

Monday, March 15

Moral Commitment

Moral commitment is not merely a matter of intellectual allegiance; it requires emotional allegiance as well, for a moral person is not simply a person who holds the abstract belief that certain things are wrong. The moral person is also *motivated* to do something about the wrong—and the source of our motivation lies primarily in our passions or emotions.

...So in short, the virtuous person will not simply say and believe in a purely intellectual way that s/he respects her or himself as a free and equal moral being with basic rights; s/he will also react emotionally if s/he is not treated as such a being.

...It is important to stress, however, that resentment does not stand simply as an emotional testimony of self-respect. This passion— and the reluctance to transcend it in hasty forgiveness— also stands as testimony to our allegiance to the moral order itself. We all have a duty to support—both intellectually and emotionally—the moral order, an order represented by clear understandings of what constitutes unacceptable treatment of one human being by another. If we do not show some resentment to those who, in victimizing us, flout those understandings, then we run the risk, in Aurel Konai’s words— of being “complicitous in evil.

Jeffrie G. Murphy, Getting Even: Forgiveness and Its Limits