

# Responsibility

*A responsible person fulfills the assigned duty by staying true to the aim. Duties are carried out with integrity and a sense of purpose.*



**C**ircumstances, necessity, and choice place people in particular situations and roles. Moral responsibility is to accept what is required, to honor the role which has been entrusted, and to perform conscientiously and to the best of one's ability. The actor has been given the part. He or she should be mindful of that and not wish to be somewhere or someone else. Duties should be carried out with integrity and a sense of purpose.

## Acting Responsibly

Personal responsibility in life comes from many expected and unexpected sources

and involves partnership and participation, commitment and cooperation. Social and global responsibility requires all the above as well as justice, humaneness, and respect

for the rights of all human beings. Particular attention is paid to ensure that benefit is for all without discrimination.

Some interpret responsibility as a burden and fail to see it as personally relevant. It becomes convenient to project it as someone else's problem. These people deny their responsibility, yet when it comes to rights, they are the first in line!

A responsible person perseveres, not stubbornly with a blind focus, but with the motivation of fulfilling the assigned duty by staying true to the aim. When there is the consciousness of being an instrument or a facilitator, a person stays neutral and flexible in his or her role. One remains detached yet has a clear understanding of what needs to be done. When the role is played accurately, there is efficiency and effectiveness, which result in satisfaction and contentment at having made a significant contribution.

Responsibility often calls upon humility to help overcome obstacles created by ego. For instance, one acting responsibly does not take over or control the outcome. One acting responsibly also has the maturity to know when a responsibility should be handed to another. A major barrier is becoming too attached to the responsibility. Being overconscientious leads to worry, doubt, and fear, which can have a crippling effect on decision-making and result in devastating consequences.

### **Collaboration Is Essential**

Responsible individuals work in collaboration. That is true for all tasks and especially important in areas which affect the lives of others. Responsible individuals operate on two premises: 1) that all participants have something worthwhile to offer, and 2) that the situation requires a cooperative rather than a competitive environment.

Responsible people do not fall into the traps of inferiority or superiority; they recognize that the optimum outcome cannot depend on one person, one group, or one nation alone.

Responsibility is managing time and resources to bring maximum benefit while accommodating necessary change. Decisions in the consciousness of being responsible for social or global welfare encourage actions which are performed in a selfless way. In taking responsibility for others' rights, a budget of all assets - mental, physical, and spiritual - needs to be devised. That includes taking into account accumulated and available resources and their efficient and equitable use. Inattention, carelessness, corruption, greed, or lack of judgment result not only in some people or areas receiving nothing, some not enough, and others too much, but also in the unnecessary loss of human lives and natural resources.

### **Accountability**

Whether the act is for world or for individual improvement, when that role and responsibility are accepted, there needs to be an internal support system which ensures that essential qualities are assimilated and put into practical activity. Such is necessary for everyone and especially so for parents, educators, religious leaders, political leaders, and celebrities, as well as trendsetters from various disciplines, since they are all role models of behavior. They have significant roles because they help shape norms that have enormous influence on weaving the fabric of society. One principle of learning is observing the behavior and real-life experience of those we admire and respect. Therefore, it is incumbent upon role models to accept and honor the responsibility of being "examples." The bigger the part, the greater the concern

should be for the message being imparted and its impact on the lives of others.

It has been said that with rights go responsibilities, and within that concept the law of action becomes operable. Each human being is like a star consisting of his or her own small world. Each star has to perceive its own world and look for the balance of rights and responsibilities. Life

is the field of action. On that field, each one's part should be enacted with responsibility and accountability. Those who wear the crown of responsibility embedded with the jewels of rights become the stars with a positive influence on the world!

*“As members of the United Nations,  
we also bear a responsibility towards each other.  
Finally, we share together a responsibility to the world community  
for seeing to it that the principles of the Charter  
and of the international law and procedure  
which we have slowly but surely been building,  
are interpreted with judgment as well as with vision,  
and with moderation as well as with justice.”*

Mr. Lester B. Pearson,  
President of the Seventh Session of the  
UN General Assembly, October, 1952