

K – Kindness with Keeness

Dear: Starting with this chapter, I want to take you on a several-chapter “trek” to compare different opinions about morality. First, I’ll emphasize differences between what you’ve been taught *versus* what I wish you’d been taught about ‘kindness’ (this chapter, **K**) and ‘love’ (next chapter, **L**). Then, in **M**, I’ll address other aspects of interpersonal morality. My goal is to try to show you how the “god-awful mess of muddled morality”, perpetrated and perpetuated by clerics, can easily be cleaned up (at least theoretically!) by ignoring all the silliness about gods and, instead, by paying attention to what Nature tries to teach us.

To begin, let me remind you of one of my “judicial principles” that I remind myself when I’m walking and that, in an earlier chapter, I suggested might serve as a fairly good “interpersonal moral principle” for any society: *try to be kind*. Another potential principle, one with which you’re familiar, is: *love one another*. In this chapter and the next, I’ll show you some natural origins of those two principles and indicate how badly they’ve been mangled by either ignorant or deliberately deceptive clerics.

PERSONAL MORALITY

At the outset, also, I should emphasize a distinction between personal and interpersonal morality. In an earlier chapter (**J2**), I tried to show you what I hope you agree is a trivially obvious description of the act of highest personal morality (scoring a +10 on a “morality scale” that runs from –10 to +10). I offered several equivalent descriptions of this act of highest personal moral value, including:

- *Test ideas with data and then decide and act as the data dictate*, or
- *Apply the scientific method in daily life*, or
- *Use your brain as best you can*, or
- *Use your head*, or
- *Evaluate*, or even just
- *Think!*

The last abbreviation in the above list (i.e., *Think!*) is, however, rather dangerous, if – as so often happens – people forget to think about testing their ideas against data, i.e., forget to evaluate, also, their thoughts.

INTERPERSONAL MORALITY

In this chapter (and in the following chapters that deal with ‘morality’) I’ll be emphasizing, not personal morality, but interpersonal morality. For example, I’ll be emphasizing, not the “best way” (judged with respect to your objectives) to act when you’re alone, but the “best way” (again judged with respect to your objectives) to interact with others. Nevertheless, considerations of personal morality will definitely continue in what follows. Thus, the “best way” to decide on the “best way” to interact with others is to apply the personal moral principle: “use your brain as best you can”!

In a way, therefore, personal morality trumps interpersonal morality, in the sense: application of one’s personal moral principles (e.g., **Evaluate!**) is usually the best way to arrive at interpersonal moral principles (e.g., “try to be kind” or “love one another”). Consequently, the above personal moral principle (in any of its “bulleted” forms) seems more important than the two familiar principles “try to be kind” or “love one another”, because it contains those two as special and restricted cases – as well as much more.¹

As an illustration, if you do act with what I consider to be the epitome of personal morality (i.e., if you do “evaluate” or “use your head” or “use your brain as best you can” or “apply the scientific method in daily life” or “test ideas with data and then decide and act as the data dictate”), then I expect that one of your conclusions about a sound principle of interpersonal morality will be similar to what I remind myself with ‘K’ when I’m walking:

K – Kindness: Be kind, if you can, but be careful: apply kindness with keeness – sometimes it’s kindest to seem to be cruel.

And although the above “kindness principle” probably needs little explanation, I plan to go into some details – in part, because I hope you’ll find them useful, and in part, because I’m still working on my response to a certain four-year-old’s question about why I don’t believe in God!

¹ By the way, Dear, if you think the two, potential “interpersonal moral principles” (viz., “try to be kind” and “love one another”) are identical, notice that you can be kind to someone even if you “hate their guts” and that, even when you’re in love with someone, you can be unkind. Stated differently, kindness can be solely in response to left-brain, analytical thoughts; love is in response to right-brain emotions. As a result, it’s possible to comply if someone in authority demands that you be kind, but you can’t comply to a demand that you love, e.g., spinach or some god.

