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PART I: WORLD MAJOR RELIGIONS

CHAPTER 1: BUDDHISM

A SHORT HISTORY OF BUDDHA

Traditional belief is that he was born a prince in Lumbinī, Nepal in the Terai lowlands near the foothills of the Himalayas. However, considerable archeological evidence now shows that he may have been born in Kalinga, now Orissa in India. He was a member of the Śākyas clan. His father, Suddhodana, was king of the clan. His mother was named Maya.



There is no consensus on the date of his birth. Modern Buddhists of the Theravada tradition suggest he was born in 623 or 624 BCE. Until recently, many religious historians have preferred birth dates ranging from 567 to 487 BCE. Various modern scholars have suggested dates from 420 to 502 BCE. In short, nobody really knows.

In common with many other great religious leaders, many miraculous stories were associated with his birth. He emerged from his mother's side without causing her any pain. The earth shook as he was born. As a newborn, he was miraculously showered with water. He stood up, took seven steps, announced that he would be the "chief of the world." He also stated that this would be his last reincarnation.

He was given the name Siddhartha Gautama. Siddhartha means "one who has achieved his aim." Gautama was his clan name. He was sometimes referred to as Śākyamuni which means "the sage of the Śākyas." He may have been born into the second of the four Indian castes, the aristocratic warrior caste called Kṣatriyas.

His early life in the palace

Śākyamuni was raised as a Hindu. His parents assumed that he would succeed his father later in his life. His parents were concerned about a prophecy that astrologers gave at the time of his birth. They predicted that he would become either a universal monarch or a monk who would be a great religious teacher. His parents raised him in a state of luxury in the hope that he would become attached to earthly things and to pleasure. This would make it less likely that he choose the religious life.

At the age of 16, he was married to his wife Yaśodhara. When he was 29, his wife had a son, Rahula. Shortly after his son's birth, some sources say that he took four journeys by chariot. Other sources say he had four visions. During the first trip/vision he was deeply disturbed by seeing an elderly, helpless, frail man. On the second, he saw an emaciated and depressed man suffering from an advanced disease. On the third, he spotted a grieving family carrying the corpse of one of their own to a cremation site. He reflected deeply upon the suffering brought about by old age, illness and death. On his fourth trip/vision, he saw a religious mendicant who led a reclusive life of meditation and was calm and serene. The four encounters motivated

him to follow the path of the mendicant and find a spiritual solution to the problems brought about by human suffering. He left his wife, child, luxurious lifestyle, and future role as a leader of his people in order to seek truth. It was an accepted practice at the time for some men to leave their family and lead the life of an ascetic.

Seeking the solution to human suffering

He first tried meditation, which he learned from two teachers. He felt that these were valuable skills. However, meditation could not be extended forever. He eventually had to return to normal waking consciousness and face the unsolved problems relating to birth, sickness, old age and death.

He then joined a group of similarly-minded students of Brahmanism in a forest where he practiced breath control and fasted intensely for six years. He is said to have brought himself to the brink of death by only eating a few grains of rice each day. Some sources say that he consumed only a spoonful of bean soup per day. This technique produced a series of physical discomforts. Ultimately, he rejected this path as well. He realized that neither the extremes of the mortification of the flesh or of hedonism would lead to enlightenment. He determined that a better path to achieve the state of Nirvana, a state of liberation and freedom from suffering, was to pursue a "Middle Way." This way was largely defined by moderation and meditation.

Attaining enlightenment

One night In 535 BCE, at the age of 35, he was seated underneath a large tree, later known as the Bodhi tree (species Pipal or ficus religiosus). He began to experience some major spiritual breakthroughs:

During the first watch of the night, he developed the ability to recall the events of his previous reincarnations in detail. During the second watch, he was able to see how the good and bad deeds that many living entities performed during their lifetimes led to the nature of their subsequent reincarnation into their next life. During the third watch, he learned that he had progressed beyond "spiritual defilements," craving, desire, hatred, hunger, thirst, exhaustion, fear, doubt, and delusions. He had attained nirvana. He would never again be reincarnated into a future life.

He had attained enlightenment! "He became a savior, deliverer, and redeemer." The events under the Bodhi tree are often described in mythological terms in Buddhist literature and art. His experiences are portrayed as a battle with Mara, the Buddhist equivalent of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic Satan.

After his enlightenment

He assumed the title Lord Buddha (one who has awakened; the one who has attained enlightenment by himself). His name is pronounced differently in various countries. In the West, it is often pronounced "Boo-duh;" in India: "Boo-the" with the stress on the "th."

For seven days, he puzzled over his future: whether to withdraw from the world and live a life of seclusion, or whether to reenter the world and teach his Middle Way. He decided on the latter course: to proclaim his Dharma (teachings) to other humans so that they could also attain enlightenment.

He located five of his fellow seekers with whom he had earlier fasted, and rejoined them near Benares. They quickly became aware of the changes brought about by his enlightenment. It was to them that he preached his first sermon. It contained the essential teachings of Buddhism. All five accepted his teachings and were ordained as monks. After the Buddha's second sermon, all five achieved enlightenment. They are referred to as Arhants (saints).

The Buddha's later life

He wandered around Northeast India for decades, teaching all who would listen. He covered a "territory" some 150 miles long by 250 miles wide, an area somewhat smaller than Ireland or the state of Pennsylvania. He had tens of thousands of disciples and accumulated a large public following. He later established an order of monks and a corresponding order of nuns that counted his wife Yaśodhara as one of its members.

His health began to fail when he was in his late 70s. After forty-five years of teaching, he died in a small town named Kuśinagara, at the age of 80, apparently of natural causes. His final words were: "Decay is inherent in all things. Be sure to strive with clarity of mind" for Nirvana. The traditional date of his death used by Theravadin Buddhists is 544 or 543 BCE. However, dates have been suggested from 544 to 380 BCE.

He did not choose a successor. He felt that the Dharma, his teachings plus the Vinaya, his code of rules for the monks and nuns, would be a sufficient guide. Two and a half centuries later, a council of Buddhist monks collected his teachings and the oral traditions of the faith into written form, called the Tripitaka. This included a very large collection of commentaries and traditions; most are called Sutras (discourses).

Confusion between Buddha and Budai

Budai means "Cloth Sack," and comes from the bag that he is conventionally depicted as carrying. He is usually identified with (or as an incarnation of) Maitreya, [the future Buddha] so much so that the Budai image is one of the main forms in which Maitreya is depicted in East Asia. He is almost always shown smiling or laughing, hence his nickname in Chinese, the Laughing Buddha. Many Westerners confuse Budai with Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. Images of Budai are often referred to as "Fat Buddha" and "Happy Buddha." However, Gautama Buddha is generally portrayed as tall and slender.

[<http://www.religioustolerance.org/buddhism5.htm>]

IMPORTANT HOLY DAYS

Buddhist New Year

In Theravadin countries, Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Lao, the New Year is celebrated for three days from the first full moon day in April. In Mahayana countries the New Year starts on the first full moon day in January. However, the Buddhist New Year depends on the country of origin or ethnic background of the people. As for example, Chinese, Koreans and Vietnamese celebrate late January or early February according to the lunar calendar, whilst the Tibetans usually celebrate about one month later.

Vesak or Visakah Puja ("Buddha Day")

Traditionally, Buddha's Birthday is known as Vesak or Visakah Puja (Buddha's Birthday Celebrations). Vesak is the major Buddhist festival of the year as it celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha on the one day, the first full moon day in May, except in a leap year when the festival is held in June. This celebration is called Vesak being the name of the month in the Indian calendar.

Magha Puja Day (Fourfold Assembly or "Sangha Day")

After the first Rains Retreat (Vassa) at the Deer Park at Sarnath, the Buddha went to Rajagaha city where 1250 Arahants, (Enlightened saints) who were the Buddha's disciples, without prior appointment, returned from their wanderings to pay respect to the Buddha. They assembled in the Veruvana Monastery with the two chief disciples of the Buddha, Venerable Sariputta and Venerable Moggallana. The assembly is called the Fourfold Assembly because it consisted of four factors: (1) All 1250 were Arahants; (2) All of them were ordained by the Buddha himself; (3) They assembled by themselves without any prior call; (4) It was the full moon day of Magha month (March).

Asalha Puja Day ("Dhamma Day")

Asalha Puja means to pay homage to the Buddha on the full moon day of the 8th lunar month (approximately July). It commemorates the Buddha's first teaching: the turning of the wheel of the Dhamma (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta) to the five ascetics at the Deer Park (Sarnath) near Benares city, India. Where Kondanna, the senior ascetic attained the first level of enlightenment (the Sotapanna level of mind purity).

Uposatha (Observance Day)

The four monthly holy days which continue to be observed in Theravada countries, the new moon, full moon, and quarter moon days, known in Sri Lanka as Poya Day.

Kathina Ceremony (Robe offering ceremony)

It is held on any convenient date within one month of the conclusion of the Vassa Retreat, which is the three month rains retreat season (Vassa) for the monastic order. It is the time of the year when new robes and other requisites may be offered by the laity to the monks.

Anapanasati Day

At the end of one rains retreat (vassa), the Buddha was so pleased with the progress of the assembled monks that he encouraged them to extend their retreat for yet another month. On the full-moon day marking the end of that fourth month of retreat, he presented his now-famous instructions on mindfulness of breathing (anapanasati), which may be found in the Anapanasati Sutta (MN 118), The Discourse on Mindfulness of Breathing.

Abhidhamma Day

In the Burmese tradition, this day celebrates the occasion when the Buddha is said to have gone to the Tushita Heaven to teach his mother the Abhidhamma. It is held on the full moon of the seventh month of the Burmese lunar year starting in April which corresponds to the full moon day in October.

[<http://www.buddhanet.net/festival.htm>]

Morality

Morality is the preliminary stage on the path to attain Buddhahood. It is a necessary condition, though not sufficient, leading to wisdom. It is absolutely essential for enlightenment. Morality in Buddhism is a rational and practical mode based on verifiable facts and individual experience, which is regarded as the one of the most perfect moral code ever known in the world.

What is the criterion of morality according to Buddhism?

In the admonition given by the Buddha to young Rahula, there is the answer.

If there is a deed, Rahula, you wish to do, reflect thus: Is this deed conducive to my harm, or to others' harm, or to that of both? Then is this a bad deed entailing suffering. From such a deed, you must desist.

If there is a deed you wish to do, reflect thus: Is this deed not conducive to my harm, nor to others' harm, nor to that of both? Then is this a good deed entailing happiness. Such a deed you must do again and again.

Thus, in assessing morality, a Buddhist takes into consideration of the interests of both himself and others - animals not excluded. Good deeds are essential for one's emancipation, but when once the ultimate goal of holy life or enlightenment is attained, one transcends both good and evil. Morality is a means to an end, but not an end in itself.

[<http://web.singnet.com.sg/~alankhoo/Precepts.htm>]

THE FIVE BUDDHIST PRECEPTS

1. Do not Kill

One must not deliberately kill any living creatures, either by committing the act oneself, instructing others to kill, or approving of or participating in act of killing. It is a respect to others' lives. One should not deprive others (animals not excluded) of the right to live. If one is hurt or killed, one's family, relatives, friends will suffer. It is the cause of rebirth in Three Evil Paths. The effects of killing to the performer are brevity of life, ill health, handicapped and fear. In observing the first precept, one tries to protect life whenever possible. Furthermore, one cultivates the attitude of loving kindness to all beings by wishing that they may be happy and free from harm.

2. Do not Steal

It is a respect to other's properties and the right to own property. If something is not given, one may not take it away by stealing, by force or by fraud. Besides these, one should avoid misusing money or property belonging to the public or other persons. In a broader sense, the second precept also means that one should not evade one's responsibilities. If an employee is lazy and neglects the duties or tasks assigned to him, he is, in a way, "stealing" time that should have been spent on his work.

In its broadest sense, observing the second precept also means that one cultivates the virtue of generosity. A Buddhist gives to the poor and the sick because of their need. He makes offerings to the monks, nuns and masters because he respects the qualities they possess. He is generous in his gifts to his parents, teachers and friends because of the advice, guidance and kindness they have shown him.

In addition, Buddhists should also offer sympathy and encouragement to those who are hurt or discouraged. It is said, however, that the best of all gifts is the gift of the Dharma in the form of teaching it or in the production and distribution of Buddhist books.

Greed is one of the Three Poisons, which leads us to attachment and suffering. The bad effects of stealing are poverty, misery, disappointment, etc.

3. Do not Indulge in Sexual Misconduct

Though the moral standards are different in different countries and in different times, rape, adultery and other abnormal sexual behaviour that involve physical and mental injury to others should be prohibited. It is also a matter of respect for people and personal relationships.

Sexual desire is one of the main causes of rebirth in the Six Paths. If we wish to end the birth and death cycle, we should not indulge in sexual misconduct or any other abnormal form of sexual relationship.

The effects of sexual misconduct are having many enemies, always being hated, and union with undesirable wives and husbands.

4. Do not Lie

To refrain from telling lies is to show respect for the truth. No good can come from telling lies, be it out of fun or malice. When a Buddhist observes the fourth precept, he refrains from telling lies or half-truths that

exaggerate or understate, and instead cultivates the virtue of truthfulness. Once people uphold the respect for truth, there will be fewer quarrels and misunderstandings and fewer cases of false accusations in the courts of justice. Society will then become more peaceful and orderly.

5. Do not Take Intoxicant

Buddhism emphasizes wisdom. Taking intoxicant will make us less wise. Intoxicants, such as drugs, liquor, smoking, etc., are harmful to health. It seems that taking intoxicant is not hurting others. However, if we are drunk and lose our consciousness, we may easily commit evil deeds and hurt others. Therefore, one who breaks this precept will tend to break all other precepts along with it.

The fifth precept is based on respect for mental health. It guards against the loss of control of one's mind. It is particularly important to those who meditate because, by refraining from taking intoxicants, they can more easily cultivate awareness, attention and clarity of mind. Thus the observance of the fifth precept not only contributes to happiness in the family and peace in society, it also prepares a person for the practice of Mental Development.

THE EIGHT PRECEPTS

The Eight Precepts consist of the Five Precepts described above and three others, namely:

1. To refrain from taking food after midday;
2. To abstain from indulging in songs, dances, music and shows as well as the use of ornaments, perfumes and cosmetics;
3. To refrain from using a high or luxurious seat or bed.

The Eight Precepts are usually observed on new moon and full moon days. These precepts may be difficult for a lay Buddhist to follow. Therefore, their observance is entirely voluntary. Those who make the attempt are those who wish to experience the disciplined life of renunciation lived by member of the Order.

In observing the sixth precept, for example, the lay Buddhist eats one or two simple meals between dawn and noon and avoids taking food beyond that. This cuts down the time spent on meals and allows him more time to spend on meditation. As for the seventh precept, the lay Buddhist refrains from enjoying songs, dances, music and shows during this period of observance so that he will not be distracted by sensual pleasures that may give rise to unwholesome thoughts. At the same time, by refraining from the use of ornaments, perfumes and cosmetics, he becomes more aware that physical beauty is impermanent and that one should not be vain. By observing the eighth precept, the lay Buddhist experiences a simple way of life with the minimum of luxuries.

[<http://web.singnet.com.sg/~alankhoo/Precepts.htm>]

DIFFERENT BRANCHES

Theravada Buddhism, using Pāli as its scriptural language, is the dominant form of Buddhism in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Burma. The Dalit Buddhist movement in India (inspired by B. R. Ambedkar) also practices Theravada.

East Asian forms of Mahayana Buddhism that use Chinese scriptures are dominant in most of China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Vietnam as well as such communities within Indochina, Southeast Asia and the West. Vietnam and Singapore are major concentrations of Mahayana Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

Tibetan Buddhism is found in Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, Mongolia, areas of India (it's the majority religion in Ladakh; significant population in Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim), China (particularly in Inner Mongolia), and Russia (mainly Kalmykia, Buryatia, and Tuva).

Formal membership varies between communities, but basic lay adherence is often defined in terms of a traditional formula in which the practitioner takes refuge in The Three Jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma (the teachings of the Buddha), and the Sangha (the Buddhist community).

CHAPTER 2: CHRISTIANITY

SHORT LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus (also called **Christ** which means king or **Messiah**) was born in Israel **2000 years ago**. Modern civilization marks his birth by dividing time **B.C.** (before Christ) and **A.D.** (Anno Domini, or the year of our Lord). For his first thirty years, Jesus lived a traditional **Jewish** life, working as a carpenter. During this time,



all of Israel was under Caesar's Roman **dictatorship**, including Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, and Nazareth, where he was **raised**.

In his thirties, Jesus began his public teaching and **display** of recorded **miracles**, yet still never travelled more than 200 miles from his birthplace. Over a three year period, despite his efforts to keep a **low profile**, Jesus' reputation spread nationwide. The Roman governors and rulers of Israel's provinces and the leaders of the Jewish people (the religious counsels) took

note of him. **Jesus' key messages** included:

God loves you and is with you

Love one another

Immense value of each person

Good news: kingdom of God has come to earth

Reality of judgment to heaven or hell

God forgives those who ask

Many have asked "Who is Jesus Christ?" Jesus' most **controversial** act was that he **repeatedly** claimed to be God, which was a direct **violation** of the Jewish law. Therefore the religious leaders asked the Roman government to **execute** him. In each of several official trials, the Romans found that he was not guilty of breaking any Roman law. Even the Jewish leaders **recognized** that other than Jesus' claim to be God, Jesus followed the Jewish law perfectly. Still the religious leaders, using the argument of political disfavor, persuaded Pilate, a Roman governor of the Southern province of Israel, to authorize an execution.

Jesus was **brutally tortured** and then hung by his hands, which were nailed to a horizontal wooden beam (cross). This method of execution **restricted** the airflow to his lungs, killing him in three hours. However, according to more than 500 witnesses, Jesus returned from the dead three days later, and over the next 40 days journeyed in both the southern and northern provinces of Israel. To many, this was conclusive proof that Jesus' claims to be God were real. Then Jesus returned to Jerusalem, the city where he was recently executed, and according to witnesses, he left the earth alive by rising up into the sky.

As a result of these **miraculous** events, the number of his followers increased **dramatically**. Only a few months later in that same city of Jerusalem one **record** states that some 3000 new followers were added in a single day. The religious leaders responded by trying to **stomp** out Jesus' followers. Many of these people chose to die rather than deny their belief that Jesus was truly God.

Within 100 years, people throughout the **Roman Empire** (Asia Minor, Europe) became followers of Jesus. In **325 AD**, the following of Jesus, Christianity, became the official religion of the **Roman Emperor Constantine**. Within 500 years, even Greece's temples of Greek gods were **transformed** into churches for followers of Jesus. Although some of Jesus' messages and teachings were **diluted** or **miscommunicated** through the expansion of a religious institution, Jesus' original words and life still **speak loudly** for themselves.

[<http://www.jesuscentral.com/ji/historical-jesus/jesus-life.php>]

IMPORTANT HOLY DAYS

1. Lent: 40 days before Easter

Observance: **Self-examination** and preparation for **Easter**.

Lent was first **observed** in the fourth century as the 40-day period between **Ash Wednesday** and Easter, focusing on self-examination and **self-denial**.

Over the centuries, Catholics have **relaxed** some of the strict fasting rules. Today, only Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays during Lent are considered fasting days. On these days, Catholics **over the age of 14** are to **refrain from** eating **meat**. (Historically, this practice was meant to help **unify** people who could afford meat with poor people who couldn't.) In addition, on **Ash Wednesday** and Good Friday, those between the ages of **18 and 59** are to **eat only one full meal and two smaller meals** and aren't to **eat between meals**.

Orthodox Christians, more **rigorous** in their observance, refrain from meat, **dairy products**, and eggs (which historically were considered more luxury foods than ordinary breads). They can only eat fish (which was historically considered less of a luxury than red meat) on the feasts of the **Annunciation** and Palm Sunday.

Some Protestant **denominations** observe Lent (such as Anglican and Episcopalian), but many Protestant churches attach less **significance** to the season of Lent than to the individual holy days leading up to Easter.

2. Palm Sunday: Sunday before Easter

Observance: Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Biblical reference: **Matthew 21:1-11**).

Christians celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. When Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem, a large crowd of people in the city spread out **palm branches** on the ground before him as a sign of his kingship. Throughout Jesus' three-year ministry, he **downplayed** his role as **Messiah** and sometimes even told people whom he healed not to say anything about the miracle to others. Palm Sunday is the one exception in which his followers loudly proclaimed his glory to all.

Today, Christians often celebrate Palm Sunday in a joyous, triumphant manner during **worship** services, emphasizing the glory of Jesus Christ. Some churches spread palm branches at the front of the **sanctuary** as a way to **commemorate** the event.

3. Maundy Thursday: Thursday before Easter

Observance: The Last Supper of Jesus (Biblical reference: **John 13-17**).

The night before Jesus was **crucified**, he had a Passover supper with his disciples. (**Passover** is a Jewish holy day that celebrates God's **deliverance** of the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt.) After supper, Jesus knew that this would be his final opportunity to instruct his disciples before the **crucifixion**, so he talked at length about his purposes, what his followers should do in response, and the promise of the Holy Spirit to come. He then washed his disciples' feet in an **incredible demonstration** of humility and **servanthood**. Finally, he gave bread and wine to his disciples and asked them to partake of it in remembrance of him. The act of partaking bread and wine is called **Communion** or the **Eucharist** or the **Mass** (or the Last Supper) today.

The word **Maundy** (pronounced mawn-dee) comes from the **Latin** word **mandatum**, which means "**command**." The command that this holy day refers to is the one that Jesus gave to his disciples during the Last Supper:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, just like I have loved you; that you also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

4. Good Friday: Friday before Easter

Observance: Crucifixion of Jesus on the cross (Biblical reference: **Luke 23**).

Good Friday marks the day on which Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross for the sins of the world. Some believe that its name was originally **God's Friday**, which, over the years, became its present name. In Germany, Christians call it **Quiet Friday** (from noon on Friday until Easter morning, church bells remain silent). Christians in other parts of Europe call it **Great Friday** or **Holy Friday**.

Good Friday is a day of mourning and sorrow over the **sacrificial** death of Jesus Christ and a reminder that the sins of all people made it necessary for him to die in the first place. It's also a day of gratitude for the supreme sacrifice that he made.

Protestant churches sometimes hold services between noon and 3:00 p.m. to commemorate Jesus' hours on the cross. Catholics often remove everything from the altar and kiss the **crucifix** as an expression of worship. Some churches even hold a **Service of Darkness** in which candles are **extinguished** until people are left sitting in total darkness, as a reminder of the darkness that covered the earth after Jesus died (Luke 23:44-46).

5. Easter: First Sunday after the first full moon after March 21

Observance: Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Biblical reference: **Luke 24**).

Easter is **the single most important holy day of the Christian Church**, for it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the central event in Christianity. To Christians, the resurrection **backs up** Jesus' claim that he had the authority to die for the sins of the world and the power to come back to life again. It also gives hope to Christians that they too will experience a resurrected life in heaven.

6. **Advent:** Period marked by the four Sundays before **Christmas**

Observance: Preparation for Christmas and Christ's Second Coming.

The lighting of the Advent wreath is the most popular tradition of the season. An **Advent wreath** is a circle of evergreens with four candles, three of which are usually colored violet purple (symbolizing royalty in some churches and penance in others) and the fourth colored rose **red** or **pink** (representing the joyous expectation that people have in the coming Messiah). Some wreaths include a white candle (for the purity and holiness of Christ) in the center, which Christians light on Christmas day.

The origin of the wreath started as a pre-Christian practice by Germanic peoples as a symbol of the hope of a coming spring. Christians kept the tradition but changed its meaning as they looked forward to Christ's return.

St. Francis of Assisi is **credited** as displaying the first Christmas nativity scene, a re-creation of the manger scene or the crib, during Advent in **1223**.

7. **Christmas:** December 25

Observance: Birth of Jesus Christ (Biblical reference: Luke 2:1-20).

Christmas is the **observance** of Jesus' **humble** birth to a **virgin** in a **stable** in Bethlehem. The holiday also celebrates the events surrounding his birth, such as an angel's appearance to shepherds, telling them to visit the newborn king.



Most of the traditional **customs** of Christmas, such as gift giving, tree decorating, light hanging, and feasting, come from sources other than the Christian Church.

[[http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/christian-holy-days-holidays-and-](http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/christian-holy-days-holidays-and-seasons.html)

[seasons.html](http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/christian-holy-days-holidays-and-seasons.html)]

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

God, in **delivering** the law to **Moses**, gave him **Ten Commandments** written upon **two tablets of stone**. Three of these Commandments that were written on the first tablet referred to the **love of God**; and the seven Commandments written on the other tablet related to the **love of our neighbor**. The whole law, therefore, is founded on these two precepts.

Since they express man's **fundamental** duties towards God and towards his neighbor, the Ten Commandments **reveal**, in their **primordial** content, **grave obligations**. They are **fundamentally immutable**, and they **oblige** always and everywhere. No one can **dispense from** them. The Ten Commandments are **engraved** by God in the human heart.

1. I AM THE LORD THY GOD: THOU SHALT NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME.

Commands: faith, making an effort to know what God has **revealed** through His Church, believing all that God has revealed, professing belief in what God has revealed; hope; love; worship of God; **reverence** for holy things, prayer and sacrifice.

Forbids: idolatry, giving to a creature (any person but God) or creation (e.g. sun, moon, stars, "Mother Earth") the honor which belongs to God alone, **superstition**, spiritualism, **séances** (a meeting at which people attempt to make contact with **the dead**, especially through the agency of a medium), astrology, horoscopes, fortune telling, palm reading, **ouija boards** (a board with letters, numbers, and other signs around its edge, to which a planchette, movable pointer, or **upturned glass** moves, supposedly in answer to questions from people at a séance), trying to communicate with the dead directly or through others, and all **occult** practices; tempting God, **sacrilege**, **attendance** at false worship; **presumption** and despair; **renouncing** the faith or giving up the practice of our religion for the sake of wealth, honors, society, or worldly pleasures.

2. THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN.

Commands: speaking with **reverence** of God and of the saints, and of all holy things; keeping lawful oaths and **vows**.

Forbids: blasphemy, the irreverent use of God's name, speaking disrespectfully of holy things, **profane** words (cursing); false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths and the breaking of vows.

3. REMEMBER THOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY.

Commands: going to Church on **Sundays** and **Holy Days of obligation**, reverence in Church.

Forbids: missing Church through one's own fault; unnecessary **servile** work; unnecessary public buying and selling; court trials; and whatever else may **hinder** the **due** observance of the Lord's day.

4. HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER.

Commands: love, respect, obedience to parents of children in all that is **not sin**; care on the part of parents for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their children; obedience to lawful civil authorities, obedience to religious superiors (when in accordance with Magisterial teaching.).

Forbids: hatred of parents and **superiors**; **contempt**, disrespect and disobedience towards our parents or lawful superiors.

5. THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

Commands: live in peace and union with our neighbor, to respect his rights, to seek his spiritual and bodily welfare, and to take proper care of our own life and health; controlling one's anger.

Forbids: all willful murder, suicide, abortion, **euthanasia**, artificial contraception, sterilization, cloning, **endangering** life and limb of self or others, fighting, anger, hatred, revenge, and bad example.

6. THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

Commands: **chastity** and **modesty** in all our looks, words, and actions; avoiding occasions of sin.

Forbids: unchaste freedom with another's wife or husband; pornography, bad movies or books, **obscene** speech; impure actions alone or with others; **masturbation, fornication**, homosexuality, **incest, bestiality, pedophilia**; also all immodesty with ourselves or others in looks, dress, words, or actions.

7. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

Commands: respect for the property and rights of others; the paying of just debts; paying just wages to employees; **integrity** in public officials. **Repentance** for sins also requires the **restoration** of ill-gotten goods, or the value of them, as best as we are able, bound to repair the damage we have unjustly caused.

Forbids: theft; damage to the property of others; not paying just debts; not returning found or borrowed articles; giving unjust measure or weight in selling; not paying just wages; **bribery; graft; cheating; fraud**; accepting stolen property; not giving an honest day's work for wages received; **violation** of contract.

8. THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR.

Commands: truthfulness in all things, respect for the good name and reputation of other; the observance of **secrecy** when required. Repentance for sin also requires those who have lied about their neighbor and seriously injured his character **must repair** the injury done as far as they are able.

Forbids: lying, injury to good name of others, slander, detraction, tale bearing, backbiting, rash judgments, contemptuous speech; and the violation of secrecy.

9. THOU SHALT NOT **COVET** THY NEIGHBOR'S WIFE.

Commands: purity in thought and desire.

Forbids: unchaste or impure thoughts, desires of another's wife or husband, and all other unlawful impure thoughts and desires.

10. THOU SHALT NOT **COVET** THY NEIGHBOR'S GOODS.

Commands: be content with what we have, respect for the rights of others; rejoice in our neighbor's welfare.

Forbids: desires to take or keep wrongfully, or to damage, what property belongs to another.

[<http://www.ourladyswarriors.org/faith/10cmdmnt.htm>]

DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF CHRISTIANITY

Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is **composed** of **23 Churches**: the Western or Latin Church and the 22 Eastern Catholic Churches.

The **Latin Church** (not to be confused with the **Roman Rite**, which is one of the Latin liturgical rites, not a particular Church) is the largest and most widely known of the 23 *sui iuris* (possessing full social and civil rights) Churches that together make up the Catholic Church.

All of the following are Particular Churches of the Catholic Church. They are all in **communion with** the Bishop of Rome (**the Pope**) and acknowledge his claim of **universal jurisdiction and authority**. They have some minor distinct theological emphases and expressions (for instance, in the case of those that are of Greek/Byzantine tradition, concerning some non-doctrinal aspects of the Latin view of **Purgatory**). The Eastern Catholic churches and the Latin Church (which together compose the worldwide Catholic Church) **share the same doctrine and sacraments, and thus the same faith**.

Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church

Armenian Catholic Church

Belarusian Catholic Church

Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church

Chaldean Catholic Church

Coptic Catholic Church

Byzantine Church of Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro

Ethiopian Catholic Church

Greek Byzantine Catholic Church

Hungarian Byzantine Catholic Church

Italo-Albanian Catholic Church; a.k.a. Italo-Greek Catholic Church

Macedonian Catholic Church

Maronite Catholic Church

Melkite Catholic Church

Romanian Catholic Church

Russian Catholic Church

Ruthenian Catholic Church; usually called the "Byzantine Catholic Church" in the United States

Slovak Greek Catholic Church

Syriac Catholic Church

Syro-Malabar Catholic Church

Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

The Catholic Church considers itself the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church that Christ founded. As such, the Catholic Church does not consider itself a denomination, but rather considers itself **pre-denominational**, the **original** Church of Christ.

The non-Catholic Church

The other churches do not belong to the Catholic Church proper. They are:

Eastern Catholic Churches

Eastern Orthodoxy

Oriental Orthodoxy

Church of the East

Protestantism

- Lutheranism
- Anglicanism
- Calvinism or Reformed tradition
- Anabaptists and Schwarzenau Brethren
- Plymouth Brethren and Free Evangelical Churches
- Methodists
- Pietists and Holiness churches
- Baptists
- Pentecostalism

The list is incomplete. It is enough to give readers certain idea of Christianity.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_denominations#The_Latin_Church]

CHAPTER 3: CONFUCIANISM

SHORT HISTORY OF CONFUCIUS

Confucius, also known as Kong Qui or K'ung Fu-tzu, was born probably in 551 B.C. (lunar calendar) in present-day Qufu, Shandong Province, China. Little is known of his childhood. Records of the Historian, written by Ssu-ma Chi'en (145-86 B.C.), offers the most **detailed** account of Confucius' life. However, some **contemporary** historians are **skeptical** as to the record's **accuracy**, regarding it as **myth**, not fact. According to Records of the Historian, Confucius was born into a royal family of the Chou Dynasty. Other accounts describe him as being born into poverty. What is **undisputed** about Confucius' life is that he existed during a time of **ideological** crisis in China.



Philosophy and Teachings

During the sixth century B.C., competing Chinese states **undermined** the authority of the Chou Empire, which had held **supreme** rule for over 500 years. Traditional Chinese principles began to **deteriorate**, resulting in a period of moral **decline**. Confucius recognized an **opportunity**—and an **obligation**—to **reinforce** the societal values of compassion and tradition. His social philosophy was based primarily on the principle of "**ren/ yen**" or "**loving others**" while exercising self-discipline. He believed that **ren/yen** could be put into action using the **Golden Rule**, "What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others." (Lunyu 12.2, 6.30).

