

## Why a Global Ethic?



Imagine a ball game in which all the players are simply running around and knocking the ball about aimlessly. They've no idea what game they're playing, what is permissible and what isn't. Rules are needed if a game is to be fair and enjoyable. And such rules are also required wherever people live together and want to achieve particular aims.

▶ Even a school class can prosper only if the pupils have a sense of fairness, if they can trust one another and not be afraid of theft, bullying, discrimination and violence – and if they feel fairly treated by the teacher. For this to happen, regulations are needed which are observed by all those involved in school life.

▶ Profit is important in a business, but if the enterprise is to flourish there is also need for a basis of trust between employer and staff, among the staff, and between customers and firm. Honesty in business practices, in accounting and financial reporting, is important, as is reliability and mutual esteem. Business and employment regulations are required which are supported by all concerned.

▶ No community can exist unless a legal order is affirmed, unless differences are resolved without

violence, unless its members deal with one another confidently, and those who hold office exercise it fairly and honestly. A balance must always be found between the interests of the individual and the common good.

So a consensus on some fundamental rules of social life is indispensable for holding a community together.

▶ Time and again peoples, nations and states have different interests, priorities and rivalries. A just balance of interests and lasting peace can be achieved only if relations are not shaped by force, and if dialogue and cooperation take the place of aggression and confrontation. Politics and diplomacy, in matters great and small, also need rules of behaviour.

Ever since there have been human societies, ideas have been developed of how to achieve a flourishing social life and a good life for the individual. Ethical standards – an elementary ethic – have been developed in all cultures. Religions and philosophies above all have spelt out these standards and systematized them. But in our present-day pluralistic world no single religion, philosophy or ideology can lay down such an ethic for the whole of society. Yet it is possible and

important to discover the common features in the ethic of the different religions and philosophies and make people aware of them:

- ▶ for the individual as personal orientation;
- ▶ for society as the presupposition for its cohesion;
- ▶ for nations and religious communities as a basis for understanding, collaboration and peace.

On the basis of these common ethical standards, called a 'global ethic' for short, people of all cultures and nations can live together and work together for a more peaceful and juster world.

### What is a global ethic?

As early as 1990, in my book *Global Responsibility*, I presented my reflections on a global ethic to the public. In it I developed programmatically the idea that the religions of the world can make a contribution to the peace of humankind only if they reflect on the ethic that they already have in common: on a fundamental consensus concerning existing binding values, irrevocable standards, and fundamental personal attitudes. The decisive step was then taken by the Parliament of the World's Religions, an interreligious gathering in Chicago in 1993 with more than 6000 participants. At it, more than 200 delegates from every religion and continent signed a '*Declaration Toward A Global Ethic*' which I drafted in a process of interreligious consultation. Since then it has become the fundamental document for the development of the idea of a global ethic.

The Global Ethic project is based on four fundamental convictions:

**No peace among the nations without peace among the religions.**

**No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.**

**No dialogue between the religions without global ethical standards!**

**No survival of our globe without a global ethic, supported by both religious and nonreligious people.**

The Chicago Declaration first of all formulates the common features of the ethic of the religions in two principles:

1. The *principle of humanity: every human being must be treated humanely.*
2. In practically all cultures and religions of humankind there is a second rule which develops this formal basic principle – the ‘*Golden Rule*’ of reciprocity: *‘What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others.’*

These two principles include concrete directives for four central spheres of life which are formulated as commitments:

- ▶ Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life;
- ▶ Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order;
- ▶ Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness;
- ▶ Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.

Building on the Chicago Declaration, the idea of a global ethic has been extended further at various levels. The following documents are particularly important:

- ▶ 1997: The proposal of the InterAction Council of former heads of states and governments for a ‘*Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*’;

- ▶ 1999: The ‘*Call to Our Guiding Institutions*’ by the Third Parliament of the World’s Religions in Cape Town;

- ▶ 2001: The manifesto on the dialogue among civilizations, ‘*Crossing the Divide*’, worked out by the ‘Group of Eminent Persons’ convened by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan for the year 2001, the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

The Chicago Declaration and the Global Ethic Project seek to stimulate an individual and collective change of consciousness in the interest of the survival of our planet. The *Global Ethic Foundation* in Tübingen, Germany, founded in 1995, is working particularly intensively on furthering this change of consciousness at different levels: in intercultural and interreligious research, education and encounter, both national and international.

### **Visualizing the global ethic: the exhibition ‘World Religions – Universal Peace – Global Ethic’**

An educational contribution to this change of consciousness is being made by the media developed by the Global Ethic Foundation: books, videos, CD-ROMs, the Internet and above all the exhibition ‘World Religions – Universal Peace – Global Ethic’ described in this booklet. Of course ethical norms do not fall from heaven, even if at all times in the various religions they have been and still are called to mind with the authority of divine revelation and by mediators of that revelation. Ethical norms and values have been developed by human beings themselves in an extremely complicated social and dynamic process during the course of human evolution. That means that where urgent human needs have emerged, regulations for governing human behaviour have imposed themselves: priorities,

conventions, laws, commandments, directives and customs; in short, specific ethical norms. Thus much that is proclaimed as God’s commandment in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and also the Qur’an, in other words in the cultures of Semitic origin, can also be found in the religions of Indian and Chinese origin. In this exhibition they are all depicted on the six panels of those religions which can be called world religions by virtue of their historical influence and global dissemination.

The first six panels show:

- ▶ portraits of the key figures and founders: Shiva, Confucius, Buddha, Moses, Christ and Muhammad (the last only in lettering, as the Prophet may not be portrayed);
- ▶ central sacred texts from the religions, specifically on ethical aspects;
- ▶ a text by me on the nature of each religion;
- ▶ a brief description and a time chart;
- ▶ pictures from the world of the religions and portraits of modern representatives of them.

At the same time the fundamental ethical standards common to all these religions need to be expressed clearly. This is done most clearly in the **panel on the Golden Rule**. Here one and the same norm is expressed in different writings and formulations; it was formulated by Confucius 500 years before Christ and today should apply not only between individuals but also between groups, nations, races and religions.