NATURAL ORIGINS OF THE KINDNESS PRINCIPLE

Ever since you were a baby, you've been indoctrinated with the idea that God wants you to be kind to others. Well, Dear, sorry to burst the balloon that your parents and Church have filled with so much hot air, but "it just ain't so"! It wasn't some giant Jabberwock in the sky who sent a "kindness principle" down to humans; instead, recent research in behavioral sciences has shown, unequivocally, that the message "be kind to one another" has literally "come down to us" from our primate past, from maybe a hundred million years ago! As Frans de Waal (a leading researcher in the field of behavioral sciences) wrote in his book *The Age of Empathy*:²

We start out postulating sharp boundaries, such as between humans and apes, or between apes and monkeys, but are in fact dealing with sand castles that lose much of their structure when the sea of knowledge washes over them. They turn into hills, leveled ever more, until we are back to where evolutionary theory always leads us: a gently sloping beach.

In his 1996 book *Good Natured – The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals*, de Waal reports a large number of observations of "moral behavior" of apes and monkeys in groups, including "cooperation, reciprocal exchanges, reconciliations, and even suggestions of sympathy and consolation." Thereby and unsurprisingly, natural selection apparently provides a "survival edge" to animals (including humans) that established a "morality" promoting the survival of the group's genes.

Here, however, I can't provide you with a thorough summary of the behavioral studies revealing such moral behavior in social animals (such as monkeys, apes, elephants, dolphins, and humans). If you have time to explore the (very interesting!) subject, you might want to start by watching videos of interviews with Frans de Waal (and by following the links) available at <http://cultureofempathy.com/References/Experts/Frans-de-Waal.htm>. The following quotations³ from de Waal might stimulate you to learn more:

² From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frans_de_Waal.

³ From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frans_de_Waal_-_Quotes.

I've argued that many of what philosophers call moral sentiments can be seen in other species. In chimpanzees and other animals, you see examples of sympathy, empathy, reciprocity, a willingness to follow social rules. Dogs are a good example of a species that have and obey social rules; that's why we like them so much, even though they're large carnivores...

The possibility that empathy resides in parts of the brain so ancient that we share them with rats should give pause to anyone comparing politicians with those poor, underestimated creatures [!].

Alternatively or in addition, you might want to search on the internet using “search words” such as “behavioral science ethics morality altruism kindness animals”. I suggest such a long string of “search words”, Dear, because (as you can find), there's an enormous amount of information on such topics on the internet.

I found an article⁴ in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* particularly illuminating, especially the following sentence:

Dolphins support sick or injured animals, swimming under them for hours at a time and pushing them to the surface so they can breathe.

Although I was unable to find the original source of that statement (by searching elsewhere on the internet), I admit that I find the thought so compelling that I almost don't care if it's correct! And thus, Dear, be prepared for my repeating this idea later in the book, even though I haven't verified its validity.

And if you think that such a plan is “about as crazy as they come”, Dear, then please allot a moment to ponder the question:

How can anyone be so naïve as to propose that kindness (or any moral principle) was dictated to humanity by some giant Jabberwock in the sky, when a dolphin will swim beneath a wounded cousin, periodically lifting it to the surface to breathe?

Sorry, Dear, but I don't want to be rational all the time!! The ideas in that question “blow me away”! But meanwhile, if you want to help your “poor old grampa” return to reality, then how about if you search for the original source of the information about the dolphins and then inform me.

⁴ At www.brittanica.com.

One source, suggesting that dolphins actually help more than just “fellow dolphins” is the myth (?) about the 7th Century BCE Greek singer/poet Arion being rescued at sea by dolphins.⁵ Another source is the following fable by Aesop, from more than 2500 years ago!⁶

Aesop: The Monkey and the Dolphin

A Sailor, bound on a long voyage, took with him a Monkey to amuse him while on shipboard. As he sailed off the coast of Greece, a violent tempest arose in which the ship was wrecked and he, his Monkey, and all the crew were obliged to swim for their lives. A Dolphin saw the Monkey contending with the waves, and supposing him to be a man (whom he is always said to befriend), came and placed himself under him, to convey him on his back in safety to the shore. When the Dolphin arrived with his burden in sight of land not far from Athens, he asked the Monkey if he were an Athenian. The latter replied that he was, and that he was descended from one of the most noble families in that city. The Dolphin then inquired if he knew the Piraeus (the famous harbor of Athens). Supposing that a man was meant, the Monkey answered that he knew him very well and that he was an intimate friend. The Dolphin, indignant at these falsehoods, dipped the Monkey under the water and drowned him.

