

THE GOLDEN RULE OF ALL RELIGIONS

Notes for an Interfaith Meeting and Prayer Session

Intent of these notes

- ✓ *To emphasize the fact that at the heart of a true religion there has to be love others - as our brothers and sisters.*
- ✓ *To be aware that love and concern for others makes us grow in the love of God*
- ✓ *Commitment to God and to religion should lead us to love and serve our fellowmen*

Introductory Thoughts.

- At the heart of all Religions we find the same Ethical Imperative, namely: **“Love others as you love yourself”!**
- Love for others is the foundation and manifestation of **“true religion”** irrespectively from any religious tradition we belong to, or in which we have been brought up.
- Love for others opens our hearts to God.
- Any religion bereft of love for others is a pretence.
- We cannot love God whom we cannot see; if we do not love God’s images – our brothers and sisters – we can see.
- Though we do not see God directly with our bodily eyes, we can see God’s image all around us, in all men and women..
- Whatever good, beautiful, attractive, commendable, inspiring, encouraging, we see in our brothers and sisters is just a pale reflection of the goodness, beauty and greatness of God.
- We know what Gods really is – his goodness, his love, his justice, his mercy, his power, etc., - only through what we experience of Him through our brothers and sisters.
- If the love for others is absent from any religion, ceases to be a religion and turns to be a harmful human “ideology”

Uses of these jottings.

- Catechism and Moral Instruction Classes.
- Prayer Sessions
- Personal Prayer and Examination.
- Interfaith meets.

PROCEDURE:

1ST Step **Introductory prayer.**

Silent, prayer, common prayer or shared prayer.
Singing hymns or bhajans.

2ND Step Reading and pondering The Sacred Texts

Quotes taken from the Sacred Books of all Major Religions

- ✓ *The major religions of the world have at the center of their moral teaching a simple statement which has come to be called the “Golden Rule”*
- ✓ *Considering the variety of backgrounds, beliefs, languages and cultures of the various world religions it is remarkable that their core teaching is the same:*

THE GOLDEN RULE”

“Do unto others as you would like them do to you!”

1. Prayerfully and slowly read and reflect on the sacred texts below.
2. After reading and reflecting on them:
 - Check your heart and ask yourself: **“How do I keep the ‘Golden Rule’?”**
 - Next, write a prayer to God to help you and all men of good will to practice the “Golden Rule

Christianity:

“Do for others what you want them to do for you: This is the meaning of the Law and the teaching of the Prophets” (Matthew 7/12)

Judaism:

“What is hateful to you, do not to you fellowman. That is the entire law: All the rest is commentary”. (Talmud, Shabbat 31d)

Islam:

“No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself” (Sunnah)

Buddhism:

“Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful: (Udana-Verga 5/18)

Hinduism:

“This is the sum of duty! Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you. (Mahabharata 5/1517)

Confucianism:

Is there one maxim which ought to be acted upon throughout ones life? Surely it is the maxim of loving kindness. Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you? (Analects 15/23).

Taoism:

“Regard your neighbours gain as you own gain and your neighbour’s loss as your own loss” (Tai Shang Kan Ying P’en)

Zoroastrism:

“That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto others whatsoever is not good for itself”. (Dadistendinik 94/5)

Step 3 Personal work.**Reflection on the Sacred Texts.**

Without thinking write down whatever items spontaneously come to your mind.

A) Things I do not like others do to me.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- Etc.....

B) Things I like others do to me.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- Etc.....

Step 4 Personal Examination.

Place yourself in the presence of God and in all sincerity read, one by one, the items you wrote above, “Things I do not like others do to me” and “Things I like others do to me” and turn them into personal questions For instance:

A) Things I do not like others do to me.

- ✓ “I do not like others to criticize me” Ask yourself: “Do I criticize others?”
- ✓ “I do not like others to ignore me”. Ask yourself: “Do I ignore others?”
- ✓ Etc. etc.
 - If your answer is positive, thank God.
 - If your answer is negative, say sorry to God, and ask yourself how will I improve in future?

B) Things I like others do to me.

- ✓ “I like others to appreciate what I do for them” .Ask yourself: do I show appreciation to others?
- ✓ “I would like others to befriend me” Ask yourself: do I befriend them?
- ✓ Etc. Etc..
 - If your answer is positive, thank God.
 - If your answer is ‘no’ say sorry to God, and ask yourself what shall I do about it?

Final Prayer:

- Write down the things you are ready and determined to do for others in the future. These will be the resolutions you will start carrying out from to day.
- At the end of your personal examination write down a prayer to God asking him

- To help you to put your resolutions into practice.
- To help you to love others as you love yourself;
- Never do to others what you would not like them do to you; and always do to others what you like them do to you.

EPILOGUE:

Parable of the Last Judgement (Mathew 25/31-46)

The main thrust of the parable is that:

In the final instance, at the end of our life, God will judge us, reward us or reject us

- According to the way we treated our brothers and sisters
- Not necessary according how we practiced our external religious rituals.
- Nor in proportion to the amount of prayers we said but on how loving we have been.

TEXT OF THE PARABLE:

Read and comment the Parable of the Last Judgment (*Some small adaptations have been introduced to make it more understandable to persons of all Faiths*).

At the end of time, God will appear in his glory. Before him all peoples of the world will gather. Then, He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then the God will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, you the blessed ones, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for

- I was hungry, and you gave me to eat;
- I was thirsty, and you gave me drink;
- I was a stranger, and you took me in;
- I was naked, and you clothed me;
- I was sick, and you visited me;
- I was in prison, and you came to see me.

"Then the righteous will answer God: 'Lord, when did we see you

- hungry, and feed you;
- or thirsty, and give you a drink
- When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in;
- or naked, and clothe you?
- When did we see you sick,
- or in prison, and come to you?'

"Then God will answer them, 'Most assuredly I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of your brothers and sisters you did it to me'.

Then God will tell to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; for

- I was hungry, and you didn't give me food to eat;
- I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink;

- I was a stranger, and you didn't take me in;
- naked, and you didn't clothe me;
- sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

"Then, they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you?'

"Then God will answer them: 'Most assuredly I tell you, inasmuch as you didn't do it to one of the least of your brothers and sisters, , you didn't do it to me.'

These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'