

Good and Happy Businessman

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All enterprises have the same basis : Humanness. Being-a-Businessman is based on Being-a-Human. Before being a good Businessman, one has to be first a good human. Humanitarianism is the basis of Ethics, and Ethics (in general) is the basis of all Ethics of Enterprises. Hence our program of study starts with the Contextual Philosophy to lay the foundation of Philosophy of Humanness which should be the basis of all human knowledge. For the Education of Professional Ethics, we lay down the General Foundation of Ethics and Ethics of Business as the foundations for various branches of Professional Ethics or Ethics of Enterprises for instances, Ethics of Business Administration, Banking, Real Estates, Theatrical Arts, Communication, Laws, Schooling, Higher Education, Marketing, Insurance, Hotel, Tourism, Computer, Transportation, Kindergarten, Sport, Teaching, Tutoring, Agriculture, Medication, Hospital, Health-Care, Trade-Center, Transportation, Aviation, Restaurant, Construction, Arts, Cinema, Commerce, Factory, Recreation, Printing, Writing, Discovery, Industry, Brokership, etc. No doubt, Ethics of all these enterprises have overlapping materials.

From this point, the readers will be ready to approach the Ethics of each profession. One profession has a particular importance, because it interpolates importantly in all kinds of professions of the Capitalistic Economy : The Business Administration. The readers, therefore, should approach the Ethics of Business Administration before going further to other branches of Professional Ethics. In any profession you are involved, you cannot avoid the involvement with the administration, even though you are not a manager.

We don't have time to spare for discussing such topics as whether Business Ethics is meaningful, whether Ethics has something to do with Business. All these issues are already obsolete, because nobody in our time believes any more that Business has no concern with society. Concerning society implies concerning Ethics. Moreover we believe nowadays that Ethics does not care only the question of right and wrong, but it extends its role to even the problem of how a Businessman can develop his happiness in his Businessmanship. Business is not any more believed to be the strategy of the Devil to deceive men. Business is not a behaviour dangerous for salvation. Business is not a

tolerating action to be allowed to the limit of necessity. We now vision Business as an honourable human activity. We take the Capitalism as wonderful discovery of Humanity, which is the effective means to a life of quality. Business instead of being the Devil's strategy to entice men, it is visioned as human masterpiece invention for the better collaboration with God in His prolonged creation after the first 6 days. The Bible narrated that God created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th day. He commanded Adam to take care of His creation after that, giving him and his successors the 4 powers : the Creative Power, the Adaptive Power, the Acquisitive Power and the Collaborative Power. Humans use their 4 Powers to create without intermission. By what Name is called that Creator, the Giver of the 4 Powers and the Commander to look after the World, is not important. But it is the fact that humans are born equipped with the 4 Powers and have used them so far effectively.

In the past, Humanity had experienced both success and failure, both prosperity and destruction, both happiness and suffering, both joy and sorrow. As long as humans used the 4 Powers according to their roles, Humanity enjoyed success, prosperity, happiness, and joy. Whenever humans abused the role of the 4 Powers, whether unintentionally or with the intention of complying for the interest of Me and Mine alone, Humanity suffered failure, destruction, suffering and sorrow. Experiences in the past should be a good teacher. With such a consciousness, we should be able to behave better and adapt ourselves better to the situations.

Therefore, for the future Business, the following handicaps should not occur again.

1. Each Man Is His Own Isle

No man can avoid a Business, because Business is unavoidably a part of the contemporary life. It becomes already human activity and the basis of human relation. Men are more and more requested to lay confidence in the procedure of Business. It is no more acceptable "to let the buyer beware" for himself, but society is charged to be responsible that the consumers be sure that the products are qualified as stated, otherwise that Business cannot survive, because the buyers will join hand to boycott. For examples the housewives are sure that the washing powder they buy are effective cleaner, medicine is not poisonous, and the prices are reasonable, etc.

That each buyer is an Isle, surely is very unfair, because the buyers are not in the situation to be safe from cheating. The consumers are helpless in

encountering with the businessmen. The only fair play in such a context is that the society as a whole must take responsibility with the collaboration of all its members.

