



Inner Social Responsibility, by Vimala Thakar

Viewing the world as a large pieced-together collection of fragments, some of which are labeled as friend and others as foe, begins internally. We map out our internal territories with the same positive or negative designations as we do external territories, and wars go on there as they do in the world. Internally, we are divided against ourselves; the emotions want one thing, the intellect another, the impulses of the body yet another, and a conflict takes place which is no different in quality, although it is in scale, from that of the world wars. If we are not related to ourselves in wholeness, is it any surprise that we cannot perceive the wholeness of the world? If we believe ourselves each to be a patched-together, unmatched assortment of desirable and undesirable features, motives at odds with each other, undigested beliefs and prejudices, fears, and insecurities, will we not project all this on the world?

Because the source of human conflict, social injustice, and exploitation is in the human psyche, we must begin there to transform society. We investigate the mind, the human psyche, not as an end in itself, as a self-centered activity, but as an act of compassion for the whole human race. We must move deep to the source of decay in society so that the new structures and social systems we design will have a sufficiently healthy root system that they will have an opportunity to flourish. The structures of society need to be transformed, but the hidden motivations and assumptions on which the structures rest need to be transformed as well. The individual and collective values and motives that give sanction to the injustice and exploitation of modern society must become the focus of change as much

as the socioeconomic and political structures. We no longer will be able to allow the motivations and values that underlie personal and collective behavior to remain hidden and unexamined. It serves no lasting purpose for us to change the surface structures and behaviors while the deep foundations remain decadent and unsound.

Those of us who have dedicated our lives to social action have considered our personal morality and ethics, our motives and habits, to be private territory. We not only want our personal motivations and habits cut off from public view, but from our own recognition as well. But in truth, the inner life is not a private or personal thing; it's very much a social issue. The mind is a result of collective human effort. There is not your mind and my mind; it's a human mind. It's a collective human mind, organized and standardized through centuries. The values, the norms, the criteria are patterns of behavior organized by collective groups. There is nothing personal or private about them. We may close the doors to our rooms and feel that nobody knows our

thoughts, but what we do in so-called privacy affects the life around us. If we spend our days victimized by negative energies and negative thoughts, if we yield to depression, melancholia, and bitterness, these energies pollute the atmosphere. Where then is privacy? We need to learn, as a social responsibility, to look at the mind as something that has been created collectively and to recognize that our individual expressions are expressions of the human mind.

--Vimala Thakar

[share/read comments

[<http://nipun.charityfocus.org/blog/ar/wednesdays/000616.html>]]

Published at www.awakin.org on May 02, 2005