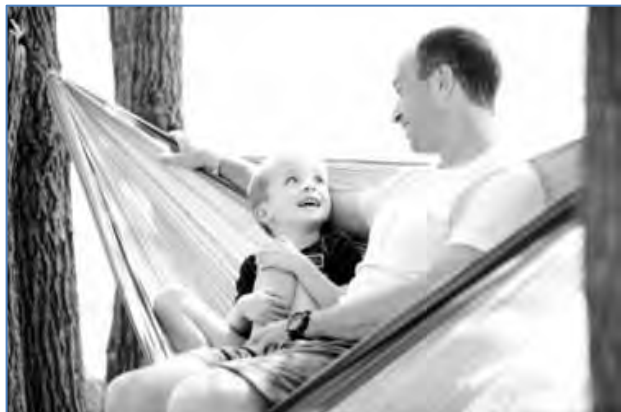


Benevolence Evokes Loyalty and Love

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The Divine Principle from a Unification Thought perspective
The Second Blessing, part 8

In this series I've been writing about relationships, specifically family relationships; keeping in mind that the family is the root of all relationships. In the previous post I wrote about "vertical" order in the family, or the love of elders towards children, and the corresponding attitude that children should have toward their elders. In relation to that, I mentioned the virtues of *loyalty, filial piety and benevolence*.

This time, I want to focus on how these three virtues relate to each other. The first two are defined in the Divine Principle in Section 4.3.1, "Love and Beauty":

Loyalty and Filial Piety

Divine Principle in Section 4.3.1, "Love and Beauty":

"In interpersonal relationships, the beauty that a subordinate returns in response to the love of a superior is called loyalty, and the beauty that children return in response to the love of their parents is called filial piety." – Exposition of the Divine Principle, p. 38

Curiously, the virtue of *benevolence* isn't mentioned in the Divine Principle. I see it inferred throughout the book, in every reference to God's parental love in both the Principles of Creation and Restoration. Nevertheless, the term *benevolence* isn't used. Recently, I've sometimes wondered if this has contributed to some misunderstandings.

I became sensitized to this "omission" because Unification Thought emphasizes benevolence. Unification Thought's clarification about this main virtue of parental love gave me an insight into the Divine Principle's exact phrasing, which I'd completely overlooked for years. And the phrasing is this: that loyalty and filial piety are what the object -- "child" -- *returns in response* to the love of the subject.



The Natural Response of Love

Loyalty and filial piety are what the object returns because they know and feel that their subject has given them love. You might say that their hearts have been "taken" by their subject of love. It is the voluntary response of a joyful and grateful heart.

Think of the behavior of a young child who feels deeply loved: when the mother comes home, the child doesn't stop playing and think: "oh, mommy's home, so I should be dutiful and express my filial heart to her." No, the child who has

experienced love spontaneously runs with delight to greet his mother. In that case, filial piety is indeed the beauty that the child returns "in response to" his mother's love.

That's what these virtues are originally -- not considered and deliberate responses, but rather spontaneous expressions of sincerely felt affection. When you're having a hard time and a close friend spontaneously puts their hand on your shoulder, meaning "I'm here for you", that's what loyalty feels like. It's not a considered decision they've made that they "should" feel this way towards you. Rather, it's what comes out sincerely from their true heart.

And that's where benevolence comes in: Unification Thought considers benevolence the primary form of vertical love downward; it's the primary form of parental love from one's parents and grandparents, but it can come from anyone in a "vertical" relationship to us. And by giving benevolent love, the possibility for receiving filial piety and loyalty in return appears.

My good friend, Pastor Heather [Thalheimer], recently shared a story with me that illustrates this point:

“I had a French teacher who demanded exacting obedience from his students and we all lived in fear of him. We begrudgingly got good grades, but hated the teacher and learning French! We never cared if we saw him again after we graduated.

In contrast our history teacher really cared for us and I credit my love of history to him. He didn't just want us to learn history; he wanted us to become good people who think deeply about the world. This teacher won our hearts because he invested in us. Everyone loved him in return.”

With this new understanding of benevolence, my notion of leadership was changed. Whereas I'd unthinkingly assumed that it was simply a follower's duty to be loyal -- or a child's duty to be filial -- I slowly realized that loyalty and filial piety are *responses* that a truly loving person *evokes* from others.

Duty Springs from Love

I'm reminded of something that I experienced decades ago when Father Moon's earliest disciple Rev. Won Pil Kim came to speak to a group I was with. In case you didn't know, Rev. Kim was famous for his life-long loyalty to Father Moon, from the time he was a very young man. Well, when he came to speak to us he was once introduced as Father Moon's oldest, most faithful disciple. He was surprised by this introduction, and then simply stated, *“what else could I do? He's my father.”*



I believe that, more than being dutiful, Rev. Kim's heart was filial in the truest, original sense: it had been deeply touched by Father Moon. And that's why he gave the response he did, and why he loved Father Moon so: because his own heart had been *wonby* Father Moon's paternal love for him.

So in my mind, the responsibility for loyalty and filial piety shifted from others to myself: if I desired loyalty, if I desired filial piety, I can't just expect or require them. Rather, I have to *earn* them; I have to become the source of unchanging, benevolent love.

Patience is part of Benevolence

If the response isn't forthcoming, then the loving parental heart is to be patient and remain benevolent. Look at the calligraphy for the word “patient”: 忍 The character at the bottom is a heart, and the character atop it is a knife. It's showing that the heart that is patient is like a heart with a knife stuck in it.

Given that this character is as old as Chinese civilization, it's pretty telling about human nature, especially the heart of parents, regardless of place and time.

Why then does God in Heaven deserve the filial piety of the children? It's beyond duty, but when we understand the heart of God behind history, the heart as the Divine Principle exposes it and as Unification Thought unfolds it, our minds understand. And this can open the door to our heart's knowledge of God's benevolent and long-suffering parental love for us.

It's a remarkable and very unusual perspective. And it gives a more genuine basis for understanding what it means to be in relationship with God.