It is common sense to see that a lie, a murder and a theft are immoral and we know by historical experiences how these immoralities had produced negative effects in Business.

2. The Business Of Business Is Business

This obsolete principle in Business means that the only purpose of doing Business is the maximum gain possible by the minimum cost possible, as in the extreme capitalist country where the *lassies-fair* is practised to the full, or in the extreme socialist country where the state monopolizes all kinds of Business leaving no chance for competition. The middle way may be found in the Japanese traditional Paternalism, e.g. : some big companies in Japan do not aim only at producing goods for competition, but they also take care of and take interest in the welfare of their employees by supporting their morale with the effect of creating confidence in them and stability of the companies.

In Thailand, though we did not yet clearly determine the direction of Business, but by evaluating from what have been going on, we can delineate that Thailand tends to promote the *lasses-fair* Business on the model of the Western World, especially of Europe and of the United States. However we can believe that Thailand will not totally abolish its own characteristics of mutually supporting fraternity. This should be the characteristic aim of the Thai Business. His Excellency Ananda Panyarchun the Ex-Prime Minister of Thailand clearly expressed such a purpose of Business in the occasion of giving advice to the Thai Businessmen on November 2, 1991, thus :

“Our Thai Society will be saved if all of us are more generous to each other, and more sympathetic with each other. Therefore we have to reject the old mentality of “Each Man is His Own Isle, and turn unanimously to collaborate with the Government, to share the taxes, to help the poor and the less fortunate, to fund for education, etc. We are proud of the Thai good will. I pray that this same good may remain in the mind of all the Businessmen and of all the industrialists....”

In our policy, such kind of exhortation leads to the Universal Corporate Culture of Business.

3. Just Keep The Laws

In the Western Ethics of Work, Religion had been used to be the basis, as it is called (not properly) "The Protestant Ethics" which states that the rich are the especially blessed of God. It can be a good motive and a good reason to push to work. In the opposite way, the lazy became poor and ignominious because they would be judged by all people that God does not bless them.

Later on, the Laws had been developed in this guideline, e.g. : the slave trade in the past and the Apartheid system which legally allows the racial discrimination.

Thus it is evident that the legal actions are not always just, e.g. : when the government gives the order to lower the car prices, some companies may simply lower the prices, but some companies may lower the prices together with reducing some expensive decorations so that the gain may be more or less constant, some other companies may dismiss a number of employees, etc.... All such strategies though are legal, we cannot accept as moral and humanitarian, because there arise serious implications to the suffering others.

The minimum wage rate also falls under this complication, e.g. : we may pay the minimum wage rate without considering the context of life of the employees.

Business Ethics is more delicate than Laws. If the owners or the managers proceed literally to the words of Laws, without considering the impacts on the surrounding persons, Laws would not be sacred, that is it cannot protect the citizens any longer, but becomes the instrument to be used for destroying our neighbours. The Businessmen must have enough knowledge of Laws, and respect all the just laws. Moreover, to act directly against any law is unjust, the businessmen have to use civil disobedience and have the duty to move for the change. The Businessmen shall never transgress Laws. They should not be satisfied with doing only what are prescribed by the Laws, but if the situations are favoured, they must do also what are benefiting the common welfare.

4. Laissez-faire

The Business domain is not the field for free competition without limit and direction as it was believed before. The determiner is not only the Laws,

but, in the Universal Corporate Culture, the people must have their voices as counsellors to the Government's decision. For example, the Government and the people must exchange their idea prudently before deciding to install a nuclear plant to generate electricity. To destroy the natural environment for the production of electricity, there must be circumspect answers for the questions such as : do the people need more electricity? If yes, can we solve the problem by asking the people's collaboration to save the electricity and find another way to provide more electricity without affecting the natural environment? To develop the capacity of the army, it is necessary to spend a large sum of the national budget which surely affects the cultural and economical development of the country, so the people must collaborate with the Government and the Parliament to consider carefully and determine together the policy and direction of the country which surely affects the Business' policy.