Confucius' political beliefs were **likewise** based on the concept of **self-discipline**. He believed that a leader needed to exercise self-discipline in order to remain humble and treat his followers with compassion. In doing so, he would lead by positive example. According to Confucius, leaders could **motivate** their subjects to follow the law by teaching them virtue and the unifying force of ritual **propriety**.

His philosophy of education focused on the "Six Arts": **archery, calligraphy, computation, music, chariot-driving and ritual**. To Confucius, the main **objective** of being an educator was to teach people to live with **integrity**. Through his teachings, he **strove** to **resurrect** the traditional values of **benevolence, propriety and ritual** in Chinese society.

Major Works

Confucius is **credited** with writing and editing some of the most influential traditional Chinese classics. These include a **rearrangement** of the Book of **Odes** as well as a **revision** of the historical Book of Documents. He also **compiled** a historical account of the 12 **dukes** of Lu, called the **Spring and Autumn Annals**. Lunyu, which sets forth Confucius' philosophical and political beliefs, is thought to be compiled by his disciples. It is one of the "Four Books" of Confucianism that Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi, a **self-proclaimed** Neo-Confucian, published as Sishu in 1190. Far-reaching in its influence, Lunyu was later translated into English under the title The **Analects** of Confucius.

Death and Legacy

Convinced that his teachings had not made a significant impact on Chinese culture, Confucius died on November 21, 479 B.C. in Qufu, China, a year after losing his son, Tzu-lu, in battle. His followers held a funeral and established a mourning period in his honor. As of the fourth century B.C., Confucius was **regarded** as a **sage** who had **deserved** greater recognition in his time. By the second century B.C., during China's first Han Dynasty, his ideas became the foundation of the state ideology. Today he is widely considered one of the most influential teachers in Chinese history.

[<http://www.biography.com/people/confucius-9254926#major-works>]

CONFUCIAN HOLY DAYS

Qing Ming, also known as **Tomb Sweeping Day**, takes place 106 days after the winter **solstice**¹, either April 4th or 5th. On this day people go to the **graves** of their **ancestors**, praying for them, presenting them with gifts and offerings like **paper money** and paper cloths. Sometimes, the dead person's favorite food will be left on the grave and a small pile of spirit money is burned. People also buy kites to fly. **Chrysanthemums** are the most common flower at these ceremonies, therefore chrysanthemums are funeral flowers.

The Birthday of Confucius

Obviously, people who follow Confucianism celebrate the birth of Confucius, 28th September. This celebration starts on the 28th of September and ends on the 10th of October. The celebration starts with a short parade leading to the temple, where an animal is then sacrificed to Confucius. Afterwards, the Song of Peace is performed by singers and dancers. Later on, a pile of spirit money is burned along with written prayers. Then the temple gates are closed and everyone has a bite of a "wisdom cake", which is a special rice cake. Sometimes, the ceremony includes a kung fu competition, which is **accompanied** by music and dance.

[<https://world-religions-2012.wikispaces.com/Confucianism>]

CORE CONCEPTS OF CONFUCIANISM

The **twin** concepts of **jen/yen** and **li** are often said to **constitute** the **basis** of Confucianism.

A. Jen/yen (wren): human heartedness; goodness; benevolence, man-to-man-ness; what makes man distinctively human (that which gives human beings their humanity).

¹ The December solstice is on either December 20, 21, 22 or 23. It is called **Winter Solstice** in the Northern Hemisphere, where it is the **shortest day of the year**. In the Southern Hemisphere, it is the **Summer Solstice** and the longest day of the year.

1. The virtue of virtues; Confucius said he never really saw it full **expressed**. The other virtues follow from it. He never gives and defends a definition of it although he does **characterize** it.
2. It is dearer than life itself--the man of **jen/yen** will **sacrifice** his life to **preserve jen**, and **conversely** it is what makes life worth living.
3. **Jen** is a sense for the dignity of human life--a feeling of humanity towards others and self-esteem for yourself.
 - a) Such feeling applies to all men--not just one nation or race. It is the **foundation** of all human relationships.
 - b) There is the belief that **jen** can be obtained; indeed, there is the belief in the natural **perfectibility** of man. Hence, he rejects the way of human action where one **satisfies** likes and avoids dislikes.
 - c) The first principle of Confucianism is to act according to **jen**: it is the **ultimate** guide to human action.
4. We should seek to **extend jen** to others.

B. Li (lee): principle of gain, benefit, order, propriety; concrete guide to human action.

1. Two basic meanings to **li**:
 - (1) concrete guide to human relationships or rules of proper action that **genuinely embody jen** (2) general principle of social order or the general ordering of life.
2. Confucius **recognized** that you need a well **ordered** society for **jen** to be expressed.
3. First Sense of Li: the concrete guide to human relationships.
 - a) The way things should be done or propriety: **positive** rather than negative ("Do's rather than Don'ts).
 - b) The main **components** of propriety emphasize the openness of people to each other.
 - (1) The **reification** of names: language used in accordance with the truth of things.
 - (2) The Doctrine of the Mean: so important that an entire book is **dedicated** to it in the Confucian canon: the proper action is the way between the extremes.
 - (3) The Five Relationships: the way things should be done in social life; none of the relationships are **equal**. (Note that 3 of the 5 relations **involve** family; the family is the basic unit of society).
 - (a) father and son (loving / reverential)
 - (b) elder brother and younger brother (gentle / respectful)
 - (c) husband and wife (good / listening)
 - (d) older friend and younger friend (considerate / **deferential**)
 - (e) ruler and subject (benevolent / loyal)

(4) Respect for age: age gives all things their worth: objects, institutions, and individual lives.

4. Second Sense of li: principle of social order; ritual; ordering of life; **conforming to** the norms of **jen** (the limits and authenticity of **li**).

a) Every action **affects** someone else--there are limits to individuality.

b) Confucius sought to **order** an entire way of life.

c) You shouldn't be left to **improvise** your responses because you are at a loss as to how to behave.

C. Yi (yee); righteousness; the moral disposition to do good (also a necessary condition for jen or for the superior man).

1. **Yi connotes** a moral sense: the ability to recognize what is right and good; the ability to feel, under the circumstances what is the right thing to do.

a. Not moral wisdom **per se**, but **intuition**.

b. Most of us live under the **sway** of different kinds of "I's." In this case, the **identification** is with an **impersonal ego**. (In Freudian terms, almost like the **super-ego**.)²

c. The impersonal ego is the **assimilated** or **appropriated** values of our culture--the Confucian true self.

2. Some actions ought to be **performed** for the **sole** reason that they are right--**regardless of** what they produce; not for the sake of something else.

a. The value in the act is the rightness of the action **regardless of** the intention or the **consequences** of the act.

b. Hence, **yi** is a different way than either **stoicism** or **utilitarianism**.

c. Confucianism is similar to **Kant's ethics of duty**: the action is done as a good-in-itself, not as a means to an end.

D. Hsiao (showe): filial piety; reverence

1. Parents are **revered** because they are the source of your life. They have **sacrificed** much for you.

2. One should do well and make the family name known and respected: bring honor to your family.

3. Consider someone you respect and admire who saves your life or someone who has sacrificed his life for you--as, indeed, your parents did. Hence, the reverence.

4. **Hsiao implies** that you give your parents not only **physical care** but also **emotional** and **spiritual** richness. When the parents die, their unfulfilled aims and purposes should be the purposes of the children.

² **The superego**, developing around the age of 3 – 5 during the **phallic stage** of psychosexual development, **incorporates** the values and morals of society which are learned from one's parents and others.

5. The beginnings of **jen** are found in **hsiao** (family life).

- a. Once the reverence and respect is understood for parent, **hsiao** can be **extended** by generalization to family, friends, society, and mankind.
- b. Respect for the sake of reverence **affects** who you are.

E. Chih (chee): moral wisdom; the source of this virtue is knowledge of right and wrong. Chih is added to Confucianism by Mencius (muhn shoos) who believed that people are basically born good.

1. Since we draw the difference between right and wrong from our own mind, these ideas are **innate**.

2. Man is a moral animal for Mencius. Man has the **potential** to be good for Confucius.

3. How, then, does Mencius account for the origin of evil?

- a. From external circumstances: nature and the needs for **survival**.
- b. From society and culture being in **disarray**: it would be to our **disadvantage** to be moral.
- c. From lack of knowledge: we do not seek to find out the **options** we have. We fail to develop our feelings and senses.

F. Chun-tzu (choon dzuh): the ideal man; the superior man; gentle person in the most significant sense.

1. He is **at home** in the world; as he needs nothing himself. He is at the **disposal** of others and completely beyond personal **ambition**.

2. He is intelligent enough to meet anything without fear.

3. Few people can **attain** this ideal; the central virtue is, of course, **jen**.

- a. Personal relationships come before anything else (i.e., before thinking, reasoning, studying).
- b. The five virtues come from within the **impersonal ego**: (1) kindness, (2) **rectitude**, (3) **decorum**, (4) wisdom, and (5) sincerity.

G. Te (day): power by which men are ruled; the power of moral example (the whole art of government consists in the art of being honest).

1. The patterns of **prestige** are used in the service of governance of the country.

2. Government is good if it can maintain (1) economic sufficiency, (2) military sufficiency, and (3) confidence of the people.

[<http://philosophy.lander.edu/oriental/main.html>]

BRANCHES OF CONFUCIANISM

1. Mencius

In the fourth century B.C., Mencius, taught that human nature is **essentially** good. He believed that if a person truly lived in the **mould** of Confucius, he could not be corrupted by riches, **conquered** by power, or **affected** by poverty. Mencius' teachings have lasted through the Song, Ming and Qing dynasties, as well as into today.

2. Xunzi

He took the opposite **stance** of Mencius when he taught that **human nature is essentially evil**. Xunzi, believed that education and self-cultivation were important, but placing importance on the need for authority, social structure and intense scholastic work to stop the evilness of human nature from spreading too widely.

3. Dong Zhongshu

Dong (179-104 B.C.) took a neutral stance on human nature, stating only that a person's actions have consequences in the universe. Dong used the five natural elements -- fire, wood, metal, earth and water - to form his **version** of Confucian cosmological theory.

4. Song Confucianism

Song Confucianism (960-1279) brought Confucian teachings back to what was thought to be truer representations of Confucius, and preached living a life of self-cultivation and balance between humanity and the cosmos. It focused more on education, politics, literature and history than on promoting militaristic powers.

5. Ming Confucianism

Scholars of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) focused on uniting a person's mind with his actions and how they related to the earth instead of the heavens. It preached balancing Confucianism with everyday life.

6. Korean Confucianism

Yi T'oege (1501-1570) wrote his treatise, "Discourse on the Ten Sagely Diagrams," to educate the king. He discussed how a person enters into a relationship with himself and others using Mencius' concepts of the **four emotions: commiseration**, shame, modesty and integrity and seven feelings: pleasure, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hatred and desire.

7. Qing Confucianism

Confucianism in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) was associated with politics instead of remaining a spiritual and philosophical school of thought. The **imposition** of literary **inquisitions** forced Confucian scholars to find a way to spread Confucius' teachings without **arousing** emperors' anger and jealousy. Books and treatises were still published but with the absence of **overt** political messages. Ogyu Sorai spread Qing Confucianism to Japan.

8. Modern Confucianism

Confucianism in China was **overshadowed** by Marxism-Leninism, followed by the economic rise of power in Japan after World War II. Young Chinese intellectuals attacked traditional Confucianism and **embraced** democracy and science.

However, Confucianism, having been so deeply bred in Chinese culture for thousands of years, did not disappear; modern scholars wove Confucian themes of loyalty and cooperation into personal and bureaucratic life. One effect was a revitalization of education by more rigorous teaching and exams. Another was the government's limitation of individual autonomy. The concept of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts³⁴ carried over in promoting strong family units. In modern Confucian China, working together as a collective unit was favored over individual effort.

[<http://people.opposingviews.com/different-sects-confucianism-8362.html>]

³ The word "stoic" commonly refers to someone indifferent to pain, pleasure, grief, or joy. Determinism is the philosophical position that for every event there exist conditions that could cause no other event.

⁴ The original famous phrase of Gestalt psychologist Kurt Koffka, "The whole is other than the sum of the parts". **Synergy** is the creation of a whole that is greater than the simple sum of its parts. The term synergy comes from the Attic Greek word **συνεργία** synergia from synergos, **συνεργός**, meaning "working together".

CHAPTER 4: HINDUISM

ORIGIN HINDUISM

Hinduism is a collective term **applied** to the many philosophical and religious traditions **native** to India.



Hinduism has neither a specific moment of origin nor a specific founder. Rather, the tradition understands itself to be timeless, having always existed. Indeed, its collection of **sacred texts** is known, as **Sanatana Dharma**, "The Eternal Teaching." It is thus a **complex** tradition that **encompasses** numerous interrelated religious doctrines and practices that have some common characteristics but which lack any unified system of beliefs and practices.

Hinduism encompasses a number of major sects, as well as **countless** subsects with local or regional variations. On one level, it is possible to view these sects as distinct religious traditions, with often very specific **theologies** and ritual traditions; on another level, however, they often understand themselves to be different means to reach a common end. The Hindu worldview is **grounded** in the doctrines of **samsara (the cycle of rebirth)** and **karma** (the universal law of cause and effect), and fundamentally holds that one's actions (including one's thoughts) directly **determine** one's life, both one's current life and one's future lives. Many, but not all, Hindus hold that the cosmos is **populated** by numerous deities and spiritual beings, gods and goddesses, or **devas**, who actively **influence** the world and who **interact** with humans.

THE SACRED DAYS OF HINDUISM

In general, Hindu festivals "are intended to purify, **avert** malicious influences, renew society, **bridge over** critical moments, and **stimulate** or **resuscitate** the **vital** powers of nature." They include a wide variety of **rituals**, including worship, prayer, processions, magical acts, music, dancing, lovemaking, eating, drinking, and feeding the poor.

Major festivals likely to be **observed** by most Hindus are:

Holi

Holi (also called Holaka or Phagwa) is an annual festival celebrated on the day after the full moon in the Hindu month of Phalguna (early March). It celebrates spring, **commemorates** various events in Hindu **mythology** and is time of **disregarding** social norms and **indulging** in general merrymaking. Holi is probably the **least religious** of Hindu holidays.

Diwali

Diwali, from the Sanskrit word Dīpāvali, meaning "**row of lights**" is a Hindu festival of lights lasting five days. For many Hindus, Diwali is also **New Year's Eve**. Diwali is held on the final day of the Vikram calendar, a type of Hindu calendar followed by North Indians.

Mahashivaratri (Shiva Ratri)

Mahashivaratri is the Great Festival of Shiva. It is **held** on the 14th day of the dark half of the lunar month of Phalguna. Mahashivaratri is especially important to Saivites (devotees of Shiva), but it is celebrated by most Hindus. Other sacred days are:

Rama Navami - birthday of Lord Rama (April)

Krishna Jayanti - birthday of Lord Krishna (July-August)

Raksābandhana - renewing bonds between brothers and sisters (July-August)

Kumbh Mela - pilgrimage every 12 years to four cities in India (July-August; last one 2003)

Ganesha-Chaturthi (Ganesha Utsava) - festival of Ganesh (August-September)

Dassera - victory of Rama over demon king Ravana (September-October)

Navaratri - festival of Shakti (in Bengal) or Rama's victory over Ravana (South India) (September-October)

[<http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/holidays>]

HINDU ETHICS

The mark of Dharma is **good conduct**. Dharma **enhances** life. Man attains prosperity and fame, here and **hereafter**, through the practice of Dharma. Good conduct is the highest Dharma. Righteousness, truth and good works, power and prosperity—all **originate** from conduct.

Conduct And Character

Man has various sorts of desires. Sometimes, there is **conflict** of desires. That desire which **obtains** victory is termed 'will'. The inner disposition which makes the will possible is called **character**. Character is the **aggregate** of **peculiar** qualities which **constitute** personal individuality.

Ethics (The Science Of Conduct)

Morality or ethics is the science of conduct. Ethics is the study of what is right or good in conduct. Ethical science shows the way in which human beings should behave towards one another, as well as towards other creatures. It contains **systematised** principles on which a man should act. **Ethics is right conduct**.

Ethics, Spirituality And Religion

Without ethics, you cannot have progress in the spiritual path. Ethics is the **corner-stone** of Vedanta (God-realization). Ethics is the strong pillar on which the **edifice** of Bhakti Yoga rests (*Bhakti Yoga is a spiritual path or spiritual practice within Hinduism focused on the **cultivation of love and devotion** toward God*).

A Yogic student or **aspirant** must be strictly ethical. He must be truthful and pure in thought, word and deed. He must not **injure** any living being in thought, word and deed. He must **practise rigidly** right thought, right speech and right action.

Benefits Of The Practice Of Ethics

Morality is the **gateway** to religion. He who leads a moral or virtuous life attains freedom and perfection. Practice of ethics will help you to live in **harmony** with your neighbours, friends, your own family

members, fellow-beings and other people. It will keep your **conscience** ever clean. A moral man who follows strictly the principles of ethics will not **deviate from** the path of Dharma or righteousness. Good conduct is the root of material and spiritual prosperity. It is good conduct which **prolongs** life and destroys all **calamities** and evils, brings eternal happiness and begets virtue.

Ethical Codes In Hinduism

Hinduism lays great **emphasis** on ethical discipline. **Yama** (self-restraint) and **Niyama** (religious observances) are the foundations of God-realization.

*The 10 **Yamas** (Restraints or Proper Conduct)*

1. Non-injury. Do no harm to others either in thought, word or deed, even in your dreams. Revere all beings as expressions of the One Divine energy. **Let go of** fear and insecurity, the sources of **abuse**. Knowing that harm caused to others **unfailingly** returns to oneself, live peacefully with God's creation. Never be a source of dread, pain or injury. Follow a **vegetarian** diet.
2. Truthfulness. Refrain from lying and **betraying** promises. Speak only that which is true, kind, helpful and necessary. Knowing that **deception** creates distance, don't keep secrets from family or loved ones. **Admit** your failings. Do not **engage in slander, gossip or backbiting**. Do not **bear false witness** against another.
3. Non-stealing. Do not steal or **covet** or fail to repay debt. Do not **gamble** or **defraud** others. Do not use others' names, words, resources or rights without permission and acknowledgment.
4. Sexual Purity. Control **lust** by remaining **celibate** when single and faithful in marriage. Don't waste the **sacred force** by **promiscuity** in thought, word or deed. Be **restrained** with the opposite sex. Seek holy company. Dress and speak modestly. **Shun** pornography, sexual humor and violence.
5. Patience. Be **tolerant** with people and patience with circumstances. Let others behave according to their nature, without adjusting to you. Don't argue, **dominate** conversations or **interrupt** others. Be patient with children and the elderly. Minimize **stress** by **keeping worries at bay**. Remain **poised** in good times and bad.
6. Steadfastness. **Overcome** non-perseverance, fear, **indecision** and changeableness. Achieve your goals with a **prayer**, purpose, plan, **persistence** and push. Avoid **sloth** and **procrastination**. Develop willpower, courage and **industriousness**. Do not let opposition or fear of failure result in changing **strategies**.
7. Compassion. Conquer **callous**, cruel and **insensitive** feelings toward all beings. Be kind to people, animals, plants and the Earth itself. Forgive those who **apologize** and show true **remorse**. **Foster** sympathy for others' needs and suffering. Honor and **assist** those who are weak, **impoverished**, aged or in pain. Oppose family **abuse** and other cruelties.
8. Honesty. Renounce **deception** and wrongdoing. Obey the laws of your nation and locale. Pay your taxes. Be **straightforward** in business. Do an honest day's work. Do not **bribe** or accept bribes. Do not cheat,

deceive or **circumvent** to achieve an end. Be **frank** with yourself. Face and accept your faults without blaming them on others.

9. Moderate Diet. Do not **overeate** nor **consume** meat, fish, shellfish, fowl or eggs. Enjoy fresh, **wholesome** vegetarian foods that **vitalize** the body. Avoid **junk food**. Drink in moderation. Eat at regular times, only when hungry, at a moderate pace, never **between meals**, in a **disturbed** atmosphere or when **upset**. Follow a simple diet.

10. Purity. Avoid impurity in mind, body and speech. **Maintain** a clean, healthy body. Keep a pure, **uncluttered** home and workplace. Keep good company, never mixing with **adulterers**, thieves or other **impure** people. Keep away from pornography and violence. Never use **harsh**, angered or **indecent** language. Worship devoutly. Meditate daily.

The 10 Niyamas (Observances or Practices)

1. Modesty. Recognize your errors, repent, confess and make **amends**. Sincerely apologize to those hurt by your words or deeds. **Resolve** all **contention** before sleep. Seek out and correct your faults and bad habits. Welcome correction as a means to bettering yourself. Shun pride and **pretension**.

2. Contentment. Be happy, smile and uplift others. Live in constant gratitude for your health, your friends and your belongings. Don't complain about what you don't possess. **Identify** with the **eternal You**, rather than mind, body or emotions. Keep the mountaintop view that life is an opportunity for spiritual progress. Live in the eternal now.

3. Charity. Be generous **to a fault**, giving liberally without thought of reward. Offer **tithes** to temples, ashrams and spiritual organizations. Approach the temple with offerings. Visit **gurus** with gifts in hand. Donate religious literature. Feed and give to those in need. **Bestow** your time and talents without seeking praise. **Treat guests as God**.

4. Faith. Believe firmly in God, **Gods**, guru and your path to enlightenment. Trust in the words of the masters, the scriptures and traditions. Practice devotion and **sadhana** (*spiritual practice leading to perfection*) to inspire experiences that build advanced faith. Be loyal to your **lineage**, one with your **satguru** (perfect master). **Shun** those who try to break your faith by argument and accusation. Avoid doubt and despair.

5. Worship of the Lord. **Set aside** one room of your home as God's shrine. Offer fruit, flowers or food daily. Learn a simple **puja** (the worship of a particular god) and the **chants**. Meditate after each puja. Visit your **shrine** before leaving the house. Worship in **heartfelt** devotion, clearing the inner channels to God, so their grace flows toward you and your loved ones.

6. Scriptural Listening. Eagerly hear the scriptures, study the teachings and listen to the wise of your lineage. Choose a guru, follow his path and don't waste time exploring other ways. Read, study, and above all, listen to readings and **dissertations** by which wisdom flows from knower to seeker. Avoid **secondary texts** that preach violence. Revere and study the revealed scriptures.

7. Cognition. Develop a spiritual will and intellect with your master's guidance. **Strive** for knowledge of God, to **awaken** the light within. **Discover** the hidden lesson in each experience to develop a **profound** understanding of life and yourself. Through meditation, cultivate **intuition** by listening to the still, small voice within, by understanding the **subtle** sciences, inner worlds and **mystical** texts.
8. Sacred Vows. **Embrace** religious vows, rules and observances and never **waver** in fulfilling them. Take vows to **harness** the instinctive nature. Observe fast **periodically**. Make **pilgrimage** yearly. **Uphold** your vows strictly, be they chastity, marriage, monasticism, non-addiction, **tithing**, loyalty to a lineage, vegetarianism or nonsmoking.
9. Incantation. **Chant** your holy **mantra** daily, **reciting** the sacred sound, word or phrase given by your guru. Bathe first, quiet the mind, and concentrate fully to let spiritual discipline **harmonize**, purify and uplift you. **Heed** your instructions and chant the prescribed repetitions without fail. Live free of anger so that the spiritual discipline strengthens your higher nature. Let it **quell** emotions and **quiet** the rivers of thought.
10. Austerity. Practice austerity, serious disciplines, penance and sacrifice. Be **ardent** in worship, meditation and pilgrimage. **Atone** for misdeeds through penance, such as 108 **prostrations**⁵ or fasting. Perform self-denial. Fulfil severe **austerities** at special times, under a master's guidance, to **ignite** the inner fires of self-transformation.

[http://hinduism.about.com/od/basics/a/yamas_niyamas.htm]

The Foundational Principles Of Hindu Ethics

The basis of Hindu ethics is this: "There is one all-**pervading Atman**. It is the **innermost** soul of all beings. This is the common, pure consciousness. If you injure your neighbour, you really injure yourself. If you injure any other creature, you really injure yourself, because the whole world is nothing but your own Self." This is the basic **metaphysical** truth that underlies all Hindu ethical codes.

Indicators Of Right And Wrong

To work **in accordance With** the Divine Will is right and to work in opposition to the Divine Will is wrong. Yet it is very difficult for the man in the street to find out what exactly the Divine Will is, in certain actions. That is the reason why wise sages **declare** that people should **resort to Sastras**, learned Pundits and **realised** persons, for consultation.

That work which gives **elevation**, joy and peace to the mind is right and that which brings **depression**, pain and restlessness to the mind is wrong. This is an easy way to find out right and wrong.

⁵ We always bow one hundred and eight times. One hundred and eight is a number from **Hinduism** and **Buddhism**. That means there are one hundred and eight **defilements** in the mind. Or, sometimes they say one hundred and eight **compartments** in the mind. Each bow takes away one defilement, cleans one compartment in your mind. So our bowing practice is like a **repentance** ceremony every morning. (<http://providencezen.org/why-we-bow-108-prostrations>)

That which helps you in your spiritual **evolution** is right and that which **obstructs** and **hinders** your spiritual evolution is wrong. That which leads to **unity of self** is right and that which leads to **separation** is wrong. That which is in accordance with the **injunctions** of the Holy Scriptures is right and that which is not in accordance with the **sacred lore** is wrong.

Conclusion

You must obey the laws or rules of conduct. The rules are given for you by the law-givers for your own betterment and spiritual **uplift**. The law-givers are great **sages** who had direct **God-realisation**.

To stick to right conduct is difficult, no doubt. **Mockery**, misunderstanding and **persecution** will have to be faced. Therefore, the cultivation of **forbearance**, meekness of spirit, calm **endurance** and spirit of forgiveness are of great importance. **Uphold** virtue at any cost. For its sake, bear any **calumny**. Return good for evil.

Do not leave the path of morality even if your life is in danger. Do not leave righteousness for the sake of some material gain. Consult the Sastras and Mahatmas whenever you are in doubt. Build up your character. Keep up your ideal always before your mind. Stick to right conduct. Practise it. You will soon attain eternal bliss and immortality.

[<http://hinduonline.co/HinduReligion/AllAboutHinduism3.html>]

BRANCHES OF HINDUISM

The tradition is typically divided into four major sects: **Shaiva** (devotees of the god Shiva), **Vaishnava** (devotees of the god Vishnu), **Shakta** (devotees of the goddess), and **Smarta** (those who understand the ultimate form of the divine to be abstract and all encompassing, Brahman).

[<http://www.patheos.com/Library/Hinduism.html>]

CHAPTER 5: ISLAMISM

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Muhammad is the founder and chief prophet of Islam and the source for the **Quran**. "Muhammad" - whose name means "highly praised", was born in Mecca in 570 AD. His father died shortly before his birth, and he



lost his mother at the age of six. Muhammad was then raised **primarily** by his uncle, for whom he worked as a **shepherd**. At age 9 (some sources say 12), he joined his uncle on a **caravan** to Syria.

As a young man, Muhammad worked as a camel driver between Syria and Arabia. Soon he established a career managing caravans on behalf of merchants. Through his travel first with his uncle and later in his career, Muhammad **came into contact with** people of many nationalities and faiths,

including Jews, Christians and **pagans**.

At age 25, Muhammad was **employed** by Khadija, a wealthy Meccan widow 15 years his senior. The two were married, and by all accounts had a loving and happy marriage. Early **records** state that "[Allah] **comforted** him through her, for she made his **burden** light." Although **polygamy** was common practice at the time, Muhammad took no other wife until her death 24 years later. [polyandry]

Divine Revelation

In his late 30's, Muhammad took to regularly visiting a cave in Mount Hira, on the **outskirts** of Mecca, to seek **solitude** and **contemplation**. In 610, at the age of 40, Muhammad returned from one such visit telling his wife he had either gone mad or become a prophet, for he had been visited by an angel. The **initially startled** Khadija became his first **convert**.

Muhammad reported that while in a **trance**-like state, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and said "Proclaim!" But like Moses, Muhammad was a **reluctant** prophet. He replied, "I am not a proclaimer." The angel **persisted**, and the Prophet **repeatedly** resisted, until the angel finally **overwhelmed** Muhammad and commanded him:

*Proclaim in the name of your Lord who created! Created man from a **clot** of blood. Proclaim: Your Lord is the Most Generous, Who teaches by the pen; Teaches man what he knew not. (Qur'an 96:1-3)*

After receiving Khadija's support, and additional angelic visits, Muhammad became confident he had indeed been chosen as the messenger of Allah and began to proclaim as he had been commanded.

Muhammad's message to his countrymen was to **convert from** pagan polytheism, immorality and materialism, **repent** from evil and worship Allah, the only true God. He was always careful to **clarify** his role in God's work; he was only a prophet. He was not an angel, he did not know the mind of God; he did not work miracles. He simply preached what he had received.

In the first three years of his ministry, Muhammad gained only 40 followers. As his teachings **threatened** the Meccan way of life, both moral and economic, he and his followers experienced **heavy persecution**. It first took the form of **mockery**, but soon turned into open **violence**. Members of the small movement were stoned, covered in dirt as they prayed, beat with sticks, thrown into prison and refused service by merchants.

Hegira

Persecution continued to increase until Muhammad received some welcome news: he had gained followers in the city of Yathrib, 280 miles north of Mecca. The city was in need of a strong leader, and a **delegation** from Yathrib proposed that Muhammad take the job. In return, they pledged to worship Allah only, obey Muhammad and defend him and his followers to the death. Allah **revealed** to Muhammad his approval of this arrangement, and Muhammad made plans to escape to Yathrib.

The leaders in Mecca heard of the planned escape, and **attempted** to prevent it. But Muhammad and his close friend Abu Bakr managed to make a **narrow escape** north out of the city, **evading** a Meccan search party and arriving safely in Yathrib. This event is celebrated by Muslims as the Hegira. The year in which it occurred, 622, is the date at which the Muslim calendar begins. Yathrib was renamed Medinat al-Nabi, "the City of the Prophet," and is now known simply as Medina, "the City."

In Medina, Muhammad proved himself an able politician and **statesman** as well as a prophet. Exercising **superb statecraft**, he welded the five **heterogeneous** and conflicting tribes of the city, three of which were Jewish, into an orderly confederation.... His reputation spread and people began to flock from every part of Arabia to see the man who had **wrought** this 'miracle.' (Smith, 230).

Battle for Mecca

After **establishing** himself in Medina and **accomplishing** the job he had been invited to do, the people of Medina began several years of battle with Muhammad's former home city. In 624, the Muslims won their first battle against the Meccans. As the latter had a much larger army, the former took the victory as a sign that God was on their side. However, a **subsequent** battle was not victorious, and Muhammad himself was wounded. But in 627, the Meccans attacked Medina, and Medina came out on top. The prophet was not to lose again.

In 630, Muhammad and his forces marched to Mecca and defeated it. The prophet **rededicated** the Ka'ba temple to Allah, **witnessed** the conversion to Islam of nearly the entire Meccan population, then returned to Medina. Muhammad died in 632, having **conquered** nearly all of Arabia for Islam.

Spread of Islam

By 634, Islam had taken over the entire Arabian **peninsula**. Within 100 years of Muhammad's death, it had reached the Atlantic in one direction and borders of China in the other. This success was due in large part to the military and political abilities of Muhammad's successors, the **caliphs**.

[<http://www.religionfacts.com/people/prophet-muhammad>]

ISLAMIC HOLY DAYS

The Islamic New Year

The Islamic year begins on the first day of month Muharram, and is counted from the year of the Hegira the year in which Muhammad **emigrated** from Mecca to Medina (July 16, 622 A.D.). The Islamic New Year is celebrated **relatively** quietly, with prayers and readings and reflection upon the Hegira.

Prophet Muhammad's Birthday

The day is **commemorated** with **recollections** of Muhammad's life and **significance**. **Fundamentalist** Muslims, such as the Wahhabi sect, do not celebrate it.

The Celebration concluding Ramadan

Ramadan, the month of fasting, ends with the festival of **Eid al-Fitr**. Literally the "Festival of **Breaking the Fast**", people dress in their finest clothes, adorn their homes with lights and **decorations**, give **treats** to children, and enjoy visits with friends and family. A sense of **generosity** and **gratitude** colors these festivities. Although charity and good deeds are always important in Islam, they have special significance at the end of Ramadan. As the month draws to a close, Muslims are **obligated** to share their blessings by feeding the poor and making **contributions** to mosques.

