

Visualize the Perfect True Image Lying Beyond Phenomena

You must not worry about unpleasant, dark, and distorted conditions that have appeared in the phenomenal world. You must transcend the phenomenal appearance and see the perfect *creation of God* that lies beyond phenomena. Applying this to man, you must see “spiritual man” (true-image man created in the likeness of God) who lies beyond physical man.

Phenomena will probably take advantage of your five physical senses to play tricks on your conscious and subconscious minds. However, enlightened eyes will not be deceived by physical forms. Instead, enlightened eyes will perceive the *perfect world* and the *child-of-God man* lying beyond phenomena. This world is governed by the law that says, “That which you visualize becomes actualized.” In Buddhism the same law is stated as follows: “The three worlds are nothing but reflections of the mind,” and in Christianity, it is stated, “...as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee” (Matt. 8:13). Christianity also states, “...thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matt. 9:22). Everything in the phenomenal world appears exactly as your mind believes it and sees it.

(From 365 Golden Keys To a Completely Free Life)

Monthly Message

What do you think of man’s morality? I talked about it in my monthly lecture in May. A definition of the word “moral” according to my dictionary is “concerned with principles of right and wrong behavior.” Then, is human behavior fundamentally “right (good)” or “wrong (evil)?” I once discussed this proposition in my peace study for the 2004 Seicho-No-Ie Special Conference for World Peace. I studied it from the psychological, biological viewpoint and researched different scholars. Some believed that human nature possessed innate “evil” in them. Others viewed human beings as being originally “good” in nature. If you are interested in this topic, please purchase of the proceedings of that conference (\$5).

Seicho-No-Ie believes that we are born with good nature because we are all children of God. Therefore, to know the essential ethic of SNI is to realize this central realization that we are all children of God and innately “good.” At the same time, it is very important that we have to know that our lives are not only of this physical world. Our lives endlessly continue to express our innate goodness in different life stages. If we believed that our physical bodies are the only

true existence, we would pursue only something comfortable and convenient for our lives. So many people follow this way of life because I assume they don’t know their lives continue after this physical world. They probably believe only in material existences.

One of the books I recently read supports this idea that materialism caused the corruption of man’s morality. The book is The Cheating Culture, by David Callahan. The preface of this book introduced the theme of the book:

My friend Peter went through a shoplifting phase a few years back. His thefts reflected his tastes—\$40 bottles of Bordeaux, for example—and though Peter showed no signs of kleptomania, his friends agreed that he must have mental problems. Why else would a normal adult be shoplifting?

Last April, my friend Max filed taxes in Connecticut, where he used to live, even though he now resides in New York City. Dodging the city’s killer taxes saved him about \$3,000. Did anyone think Max was disturbed? Hardly. His friends thought he was smart to keep his legal address in Connecticut.

Petty shoplifting is a misdemeanor. Tax evasion is a felony that can yield prison time. If anyone has a screw loose, it's really Max, not Peter. Right? Well, yes and no. And this funny dichotomy says a lot about morality in America these days, as I've learned while writing this book.

This book shared many true stories documenting how American citizens cheated on their taxes, their customers, and their companies. Although Benjamin Franklin advocated in his 13 Virtues to "Imitate Jesus and Socrates," nowadays, Callahan said cheating was more likely to happen than to follow the moral guidelines of America's founding fathers. He gave many examples of recent corporate scandals such as the Sears auto repair chain's case in 1990s, the WorldCom case, the Enron case and so on. Scot Sullivan who was the CFO of WorldCom, and Bernard Ebbers who was the CEO of WorldCom, for example, misguided and cheated investors so that the investors lost over \$175 billion in equity value, and the union pension fund lost an estimated \$70 billion on WorldCom stock (p 103). Recent news also introduced that former Enron's executives were convicted in different counts of fraud and conspiracy (as of May 25, 2006).

