

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On a recent visit to a young friend's residence. I saw a decorative plaque on the wall, which read: "All men do their due. no man lives to fulfill others' expectations."

Older people might want to modify these statements, add some provisos and draw a line. It could however be salutary for some to have this particular plaque adorning the wall. It might act as a check on those who go beyond the reasonable limits of what one can fairly expect of other people.

I suppose we all try, to some extent, to foist our ideas, our ways and our own outlook on other people and, from time to time, we make unwelcome demands and try to get our own way with them. If they persist in holding their own ideas for the consummation of a task, we think or hold them in disregard, seek vengeance or even write them off as bloated egotists. We can also go to the extent of christening them as ungrateful or unkind people.

This attitude seems so universal that it might be synonymous to human nature. If revised and measured to a minimum, our personal relationships survive it well enough. We bicker along in our efforts to change someone for the better, as we see it, or get our own way or make them do what we think best for them, many a times against their will. Little do we ponder if there rages an inner conflict in their minds, wanting to protest but silently obliging, so as to maintain a placid relationship. But, if this feeling that others must live up to what we expect of them is excessive, then there may be a lot of bad blood and many a soul may be hurt and bleeding. The submissive lead frustrated lives. There are failures who might have been otherwise successful if they had not "strayed into the rough", so to speak. Mental upheavals may stain the tapestry of many a life.

Sometime we come across people who are anxiously trying to placate others around them because they want the world to approve of them and be the centre of adulation. This abnegation of self does not emanate solely from love for one's fellow human beings and choosing to live a life in service to them, but also from an ardent desire to be approved of by all and sundry. An overstated effort to satisfy others can distort one's personality. Consciously or unconsciously, one strives to live up to expectations of someone or the other. These efforts can be weighted by the passion shown by the person for the task or action in question. The humblest effort made from one's heart weighs more than a dozen of the same made from the desire to be approved of by others. A simple deed, which is inspired by the heart and driven by true passion and motivation can win over a hundred people, while a deed, however extravagant, if inspired by the selfish motive of self-appraisal, and devoid of true passion, does not bring one any closer to peoples' hearts, or at least not for long. If anything, they may push the person further away, once the true source of his inspiration is revealed.

So, what one might discern from this is a message to live and let live. If each man lives his own life to the fullest, then this world would surely become nothing less than paradise, for in each body walking the earth shall dwell a god, capable of anything under the sun. But, the path to that is a very long one, but one that has a destination and that destination can be reached, if we all make an effort to better ourselves, thereby bettering the world. If no man is made to serve another forcibly, and if he serves only humanity, then, in the end, his efforts shall bring about the betterment of not only himself and the entire world, but also every person living in it.