The Golden Rule already makes more precise the still more elementary *fundamental principle of humanity* which has been called for at all times by the great humanists – from Immanuel Kant through Henry Dunant, Rosa Luxembourg and Thomas Mann, Hannah Arendt and Albert Schweitzer to Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela

and Yehudi Menuhin: ‘Every human being, man or woman, white or coloured, rich or poor, old or young, should be treated humanely, that is, not inhumanely or bestially.’ This demand is implicit in what is really common to all human beings, namely being human, and the inalienable human dignity associated with it. This is also the starting point for human rights.

The last four panels develop and spell out these two basic ethical principles; at the same time they translate them into the present day with the four great ethical directives of all religions as formulated in the Chicago Declaration. It is becoming clear that they are by no means fortuitous but are focussed on decisive spheres of human life and human society.

The global ethic is what holds our exhibition together. Those who look at these twelve panels can see the ethical heritage of humankind: it embraces both secular traditions from the humanist ethic and the traditions of the religious ethic. World peace can be furthered only in a coalition of men and women inspired by ethics on both a religious and a nonreligious basis.

### **Global ethic in practice: The Global Ethic Foundation**

The Global Ethic Foundation owes its origin to Count K. K. von der Groeben, who in 1995 read Global Responsibility and was so impressed that he donated a substantial sum towards the dissemination of the idea of a global ethic. The interest on the capital guarantees the long-term future of the work of a small research team under my direction in the service of a global ethic. The programmatic basis for the work of the Foundation is the ‘Declaration Toward A Global Ethic’ of the Parliament of the World’s Religions.

The foundation is active in three fields:



#### **1. The implementation and encouragement of intercultural and interreligious research:**

▶ Research into the foundation of religions in theology and religious studies, especially by the production and encouragement of scholarly publications (books, articles) in the interest of intercultural, interreligious and interdenominational understanding.

#### **2. The stimulation and implementation of intercultural and interreligious education:**

▶ Teaching and lectures to disseminate the results of scholarship, in particular the ideas of a fundamental ethic common to all human beings, a global ethic, in schools, academies, colleges, associations and interest groups of all kinds, national and international;

▶ The education of those interested by conferences, lectures, seminars or workshops to deepen the theme of a global ethic;

▶ Public activity in the service of a global ethic with the help of the media (newspaper articles, interviews, radio and television).

▶ The preparation of media such as the multimedia project ‘Tracing the Way. Spiritual Dimensions of the World Religions’ which consists of seven video films, a CD-ROM (in German only) and a book (available also in English), or the present exhibition.

#### **3. The sponsoring and support of intercultural and interreligious encounter necessary for research and education.**

▶ Encouragement and sponsoring of initiatives in the sphere of society, politics and culture in the interest of an understanding between people (e.g. ‘confidence-building measures’ between the religions);

▶ The encouragement of encounter between people of different cultures and religions (colloquia, study trips, congresses);

▶ The development of the existing network of intercultural and interreligious relations to encourage a global ethic.

▶ The creation of access to key documents and literature with the help of modern communications technologies ([www.global-ethic.org](http://www.global-ethic.org)).

Since its establishment in 1995 the activity of the Foundation has extended into a great variety of practical fields and areas of society like schools, business and politics and has aroused great interest, extending as far as the United Nations Organization. It has been possible to create further Global Ethic Foundations: in 1996 in Switzerland, in 1999 in the Czech Republic, in 2000 in the Netherlands, and in 2001 a ‘Global Ethic Initiative’ in Austria. The positive response to the activities of the Foundation shows that the task of putting globalization on an ethical basis is becoming increasingly necessary.

Hans Küng



# Hinduism



Shiva

The name Hinduism was invented by us Europeans for Indian religion. In reality it does not denote a single Indian religion but a whole cluster of religions, a confederation of religions.

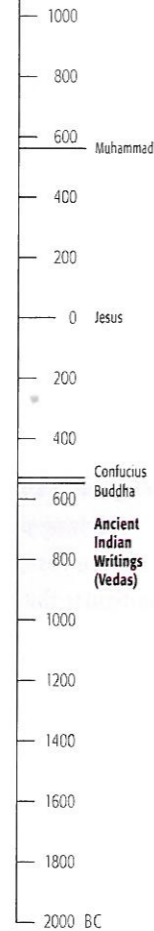
Indians themselves usually call their religion **eternal order**. In Sanskrit, the old classical language of India, this is *Sanatana dharma* – a term which was very often used by Mahatma Gandhi. This central concept of **dharma** determines everything: it means order, the law, obligation.

Order here is not a legal order but an all-embracing cosmic order which governs all life. All men and women, regardless of the caste or class to which they belong, are to observe it.

Here we are reminded of something like the **fundamental ethic** that can already be found among the Aboriginal people in Australia, a fundamental order which is there from the start, right from the beginning.

But here already it is also clear that Hinduism is not primarily a matter of statements of faith, dogmas, orthodoxy. Hinduism has no official doctrinal authority, but is about right action, the correct rite, morality – everything that makes up the practice of religion.

Hinduism is not primarily about specific **rights** either. It is about our great human destiny, the **responsibilities** that we have: responsibilities towards family, society, God and the gods.



**A Hindu's FOUR CLASSIC AIMS IN LIFE**  
Striving for what is pleasant and the delight of the senses (*kama*).  
Striving for what is useful and attaining prosperity (*artha*).  
Working for justice and virtue (*dharma*).  
Striving for liberation and redemption (*moksha*) from the cycle of birth, death and reincarnation.

**The seven modern SOCIAL SINS of humankind**  
Politics without principles  
Business without morality  
Wealth without work  
Education without character  
Science without humanity  
Enjoyment without conscience  
Religion without sacrifice  
*(according to Mahatma Gandhi)*

**Virtues of the YOGA WAY**  
Non violence, doing no harm (*a-himsa*)  
Truthfulness (*satya*)  
Not stealing (*a-steeya*)  
Chastity, purity of life (*brahmacharya*)  
Lack of desire (*a-parigraha*)  
*(according to Patanjali)*

- ▶ The union of hearts and minds and freedom from hate I will bring you.
- ▶ Love one another as the cow loves the calf that she has borne.
- ▶ Let son be loyal to father and of one mind with his mother.
- ▶ Let not a brother hate a brother, nor a sister hate a sister; unanimous, united in aims speak your words in friendliness.