Of course it’s the case (as someone else said) that “Aesop’s fables are not to be believed but to be understood”; so, I won’t rely on this Aesop fable [or the Arion myth (?)] to support the contention that dolphins practice kindness (or talk to monkeys or punish liars!), but hints that dolphins practice “kindness with keeness” have obviously been available for a long time!⁷

⁵ See, e.g., <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arion>.

⁶ Dear: All Aesop’s wonderful fables are available at www.classics.mit.edu.

⁷ Subsequent to writing that, Dear, I read the 2004 book by Michael Shermer entitled *The Science of Good and Evil – Why People Cheat, Gossip, Care, Share, and Follow the Golden Rule* (Holt & Co., New York). On pp. 31–32 of his book, not only does Shermer provide support for the reports about the behavior of dolphins, he describes similar for whales and elephants! He writes:

Hundreds of such examples exist in the scientific literature, and thousands more in popular literature. The following characteristics appear to be shared by humans and other mammals, including and especially the apes, monkeys, dolphins, and whales: *attachment and bonding, cooperation and mutual aid, sympathy and empathy, direct and indirect reciprocity, altruism and reciprocal altruism, conflict resolution and peace making, deception and deception detection, community concern and caring about what others think about you, and awareness of and response to the social rules of the group...* [The] fact that such “pre-moral” sentiments exist in our nearest evolutionary cousins may be a strong indication of their evolutionary origins.

Even more recently, I’ve been reading Richard Dawkins’ [old, 1976!] book *The Selfish Gene*. On p. 100 (of the 30th Anniversary edition of his book) he writes:

Perhaps even more difficult than to determine the degree of altruism among animals is to determine details about how kindness or altruism started among groups of primitive humans. Yet, a little imagination plus data from modern groups and some scanning for ideas on the internet (and other sources of information) can provide at least a general outline of what surely must have occurred. Thus, surely some general features of the origin of altruism among humans were the following.

- Because individual humans were vulnerable to “beasts of prey” (including lions, tigers, cougars, bears, wolves, and so on), no doubt survival of the human genetic code depended on cooperation among humans to defend against such beasts – and against groups of raiding humans.
- Because individual humans would generally have substantial difficulty killing most large animals for meat, no doubt survival of humans was promoted if they cooperated in hunting such animals – including cooperation with wolves / dogs!
- Because, almost certainly, food would soon spoil (except in the Arctic!), no doubt survival of the group would be promoted if meat from the killing of large animals were shared among members of the group, including adopted dogs!
- Because an increasing number of tasks would need to be performed to support a group (obtain water, wood for fires, and berries and roots; make clothing, shelters, utensils, and weapons; scout, hunt, prepare food; make decisions, settle disputes, care for the wounded, and so on), no doubt specialization and cooperation would have promoted the group’s survival.
- Because giving birth of children with such large brains is so difficult for women and because human offspring require so much care (compared with the care needed for offspring of other species), no doubt cooperation among women would have been essential.

Now, Dear, undoubtedly such a list could continue, but I trust I’ve listed enough for you to permit me to draw what I think are obvious conclusions.

Incidentally, there is at least one well-authenticated story of a drowning human swimmer being rescued by a wild dolphin. This could be regarded as a misfiring of the rule for saving drowning members of the [dolphin] school. The rule’s ‘definition’ of a member of the school who is drowning might be something like: “A long thing thrashing about and choking near the surface.”

Maybe – or maybe that “wild dolphin” has some previous, kind experience with humans, and like my German shepherd Heidi, it had learned the meaning of “reciprocity”!

Thus, surely it's obvious that cooperation among humans, altruism, kindness, "love one another", and so on, weren't proclamations that came down to us from some giant Jabberwock in the sky. They're not some god's "commandments" – and if you violate them, you're not going to have your toenails pulled off for eternity (or whatever). Cooperation among members of any group of social animals promotes the group's survival; those groups with non-cooperating members didn't survive (as groups, and maybe, then, not as individuals); therefore, consistent with Darwin's principle of natural selection, a propensity for cooperation among social animals was promoted by rewarding (with a greater chance of survival) those who practiced cooperation, altruism, sharing, kindness, etc.