The celebration concluding the Hajj

Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice, **commemorates** the prophet Abraham's **willingness** to obey Allah by **sacrificing** his son Ishmael. According to the Qu'ran, just before Abraham sacrificed his son, Allah replaced Ishmael with a **ram**, thus sparing his life.

The feast begins on the 10 day of Dhu'l-Hijja, the last month of the Islamic calendar. Lasting for three days, it occurs at the conclusion of the annual Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca. Muslims all over the world celebrate, not simply those undertaking the hajj, which for most Muslims is a once-a-lifetime **occurrence**.

The festival is celebrated by sacrificing a lamb or other animal and **distributing** the meat to relatives, friends, and the poor. The sacrifice symbolizes obedience to Allah and its distribution to others is an expression of generosity, one of the five pillars of Islam.

(Borgna Brunner)

[<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/islamicholidays.html>]

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

1) The Testimony of Faith:

The **testimony** of faith is saying with conviction, "There is no true god (deity) but God (Allah), and Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of God." The first part, "There is no true god but God," means that none has the right to be **worshipped** but God alone, and that God has neither partner nor son. This

testimony of faith is called the Shahada, a simple formula which should be said with **conviction** in order to **convert** to Islam. The testimony of faith is the most important pillar of Islam.

2) Prayer:

Muslims perform five prayers a day. Each prayer does not take more than a few minutes to **perform**. Prayer in Islam is a direct link between the worshipper and God. There are no **intermediaries** between God and the worshipper.

In prayer, a person feels inner happiness, peace, and comfort, and that God is pleased with him or her. The Prophet Muhammad said: {Bilal, call (the people) to prayer, let us be **comforted** by it.} Bilal was one of Muhammad's companions who was charged to call the people to prayers.

Prayers are performed at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night. A Muslim may pray almost anywhere, such as in fields, offices, factories, or universities.

3) Giving Zakat (Support of the Needy):

All things belong to God, and **wealth** is therefore held by human beings in trust. The **original** meaning of the word zakat is both 'purification' and 'growth.' Giving **zakat** means 'giving a **specified** percentage on certain properties to certain classes of needy people.' The percentage which is due on gold, silver, and cash funds that have reached the amount of about 85 grams of gold and held in possession for one lunar year is two and a half percent. Our possessions are purified by **setting aside** a small portion for those in need, and, like the **pruning** of plants, this cutting back balances and encourages new growth. A person may also give as much as he or she pleases as **voluntary** alms or charity.

4) Fasting the Month of Ramadan:

Every year in the month of Ramadan, all Muslims fast from dawn until sundown, **abstaining** from food, drink, and sexual relations.

Although the fast is **beneficial** to health, it is regarded principally as a method of spiritual self-**purification**. By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person gains true **sympathy** with those who go hungry, as well as growth in his or her spiritual life.

5) The Pilgrimage to Mecca:

The annual pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca is an **obligation** once in a lifetime for those who are physically and **financially** able to perform it. About two million people go to Mecca each year from every corner of the **globe**. Although Mecca is always filled with visitors, the annual Hajj is performed in the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. Male pilgrims wear special simple clothes which strip away distinctions of class and culture so that all stand equal before God.

[<http://www.islam-guide.com/ch3-16.htm>]

MAJOR BRANCHES OF ISLAM

The two main branches of Islam are **Sunni** and **Shi'a**. Together they constitute more than 99% of all Muslims. Roughly speaking, Sunnis constitute between 85 and 90 per cent of the world's Muslims, with another 10-15% being Shi'a.

The main distinction between Sunni and Shi'a **strands** of Islam **surrounds** the question of who should lead the Muslim community after Muhammad died in approximately 632 CE.

Sunnis believe that it was for the believers to form a committee to choose the next leader after Muhammad, and that it should be a decision made by the community. They chose Muhammad's lifelong friend Abu Bakr.

Shi'a believe that Muhammad's cousin, Ali, should have become the leader of the Muslim community, and that there is a line of leaders from his lineage, that should be leaders of the Muslim community (some sects within Shi'a Islam believe there will be 12 such Imams)⁶.

[<http://www.quora.com/What-are-the-major-branches-and-denominations-of-Islam>]

⁶ An Imam is an Islamic leadership position. It is most commonly in the context of a worship leader of a mosque and Muslim community by Sunni Muslims. For the Shi'a, he is a Muslim leader of the line of Ali held by Shiites to be the divinely appointed, sinless, infallible successors of Muhammad.

CHAPTER 6: JAINISM

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FOUNDER

Jainism arose in 7th century BC Eastern India, home to Hinduism and Buddhism. It was a time and place of religious renewal, in which several groups **reacted against** the formalized rituals and hierarchical organization of traditional Hinduism, desiring something new and fresh.



Jains hold that 24 historical figures have lived and taught Jain truths in this age. Of these figures, called **Tirthankaras**, only the last two can be historically verified with any confidence. The 23rd Tirthankara, **Parshvanatha**, is thought to have lived in the 7th century and founded a Jain community based on renunciation of the world.

Mahavira, the 24th and last Tirthankara to appear in this age, is regarded by some Jain historians as the founder of the religion, the first significant marker on Jainism's

historical timeline. He is traditionally thought to have lived from 599 to 527 BC, but some scholars believe he was a contemporary of the Buddha in the early 5th century BC.

Like the Buddha, Mahavira was born into the warrior class. At the age of 30, he renounced the world to seek spiritual truth in ascetic solitude. He found enlightenment after 13 years of renunciation, and soon made 11 converts. All were former Brahmins and became his disciples. Mahavira is said to have fasted to death (a practice called *salekhana*) at Pavapure (near modern Patna, India).

Jain tradition teaches that the monastic community founded by Mahavira boasted 14,000 monks and 36,000 nuns by the time of his death.

JAIN HOLY DAYS

Generally, festivals are celebrations and jubilations characterized by excitement, enthusiasm, enjoyments and entertainments; but the Jain festivals are characterized by renunciation, austerities, study of the scriptures, repetition of holy hymns, meditation, and expressing devotion for the Paramatma (*The ultimate goal for every individual is to become a perfect soul or Paramatma*). Even those people who are caught in the meshes of mundane life, according to their ability and conveniences, get free from the worldly entanglements to the extent possible and become immersed in worship and meditation. Renunciation and austerity constitute the very foundation of the Jain Dharma.

[<http://www.jainworld.com/jainbooks/guideline/46.htm>]

1. **Mahavira Jayanti** occurs around March/April, celebrating the **birth of Mahavira** (the founder of Jainism). Celebrations include community worship, processions, and other devotional and spiritual activities.
2. **Paryushana** occurs in August/September. It is considered by some to be the most important festival in Jainism. All Jains are required to fast and the spiritual preceptors read out and explain in detail the Kalpasutra (sacred scripture). The first seven days of the festival are days of attainment, and the eighth and finally day is one of fulfilment and achievement.
3. **Diwali** occurs in October/November. The whole night of Diwali should be spent in the recitation of holy hymns and meditation. Svetambara Jains believe that on the night of the day of Diwali in 537 B.C.E., Mahavira achieved Nirvan, or deliverance and attained to a state of absolute bliss. The day after Diwali marks the beginning of the New Year in their calendar.
4. **Kartak Purnima** occurs in October/November. Thousands of Jains go on pilgrimages on this day to sacred Jain sites.
5. **Mauna Agyaras** occurs around November/December. This is the day on which Jains fast and observe total silence. It is a day for meditation.

[<http://www.diversiton.com/religion/main/jainism/holydays-festivals-rituals.asp>]

JAIN'S PRECEPTS EXPLAINED

Right knowledge, right faith, and right conduct are the three most essentials for attaining liberation. In order to acquire these, one must observe the five great vows:

1. Non-violence
2. Truth
3. Non-stealing
4. Celibacy/Chastity
5. Non-attachment/Non-possession

1. Non-violence (Ahimsa):

Among these five vows, non-violence (Ahimsa) is the cardinal principle of Jainism and hence it is called the highest religious principle, or the cornerstone of Jainism.

It is repeatedly said by all Tirthankaras in Jain literature, "Do not injure, abuse, oppress, enslave, insult, torment, torture, or kill any creature or living being."

According to Jainism all living beings, irrespective of their size, shape, or different spiritual developments are equal. No living being has a right to harm, injure, or kill any other living being, including animals, insects, and plants. Every living being has a right to exist and it is necessary to live with every other living being in perfect harmony and peace.

Nonviolence is based on love and kindness for all living beings. It is not a negative virtue. It is based upon the positive quality of universal love and compassion. One who is actuated by this ideal cannot be indifferent to the suffering of others.

Violence of every type should be completely forbidden. Mental tortures by way of harsh words, actions, and any type of bodily injuries should also be avoided. Even thinking evil of someone is considered violence in Jainism.

Practically, it is impossible to survive without killing or injuring some of the smallest living beings. Some lives are killed even when we breathe, drink water, or eat food. Therefore, Jainism says that minimum killing of the lowest form of life should be our ideal for survival.

In the universe, there are different forms of life, such as, human beings, animals, insects, plants, bacteria, and even smaller lives which cannot be seen even through the most powerful microscopes. Jainism has classified all the living beings according to their senses as follows:

five senses: human, animals, birds, heavenly, hellish beings;

four senses: flies, bees, etc.;

three senses: ants, lice, etc.;

two senses: worms, leeches, etc.;

one sense: vegetables, water, air, earth, fire etc.

The five senses are, touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. It is more painful if a life of the higher forms (more than one sense) is killed. All non-vegetarian food is made by killing a living being with two or more senses. Therefore, Jainism preaches strict vegetarianism, and prohibits non-vegetarian foods. Jainism explains that violence is not defined by actual harm, for this may be unintentional. It is the intention to harm, the absence of compassion, and the ignorance that makes an action violent. Without violent thought there can be no violent actions.

Non-violence is to be observed in action, speech, and thought. One should not be violent, ask others to do so, or approve of such an activity.

2. Truth (Satya):

Anger, greed, fear, jokes, etc., are the breeding grounds of untruth. To speak the truth requires moral courage. Only those who have conquered greed, fear, anger, jealousy, ego, frivolity, etc., can speak the truth. Jainism insists that one should not only refrain from falsehood, but should always speak the truth which should be wholesome and pleasant.

One should remain silent if the truth causes pain, hurt, anger, or death of any living being. Truth is to be observed in speech, mind, and deed. One should not utter an untruth, ask others to do so, or approve of such activities.

3. Non-stealing (Achaurya or Asteya):

Stealing consists of taking another's property without his consent, or by unjust or immoral methods. Further, one should not take anything which does not belong to him. It does not entitle one to take away a thing which may be lying unattended or unclaimed. One should observe this vow very strictly, and should not touch even a worthless thing which does not belong to him.

When accepting alms, help, or aid one should not take more than what is minimum need. To take more than one's need is also considered theft in Jainism.

The vow of non-stealing insists that one should be totally honest in action, thought, and speech. One should not steal, ask others to do so, or approve of such activities.

4. Celibacy / Chastity (Brahmacharya):

Total abstinence from sensual pleasure is called celibacy. Sensual pleasure is an infatuating force which sets aside all virtues and reason at the time of indulgence. This vow of controlling sensuality is very difficult to observe in its subtle form. One may refrain from physical indulgence but may still think of the pleasures of sensuality, which is prohibited in Jainism.

Monks are required to observe this vow strictly and completely. They should not enjoy sensual pleasures, ask others to do the same, nor approve of it. There are several rules laid down for observing this vow for householders.

5. Non-attachment / Non-possession (Aparigraha):

Jainism believes that the more worldly wealth a person possesses, the more he is likely to commit sin to acquire the possession, and in a long run he may be more unhappy. The worldly wealth creates attachments which will continuously result in greed, jealousy, selfishness, ego, hatred, violence, etc. Lord Mahavir has said that wants and desires have no end, and only the sky is the limit for them.

Attachments to worldly objects results in the bondage to the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, one who desires of spiritual liberation should withdraw from all attachments to pleasing objects of all the five senses.

Monks observe this vow by giving up

- a) Attachments to all material things (wealth, property, grains, house, books, clothes, etc.)
- b) Relationships (father, mother, spouse, sons, daughters, friends, enemies, other monks, disciples, etc.)
- c) Feelings: pleasure and painful feelings towards touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing objects. They have the equanimity towards music and noise, good and bad smells, soft and hard objects for touch, beautiful and dirty sights, etc. They do not eat food for taste but for survival with the intention to destroy his karma with the help of this body.

Non-possession and non-attachment are to be observed in speech, mind, and deed. One should not possess, ask others to do so, or approve of such activities.

[<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralism/affiliates/jainism/jainedu/5greatvows.htm>]

BRANCHES OF JAINISM

An early schism occurred that lasts to the present day over certain aspects of monastic discipline. The **Schvetambara** sect believed that monks and nuns should wear **white robes**, whereas the **Digambaras** believed that monks should wear **no clothes**. The latter group (Digambaras) is also differentiated by its belief that a female cannot attain liberation. The **schism** was further divided when the Schvetambaras met in a **council** to fix the Jain **canon of scriptures** around 456 AD, the Digambaras were excluded from the council, and they later rejected the decisions of the council.

CHAPTER 7: SIKHISM

BRIEF HISTORY

The founder of the Sikh religion was Guru Nanak who was born in 1469 in the village of Talwandi, now called Nankana Sahib, near Lahore in present-day Pakistan. His parents were of Hindu background and he was from a family who were traders.



Even as a boy, Nanak was fascinated by religion, and his desire to explore the mysteries of life eventually led him to leave home and he travelled all over the world in the manner of Indian saints. It was during this period that Nanak met many religious people and preached his message of one God to all the people of Central Asia. He made five distinct major journeys, which are called Udashis spanning many thousands of miles covering most of Central Asia and the Middle-East. He preached a message of love and understanding and criticized

the blind rituals of the Hindus and Muslims. Guru Nanak passed on his enlightened leadership of this new religion to nine successive Gurus. The final living Guru, Guru Gobind Singh died in 1708.

During his lifetime Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa order (meaning 'The Pure'), soldier-saints. The Khalsa uphold the highest Sikh virtues of commitment, dedication and a social conscious. The Khalsa are men and women who have undergone the Sikh baptism ceremony and who strictly follow the Sikh Code of Conduct and Conventions and wear the prescribed physical articles of the faith.

Before his death in 1708 Guru Gobind Singh declared that the Sikhs no longer needed a living (Guru) and appointed his spiritual successor as **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** (Sikh Bible), his physical successor as the Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh felt that all the wisdom needed by Sikhs for spiritual guidance in their daily lives could be found in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is unique in the world of religious scriptures because not only is it accorded the status of being the spiritual head of the Sikh religion, but besides the poetry of the Gurus, it also contains the writings of saints of other faiths whose thoughts were consistent with those of the Sikh Gurus.

Sikhism does not have priests, which were abolished by Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru felt that they had become corrupt and full of ego. Sikhs only have custodians of the Guru Granth Sahib (granthi), and any Sikh is free to read the Guru Granth Sahib in the Gurdwara (a Sikh temple) or in their home. All people of all religions are welcome to the Gurdwara. A free community kitchen can be found at every Gurdwara which serves meals to all people of all faiths. Guru Nanak first started this institution which outline the basic Sikh principles of **service, humility and equality**.

The most significant historical religious center for the Sikhs is Harmandir Sahib (**The Golden Temple**) at Amritsar in the state of Punjab in northern India. It is the inspirational and historical center of Sikhism but is not a mandatory place of pilgrimage or worship. All places where Sri Guru Granth Sahib are installed are considered equally holy for Sikhs.

Who and What is a Sikh?

The word 'Sikh' in the Punjabi language means 'disciple', Sikhs are the disciples of God who follow the writings and teachings of the Ten Sikh Gurus. The wisdom of these teachings in Sri Guru Granth Sahib are practical and universal in their appeal to all mankind.

Philosophy and Beliefs

The soul goes through cycles of births and deaths before it reaches the human form. The goal of our life is to lead an exemplary existence so that one may merge with God.

[<http://www.sikhs.org/summary.htm>]

SIKH CODE OF CONDUCT

1. There is only one God; worship and pray only to Him.
2. Always remember the one God, work hard and honestly, and share with others.
3. At all times practice Truth, live a Truthful life and engage in service for the community.
4. Remember that women are as good as men and must be treated as equals.
5. Always remember the whole of the human race is one. Distinctions on caste, colour and class are wrong and against Sikh principles.
6. Do not believe in superstitions; nor follow empty rituals; nor believe in Idols, magic, omens, fasts, frontal marks or sacred threads, etc.
7. Dress yourself in a simple and modest way; gaudy clothes and revealing dress bring no credit and will take you away from Sikhi.
8. Sikh women should not observe the veil; neither should they observe any other distinct customs like fasting for their husbands, make payments in marriage (Dowry); etc. Women have the same rights as men before God.
9. Live a married family life; asceticism and renunciation are needless exercises.
10. Put your faith in the Holy Granth (Sikh Bible); no other Holy book or living person can claim Guruship (for Sikhs).
11. Control the Five Evils - Lust, Anger, Greed, Material attachment and Ego
12. Practise the Five Virtues - Truth, Contentment, Compassion, Humility and Love

Living in Consonance with Guru's Tenets

A Sikh's living, earning livelihood, thinking and conduct should accord with the Guru's tenets. The Guru's tenets are:

- (a) The Khalsa should maintain its distinctiveness among the professors of different religions of the world, but should not hurt the sentiments of any person professing another religion.
- (b) It is a Sikh's duty to get his children educated in Sikhism.
- (c) A Sikh should add the suffix "Singh" to the name of his son and "Kaur" to the name of his daughter. A Sikh should keep the hair of his sons and daughters intact.
- (d) A Sikh must not take hemp (cannabis), opium, liquor, tobacco, in short, any intoxicant. His only routine intake should be food.
- (e) Piercing of nose or ears for wearing ornaments is forbidden for Sikh men and women.
- (f) A Sikh shall regard a poor person's mouth as the Guru's cash offerings box.
- (g) A Sikh shall not steal, form dubious associations or engage in gambling.
- (h) He who regards another man's daughter as his own daughter, regards another man's wife as his mother, has coition with his own wife alone, he alone is a truly disciplined Sikh of the Guru. A Sikh woman shall likewise keep within the confines of conjugal rectitude.

Sikh Matrimonial Ceremony and Conventions

- (a) A Sikh man and woman should enter wedlock without giving thought to the prospective spouse's caste and descent.
- (b) A Sikh's daughter must be married to a Sikh.
- (c) Child marriage is taboo for Sikhs.
- (d) Consulting horoscopes for determining which day or date is auspicious or otherwise for fixing the day of the marriage is a sacrilege. Any day that the parties find suitable by mutual consultation should be fixed.
- (e) Persons professing faiths other than the Sikh faith cannot be joined in wedlock by the Anand Karaj ceremony.
- (f) No Sikh should accept a match for his/her son or daughter for monetary consideration.
- (g) Generally, no Sikh should marry a second wife if the first wife is alive.
- (h) A baptised ought to get his wife also baptised.

Articles Of Faith

Sikhs wear an external uniform to unify and bind them to the beliefs of the religion and to remind them of their commitment to the Sikh Gurus at all times. All Sikhs are enjoined to wear the uniform of their beliefs. These five articles of faith, along with a turban, distinguish a Sikh and are essential for preserving the life of the community. The five articles of faith start with the "ka" character in Punjabi, and are thereby referred to as the 5 K's in English.

1. Kes (unshorn hair)

Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, started the practice of keeping hair unshorn because keeping it in a natural state is regarded as living in harmony with the will of God. The turban is part of the uniform because it has immense spiritual and temporal significance. Wearing a turban declares sovereignty, dedication, self-respect, courage and piety. All practicing Sikhs wear the turban out of love and as a mark of commitment to the faith.

2. Kangha (comb)

Sikhs wear a small comb called the Kangha in their hair. The social context in which Sikhism arose, matted hair were worn by Hindu ascetics who had renounced the world. The Kangha in the Sikh's hair serves as a constant reminder that the Sikh must remain socially committed and never practice asceticism.

3. Kara (steel bracelet)

The bracelet is generally made out of steel. It is worn to remind a Sikh that he or she is a servant of the Guru and should not do anything that may bring shame or disgrace.

4. Kirpan (sword)

The Kirpan is a religious sword that encapsulates an initiated Sikh's solemn obligation of courage and self-defense. It denotes dignity and self-reliance, the capacity and readiness to always defend the weak and the oppressed. It helps sustain one's martial spirit and the determination to sacrifice oneself in order to defend truth, oppression and Sikh moral values. All Initiated Sikhs are mandated to wear a Kirpan on their body.

5. Kachhehra (soldier's shorts)

A special, slightly longer type of shorts, the Kachhehra is linked to a high moral character and must be worn at all times. It reminds the Sikh of the need for self-restraint over passions and desires.

[<http://www.sikhcoalition.org/resources/about-sikhs/at-a-glance>]

SIKH HOLY DAYS

Sikhs do not believe that any particular day of the week is a holy day. However, Sangraand (the first day of the Indian lunar calendar month) is an important day, when most Sikhs like to visit the Gurdwara (temple) for special prayers, usually in the early morning.

A Sikh festival or holy-day is called Gurpurb, meaning the Guru's Remembrance Day. This usually refers to the birth or the death of certain Gurus. The following Gurpurbs are regarded as rather important:

Guru Nanak's Birthday (usually in November)

Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday (end December or early January)

The Birthday of the Khalsa (mid-April)

Guru Arjan's Martyrdom (usually in June)

Guru Teg Bahadur's Martyrdom (usually in October)

This 'Gurpurb' comes, usually in the month of November and is celebrated with great excitement. An important feature of the celebration is a colourful procession of hundreds and thousands of Sikhs, men, men women and children, which is led by the Panj Piaray (five beloved ones) and the Holy Granth (Bible) on a float. As the procession winds its way through the streets a continuous chant of the sacred music or hymn singing is heard, which is occasionally broken by loud (mass) shouts of salutations of Sat Sir Akal (Hail Victory to the True Lord).

In most Gurdwaras, celebrations start a couple of days earlier with the commencement of Akhand-Path (non-stop reading of the Holy Granth for 48 hours). On the final day, the atmosphere in and around the Gurdwara is like a fair, as families and groups of Sikhs are seen entering and leaving the premises throughout the day.

In the evening, some Sikhs illuminate their homes and shops with candles, 'deevas' or other electric lights. Occasionally, a display of fireworks is also arranged, especially at the Gurdwaras. However, the most spectacular sight is the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar, which as on Diwali Night looks like a floating palace of a million multi-coloured lights.

Baisakhi (or Vaisakhi)

This festival day celebrating the birth of the 'Khalsa' usually falls on the 13th of April. Baisakhi was originally celebrated to mark the beginning of the New Year (according to the ancient Indian Lunar Calendar).

To the Sikhs, the importance of this day is both historical and religious. It was on this day on 13th April, 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh gave the Sikhs a new name (Singh) and a new identity of being a nation, by making them distinctively different in physical appearance and personal behavior. Hence forth, along with 'inner discipline' the Sikhs were asked to keep an 'out discipline' too by wearing the 5K's.

Baisakhi is also an important harvest festival in the Punjab. All over the Punjab farmers are happy because they have 'gathered in' the wheat, the most important crop of the season. Now they can perform Bhangra (folk dance) and sing. The folk lore goes like this:

Hey! Farmer! the Baisakhi has come and you no longer need to worry about and watch your wheat.

Diwali

Although, essentially a Hindu festival, the Sikhs have found themselves enough good reasons to celebrate this day as another important festival. Diwali is commonly known as the festival of lights or lamps. Thus many Sikh homes and business properties are decorated and lit with Deevas (oil lamps made of clay), candles and multicoloured electric bulbs. Children look forward to enjoying fireworks and 'family feasts'. The Darbar Sahib at Amritsar presents another spectacular sight at night, with hundreds and thousands of big and small oil lamps, candles and electric lights. Usually, Diwali falls in the month of October.

[<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/sikhism6.html>]

BRANCHES OF SIKHISM

1. Udasi

Sikhism isn't monolithic-there are multiple different branches which are not recognized by the majority of Sikhs as orthodox in their teachings and beliefs. These branches include one group called the **Udasi**, a group of holy men that was founded by Baba Sri Chand. They are celibate and usually either nude, or wearing a yellow robe. The followers carry a begging bowl to receive food or donations. They are active missionaries of Sikhism.

2. Sahajdharis

Another group is the **Sahajdharis**, ("slow adopters.") This actually encompasses several smaller sects, all of which tend to be shaven and contrary to Sikh orthodox. They have rejected the more militant teachings which were promoted by Gobind Singh, the tenth and final human Guru. (Sikhiwiki.Org, 2007)

3. Keshadharis

The final group is the **Keshadharis** ("hair-wearers") and it also encompasses a number of smaller sects. The Nihangs are the most militant of all Sikhs; they regularly carry an arsenal of weapons and are willing to take action to defend their religion. They regard themselves as continuing in the tradition of Guru Gobind Singh's Khalsa army and live a semi-nomadic lifestyle. The Nirmalas are much less militant than average and members tend to lead contemplative lives while secluded in monasteries.

[<http://sikhismss8wrp.blogspot.com/p/denominations.html>]

PART II: ETHICS AND CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER 8: ETHICS



1. Definition

Moral philosophy, belonging to practical philosophy and distinguished from moral theology, is subdivided into logic and ethics. The former or logic orders the intellectual activities and teaches the proper method in the acquirement of truth, while the latter or ethics directs the activities of the will. The object of the former is the true; that of the latter is the good.

Ethics may be defined as the science of the moral rectitude of human acts in accordance with the first principles of natural reason. Ethics is pre-eminently practical and directive; for it orders the activity of the will, which means ordering the whole man. Moreover, ethics not only directs a man how to act if he wishes to be morally good, but sets before him the absolute obligation he is under of doing good and avoiding evil.

Morals or morality is the built-in awareness of right or wrong in each individual. Everybody has it. Ethics is the scientific or philosophical treatment of morality. The subject matter proper of ethics is the deliberate free actions of man. We may have a good artist and at the same time a morally bad man or vice versa. Ethics has to do with the order which relates to man as man, and which makes of him a good man. Ethics is related to and distinct from the other natural sciences which deal with moral conduct of man, as jurisprudence, pedagogy, and political economy. However, all these sciences are subordinate to ethics. The English word ethics is derived from the Ancient Greek word *ēthikós* (ἠθικός), meaning "relating to one's character", which itself comes from the root word *ēthos* (ἦθος) meaning "character, moral nature". This word was transferred into Latin as *ethica* and then into French as *éthique*.

2. Sources and methods of Ethics

The sources of ethics are partly man's own experience and partly the principles and truths proposed by other philosophical disciplines (logic and metaphysics). All nations distinguish between what is good and what is bad, between good men and bad men, between virtue and vice; they agree that the good is to be strived for and the evil shunned though individual cases they may not be one in denominating the same thing good or evil. The proper method of ethics is at once speculative and empirical.

Supernatural Christian Revelation is not a proper source of ethics. The Christian philosopher, however, should be guided by the revealed truth. Since God is the fountain-head of all truth, a conflict between faith (revealed truth) and science is impossible.

The following methods of ethics are rejected as unsound.

1. Pure rationalism. This system bases itself on reason alone, putting aside the Christian revelation.
2. Pure Empiricism. This system bases itself on the foundation of experience which is limited to past or present phenomena, giving no clue to the future. Historicism, its close ally, is concerned with the past; it only rehearse the moral aberrations of mankind.

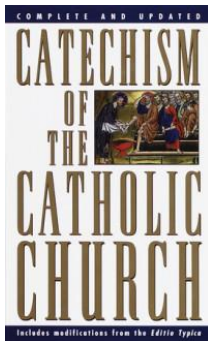
3. Positivism seeks to emancipate ethics from metaphysics and base it on facts alone. No science can be constructed on the mere foundation of facts, and independently of metaphysics. Man created in God's image with intellect and free will and immortal soul destined for eternal life must be accepted as the foundation of ethics.

4. Traditionalism. It teaches that complete certainty in religious and moral questions was not to be attained by the aid of reason alone, but only by the light of revelation as made known through tradition. But, this system evolves with the certainty that God exists and that he reveals himself. Kant's Irrationalism, accepting the inability of reason to furnish certainty in matters relating to God and religion, teaches that faith that consists in certain appreciative judgments, i.e., assumptions or convictions which are the result of each one's own inner experiences, and which have, therefore, for him a precise worth, and correspond to his own peculiar temperament, is alone can lead us into the realm of the morals and religious. It relegates religion and morals to pure subjectivism, losing all their objectivity and universality of value.

The Catechism of the Catholic on Man's Freedom, Morality of Human Acts, and Morality of the Passions⁷ (Numbers 1744-1745; 1757-1761; 1771-1775)

Man's freedom in Brief

- Freedom is the power to act or not to act, and so to perform deliberate acts of one's own. Freedom attains perfection in its acts when directed toward God, the sovereign Good.



- Freedom characterizes properly human acts. It makes the human being responsible for acts of which he is the voluntary agent. His deliberate acts properly belong to him.
- The imputability or responsibility for an action can be diminished or nullified by ignorance, duress, fear, and other psychological or social factors.
- The right to the exercise of freedom, especially in religious and moral matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of man. But the exercise of freedom does not entail the putative right to say or do anything.

The Morality of Human Acts in Brief

- The object, the intention, and the circumstances make up the three "sources" of the morality of human acts.
- The object chosen morally specifies the act of willing accordingly as reason recognizes and judges it good or evil.
- "An evil action cannot be justified by reference to a good intention". The end does not justify the means.
- A morally good act requires the goodness of its object, of its end, and of its circumstances together.

⁷ CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH - Latin text copyright (c) Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano 1993. This is a comprehensive handbook for all Catholics. It is divided into Parts, Sections, Chapters, and Articles which is further subdivided into divisions with running numbers.

- There are concrete acts that it is always wrong to choose, because their choice entails a disorder of the will, i.e., a moral evil. One may not do evil so that good may result from it.

The Morality of the Passions in Brief

- The term "passions" refers to the affections or the feelings. By his emotions man intuitively feels the good and suspects evil.
- The principal passions are love and hatred, desire and fear, joy, sadness, and anger.
- In the passions, as movements of the sensitive appetite, there is neither moral good nor evil. But insofar as they engage reason and will, there is moral good or evil in them.
- Emotions and feelings can be taken up in the virtues or perverted by the vices.
- The perfection of the moral good consists in man's being moved to the good not only by his will but also by his "heart."

Teaching on Ethics that is certain

The Catholic Church points to two main sources of moral teaching, one is that found in human nature itself (the natural law), the other is that revealed by God (divine law). God has given the Church the gift to teach the truth about right living as well as correct believing.

One of the unique abilities of a human being is to be a master of his or her own acts. This enables us to be creative and to choose from among many possible good actions. Unfortunately, this freedom also enables us to choose things that are evil, that is, contrary to what is good for us and to what God commands. God greatly desires us to choose only what is good for us. God does not, however, force us to do good. As long as we are alive here, we remain free to choose between good and evil actions. The effects of both kinds of choice are evident in human society.

Catholics believe in Original Sin which makes it difficult for us to do what is good. We tend to desire sinful things, a condition called disordered concupiscence.

Catholic ethical teaching is founded upon the pursuit of what is good. When the Church speaks out against something it does so to protect that which is good. So for instance, in areas of great pertinence today, the Church values every human person as made in the image of God, from conception until natural death. It is to protect the inviolable dignity and infinite value of each person that the Church stands against abortion, euthanasia, and any deliberate practices which lead to the destruction of embryos.

ETHICS OF TECHNOLOGY

What is meant by technological ethics?

Technology ethics is the application of ethical thinking to the practical concerns of technology. The reason technology ethics is growing in prominence is that new technologies give us more power to act, which means that we have to make choices we didn't have to make before.

Most Important Ethical Issues in Technology

Misuse of Personal Information, Misinformation and Deep Fakes, Lack of Oversight and Acceptance of Responsibility, Use of AI, Autonomous Technology, Respect for Employees and Customers, Moral Use of Data and Resources, Responsible Adoption of Disruptive Tech.

The Pros and Cons of Technology

Pros: 1) improve efficiency, 2) saves time, 3) better communication, 4) reduces cybercrime risks

Cons: 1) extreme dependability, 2) expensive, 3) shortage of jobs, 3) malfunctions

How technology is affecting the human values?

