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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/124/2021_2022_GRE_E8_80_83_E8_AF_95_E4_c86_124267.htm Philosophy & Practicality

In Ethical Culture, the attempt is made to keep philosophy walking hand in hand with practicality. It is possible to overreach on either side of this combination. As often, there is a proverb that characterizes each of the errors. We may overdo philosophy, we may become, as the proverb puts it, “ Too heavenly minded to be any earthly good. ” On the other hand, we may err on the practical side, as the proverb reminds us, “ Look before you leap. ” That latter proverb goes back a long way, and when William Tyndale used it as long ago as 1528, he added the comment that its literal sense is, “ Do nothing suddenly or without advisement. ” In other words, think before you act. In Ethical Culture, the discussion has turned around the balance between “ creed ” and “ deed. ” Early on, it was said that we were committed to “ deed, not creed. ” But this got modified to “ deed before creed, ” suggesting that there was a place for both, but that priority should be given to deed. We plunge again and again into the thick of things and out of that experience we draw philosophical conclusions to guide further action. Actually, when Adler, our founder, used the dichotomy, in 1877, he presented it as “ Not by the Creed, but by the Deed, ” saying the Ethical Society was organized with that as its motto. The motto carried the litmus test of ethical religion. It was not saying that Creed, as philosophy or theology, was unimportant, but that the test of one ’ s religion was

not in one ' s beliefs but in one ' s behavior. Later in life, Adler put the other side of the equation, when he said, “ The plan of life must exist before the deed, at least in the mind of the leader, the guide. The various acts recommended must be seen as so many attempts to spiritualize human relations according to the ideal plan. ” So the balancing act continues. Thinking crystallizes out the principles by which we live, but the thrust of living goes beyond thinking. This, of course, is a commonplace of most religions. Jesus told a parable of a person who builds a house on rock and a person who builds a house on sand. The contrast in that picture is between someone who hears his words and practices them and someone who hears his words, and even loudly confesses allegiance, but does not do the deeds they teach. As another proverb says very pointedly, “ Talk is cheap.

” And a Chinese proverb adds, “ Talk doesn ' t cook rice. ” So how do we rightly balance thinking and acting? **ACTING** is a part of the wide web of our experience. We are always acting, whether breathing, or digesting food, or sleeping. Indeed, death could be defined as the cessation of human acting. But in moral terms, acting refers to deliberate, consciously guided behavior. That is, acting in accordance with the values we hold. Behavior inevitably involves choice, and to choose in accordance with a value - like honesty, or justice, or care, or beauty - is to act ethically. **THINKING** is also a form of acting. It ' s the brain in action. But it has a degree of supervisory function to it. It organizes experience. A naturalist walks through our world of plants and animals and interacts with them. But thinking looks out on that experience of nature and begins to classify

plants and animals. Further action may then use that classification to work with the relationships discerned between the plants and animals that share commonalities. In the sciences, thinking not only serves classification, but observes reactions and makes guesses as to why that led to this. Newton makes the leap of understanding that connects the fall of an apple to earth with the orbiting of the moon around the earth, and he names the explanatory force, gravity. Halley guesses that the same force of gravity will govern the movement of the comet named after him even when it has moved in its orbit out of our range of sight, so that he can calculate when it will return to be seen by viewers on our planet. Thinking has discerned the law involved in motion. In the human realm, behavior happens, but it has also been ordered to create pleasant and useful and necessary relationships between members of society. The mind reflects on behavior and begins to put together what we would call ethical theory. Certain principles are seen as underlying guidelines for all human behavior. And so we get “ laws ” of human behavior forbidding taking life and sexual trespass and theft and lying, on the negative side, and promoting responsibility and respect and righteousness, on the positive side. Some of these principles are so clear and well established that there is no need to sit and think about them. We need to get on with it, and to act in accordance with them. However, since acting involves choice, there are numerous occasions when we need to think through the right choice. Is abortion permissible or not? And if so, when, and on what grounds? And if not, why not? On what grounds do we deny it? Is war ever a right

choice? If not, what are the alternatives in face of evil? If it is permissible, under what conditions, and how conducted? 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com