

If life's unfair, make it better

WE HAVE seen fine people, pursuers of truth and kindness, men and women of generosity, and yet they have had to carry burdens of illness, distress and affliction.

As we grow older we witness the suffering of the good, the death of the all-too-young and the passing of the righteous. Simultaneously, we see the untroubled lives of the selfish and the seeming bliss of the cruel.

BY CONVENTIONAL wisdom, none of this makes sense. We are taught from birth that the good would be rewarded and the evil doer punished.

As children, when we behaved ourselves and did what our parents told us, if we weren't rewarded, at least we weren't punished. But if we did the reverse, we soon discovered that punishment would be forthcoming.

When we began to grow up, we gradually became aware that what we had learned as children was not quite so in the marketplace of life, and we recognized the sad truth that life is not fair.

Computer classes open at OU campus

Several computer courses are starting soon, offered by the Oakland University Division of Continuing Education, Rochester.

All are taught with one computer per enrollee. For a course brochure and registration information, call OU at 370-3120.

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- Lotus 1-2-3 seminars — for beginners at work or home; Tuesdays and Thursdays, Jan. 19-26; Tuesdays and Thursdays, Feb. 2-9. Tuition of \$150 includes an instructional package for post-class reference.

Upon this realization, different responses are possible. The first is the answer of submissiveness.

ACCEPT. Ask no questions. Raise no outcry. Seek not to change the scheme of things. The proper mood for living is resignation.

As the poet suggested in "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam": "The moving finger writes; and having writ, moves on; nor all your piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line; nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

This is what the Buddhists call "karma," the wheel of necessity. This is the act of providence. In the name of fate, the world's unfairness and inequity is tolerated, condoned and justified.

BUT A DIFFERENT response is possible and needed. Religion, at its highest, teaches us that we were put on earth to make life more fair.

The greatest challenge of moral conduct is this: The more unfair life is, the more fair, just and compassionate we are to be.

If life is unfair to you, make it more fair to others. This commitment enables us to live in a world



moral
perspectives

Rabbi Irwin
Groner

that can be unfair without becoming deranged or filled with bitterness.

Life is unfair to families who are divided because of singleness, divorce, death and alienation.

Life is unfair to slow learners and those with learning disabilities.

Life is unfair to many old people, particularly those who are infirm and weak and who suffer from neglect and emptiness.

Life is unfair to those whose lives are ravaged with the suffering of terminal illness and for their loved ones.

LIFE IS unfair to the afflicted and the handicapped. And who isn't afflicted and who isn't handicapped?

For all these and more, we should make the world more fair, more sensitive, more compassionate.

As we make the world more fair, we discover that we belong together. The weak need the strong; the sick, the well; the ignorant, the learned; the frightened, the brave. The only way to make life more fair is to affirm that it is a common gift in which all of us must share.

Rabbi Irwin Groner is with Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield.

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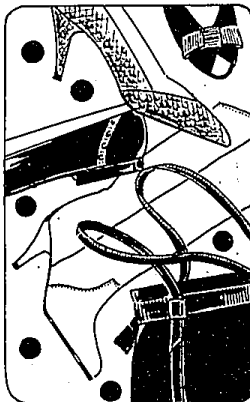
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