Why did this corporate corruption happen? Callahan thought the American morality has been deteriorating over time for three main reasons. First, extreme individualism and worshipping money is ruining people's sense of morality. He wrote, "Extreme individualism and the money obsession might be expected to bring out the worst in America" (p 122). Second, while Americans have always valued individualism and independence, an extreme form of individualism may have developed in the 1960s according to Callahan. He wrote, "The 'do your own thing' ethos of the '60s rebels unwittingly provided a strong foundation for the laissez-faire revolution of the '80s

and '90s" (p 111). Third, Callahan claimed that people tended to justify their illegal acts as proper although they recognized that their acts were against the law. Callahan wrote, "People are prone to invent their own morality when the rules don't seem fair to them. This tendency explains a lot of cheating in America today" (p 168). According to him, in 2001 the federal government wanted to celebrate the biggest economic boom of the year in U.S. history, but "instead of celebrating, IRS officials were gnashing their teeth about all the money that got away [because of tax evasion]—which was estimated to be over \$250 billion, an amount that could have covered most of the Pentagon's budget that year" (p 154). Callahan also wrote that every year white collar workers steal an estimated \$600 billion or more of their companies' time and materials.

When I worked at the Hilton Hotel in Tokyo, I witnessed that some of the workers used hotel products in their private lives without hesitation. For example, some brought back unused hotel products containing the hotel logo such as bathroom towels, slippers, soaps, toothbrushes, and so on. I have no intention to condemn people who were my friends or subordinates at the time. Sometimes they didn't think they were doing anything wrong. At times, in my experience, I used a company telephone for personal calls. I occasionally used hotel's stationary and other small products at home. I probably thought it was okay to bring a pen or memo pad back to home because it was only a used product. I justified my action.

This is the idea that Callahan wanted to say. Of course what he wrote about was more intentional and large-scale theft. He said some people tended to justify this type of theft because they believed that they were not properly treated in the workplace. Others justified such theft by claiming that they were performing "free advertising" for

their companies. Consequently, people don't understand what could be so bad if a few employees stole a few T-shirts or a few towels for their friends or relatives. Something was wrong with this! Unfortunately, not so many people realized what was wrong with it. In 2001, company losses from theft were estimated to be over \$600 billion a year, which equaled 6% of America's GDP.

Callahan suggested his ideas for how Americans should deal with, what he believes to be, America's cheating epidemic. I found his ideas to be insightful. I recommend that you read this book.

Continuing on the theme of morality, I would like to pose this question. Do you think people who believe in God are moral? Well, it is not always the case. Callahan wrote that Ebbers who was the CEO of WorldCom was one of the most religious CEOs in the high-tech sector. He often mentioned God in his speech and started every board meeting with a prayer (p 136). However, Ebbers did not prevent the ruin of WorldCom.

A moral sense exists within each one of us, and its standard is how much we love ourselves. The important thing is the self is not the physical self but the real (True Image) self. Therefore, in SNI, we believe that the true value of morality will be realized in the True Image World because morality exists along with love and freedom. Callahan pointed out that Americans' extreme obsession with money could ruin the moral character of the U.S. and ultimately the economic strengths and democratic freedoms that Americans currently enjoy. I believe America's prosperity has resulted, in great part, from the high moral standards set by its citizens as reflected in its constitution. Please remind yourself of Benjamin Franklin's 13 virtues. By sharing his virtues here may stray from my main subject, however, it is good for us to be reminded of America's

founder's spirit here. These are all good standards for our morality:

Temperance: Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

Silence: Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

Order: Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

Resolution: Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

Frugality: Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.

Industry: Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

Sincerity: Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

Justice: Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

Moderation: Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

Cleanliness: Tolerate no uncleanness in body, cloths, or habitation.

Tranquility: Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

Chastity: Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

Humility: Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

One of the teachings of SNI explains that we have to reap what we sow. In other words, it is not enough to say that we "believe in God" or that "we are religious." It is our actions that demonstrate our moral character.

If we do good deeds, we will receive good results in the future. Our lives continue after death, therefore, although many people think that this world is not fair, we must reap the true value from what we sow each day to attain enlightenment. If we think in this manner, we will be guided to make moral choices because the price of our deeds will be paid in the future. In order to continue this prosperity we are enjoying now, we must continue to choose morality over materialistic rewards. Please keep the 13 virtues in mind.

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