

# At the Heart of the Matter



Send him mail.

*"Food for Thought" is an original column appearing every other Tuesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Norman Imberman. Norman is a retired podiatrist who loves playing piano, writing music, lawn bowling, bridge, reading, classical music, going to movies, plays, concerts and traveling. He is not a member of any social network, nor does he plan on becoming one. Archived columns can be found [here](#). FFT-only RSS feed available [here](#).*

There is a common and well-founded consensus, which warns people to avoid becoming involved in political and religious discussions. It is well founded because experience teaches us that more often than not, it results in bad feelings, and sometimes, name-calling. A simple difference of opinion is not what is at the heart of the matter. It goes deeper than that. At the heart of the matter it involves one's most cherished and fundamental belief system concerning ones relationship with other individuals, groups, nations and reality.

All adults, whether they realize it or not, have a core belief system which, in most cases, is acquired by accepting what they were taught by their parents, teachers or religious leaders. At one time I too was caught up in the belief system of my peers. Sometimes it is a result of one's life experiences. By the time one becomes an adult it is firmly entrenched in one's philosophy of life and dictates one's attitudes, opinions and behavior. This belief system is so much a part of an individual's essence that changing one's opinion on some political, social or religious matter is experienced, on a subconscious level, as a major threat to one's well being. In order to defend their belief system, individuals have been known to resort to name calling, fisticuffs, murder and on an international scale, war.

In reality, there are only two belief systems with respect to one's relationship with others. Expressed in philosophical terms, the question is "Is each individual an end unto himself, or is he an end to the desires and needs of others?" "Does the need of one man constitute a moral obligation upon the actions of another?" A corollary to this is, "Does one man's need constitute a right to the property of another?"

For the sake of word economy let's call the belief that one *does have* a duty to sacrifice oneself to the needs of others, "the Sacrificial System" (**SS**), and call its opposite, "the Non-Sacrificial System" (**NSS**). It is the purpose of this article to motivate those individuals

who maintain the SS (Sacrificial System) to look at their belief in an objective manner, to look at how they arrived at such a belief and see if it is valid. This article is an appeal to one's reason. If one reads it and concludes that he still believes in the SS based upon faith, then I have failed. It is one thing to accept one's belief in God as an act of faith but quite another to accept on faith, a belief which when translated into action has been proven to produce a most deleterious effect upon the lives of others and upon the entire societal structure. Those effects will be pointed out in the remainder of this article.

How do these systems work? Realize that an SS person not only believes that one man's need does constitute a moral obligation upon the actions of another, but also that such a belief is correct, righteous and highly moral. *Per se*, such a belief creates no burden upon society. However, the SS does not stop there. It also preaches that, since one is willing to be a sacrifice on the altar of society, everyone else should be willing as well, even the NSS. Those who are not willing to sacrifice (NSS) are the "bad guys." If they are not willing, then they must be forced to act accordingly under the rule of law, which means at the point of a gun. Thus the "humanitarian with the guillotine" is born. To quote Voltaire, *"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."* Having to act under the point of a gun is called coercion and is the source of a condition called slavery. In 1970 I recall having a discussion with an admitted communist. After a long debate I finally said, "Don't you realize that you are advocating slavery?" He replied, "Of course I am, but since I am willing to live under such a system, so should you." At least he was intellectually honest.

When the SS ideology prevails in a society you have a situation whereby some person or a group of people must decide the answers to the following questions. What constitutes need? Who shall fulfill that need? Who shall be the recipient of the giving, how much shall be taken, how much shall be given, and what shall be the punishment for those who do not comply. Of course, the administrators of the procedure must also get their piece of the action. Although it is not a question of numbers, it is absurd to imagine that any group of people could even manage such an undertaking without a resulting stupendous inefficiency, waste, corruption and injustice when millions of people are involved, each with their own special needs. An SS society is called a collectivist society and has been hidden under the guise of other appellations: Communism, Socialism, Fascism, National Socialism, Nazism, Monarchy, Republicanism, Theocracy and Democracy. A society where the SS prevails is a win-lose society in the short run and one that must terminate in the scrap heap of history in the long run.

