

Taking Offense the Right Way

Offense: something that causes a person to be hurt, angry, or to suffer.

The great Christian author, C. S. Lewis once remarked that, *"Human beings have a nasty little habit of trying to turn their desires into rights."* This tendency is becoming increasingly apparent in our modern culture, where a growing number of people seem to believe that they have a right to not be offended by anybody, or anything. Although such a condition might be desirable, it is most certainly not a right that has ever been bestowed upon us by Man, or God.

What these individuals do not understand is that the only place where they will never be offended is in the *'Kingdom of Heaven.'* Tragically, they seem to think that they can bring *'Heaven to Earth'* by controlling or suppressing, everyone and everything that offends them. Never in the history of the world has this approach ever worked, nor will it ever. Yet, Jesus told us that the *"Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."* (Mat. 4:17) Which means that it is here and now before us, simply awaiting our awareness of it.

If this is true, then there must be a way to create a world where we will never be offended. Perhaps the secret lies in a statement of ancient wisdom which reveals that *"You cannot offend an Enlightened being."* Therefore, if we want to live our lives without being offended, we must become Enlightened. Consequently, the real question then becomes, *"How can we become Enlightened?"*

First, we must realize that an Enlightened state of being is simply an *'awareness of oneness,'* which is the experience of Love. Then, we must remember that Love begins with Forgiveness, and ends in Gratitude, which is a graceful state of being. Consequently, the only way that we will ever be able to live in a world where we are not offended is to learn how to Forgive all of those who offend us.

Therefore, whenever we are offended, we are being provided with an opportunity to learn how to Forgive more readily, and more fully. Consequently, the fastest way to become Enlightened is to allow ourselves to be offended by everyone, and then consistently Forgive them, until we are no longer offended by anyone.

Furthermore, we must always remember that *'Humility is a constant state of Forgiveness,'* and that *"God gives Grace to the Humble."*

(1 Peter 5:5) The key to this understanding is contained in the Gospel of Mark, where Jesus said, *"As you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, Forgive them, so that your Father might Forgive you."* (Mark 11:25)

This is how we dispel our own sin, which is the bad karma we have created by our past actions. It is also why Jesus told us that, *"The Son of Man (ego) has the power to forgive sin."* (Mark 2:10) This is a Principle that is so important that Jesus included it in the universally applicable *'Lord's Prayer,'* with these words, *"Forgive me my debts (offences), as I forgive my debtors (those who have offended me)."* He further went on to say, *"If you forgive others their trespasses (offences), your Heavenly Father will forgive you."* (Mat. 6:12,14)

Jesus then went on to demonstrate this Principle in the most extreme and horrific fashion possible, which was the Crucifixion. It was there that He graciously provided us with the *'Great Lesson of Life'* by speaking these immortal words, *"Father, please Forgive them, for they know not what they do."* (Luke 23:34)

Ultimately, we must come to the realization that if the only place where we are not offended is in the Kingdom of Heaven, then whenever we are offended, we must be living in Hell. Consequently, the only way out is up, through the power of Love, expressed by Forgiveness.

*If you can't Forgive those who offend you,
you have no right to speak of Love.*

Rev. Lloyd Strom
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