As scientific advances improve our lives, they also complicate how we live and react to the new technologies. More and more, human values come into conflict with scientific advancement as we deal with important issues such as nuclear power, environmental degradation and information technology.

What are the impact of social media to our daily lives?

Emotion. Multiple studies have shown that unlimited use of social media causes stress, bad moods and negative mental health. Many people wake up in the morning and immediately check their Instagram, Snapchat or Twitter.

Is technology good or bad for us?

While some forms of technology may have made positive changes in the world, there is evidence for the negative effects of technology and its overuse, as well. Social media and mobile devices may lead to psychological and physical issues, such as eyestrain and difficulty focusing on important tasks.

Nanotechnology

It is the branch of technology that deals with structures that are less than 100 nanometres long. Scientists often build these structures using individual molecules of substances. Nanotechnology will enable engineers to construct sophisticated nanorobots that can navigate the human body.

What are the social implications of nanotechnology to people?

Nanotechnology will have significant social impacts in the areas of military applications, intellectual property issues, as well as having an effect on labor and the balance between citizens and governments.

What are the benefits and the negative impacts of nanotechnology?

Hazards and risks of nanoparticles include increased production of ROS, DNA damage, genotoxic effects, damages to organs and tissues in humans, effects on growth and yield of crop plants and negative impacts on beneficial bacteria in the environment.

Nanotechnology is helping to considerably improve, even revolutionize, many technology and industry sectors: information technology, homeland security, medicine, transportation, energy, food safety, and environmental science. Despite many benefits of nanotechnology there are potential risks and ethical issues involved in its implementation. There is a concern that some nanoparticles could be toxic because elements at the nanoscale behave differently than they do in their bulk form and these particles could easily cross the blood-brain barrier.

MACHINE ETHICS

What do you mean by machine in ethics?

Machine ethics (or machine morality, computational morality, or computational ethics) is a part of the ethics of artificial intelligence concerned with adding or ensuring moral behaviors of man-made machines that use artificial intelligence, otherwise known as artificial intelligent agents.

Should AI be guided by ethics?

AI ethics and safety must be a priority in the design and implementation of AI systems. AI Ethics emerges to avoid individual and societal harms caused by the misuse, abuse, poor design, or unintended negative consequences of AI systems.

Why is automation ethical?

Used correctly, automation can improve working life for your team. Therefore, the creation of business process automation is completely ethical — its goal is to improve working life for thousands of people across the world. Automation becomes unethical when you use it incorrectly in an unethical way.

SOME SALIENT POINTS FROM THE VATICAN’S ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYMPOSIUM (Nov 2, 2021, by James F. Keenan)

1. AI is highly competitive against humans. The pace of progress in machine learning, databases and hardware are all but irreversible and will profoundly affect humanity’s future;
2. Machines are about ‘doing’, not about ‘being’. They cannot fully replace humans;
3. AI designers must be accountable and transparent in their work;
4. IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) is an excellent resource for developing ethical guidelines for holding designers and researchers responsible;
5. We need to have an equitable distribution of AI resources and outcomes to fight against the profit-driven world of technology. AI could not force us to act, yet it can manipulate and confuse us. AI could not suffer, could not be intersubjective, needed to be regulated, yet a few years in the future we could have AI taking the role of the resident director, therefore, acting as a human person;
6. We like regulation or line-drawing, yet we are easily inclined to crossing a boundary.

IEEE Code of Ethics (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)

The following is from the IEEE Policies, Section 7 - Professional Activities (Part A - IEEE Policies).

7.8 IEEE Code of Ethics

We, the members of the IEEE, in recognition of the importance of our technologies in affecting the quality of life throughout the world, and in accepting a personal obligation to our profession, its members and the communities we serve, do hereby commit ourselves to the highest ethical and professional conduct and agree:

I. To uphold the highest standards of integrity, responsible behavior, and ethical conduct in professional activities.

1. to hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, to strive to comply with ethical design and sustainable development practices, to protect the privacy of others, and to disclose promptly factors that might endanger the public or the environment;
2. to improve the understanding by individuals and society of the capabilities and societal implications of conventional and emerging technologies, including intelligent systems;
3. to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest whenever possible, and to disclose them to affected parties when they do exist;
4. to avoid unlawful conduct in professional activities, and to reject bribery in all its forms;
5. to seek, accept, and offer honest criticism of technical work, to acknowledge and correct errors, to be honest and realistic in stating claims or estimates based on available data, and to credit properly the contributions of others;
6. to maintain and improve our technical competence and to undertake technological tasks for others only if qualified by training or experience, or after full disclosure of pertinent limitations;

II. To treat all persons fairly and with respect, to not engage in harassment or discrimination, and to avoid injuring others.

7. to treat all persons fairly and with respect, and to not engage in discrimination based on characteristics such as race, religion, gender, disability, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;
8. to not engage in harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment or bullying behavior;
9. to avoid injuring others, their property, reputation, or employment by false or malicious actions, rumors or any other verbal or physical abuses;

III. To strive to ensure this code is upheld by colleagues and co-workers.

10. to support colleagues and co-workers in following this code of ethics, to strive to ensure the code is upheld, and to not retaliate against individuals reporting a violation.

Adopted by the IEEE Board of Directors and incorporating revisions through June 2020.

[<https://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/p7-8.html>]

CHAPTER 9: THE ROLE OF CONSCIENCE

Different Notions/ concepts of Conscience

In the Hebrew Scriptures, conscience is typically understood as the feeling in one's heart, or of the voice of God in one's soul.

In the "Book of the Dead", the Egyptians put forward an examination of conscience, or rather profession of innocence, before the Supreme Judge after death.

The ancient Greek Penandros said that "a good conscience" was true freedom.

In the literary traditions of the Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, conscience is the label given to attributes composing knowledge about good and evil, that a soul acquires from the completion of acts and consequent accretion of karma over many lifetimes.

The Chinese concept of Ren, indicates that conscience, along with social etiquette and correct relationships, assist humans to follow The Way (Tao) a mode of life reflecting the implicit human capacity for goodness and harmony.



*“The best
asset is a
clean
conscience.”*
Polish Proverb

In the Pali scriptures, Buddha links the positive aspect of conscience to a pure heart and a calm, well-directed mind. It is regarded as a spiritual power, and one of the "Guardians of the World". The Buddha also associated conscience with compassion for those who must endure cravings and suffering in the world until right conduct culminates in right mindfulness and right contemplation.

The Islamic concept of Taqwa is closely related to conscience. In the Qur'ān verses 2:197 & 22:37 Taqwa refers to "right conduct" or "piety", "guarding of oneself" or "guarding against evil".

Definition of Conscience

Conscience existing as a faculty of the human soul is to grasp what is truly good and what is truly evil. It does not exist apart from man's intellect or free will. Contrary to some popular misconceptions, conscience is not the "source" of morality, but rather is its "servant".

The term "conscience", Latin "conscientia" (con =with; scientia = knowledge) and Greek "suneidenai" (sun =to share; eidenai = knowledge) means to share knowledge with oneself. It implies the external sources of morality, such as, God or religions, or the influence of one's culture or of one's upbringing in conscience-formation. Conscience, therefore, involves introspection, awareness of one's behavior, and self-assessment, leading to feelings of remorse when a person commits an act that conflicts with their moral values.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) describes, "Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, tells him inwardly at the right movement: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. His dignity lies in observing this law, and by it he will be judged."

Conscience may be defined as the practical reason employed when applying moral convictions to a situation ("critical conscience"). In purportedly morally mature mystical people who have developed this capacity through daily contemplation or meditation combined with selfless service to others, critical conscience can be aided by a "spark" of intuitive insight or revelation (called *marifa* in Islamic Sufi philosophy and *synderesis* in medieval Christian scholastic moral philosophy).] Conscience is accompanied in each case by an internal awareness of 'inner light' and approbation or 'inner darkness' and condemnation as well as a resulting conviction of right or duty either followed or declined.

St. Thomas Aquinas regarded conscience as the application of moral knowledge to a particular case.

Albert Einstein viewed an enlightened religious person as one whose conscience, 'the inner voice', reflects that he "has, to the best of his ability, liberated himself from the fetters of his selfish desires and is preoccupied with thoughts, feelings and aspirations to which he clings because of their super-personal value."

Conscience's function

Conscience is ordered to the task of holding to the most fundamental of all moral precepts: do good and avoid evil. Informed by the teaching/ tenets of each religion or by the principles of right and wrong, which are perceptible to the human mind from the natural law, conscience renders a judgment about the goodness or evil of a particular act or choice in the specific circumstances of the moment. Conscience then evaluates the choice one has made to determine whether or not the good is chosen and the evil shunned.

Because all men and women suffer the effects of sin, the human intellect is fallible. As a result, it is possible for the judgment of conscience to be in error. Out of ignorance or even faulty reasoning, conscience may not be able to render a judgment that conforms to objective moral truth.

Sometimes this ignorance can be willful or vincible. In such a situation, a person would have had the means available to overcome a lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of a particular moral precept, yet would have rather freely chosen to remain in ignorance. A person acting on the basis of vincible ignorance is morally responsible for the choices that are made.

On the other hand, there are times when a person's lack of awareness or misunderstanding of a particular moral obligation is not voluntary and, therefore, beyond the ability of the person to overcome it. This is termed invincible ignorance. A person acting on the basis of such invincible ignorance is not morally responsible for his actions or choices. Yet, even though he may not be morally responsible for the evil he committed, he and others may be affected by it. Sadly, such situations often have a serious and negative impact upon one's spiritual life, disrupting union with the Absolute and others.

Leo Tolstoy held that the only power capable of resisting the evil associated with materialism and the drive for social power of religious institutions, was the capacity of humans to reach an individual spiritual truth through reason and conscience.

The Rights of Conscience and Conscientious Objections

Definition of Conscientious Objection

John Rawls, in his *A Theory of Justice*, defines a conscientious objector as an individual prepared to undertake, in public (and often by reference to contrary foundational social virtues (such as justice as

liberty or fairness) and the principles of despite widespread condemnation), an action of civil disobedience to a legal rule justifying it (also in public) morality and law derived from them. Rawls considered civil disobedience should be viewed as an appeal, warning or admonishment (showing general respect and fidelity to the rule of law by the non-violence and transparency of methods adopted) that a law breaches a community's fundamental virtue of justice. He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters"

The Catholic Church has always defended the conscience rights or the freedom of conscience. Man must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters.

The United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) refers to conscience in the following articles:

Article 1: 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

Article 2: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance

Article 3: Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching

These articles provide international legal obligations protecting conscientious objectors from service in the military.

Examples of Conscientious Objections

St. Thomas More was executed for refusing to submit to the religious authority of English King Henry VIII, citing that he could not do so in good conscience.

In Nazi Germany/Austria Franz Jagerstatter refused to participate in the Nazi military, and for this he was beheaded.

During the Vietnam War, US Army soldier Louis Negre petitioned for conscientious objector status, stating that because of his Catholic faith and conscience he could not participate in the Vietnam War, which he considered to be unjust. Negre lost his case in the US Supreme Court; however the decision was not unanimous, with Justice William O. Douglas dissenting.

Sister Agnes Walsh, a Daughter of Charity, is remembered for her heroism in France during World War II. In 1943, when France was occupied by German Nazis, the search for Jews began. In the face of grave peril, Sister Agnes convinced her mother superior to open their convent and offer refuge to a Jewish family. The sisters did the right, but very challenging, thing when many would have told them to take the easy way out.

Kimberly Rivera, a private in the US Army and mother of four children who, having served 3 months in Iraq War decided the conflict was immoral and sought refugee status in Canada in 2012 (see List of Iraq War resisters), but was deported and arrested in the US.

Rosa Parks similarly acted on conscience in 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama refusing a legal order to give up her seat to make room for a white passenger; her action (and the similar earlier act of 15-year-old Claudette Colvin) leads to the Montgomery bus boycott.

Rachel Corrie was a US citizen allegedly killed by a bulldozer operated by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) while involved in direct action (based on the non-violent principles of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi) to prevent demolition of the home of local Palestinian pharmacist Samir Nasrallah.

World Conscience

Definition

Conscience, the inner voice or the voice within, is a concept in national and international law. Being increasingly conceived of as applying to the world as a whole, it has motivated numerous notable acts for the public good and been the subject of many prominent examples of literature, music and film. It is properly and widely called "World Conscience".

For Edward O Wilson, world conscience is a concept that overlaps with the Gaia hypothesis⁸, advocating a balance of moral, legal, scientific and economic solutions to modern transnational problems such as global poverty and global warming, through strategies such as environmental ethics, climate ethics, natural conservation, ecology, cosmopolitanism, sustainability and sustainable development, biosequestration⁹ and legal protection of the biosphere and biodiversity.

The Green party politician Bob Brown expresses world conscience in these terms: "the universe, through us, is evolving towards experiencing, understanding and making choices about its future"

Notable Examples of World Conscience Objections

The American cardiologist Bernard Lown and the Russian cardiologist Yevgeniy Chazov were motivated in conscience through studying the catastrophic public health consequences of nuclear war in establishing International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 and continues to work to "heal an ailing planet".]

Oscar Arias Sanchez has criticized global arms industry spending as a failure of conscience by nation states: "When a country decides to invest in arms, rather than in education, housing, the environment, and health services for its people, it is depriving a whole generation of its right to prosperity and happiness. We have produced one firearm for every ten inhabitants of this planet, and yet we have not bothered to end hunger

⁸ The Gaia hypothesis, named after the ancient Greek goddess of Earth, assumes as a fact that Earth and its biological systems behave as a huge single entity. This entity has closely controlled self-regulatory negative feedback loops that keep the conditions on the planet within boundaries that are favorable to life.

⁹ Biosequestration or biological sequestration is the capture and storage of the atmospheric greenhouse gas carbon dioxide by continual or enhanced biological processes. ... Methods and practices exist to enhance soil carbon sequestration in both sectors of agriculture and forestry.

when such a feat is well within our reach. This is not a necessary or inevitable state of affairs. It is a deliberate choice."

Mordechai Vanunu an Israeli former nuclear technician, acted on conscience to reveal details of Israel's nuclear weapons program to the British press in 1986; was kidnapped by Israeli agents, transported to Israel, convicted of treason and spent 18 years in prison, including more than 11 years in solitary confinement.

The Ambassador of Conscience Award, Amnesty International's most prestigious human rights award, takes its inspiration from a poem written by Irish Nobel prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney called "The Republic of Conscience." Winners of the award have included: Malala Yousafzai (2013), singer and social justice activist Harry Belafonte (2013) musician Peter Gabriel (2008), Nelson Mandela (2006), the Irish rock band U2 (2005), Mary Robinson and Hilda Morales Trujillo (a Guatemalan women's rights activist) (2004) and the author and public intellectual Václav Havel (2003).

Greta Thunberg received Human Act Award, on Earth Day, 22 April 2020, by the Human Act Foundation, for "her fearless and determined efforts to mobilize millions of people around the world to fight climate change." The USD100,000 prize money was donated to UNICEF and doubled by the Foundation.

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PART III: THE WORLD ISSUES

CHAPTER 10: THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organization to promote international co-operation. A replacement for the ineffective League of Nations, the organization was established on 24 October 1945 after World War II in order to prevent another such conflict. At its founding, the UN had 51 member states; there are now 193. The headquarters of the United Nations is in Manhattan, New York City, and experiences extraterritoriality. Further main offices are situated in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna. The organization is financed by assessed and voluntary contributions from its member states. Its objectives include maintaining international peace and security, promoting human rights, fostering social and economic development, protecting the environment, and providing humanitarian aid in cases of famine, natural disaster, and armed conflict.

During the Second World War, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated talks on a successor agency to the League of Nations, and the United Nations Charter was drafted at a conference in April–June 1945; this charter took effect 24 October 1945, and the UN began operation. The UN's mission to preserve world peace was complicated in its early decades by the Cold War between the US and Soviet Union and their



respective allies. The organization participated in major actions in Korea and the Congo, as well as approving the creation of the state of Israel in 1947. The organization's membership grew significantly following widespread decolonization in the 1960s, and by the 1970s its budget for economic and social development programmes far outstripped its spending on peacekeeping. After the end of the Cold War, the UN took on major military and peacekeeping missions across the world with varying

degrees of success.

The UN has five principal organs, the sixth one, the United Nations Trusteeship Council (inactive since 1994):

1. The General Assembly. Decisions on such key issues as international peace and security, admitting new members and the UN budget are decided by two-thirds majority. Other matters are decided by simple majority. In recent years, a special effort has been made to reach decisions through consensus, rather than by taking a formal vote. The Assembly cannot force action by any State, but its recommendations are an important indication of world opinion and represent the moral authority of the community of nations ;
2. The Security Council. There are 15 Council members. Five of these — China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — are permanent members. The other 10 are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Decisions of the Council require nine yes votes. Except in votes on procedural questions, a decision cannot be taken if there is a no vote, or veto, by a permanent member. The Council can impose economic sanctions or order an arms embargo. Rarely has the Council authorized Member States to use "all necessary means," including collective military action, to see that its decisions are carried out. It also makes recommendations

to the General Assembly on the appointment of a new Secretary-General and on the admission of new Members to the UN;

3. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Economic and Social Council coordinates the economic and social work of the United Nations and the UN family of organizations. It plays a key role in fostering international cooperation for development. Through consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) it maintains a vital link between the United Nations and civil society;
4. The Secretariat. It carries out the substantive and administrative work of the United Nations as directed by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the other organs. At its head is the Secretary-General, who provides overall administrative guidance;
5. The International Court of Justice. Also known as the World Court, it is the main judicial organ of the UN. Its 15 judges are elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council, voting independently and concurrently. The Court decides disputes between countries, based on the voluntary participation of the States concerned. If a State agrees to participate in a proceeding, it is obligated to comply with the Court's decision. The Court also gives advisory opinions to the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

WHAT THE UN DOES FOR PEACE

Over the years, the UN has played a major role in helping defuse international crises and in resolving protracted conflicts. It has undertaken complex operations involving peacemaking, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. It has worked to prevent conflicts from breaking out. And after a conflict, it has increasingly undertaken action to address the root causes of war and lay the foundation for durable peace.

WHAT THE UN DOES FOR JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Human rights: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1948, sets out basic rights and freedoms to which all women and men are entitled — among them the right to life, liberty and nationality; to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to work and to be educated; the right to food and housing; and the right to take part in government.

The International Law Commission prepares drafts on topics of international law which can then be incorporated into conventions and opened for ratification by States. Some such laws are the Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Convention against illicit Traffic in Narcotic drugs, the Convention against the Taking of Hostages, the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, and the Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism.

Ending impunity: In voting to set up the Court, the international community made it clear that impunity — the assumption that crimes will go unpunished — is no longer possible for those who commit atrocities.

WHAT THE UN DOES FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Emergency assistance: In the face of disaster, the UN family of organizations supplies food, shelter, medicines and logistical support to the victims — most of them children, women and the elderly.

Palestine refugees: Relief work for Palestine refugees has been carried out since 1949 by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

WHAT THE UN DOES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The UN system works in a variety of ways to promote economic and social goals through its specialized agencies. They are:

FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN)

IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)

ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization)

IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development)

ILO (International Labour Organization)

IMF (International Monetary Fund)

IMO (International Maritime Organization)

ITU (International Telecommunication Union)

UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organization)

UPU (Universal Postal Union)

WHO (World Health Organization)

WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization)

World Bank Group

WMO (World Meteorological Organization)

WTO (World Tourism Organization)

The organization won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001, and a number of its officers and agencies have also been awarded the prize. Other evaluations of the UN's effectiveness have been mixed. Some commentators believe the organization to be an important force for peace and human development, while others have called the organization ineffective, corrupt, or biased.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations; http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php

http://www.un.org/Overview/uninbrief/uninbrief_toprint.html;

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CHAPTER 11: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also called Global Goals, and Agenda 2030, are an inter-governmentally agreed set of targets relating to international development. They replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that expired at the end of 2015. The SDGs were first formally discussed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (Rio+20).

On 19 July 2014, the UN General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) forwarded a proposal for the SDGs to the Assembly. The proposal contained 17 goals with 169 targets covering a broad range of sustainable development issues. These included ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, making cities more sustainable, combating climate change, and protecting oceans and forests. On 4 December 2014, the UN General Assembly accepted the Secretary-

General's Synthesis Report which stated that the agenda for the post-2015 SDG process would be based on the OWG proposals.



The Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (IGN) began in January 2015 and ended in August 2015. Following the negotiations, a final document was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit September 25–27, 2015 in New York, USA. The title of the agenda is Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Up to 2015, the development agenda was centered on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were officially established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000. The MDGs encapsulated eight globally agreed goals in the areas of poverty alleviation, education, gender equality and empowerment of women, child and maternal health, environmental sustainability, reducing HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases, and building a global partnership for development.

The MDGs were supposed to be achieved by 2015, so a further process was needed to agree and develop development goals from 2015-2030. Discussion on the post-2015 framework for international development began well in advance. Formal debate concerning the SDGs first occurred at the 2012 United Nations conference in Rio de Janeiro. The 192 UN member states agreed at the Rio+20 summit to start a process of designing sustainable development goals, which are “action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities”.

The Rio+20 outcome document, “The Future We Want”, called for the goals to be integrated into the UN’s post-2015 Development Agenda.

On 25 September 2015, the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled 'Transforming our world'.

This included the following goals:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Paris climate deal and the SDGs

In May 2015, a report concluded that only a very ambitious climate deal in Paris in 2015 will enable countries to reach the sustainable development goals and targets. It also states that tackling climate change will only be possible if the SDGs are met; and that development and climate are inextricably linked, particularly around poverty, gender equality and energy.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Development_Goals]

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC)

The United Nations Climate Change Conferences are yearly conferences held in the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). They serve as the formal meeting of the UNFCCC Parties (Conferences of the Parties) (COP) to assess progress in dealing with climate change, and beginning in the mid-1990s, to negotiate the Kyoto Protocol to establish legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. From 2005 the Conferences have also served as the "Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol" (CMP); also parties to the Convention that are not parties to the Protocol can participate in Protocol-related meetings as observers. The first UN Climate Change Conference was held in 1995 in Berlin.

Where and When of COP

1	1995: COP 1, The Berlin Mandate	25	2018: COP 24/CMP 14, November 5-16
2	1996: COP 2, Geneva, Switzerland	26	2019: COP 25/CMP 15, November 11-22
3	1997: COP 3, The Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change		
4	1998: COP 4, Buenos Aires, Argentina		
5	1999: COP 5, Bonn, Germany		
6	2000: COP 6, The Hague, Netherlands		
7	2001: COP 6, Bonn, Germany		
8	2001: COP 7, Marrakech, Morocco		
9	2002: COP 8, New Delhi, India		
10	2003: COP 9, Milan, Italy		
11	2004: COP 10, Buenos Aires, Argentina		
12	2005: COP 11/CMP 1, Montreal, Canada		
13	2006: COP 12/CMP 2, Nairobi, Kenya		
14	2007: COP 13/CMP 3, Bali, Indonesia		
15	2008: COP 14/CMP 4, Poznań, Poland		
16	2009: COP 15/CMP 5, Copenhagen, Denmark		
17	2010: COP 16/CMP 6, Cancún, Mexico		
18	2011: COP 17/CMP 7, Durban, South Africa		
19	2012: COP 18/CMP 8, Doha, Qatar		
20	2013: COP 19/CMP 9, Warsaw, Poland		
21	2014: COP 20/CMP 10, Lima, Peru		
22	2015: COP 21/CMP 11, Paris, France		
23	2016: COP 22/CMP 12, Marrakech, Morocco, November 7-18		
24	2017: COP 23/CMP 13, November 6-17		

2005: COP 11/CMP 1, Montreal, Canada

COP 11 (or COP 11/CMP 1) took place between November 28 and December 9, 2005, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. It was the first Meeting of the Parties (CMP 1) to the Kyoto Protocol since their initial meeting in Kyoto in 1997. It was one of the largest intergovernmental conferences on climate change ever. The event marked the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. Hosting more than 10,000 delegates, it was one of Canada's largest international events ever and the largest gathering in Montreal since Expo 67. The Montreal Action Plan was an agreement to "extend the life of the Kyoto Protocol beyond its 2012 expiration date and negotiate deeper cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions". Canada's environment minister, at the time, Stéphane Dion, said the agreement provides a "map for the future".

COP21/CMP11 (Paris, 28/30 Nov-11 Dec 2015)

A deal to attempt to limit the rise in global temperatures to less than 2C has been agreed at the climate change summit in Paris after two weeks of intense negotiations. The pact is the first to commit all countries to cut carbon emissions. The agreement is partly legally binding and partly voluntary.

Earlier, key blocs, including the G77 group of developing countries, and nations such as China and India said they supported the proposals.

President of the UN climate conference of parties (COP) and French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said: "I now invite the COP to adopt the decision entitled Paris Agreement outlined in the document. Looking out to the room I see that the reaction is positive, I see no objections. The Paris agreement is adopted."

COP21: In summary

As he struck the gavel to signal the adoption of the deal, delegates rose to their feet cheering and applauding.

US President Barack Obama has hailed the agreement as "ambitious" and "historic", but also warned against complacency. "Together, we've shown what's possible when the world stands as one," he said. And although admitting that the deal was not "perfect", he said it was "the best chance to save the one planet we have".

China's chief negotiator Xie Zhenhua said the deal was not perfect. But he added that "this does not prevent us from marching historical steps forward".

Nearly 200 countries took part in the negotiations to strike the first climate deal to commit all countries to cut emissions, which would come into being in 2020.

The chairman of the group representing some of the world's poorest countries called the deal historic, adding: "We are living in unprecedented times, which call for unprecedented measures. It is the best outcome we could have hoped for, not just for the Least Developed Countries, but for all citizens of the world."

Key points

The measures in the agreement included:

- To peak greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and achieve a balance between sources and sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century
- To keep global temperature increase "well below" 2C (3.6F) and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5C
- To review progress every five years
- \$100 billion a year in climate finance for developing countries by 2020, with a commitment to further finance in the future.

Analysis: The BBC's Matt McGrath in Paris

More than anything though the deal signifies a new way for the world to achieve progress - without it costing the Earth. A long term perspective on the way we do sustainability is at the heart of this deal. If it delivers that, it truly will be world changing.

'Almost nothing binding'

Nick Dearden, director of campaign group Global Justice Now, said: "It's outrageous that the deal that's on the table is being spun as a success when it undermines the rights of the world's most vulnerable communities and has almost nothing binding to ensure a safe and livable climate for future generations."

Some aspects of the agreement will be legally binding, such as submitting an emissions reduction target and the regular review of that goal. However, the targets set by nations will not be binding under the deal struck in Paris.

Observers say the attempt to impose emissions targets on countries was one of the main reasons why the Copenhagen talks in 2009 failed. At the time, nations including China, India and South Africa were unwilling to sign up to a condition that they felt could hamper economic growth and development. The latest negotiations managed to avoid such an impasse by developing a system of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). In these, which form the basis of the Paris agreement goal of keeping global temperature rise "well below" 2C (3.6F) above pre-industrial levels, nations outline their plans on cutting their post-2020 emissions.

An assessment published during the two-week talks suggested that the emission reductions currently outlined in the INDCs submitted by countries would only limit global temperature rise by 2.7C.

Nick Mabey, chief executive of climate diplomacy organisation E3G, said the agreement was an ambitious one that would require serious political commitment to deliver.

"Paris means governments will go further and faster to tackle climate change than ever before," he said.

"The transition to a low carbon economy is now unstoppable, ensuring the end of the fossil fuel age."

[<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-35084374>;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Climate_Change_conference]

TOKYO OLYMPICS 2021 TO AWARD ATHLETES ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY MEDALS MADE OF E-WASTE (06/30/2021, By BHAVISHYA MITTAL)

Everyday people around the world generates a lot of e-waste. Tokyo Olympics 2021 and Paralympics 2021, therefore, had tried to give back to society with greener innovations.



Over 6.21 million phones and 78,985 tons of small electronic gadgets were collected. They were then dismantled and around 5000 gold, silver, and bronze medals were made with the e-waste. Having got a disc of gold, silver, and bronze, the design of the medal was engraved on the disc, and was later polished to get the final product.

The organizers also introduced the navy-coloured checkered podium, the costumes for the volunteers, and the medal trays, all made from recycled plastic.

Thus, the Olympics in Japan contributed to an environmentally friendly and sustainable society.

[<https://www.essentiallysports.com/tokyo-olympics-2021-to-award-athletes-environmentally-friendly-medals-made-of-e-waste;> <https://english.kyodonews.net/tokyo/news/2021/06/608c6ae89b7f-eco-friendly-tokyo-olympic-medal-podium-unveiled-with-50-days-to-go.html>]

CHAPTER 12: PEACEBUILDING

(This chapter presents Catholic views on Peacebuilding. The class can be immensely enriched through sincere and an in-depth exchange of views and opinions on this valuable topic.)

“Whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it is also peaceable, kindly and considerate; it is full of mercy and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. 18 The peace sown by peacemakers brings a harvest of justice”. (James. 3:17-18. New Jerusalem Bible)

1. Introduction:

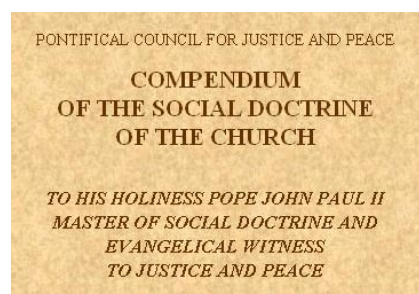
The term "Peacebuilding" first emerged in 1970s through the work of Johan Galtung who called for the creation of *peacebuilding* structures to promote sustainable peace by addressing the "root causes" of violent conflict and supporting indigenous capacities for peace management and conflict resolution. Since then, the term *peacebuilding* has covered a multidimensional exercise and tasks ranging from the disarming of warring factions to the rebuilding of political, economic, judicial and civil society institutions.

The process of peace building is complex and multidimensional. This is particularly so in the contexts of conflict, for which three interconnected phases of peace building have been identified: conflict prevention and de-escalation, crisis management and cessation of hostilities, and consolidation leading to a stable peaceful order. These phases are connected with a number of factors which are required for, or significantly contribute to, peace on both the individual, internal level (for example, trust and forgiveness) and on the broader, social level (for example, disarmament and justice).

2. Peace: Fruit of Justice and Love

According to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church¹⁰

494. *Peace is a value and a universal duty founded on a rational and moral order of society that has its roots in God himself, "the first source of being, the essential truth and the supreme good". Peace is*



not merely the absence of war, nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. Rather it is founded on a correct understanding of the human person and requires the establishment of an order based on justice and charity

Peace is the fruit of justice, understood in the broad sense as the respect for the equilibrium of every dimension of the human person. Peace is threatened when man is not given all that is due him as a human person, when his dignity is not respected and when civil life is not directed to the common good. The defense and promotion of

human rights is essential for the building up of a peaceful society and the integral development of individuals, peoples and nations.

Peace is also the fruit of love. "True and lasting peace is more a matter of love than of justice, because the function of justice is merely to do away with obstacles to peace: the injury done or the damage caused. Peace itself, however, is an act and results only from love".

¹⁰ This is the comprehensive manual or handbook on social issues for Catholics.

495. Peace is built up day after day in the pursuit of an order willed by God and can flourish only when all recognize that everyone is responsible for promoting it. To prevent conflicts and violence, it is absolutely necessary that peace begin to take root as a value rooted deep within the heart of every person. In this way it can spread to families and to the different associations within society until the whole of the political community is involved. In a climate permeated with harmony and respect for justice, an authentic culture of peace can grow and can even pervade the entire international community. Peace is, consequently, the fruit of "that harmony structured into human society by its Divine Founder (Supreme Being) and which must be actualized by men as they aspire for ever greater justice". Such an ideal of peace "cannot be obtained on earth unless the welfare of man is safeguarded and people freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of their minds and their talents".

496. *Violence is never a proper response.* With the conviction of her faith in Christ and with the awareness of her mission, the Church proclaims "that violence is evil, that violence is unacceptable as a solution to problems, that violence is unworthy of man. Violence is a lie, for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity. Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings".

The contemporary world too needs the witness of unarmed prophets, who are often the objects of ridicule. "Those who renounce violence and bloodshed and, in order to safeguard human rights, make use of those means of defense available to the weakest, bear witness to evangelical charity, provided they do so without harming the rights and obligations of other men and societies. They bear legitimate witness to the gravity of the physical and moral risk of recourse to violence, with all its destruction and death".

