

BENEVOLENCE

The strong protecting the weak.

Serving the under-served.

Universal Worship, August 8, 2021

HINDUISM:

Then the Asuras said to him, 'Please instruct us.' He told them the same syllable 'Da' (and asked), 'Have you understood?' (They) said, 'We have. You tell us: 'Have compassion.' (He) said, 'Yes, you have understood.'

That very thing is repeated by the heavenly voice, the cloud, as 'Da,' 'Da,' 'Da': 'Control yourselves,' 'Give,' and 'Have compassion.' Therefore one should learn these three—self-control, charity and compassion.

—Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Verse 5.2.3 (trans. Swāmī Mādhavānanda)

BUDDHISM:

"I am convinced that it is essential that we cultivate a sense of what I call universal responsibility, or universal consciousness (the Tibetan term *chi sem*). An important benefit of developing such a sense of universal responsibility is that it helps us become sensitive to all others - not just those closest to us. We come to see the need to care especially for those members of the human family who suffer most. We recognize the need to avoid causing divisiveness among our fellow human beings.

And we become aware of the overwhelming importance of contentment."

-HH the Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium*

ZOROASTRIANISM:

How great Your Power! How intense my desire for deeds performed in Your Service, O Mazda, so that I may follow after You in order to protect, through the Divine Law and the Good Mind, the Drighu, the poor in spirit, the meek and lowly of the heart, who are Yours. For Your sake we shall speak against all Evil Spirits and people of destruction.

-Yasna 34:5 (trans. FA Bode, adapted)

TAOISM:

A man of the highest virtue does not keep to virtue and that is why he has virtue.

A man of the lowest virtue never strays from virtue and that is why he is without virtue.

The former never acts yet leaves nothing undone.

The latter acts but there are things left undone.

A man of the highest benevolence acts, but from no ulterior motive.

A man of the highest rectitude acts, but from ulterior motive.

A man most conversant in the rites acts, but when no one responds rolls up his sleeves and resorts to persuasion by force.

Hence when the way was lost there was virtue;

When virtue was lost there was benevolence;

When benevolence was lost there was rectitude;

When rectitude was lost there were the rites.

-Taoteching 33 (trans. DC Lau)

INDIGENOUS:

It was a time when there was little food left in the camp and the people were hungry. Two young men were sent out to scout for food. They went on foot, for this was a time long before the horses were given to the people. The two young men hunted for a long time but had no luck. Finally, they climbed to the top of a hill and looked to the west. "What is that?" said one of the young men. "I cannot tell, but it is coming towards us," said the other. And so it was. At first they thought it was an animal, but as the shape drew closer she saw it was a woman. She was dressed in white buffalo skin and carried something in her hands. She walked so lightly that it seemed as if she was not walking at all, but floating with her feet barely touching the earth. Then the first young man realized that she must be a Holy Person and his mind filled with good thoughts. But the second young man did not see her that way. He saw her only as a beautiful young woman. She was now very close and the second man reached out to grab her. As soon as he did so, though, there was a sound of lightning and the young man was covered by a cloud. When it cleared away there was nothing left of the second young man but a skeleton. Then the White Buffalo Calf Woman spoke. "Go to your people," she said, holding up the bundle in her hands so that the first young man could see it. "Tell your people that it is a good thing I am bringing. I am bringing a holy thing to your nation, a message from the Buffalo People. Put up a medicine lodge for me and make it ready. I will come there after four days have passed. The first young man did as he was told. He went back to his people and gave them the message. Then the crier went through the camp and told all the people that something sacred was coming and that all things should be made ready. They built the medicine lodge and made an earth altar which faced the west. Four days passed and then the people saw something coming toward them. When it came closer, they saw it was the White Buffalo Calf Woman. In her hands she carried the bundle and a bunch of sacred spices. The people welcomed her into

the medicine lodge and gave her a seat on honor. Then she unwrapped the bundle to show them what it meant. "The bowl of the Pipe," she said, "is made of the red stone. It represents the flesh and blood of the Buffalo People and all other Peoples. The wooden stem of the Pipe represents all the trees and plants, all the things green and growing on this earth. The smoke that passes through the Pipe represents the sacred wind, the breath that carries prayers up to Wakan Tanka, the Creator." When she finished showing them the Pipe, she told the people how to hold it and how to offer it to the Earth and Sky and the Four Sacred Directions. She told them many things to remember. "The Sacred Pipe," said the White Buffalo Calf Woman, "will show you the Good Red Road. Follow it and it will take you in the right direction. Now," she said, "I am going to leave, but you will see me again." Then she began to walk toward the setting sun. The people watched her as she went, and they saw her stop and roll once on the Earth. When she stood up she was a black buffalo. Then she went farther and rolled again on the Earth. This time when she stood up she was a brown buffalo. She went farther and rolled a third time and stood up. Now the people saw that she was a red buffalo. Again she walked farther and a fourth and final time she rolled upon the Earth. This time she became a white calf and continued to walk until she disappeared over the horizon. As soon as the White Buffalo Calf Woman was gone, herds of buffalo were seen all around the camp. The people were able to hunt them and they gave thanks with the Sacred Pipe for the blessings they had been given. As long as they followed the Good Red Road of the Sacred Pipe and remembered as the White Buffalo Calf Woman taught them, that all things were as connected as parts of the Pipe, they lived happily ever after.

-(from Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac's Keepers of the Earth)

JUDAISM:

If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kinsmen in any of your settlements in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman.

Rather, you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs.

Beware lest you harbor the base thought, "The seventh year, the year of remission, is approaching," so that you are mean to your needy kinsman and give him nothing. He will cry out to the LORD against you, and you will incur guilt.

Give to him readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return the LORD your God will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings.

For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy kinsman in your land.

-Deuteronomy 15:7-11 (sefaria.org)

CHRISTIANITY:

Jesus said....“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 (NRSV)

ISLAM:

Haven't we made a pair of eyes for him (humankind)?

And a tongue and a pair of lips? And shown him the two ways?

But he has not quickened along the path that is steep.

And what will explain to you what the steep path is?

The freeing of one who is enslaved, or the giving of food in time of need, to the orphan with claims of relationship, or to the helpless, lowly one in the dust,

And being of those who have faith and encourage patience, and who encourage deeds of kindness and compassion.

These are the companions of the right hand. (Qur'an 90: 8-18) (Trans. Camille Helminski)

TRUTH:

As great as is a person's ideal, so great is that person. It is the ideal that makes a person great, but at the same time if they are not great their ideal cannot be great. Besides life is a small thing to offer to the ideal, and if life is a small thing, what else is more valuable? Nothing. It is the one who has no ideal who holds on to everything and says, 'This is mine, and I am very anxious to keep it!' The one with an ideal is generous. There is nothing that they will keep back, for their ideal they will give everything, and it is that person who is a living being.