

SANE OR INSANE?

Intent of the story:

- ✓ *To clarify the following terms;*
 - *“Normal” and “abnormal” social behavior*
 - *“Moral and immoral” deeds.*
 - *“Legal and illegal” actions.*
- ✓ *The terrible impact social acceptance or rejection has on our thinking and acting.*

The Story

Many, many years ago in a far away country, there was a village inhabited by queer people. Except for two persons in that village, all the rest had taken leave of their senses. They acted in the craziest and maddest ways one could imagine. Only those two persons refused to conform to the mad and insane ways of their fellow villagers. They behaved in a normal way as sound people in society do.

Seeing those two people acting differently from the common man, the villagers realized that there was something wrong with them. They branded them as mad and insane. The elders of the village thought it was their duty to take those two queer and “strange” fellows to book.

They summoned them and warned them to change their ways, or else... When all the elders' warnings and exhortations did not bring the expected change, the Village Council declared those two rebels incorrigibly mad and had them locked up in a small little mad house outside the village. They told them: "You will remain locked in this mad house until you learn to behave normally like all of us do."

After a long time, one of two rebels lost his head and turned mad. With great rejoicing The Village Council declared him “normal” and accepted him in the bosom of their village community. The other incurable mad man – the stubborn one – remained in the lock-up until he died.

Points for Reflection and Discussion

1. What would you call “normal” and “abnormal” behavior in society?
2. What influence social acceptance or rejection has in our behavior? Explain. Discuss.
3. Can a person be true to “himself” in any society, and be considered normal? Why?
4. Have our ways of behavior an “absolute” or a “relative” value? How and why?
5. Can a person retaining his freedom and being true to himself, be considered “normal” in today’s world? Why?
6. What power fads and fashions have on us all? Can we escape their influence? How?
7. Who creates “public opinion”?
8. What do the creators of public opinion have as their primary goal?

9. What is the value and function of social conventions and customs?
10. Was Christ "normal" or "abnormal" within the Jewish society of his day? What did they think of him? What did they do to Him?
11. Does the world approve of prophets and reformers like Gandhi, Luther King, etc.? What did the world do to them? Why?
12. Can you explain why "religious "values" and "moral ethos and standards" have changed so much during the last decades?
13. Is divorce considered normal or abnormal in today's society? Why
14. Does this explain why the number of divorces keeps mounting? How?
15. Is the priestly and religious celibacy viewed in modern life as "normal" or "abnormal"? Why?
16. Can you explain why there are so few vocations to the priesthood and religious life now?
17. In today's world, who sets the norms of what is
 - "Normal and "abnormal"?"
 - "Moral or immoral"?",
 - Legal or illegal?
18. Could God change the morality of human actions *-for instance, make murder good and moral?* Why?
19. What's the source of the morality of human actions?
20. Do moral values have any objectivity or are they purely subjective?
21. Can immoral practices ever become moral with the passage of time or with a change in the social mores and ethos? Why?
- 18 Why so many practices considered in the past immoral and illegal – such as abortion, euthanasia, drug addition, pornography, homosexual marriages, etc...have become legal today in many countries?
22. Does the legalization of immoral actions change their moral nature?
23. Can we, in good conscience, practice "immoral-legalized" actions? Why?
24. In case of a clash between morality and legality – conscience against law - what should we do? Should we break the law or go against our conscience?
25. If we break the civil law, shall we be bound to abide by the legal sanctions attached to the breaking the law? Why?

Explain the Following Sentences

- Not all that can be done may be done.
- Our intellect tells us what can be done; conscience tells only what may be done.
- The crowd, public opinion and ads entice us to do what may not be done. .
- The moral nature of things do not change, only our thinking changes
- By sheer propaganda, society makes us believe any thing whatever
- Follow your conscience not the crowd.
- To yourself be true.
- Do not be a number in a faceless crowd. Stand up, be yourself.
- Being yourself you will be always different.
- Stand and walk on you legs, not on those of the crowd
- Be a shepherd not a sheep
- There is a little sheep in every man's heart. Slaughter it before it's too late.

- Not what everybody does is the right thing to do.
- Monkeys imitate man apes.
- Actions repeated become habits, habits become ruts, and ruts become chains.
- A sin committed many time ceases being a sin..
- When in a crowd, walk at the head of it, not at it's the tail end.
- When our emotions are ruffled, our minds are muddy.
- When immersed in a crowd, our minds and hearts get drowned.
- Public opinion is not created for the love of truth but for selfish interests.
- Society and advertising make us robots
- Be your own programmer
- Advertising is the art of bluffing.
- Advertising promises what it cannot deliver
- Advertising doesn't train the minds they taint them.
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