3. The Importance of Dialogue in Peacebuilding



In a speech delivered at the conclusion of the Interreligious Assembly hosted by the Vatican in October 1999 to several hundred invited guests from twenty religions, Pope John Paul II stated: "Any use of religion to support violence is an abuse of religion. ... Religion and peace go together: to wage war in the name of religion is a blatant contradiction. Religious leaders must show that they are pledged to peace precisely because of their religious belief. The task before us therefore is to promote a culture of dialogue. Individually and together, we must show how religious belief inspires peace, encourages solidarity, promotes justice and upholds liberty."

In these comments Pope John Paul II shows that religious belief can form an inspirational basis for peace and highlights the need for dialogue to build peace.

Dialogue can be understood in various ways. The Vatican document *Dialogue and Proclamation* describes three meanings. On the one hand, dialogue can refer at the purely human level to "reciprocal communication, leading to a common goal or ... to interpersonal communion." On the other hand, it can mean "an attitude of respect and friendship" ideally permeating all activities which are part of the evangelizing mission of the Church with "the spirit of dialogue". Finally, in contexts of religious plurality, it denotes "all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment, in obedience to truth and respect for freedom." This final definition points to a number of characteristics of dialogue, namely, that it is positive and constructive, includes "relations" in general rather than being restricted to conversation, has the aim of mutual understanding and enrichment, and involves truth and respect. Teasdale further characterizes

such dialogue as honest, open, active communication, presupposing mutual acceptance and generosity of heart, and encompassing the possibility of being changed ("converted") by the truth of the other.

The Church teaches that true peace is made possible only through forgiveness and reconciliation. It is not easy to forgive when faced with the consequences of war and conflict because violence, especially when it leads "to the very depths of inhumanity and suffering", leaves behind a heavy burden of pain. This pain can only be eased by a deep, faithful and courageous reflection on the part of all parties, a reflection capable of facing present difficulties with an attitude that has been purified by repentance. The weight of the past, which cannot be forgotten, can be accepted only when mutual forgiveness is offered and received; this is a long and difficult process, but one that is not impossible.

Mutual forgiveness must not eliminate the need for justice and still less does it block the path that leads to truth. On the contrary, justice and truth represent the concrete requisites for reconciliation. Initiatives aimed at establishing international judicial bodies are therefore appropriate. In virtue of the principle of universal jurisdiction and guided by suitable procedural norms that respect the rights of the accused and of the victims, such bodies are able to ascertain the truth about crimes perpetrated (*commit a crime*) during armed conflicts. However, in order to re-establish relationships of mutual acceptance between divided peoples in the name of reconciliation, it is necessary to go beyond the determination (*perseverance, singlemindedness*) of criminal behavior, both of commission and omission, and the procedures for seeking reparation. It is necessary, moreover, to promote respect for *the right to peace*. This right "encourages the building of a society in which structures of power give way to structures of cooperation, with a view to the common good".

It is through prayer that the Church engages in the battle for peace. Prayer opens the heart not only to a deep relationship with God but also to an encounter with others marked by respect, understanding, esteem and love. Prayer instills (*inculcate*) courage and lends support to all "true friends of peace", those who love peace and strive to promote it in the various circumstances in which they live.

JUST WAR THEORY

St. Augustine (4th century) said a war can be morally justifiable in some cases because it might prevent an even worse situation.

Pope Francis increasingly questioned the idea of a just war.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that there are strict conditions for legitimate defence by the military:

1. The damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain;
2. All other means for ending the conflict have failed;
3. There is a serious prospect of success;
4. And the use of arms cannot produce a graver evil than the one they are allegedly eliminating.

St. Thomas Aquinas's conditions for a Just War (1225 1274):

1. The war must have a just cause - eg against invasion, or for self-defence - and not to acquire wealth or power;
2. The war must be declared and controlled by a proper authority, eg the state or ruler;
3. The war must be fought to promote good or avoid evil, with the aim of restoring peace and justice after the war is over;

4. The war must be a last resort when all peaceful solutions have been tried and failed, e.g., negotiation;
5. The war should be fought with 'proportionality', with just enough force to achieve victory and only against legitimate targets, i.e., civilians should be protected;
6. The good which is achieved by the war must be greater than the evil which led to the war.
[<https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2022/07/pope-francis-confirms-right-to-defense-but-insists-on-rethink-of-just-war-doctrine>]

CH13: GLOBAL CONFLICTS THAT CAN LEAD TO MAJOR MILITARY STANDOFF

Note from the compiler. As AU is an international university, she firmly believes that her students should be aware of global issues. **“Live locally, yet think globally”**. Peace and its fruits are the perennial desire of all human beings. And AU students should cherish the same desire. (The article has been slightly edited and modified for the students. The compiler believes it was written with a British backdrop).



Globally, so many conflicts are bubbling under, forcing countries to size each other up and form alliances to feel safety in numbers. Here we look at 22 powder keg countries and regions already embroiled in war.

1. Syria

The savage civil war here is now in its seventh year, with over 40,000 fighters and thousands of foreign troops embroiled in conflict. The war has caused almost half a million casualties and seen appalling atrocities as jihadists and regime fighters torture and murder at will. President Bashar al-Assad– accused of horrific poison gas attacks on his own people– is backed by Russia and Iran. He is opposed by the US, Britain and many Arab countries including Saudi Arabia, which part-sponsors IS and al-Qaeda.

2. Mexico

Mexico's drug war is fuelled by a lust for territory, cash, power and violence by 54 ruthless cartels which have slaughtered as many as 85,000 people since 2006. Victims – including thousands of police officers, politicians and members of the judicial system – are routinely shot, tortured with drills, dismembered with chainsaws, beheaded and burned alive to spread fear. President Trump controversially wants to build a wall on the border, believing this will halt Mexican gangs and crime coming into the US.

3. Mali

Around 4,000 people have been killed in Mali since 2012. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita took power in September 2013 but Islamist groups like al-Qaeda took root in the country's north. Britain helped French troops quell the uprising as we wanted to stop Mali being overrun by terrorists who would gain a foothold and plot attacks on Europe.

4. Afghanistan

The Taliban are regaining power in Afghanistan despite there still being nearly 9,000 US troops in the country. Now IS is trying to get a foothold in Afghanistan too – so it is vital that local security forces gain control. President Trump ordered the dropping of the awesome “Mother of all Bombs” and the CIA may even help the Taliban fight IS.

5. Yemen

Both al-Qaeda and IS have fighters in Yemen, where over 7,600 people have been killed in the past two years. Most died in air strikes by a Saudi-led, multi-national coalition that backs President Abdrabbuh Hadi.

The turmoil has left 70 per cent of the population in need of aid. Attacks on the West have originated in Yemen before, so British authorities are keen to stop the fighting there.

6. East and South China sea

Tensions between China and Japan over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, an uninhabited chain both claim as their own, have been cranked up as incursions by ships increase.

Arguments over territory and jurisdiction in the South China Sea continue to strain relations between Beijing and other governments in the south-east Asia region, risking a military escalation.

7. Pakistan

Since soon after the 9/11 outrage in 2001, war has been raging between the Taliban and Pakistani troops. But the country's military and its spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence, have also covertly supported the Taliban in Afghanistan – encouraging chaos there. IS too has now spread to Pakistan, which is believed to have around 130 nuclear weapons in storage. Many Britons have ties with Pakistan and we desperately need intelligence coming out of the country on terrorism to tackle it head-on.

8. North Korea

Despot Kim Jong-un has executed around 100 state officials since he took over as leader five years ago. His secretive country has nuclear weapons and continues to threaten South Korea and America. Technically, it has never stopped being at war with the South since 1953.

9. Iraq

The 2003 US-led Iraq war killed up to a million Iraqis, gave birth to Islamic State and left 179 UK troops dead. Now Britain and America are backing Iraqi forces as they battle IS fighters holding out in Mosul. Barely a week goes by without news of suicide bombings and other terror atrocities across this war-torn nation. Britain has a duty to help wipe out IS in Iraq since we took part in the disastrously mishandled aftermath of the 2003 invasion, which gave rise to the terror group.

10. Kurds

With 30 million Kurds in the Middle East there are populations in Iraq, Syria and Iran – and make up a fifth of Turkey's population. Turkey is fighting the Kurdish Workers Party the PKK, is hostile to the Kurdish Democratic Unity Party's armed wing, the YPG, but has good relations with the Kurdish Peshmerga of Northern Iraq. The Turkish and Syrian Kurds are fighting IS and others in Syria but are against the Turkish government. Many British Kurds have relatives in the region.

11. Lebanon

Nearly a quarter of Lebanon's population is made up of Syrian refugees and sectarian division has risen as IS battles with the Shia militant group Hezbollah. Hezbollah is deeply involved in Syria, where it backs regime forces. Some 1,200 Hezbollah fighters have been killed in Syria. And IS has been bombing Beirut in

revenge for Hezbollah's stance. Lebanon is vital in a strategic sense. It is on Israel's doorstep– so jihadist groups must not get a foothold there.

12. Libya

At least 35,000 people have been killed since the Arab Spring uprising in which despot leader Muammar Gaddafi died in 2011. British forces backed the rebellion with airstrikes and artillery but the civil war caused a power vacuum. Al-Qaeda and IS gained a foothold and the battle is still underway to wipe them out. Military sources say British special forces have been there for some time as Libya is the gateway to Europe.

13. Democratic Republic of Congo

More than 70 groups are fighting despite the presence of 20,000 UN troops. The war is rooted in the refugee crisis which followed the killing of 800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. Two million Hutus, who had committed genocide, fled to Congo and formed armed groups. Opposing Tutsis and other rebel groups arose. The Congolese government backed off and five million may have been killed. Britain takes a huge interest in any conflict where so much war-crime is committed.

14. Somalia

Al-Shabaab has 9,000 fighters in Somalia but since closing ground in the capital Mogadishu after 2011, the terror group is weakened. British fugitive Samantha Lewthwaite, 33 – the so-called White Widow – fled there and is believed to have directed terror raids, suicide attacks and car bombings in Somalia and Kenya. The mother of four was married to Germaine Lindsay, one of the 7/7 bombers who killed 52 people in London in 2005. IS has a foothold in Somalia and is trying to recruit Al-Shabaab fighters.

15. India

With continued violence in Kashmir and a heightened terror threat by Pakistan-based militant groups, the threat of a clash between India and its neighbour Pakistan is high. Both have maintained a fragile ceasefire since 2003 but still exchange fire across the contested border. Any conflict between these two countries is likely to be extremely bloody and could reduce security in the UK.

16. Palestine

The tension between Israel and Palestine pervades Asia and the wider Muslim world. Israel has forced tens of thousands of Arabs from homes in land grabs. Refugee camps are crammed and the debate over a “two-state solution” to solve the conflict continues. Tensions are high between Israelis and Palestinians in the territories of Gaza, controlled by fundamentalist group Hamas, and The West Bank. Former British PM Tony Blair tried – and failed – in a bid to bring peace to the region as a Middle East envoy.

17. South Sudan

Over 50,000 people have been killed and more than 1.6 million displaced since war broke out in 2013. A 2015 peace deal has since collapsed and a transitional government's future is shaky as violence between

groups and regime troops continue. The British government is taking part in a massive programme to offer aid to South Sudan. British troops are taking part in training missions and mentoring security staff in an attempt to make the region safer.

18. Egypt

Egypt's war against Islamist militants in the Sinai has intensified against a backdrop of insurgency and rising terror atrocities. Attacks in the country are the highest since the 1990s amid fears it will become a permanent base for IS. In one incident 45 people died in bombings at two Coptic Christian churches. Christians claim they are not being protected by the government of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Tourist numbers to the country, a long-time favourite with Brits, have shrunk.

19. Central African Republic

Since 2013, 6,000 people have been killed in the Central African Republic, with 25 per cent of the 4.6 million population displaced. After decades of instability an insurgency by the Seleka – primarily Muslim groups – has sparked mass violence. They seized the capital Bangui and staged a coup in March 2013. Christian fighters carried out reprisals against Seleka fighters. A stable Africa is vital to protect British investments across the continent and ensure the safety of consular staff.

20. Ukraine

Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and sent military intelligence into East Ukraine to take control of militia and threaten Kiev's troops. Shellings and fighting are frequent and ceasefires have been violated. A recent spike in violence and civilian casualties raised concerns of further escalation. Russian muscle-flexing and violence against Ukraine must be controlled by NATO to keep Putin in check. He respects robust action and the UK has deployed troops and warplanes all along the Baltic states.

21. Nigeria

Nearly 50,000 people have died in the war between regime forces and Islamic State-affiliates Boko Haram. Since armed conflict broke out in 2011, 1.9million civilians have fled their homes. The terror group – whose name means “western teaching is a sin” – triggered global outrage by kidnapping 276 schoolgirls in Chibok on April 14, 2014. Some 195 are still held hostage. British SAS have helped train Nigeria's troops in how to smash the terror group. Britain has a large ex-pat Nigerian community.

(By Chris Hughes, Defence and Security Editor, updated 08:07, 9 AUG 2017, originally published on April 15, 2017. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/22-conflicts-around-world-could-10233403>)

PART IV: ASIAN ISSUES

CHAPTER 14 ASEAN COMMUNITY: ONE VISION; ONE IDENTITY; ONE COMMUNITY

History: ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok by the five original member countries which are Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

ASEAN Membership: Its 10 States, are 1) Brunei Darussalam [8 December 1984], 2) Cambodia [30 April 1999], 3) Indonesia, 4) Laos [23 July 1997], 5) Malaysia, 6) Myanmar [23 July 1997], 7) Philippines, 8) Singapore, 9) Thailand, 10) Vietnam [28 July 1995].

Objectives: The ASEAN Declaration states that the aims and purposes of the Association are:

- (1) To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavors in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian nations; and
- (2) To promote regional peace and stability through

abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries in the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter. In 1995, the ASEAN Heads of State and Government re-affirmed that "Cooperative peace and shared prosperity shall be the fundamental goals of ASEAN."



Fundamental Principles: The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, signed at the First ASEAN Summit on 24 February 1976, declared that in their relations with one another, the High Contracting Parties should be guided by the following fundamental principles:

1. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations;
2. The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion, or coercion;
3. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
4. Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner;
5. Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and
6. Effective cooperation among themselves.

Political Cooperation: The TAC stated that ASEAN political and security dialogue and cooperation should aim to promote regional peace and stability by enhancing regional resilience. Regional resilience shall be achieved by cooperating in all fields based on the principles of self-confidence, self-reliance, mutual

respect, cooperation, and solidarity, which shall constitute the foundation for a strong and viable community of nations in Southeast Asia.

Some of the major political accords of ASEAN are as follows:

ASEAN Declaration, Bangkok, 8 August 1967;

Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration, Kuala Lumpur, 27 November 1971;

Declaration of ASEAN Concord, Bali, 24 February 1976;

Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, Bali, 24 February 1976;

ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea, Manila, 22 July 1992;

Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Bangkok, 15 December 1997;

ASEAN Vision 2020, Kuala Lumpur, 15 December 1997;

Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, 5 November 2001;

Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, Bali, 7 October 2003;

ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT), 11 January 2007; and

Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015, 11 January 2007.

Although ASEAN States cooperate mainly on economic and social issues, the organization has a security function, with a long-discussed program for confidence-building measures and for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia, with the objective of implementing ASEAN's 1971 Declaration on a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (**ZOPFAN**), and a Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (**SEANWFZ**), which would be a component of ZOPFAN.

Developments:

2015: On 15-17 March, the 9th ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) was held in Langkawi, Malaysia. On 16 March, the 10 defense ministers signed a joint declaration with a focus on regional security cooperation, especially against terrorist threats posed by groups like the Islamic State (IS).

2014: On 2 April, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel joined defense ministers from the 10 Asia-Pacific countries for an unofficial meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen and "rebalance" the relationship between the United States and ASEAN.

On 27 May, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime, through the Working Group on Cybercrime, finalized a "roadmap" for ASEAN members to combat cybercrime through regional information sharing, capacity building, and enforcement regulation. This was followed by the 9th ASEAN-Japan Counter-Terrorism Dialogue on 29-30 May in Singapore. The meeting covered counter-terrorism in a variety of fields, including CBRN explosives and cyber-terrorism.

On 5-10 August, the 47th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (**AMM**) was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. In the meeting, the delegates addressed the importance of nuclear nonproliferation, the commitment to Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and the cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (**IAEA**).

On 10 November, the 25th ASEAN Summit took place under Myanmar's chairmanship. The chairman addressed the concern on nuclear nonproliferation and other regional and international security issues. On 13 November, the 9th East Asia Summit (EAS) was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The Chairmanship expressed their commitment to preserving Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and addressed other issues relevant to disarmament, nonproliferation, maritime security, and counterterrorism.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Membership: 27 States — Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, United States, and Vietnam.

Verification and Compliance: The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is an important multilateral forum for political and security consultations and cooperation. The ARF has begun to explore activities where there is overlap between confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy. ASEAN Member States are urged to settle disputes through friendly negotiations applying the procedures of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) of 1976. However, the Member States are not obliged to use the Treaty stipulations for the peaceful settlement of disputes. In case a State resorts to the use of force, no system of collective security is foreseen.

[<http://www.nti.org/treaties-and-regimes/association-southeast-asian-nations-asean/>]

TWELVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ASEAN

By 2015, ten countries in Southeast Asia plan to launch a single market for goods, services, capital and labor, which has the potential to be one of the largest economies and markets in the world. Here are 12 things to know about the ASEAN Economic Community.

1. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is intensifying efforts to realize by 2015 the ASEAN Economic Community and implement the initiatives to achieve a single market and production base, allowing the free flow of goods, services, investments, and skilled labor, and the freer movement of capital across the region.
2. If ASEAN were one economy, it would be seventh largest in the world with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$2.4 trillion in 2013. It could be fourth largest by 2050 if growth trends continue.
3. With over 600 million people, ASEAN's potential market is larger than the European Union or North America. Next to the People's Republic of China and India, ASEAN has the world's third largest labor force that remains relatively young.
4. ASEAN is one of the most open economic regions in the world, with total merchandise exports of over \$1.2 trillion - nearly 54% of total ASEAN GDP and 7% of global exports.
5. Created in 1967 mainly for political and security reasons, ASEAN is today a successful model for regionalism, widely recognized globally.

6. On its 40th anniversary in 2007, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, which advanced the completion target to 2015 from 2020.
7. The ASEAN Economic Community is defined by **four pillars**: (i) creating a single market and production base, (ii) increasing competitiveness, (iii) promoting equitable economic development, and (iv) further integrating ASEAN with the global economy.
8. In November 2007, ASEAN leaders also approved the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Strategic Framework and Work Plan (2009-15), which is meant to bridge the perceived "development divide" between the older and economically more advanced members - Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, known as the ASEAN-6, and the four newer ones - Cambodia (1999), Lao People's Democratic Republic (1997), Myanmar (1997), and Viet Nam (1995).
9. As of October 2013, 279 measures (79.7%) of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint have been implemented.
10. Under the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement, the Common Effective Preferential Tariff scheme has brought down tariff rates on goods coming from ASEAN members to virtually zero for ASEAN-6. The four new ASEAN members have until 2015 to reduce their tariff.
11. While progress has been made in lowering tariffs and some behind-the-border economic hurdles, non-tariff barriers remain as major impediments to achieving a single market by 2015. The liberalization of trade in services has also been slow despite the industry's growing importance in the region.
12. An ADB Institute study finds that the ASEAN Economic Community should be considered a stepping stone to deeper integration. With the appropriate policy mix, ASEAN could triple per capita income by 2030, raising its citizens' quality of life to levels enjoyed today by members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**).

[<http://www.adb.org/features/asean-economic-community-12-things-know>]

THE ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY (APSC)

To build on what has been constructed over the years in the field of political and security cooperation, the ASEAN Leaders have agreed to establish the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC). The APSC shall aim to ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and with the world in a just, democratic and harmonious environment.

The members of the Community pledge to rely exclusively on peaceful processes in the settlement of intra-regional differences and regard their security as fundamentally linked to one another and bound by geographic location, common vision and objectives. It has the following components: political development; shaping and sharing of norms; conflict prevention; conflict resolution; post-conflict peace building; and implementing mechanisms.

The APSC Blueprint envisages ASEAN to be a rules-based Community of shared values and norms; a cohesive, peaceful, stable and resilient region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security; as well as a dynamic and outward-looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world. The

APSC Blueprint is guided by the ASEAN Charter and the principles and purposes contained therein. It provides a roadmap and timetable to establish the APSC by 2015. It also leaves room for flexibility to continue programmes/activities beyond 2015 in order to retain its significance and have an enduring quality.

THE ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC)

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community aims to contribute to realising an ASEAN Community that is people-oriented and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the peoples and Member States of ASEAN. It seeks to forge a common identity and build a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and where the well-being, livelihood, and welfare of the peoples are enhanced.

ASCC is focused on nurturing the human, cultural and natural resources for sustained development in a harmonious and people-oriented ASEAN.

The ASCC Blueprint represents the human dimension of ASEAN cooperation and upholds ASEAN commitment to address the region's aspiration to lift the quality of life of its peoples. The goals of the ASCC are envisaged to be achieved by implementing concrete and productive actions that are people-centred and socially responsible. This set of cooperative activities has been developed based on the assumption that the three pillars of the ASEAN Community are interdependent and interrelated and that linkages are imperative to ensure complementarity and unity of purpose.

Both the APSC Blueprint and the ASCC Blueprint were adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 14th ASEAN Summit on 1 March 2009 in Cha-am/Hua Hin, Thailand.

[<http://www.asean.org/communities/asean-socio-cultural-community>]

“ASEAN Community: Challenges, Problems and Prospects”

On Friday, February 22, 2013 Thammasat University's Pridi Banomyong International College hosted an international conference titled “ASEAN Community: Challenges, Problems and Prospects.”

The conclusion can be summarized into five key points:

- 1) There is a need for improved public awareness and transparency in ASEAN activities and policies;
- 2) The year 2015 will become a major milestone for launching the ASEAN Community, but should not be misunderstood as the year of total integration because there is still work to be done beyond 2015;
- 3) Internal competition and regional insecurity are among the biggest challenges for ASEAN;
- 4) ASEAN Member States are not politically, socially, or economically on the same level; and
- 5) The formation of an ASEAN identity should be done carefully and intentionally.

[<http://www.led.go.th/asean/pdf/6.6-2.pdf>]

CHAPTER 15: GAZA STRIP

9 Facts About the Israel-Palestine Conflict On Which We Can All Agree

(by Qasim Rashid, posted: 08/01/2014 7:21 pm EDT Updated: 08/01/2014 7:59 pm EDT)

(This article is selected with a view to getting to know better the ongoing conflict in the Holy Land. The readers are encouraged not to be biased against any group.)

Simply open your mouth on Israel-Palestine, and faster than you can blink you'll be labeled either a heartless Zionist or a Hamas terrorist¹¹. Both extreme labels are equally fruitless.

If we cannot find a middle ground in dialogue, how can we expect Israel and Palestine to find a middle ground during war? After all, peace is what we're after, right? Right.

In full disclosure my analysis is as a human rights lawyer and a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community--a 125-year-old worldwide Muslim organization that arrived in Palestine in 1920. Today, Ahmadi Muslims enjoy generous religious freedom in Israel while facing increasing persecution in Palestine. I present this to emphasize the importance of justice and transparency in dialogue -- even in the face of injustice. Unfortunately, transparency and dialogue are two characteristics perennially missing in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

If the end goal is peace, then we must acknowledge some realities of the Israel-Palestine conflict without polarizing one another. Ignoring facts does not resolve differences; it simply ensures differences fester unchecked. If we truly want peace -- and all sides at least profess to want peace -- we must come to the negotiation table accepting 9 facts about the Israel-Palestine conflict.



1. Hamas rockets must stop.

This should be a no brainer but for some it is difficult to accept. "What about..." comes into play. What about the illegal occupation? What about the blockade?

What about the lopsided numbers of civilians killed?

All relevant, but none change the fact that two (or multiple) wrongs don't make a right. We must condemn Hamas violence, their rockets, and their indiscriminate firing that puts Israeli civilians at risk. The rockets must unconditionally stop.

2. The conflict is older than Hamas -- a lot older.

The incessant focus on Hamas as the reason for Israel's self-described acts of self-defense is a red herring (*anything that diverts attention from a topic or line of inquiry*). This position pretends we are addressing a 27-year conflict -- not a 65-year conflict. Israel's actions against Palestine, specifically Gaza, stem back far before Hamas even existed. Hamas's actions and Israel's repeated claim that Hamas is the root cause of

¹¹ Zionism is a worldwide Jewish movement that resulted in the establishment and development of the state of Israel. Hamas is Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist movement engaged in grass-roots organizing and armed resistance and terrorism against Israel.

all this fighting proves only one thing -- force cannot create peace, at least not lasting peace. Any conversation that ignores pre-1987 is incomplete, insincere, and will ultimately prove ineffective at the negotiation table. Hamas is a symptom of this conflict, but not the root cause.

3. If Muslims want peace in Palestine, then they must unite in peace worldwide.

His Holiness the Khalifa of Islam, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, leads the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. While championing separation of mosque and state, His Holiness commands the world's largest Muslim following with tens of millions of Muslims in over 204 nations. The Muslim world should follow his example of principled leadership precisely because he implores and acts with justice in all fairs -- even with those persecuting his community. For example, despite Palestine's persecution of Ahmadi Muslims, His Holiness has instructed Ahmadi Muslims worldwide to pray for Gaza, provide humanitarian aid to civilians of Gaza.

In speaking to Muslim majority nations His Holiness points out a simple fact -- how can you demand Israel treat Palestine with peace and justice if you cannot even establish it among yourselves? His Holiness explains,

With great regret it must be said that today it is the ill fortune of many Muslim countries that they are no longer united. Members of the public are fighting amongst themselves; citizens are also fighting with governments, whilst governments are inflicting cruelty upon their public. Therefore, not only has unity been lost, but great cruelties and injustices are being perpetrated. If the Muslims were united and followed the path of God then the collective strength of the Muslim nations is so great that this cruelty [against Palestine] could never have taken place.

Before lambasting Israel, Muslim majority nations should lead by example and establish peace with each other.

4. Peace cannot exist without justice.

Justice can only exist with peace, and peace can only exist with principled leadership. On this issue His Holiness has demanded justice on both fronts.

To Muslim leaders His Holiness has admonished,

The Muslim leaders and so-called clerics are not righteous or God fearing and as a result those under their influence are being entirely misguided. The clerics are pushing young people, who know no better, towards evil and cruelty by falsely claiming it will lead them towards God. No one is guiding such youths or the wider Muslim Ummah (community) that such cruelty is neither righteous nor just. What they are doing is not Jihad because murder and bloodshed can only take you away from God.

To Israel and Palestine His Holiness has advised,

Compared to Israel, the Palestinians have no power or strength. Certainly all cruelty is wrong and so if Hamas is perpetrating cruelty, then the Muslim countries should also stop them. However, if you are to compare the relative strengths and cruelties of the two sides, it is as if one side is using a stick, whilst the other side is utilizing a fully equipped army to perpetrate its injustice.

Muslim leaders must take more ownership over their youth, and Israel and Palestine must hold themselves accountable to justice -- otherwise peace is a mere fantasy.

5. Palestine was a haven for Jewish refugees before the creation of Israel.

Some insist on arguing that Palestine is inherently anti-Semitic¹². This is untrue and Palestine's historical actions prove otherwise. Before Israel's creation, Palestine willingly accepted some 700,000 Jewish refugees escaping World War I and the Holocaust. This is a massive number considering Palestine's Muslim population in 1947 was only around 1.2 million. That said, Palestine did not vote for the creation of Israel. Instead Israel's creation was imposed on Palestine by the United Nations. We often hear the talking point "no country on Earth would tolerate rockets raining down on its civilians." No doubt this is true, but in fairness we must also accept that no country on Earth would tolerate being split in two without the right to self-determination or a say in the matter. If you disagree, imagine if tomorrow the United Nations decided half of your country would go to another nation of people -- while you have no say in the matter. In short, Palestine served as a haven for Jewish refugees before Israel's creation. It is important to draw on this history when trying to find common ground for the future.

6. Since Israel was created by the United Nations, it must live by the United Nations.

The hardline pro-Palestine argument states that since Palestine never approved the creation of Israel, they will not recognize Israel. The pro-Israel side states the opposite -- the United Nations created us by democratic vote so we are here to stay. Israel is right. The reality is we cannot undo history. Israel has the right to exist and is here to stay -- no amount of arguing or fighting will undo that.

That fact established, we cannot stop the UN conversation here.

A nation born by the UN must live by the UN. Since Israel's creation, the United Nations has passed at least 42 Resolutions against Israel for violating international law -- 17 of which were passed before Hamas existed. These include resolutions condemning Israel for illegal practices against civilians in Lebanon, condemning Israel's contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention, calling on Israel to withdraw from all Palestinian territories, calling on Israel to recognize the Palestinian right of return, and calling on Israel to respect Muslim holy places. Post-Hamas, the UN has passed Resolutions against Israel to abide by and accept the Fourth Geneva convention, condemning Israel's invasion of Lebanon, condemning Israel's killing of UN employees of the World Food Program, and condemning Israel settlements established since 1967 as illegal -- all of which have nothing to do with Hamas. This further establishes point two above that Hamas is not the root cause of this conflict.

Unfortunately and remarkably, Israel has asked and the United States has agreed to veto all 42 of these UN Resolutions. Israel cannot have it both ways. It cannot on one hand claim legitimacy by citing the United Nations decision to create Israel, and then ignore UN enforcement to hold Israel accountable to international law. If UN decisions are invalid now, then they were invalid at Israel's creation. Likewise, and reasonably, since UN decisions were valid upon Israel's creation, they must also be valid now and Israel must maintain justice accordingly.

7. Arab blood and Jewish blood are human blood -- and all blood is equal

¹² Of or relating to the Semites or their languages, especially of or pertaining to the Jews.

No justification exists for civilian deaths. The concept of self-preservation or a "zero-sum" game does not work in our global village or by any moral compass. The idea that Arab blood is more valuable than Jewish blood, or that Jewish blood is more valuable than Arab blood, is modern day racism in all its ugliness. A Palestinian child has just as much right as an Israeli child, and vice versa. Any action by either side that ignores this principle is a violation of human rights and derails the peace process. Let us rid ourselves of the cancer of justifying collateral damage and recognize all human life is equal.

8. Both sides have committed potential war crimes and must be held accountable accordingly.

Having elected Hamas, Palestine must be accountable to Hamas's war crimes. Firing rockets indiscriminately is a war crime. Iron Dome and the comparatively fewer civilian Israeli casualties acknowledged, firing rockets at a civilian population is by definition a war crime. Just because "not as many" Israeli civilians have been killed does nothing to mitigate the fact that firing rockets at civilians is a war crime. Likewise, Hamas cannot hoard illegal weapons in UN schools, especially near refugees, and pretend they are not putting innocent Palestinians in harm's way. Such crimes do nothing to promote peace and only aggravate an already volatile situation. Hamas must immediately cease such acts.

As mentioned already, Israel must be accountable to the United Nations and international law. Israel's use of white phosphorous is a war crime, their use of human shields is a war crime, Israel's collective punishment of all of Gaza is a war crime, Israel's target killing of children on a beach playing soccer is a war crime, Israel's bombing of hospitals is a war crime. These are documented acts by UN Mission reports, independent journalists, and by admission of Israeli soldiers. Rather than ignoring these unjust acts, Israel must own up to these war crimes and immediately cease such acts.

9. America must play fair, and so must worldwide Muslim leadership.

Since Israel's creation nearly seven decades ago, the world has witnessed the same violence again and again. Several peace treaties and efforts have gone by yet we stand no closer to peace.

It may seem illogical to compare America to the diversity of Muslim leadership, but that's the reality we face. America holds UN veto power, and despite the diversity in the Muslim world, the perception is that of a monolith¹³ on the Israel-Palestine crisis.

Over the decades, America's reputation to the rest of the world -- and especially the Muslim world -- is that of a dishonest thug who enforces its will and blindly sides with Israel. This image cannot be reversed very easily -- but it must if we want our ultimate goal of peace. It took decades to create this image. It will take decades to change it but will change if America begins to tread the path of peace with justice and equity. A strong military is most powerful when it exercises restraint, rather than when it uses that might to justify killing civilians.

¹³ Something having a uniform, massive, redoubtable, or inflexible quality or character.

Likewise, the Muslim world must recognize the right of Israel to exist. Muslims worldwide cannot point to dozens of UN Resolutions against Israel and ignore the singular UN decision to create Israel -- such an act demonstrates similar hypocrisy to Israel's current opposite practice regarding the UN.