*(Atharva Veda 3.30)*

- ▶ One should speak the truth and speak it pleasingly.
- ▶ One should not speak the truth in an unpleasant manner nor should one speak untruth because it is pleasing; this is the eternal law.

*(Manu Smriti 4, 138)*

Truth, self-control, asceticism, generosity, non-violence, constancy in virtue – these are the means of success, and not caste or family.

*(from the Mahabharata)*

One should not take what belongs to others, that is an eternal duty.

*(from the Mahabharata)*

Most Hindus believe in one God, an Absolute, but depending on the path they choose they associate themselves with a quite particular divine revealer figure, like Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti, Krishna or Ram.

Hindus are convinced that the human soul is eternal, that it is identical with the primal ground of the world and according to the law of karma undergoes several earthly existences.

Karma means that all actions have causes from earlier life and effects on later existences.

The four **Vedas** are regarded as classical sacred scriptures of the Hindus, but the Bhagavad-Gita, a book from the Mahabharata epic, is also extremely popular.

There are more than 800 million Hindus world-wide; most of them live in India.



Sarpapalli Radakrishnan



Mahatma Gandhi

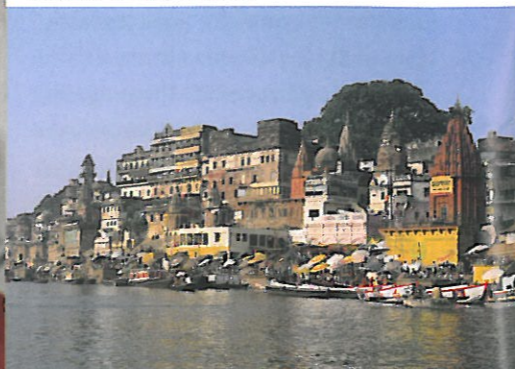


Vivekananda

Kandariya Mahadev temple, Khajuraho



Varanasi, the city of Shiva



A Vishnavite priest



Temple frieze with tantric scenes



Morning prayer in the Ganges





# Chinese Religion

It is not authoritarian patriarchy that stands at the centre of the teaching of Confucius, but what is truly human.

Humanity (*ren*) in the sense of loving care, goodness, benevolence, is the ethical term that is used most frequently of all in the *Analects* of Confucius.

Humanity could very well also be the basis today for a fundamental ethic – not only in China, but in humankind as a whole. According to Confucius, humanity is to be understood as **mutuality** (*shu*), as mutual respect, as he explains it in the Golden Rule: **What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others.**

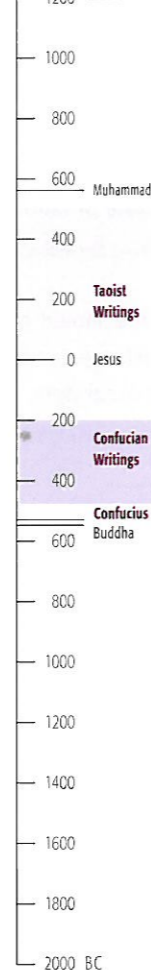
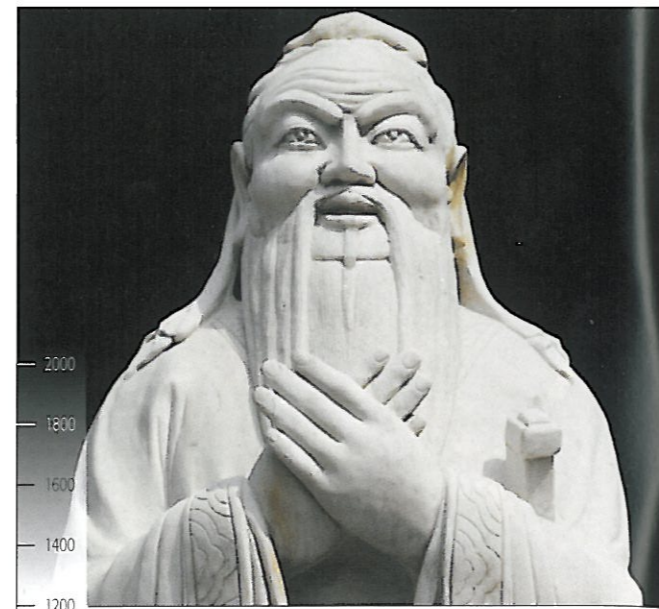
Good and evil can be distinguished by the basic norm of **true humanity** in a quite elementary way, one that is valid for all. For the Chinese there is nothing beyond good and evil. Confucius is said to have remarked that there are only two ways: **humanity or inhumanity.**

So the Chinese in particular greatly approve of the statement that the universal **basic criterion** for a global ethic is that what helps human beings to be truly human is what is in principle good for them.

That means that:

► Human beings, whether individuals or societies, should not behave in an inhuman, antihuman, bestial way, as so often happens.

► Rather, human beings, as individuals or in community, should behave in a truly human way, a humane way: towards their fellow men and women, society, and nature.



### The foundations of Confucian ethics are FIVE BASIC RELATIONSHIPS

- Superior – subordinate
- Father – son
- Older brother – younger brother
- Husband – wife
- Friend – friend

### Confucian VIRTUES

- Proper behaviour (*li*)
- Humanity (*ren*)
- Doing one's duty (*yi*)
- Knowing what is right (*shi*)
- Reciprocal care of others (*shu*)
- Respect, fulfilling the obligations of a child (*xiao*)

### The MASTER SAID:

At **fifteen**, I bent my mind on learning; at **thirty**, I was established; at **forty**, I was free from delusion; at **fifty**, I knew the mandate of Heaven; at **sixty**, my ears became subtly perceptive; at **seventy**, I was able to follow my heart's desire without overstepping the rules of propriety.

(Confucius, *Analects* 2.4)

## Confucius

To apply oneself to the duties of men and, while revering the spirits and gods, to keep away from them – this may be called wisdom.