The United States of America began as a noble experiment in the NSS philosophy and prospered. Due to a gradual conversion to the SS its days became numbered and it is deteriorating at a phenomenal pace. The Declaration of Independence, the prosaic embodiment of the NSS, clearly stated that man is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of

happiness. Notice, that it did not state that he is entitled to happiness, only the pursuit of happiness. The NSS means that I must rely upon myself for my success and happiness. I will not force anyone to help me in my pursuits, others must not force anyone to help me and I must not be forced to help anyone in their pursuits. This principle applies to groups as well as individuals. A society where the NSS prevails is a win-win society where relationships between people are non-coercive, or voluntary. Such a society has the potential of producing lasting peace and progressive prosperity.

Basically, the United States is politically divided into two factions, liberals and conservatives. Both are attempting to choose the correct means to achieve the same fundamental ends of peace, prosperity, security and freedom. I have never heard anyone from either side state that his goal is war, poverty, insecurity and slavery. Even the villains of the past wanted the same goals for the people they governed. So what is the difference between them? Is there a difference? If you are a liberal or conservative, look honestly at your belief system and see if you maintain an SS or an NSS. After much discussion with liberals and conservatives I have come to realize that both factions hold to the belief that it is one's duty to sacrifice some people to the needs of others and both hold this belief as a noble ideal. However, it is human nature, in spite of teachings to the contrary, to *avoid* being a sacrificial animal. Therefore, the main preachers of the SS solve this dilemma in two ways. First, they advocate and encourage sacrifice on a massive scale so that most of the population accepts the slogans "don't complain, we are all in the same boat, so we might as well make the best of it. After all this is the best country in the world. America, love it or leave it!" The second method is by instilling guilt by making the "morality" of the SS the only acceptable morality, so that having an opposing view is an anathema to the SS society. It is quite evident that they have been quite successful at it since we do have a country where everyone is being sacrificed to everyone else and those who have a semblance of the NSS philosophy feel guilt over it. At first, the harm was trivial, thus making it easy to perpetuate the sacrifice. However, it is reaching a critical mass and will self-destruct if there isn't a turnaround in the core belief of the majority of citizens.

The only difference between liberals and conservatives is their answer to the questions mentioned previously. What constitutes need? Who shall fulfill that need? Who shall be the recipient of the giving? How much shall be taken and from who? How much shall be given? Neither of them asks, "is forced sacrifices of others necessary?" Liberals usually want to sacrifice others in order to control economic and fiscal matters, and conservatives usually want to sacrifice others in order to control personal matters and civil liberties. Sometimes they join forces and agree on the sacrificial means. Occasionally they may switch positions, but most of the time they compromise. Neither side ever questions the core belief, SS or NSS.

It is no coincidence that all of the great nations of the past have lost their power and

declined. They became successful nations to the extent that the NSS philosophy prevailed, and then deteriorated as the SS philosophy gradually crept in. Some SS nations, where all decisions were totally in the hands of government, were able to survive for a short while but only because they were supported by more prosperous nations. Today the entire world of nations is a massive cauldron of bubbling sacrifice. Each nation is a giver of and receiver of sacrifices, all paid for through the forced sacrifices of the taxpayers. The cauldron is on the verge of boiling over.

How do we know when sacrifice is forced? Eliminate the force and see how much sacrifice remains. Eliminate minimum wage laws and discover how many more people become employed at lower wages. Eliminate the antitrust laws and see how the economy surges forward by virtue of the amount of innovation that will erupt. Eliminate rent control and observe the reduction in slums because landlords can make a profit. And eliminate the worst forced sacrifice of them all—the income tax—and see how many people voluntarily pay the tax. In spite of all of the religious teachings, take away force and you will not have universal mass sacrifice. In order to have sacrifice on such a massive scale you must have force. Stalin and Khrushchev killed 35 million people in the name of SS. Hitler killed 10 million in the name of SS. Fortunately, in the “civilized” United States of America, up until now, we do not kill the non-compliant immediately. We are more humane than that. First we are fined, our property is confiscated and/or we are incarcerated. Then if we do not comply (by trying to escape) we are killed. The threat is always there. The SS produces victims (win-lose relationships), while the NSS produces win-win relationships. To add insult to injury, those with an SS teach their children the same set of SS values so that it slowly oozes into a society in such a way that it is not even recognized as the evil that it is. Therefore it is rarely questioned. How else could Stalin and Hitler gotten so far?