The prime focus must be peace.

Peace is only possible by ensuring the sanctity and dignity of all human life -- whether Jewish, Muslim or the minority and often ignored Christian Palestinian population suffering through these atrocities. Ignoring such human values only ensures this vicious cycle continues.

In conclusion

Peace cannot exist without justice. A future peace cannot exist without recognizing factual history. The irony is only two types of people will ignore the above guidance -- "heartless Zionists" and " Hamas terrorists."

Hopefully the majority of us can build a strong enough middle ground to neutralize both extremes and finally get what we all want -- peace.

PART V: THAI ISSUES

CHAPTER 16: CORRUPTION

CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2018 SHOWS ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS STALLED IN MOST COUNTRIES

The 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released today by Transparency International reveals that the continued failure of most countries to significantly control corruption is contributing to a crisis of democracy around the world.



“With many democratic institutions under threat across the globe – often by leaders with authoritarian or populist tendencies – we need to do more to strengthen checks and balances and protect citizens’ rights,” said Patricia Moreira, Managing Director of Transparency International. “Corruption chips away at democracy to produce a vicious cycle, where corruption undermines democratic institutions

and, in turn, weak institutions are less able to control corruption.”

The 2018 CPI draws on 13 surveys and expert assessments to measure public sector corruption in 180 countries and territories, giving each a score from zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). To view the results, visit: www.transparency.org/cpi2018.

CPI HIGHLIGHTS

More than two-thirds of countries score below 50, with an average score of only 43. Since 2012, only 20 countries have significantly improved their scores, including Estonia and Côte D’Ivoire, and 16 have significantly declined, including, Australia, Chile and Malta.

Denmark and New Zealand top the Index with 88 and 87 points, respectively. Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria are at the bottom of the index, with 10, 13 and 13 points, respectively. The highest scoring region is Western Europe and the European Union, with an average score of 66, while the lowest scoring regions are Sub-Saharan Africa (average score 32) and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (average score 35).

CORRUPTION AND THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

Cross analysis with global democracy data reveals a link between corruption and the health of democracies. Full democracies score an average of 75 on the CPI; flawed democracies score an average of 49; hybrid regimes – which show elements of autocratic tendencies – score 35; autocratic regimes perform worst, with an average score of just 30 on the CPI.

SOME COUNTER MEASURES TO FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

To make real progress against corruption and strengthen democracy around the world, Transparency International calls on all governments to:

- strengthen the institutions responsible for maintaining checks and balances over political power, and ensure their ability to operate without intimidation;
- close the implementation gap between anti-corruption legislation, practice and enforcement;

- support civil society organisations which enhance political engagement and public oversight over government spending, particularly at the local level;
- support a free and independent media, and ensure the safety of journalists and their ability to work without intimidation or harassment.

	COUNTRY	REGION	2018	2017	2016	2015
1	Denmark	Western Europe & European Union	88	88	90	91
2	New Zealand	Asia Pacific	87	89	90	91
3	Finland	Western Europe & European Union	85	85	89	90
3	Singapore	Asia Pacific	85	84	84	85
3	Sweden	Western Europe & European Union	85	84	88	89
3	Switzerland	Western Europe & European Union	85	85	86	86
7	Norway	Western Europe & European Union	84	85	85	88
8	Netherlands	Western Europe & European Union	82	82	83	84
9	Canada	Americas	81	82	82	83
9	Luxembourg	Western Europe & European Union	81	82	81	85
11	Germany	Western Europe & European Union	80	81	81	8
<hr/>						
172	Guinea Bissau	Sub-Saharan Africa	16	17	16	17
172	Sudan	Sub-Saharan Africa	16	16	14	12
176	Korea, North	Asia Pacific	14	17	12	8
176	Yemen	Middle East & North Africa	14	16	14	18
178	South Sudan	Sub-Saharan Africa	13	12	11	15
178	Syria	Middle East & North Africa	13	14	13	18
180	Somalia	Sub-Saharan Africa	10	9	10	8

THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF ASIAN ECONOMICS COMMUNITY (AEC)¹⁴

61	Malaysia	Asia Pacific	47	47	49	50
99	Philippines	Asia Pacific	36	34	35	35
99	Thailand	Asia Pacific	36	37	35	38
105	Timor-Leste	Asia Pacific	35	38	35	28
117	Vietnam	Asia Pacific	33	35	33	31
132	Laos	Asia Pacific	29	29	30	25
132	Myanmar	Asia Pacific	29	30	28	22
161	Cambodia	Asia Pacific	20	21	21	21

CORRUPTION IS 'PART OF THAI MINDSET'

(Takayuki Kanaboshi. *The Nation* March 7, 2014 1:00 am)

Corruption has become a part of people's mindset here in Thailand, where "cheating" is tolerated, Chalermchai Boonyaleepun, president of Srinakharinwirot University, told a seminar on Wednesday.

¹⁴ Singapore is an exception. Brunei is not listed.

In the discussion on combating corruption, National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) member Vicha Mahakun and Sompol Kiatphaibool, chairman of the Stock Exchange of Thailand and vice chairman of the Anti-Corruption Organisation of Thailand, placed their hopes on the media.

They were speaking at the 59th anniversary celebration of the Thai Journalists Association (TJA).

Chalermchai said that according to a survey he conducted on more than 640,000 students, 47.9 per cent said they had copied assignments and only 43 per cent found this "slightly wrong". Upon seeing another student cheating, only 7.2 per cent said they would inform the teacher, while 30.7 per cent would pretend it never happened.

The survey also found that 3 per cent did not find anything wrong with not paying back their student loans, as "they need the money and there's nothing wrong with giving money to those who need it".

This attitude was also found in working adults as well, with 29.5 per cent of public servants saying they spend some of their time at work doing personal jobs.

Chalermchai calculated that if one teacher wasted 20 per cent of their working hours over the course of their career, it would cost the public Bt1.7 million.

Judging from the number of teachers in the state system, they could cost Bt2 trillion for the hours wasted, he said.

Chalermchai blamed this mindset on external influences such as family, friends and news sources, adding that parents should make their children understand that cheating will not be tolerated.

Sompol admitted that corruption was the biggest problem in Thailand. This was highlighted by the fact that all the awards handed out by the TJA were related to reports on corruption scandals.

Vicha said graft was so rife in Thailand that it would take the NACC more than a lifetime to handle all the cases. He added that corruption was so deeply ingrained, that those who do not work within the system will be "kicked out".

Citing the fact that some countries have managed to curb corruption in a relatively short period of time, Sompol suggested that transparency, a strong investigation systems and strict punishments were necessary.

Vicha said investigative journalism was important in the fight against corruption as he cited the case of young Brazilian journalists relying on social media to effectively report on graft.

He went on to say that one should not rely on politicians to fight graft, but put their hopes on civil society. For instance, he said, South Korea had thousands of organisations that monitor and investigate corruption in both the public and private sector.

The ideal, he says, is the Singaporean approach to transparency, where the government practices an open and transparent approach to all business matters, which makes corruption impossible.

PREM DECRIES CORRUPTERS AS STATE THIEVES

(Ariane Kupferman-Sutthavong, 16/10/2015)

Privy Council president Gen Prem Tinsulanonda has proposed a renewed effort to fight corruption, which he decried as Thailand's number one enemy. Corruption is the most severe ill which plagues the country,

and a shameful matter for Thailand, Gen Prem said Thursday following a seminar organised by the Collective Action Against Corruption, a network of companies tackling graft problems.

Robbing the Country

According to General Prem, corruption in Thailand occurs at the individual level, in dealings between private sector companies and state agencies, as well as in government policies that are specifically designed to enable corruption.

The statesman argued that taking part in corrupt schemes is akin to robbing the country. "Those involved are thieves," he said.

If corruption continues to take place, Thailand will be viewed as a cheating nation, and Thai citizens will be called cheaters, he added.

General Prem urged the private sector to set an example. They should show the public that companies can be successful without offering bribes or taking part in fraudulent dealings and can achieve a break through [to corruption free business] by employing ethics and good governance.

Culture of Impunity

Individuals who take part in corrupt deals must be sanctioned, he said, calling for an end to the existing culture of impunity. Such people should have no standing in society.

"We must neither admire nor respect those who gained success, wealth or fame through corruption. We must neither trade nor associate with these robbers," he said.

Corruption is only harming the country, he said, stripping the kingdom of its wealth, causing it to lose business opportunities and giving Thailand a bad reputation. All parties must be involved in graft-fighting for the sake of national security, he added. Justice against corruption must be swift, harsh and decisive like the way the cavalrymen deal with their enemy, said General Prem.

Measures to Reduce Corruption

Meanwhile, academics and experts have praised the Prayut Chan-o-cha government for creating a wide array of measures to help reduce graft. However, they insist it is too early to say whether such measures will prove to be effective.

Pramon Suthiwong, chairman of the Anti-Corruption Organisation of Thailand, said there is a political will to tackle the issue of corruption, adding the government had placed the matter high on its agenda of items demanding attention.

Mr Pramon said this was illustrated in the government's creation of a "Super Board", in charge of monitoring state-owned enterprises, and the Centre for National Anti-Corruption (CNAC), two bodies chaired by the prime minister himself. In recent months, the CNAC has taken disciplinary measures against more than 100 state officials found guilty of corruption, using Section 44 of the interim charter, he said. The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) is also taking action against officials who have taken part in fraudulent dealings, or abused their authority, he said.

Duenden Nikomborirak, a senior researcher at the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), agreed there was political commitment to fighting graft, and said legislators had been actively involved in busting corruption as well.

Last July, the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) passed the Licence Facilitation Act, which holds officials accountable if they fail to meet certain corruption-free standards, Ms Duenden said.

The researcher said the NLA is considering a new bill on public procurement -- which would include an Integrity Pact, allowing external observers to scrutinise the procurement process in large deals -- as well as a law related to conflicts of interest, but added such measures have to be properly enforced.

"Passing laws is easy. Enforcing them is another challenge," Ms Duenden argued.

[<http://www.bangkokpost.com/learning/work/735148/prem-on-corruption-thieves-robbing-the-country>]

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

DIGITALIZATION AND CORRUPTION IN THE EU MEMBER STATES.

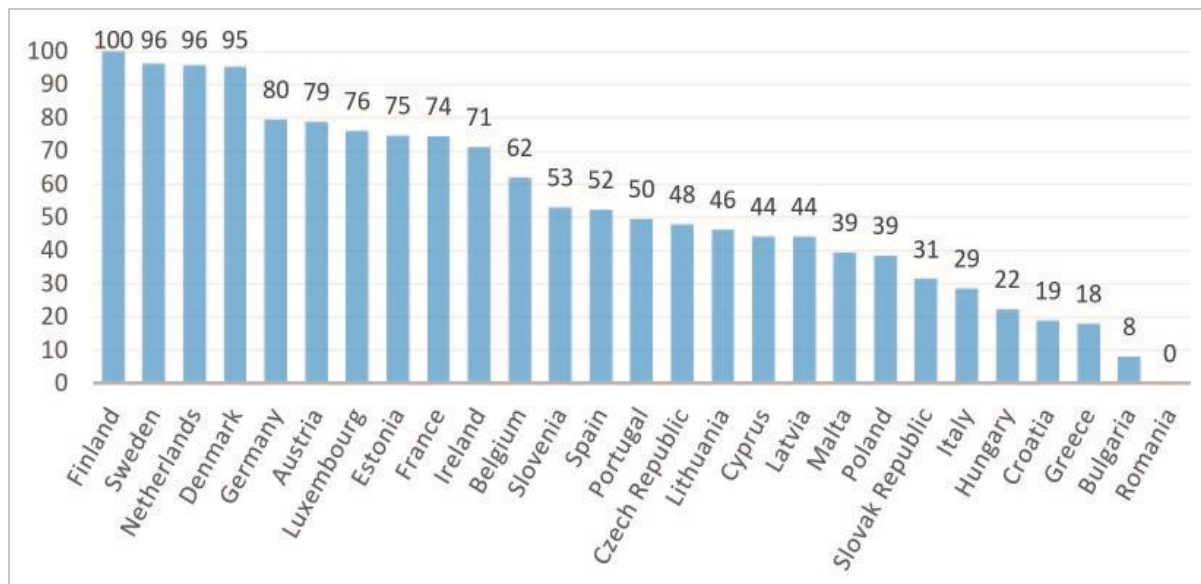
A COMPARATIVE AND CORRELATIVE RESEARCH ANALYSIS

(This well-researched paper is the joint work of three professors, namely, Armenia ANDRONICEANU Professor, Faculty of Administration and Public Management, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania, E-mail: armenia.androniceanu@man.ase.ro, ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7072-7019; Irina GEORGESCU, Associate Professor, Department of Informatics and Economic Cybernetics, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania E-mail: irina.georgescu@csie.ase.ro, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8536-5636; Jani KINNUNEN, Researcher, Department of Information Systems, Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland, E-mail: jani.kinnunen@abo.fi, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0154-6617. It is first published online in February 25, 2022.)

The burdensome, complicated and detailed statistical methods have been put aside for easy.)

The three great researchers have done a praise-worthy work on this topic. Though the focused area is the EU member States, yet, I think, it could very well be applied to our ASEAN Community. Thailand is therefore included.

Having putting forward the research questions, the key hypothesis, the research methods and data, the authors lay out their findings in Figure 2: Correlation Index of Corruption and Digitalization (CICD) in the EU member States.



The index values are scaled between 0 and 100 by Min-Max normalization. Figure 2 visualizes the ordered CICD values for EU countries. Nordic countries show the greatest values suggesting that they are digitalized and the most effective in terms of lack of corruption, Finland achieving the largest CICD =100.0, while Bulgaria (CICD =8.0) and Romania (CICD =0.0) are the least digitalized with relatively high corruption indicators. Romania has the smallest values for V8 (Human capital index) and V9 (E-government) as well as for V3 (Regulatory quality index) and V4 (Government effectiveness). Bulgaria also has very low values for digitalization and the lowest values of the EU states for V1 (Control of corruption) and V5 (Rule of law index).

These results answer the two research questions, as they confirm the differences between EU member states, both in terms of the degree of digitization associated with corruption, but also the fact that digitization, in the states investing in it, is a success factor in the fight against corruption. The results show that corruption was persistent in Europe amid the Covid-19 pandemic during 2019–2020. This was also confirmed by Transparency International, with the launch of the report on the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2020 (Transparency International, 2020). The results of our research show that the place recorded in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) in 2020 is linked to how a country meets the challenges posed by the pandemic. States with a good ranking seem to invest more in the healthcare system and are less likely to violate democratic and institutional rules or the rule of law.

Preventing or reducing corruption in public institutions is significantly influenced by public managers and elected politicians. They can develop anti-corruption strategies, policies, and tools and make internal changes to control and reduce corruption.

There are a variety of internal and external anti-corruption measures that can be implemented in public institutions both by civil servants and politicians. They are:

1. Establishing the core values and integrity codes for effective and honest preventive conduct;
2. Elaborating the codes of conduct for civil servants as a component of the employment contract;
3. Creating internal commissions to identify the acts of corruption of officials and to prosecute them;

4. Collaborating with specialized institutions involved in the procedure of investigating corruption in the public institution;
5. Developing strategies for both repression and prevention of corruption and others.
6. Blocking the participation of corrupt organizations in public tenders by public managers and politicians;
7. Organizing training programs for officials to prevent acts of corruption and to know the sanctions applied for corruption;
8. The behaviour of public managers and politicians regarding digitalization and corruption significantly influences both the content of the changes determined by digitalization and the intensity of corruption in the public institutions they lead.

Conclusion

Comparisons between states show that digitizing the administration is one of the most effective ways to reduce corruption in the public sector. This conclusion underlines the fact that state administrations should design and implement appropriate strategies and policies for the integration of large-scale digital applications. The countries that do not prioritize the cross-cutting integration of technology at all levels of the economy and society will lose important opportunities and will suffer.

By digitizing the administration and reducing corruption in public institutions, EU states are moving towards a digital society and economy. Digitalization brings with it new forms of organization, new managerial models and types of institutional processes, new social mechanisms, new instruments for making reforms in public administration, new leadership as well as a new type of values for society.

CHAPTER 17: DRUG TRAFFICKING

BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS

2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR)

Report

A. Introduction

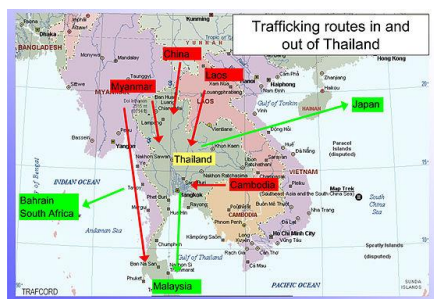
There were no significant quantities of opiates, methamphetamine, or other drugs cultivated or produced in Thailand in 2015. Various transnational criminal organizations use Thailand as a destination and transshipment country for illicit drugs destined for regional and international markets. Thailand is a net importer of illicit narcotics, and domestic use continues to remain a serious problem. The primary drugs of concern continue to be amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), primarily methamphetamine, and abuse of these drugs continues to increase. Increased ATS availability is primarily due to growing cross-border trafficking and importation of methamphetamine from neighboring Burma.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Thai authorities have not reported eradicating opium poppy since 2013, when 264 hectares of poppy were reportedly destroyed. In 2014, there was a slight decrease in heroin and cocaine seizures, but continued growth in MDMA, crystal methamphetamine, and methamphetamine tablet seizures.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Thai authorities continue to focus on tracking the movements of large international drug trafficking organizations operating in Thailand. In 2015, the Royal Thai Police Narcotics Suppression Bureau (RTP/NSB) increased its focus on Africa-based drug trafficking organizations responsible for controlling a large portion of the drug trade in Thailand. Thailand's counternarcotics assets are insufficient to patrol the long and



remote borders with Laos, Burma, and Cambodia, where most drugs cross into the country. Thailand continues to increase its efforts to coordinate with neighboring law enforcement entities, with U.S. support for equipment and training.

Thailand has bilateral extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties with the United States. Thailand is among the most effective and cooperative partners of the United States in Southeast Asia, with U.S. assistance facilitating and enhancing that

cooperation.

2. Supply Reduction

Thai law enforcement agencies continued to seize significant amounts of illegal drugs in 2015. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) worked closely with Thai law enforcement authorities on joint investigations, resulting in the successful disruption of several international drug trafficking organizations.

Trafficking in heroin through Thailand appeared to decrease in 2015, but remains a challenge for Thai law enforcement agencies. The Office of Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) reported that Thai authorities seized 207.1 kilograms (kg) of heroin in 2015, compared to 371 kg in 2014, and 784.6 kg in 2013.

Methamphetamine trafficking and use continues to be the primary drug concern in Thailand. Thailand remains one of the largest markets for methamphetamine pills, known locally as "yaa-baa" or "crazy medicine." Most methamphetamine pills entering Thailand are manufactured in Burma and believed to be consumed domestically, with unknown quantities transported onward to other regional markets. The majority of crystal methamphetamine ("ice") seized in Thailand is destined for regional markets, where demand for the drug continues to grow. The production of crystal methamphetamine by the United Wa State Army in Burma and other regional producers remains an issue of great concern to Thailand. In 2015, ONCB seized approximately 1.14 metric tons (MT) of crystal methamphetamine and 9.75 MT of methamphetamine tablets, compared to 1019.3 kg of crystal methamphetamine and 11.32 MT of tablets in 2014. ONCB estimates that 80 percent of the drugs smuggled into Thailand enter through its northern border.

There was an increase of inbound couriers carrying crystal methamphetamine to Thailand from China in 2015. Thai authorities believe that the couriers were directed by Africa-based drug syndicates operating in Guangzhou, China.

Thailand has a small domestic market for MDMA (ecstasy) and cocaine, largely among affluent residents in large cities, as well as tourists and expats in Thailand. MDMA arrives in Thailand from a variety of sources and routes including overland from Cambodia, Malaysia, and Burma, and also via commercial flights from Europe and Canada. Through March 2015, approximately 18.5 grams of MDMA were seized, compared to 6.66 kg in 2014. In Thailand, the cocaine market is still largely controlled by Africa-based trafficking networks. However, South American and Chinese trafficking groups are also involved in bulk cocaine smuggling through Thailand, typically for further export to China and Australia. In 2015, approximately 48.8 kg of cocaine were seized, compared to 28.57 kg in 2014 and 69.8 kg in 2013.



Marijuana remains less visible, but is readily available in Thailand and throughout the region. Cannabis is domestically cultivated in limited quantities, with bulk shipments imported from Laos for domestic use and regional export. Kratom (*mitragyna speciosa*), a local drug with modest psychotropic properties, is grown locally and consumed primarily in Thailand's southern

provinces. In 2015, 23.63 MT of dried marijuana were seized, compared to 38.72 MT in all of 2014.

Ketamine consumption appears to be limited to use as an alternative to methamphetamine tablets. In 2015, 26.1 kg of ketamine were seized, compared to 36.1 kg in 2014. South Asian and Taiwanese drug trafficking organizations are prominently involved in ketamine trafficking.

Thailand's penalties for drug-related offenses are severe and can include the death penalty for those convicted of possession of more than 20 grams of Schedule I substances with "intent to sell," a punishment reportedly last used in 2009.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Thailand carries out comprehensive demand reduction programs, combining drug abuse prevention programs with treatment for those suffering from substance abuse disorders. According to the ONCB, drug treatment programs have reached over 700,000 persons with substance abuse disorders since 2011. The Thai government also invests in building awareness of the perils of drug addiction, but the effectiveness of these awareness programs is difficult to gauge. Heroin and opium usage remain relatively low and stable.

4. Corruption

As a matter of policy, the Thai government does not permit, encourage, or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic/psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, or the laundering of drug proceeds, by individuals or government agencies. However, corruption remains a problem in Thailand, and some officials are susceptible to bribery. In 2015, several high level Royal Thai Police officers were accused of numerous offenses due to corruption, removed from office, and subsequently criminally charged.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

Thailand and the United States enjoy a strong cooperative relationship. U.S. law enforcement agencies receive willing cooperation from their Thai counterparts and support from the highest levels of the Thai government. Thailand is one of several countries in which DEA maintains Sensitive Investigative Units (SIUs). Thai SIU participants receive specialized training and undergo a rigorous vetting process.

Additionally, the United States provides a stream of training and assistance to Thai law enforcement and criminal justice entities specific to drug trafficking. Through the U.S.-funded International Law Enforcement Academy and other programs, the United States and Thailand are working to enhance regional cooperation to combat transnational crime.

Thailand is also using U.S.-developed curriculum to support training and professionalization of its substance use treatment workforce. With U.S. support, the program is establishing a cadre of national trainers who will disseminate the training throughout the country.

D. Conclusion

The U.S. government enjoys a particularly close and collaborative relationship with Thai law enforcement. The United States has encouraged the Thai government to adopt laws and regulations more closely aligned with international standards and has helped Thailand develop more consistent adherence to rule of law principles. All such activities contribute to the fight against illicit drug trafficking and other transnational crime.

The United States will continue to assist the Thai government in its efforts to promote greater cooperation between its police and prosecutors, prevent corruption, and further advance regional cooperation.
[<https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2016/vol1/253313.htm>]

CHAPTER 18: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THAILAND

The government of Thailand has focused on the social and economic development of the country for the past 35 years. The Seventh Economic and Social Development Plan seeks to achieve sustainable growth and stability, especially in the petrochemical, engineering, electronics, and basic industries. Thailand's dramatic economic growth has brought forth environmental challenges to the once-agrarian economy.

1. Air pollution

The Bangkok metropolitan area, which consists of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the four surrounding provinces, holds about 20% of the national population and over half of the country's factories. Due to a lack of treatment facilities, increasing volumes of hazardous substances generated by the thriving industrial activities have caused serious dumping issues. Unless treatment facilities are built and institutions start to regulate strictly, environmental contamination caused by hazardous waste threatens to become Thailand's worst environmental problem in the future.



The Pollution Control Department and other agencies have developed standards in order to reduce air pollution. The standards focus on shifting to lower-emissions vehicle engines and improving public transportation. Environmentally-unfriendly motorbikes, diesel trucks and buses contribute many pollutants. In most areas of the country, air pollutants for vehicles are now within acceptable levels according to national standards.

Factories and power plants have been required to reduce emissions.

Bangkok and the rest of the Central Region contribute between 60–70% of the country's industrial emissions. Most power plants rely on burning fossil fuels.

Other sources of air pollution include garbage burning, open cooking and agricultural burning practices, including deliberate forest fires.

Agricultural burning in Southeast Asia often creates a haze. Wildfires are started by local farmers during the dry season in northern Thailand for a variety of purposes, with February and March as the two months when conditions are at their worst. They are the main cause of the intense air pollution in the Thai highlands and contribute to the floods in the country by completely denuding the undergrowth of the woods. The dry forest soil leads to lower water intake for the trees to extract when the rains arrive.

2. Deforestation

Forest cover in Thailand has been greatly reduced as people convert forested land to agriculture or misappropriate public lands for private use. An estimate by the World Wildlife Fund concluded that between 1973 and 2009, Thailand's forests declined by 43%. Wetlands have been converted to rice paddies and urban sprawl. With a government measures in place to prohibit logging, deforestation rates have dropped, but the impacts of deforestation are still being felt.

Deforestation creates a host of environmental problems: soil erosion, sedimentation of rivers, and loss of natural habitat. Wetlands and mangroves in coastal areas have been seriously degraded by expansion of commercial fishing, shrimp aquaculture, industry, and tourism, causing much of Thailand's biodiversity losses.

In June 2015, as a severe drought gripped northeastern Thailand, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha urged farmers to forgo a second rice crop in order to save water. He attributed the drought to massive



deforestation. At least 26 million rai (41, 600 km²) of forested land, especially forests in the mountainous north, had been denuded, according to the prime minister, who said that forests were needed for the generation of rainfall.

In July 2015, a Bangkok Post editorial summed up Thailand's forestry issues: "Forests have rapidly declined under state policies over the past four decades. Factors include logging, mining, anti-insurgency strategies, promotion of cash crops on the highlands, construction of big dams and promotion of the tourism industry. Corruption is also deep-rooted in forestry bureaucracy."

3. Field and forest burning

The burning of agricultural fields and forested areas is a yearly event. Northern Thailand currently has the highest rates of lung cancer in the kingdom. The incidence of other chest diseases and cardiac conditions is also high.



Fires occurring in that area fall into three main categories: forest fires, agricultural burning, and roadside burning. Forest fires are deliberately set mainly for the supposedly increased forest product yields, especially the earth star mushroom ("hed thob" or "hed phor" in Thai), which has seasonal availability and a high market price. In order to collect these fungi, local farmers use fire either to clear the forest floor to make it easier to find the mushroom or because fire is thought to stimulate the growth of this mushroom. "Cheap and fast" is a shorthand explanation for the intentional use of fire to clear agricultural fields, overgrown roadsides, and open areas. Cattle herders also burn areas to stimulate the growth of *Imperata* grass¹⁵ which is able to quickly produce new leaves during the hot-dry season. New leaves produced on burnt areas have a higher nutrient value, which is perfect for cattle grazing. Roadside fires are set to clear vegetation from



encroaching on roadways. Fires produce large amounts of smoke which stagnate low lying areas, causing eye irritation and respiratory ailments. Large areas of degraded forest are destroyed by fire each year.

Fire not only destroys forest biodiversity and vegetation and retards forest growth, but also results in erosion, air pollution and flash-flooding. Proper replanting of severely degraded places is often the only remedial action available as natural regeneration has stopped in many places.

4. Overfishing

Thailand is a peninsular country of 514,000 km² with over 3,565 km of coastline, 2,700 km on the Gulf of Thailand and 865 km on the Andaman Sea. Historically, fish from Thailand's off-shore waters have been a significant provider of protein to the population.

Thailand's marine fish resources are over exploited, and while the catch has increased, the catch per unit of effort (**CPUE**) has decreased markedly. Put another way, average catches in Thai waters have fallen by 86% since the industry's large expansion in the 1960s. In 2014, Thailand was 12th in the world (of 215 nations) (1=worst, 215=best) in terms of fish species at risk (96 species).

¹⁵ A serious weed not only in crops but also in natural areas, causing serious economic and environmental damage.

The over-exploitation of fish stocks in Thailand has led to the creation of a huge aquaculture industry, human trafficking to man fishing vessels voyaging ever further out to sea, and the depletion of "trash fish" as well as marketable juvenile fish to feed the increasing demand for fish meal for farmed shrimp.



On 21 April 2015 the European Commission threatened Thailand, the third-largest seafood exporter in the world, with a trade ban if it did not take action on illegal fishing. The EU, since 2010 has taken action against countries that do not follow international overfishing regulations, such as policing their waters for unlicensed fishing vessels and imposing penalties to deter illegal fishing. Thailand has failed to certify the origin and legality of its fish exports to the EU and now has six months, until October 2015, to implement a satisfactory action plan to address the shortcomings. In the view of the Bangkok Post, "The [Thai] fisheries bureaucracy's record is extremely shabby, resulting in a breakdown in state regulation of commercial trawlers. Fisheries officials are also known to have cosy relationships with trawler operators." (8 July 2015)

5. Industrial water pollution

Thailand has a total of 25 river basins in the country and Thailand's annual rainfall is around 1,700 mm. Despite the annual southwest monsoon, Thailand is subject to drought, particularly the northeastern region. As of 2002, Thailand had less water available per person than any other country in Asia, and nearly one-third of its water was "unsuitable for human consumption." Non-potable water was a result of increasing untreated domestic sewage, industrial waste water, and solid hazardous wastes.

The most critical environmental problem that Thailand faces presently is water pollution. Like air pollution, water pollution is most serious in the populous central region, with high levels of industrial and domestic waste water. The depletion of the water table around Bangkok has led to land subsidence which has exacerbated flooding.



Coastal waters also face challenges. The Gulf of Thailand is polluted by domestic waste water, and further by waste from industry and tourism. High pollution levels are found at the mouths of the Chao Phraya, Tha Chin, Pak Panang, Pattani, and Ranong rivers. Coastal water quality in most areas, however, is within established limits.

Water pollution has become obvious in many areas. In 1997, hundreds of thousands of fish and other aquatic life in the Nam Phong River died as a result of industrial pollution. Large amounts of

arsenic were found in the groundwater in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, a result of mining in the area. Pollution affects the marine environment. Red tides, caused by excessive algae growth and a result of pollution, oil spills, and invasive species are some of the factors that are affecting Thailand's marine biodiversity.

Another major source of pollution are the heavy metals that have seeped into the rivers of Thailand. In the Chao Phraya estuary, mercury levels have far exceeded normal standards, and high concentrations of heavy metals on the river bed poses a serious threat to ecosystems.

Health effects. Water pollution results in typhoid, dysentery, hepatitis, trachoma, hookworm, and diarrhea. Exposure to toxins and heavy metals in water causes skin disease, liver cancer, and birth defects.

Improvement efforts. In 1992, the government passed several pieces of legislation to prevent water pollution and thereby limiting industrial water contamination. The government continues to invest in wastewater treatment plants which include oxidation ditches, aerated lagoons, and stabilization ponds. Effective and modern techniques of constructing wetlands are under consideration.

6. Wildlife

Thailand's wildlife is threatened by poaching, habitat loss, and an industry that sells wild animals as pets. At present the population of elephants in the wild has dropped to an estimated 2,000. Poachers have long hunted elephants for ivory, meat, and hides. Young elephants are often captured for use in tourist attractions or as work animals, although their use has declined since the government banned logging in 1989. There are now more elephants in captivity than in the wild, and environmental activists claim that elephants in captivity are often mistreated.



Poaching of protected species remains a major problem. Hunters have decimated the populations of tigers, leopards, and other large cats for their valuable pelts. Many animals (including tigers, bears, crocodiles, and king cobras) are farmed or hunted for their meat, which is considered a delicacy, and for their supposed medicinal properties. Although such trade is illegal, the famous Bangkok market Chatuchak is still known for the sale of endangered species.

The practice of keeping wild animals as pets threatens several species. Baby animals are typically captured and sold, which often requires killing the mother. Once in captivity and out of their natural habitat, many pets die or fail to reproduce. Affected populations include the Asiatic black bear, Malayan sun bear, white-handed lar, pileated gibbon and binturong.

Large-scale deforestation and development have encroached on many former wildlife habitats, and pesticides in their food supply has reduced bird populations. Many species are listed as critically endangered because of habitat loss and over-exploitation. The World Bank estimates that, of 214 countries studied, Thailand ranks ninth (1=worst, 214=best) in the world in the number of mammal species (55 species) under threat.