(Confucius, *Analects* 6.22)

A benevolent man extends his love for those he loves to those he does not love.

(Mencius 7B.1)

Treat the aged of your own family in a manner befitting their venerable age and extend this treatment to the aged of other families.

Treat your own young in a manner befitting their tender age and extend this to the young of other families.

(Mencius, 1A, 7)



Carsun Chang

Kang Youwei

Mou Tsung-san

Liang Qichao

Early Chinese culture, around 5,000 years old, is a shamanistic culture with a strong religious stamp, at the centre of which stands the veneration of ancestors and rites.

The era of Chinese humanism begins in China in the sixth century BC with the emergence of **wisdom teachers** – the most famous of them is **Confucius**. There is a transition from magical religion to a rationality centred on human beings and their ethical decisions.

To some degree as a counter-movement to that, at this time **Taoism** arose. It is a return to nature and its harmony, inspired by the wisdom writing **Tao te Ching**, which is attributed to the legendary wise man **Lao-tsu**. This is a philosophical-mystical doctrine of the **Tao**, the way, the primal law and primal foundation of all being, in which human beings are to be embedded and with which they are to live in harmony.

Later this became a separate religious movement which adopted many elements of the old Chinese religion.

There are about 1.3 billion Chinese, some of whom – in so far as they are religious at all – are Confucians or Taoists; others are Buddhists, Christians or Muslims.

Taoist priestess



Yue Hai Qing temple, Singapore



'Temple of heaven', Beijing



Foretelling from the hand



Morning t'ai-chi meditation in Beijing





# Buddhism

It has often been asserted that Buddhism is not really a religion but a philosophy.

However, Buddhism is not a philosophy. It is a religion; it is a doctrine of liberation and a way to liberation.

And in fact the Buddha understood himself as something like a doctor who wants to help suffering people to find liberation and redemption. However, everyone has to try out the means of healing for themselves.

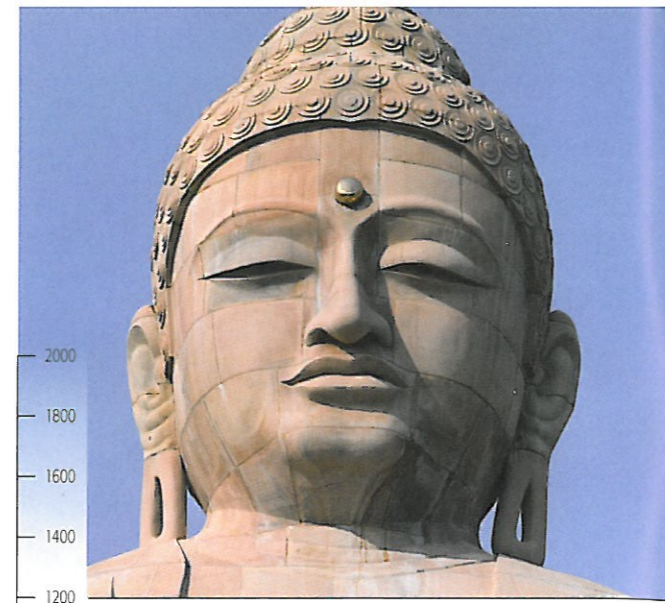
Here the Buddha is something like a present-day psychotherapist who helps people to overcome crises in life, to understand the causes of suffering and so cope with it, to be content with their limitations, finitude and mortality. But the Buddha is more than a psychotherapist. He is more radical. He himself has experienced in Enlightenment that human beings, if they see through everything, can recognize that all that they see is not

stable, that **nothing in the world is permanent**. Everything is changeable; even the self, to which we so cling, basically has no abiding substance, but is just as transitory.

So the **suffering** from which human beings are to be cured is this illusion of a real self. Human beings are to learn through the **therapy** of the Buddha to free themselves from their own selves.

They are to find the way from a concern with the self and entanglement in the self to a **selflessness** which makes them free for an all-embracing compassion.

That is something which really should not be so remote for Christians either.



**The EIGHTFOLD PATH**  
**Right view**  
Right understanding of the origin of suffering,  
right understanding of the cessation of suffering,  
right understanding of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

**Right intentions**  
Intentions of renunciation, intentions of goodwill, intentions to do no harm.

**Right word**  
To refrain from lying, to refrain from slander, to refrain from harsh speech, to refrain from chattering.

**Right action**  
To refrain from killing living beings, to refrain from taking what is not given, to refrain from an immoral love life.

**Right livelihood**  
To earn one's living by legal means and without violence.

**Right effort**  
The effort of the will, not to allow to come into being unwholesome things which have not come into being, to make unwholesome things that have come into being disappear, to make wholesome things that have come into being unfold.

**Right mindfulness**  
Developing awareness of the body so that greed and hatred are reduced.

**Right concentration**  
To enter deep levels of mental calm through developing one-pointedness of need.

(from Mahasatipatthana-Suttanta 21)

Tibetan sand mandala



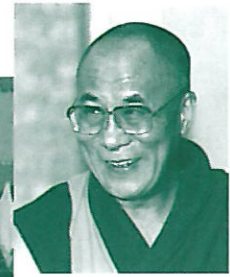
## Buddha



Nikkyo Niwano



Aung San Suu Kyi



Dalai Lama

- Do not be led by reports, nor by tradition, nor hearsay.
- Do not be led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea 'this is your teacher'.
- But when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome and wrong and bad, then give them up.
- And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good, then accept and follow them.

(Vimamsaka Sutta)

### The five precepts of Buddhism

I vow to abstain from killing living beings,  
I vow to abstain from taking what is not given,  
I vow to abstain from sexual misconduct,  
I vow to abstain from lying,  
I vow to abstain from taking intoxicants.

The avoidance of what is evil; the undertaking of good; the cleansing of one's mind; this is a teaching of the awakened ones.

(Dhammapada 183)

Buddhism has its historical origin in the sixth century BC with Siddharta Gautama.

In the **Four Noble Truths** he taught insight into the cause of human suffering and with the **Eightfold Path** showed a way towards overcoming it.

Through this insight Siddharta Gautama became the **Buddha**, the **Enlightened One**. Buddhists do not understand the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute, as a personal deity or a creator god.