The state officials at any position have the duty to protect and foster the national welfare and have the right to the remuneration according to the Law. They have no right to confiscate any national resource into their own property. The officials in the name of the state have the duty to interfere with the Business that runs against the social justice. The right of the poor and the underdeveloped must have the priority of protection, because the success of the Government is measured by the conditions of the poorest of the country.

In a word, the long lived Business must be based on the Ethical system. We can run our Business at the ethical level only by constantly conscientizing ourselves about our humanness that we are one with Humanity and Nature. We must not destroy ourselves by destroying Humanity and Nature. At the Spirituality level, the Business show more of sacrifices and devotion for the sake of Charity and Mercy.

5. Me And Mine, No Thy Concern

The right to have a Private Property is the essential condition of the Capitalist System of economy, as the Social Property is the essential condition of the Socialist System. Property whether private or social plays an important role in Ethics. What is "Property" ? How can a property become private? How can a man be justified to possess a Private Property?

The Law prescribes the right of possession. Therefore when I say : "This is mine", it means legally that I have a right to that thing and it belongs to me alone. Do I really have the absolute right to do anything with that property as I like?

Aristotle proved by his way that a man is justified by the natural right to possess his private property. He exerts his committed powers over that property to CARE and to SHARE. Only under these conditions, is the private property justified legal and necessary, because :

- 1) Man loves and cares his own property better than the social property,
- 2) Man is better responsible for a part of his own than sharing the responsibility with others,
- 3) Man lives peacefully with others easier when he is satisfied with his own possession.

Thomas Aquinas supports Aristotle's ideas by giving more reasons from the belief in God the Creator, saying that Man commits himself to more responsibility proportionately to his belief in God the Creator, because he will take it seriously what God commits him to take care from his creation. He is assigned by God to possess a portion of the creation with the responsibility to serve his neighbours in his capacity by means of his private property. Such a commitment is called "Christian Vocation".

John Locke, an English Philosopher says about the Private Property that a man has a Natural Right to use everything given him by Nature. He can possess it as long as he uses it. If you don't use it, it will belong to another man who uses it.

Common property usually does not have enough care, because there is no sense of competition. However it is to be remembered that all private properties always have a social dimension, and in the same way, the common properties always have a private dimension.

We can conclude that the real purpose of property, especially of the private property, is not to give total and absolute right to a person to use it capriciously, because a private property has always a social dimension, i.e. : he can use it not only for his own benefit, but also for the distribution of joy and fruition to all neighbours.

The Economic System so emphasizing the Private Property that it neglects the social or common dimension cannot be right. By the same token, the Economic System so emphasizing the social property that it neglects the private dimension is equally wrong. The Fair Economic System has to give a

good balance between the private and the common dimension.

6. Conclusion

We can, therefore, distinguish the Businessmen into 4 categories, from the coarsest to the most delicate levels according to our stance thus :

- 1) **Egoistic Businessmen** : They think only of profiteering as much as possible, without respect to anyone or anything. Businessmen of this level are dangerous to society.
- 2) **Pragmatic Businessmen** : They take profit with moderation so as not to show bad figure against the principle : "little by little, you go far and long". Businessmen of this level are not so bad, but not yet good enough.
- 3) **Humanitarian Businessmen** : They take profit to have surplus for the Charity Contribution. Thus they will not only avoid the bad figure of egoism in society, but also to show a beautiful figure of Humanitarianism. Businessmen of this level are good enough, but not yet the best.
- 4) **Religious Businessmen** : With the authentic Religiosity in their heart, these high spirited Businessmen will follow strictly all the good characters of an ideal Businessman, who seeks happiness on the happiness of others, who is a Man for himself, with others and for others, and also for the World. They humbly sacrifice without a desire to show off. Of any religious faith, they help the needy, "letting not the left hand know what the right hand is doing" (Mt. 6 :3). Businessmen of this level are the best and ideal. They are really happy and render all concerned happy.

"Earlier generations—prior to the twentieth century, roughly speaking—found the notion of consciousness unproblematic and the notion of the unconscious mind puzzling, perhaps even self-contradictory. We have reversed the roles. After Freud, we routinely invoke unconscious mental phenomena to explain human beings, and we find the notion of consciousness puzzling and perhaps even unscientific."¹