Conservation in theory. There are many conservation bills (Acts) passed by the government between 1960-1992. These acts represented a major shift in Thai policy, and are part of the government's cooperation with the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, an international wildlife protection agreement. The government now requires that at least 15% of its land area be protected as forest, and 22% is currently protected as wildlife sanctuaries or national parks. To enforce CITES, the government also maintains border checkpoints to prevent animal smuggling, and works to educate the public about wildlife preservation. Thailand's Buddhist culture, with its emphasis on respect for all life, has become a key component of the country's conservation efforts.

Conservation in practice. Current (2015) national law allows for ivory from domesticated Thai elephants to be sold legally. As an unintended consequence, large quantities of African ivory can be laundered through Thai shops. Only by closing the domestic trade in ivory can Thailand help eliminate the threat to African elephants. Thailand's ivory market is the largest in the world and trade is largely fuelled by ivory from poached African elephant's tusks that are smuggled into the country.

Thailand was to be next assessed by CITES on 31 March 2015. If found lacking, CITES will vote on whether trade sanctions should be imposed against the country. The impact of punitive sanctions on the national economy would be significant: all trade in CITES-listed species would be prohibited.

In appreciation of and in full compliance with CITES, on the 12th November 2015, Thailand returned 12 smuggled orangutans to Indonesia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_issues_in_Thailand]

GROUND WATER IN THAILAND

Thailand has groundwater storage of 1,130,000 Mm³ (million cubic meters) and a surface storage of 76,000 Mm³. The agricultural sector is the main user of surface water (70% of the total). There are 25 main drainage basins, which are included in these six groundwater basins: North, Upper Central, Lower Central, Northeast, East and South.

The main hydric problems faced by the Water Authority are:

1. Pollution (nitrates from agricultural sources in shallow aquifers, organic compounds from the petrochemical industry in coastal aquifers to the south-east of Bangkok, cadmium and fluoride in the north-west of the country, sodium chloride in the east and northeast, and arsenic in the south and problems of seawater intrusion along the coastline);
2. Floods (mountainous areas in the north, lower central plain, and south of the country);
3. and droughts (mainly in the north eastern area).

Groundwater Use

The current groundwater abstraction, in the whole country, is 11,047 Mm³-year⁻¹: 4,840 Mm³ for agriculture (44%), 4,085 Mm³ for industry (37%), and 2,122 Mm³ for domestic use (19%). Groundwater is used during the two dry seasons and mainly in rural areas. According to the National Statistic Office, in 2008 there were 1,405,401 dug wells and 738,406 groundwater wells.

Environmental Impacts

For a long period, there has been extraction of groundwater at a rate higher than that could be recharged naturally, and has caused three main environmental problems: 1) a decline in groundwater levels, 2) land subsidence, and 3) seawater intrusion.

Decline in Groundwater Levels

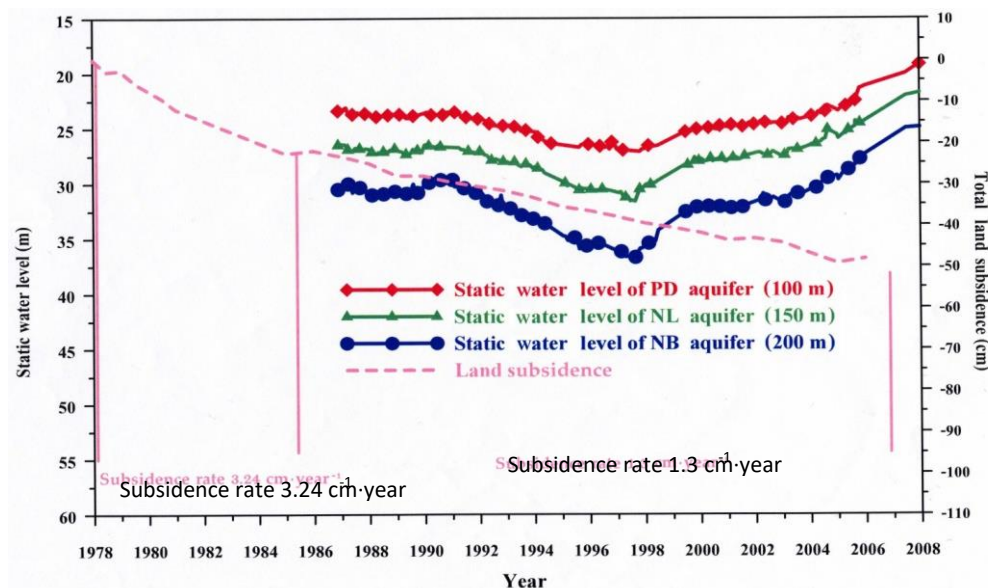


Fig. 5 Water level from three major aquifers and total land subsidence in Central Bangkok

Source: Department of Groundwater Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand. (PD = Phra Padaeng, NL = Nakorn Luang, NB = Nonthaburi)

The Department of Groundwater Resources has registered the water level from three major aquifers and total land subsidence in Central Bangkok (Fig. 5). There is a clear relationship between groundwater level and land subsidence.

By 2004, groundwater levels generally declined considerably in the Chao Phraya-Tha Chin Basin due to extensive groundwater pumping. In some areas of Amphoe Krathum Baen and Samut Sakorn, the water levels were at 65-70 m below ground surface. After the groundwater conservation charge is introduced, the water levels had significantly recovered between 2.6 m·year⁻¹ and 3 m·year⁻¹ and in 2008 coming up to 28-48 m below ground surface. However, in other areas such as Amphoe Muang Samut Sakorn, this recovery was still low due to intense groundwater pumping.

Land Subsidence

A large area in Bangkok and its surroundings is dealing with problems of land subsidence due to high groundwater extraction. The major subsidence is in an area in the eastern part of Bangkok where the subsidence rate was as high as 10 cm·year⁻¹ in the 1978-1981 period. In central Bangkok, subsidence reached 5-10 cm·year⁻¹ throughout the same period. After the Groundwater Act was enacted in 1977 and strict control measures on groundwater extraction introduced, the rate of land subsidence reduced to less than 5 cm·year⁻¹. In 2008, it was below 3 cm·year⁻¹ in Bangkok and its neighboring provinces.

Seawater Intrusion

There are areas along the coastline which have seawater intrusion problems. Groundwater in Samut Prakan (to the south of Bangkok), for instance, has become brackish, or even salty in some layers. In some areas, the seawater not only intrudes into the aquifers but also leaks from one layer to the other from groundwater wells that are not properly sealed.

Groundwater in Bangkok

Bangkok is known as the Venice of the East on account of its great number of canals connected with the Chao Phraya, the city's main river. The population uses the water in those canals as well as rain water for

daily use. However, water problems usually occurred in dry season due to canal water became salty, dirty and unsafe for drinking and use for other activities. Occasionally, it caused an outbreak of fatal cholera. In 1909, a project to supply the city of Bangkok with treated drinking water was promoted by King Rama V. The project was completed in 5 years and in 1914, the Bangkok Waterworks became the first drinking water distribution company for Bangkok citizens. In 1967, Bangkok Waterworks was turned into the MWA (Metropolitan Waterworks Authority), a state company under the orbit of the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for clean disinfected water production, transmission and distribution to people living in three adjoining provinces: Bangkok, Nonthaburi and Samut Prakan. The company slogan is "Tap water is drinkable everywhere". Water is collected from the canals rather than reservoirs and is distributed through tunnels (20 m deep) or pipelines (3 m to 4 m deep).

In conclusion we can say that a comprehensive plan of water management is necessary. One efficient way of water management is the abolition or the reduction of groundwater abstraction.
[<http://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/55078898cb5e0.pdf>]

CHAPTER 19: HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Situation

Thailand is a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking. It is a destination-side hub of exploitation in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, for both sex and labor exploitation.

Source

Migrants, ethnic minorities, and stateless people in Thailand are at a greater risk of being trafficked than Thai nationals, and experience withholding of travel documents, migrant registration cards, and work permits by employers. Thai men who migrate for low-skilled contract work and agricultural labor are subjected to conditions of forced labor and debt bondage as well.

Although the networks that traffic foreigners into Thailand tend to be small and not highly organized, those who traffic and enslave Thai victims abroad tend to be more organized and work in more formal networks; often collaborating with employers and, at times, with law enforcement officials, and have been found to hold Thai and foreign passports. Many Thais are lured by labor recruiting agencies and are forced into involuntary servitude or sexual exploitation because of the high debt owed to the agencies.

The majority of Thai trafficking victims are trafficked to the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bahrain, and China for both sexual and labor exploitation. Thai victims have also been repatriated from Russia, South Africa, Yemen, Vietnam, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Singapore. Thai nationals are also known to be trafficked to Australia, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Taiwan, and Timor-Leste.

Transit

Thailand is a transit country for victims from North Korea, China, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Burma destined for third countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Russia, Western Europe, South Korea, and the United States.

Destination

The majority of the trafficking victims identified within Thailand are migrants from Thailand's neighboring countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, but also come from farther away such as Uzbekistan and Fiji. These migrants are forced, coerced, or defrauded into labor or commercial sexual exploitation. They are often fleeing conditions of poverty, or in the case of Burmese migrants, which make up the bulk of migrants in Thailand, from military repression. Conservative estimates have this population numbering in the tens of thousands of victims.

Trafficking victims in Thailand are found employed in maritime fishing, seafood processing, low-end garment production, and domestic work. Children from neighboring countries are forced to sell flowers, beg, or work in agriculture or domestic service in urban areas. Evidence suggests that the trafficking of men, women, and children into these sectors represent a significant portion of all labor trafficking in Thailand.

Child prostitution also remains a problem. According to government officials, academics, and NGO representatives, children (both boys and girls), especially among migrant populations, were sometimes forced, coerced, or lured into prostitution.

Internal Trafficking

Thailand is a country with internal trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation, and labor trafficking. Ethnic minorities and women and girls from the northern Hill Tribes are especially vulnerable due to their lack of citizenship. UNESCO officials assert that lack of legal status is the single greatest risk factor for trafficking or other exploitation of highlanders. There is also an issue of rural-to-

urban trafficking, where ethnic Thais are trafficked from the relatively poor areas of Chiang Rai, Phayao and Nong Khai to urban and tourist areas.

Sex tourism remains a problem. According to the Thai Government, there are no laws that specifically address sex tourism. However, the criminal code, laws on prostitution, and laws combating trafficking in persons contain provisions to combat sex tourism. While it is widely believed there are fewer incidences of Thai citizens forced into prostitution today than in past years, children from poor families remain vulnerable, and there are some incidences of Thai parents who force their children into prostitution. The 1996 Prostitution Prevention and Suppression Act imposes heavy penalties on whoever procures, lures, compels, or threatens children under 18 years old for the purpose of prostitution.

Child labor is still present, particularly in agriculture, the garment industry, seafood processing, fishing-related industries, and the informal sector. Within the country Thai men are trafficked into the fishing and seafood industry.

Causes

There are many causes of human trafficking in Thailand. Many argue that Thailand is a destination for human trafficking because of its relative affluence in the Greater Sub-Mekong Region. Other cited vulnerability factors include: statelessness, poverty, lack of education, awareness and employment, or dysfunctional families.

The Thai Government

In 2010, the Thai prime minister chaired meetings with labor and civil society organizations to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts, which led to the development of the Thai government's second six-year National Policy Strategy on human trafficking for 2011-2016. In July 2010, the prime minister publicly acknowledged the need to improve the government's weak interagency coordination in addressing human trafficking and the government self-reported increased trafficking prosecutions and convictions; however, there was insufficient data available to determine whether each of these could be categorized as human trafficking convictions. The government also continued efforts to train thousands of police, labor, prosecutors, social workers, and immigration officials on victim identification.

Despite these increased efforts, the scope and magnitude of the trafficking problem in Thailand remains significant, and there continues to be a low number of victims identified among vulnerable populations and of convictions for both sex and labor trafficking. NGOs report that problems hindering the government's anti-trafficking efforts included:

- Local police corruption, including direct involvement in and facilitation of human trafficking;
- o Biases against migrant laborers;
- o Lack of a comprehensive monitoring system of the government's efforts;
- o Lack of understanding among local officials of trafficking;
- o Courts' lack of a human rights-based approach to labor abuse cases; and
- o Systematic disincentives for trafficking victims to be identified.
- o Furthermore, while authorities continue efforts to prevent human trafficking with assistance from international organizations and NGOs, the government has not yet adequately addressed structural vulnerabilities to trafficking created by the country's migrant labor policies.

For these reasons, the Thai Government was placed in Tier 3 in the 2015 U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report) for not fully complying with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but making significant efforts to do so. For the previous two years, 2013 and 2014, Thailand was placed in Tier 2.

Prosecution

Thailand's 2008 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act criminally prohibits all forms of trafficking and prescribes penalties from four to 10 years' imprisonment. The Act applies to everyone on an equal basis, not only women and children. Its key elements are: 1) heavier penalties on all offenders involved in human trafficking; 2) victims may claim compensation from the offenders for any damages caused by human trafficking; and 3) victims will be provided with shelter and other necessities including physical, psycho-social, legal, educational and healthcare assistance.

However, according to the 2011 TIP Report, the Thai government has made mixed progress in its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. It reported 18 convictions in trafficking-related cases in 2010 – an increase from eight known convictions during the previous year; however, as of May 2011, only five of the 18 convictions reported by the government could be confirmed to be for trafficking offenses. The government also reported initiating 79 prosecutions in 2010, up from 17 prosecutions during the previous year. The police reported investigating 70 trafficking-related cases in 2010, including at least 49 cases of forced prostitution and 11 for forced labor. This compares to the 95 trafficking-related investigations reported in 2009. Very few cross-border labor exploitation investigations lead to arrests of alleged traffickers, and even those arrested rarely find themselves prosecuted in court.

Corruption remains widespread among Thai law enforcement personnel, creating an enabling environment for human trafficking to prosper. There are credible reports that officials protect brothels, other commercial sex venues, and seafood and sweatshop facilities from raids and inspections. There are also reports that Thai police and immigration officials extort money or sex from Burmese citizens detained in Thailand for immigration violations, and sell Burmese people who are unable to pay to labor brokers and sex traffickers.

Protection

According to the 2011 TIP Report, the Thai Government demonstrated limited efforts to identify and protect foreign and Thai victims of trafficking during the year. The Thai Government reported that 381 foreign victims were classified as trafficking victims in Thailand and received assistance at government shelters during the year, a decrease from the 530 foreign victims assisted in 2009. The government also reported that in 2010, 88 Thai nationals were classified as trafficking victims abroad and were repatriated to Thailand, a significant decrease from the 309 victims repatriated in 2009. The government has reported increasing efforts to identify victims of trafficking among vulnerable populations through screening checkpoints at airports and border crossings. However, only 52 trafficking victims were reported identified in immigration detention centers in 2010.

The Thai government continues to refer victims to one of nine regional shelters run by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), where victims receive counseling, limited legal assistance, and medical care. However, trafficking victims typically cannot opt to reside outside of these shelters or leave, and stays can be long due to lengthy repatriation and court processes. Furthermore, despite a 2005 cabinet resolution that established that foreign trafficking victims in Thailand who are stateless residents can be given residency status on a case-by-case basis, the Thai government has yet to report granting residency status to a single foreign trafficking victim. As a result, it has been reported, that migrant victims run away from shelters to avoid deportation, which in turn makes them vulnerable to re-trafficking.

While the government generally encourages victims to participate in the investigation and prosecution of their traffickers, it provides limited incentives for victims to do so. High legal costs, language, bureaucratic, and immigration barriers, fear of retribution by traffickers, distrust of Thai officials, slow legal processes, and the financial needs of victims effectively prevent most victims from participating in the Thai legal process. While in the past, the government has offered legal aid and encouraged trafficking victims to seek financial compensation from their trafficking offenders in a few cases, there were no such reported cases during 2010.

Prevention

The Thai government supports an array of projects to prevent human trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation and sex tourism and made notable efforts in 2010.

The government collaborates with international organizations and NGOs to raise awareness on trafficking among migrant workers, targeting high-risk industries and populations within Thai society. The government reported that throughout 2010 and early 2011, it reached more than 3,000 people from high-risk groups to raise awareness on trafficking, as well as approximately 2,000 employers to raise awareness on labor rights and trafficking. NGOs confirmed that awareness of human trafficking and labor rights grew, both among these high-risk populations and government officials.

Further, the Thai Government is working with the Government of Burma to open a Burmese government office in Thailand, in the hopes of reducing the need for some undocumented Burmese workers to return to Burma, and thus making them less at risk to being exploited. However, there are several Thai policies that also put Burmese and other migrants at greater risk for trafficking. These include:

The government's Nationality Verification and Granting an Amnesty to Remain in the Kingdom of Thailand to Alien Workers Program binds Burmese and other migrant workers' immigration status to Thai employers, effectively leaving workers without legal recourse or protection from forced labor.

The government's process to legalize migrant workers includes associated fees which, in addition to costs imposed by poorly regulated and unlicensed labor brokers, increase the vulnerability of migrant workers to trafficking and debt bondage.

The government announced plans in 2010 to collect additional funds from migrant workers undergoing nationality verification in order to underwrite the cost of deporting undocumented migrants; if enacted, this could further increase workers' debt.

Thailand's 2008 anti-trafficking act also stipulated that a government fund be established to support the prevention and suppression of human trafficking as well as welfare protection for trafficked victims. The government reportedly disbursed \$200,000 from its fund to assist trafficking victims and finance anti-trafficking activities in 2010, but this is only a small portion of the total fund value.

International Cooperation

The Thai government works with international agencies and NGOs and foreign governments to combat human trafficking. It has also signed anti-trafficking memoranda of understanding (MOU) with Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam and established a migrant registration policy and signed bilateral employment MOUs with Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar.

Recommendations

The U.S. Department recommends that the Thai government enact the following measures in its 2011 TIP Report:

- ☐ Enhance ongoing efforts to identify victims of trafficking among vulnerable populations, in particular undocumented migrants and deportees;
- ☐ Increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict both sex and labor trafficking offenders;
- ☐ Improve efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict officials engaged in trafficking-related corruption;
- ☐ Ensure that offenders of fraudulent labor recruitment and of forced labor receive stringent criminal penalties;
- ☐ Improve labor inspection standards and procedures to better detect workplace violations, including instances of trafficking;
- ☐ Improve implementation of procedures to allow all adult trafficking victims to travel, work, and reside outside of shelters;

- ☐ Provide legal alternatives to the removal of trafficking victims to countries in which they would face retribution or hardship;
- ☐ Implement mechanisms to allow adult foreign trafficking victims to reside in Thailand;
- ☐ Make greater efforts to educate migrant workers on their rights, their employers' obligations to them, legal recourse available to victims of trafficking, and how to seek remedies against traffickers;
- ☐ Improve efforts to regulate fees and brokers associated with the process to legalize migrant workers in order to reduce the vulnerability of migrants to human trafficking; and
- ☐ Increase anti-trafficking awareness efforts directed at employers and clients of the sex trade.

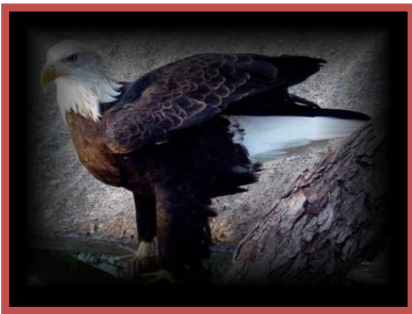
PART VI: BECOMING A NEW PERSON

CHAPTER 20: WE NEED CHANGE

Any bad habit can be got rid of if you have the will to do it. Besides, any good habit can equally be acquired if you so desire.

A. THE CHAINED EAGLE (ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY DAVID BRANDT BERG)

Many people resolve to do this or that, change this or that, break a bad habit, or start a new one. Sometimes it works; often it doesn't. Is that because so many of us are like the bird in the following story?



A man once owned an eagle, and for many years kept him chained to a stake.

Every day the eagle walked around and around that stake, and over time wore a rut in the ground.

When the eagle was getting old, his master felt sorry for him and decided to set him free. So he took the metal ring off the eagle's foot, lifted the eagle from the ground, and tossed him into the air.

He was free-but he had forgotten how to fly! He flip-flopped to the ground, walked back over to his old rut, and started walking in circles like he had for years.

No chain and shackle held him, just the habit!

There is a saying:

“The chains of bad habits are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken”

--and that would be true if it weren't for the Lord and His power.

You may think it's not possible for you to change, but if you really want to and are sincerely willing to, God can change you by the miracle-working power of His Spirit.

He'll do things you can't do!

You may have to put a great deal of your own will to the transformation process as well, but with God's strength and His intervention, you'll find you have more resolve, determination, and ability to change than you ever thought possible.

He said, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:22).

Following is what it means to "become a new creature in Christ Jesus" (2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV).

Jesus coming into your life not only renews and purifies and regenerates your spirit, but it also renews your mind, literally breaking old connections and reflexes and gradually rebuilding it and rewiring it into a whole new computer system with a different outlook on life and a new way of looking at the world, with new reactions to nearly everything around you.

To change yourself is something you can't do in your own will power and strength. If you want this change, it's necessary for you to ask Jesus to help.

Some changes are instantaneous, others take a while.

--But if you ask Him for help and do your part, you'll be changed, because Jesus changes people!
(For those who are not Christians, the power of your faith, of your Supreme Being, can transform your life. Faith in the absolute together with sincere, dedicated religious practices can help break bad habits and build up good ones. As to those who have no religion, the constant practice of the cardinal virtues can make you a new person.)

B. BUILDING GOOD HABITS



Believe it or not, they used to build bridges by first flying a kite from one side of the river or gorge to the other.

Someone on the opposite side caught the kite and tied a little thicker, stronger string to the end of the kite string, and the men who had sent the kite over pulled the new, thicker string back across.

The teams on each side kept repeating the process, next with an even stronger string, then a cord, then a thin rope, then a thicker rope, and so on.

Eventually they could pull a small steel cable across, then a heavier one, until finally they had a cable across the expanse that was strong enough to support them and their tools and materials.

And it all started with one tiny kite string!

That's how habits are formed, both good and bad. Add a thread every day, and before long you can't break it.

Start developing a good habit by taking the first step, however small, in the right direction. Then keep at it until you've built up a routine that can't easily be broken.

Psychologists tell us that it usually takes us three weeks to get familiar with some new task or habit; it takes another three weeks before it becomes a habit.

Now the reason why many people are not successful in forming a new habit is because they've never made it past that six-week barrier. For your new behavior to become a habit, you must do it daily for at least six weeks.

So don't give up too easily or too soon. Keep at it!

C. THE CHANGE WE NEED



After having lived its life for forty years, the eagle's long and flexible talons can no longer grab prey which serves as food. Its long and sharp beak becomes bent.

Its old-aged and heavy wings, due to their thick feathers, become stuck to its' chest and make it difficult to fly. Then the eagle is left with only two options: die or go through a painful process of change which lasts 150 days.

The process requires that the eagle fly to a mountain top and sit on its' nest. There the eagle knocks its' beak against a rock until it plucks it out. After plucking it out, the

eagle will wait for a new beak to grow back and then it will pluck out its talons. When its new talons grow back, the eagle starts plucking its old-aged feathers.

And after five months, the eagle takes its famous flight of rebirth and lives for 30 more years.

Why is change needed?

Many times, in order to survive we have to start a change process. We sometimes need to get rid of old memories, habits and other past traditions. Only freed from past burdens, can we take advantage of the present.

(This is a powerful thought for any human being, any organization, and institute. After its long years of existence, all need to undergo a painful process of change to equip themselves to face the challenges of the time.)

CHAPTER 21: SELF-ESTEEM

Definition

It is confidence in one's own worth or abilities. Being proud of oneself and one's dignity, it is also self-respect and faith in oneself. It is made up of the thoughts, feelings, and opinions one has about oneself.

The acquisition of self-esteem

We acquire it through the bringing up of our own family, through the interactions-be they good or bad-we have had with different peoples and events, through our experiences, and through our successes and failures.

As we grow up and move along in life, we cannot avoid hearing the "inner voice" or the "inner critic" that talks to us now and then. Learn to turn these voices into our own benefit, enhancing our own self-esteem.

Healthy self-esteem

It is the correct assessment of who we are as well as the acceptance of our weaknesses and strengths. We are proud of ourselves and our worthiness. Healthy self-esteem encourages us to try new things or new ideas and empower us to believe in ourselves. As a result, we learn to make good decisions. Positive self-esteem helps us love ourselves in their totality-body and soul.

Low self-esteem is the negative assessment of oneself.

Increasing one's self-esteem

There are many ways to enhance our self-esteem. They can be summed up thus:

1. Accept the reality and the totality of oneself. An adult will carry with oneself height, size, sex, colour of the skin, conspicuous feature of race (Chinese, Indian, European, American, etc., or mixture of these), one's nationality, place of birth, one's religion. Some of these realities can be changed. However, for the unchangeable, be happy with them. They can be one's valuable assets.
2. Realize one's strengths and accept limitations. Though one may be a good fighter/ boxer in lower division, yet one's overall buildup may not reach the heavy weight division. Accept it and try some other things that can match your strong points, such as language or IT or culinary skills. One should be able to look into the mirror each day and smile at oneself, acknowledging all the good qualities one has. If one does not appreciate one's own positive qualities, it will not be easy for the others to appreciate us.
3. Control one's emotions. If one is in the wrong, getting angry does not set one right; or if one is right, it is pointless to get angry. Everybody loves a smiling face, a cool and welcoming person. Any practice like prayer, meditation, Vipassana (Buddhist insight meditation), that helps bring self-awareness should be part of one's good habit.
4. Forgive oneself. Be large-hearted enough to forgive oneself for the wrong one has done. We all make mistakes and commit sins. Turn them into steppingstones to success. Self-forgiveness enables us to forgive others too. Never live in the past. It is useless to smell the garbage. There are perfumes and beautiful flowers out there to enjoy.

5. Adhere firmly to ethical principles and values. Everybody admires taxi drivers who return forgotten, valuable goods to right owners. All admire kids who help their sick, elderly parents through menial tasks like garbage collection or street sweeping to earn some baht. Your heroic acts of moral virtues bring you praise and self-esteem. Remember always “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
6. Be prudent in receiving remarks. Listen carefully to the inner voice in you or the loud spoken words of people around you that criticize or praise you. Some are insincere in their praise and criticism. Others are honest. Ignore the insincere remarks. Take constructive criticisms for correction and further development.
7. Get help from others. Yours trusted friend (s), teachers or lecturers, coaches or any person whom you can confide in freely can help boost your self-esteem. They are there to help you grow. As a last resort, you can get help from a counselor or therapist.
8. Exercise, healthy diet, relax and rest:
 - a. **Exercise.** Remember the Latin saying, “*mens sana in corpore sano*”- a sound mind in a sound body. Regular exercise, be it strenuous or light, keeps you fit and firm. Healthy body and sound mind enable you to make good judgment. In addition, sportsmen and women always look smart. They win admiration and esteem from others.
 - b. **Healthy diet.** Eat and drink what your body needs; do not follow your greed. Simple or plain food can be more nutritious than rich or junk food. Fruits, vegetables and lot of water are always good to your health.
 - c. **Relax.** Learn to laugh at yourself and laugh with others. Seriousness and studiousness in duty and responsibility is good. However, outside that, relax, laugh, and have fun. Avoid activities that cause tension and tiredness. Should watching detective movies cause you headache, stop doing it. If playing chess causes you mental fatigue, shun it. If watching humourous movies or episodes make you laugh a lot, alone or with others, do it. If the sea, sun, and the sand along the beach, uplift you, follow your heart. Seek out company and activities that bring relaxation. We all need it.
 - d. **Rest.** The old saying, “Early to rest and early to rise make a man healthy, wealthy and wise”, is still good today. The 24 hours per day should be divided into 8 hours of work, 8 hours of rest/ sleep, and 8 hours of eating, drinking, exercising, and relaxing. A sound sleep is sometimes more important than food. To have a good rest, keep your problems and worries at the door. Do not allow them to enter your room. After your waking up, you can ponder over those problems and worries once more.

CHAPTER 22: SELF-KNOWLEDGE: JOHARI WINDOW MODEL

(Adapted from: http://changingminds.org/disciplines/communication/johari_window.htm#the)

Introduction:

Johari window is a simple and useful tool for understanding and training self-awareness, personal development, improving communications, interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, team development and intergroup relationships.

It was developed by American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in the 1950's, calling it "Johari" after combining their first names, Joe and Harry.

Johari window is especially relevant due to emphasis on, and influence of, "soft" skills¹⁶, behavior, empathy, cooperation, inter-group development and interpersonal development. This is a very useful way of understanding how our self may be divided into four parts that we and others may or may not see.

The Basic Johari Window:

Below is a diagram of the standard Johari Window. It shows the four different selves and how the levels of self-awareness and how others are aware of this self lead to these four categories.

	What you see in me	What do you <u>not</u> see in me
What I see in me	The Public Self	The Private (or hidden) Self
What I do <u>not</u> see in me	The Blind Self	The Undiscovered Self

1. The Public Self

¹⁶ Personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people.

The Public Self is the part of ourselves that we are happy to share with others and discuss openly. Thus you and I both see and can talk openly about this 'me' and gain a common view of who I am in this element.

2. The Private Self

There are often parts of ourselves that are too private to share with others. We hide these away and refuse to discuss them with other people or even expose them in any way. Private elements may be embarrassing or shameful in some way. They may also be feared or avoided being discussed for reasons of vulnerability. Between the public and private selves, there are partly private, partly public aspects of ourselves that we are prepared to share only with trusted others.

3. The Blind Self

We often assume that the public and private selves are all that we are. However, the views that others have of us may be different from those we have of ourselves. For example a person who considers themselves as intelligent may be viewed as arrogant and socially ignorant by others.

Our blind self may remain blind because others will not discuss this part of us for a range of reasons. Perhaps they realize that we would be unable to accept what they see. Perhaps they have tried to discuss this and we have been so blind that we assume their views are invalid. They may also withhold this information as it gives them power over us.

4. The Undiscovered Self

Finally, the fourth self is one which neither we nor other people see. This undiscovered self may include both good and bad things that may remain forever undiscovered or may one day be discovered, entering the private, blind or maybe even public selves.

Between the Blind and Undiscovered Selves, are partly hidden selves that only some people see. Psychologists and those who are more empathetic, for example, may well see more than the average person.

Is self-knowledge important?

Self-knowledge is important because when we have a better understanding of ourselves, we are able to experience ourselves as unique and separate individuals. We are then empowered to make changes and to build on our areas of strength as well as identify areas where we would like to make improvements. Self-knowledge is often a first step to goal setting. Self-knowledge is being conscious of what you're good at while acknowledging what you still have yet to learn. This includes admitting when you don't have the answer and owning up to mistakes.

In our highly competitive culture, this can seem counterintuitive. In fact, many of us operate on the belief that we must appear as though we know everything all the time or else people will question our abilities, and then perhaps judge us. If you're honest with yourself, you'll admit that really the opposite is true. Because whether you acknowledge your weaknesses or not, everyone still sees them. So rather than conceal them, the person who tries to hide weaknesses actually highlights them, creating the perception of a lack of integrity and self-knowledge.

The Benefits of Self-Knowledge

Maybe it's obvious, but here in a nutshell are a few reasons why you might want to know your own nature:

1. Happiness. You will be happier when you can express who you are. Expressing your desires, moreover, will make it more likely that you get what you want.
2. Less inner conflict. When your outside actions are in accordance with your inside feelings and values, you will experience less inner conflict.
3. Better decision-making. When you know yourself, you are able to make better choices about everything, from small decisions like which sweater you'll buy to big decisions like which partner you'll spend your life with. You'll have guidelines you can apply to solve life's varied problems.
4. Self-control. When you know yourself, you understand what motivates you to resist bad habits and develop good ones. You'll have the insight to know which values and goals activate your willpower.
5. Resistance to social pressure. When you are grounded in your values and preferences, you are less likely to say "yes" when you want to say "no."
6. Tolerance and understanding of others. Your awareness of your own foibles and struggles can help you empathize with others.
7. Vitality and pleasure. Being who you truly are helps you feel more alive and makes your experience of life richer, larger, and more exciting.