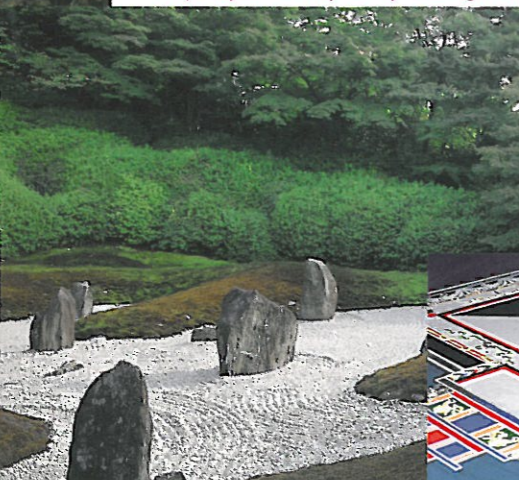
Buddha's teachings were gathered together over a long period; the most important are the Theravada canon (the Tripitaka) and the Mahayana sutras.

There are more than 300 million Buddhists world-wide, divided into schools of Theravada (Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos) and Mahayana (Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan, Tibet).

Buddhist monks at the autumn feast in Nara



Simplicity and transparency: a zen garden



Todaiji temple, Nara



Stone footprint of Buddha, Bodh-Gaya





# Judaism

The Bible portrays the Jews as a people who have been chosen by God.

However, for believing Jews this is not an expression of superiority and arrogance but an expression of a particular obligation: an obligation to God's covenant, God's commandments, God's teaching – in Hebrew the **Torah**.

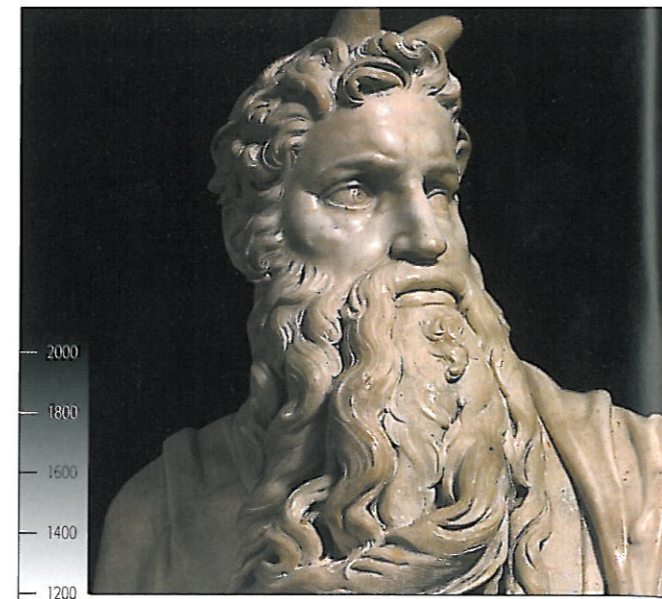
That certainly does not mean that all the commandments of the Jewish sacred law were given from the very beginning. And of course there were also elementary commandments of humanity among the peoples outside Israel.

What was new was that the commandments of humanity were now put under the **authority of one and the same God**.

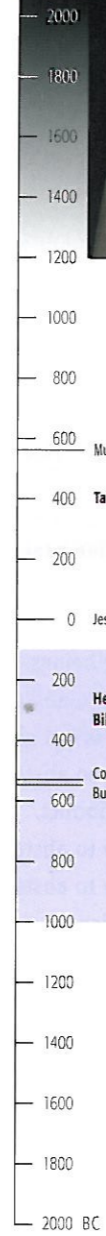
No longer was there the general statement, 'You shall not kill, lie, steal, commit adultery.' Now we hear, 'I am the Lord your God, you shall not kill, lie, steal, commit adultery.'

At a very early stage these commandments were summarized, the most important of them in the **Ten Words**, the 'Decalogue'. They were also taken over by the Christians. There are parallels to them in the Qur'an.

They form **the basis of a common fundamental ethic of the three prophetic religions**. Grounded in belief in the one God, these Ten Words of Israel form the great legacy of the Jews to humankind.



Moses



## The TEN COMMANDMENTS

I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God. Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.

Honour your father and your mother.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house, you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

(Exodus 20.1-21)

You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

(Leviticus 19.18)

The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself.

(Leviticus 19.34)

Which of you desires life, and covets many days to enjoy good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

(Psalm 34.13-15)

When a man appears before the throne of Judgment, the first question he is asked is not, Have you believed in God? or, Have you prayed and fulfilled the precepts? but, Have you dealt honourably, faithfully in all your dealings with your neighbour?

(Talmud, Shabbat 31a)

The world rests on three things: on justice, truth and peace.

(Talmud, Avot 1.18)

You may modify a statement in the interests of peace.

(Talmud, Yebamot 65b)

It may not be granted you to complete the work, but you are not free to withdraw from it.

(Talmud, Avot 3.21)

The seal of God is truth.

(Talmud, Shabbat 55)

Judaism is grounded in belief in the **One God**, who liberated the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt – under the leadership of Moses, through whom the Israelites on Mount Sinai received God's teaching, the Torah.

The **Hebrew Bible** – the earliest parts of which go back to the tenth century BC – is called Tanak after the initial consonants of its three main divisions (Torah = instruction, Nebi'im = Prophets, Ketubim = Writings). Christians generally call it the Old Testament – as opposed to the New Testament.

A rich body of religious writing developed among rabbinic scholars from the second century CE onwards, including the Talmud.

World-wide there are about 14 million Jews; the main currents are Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Liberal. The majority live in Israel and in North America. About 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust.



Elie Wiesel

Martin Buber

Theodor Herzl

Jewish everyday life in New York



'The tomb of Abraham', Hebron



A Jewish family in Nazi Germany



Orthodox Jews before the Western Wall in Jerusalem



Torah scroll



# Christianity

It would be wrong to identify Christianity with ecclesiastical power structures and bureaucratic institutions.

**Christians are those who throughout their personal lives – and everyone has his or her own life to live – are guided by Jesus Christ.**

We might think of Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of El Salvador, who was shot at the altar during a service; of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Protestant theologian and resistance fighter; of Martin Luther King, the American Civil Rights activist; or of Jerzy Popiełuszko, the Polish priest.

