

ON INTEGRITY

Maliwada Human Development Training School

We are going to visit the arena of Profound Humanness called "Integrity". Sometimes "integrity" is reduced to mean a kind of moral uprightness and steadfastness, in the sense of saying, "He has too much integrity to ever take a bribe."

But profound integrity goes far beyond this. Sometimes, in order to distinguish it from more limited popular usage, it is called "secondary integrity". This is the integrity which is not constrained by limited moralities, however well-intentioned. The integrity that is profound living is the singularity of thrust of a life committed and ordering every dimension of the self towards that commitment. Thus the self is in fact shaped by the self, and focused towards that commitment. You can say that an audacious creation of the self takes place in integrity, without which you are simply the creation of the various forces impacting you in your society.

Thus the basis of integrity is a destinal resolve - a resolve that chooses and sets your destiny and out of which your whole life is ordered. The object of that resolve is the ultimate decision of each person, and each person makes that choice, consciously or unconsciously. To do so with awareness is the height of man's responsibility. It is incarnate freedom. It is what real freedom looks like.

When man has thus exercised his freedom he realizes that to be true to himself ever thereafter he has a unique position to look at the values of his society. He is no longer bound by the opinions and codes of his fellow-man, but reevaluates then on the basis of their impact on his destinal resolve.

Thus the man of integrity is continuously engaged in a societal transvaluation, a moving across the values of society and reinterpreting them in line with his life's thrust. It does not give him the liberty of ignoring his society, but his obligation transcends the conformity of living within the codes and mores of his society. Thus the man of profound integrity always seems to not quite fit with his fellow-men, but his actions always are appropriate for him, even to those who oppose him.

No matter how odd the man of profound integrity appears to his neighbors, he experiences himself as securely anchored. While he is very clear that this world is not his home, nevertheless he experiences himself as having found his native vale. He experiences an eternal at-one-ness, not so much with the currents and waves of activity around him, but with the deeper trends of history itself. Amid the flux of wavering to and fro that is so evident in others, he experiences an inexplicable rootedness, as though he has sunk a taproot deep into the foundations of the earth itself. Though he experiences his life as a long journey, even an endless journey, towards the object of his resolve, yet he never senses himself as a stranger on the journey. It's as if he'd been there before. Original integrity is experienced primarily by this sense of at-one-ness.

Kierkegaard once wrote a book about this kind of integrity that he titled, "Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing". An ancient philosopher focused his wisdom around this integrity with the advice, "Know yourself, and to your own self, be true."

This document comes from the curriculum of the Maliwada Human Development Training School in Maliwada, India, which is a former program of ICA International. They are not certain of the year, so there are no further details that they could provide for a citation.

I believe these words are spoken by Joseph Wesley Mathews, the founder of the Institute of Cultural Affairs, who laid out a vision of 24 Human Development Projects.