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Peace & Nonviolence

This Week's Common Theme Across Religions

At the end of each prayer every day, my father would say, "Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti-Shanti"—with "Shanti" meaning "peace." This left a big impression on me as a child, and ever since then I have sought to see peace and non-violence become the dominant state of the world. In fact, the main purpose of this project of tracing common themes across religions is to inspire more peace and respect between people from different faiths.

All faiths essentially preach about peace and non-violence. Jain monks are known to walk barefoot so that they can avoid killing the tiniest living creature. The word Islam, which means submission to God, is derived from the Arabic term for peace.



When we take the time to examine religions, the similarities become apparent—with peace and nonviolence being one of the most prevalent common themes. And with greater peace in the world, we can accomplish so much more as a species!

Christianity

"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."

—The New Testament (Hebrews 12:14), Christian text

Islam

"On account of [his deed], We decreed to the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a person—unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land— it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind."

—The Qur'an (5:32), Islamic text

Judaism

"Man was created alone in order to teach you that if anyone causes a single soul to perish from Israel, Scripture imputes to him the destruction of the entire world; and if anyone saves alive a single soul in Israel, Scripture imputes to him the saving alive of the entire world."

—Sefer Ha-Aggadah, collection of Jewish writings

Hinduism

"Realize the truth of the scriptures; learn to be detached and to take joy in renunciation. Do not get angry or harm any living creature, but be compassionate and gentle; show good will to all."

—The Bhagavad Gita (16:1-2), Hindu text

Buddhism

"If you have no wound on your hand, you can touch poison without being harmed. No harm comes to those who do no harm. If you harm a pure and innocent person, you harm yourself, as dust thrown against the wind comes back to the thrower."

—The Dhammapada (124-25), Buddhist text

Daoism

"The best are like water bringing help to all without competing [...] governing with peace"

—Tao Te Ching (Ch. 8), Daoist text

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