Common to them all is that:

- ▶ They were committed Christians.
- ▶ They stood up for their fellow men and women in a non-violent way.
- ▶ And they were all eliminated with brute force.

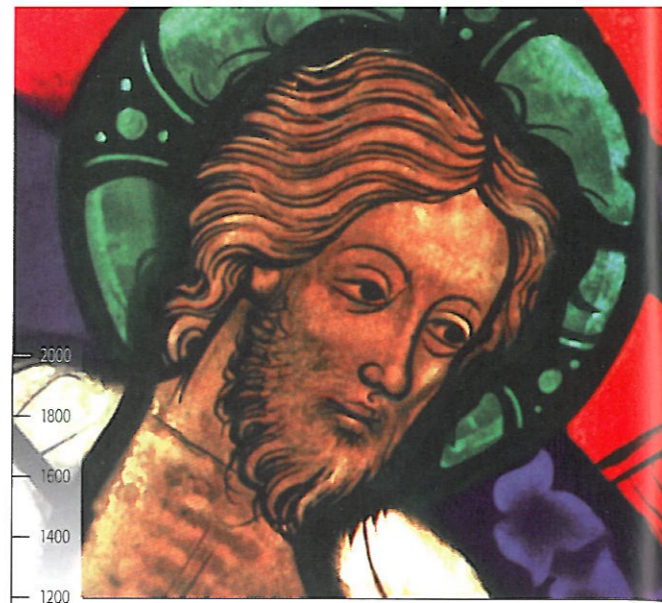
But that also makes them like the

one who was their model in their life, suffering and struggles: Jesus of Nazareth.

That takes us right to the heart of things. What is the real essence of Christianity?

**The essence of Christianity** is not, as some people think, some great theory, a world-view, or even an ecclesiastical system. It is quite simply **Jesus Christ**.

And basically, no organization, no institution, no church can honestly call itself 'Christian' if it cannot truly refer to him in word and deed.



## The NEW TESTAMENT

### From Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount'

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5.3-12)

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

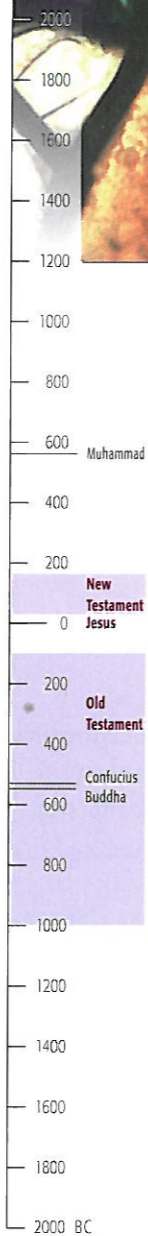
(Matthew 5.44)

But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

(Matthew 5.39-42)

The measure you give will be the measure you get.

(Matthew 7.2)



## Christ



Alexander Men



Mother Teresa



Pope John XXIII



Dietrich Bonhoeffer

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

(Matthew 22.37-39)

Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.

(Mark 10.43-44)

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

(Acts of the Apostles 20.35)

Christianity is named after Jesus Christ, a Jewish itinerant preacher, who lived in Palestine in the early part of the first century. During his brief public activity – perhaps only a few months, at most three years – Jesus proclaimed the coming kingdom of God with its promises and standards.

He gathered a group of disciples around him, came into conflict with the religious and political establishment, and was crucified around the age of thirty.

Christians believed and still believe that God has raised him from the dead to eternal life and exalted him to be the Christ ('God's anointed').

Jesus himself did not write down any sayings. His teachings and his life are handed down in the four Gospels, which with twenty-three other writings form the New Testament.

There are around 2 billion Christians worldwide: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and others.

Russian monk, Moscow



Peter and Paul, Rome



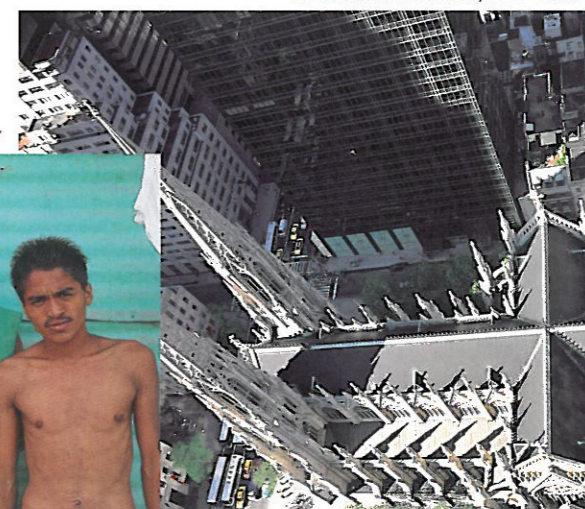
Hagia Sophia, Istanbul



The shanty-town of La Chacra, San Salvador



St Patrick's Cathedral, New York



Martin Luther





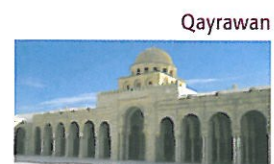
# Islam

There is no doubt that through the prophet Muhammad the Arabs were raised to the level of an ethical high religion, grounded in belief in the one God and in a **basic ethic of humanity**, with clear imperatives for more humanity and more justice. From its origins onwards, Islam was a religion not so much of the law as of an ethic. And there is also something like the Ten Commandments, the basis of a common ethic of humanity.