[<https://www.sott.net/article/314005-The-benefits-of-self-knowledge-Vital-signs-for-understanding-your-identity>]

CHAPTER 23: THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING AND PAIN

There is one thing that almost every pregnant woman believes: Childbirth is the worst pain you could ever feel. And just about every pain you can imagine is compared to the pain of childbirth. Yet without the birth pang, there would not be a new life into the world. Again take the examples of reptiles. Skin shedding, or sloughing or molting among the reptiles, takes place to allow for further growth and to remove parasites that may have attached to their old skin. Although we are unsure if the skin shedding process is painful, it does make the reptile uncomfortable, cranky, aggressive, and in the wild more vulnerable to other predators. The last example is about toddlers. They stumble and fall several times before they can learn to walk. The adage "No pain, no gain". Is very much valid anytime, anywhere.

A. The Butterfly Story



I had kept the cocoon of a butterfly for nearly a year, when one day I noticed with excitement that the little insect was beginning to come out.

The cocoon was very peculiar in its construction. There was just a very narrow opening left in the neck of the flask, through which the perfect butterfly would have to force its way.

Such a small opening compared to the size of the imprisoned insect made me wonder how the exit could ever be accomplished at all!

I watched it patiently striving and struggling to get out.

It never seemed to be able to get beyond a certain point, and at last my patience was exhausted.

I thought that I was wiser and more compassionate than its Maker, and I resolved to give it a helping hand!

With the point of my scissors I snipped the confining threads to make the exit just a little easier...

... And lo! Immediately, and with perfect ease, out crawled my butterfly... dragging a huge swollen body and little shriveled wings!



I eagerly waited to see the marvelous process of expansion in which the wings develop before one's eyes. I longed to see them assume their due proportions and the creature to appear in all its perfect beauty. But I looked in vain!

My poor butterfly was never anything but a stunted abortion, crawling painfully through its brief life which it should have spent flying through the air on rainbow wings!

I learned later that the great labor and difficulty in passing through such a narrow opening is nature's provision for forcing the juices into the vessels of the

wings, which aren't totally developed at the period of emerging from the chrysalis.

My false tenderness had proved its ruin.

I now look back and think of it often, when watching with pitiful eyes those who are struggling with sorrow, suffering and distress; and feel tempted to cut short the discipline and give deliverance.

I say to myself: "Shortsighted man! How do I know that one of these pangs or groans could be spared?"

I asked for strength, and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for wisdom, and God gave me problems to solve.
I asked for prosperity, and God gave me intelligence and muscles to work.
I asked for courage, and God gave me obstacles to overcome.
I asked for love, and God put people with problems in my path for me to help.
I didn't get exactly what I asked, but I received all that I needed!

We all need to experience challenges and difficulties in our lives.
If God would allow us to live our lives without obstacles, we would be weak. And we could never gain the strength of character He needs us to have in order to succeed in life.
Without pain, suffering, and challenges, we could never fly.
Our Father's Love is too true to be weak.
*"There is always the hope of tomorrow to brighten the clouds of today.
There is always a corner for turning no matter how weary the way.
Just look ahead to tomorrow and trust that you'll find waiting there,
the sunlight that seemed to be hidden by yesterday's clouds of despair"*

B. Why God Allows Pain and Suffering

A man went to a barbershop to have his hair cut and his beard trimmed. As the barber began to work, they began to have a good conversation. They talked about so many things and various subjects. When they eventually touched on the subject of God, the barber said:

"I don't believe that God exists."

"Why do you say that?" asked the customer. "Well, you just have to go out in the street to realize that God doesn't exist."

Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people?
Would there be abandoned children?

"Why do you say that?" asked the customer. "Well, you just have to go out in the street to realize that God doesn't exist."

Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people?
Would there be abandoned children?

If God existed, there would be neither suffering nor pain.

I can't imagine a loving God who would allow all of these things."

The customer thought for a moment, but didn't respond because he didn't want to start an argument.

The barber finished his job and the customer left the shop. Just after he left the barbershop, he saw a man in the street with long, stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard.

He looked dirty and unkempt. The customer turned back and entered the barber shop again and he said to the barber:

"You know what? Barbers do not exist."

"How can you say that?" asked the surprised barber.

"I am here, and I am a barber. And I just worked on you!"

"No!" the customer exclaimed. "Barbers don't exist because if they did, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside."

"Ah, but barbers DO exist! That's what happens when people do not come to me."

"Exactly!" affirmed the customer. "That's the point! God, too, DOES exist!

That's what happens when people do not go to Him and don't look to Him for help.

That's why there's so much pain and suffering in the world."

BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS!!!

C. Pope Saint John Paul II's Answer to the Problem of Pain

An Inescapable Feature

He explored this theme in his apostolic letter *Salvifici Doloris* (SD: On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering). Suffering is part of human existence from birth until death, and every human person suffers in a variety of ways: physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually. The Bible provides many examples: one's own death, the danger of death, the death of children or friends, sterility, homesickness, persecution, mockery, scorn, loneliness, abandonment, remorse, watching the wicked prosper while the just suffer, the unfaithfulness of spouse and friends, and the misfortunes of one's homeland (SD 6). Suffering in one form or another accompanies each of us every day. It is an inescapable feature of human existence.

Suffering naturally leads to questioning. Why do I suffer? Why do others suffer? How can suffering be overcome? Is there any meaning to suffering? To find an answer, John Paul turned to revelation (Bible). In order to perceive the true answer to the "why" of suffering, we must look to the revelation of divine love, the ultimate source of the meaning of everything that exists. Love is also the richest source of the meaning of suffering, which always remains a mystery: We are conscious of the insufficiency and inadequacy of our explanations. Christ causes us to enter into the mystery and to discover the "why" of suffering, as far as we are capable of grasping the sublimity of divine love. In order to discover the profound meaning of suffering ... we must above all accept the light of revelation.... Love is also the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of suffering. This answer has been given by God to man in the cross of Jesus Christ (SD 13).

For John Paul, the story of Jesus Christ is the story of humanity. Every human life is a question, and it is the Lord who answers the question. Therefore we must look to Christ to understand the meaning of suffering. But our understanding of God is fragile and incomplete, because we are not capable of comprehending pure love and goodness. It follows, then, that our understanding of suffering cannot be definitive. This is especially true when we are dealing with suffering in its subjective dimension. Words fall far short when we are undergoing suffering, and reasoning cannot remedy the profound sense of the offensiveness of suffering.

In looking for an answer to the "problem of pain," the Pope avoided reducing all suffering to a single justification but looked at various aspects and meanings of suffering. Reducing suffering to a single solution does not do justice to its complexities.

Charity

Sometimes suffering makes an important good possible. If God eliminated that suffering, the corresponding good also would be eliminated.

We could say that suffering ... is present in order to unleash love in the human person, that unselfish gift of one's "I" on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer. The world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love that stirs in his heart and actions. (SD 29)

Humility

Suffering can bring us closer to what is good and can draw us away from obstacles to achieving happiness. Pain can prompt rehabilitation, a turning from evil to embrace stronger relationships with others and with God (SD 12). Suffering breaks down that most fundamental of human proclivities: our desire to be God. The atheistic existentialist Jean Paul Sartre wrote: "To be man is to reach toward being God. Or, if you prefer, man fundamentally is the desire to be God." The original sin of Adam and Eve was an attempt to reorder the universe so they could determine what is good and what is evil. This is replicated in every human sin. The sinner orders the universe according to his own will and sets aside the will of God. Suffering is redemptive in part because it reveals to man that he is not God, rendering him more receptive to the divine:

To suffer means to become particularly susceptible, particularly open to the working of the salvific powers of God, offered to humanity in Christ. In him God has confirmed his desire to act especially through suffering, which is man's weakness and emptying of self, and he wishes to make his power known precisely in this weakness and emptying of self. (SD 23)

Only when we are weak do many of us rely on God and explicitly repudiate our own divine ambitions.

Transformation

Down through the centuries and generations it has been seen that in suffering there is concealed a particular power that draws a person interiorly close to Christ, a special grace. To this grace many saints, such as St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and others, owe their profound conversion. A result of such a conversion is not only that the individual discovers the salvific meaning of suffering but above all that he becomes a completely new person. He discovers a new dimension, as it were, of his entire life and vocation. (SD 26)

It may be that some suffering is permitted by God as a way of waking someone from a dream of self-sufficiency or illusory happiness. Life-saving surgery is painful.

Punishment

Often our sinful actions lead directly to painful repercussions—the drinking binge leads to the hangover, unreasonable anger to injured relationships, laziness to lack of achievement. Suffering can serve as punishment for wrongdoing, a just retribution for personal sins.

The friends of Job sought to universalize this judgment, falsely concluding that all suffering is the direct result of a person's sin. If Job is punished, they reasoned, he must have sinned against God. But the innocent do suffer:

While it is true that suffering has a meaning as punishment, when it is connected with a fault, it is not true that all suffering is a consequence of a fault and has the nature of a punishment. The figure of the just man Job is a special proof of this in the Old Testament. (SD 11)

A Reason to Live

Christ's approach to the problem of pain is not an intellectual answer to an academic puzzle. Not every problem is abstract, intellectual, or academic. Theodicy—reconciling the existence of an all-good God with evil—can be tackled in this manner, but the problem of real pain is concrete, experiential, and personal. Its resolution does not come through words but through the Word alone.

The author Victor Frankel in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* describes his horrifying experiences in Nazi concentration camps. He notes that although all the prisoners were in the same material circumstances—the most horrible imaginable—they did not all react in the same way. Some prisoners killed themselves by walking into electrified fences; others clung to life and even found joy despite the atrocities occurring around them daily. What made the difference? One way to put it is that man can endure anything if he has a reason (logos) to live. Conversely, man can endure nothing if he does not.

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CHAPTER 24: THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS AND THE SEVEN CAPITAL VIRTUES

The concept of the seven capital virtues has been an aspect of Catholic Faith for several centuries, having gained recognition and popularity in the middle ages. This list of seven virtues is a set of virtues which are to counter the temptation to succumb to the seven capital sins. For this reason, they are sometimes also called the seven contrary virtues, representing the opposite of the seven sins.

The Seven Deadly Sins

Lust is an insatiable need for sex or things of a sexual nature. This includes thoughts, desires, and actions. If this need is unfed, it can lead to masturbation, rape, and even bestiality. Lust is fed by any of the aforementioned means or viewing pornography.



Gluttony is over indulgence of anything to the extreme, usually food or drink. Alcoholism and drug abuse are considered part of gluttony.

Greed is the need for material possessions or material wealth. If this need is unfed, a greedy person may even resort to hoarding their goods, theft, robbery, or obtaining any material possessions by means of trickery, violence, deception, or manipulation. Greedy people usually are easy to bribe, or will take any bet or do anything for a dollar.

Sloth, sometimes called *acedia*, is laziness, particularly when it concerns prayer and spiritual life. Sloth is always wanting to rest and relax, with no desire or intention of making a sacrifice or doing something for others. It's an aversion to work, physical, mental, and spiritual.

Wrath is extreme anger, rage, hatred, or a need for vengeance or revenge. People who suffer with wrath issues will often resort to taking the law in their own hands if they feel the justice system has failed them. To feed the need of wrath, they may even turn to physical abuse of themselves or others, murder, or even genocide. Wrath usually is a need to do harm to others

Envy is resenting another person's good fortune or joy. Catholicism distinguishes between two kinds of envy. Material envy is when you resent others who have more money, talent, strength, beauty, friends, and so on, than you do. Spiritual envy is resenting others who progress in holiness, preferring that they stay at or below your level instead of being joyful and happy that they're doing what they're supposed to be doing. Spiritual envy is far worse and more evil than material envy.

Pride is a need for public acceptance in all acts and to be more important than others. Those who suffer with pride issues, usually fail to give due complements to others, but instead fish for complements for

themselves. They find ways to be better than those around them and usually have a "One Up" story (superior). Pride is said to be the original and most deadly of the seven sins, leading straight to damnation.

The seven contrary or capital virtues

Chastity overcomes the sin of lust. Everyone could use more chastity in a world that is constantly displaying sexual images. The virtue of chastity can help calm our lustful desire for sexual acts and restrain



our wandering eyes. Chastity embraces moral wholesomeness and purity, and in both thought and action treats God's gift of sexuality with due reverence and respect.

Generosity overcomes the sin of greed. Our lives can be filled with a yearning for material goods or with the immoderate desire for earthly things. Material objects can block our vision of Christ who told us to give to the poor. This means not only do we give what we have in "excess" but to surrender all of our time, money, and spiritual gifts to those in need. The virtue of generosity is focused not merely on the appropriate concern regarding one's earthly things, but furthermore on generosity and a willingness to give, freely and without request for commendation.

Temperance overcomes the sin of gluttony, which wants us to give into our self-gratification for eating and drinking, among other things. Temperance is our ability to control ourselves and these desires. We may fall into the trap of self-indulgence but during these times we can call upon the virtue of moderation and self-control.

Kindness overcomes the sin of envy. Our love for someone should be without bias or spite. God blesses each of us in different ways. Envy will cause a rift in our relationship with God and others. Look upon our life with positivity rather than counting the ways God "hasn't" blessed us. Envy, in contradiction to God's law of love, is manifest in a person's sorrow and distress over the good fortune of another person. Conversely, kindness and brotherly love is manifest in the unprejudiced, compassionate and charitable concern for others.

Meekness overcomes the sin of unjust anger/wrath/rage. When Jesus was confronted by angry crowds who wanted to torture and kill him, he prayed for them. How often do we become upset and consumed by trivial matters? Control your anger and resentment and cultivate patience through this virtue. It focuses on patiently seeking appropriate resolution to conflicts, and on the ability to forgive and show mercy.

Humility overcomes the sin of pride. Everything we have is from God, and everything we do is derived from the gifts he has given us. By being modest we can turn outwards and lift up those around us. True humility clears a path for holiness. Pride is a sin based on undue and inappropriate appreciation of one's

self worth. Conversely, the virtue of humility is about modest behavior, selflessness and the giving of respect.

Diligence overcomes the sin of sloth. The virtue of diligence aids us in fulfilling our duties and cultivating a strong work ethic. Sloth draws us in to be lazy in all aspects of our life, physical and spiritual. We should develop our talents and gifts rather than keeping them wrapped up in sloth.

[<https://www.catholiccompany.com/content/7-Deadly-Sins.cfm>; <http://www.aquinasandmore.com/catholic-articles/>]

CHAPTER 25: MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Is Sexual Orientation Determined at Birth?

Whether sexual orientation is a trait we are born with (nature) or is caused by the environment we are raised in (nurture) has been debated by scientists, religious leaders, elected officials, and the general public.

Proponents argue that sexual orientation, much like handedness or tongue curling, is determined by natural, immutable biological factors such as genes or hormones, and therefore gay people should be entitled to the same legal rights and protections as other human beings.

Opponents argue that homosexuality is a reversible and unfortunate lifestyle choice resulting from poor child-parent relationships, sexual abuse, brainwashing by pro-gay influences, or other developmental causes. Some contend that gay people should be denied marriage, discrimination protection, and social and religious acceptance.

Points to Consider in Choosing your Ideal Marriage Partner

Choosing well is the foundation for a good marriage. Yet choosing is one of the most neglected pieces of the process of meeting, bonding, marrying, living life together and possibly having children. Choose well: the good and bad outcomes of your choice will shape your life, whether a first or second marriage, a Christian marriage, a common-law marriage, or a mixed-race marriage.

1. Can you accept each other as you are, warts and all? You can't change another person and you have absolutely no right to try to change your spouse. At the same time don't promise to change if your potential partner can't accept you as you are.



2. Value compatibility in the following areas:

- a) Lasting commitment, kids, religion, and spirituality;
- b) Expressing feelings honestly;
- c) An optimistic person;
- d) Simplicity versus luxury;
- e) Pet lover or plant keeper.

3. Don't fall in love with someone your intuition says you couldn't build a satisfying and fulfilling life with.

4. Being attracted to someone who is "hot" or "cool" is not the same as choosing someone who is gentle (a gentleman) and forgiving.

5. The man should have the courage to pursue the girl, to call her up and ask her for the date. It's a good thing that the man pursues the woman. Deep down inside, women want this.

6. A good relationship is not just about finding the right person, but being the right person. Be the best you can be and you will attract someone trying to be the best he or she can be. And always pray a lot.

Marriage

Marriage is not simply romantic love or sexual attraction. Rather it is the gift that one has made of oneself to another. Love of a person requires that your focus is not on what that person can do for you. Your focus is on what is good for that person, even if it inconveniences you. The real love comes from another source. It is not the feeling of closeness. It is not the sexual attraction. It is the gift of oneself that one has made to one's spouse. It is at a deeper level than feeling. It is at the level of free will and deliberate choice. Each should willingly say, "I love you and so I will lay down my life for you".

Remember men use language pretty much to solve problems, to get things done. Women use language that way, too, but they also use language to express how they feel. Men do have to learn to get into the feeling issue to a degree. Besides, women have intuitive way of grasping reality that men might have overlooked. Women like to be told, "I love you. I'm mad about you." Men don't do this. This is an expression of a feeling. Left to themselves, men will only express a feeling such as, "I don't like that. Do it differently." For men, language is for problem solving.

Regarding "two families marrying each other," that is important for the couple to keep in mind. When you marry you get a whole new family. You have to take that into account when you are courting because, to marry someone, and then just want that person only, and to try to tear him free from his family of origin isn't going to work.

Premarital sex and "living together" is to be discouraged. If one partner is unfaithful, the scar of infidelity will always remain. Secondly, there is the question of unwanted or untimely pregnancy. Thirdly, there could creep in the feeling of being "used" when the relationship is broken up. The wound will be hard to heal.

[<http://www.neillneill.com/marriage-seven-questions-to-consider-in-choosing-your-ideal-marriage-partner;>

<http://catholicreview.org/article/life/how-to-pick-the-right-spouse;>

<http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/marriage-and-family/sexuality/how-to-choose-a-spouse.html;>

[http://borngay.procon.org/\]](http://borngay.procon.org/)

Catholic View on Marriage and Family

Married love is a unique form of love between a man and woman which has a special benefit for the whole of society¹⁷. The Catholic Church, with other Christians and those of other religious and non-religious groups regard the family based on marriage between a woman and a man as the single most important institution in any society.

Marriage is a unique relationship different from all others. An essential characteristic of marriage is the biological fact that a man and a woman can join together as male and female in a union that is orientated to the generation of new life. The union of marriage provides for the continuation of the human race and the development of human society. It is precisely the difference between man and woman that makes possible this unique communion of persons, the unique partnership of life and love which is marriage.

¹⁷ Cf. Relatio Synodi of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelisation, (5-19 October 2014), p. 4.

Women and men find companionship in that relationship, where they complement each other, not because they are the same but because they are different, with different interests, perspectives, experiences and family backgrounds that each of them brings to the relationship. They are different because of all of those things, but they are different also because they are of different sexes. That difference means for most couples that their relationship can be fruitful in a unique way. Their love can bring forth new human life. In the child of their love they will see the qualities and experiences that each of them has flowering in a new human being. This little person is a member, like them, of the human family and, like them, a child of God who is beginning the journey that leads to where God makes all things new. Male – female complementarity is essential to marriage. It is naturally ordered toward sexual union in a faithful, committed relationship as the basis for the generation of new life. The true nature of marriage, lived in openness to life, bears witness to how precious is the gift of a child and to the unique roles of a mother and father.

Marriage is not only a private institution. The well-being of the family and its place in society is not simply a matter for the husband and wife but for society as a whole. It is given special recognition by society because it is the place where children learn what it means to be members of their family and of society.

In marriage, a woman and man promise love and fidelity to each other, for the rest of their lives. Not knowing what lies ahead they nevertheless make a commitment that they will continue to love each other whatever comes. While we know that their commitment may break down and know also the sorrow that this can bring, we also recognize that many couples live that marital commitment faithfully.

This committed, married love provides a stable and nurturing environment for children. It is here that children receive the most important and lasting education of all. They learn how to be a member of a family and of society.

We recognize that couples today face many challenges to building and sustaining a strong marriage¹⁸. A major challenge arises from any proposal which seeks to redefine the meaning and purpose of marriage on which the family is founded, changing the definition of marriage by enabling the relationship of a same sex couple to also become a marriage. To do this would mean that marriage, under civil law, would no longer be the committed gift of a man and a woman in a relationship “until death do us part”, in the kind of union which can bear fruit in new human lives. Any such proposal is based on the assumption that the institution of marriage on which the family is founded, which has always been recognized as the natural, primary and fundamental unit group of Society, has nothing unique about it and on the supposition that marriage can be unprotected of that social standing without obscuring its irreplaceable social role.

Marriage means the union of a man and woman. A husband is a man who has a wife; a wife is a woman who has a husband. A same sex couple cannot be husband and wife. A same sex couple cannot procreate a child through the sexual act which expresses married love. Often those who call for legal recognition of same sex marriage see it as a matter of fairness, equality and civil rights. The Church holds that basic human rights must be afforded to all people. This can and should be done without sacrificing the

¹⁸Ibidem, pp. 5-7

institution of marriage and family and the fundamental role they play in society. This is not about denying civil rights but protecting and upholding the meaning of marriage. It is a grave injustice if the State ignores the uniqueness of the role of husbands and wives, the importance of mothers and fathers in the society. Children, as they grow and mature, deserve from society a clear understanding of the importance of marriage. Without protection and support for the unique place of marriage in society, the State could, in effect, deprive children of the right to a mother and father.

Religious and non-religious people alike have long acknowledged and know from their experience that the family, based on the marriage of a woman and a man, is the best and ideal place for children. It is a fundamental building block of society which makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the common good. It is therefore deserving of special recognition and promotion by the State.

Proposals to change the meaning of marriage effectively say to parents, children and society that the State should not, and will not, promote any normative or ideal family environment for raising children. It therefore implies that the biological bond and natural ties between a child and its mother and father have no intrinsic value for the child or for society. As Pope Francis stated recently, “We must reaffirm the right of children to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child’s development and emotional maturity.”

There will always be situations in which the best interests of a particular child can only be met in a different type of arrangement. It is important that the State provides for and gives practical support to these arrangements. This is different, however, from saying that having children raised by their biological parents in a life-long committed marriage is no longer essential to the common good and deserving of special recognition by the State. Even where a husband and wife cannot have children of their own, the nature of their marriage can still provide a mother and a father to a child in adoption or fostering. We believe that the State should urgently provide more and better services in support of marriage in which mothers and fathers can provide the optimum loving and stable environment for children to grow and flourish.

PART VII: TOUGH DECISIONS

CHAPTER 26: DILEMMAS

Top 10 Moral Dilemmas (LISTVERSE STAFF (Oct 21, 2007)

Thankfully most of us do not come across dire situations that present a moral dilemma, but it is always a very interesting exercise to consider a dilemma and our reaction to it.

10. Concentration Camp. You are an inmate in a concentration camp. A sadistic guard is about to hang your son who tried to escape and wants you to pull the chair from underneath him. He says that if you don't he will not only kill your son but some other innocent inmate as well. You don't have any doubt that he means what he says. What should you do?

9. The Accident Ambulance. You are an emergency worker that has just been called to the scene of an accident. When you arrive you see that the car belongs to your wife. Fearing the worst you rush over to see she is trapped in her car with another man. She sees you and although barely conscious, she manages to mouth the words "I'm sorry"...You don't understand, but her look answers your question. The man next to her is her lover with whom she's been having an affair. You reel back in shock, devastated by what her eyes have just told you. As you step back, the wreck in front of you comes into focus. You see your wife is seriously hurt and she needs attention straight away. Even if she gets attention there's a very high chance she'll die. You look at the seat next to her and see her lover. He's bleeding heavily from a wound to the neck and you need to stem the flow of blood immediately. It will only take about 5 minutes to stop, but it will mean your wife will definitely die. If you tend to your wife however, the man will bleed to death despite the fact it could have been avoided. Who would you choose to work on?

8. Spam Filtering. You are the network administrator for a rather large company. You have a young family and need your job to support them. As part of your responsibility as a network administrator is to monitor the emails for the organization. Usually this just means occasionally allow through emails for staff members that have been accidentally blocked by the spam filters. One day you get a helpdesk request from a staff member asking for an email to get released. Normally it's standard procedure except this time the request has come from the wife of a very good friend of yours. You recognize the name on the helpdesk request so quickly attend to the problem. As part of the procedure you need to manually open up the email to ensure that it isn't spam, so you do and you discover that it certainly isn't spam. You find that it's actually an email to your friend's wife from her lover. You scan the rest of the contents of the email and there is no doubt that she has been having an affair for some time now. You release the email, but you can't decide what to do. Your initial reaction is to call your friend up and tell him about the email, however you quickly realize that company policy is very strict about revealing the contents of confidential emails of staff members regardless of the contents and unless someone's life is in immediate danger, under no circumstances are you permitted to reveal the information. In any case you know that revealing this

information presents great risk, because even if you don't do it directly, there is a good chance that the dots will be joined somewhere along the line and you will be found out. However you feel that by not telling your friend that you are aiding his wife get away with adultery and this troubles you greatly. What do you do?



7. The Neighbor. You have a wonderful daughter. She is 8 years old and has always been a happy outgoing child. But a while ago something terrible happened, she was raped. You are quite sure that the person who raped her is your neighbor. Your daughter is so traumatized she has stopped speaking, but she in other ways has been able to convince you that he is the one. Unfortunately not enough evidence can be found to convict him. You try to put your life back together. You move to another house and try to help your daughter in any way you can, but it is clear that the experience has ruined her life and that of your family. One evening you have taken your wife out to dinner at a restaurant when you spot your former neighbor at another table. He is eating alone and looks unhappy. You quickly finish eating and leave. The next day you find out that your former neighbor's wife has been murdered. Enough evidence to convict him of the murder is soon found, and at first you are very happy, finally he will get what he deserves. But then you remember that you saw him in the restaurant at the time of the murder. You know he did not murder his wife. Maybe he paid someone else to do it... You remember that the police said that it had been made it look like a burglary, maybe it was... You sit down to think. If you keep quiet he will be convicted for the murder, and the real murderer will go free. If you give him an alibi, he will go free, but you can't be sure the real murderer will be found, and it is possible that the evil bastard paid someone to do it... What do you do?

6. The Pregnant Woman. A pregnant woman leading a group of people out of a cave on a coast is stuck in the mouth of that cave. In a short time high tide will be upon them, and unless she is unstuck, they will all be drowned except the woman, whose head is out of the cave. Fortunately, (or unfortunately,) someone has with him a stick of dynamite. There seems no way to get the pregnant woman loose without using the dynamite which will inevitably kill her; but if they do not use it everyone will drown. What should they do?

5. Nieces and Daughters. You and your family are going away for the weekend. Your daughter is 7 and is best friends with your niece, who is also 7. Your families are very close and your daughter asks if your niece can come with you on your holiday. You have been on holidays together before and don't see any problem, so you agree. You arrive at your holiday destination and the house you are staying at backs onto a beach. The girls ask if they can go for a swim. You tell them that they have to wait until you have unpacked the car, but they can play on the sand directly in front of the beach. They run down to the sand, and you begin to unpack the car. After about 5 minutes, you hear screaming coming from the direction of the beach and it sounds like the girls. You run down to see what the matter is, and you discover that they hadn't listened to you and have gone for a swim. There is no one else on the beach and the girls are caught in a rip. The girls are really struggling, particularly your niece who isn't as strong a swimmer as your daughter. You swim out quickly, but when you get there, you realize that there is no way you will be able to get both the girls back into shore on your own. You realize that an agonizing decision will need to be made. You need to

decide which of the girls you will rescue first, you have enough strength and energy to rescue them both, but you can only do it one at a time. You look at the two girls, and your niece is really struggling to hold her head above water and you know if you take your daughter back first, there will be little or no chance that she will survive. Your daughter is struggling also, but is much stronger in the water and you estimate that if you take your niece back to shore first, there's probably a 50% chance that your daughter will be able to stay afloat long enough for you return, but you simply don't know how long she will hold on.

4. Hit and Run. One morning you are driving to work, and as per usual you are running a bit late, so you are driving a little faster than the speed limit. You reach down to your stereo to change the CD, when all of a sudden your car hits something solid. You spin to a stop, but not before several more cars have run into you and each other in an attempt to avoid the accident. As you look up and out of your car, you can see that you hit a person, and that the person is not looking very good. In fact, you are sure that he is dead. You shakily get out of your car, and look around at the damage that has been caused. Several cars have been badly smashed up, but more importantly you have killed someone with your careless driving. As you are standing there in shock, a woman comes up to you, tears running down her face, and obviously very shook up. As a natural reaction, you ask her what is wrong. She gives you a funny look, and then she explains that she just ran over someone. You ask her where this person is, and she points towards the person that you ran over! You don't understand why, but for some reason this woman thinks that she caused this accident and killed the person, when in fact you are well aware that you were the cause. Whoever accepts the blame is likely to be placed in jail for a very long time. If you let the woman take the blame, there is a very good chance you will get away with it all. However, there is also the chance that you could be placed in jail for even longer for trying to cover it up.

3. Drug Bust. You are on holiday in Bali with your 18 year old son and wife. You have been there for a week and are ready to head home. All three of you are at the airport getting ready to board your plane, when an armed officer comes around with a sniffer dog. You have all your bags on a trolley, and the dog sniffs at both your wife and your bag, and passes over it, however when he gets to your son's bag, he begins to get a bit more active. You look over at your son and he's looking a little nervous. You know he's smoked a little marijuana in his time, but generally, he's a good kid, and you certainly didn't think he'd actually be stupid enough to bring it back on the plane with him. At first you feel angry that he would do such a thing and start planning your responsibility lecture, but then you realize that you are in Bali, and they have a zero tolerance policy on drugs, meaning your son could be jailed for life, or worse, executed, if he does have some illicit materials in his bag. You look at your wife and realize she has come to the same conclusion and has gone pale with fear. The armed officer accompanying the dog is beginning to look more stern with every sniff the dog takes and looks directly at you and asks you to open the bag. You do, and as the officer begins to take things out of the bag, you see to your horror that there is a small quantity of marijuana stashed in with your son's belongings. The officer looks at you and asks "Whose bag is this?" You realize you have to answer, but the answer won't be easy. You see your wife in the corner of your eye, and she is about to step forward and claim it as her own; what do you say?

2. The Mad Bomber. A madman who has threatened to explode several bombs in crowded areas has been apprehended. Unfortunately, he has already planted the bombs and they are scheduled to go off in a short time. It is possible that hundreds of people may die. The authorities cannot make him divulge the location of the bombs by conventional methods. He refuses to say anything and requests a lawyer to protect his fifth amendment right against self-incrimination. In exasperation, some high level official suggests torture. This would be illegal, of course, but the official thinks that it is nevertheless the right thing to do in this desperate situation. Do you agree? If you do, would it also be morally justifiable to torture the mad bomber's innocent wife if that is the only way to make him talk? Why?

1. Lifeboat. You are going on a cruise. Two days into the cruise your ship experiences technical difficulties and the captain says it needs to make an unscheduled stop. A couple of hours later the captain makes another announcement that the ship's hull has been breached and that you will all need to start heading to life rafts and abandon ship. The ship's life rafts are lowered as people begin to pile in and you get on board one of the life rafts. As it is lowered however, it hits the side of the ship, putting a hole in the side of the raft, and when it hits the water it begins to sink. There are 10 people in the boat and to prevent it sinking, you quickly work out that by having 9 people working for 10 minutes while 1 person rests you can bail the water out with their hands, quick enough to keep the water at bay and preventing it from sinking, but you have to continually keep it up to ensure that the boat doesn't sink. By being able to rest one person you are greatly able to increase the length of time you can keep the boat afloat, however if the rescue team doesn't turn up you calculate that within 5 hours the boat will sink and you will all die. While taking your break, you glance over to another boat and notice that a friend of yours who you met on the boat is there and has noticed your predicament. He is signaling for you to come over and join them on their boat so you don't have to continue bailing water out. There is only just enough room for one more person. You also notice that their boat is moving away rapidly with the current, but your boat can't keep up because the hole is affecting its buoyancy. You estimate that if you jump ship, you will force all 9 remaining crew members to bail water continuously, which will reduce the total time they can stay afloat to just 2 hours, but will ensure that you will be able to live long enough to be rescued. If you stay aboard, you will not have another chance to jump ship, and there's no guarantee that the rescue will arrive in 5 hours, meaning you will drown, however by staying you give everyone a better chance of survival.

As you watch the boat with your friend drift away, you realize you have about 30 seconds to make a decision: a) Do you stay on your current boat and help keep it afloat as long as possible and hope that the rescue will arrive in 5 hours

b) Do you go to your friend's boat, ensuring your rescue, but reducing the chances of the others on the boat being rescued?

(Source: Moral Bliss)