

Judge Not

The fundamental requirement for witnessing is to stop judging others!

Jesus Christ says, "Judge Not." These two words have a very profound meaning behind it. As human beings, we find it almost impossible to refrain from making judgments. Judging has become second nature to us. We have a tendency to form opinions on issues that don't relate to us without even checking the facts.

Every time the mind pronounces a judgment call, the soul stops growing. The judgement is a lethal dose of poison that can do irreversible damage to your soul. It takes a great amount of courage to attempt to control the ego that judges constantly. The following test will make you aware of how many judgments you form without thinking. For one week, find half an hour every evening when you can reflect on the events that took place during the day. From the time you wake up, go through the whole day until the evening. Repeat each event to yourself in your mind. Do this exercise for one week and write down all the details. You may be surprised at your results at the end of the day.

Contemplate the following beautiful story. This story took place in China; the master Lao-Tzu loved to tell it. It has been repeated from generation to generation.

Once upon a time, in a small village in China, there lived an old man. The man was very poor, but the kings envied him because he had a beautiful white horse. This horse was so captivating that the kings offered the old man vast sums to purchase it. But the old man would say, "This horse is very valuable to me. He is like a human, and how can you trade a human being for money? He is my friend, not something you can claim to own." The man faced great poverty; he was tempted, but he kept the horse.

One day he discovered that the horse was not in the stable. The people from the village said, "You crazy old man, we knew this was going to happen! We knew your horse would be stolen some day. You were offered immense wealth for the horse but you were stubborn. You were not able to protect the horse and now he is gone forever. This is a curse, a tragedy."

The old man replied, "Don't leap to conclusions. Simply observe the fact that the horse cannot be seen in the stable. That is the only visible fact; anything and everything else is a judgment."

The crowd replied, "We know what is going on. We are not claiming to be philosophers. The fact is that a priceless jewel has been lost and it is a great tragedy."

The old man replied, "The only fact that is clear to me is that the stable is empty. Beyond this I do not know anything else. Who knows what will happen next?"

People thought the old man had gone crazy. They started making fun of him. They always thought that he was not wise; if he had been, he would have sold the horse and lived comfortably. The old man decided that he would make a living as a woodcutter, bringing the wood from the forest and selling it. After several days, the horse returned. He had run off into the wilderness. Amazingly, he brought several wild horses with him. Once again the people came

together and said, “Old man, it seems that you were right and we were wrong. This incident turned out to be a blessing. Please accept our apologies.”

The old man replied, “Once again, you are going too far. The only clear fact is that the horse has returned and has brought other horses back with him. Only God knows whether it is a blessing or not.”

This time the crowd did not say much; they thought it possible that the old man was right. They kept silent but thought to themselves that, with a little training, the beautiful horses could all be sold for a great price.

The old man had only one child, a young boy. He was given the job of training the wild horses. After a few days, he fell off a horse and broke his legs. Once again the people gathered and naturally started judging the incident. They said, “Maybe you were right; the horse’s return was a misfortune. You have only one son, and he has lost his legs. You are so old; he could have supported you. Now you are destitute.”

The old man replied, “You still continue to judge too quickly. The only thing that is clear is that my son has broken his legs. Who knows whether it is a blessing or a curse?”

Soon after, the country was involved in a war with its neighbour. All the young men were forced to join the military. The only young man left behind was the old man’s crippled son. The people gathered and wept because from every house all the sons were forced into battle. There was no possibility of their coming back - the opposing army was too strong.

The crowd came to the old man and wept for their young ones. They said to the old man, “You were absolutely right. This is a blessing for you. Maybe your son is crippled, but he is still with you. Our sons are gone forever. Your son will eventually start to walk again; you are so lucky.”

The old man replied, “It is very frustrating to talk to you people. Once again you are judging. The only fact that is clear is that your sons are forced into battle and my son is not. But who knows whether it is a blessing or a misfortune. Only God knows why this is happening.”

Our way of thinking is very similar to that of the crowd. When we go to work, we judge. When we are dealing with family situations, we judge. When we socialize, we judge. Remember that you cannot judge a book by its cover. You cannot judge a sentence from a single word. Life comes in fragments. We receive one piece at a time. Judgment can only be applied to the total. Only God knows the total.