

Moment of Truth or Two Rules of Coexistence



Jonathan Granoff

We are the first generation making ethical decisions that will determine whether we will be the last generation. Science, technology and sophisticated social organizational skills have provided us with unprecedented capacities for both enrichment and destruction. I believe that there is an ethical responsibility to future generations to ensure we are not passing on a future of horrific wars or ecological catastrophe. As individuals and organizations that have received the Nobel Peace Prize, we, particularly, have a heightened responsibility to encourage and empower ethically informed policies.

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Our individual life is precious and fragile. We are now reminded that our collective existence is fragile. This compels us to address, among other issues, ensuring bio-diversity and ending the destruction of thousands of species; reversing the depletion of fishing stocks; controlling ocean dumping; preventing ozone depletion; halting global warming; controlling and eliminating nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction; ending terrorism whether by States or non-State actors; fighting pandemic diseases; ending the tragedy of crushing poverty and lack of clean drinking water; and addressing crises arising from States in chaos. No nation or even small group of nations can succeed in addressing these issues alone.

Some solutions must be universal. Chlorofluorocarbon from a refrigerant in the United States or China can harm the ozone in Chile, New Zealand or anywhere.

others will follow. Viruses do not recognize religions, races or borders. Our futures are interconnected in unprecedented ways.

Wise people have been instructing us for millennia to recognize our deeper human unity. But now necessity alerts us: the galvanizing power of moral leadership cannot be ignored in deference to short-term parochial interests. Our collective challenges require principles that are uplifting, inspiring, affirmative of our highest potential and universal. Hope must overcome fear.

Fear is the twin of ignorance, generating a false realism. Niccolo Machiavelli stated in *The Prince*: "Where the safety of the country depends upon resolutions to be taken, no consideration of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, nor of glory or shame, should be allowed to prevail." This policy of "emergency" can hardly make sense as a norm if we are to be ethical beings living in a community. Such so-called "realists" invariably assert broadly that power in their own hands is necessary to ensure the security of their individual State.

Overlooking the intricate interconnectedness of living systems, they exalt social Darwinism. Strength is good, ultimate strength is better. In the quest for the ultimate weapon, an absurd result is obtained. The means to security and the pursuit of strength undermine the end of security. Such improved means to an unimproved end is most aptly articulated by nuclear weapons, whereby the means of pursuing security undermines the end of security. This

They also rely on a rigid world view in which the pursuit of the good and the pursuit of the real are divisible. They say that only what can be measured, predicted and controlled is relevant in policy discussion. What gives our lives meaning, what makes us human, what exalts our lives, is thus not considered. They leave little room in the making of policy for conscience, love, or other immeasurable, formless, human treasures. Not the least of these treasures that give our lives meaning is compassion, the twin of wisdom.

Compassion is essential to our ethical nature and has universally guided every successful culture. It is upon the foundation of ethical principles that policies must become based. Without compassion, law cannot attain justice, and without justice, there is never peace.

This principle is the ethical and moral foundation of all the world's major religions. Multilateralism is the logical political and policy outgrowth of this principle. An international order based on cooperation, equity and the rule of law is its needed expression. Where this rule of reciprocity is violated, instability follows. The failure of the nuclear weapons states to abide by their pledge, contained in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons is the single greatest stimulus to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. For some to say nuclear weapons are good for them but not for others is simply not sustainable.

I would like to add two new rules: First, the Rule of Nations: Treat other nations as you wish your nation to be treated. Second, the Rule of the Powerful: As one does so shall others do.

We are faced with a moment of collective truth: the ethical, spiritually based insights of the wise coincide with material physical imperatives for survival. The value of the love of power must give way to the power of love. In today's world, leadership must be guided by the duty to love one's neighbor as oneself. This includes the duty to protect the weakest neighbor. And, today, the whole world is one neighborhood – a moral location, not just a physical one. What was once an admonition

now become a principle that we must learn to utilize in forming public policies. May I suggest that Timothy Wirth, when he was United States Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, was correct when he stated: **"Security is now understood in the context of human security. Human security is about the 1 billion individuals who live in abject poverty. It is about the 800 million people who go hungry every day – the 240 million malnourished. The 17 million who die each year from easily preventable diseases fall into this definition of security as do the 1.3 billion people without access to clean water and the more than 2 billion people who do not benefit from sanitation."**

Failure to change from the flawed paradigm through which security is pursued reinforces the brutality inflicted upon millions of daily lives destroyed by conventional weapons, including small arms and anti-personnel land mines. And we cannot overlook the exorbitant economic waste and social costs of militarism – more than ten trillion dollars since the end of the Cold War.

If we do not quickly get over the ridiculous excessive attachments to that which divides us, we will fail to establish effective institutions and policies in our time and we will fail to treat future generations as we would be treated. Such failure cannot be accepted by any parent who has looked into the eyes of their children.

We have developed excessively sophisticated technologies for destruction. For our survival, we require appropriate social and human technologies for cooperation, for disarmament – for our very humanity.

Our technology has only taught us so much. An Eskimo elder at the Millennium Summit said, "Our history goes back 40,000 years and only now are we finding lakes in the Arctic ice cap. You have technology that is melting the ice. When will we develop a technology to melt the human heart?"

Let our deliberations help discover that

Buddhism:
Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.
UdanaVarga, 5:18;

Christianity:
All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.
Matthew 7:12;

Confucianism:
Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you.
Analects 15:23;

Hinduism:
This is the sum of duty: do not unto others which would cause you pain if done to you.
Mahabharata 5:1517;

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

Jainism:
A man should journey treating all creatures as he himself would be treated.

Judaism:
...thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
Leviticus 19:18;

Native American:
Respect for all life is the foundation.
The Great Law of Peace

Shinto:
The heart of the person before you is a mirror.

Sikhism:
I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.
Guru Granth Sahib, p.1299.

Taoism:
Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss.