

Choose Your Options With Utmost Care

Talk: Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Every day in our life, we perhaps have some kind of bad experience, big or small. One has two options: either ignore them or react. The first option is a form of forgiveness, while the other amounts to engagement and in some cases, even revenge.

Which is the better option?

Forgiveness is a better option for it is based on a proven formula: 'Save yourself'. Forgiveness saves you from distraction, it saves your time, and it saves you from creating more problems. Forgiveness could amount to an instant solution to the problem.

In contrast, reaction and emotional revenge means turning the bad into worse, for revenge tends to worsen the problem. If forgiveness is buying time, revenge is just wasting time without hope of any positive result.

In such a situation people generally tend to give in to negative thinking but that would be unwise. The better formula is following a self-oriented course of action. In other words, if you are having a sad experience, don't think about the other party who you feel has wronged you. Think about and adopt a course of action that is better for you.

At all times in our life we are torn between two choices – anti-other thinking and pro-self thinking. Anti-other thinking makes you descend to the lowest level, whereas pro-self thinking elevates you to a higher plane of consciousness.

If forgiveness is a full stop, revenge is full of commas. Forgiveness means ending an unwanted situation, while revenge means extending it to infinity. Forgiveness maintains your positive thinking uninterruptedly, while revenge creates negativity. And negativity creates all kinds of undesirable behaviour, in terms

of both thought and action.

Some would argue that forgiveness does not always work, and that it is better to adopt the tit-for-tat policy. But tit-for-tat is not a real solution; it does not end the problem, it only leads to a chain reaction. A reactionary attitude aggravates the problem. Wouldn't the policy of forgiveness only encourage others to take further negative steps against us? To assume so would be unfair, and also, it is against the law of nature.

Psychological studies show that every human being is born with two different faculties – the ego and the conscience. If you follow the path of vindication, it fans the ego of the other party, whereas if you follow the policy of forgiveness, it will activate the conscience of the other person. And it is a fact that conscience always plays a positive role in controversial matters.

The culture of forgiveness helps in the building of a better society, where positive values flourish, where the spirit of cooperation prevails, where disparate groups come together and form a peaceful society. Revenge, on the other hand, creates an environment of mistrust, in which everyone takes others to be rivals. The revenge culture rules out the growth of a healthy society.

To err is human; everyone is bound to do something wrong at one time or other. But, in such a situation, revenge means committing not just one mistake, but making mistake after mistake. On the contrary, forgiveness means undoing wrongs with rights. It is better to say that, if to err is human, to forgive is also human. Perhaps this concept is expressed in the saying: 'To err is human, but to forgive is divine'. For at the core, aren't we all really divine beings?

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