

THE PURPOSE OF RELIGION

Hinduism

Laws of Manu 6.92

Contentment, forgiveness, self-control, not appropriating anything unrighteously, purification, coercion of the organs, wisdom, knowledge of the Supreme, truthfulness, and abstention from anger: these constitute the tenfold law for ascetics.

Vishnu Purana

...by attending to the duties prescribed, he best worships Vishnu. He does not vilify another either in his presence or in his absence

...who does not speak untruth, does not injure others...

...who does not covet another's wife, wealth, and who does not bear ill feeling towards any...

...who neither beats nor slays any animate thing...

...who is ever intent upon serving the gods, the Brahmanas and his spiritual preceptor.

...who is ever anxious for the welfare of all creatures, his children and his own soul...

...whose mind is not sullied with anger and other passions...

...who observes the duties laid down by scripture for every caste and condition of life; there is no other mode.

Bhagavad Gita 6.28~32

The infinite joy of touching the Godhead is easily attained by those who are free from the burden of evil and established within themselves. They see the Self in every creature and all creation in the Self. With consciousness unified through meditation, they see everything with an equal eye.

I am ever present unto those who have realized me in every creature. Seeing

all life as My manifestation, they are never separated from Me. They worship Me in the hearts of all, and all their actions proceed from Me. Wherever they may live, they abide in Me. When a person responds to the joys and sorrows of others as if they were his own, he has attained the highest state of spiritual union.

Judaism

Exodus 20.1~17

And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

...You shall have no other gods before me.

...You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above,

...You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain;

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honor 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 neighbor.

You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's.

Psalms 15

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the

innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

Zoroastrianism

The Pahlavi Texts, Instructions to the Priests

About the ten admonitions with which all instruction as to religion is connected...

...the first is to proceed with good repute, for the sake of occasioning approving remarks as to the good repute of your own guardian and teacher, high priest and master.

The second is to become awfully refraining from evil repute, for the sake of evil repute not occurring to relations and guardians.

The third is not to beat your own teacher with a snatched-up stick, and not to bring scandal upon his name, for the sake of annoying him, by uttering that which was not heard from your own teacher.

The fourth is that whatever is taught liberally by your own teacher, you have to deliver back to the worthy, for the sake of not extorting a declaration of renown from the righteous.

The sixth is to keep the way of the good open to your house, for the sake of making righteousness welcome in your own abode.

The seventh is that, for the sake of not developing the fiend insensibly in your reason, you are not to keep it with the religion of the good, nor to remain in impenitence of sin.

The eighth is that, for the sake of severing the fiend from the reason, you have to force malice away from your thoughts, and to become quickly repentant of sin.

The ninth is to fully understand the forward movement of the religion, also keep the advancing of the religion further forwards, and to seek your share of duty

therein; and on a backward movement, when adversity happens to the religion, to have the religion back again, and keep your body in the continence of religion.

The tenth is that there is to be a period of obedience towards the ruler and priestly authority, the high-priesthood of the religions.

Buddhism

Khuddaka Patha: The Ten Charges

The charge to avoid the taking of life.

The charge to avoid taking what is not given.

The charge to avoid unchastity.

The charge to avoid falsehood.

The charge to avoid fermented liquor, distilled liquor, intoxicants giving rise to sloth.

The charge to avoid unseasonable meals.

The charge to avoid dancing, song, playing music, and seeing shows.

The charge to avoid the use of flowers, scents, and unguents, wearing ornaments and decorations.

The charge to avoid the use of raised beds, of wide beds.

The charge to avoid the accepting of gold and silver.