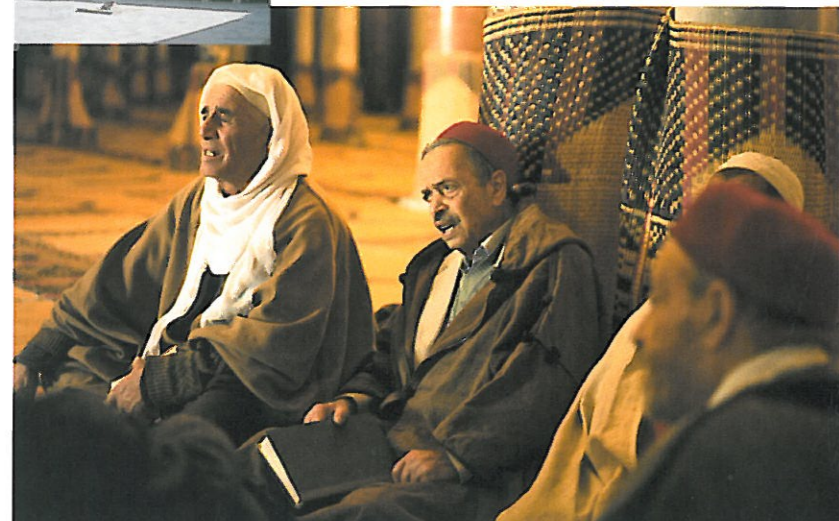
Muslims see Muhammad as the **seal of the prophets**, the messenger of God who brought God's final revelation to humankind. However, Muslims attach the greatest importance to the fact that the Prophet Muhammad does not stand at the centre of Islam, as Jesus Christ stands at the centre of Christianity.

For Muslims, the Word of God did not become a man but a **book**. And it is the Qur'an, the original version of which lies with God himself, that forms the centre of Islam.

So Islam is a **religion of the book** par excellence. The Qur'an completes the Torah of the Jews and the Gospel of the Christians. For Muslims it is unsurpassable, perfect, absolutely reliable. So it is also solemnly recited and above all learnt by heart by the experts. Yet Muslim theologians, too, have discussed the question whether as the word of God the Qur'an is not also a human word, the word of the Prophet Muhammad.

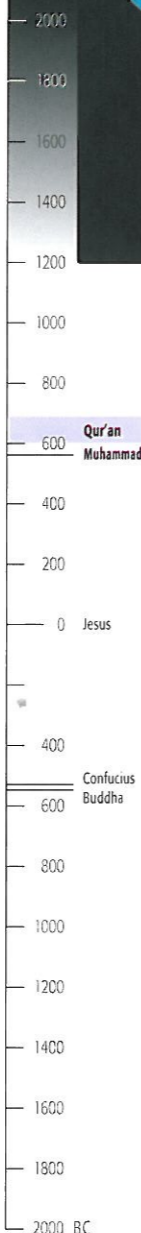


Qayrawan



Believers recite the Qur'an

The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem



## The QUR'AN

In the Name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate, Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate, Master of the Day of Reckoning. Thee alone do we worship; and to Thee alone do we turn for help. Guide us in the straight path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom Thou art wrathful, not of those who have incurred Thy wrath. *(Qur'an, Surah 1)*

## The Muslim code of duties

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Set not up with God another god, or you will sit condemned and forsaken. Thy Lord has decreed you shall not serve any but Him, and be good to parents. And give the kinsman his right, and the needy, and the traveller. And slay not your children for fear of poverty. Nor take life, which God has made sacred. And approach not fornication. And do not touch the property of the orphan. And be true to every promise. And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with the straight balance. And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. And walk not the earth with insolence. *(Qur'an, Surah 17:22-38)*

## 'Muhammad'



Muhammad Iqbal



Muhammad Abduh



Gamaladdin al-Afghani

And if they incline to peace, you should also incline to it and place your trust in God.

*(Qur'an, Surah 8:61)*

And avoid the abomination of idols, and avoid the speaking of falsehood.

*(Qur'an, Surah 22:30)*

Do you see him who calls the Reckoning a lie?

He is the one who casts the orphan away, who fails to urge the feeding of one in need.

So woe to those that pray and are heedless of their prayers, to those who make display and refuse charity.

*(Qur'an, Surah 107:1-7)*

Let there be no compulsion in religion.

*(Qur'an, Surah 2:256)*

Let there be one community (of believers), calling to good, and bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour; those are the prosperers.

*(Qur'an, Surah 3:104)*

O believers, be you securers of justice, witnesses for God. Let not detestation for a people move you to deviate from justice.

*(Qur'an, Surah 5:8)*

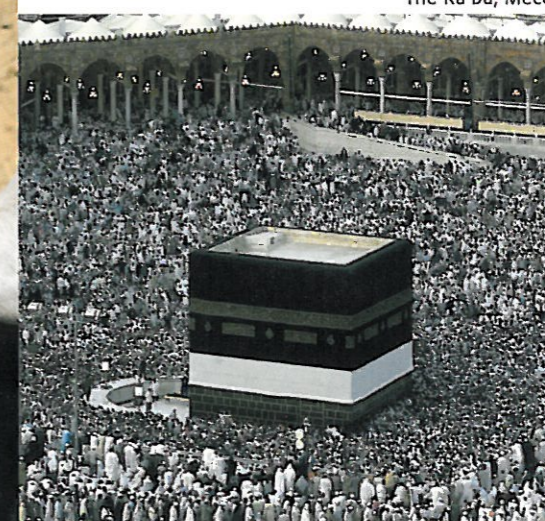
Islam means **submission** to the will of God. It is the message of the Prophet **Muhammad**, which was gradually revealed to him in the seventh century by an angel and was later written down in the Qur'an by Muhammad's companions and followers.

The **five pillars** of Islam are:

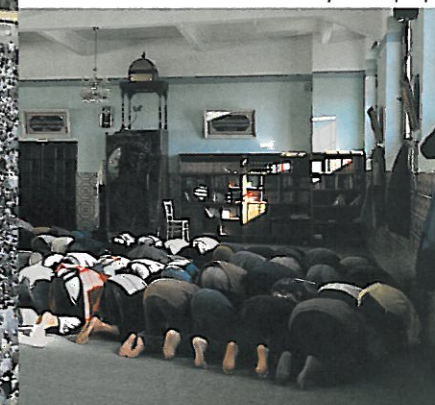
- ▶ belief in God and Muhammad as his messenger,
- ▶ daily ritual prayer,
- ▶ obligatory contribution for the poor,
- ▶ Ramadan, the annual month of fasting,
- ▶ to go on pilgrimage to Mecca if possible once in a lifetime.

There are around 1.2 billion Muslims; the most important movements are the Sunni and the Shi'ites.

