



BELONGING TO SOCIETY

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We all belong to a society of laws. This means we simply can not flout laws without suffering the consequences. We all belong to societies that have become the evolving product of civilization; therefore we owe it to those we live in community with to act not just in our own selfish interests but to seek the common good. We are a society of civilized individuals who know what is right, believe in what is just, and uphold the greater good.

Many of us belong to certain societies where we are governed by specific patterns of existence and interaction. We do the same things together and basically engage in common activities and patterns of relationships that correspond to the commonality that binds us. In this very structure, when someone dares to live outside what is deemed the norms of society, they are branded as individualistic or acting outside what is expected of them. To illustrate this concept, consider how individuals adopt certain patterns of living that have never been perceived as normal. In so doing, they are thus considered unconventional, choosing alternative ways of living and being individualistic. However, there are some teachings that also define society as a collection of individuals, so basically, belonging to a society is simply blending in, while not doing as society dictates is considered a form of “rebellion”, if you will.

As a member of society, any person can sometimes (or often, depending on one’s personal perception) claim to be suffocated or constrained against their will to act according to what society dictates. Being a member of a society can be difficult when there’s a specific set of laws one must adhere to. However, laws in society give the community a degree of stability and security. These laws make order possible in society and serve to prevent flare-ups and outbreaks that could potentially result into erosion of values and the break-up of society as we know it.

As responsible members of society, we need to observe ordained and promulgated laws not just as guidelines, but rather as accepted boundaries of behavior. Laws dictate what must be done, yes, but they also enable us to live peaceably together while maintaining orderliness and a certain degree of purpose in all that we do. Once individuals openly disregard these laws and open their lives to anarchy, the very fiber of living itself becomes disrupted. We can always protest but we still need to remember that the discordant clang of rebellion eventually takes its toll on the individuals we live in society with.

Too much protesting can become a hackneyed way of telling everyone that you can not be a member of the society you were born in to. And surely, no one wants to be a social pariah all the time, would they?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define society.
2. What are the essentials factors of living in a society?
3. Have you ever felt constricted by society? In what way?
4. Would you consider yourself a law-abiding person? Why or why not?
5. How has society defined what you are now? Elaborate on your answer.