Bandavyuha Sutra, Vows of Samantabhadra

All beings should be accommodated and served by me as attentively as I would show filial respect to my parents, due respect to my teachers, to elders and arhats, up to the Tathagatas, all in equality. I would be a good physician to the sick, a guide to those who have wandered from the path, setting their feet in the right way. I would be a light to those who wander in darkness. I would enable the people in poverty to discover vaults of treasure. A bodhisattva should thus benefit all beings in equal treatment, and bestow his loving care on all

beings alike. And why? Because if a bodhisattva serves all beings, that is equal to serving Buddhas dutifully. To hold all beings in high esteem, and render them respectful services, that is equal to reverencing and serving the Tathagatas. To make all beings happy, is to please the Tathagatas.

Christianity

Matthew 22:34~40

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Matthew 16.24~27

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Islam

Qur'án 6.151~53

Say, Come, I will recite what God has made a sacred duty for you:

Ascribe nothing as equal with Him; be good to your parents.

Kill not your children on a plea of want—We provide sustenance for you and for them.

Approach not lewd behavior whether open or in secret.

Take not life, which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and law. Thus does He command you, that you may learn wisdom.

And approach not the property of the orphan, except to improve it, until he attains the age of maturity.

Give full measure and weight, in justice—No burden do We place on any soul but that which it can bear.

And if you give your word, do it justice, even if a near relative is concerned; and fulfill your obligations before God.

Thus does He command you, that you may remember. Verily this is My straight Path: follow it, and do not follow others paths which will separate you from His Path. Thus does He command you, that you may be righteous.

Bábí Faith

The Bayán, Vahid 14

God loveth those who are pure. Naught in the Bayán and in the sight of God is more loved than purity and immaculate cleanliness...

God desireth not to see, in the Dispensation of the Bayán any soul deprived of joy and radiance. He indeed desireth that under all conditions, all may be adorned with such purity, both inwardly and outwardly, that no repugnance may be caused even to themselves, how much less unto others.

The Bayán, Vahid 19

There is no paradise, in the estimation of the believers in the Divine Unity, more exalted than to obey God's commandments, and there is no fire in the eyes of those who have known God and His

signs, fiercer than to transgress His laws and to oppress another soul, even to the extent of a mustard seed. On the Day of Resurrection God will, in truth, judge all men, and we all verily plead for His grace.

Bahá'í Faith

The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh

This is that which hath descended from the realm of glory, uttered by the tongue of power and might, and revealed unto the Prophets of old. We have taken the inner essence thereof and clothed it in the garment of brevity, as a token of grace unto the righteous, that they may stand faithful unto the Covenant of God, may fulfill in their lives His trust, and in the realm of spirit obtain the gem of Divine virtue.

O SON OF SPIRIT! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.

O SON OF SPIRIT! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

O SON OF MAN! Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it. Thou thinkest thyself rich in its possession, and I recognize thy wealth in thy sanctity therefrom. By My life! This is My knowledge, and that is thy fancy; how can My way accord with thine?

O CHILDREN OF ADAM! Holy words

and pure and goodly deeds ascend unto the heaven of celestial glory. Strive that your deeds may be cleansed from the dust of self and hypocrisy and find favor at the court of glory; for ere long the assayers of mankind shall, in the holy presence of the Adored One, accept naught but absolute virtue and deeds of stainless purity. This is the day-star of wisdom and of divine mystery that hath shone above the horizon of the divine will. Blessed are they that turn thereunto.

Prayer

Lord! Pitiful are we, grant us Thy favor; poor, bestow upon us a share from the ocean of Thy wealth; needy, do Thou satisfy us; abased, give us Thy glory. The fowls of the air and the beasts of the field receive their meat each day from Thee, and all beings partake of Thy care and loving-kindness.

Deprive not this feeble one of Thy wondrous grace and vouchsafe by Thy might unto this helpless soul Thy bounty.

Give us our daily bread, and grant Thine increase in the necessities of life, that we may be dependent on none other but Thee, may commune wholly with Thee, may walk in Thy ways and declare Thy mysteries. Thou art the Almighty and the Loving and the Provider of all mankind.

Abdu'l-Bahá

Bahá'í Prayers, p. 22 (U.S. Edition)