Most Muslims today live in South-East Asia and India, Central Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Turkey.



The Ka'ba, Mecca



Daily ritual prayer



# Every human being must be treated humanely



## DECLARATION TOWARD A GLOBAL ETHIC, THE PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS, Chicago 1993

In the face of all inhumanity our religious and ethical convictions demand that every human being must be treated humanely. **This means that every human being without distinction of age, sex, race, skin colour, physical or mental ability, language, religion, political view, or national or social origin possesses an inalienable and untouchable dignity. And everyone, the individual as well as the state, is therefore obliged to honour this dignity and protect it.**



**Immanuel Kant, philosopher**

Act in such a way that you always use humankind, both in your person and in the person of anyone else, at the same time as an end, never as a means.



**Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross**

In an age in which people talk so much about progress and civilization, is there not an urgent need, since unfortunately wars cannot always be avoided, to insist that with a sense of true humanity and civilization a way be sought at least to diminish their terrors to some degree?



**Rosa Luxemburg, politician**

Freedom only for the supporters of a government, only for the members of one party – however numerous they may be – is no freedom. Freedom is always only freedom of the one who thinks otherwise.



**Thomas Mann, writer**

The tendency towards some form of world organization is unmistakably present, and nothing of this kind is possible without a strong dose of secularized Christianity, without a new Bill of Rights, a basic law of human rights and human decency binding on all, which universally guarantees ... a minimum of respect for man made in God's image.

**Human dignity is unassailable. To respect it and to protect it is the responsibility of every state authority.**

*Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, Article 1 (1949)*

**All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.**

**They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.**

*Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1 (1948)*



**Albert Schweitzer, Nobel Peace Prize 1952**

If we are disposed towards humanity we are true to ourselves, in that we are capable of being creative. If we are disposed towards inhumanity we are untrue to ourselves, and thus exposed to all error.



**Hannah Arendt, philosopher**

Regardless of whether it appears in a religious or a humanist form, the idea of humanity contains a duty to a shared responsibility.



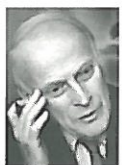
**Martin Luther King, Nobel Peace Prize 1964**

I have a dream ... that one day the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood ... I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.



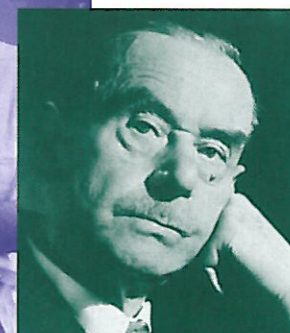
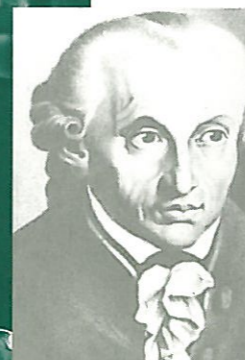
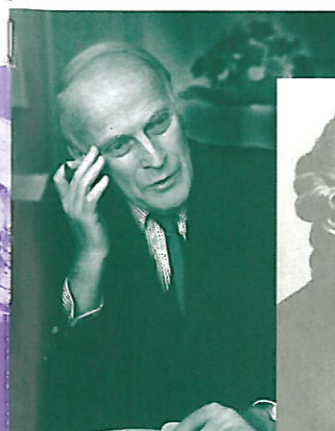
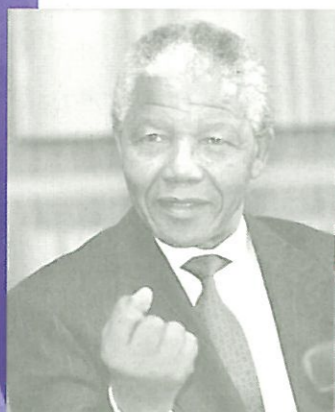
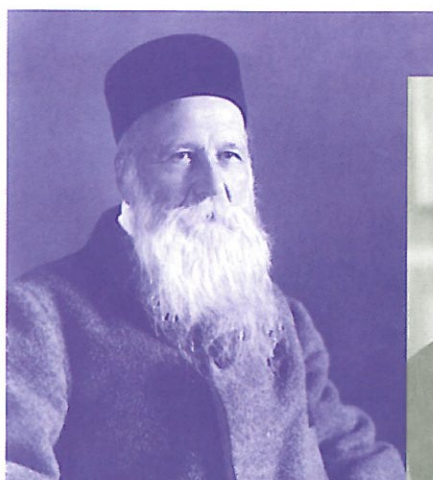
**Nelson Mandela, Nobel Peace Prize 1993**

No one is born to hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even in the grimmest times in prison ... I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards.



**Yehudi Menuhin, musician**

The will and the capacity to exterminate whole peoples are more widespread today than ever. My aim, which I seek to achieve with music and in my educational projects, has long been to work against this evil by encouraging understanding between peoples, by strengthening the feeling that we are all human beings and are dependent on one another.



# The 'Golden Rule' in the world religions



## HINDUISM

This is the sum of duty: do nothing to others which would cause you pain if done to you.

*Mahabharata XIII.114.8*



## JAINISM

A person should treat all creatures as he himself would be treated.

*Sutrakritanga I.11.33*



## CHINESE RELIGION

Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.

*Confucius, Analects 15.23*

己所不欲、勿施於人

己の欲せざる所を、人に施すなかれ

لا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ  
حَتَّىٰ يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ .

न तत्परस्य सन्ध्यात्प्रतिकूलं यदात्मनः ।  
एष संक्षेपतो धर्मः कामादन्यः प्रवर्तते ॥



## BUDDHISM

A state that is not pleasant or delightful to me must be so for him also; and a state which is not pleasant or delightful for me, how could I inflict that on another?

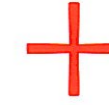
*Samyutta Nikaya V, 353.35-354.2*



## JUDAISM

Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you.

*Rabbi Hillel, Shabbat 31a*



## CHRISTIANITY

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you.

*Matthew 7.12; Luke 6.31*



## ISLAM

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.

*40 Hadith (sayings of Muhammad) of an-Nawawi 13*

דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד.

Πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν θέλητε  
ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι,  
οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς·

