

# CAN THE END REALLY JUSTIFY THE MEANS?

BY YARON BARZILAY



**Often** when we come across this phrase, it is meant to emphasise the importance of bottom line results, disregarding the means used to achieve them, as if the path of our actions isn't important at all; only the outcome is. Sometimes it is used in order to justify an unethical act with regards to a right cause, or even a noble ideal.

Practically, one may say that a small evil is acceptable, in order to prevent a greater one, or to bring some good. But what starts with good intention may easily grow into an undesirable reality; planting the seed of a certain tree can't result in a different type of tree, no matter how much we wish for it.

This might not seem right to those who are driven by selfish goals, consider materialistic results alone, and are attached to the most superficial realm of life. But it definitely should be a concern for those truly aspiring for the Just, Beneficial and Good of others. Can the end ever justify the means? Can any good come from bad deeds? Can the banner of a good cause ever be raised by unethical behaviour?

To act ethically doesn't imply that one must be naive and impractical, or that one expects perfect actions that may only exist in the realm of the ideal, rather

than in the material world. On the contrary, to bring a dream to life is a necessity for the true idealist, and to be impractical will be unbearable for him. Without this, his dream is nothing but wishful thinking, mere fantasy, with no real intention of fulfilment.

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It may be this very need to "live the dream" that may reveal the mistake and the lie in justifying the means in the name of a noble goal. Doing so is exactly what will "kill the dream". No, the end never justifies the means, but rather it illuminates the means with its own light. To act in the light of your higher goals in life, is to act with nobility; your actions can never be separate from what they aim to achieve. This is a marvellous thing because it allows for uniting the present and the future, and one illuminates the other. We cannot see the future just as an accumulated result of many moments of time; instead it is an outcome of the path we choose to take at any given moment. Not to separate from the future means that that which we wish to see in our future, illuminates our present and demands from us that we live right now the future that lies beyond the horizon; we must imagine and follow the truth, and the noble, as the only sustainable way, regardless of how long it may take.

Not to disconnect from the future also requires that we not separate from the past, because we project to the future what we've learned from the past, our best experiences help us shape our dreams and

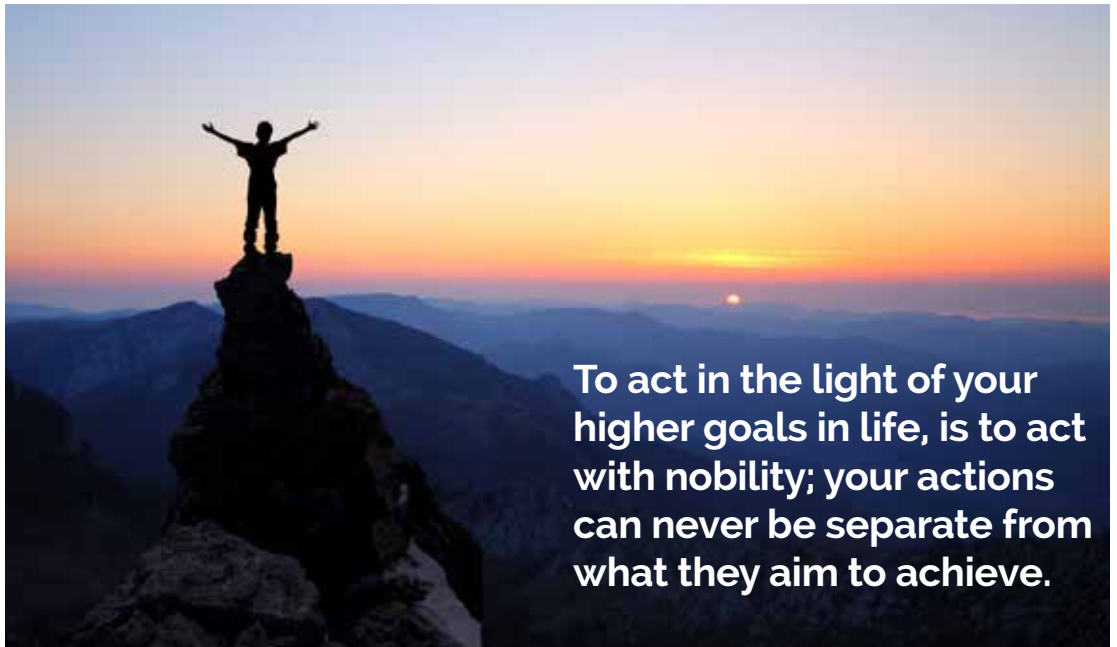
imagination. When the past is not separated from the present, events that have happened may be re-understood, and can unveil to us new perspectives on the path of our life.

To live and act in the light of our noble goals in life is to remember who we truly are, resisting the deceiving voices that constantly attempt to cause us to believe that we are something else. Never define yourself by the shadows of your imperfections. Instead live in the light of what lies in your future, in the innermost chambers of your heart. Take a look at the stars that are high above you. Perhaps they are also present in your past and in your future; imagine they are enormous hearts, shining from within, just as your own heart may one day. You might not be there yet, but you can act and live today as the noble creator of your bright future. ★★★

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