There is no difference between liberals and conservatives. There is a little dictator in every liberal or conservative. As individuals, most people do not wish to harm others, and they live honest lives. However, in the political arena, mass moral self-righteousness takes over and people who maintain the SS attitude are willing to perpetrate gross acts of harm to some people for the supposed benefit of others, with the blink of an eye. That which is seen, is the “good” effect that the coercion has on the recipient(s). The suffering created by such acts is usually not seen or even considered because the victims are usually far removed from the act, and the harm created usually occurs many months or even decades down the road. Most people are not inclined to seek out cause and effect when it comes to social problems, nor are they learned enough to seek it out. It takes much study and knowledge to understand the relationship between the deterioration of our society today and the passage of anti-trust laws, federal-reserve laws, taxation laws and other sacrificial laws, many of which were passed 50 to 110 years ago.

Once the distinction between the SS versus the NSS is demonstrated, as it has been in this

article, there is no way of avoiding the realization to which belief system the reader adheres. There is also no way to avoid the realization that if you adhere to the SS, you are an advocate of win-lose tactics — coercion and slavery. Don't cry that you know of no other way. There is another way. Don't be so arrogant to think that just because your mind cannot imagine such a system, it is impossible. Before the Wright Brothers flew, it was accepted that man would never fly. Most people do not have the intellectual equipment to innovate anything, but that is not the standard of impossibility.

If you find yourself in a political discussion with someone and the atmosphere is starting to become uncomfortable, ask yourself and your opponent to define your basic (core) belief when it comes to SS or NSS. That is where the discussion must begin. Why have you accepted your belief, and is your belief really conducive to attaining the goals of peace, prosperity, security and freedom and is it in harmony with human nature? It has always baffled me how one could believe that peace could be attained by initiating acts of aggression against one's fellow citizen through the sanctioning and condoning of sacrificial laws. Do not delude yourself. Sacrificial laws are acts of aggression. Peace and aggression are mutually exclusive. Such a belief is a contradiction in terms and a gross defect in one's thinking. As a word of caution, it is sophistry and therefore futile to reason that it is your goal to convince others that if everyone were willing to be voluntarily sacrificial, the world would become a better place. The futility is in the fact that such a policy conflicts with human nature, including the human nature of the very people who preach such an ideal. It is a Hegelian attempt to synthesize two opposing, mutually exclusive concepts. The Soviet Union took flight on the wings of such an ideal, which resulted in a crash landing. They quickly discovered that it took whips, guns and forced starvation to scare everyone into submission. It is not a noble ideal to preach a belief that is anathema to the human spirit and human achievement.

There is no difference between a liberal with an SS philosophy and a conservative with an SS philosophy. It is just a matter of degree as to where and how the sacrifice is applied. Even though their goal is to create a better world, both are preaching coercion in the name of morality and good intentions. Their goals are to be applauded, but their means must be condemned. I am certain that all of them have convinced themselves that their form of aggression is "good" aggression and that mankind is better off for it, with them or their representatives acting as the benevolent rulers of the land. Of course that is exactly how we arrived at the present critical situation in the first place.

If in a discussion, one maintains the SS and the opponent holds the NSS, again there can be no meeting of the minds if *issues* are discussed. The discussion is an act of futility because they are both operating from different basic premises. That's why it is so difficult for both sides of the political isle to compromise. It would be better to discuss the ideas in this article, and which basic premise is more in harmony with the human condition in order

to establish and maintain a civilized society. In fact, how can a society be considered “civil” when its core is based upon the SS?

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