This aspect of natural selection must have continued for hundreds of thousands of years – even millions of years. As a result, people (in particular) were "bred" (by natural selection) to be (and now are) generally cooperative, helpful, kind, and so on. Stated differently, the DNA molecule that each of us hosts first "learned" and subsequently "taught" each of us (*via* our "instincts", "programmed in our genes") that our survival – the survival of the human genetic code – is promoted if we cooperate with one another. Thus, Dear, it's a mistake to think that helping others is a mistake. It's true that altruism can be detrimental to an individual, but evolution selects "the altruistic gene" – because altruism promotes the survival of the species, which in the long run is the more important goal for the species.

HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE KINDNESS PRINCIPLE

In contrast to difficulties in deciphering the evolutionary record of "the kindness principle", it's relatively easy to decipher attempts to express the principle in writing. Generally in the following, I'll try to show the chronological order of written descriptions that led to your being indoctrinated with the idea that the principle was dictated by God.

Some Written Sources of the Old Testament's Kindness Principle

The earliest written record that hints at recognition of the value of cooperation, kindness, and so on, seems to be from the 24th century BCE. It was written by Ptahhotep (or Ptahhotpe or Ptah Hotep, where "Ptah" means "lord"), who was an Egyptian city governor and vizier (wise man) under Pharaoh Izezi. Unfortunately for my purposes here, Ptahhotep wrote in what appears to be a common style of early Egyptians, emphasizing negatives rather than positives (a style that, as I'll show you in a later chapter, is

* Go to other chapters *via*

common in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*). Thus, Ptahhotep wrote (4400 years ago!):

If you desire that your conduct should be good and preserved from all evil, keep yourself from every attack of bad humor... For it introduces discord between fathers and mothers, as well as between brothers and sisters; it causes the wife and the husband to hate each other; it contains all kinds of wickedness, it embodies all kinds of wrong. When a man has established his just equilibrium and walks in this path, there where he makes his dwelling, there is no room for bad humor. Be not of an irritable temper as regards that which happens at your side; grumble not over your own affairs. Be not of an irritable temper in regard to your neighbors...

One of the few “positive statements” that Ptahhotep seems to have made was his famous: “Be cheerful while you are alive!” Otherwise, the nearest Ptahhotep wrote on the subject of being kind to others appears to be 1) “Be not of an irritable temper in regard to your neighbors...” and 2) something that the authors of the Old Testament (writing ~2,000 years later!) would have been well advised to copy, for it’s doubtful that a better expression of “the kindness principle” has ever been written:⁸ “Let the love thou feelest pass into the heart of those whom thou lovest...”

Another early attempt to formulate the kindness principle was written by an Egyptian king (whose name is lost) who wrote *The Teachings for Merikare* (his son), which is given in Bartlett’s book⁹ to be from ~2135–2040 BCE, i.e., more than 1,000 years older than the oldest part of the Old Testament (OT) and ~1,500 years before the majority of the OT was written. Some of the details in these *Teachings* are the following:

Do justice, that you may live long upon earth. Calm the weeper; do not oppress the widow, do not oust a man from his father’s property... Beware of punishing wrongfully... Instill the love of you into all the world, for a good character is what is remembered.

In the Bible’s OT (the Jewish *Tanakh*), written, updated, and rewritten again (and again!) during the time period from ~1000–500 BCE, with most of it

⁸ Copied from Chapter 9 of John McCabe’s book *The Story of Religious Controversy*, which you can find on the internet and which I’ll be encouraging you to read.

⁹ *Familiar Quotations* by John Bartlett. Dear, the first edition of this book was published in 1855; my edition was published in 1980; I know you have a more recent edition at home. I hope that you’ll make the time to read this entire book, to discover a large part of your astounding inheritance, i.e., ideas that some of the best human minds have left you. As Ptahhotpe wrote 4400 years ago (!), in one of the oldest records of human thought: “Teach him [and her!] what has been said in the past...”

put in its current form by Ezra and co-authors ~425 BCE (i.e., ~100 years after Confucius and the Buddha), there is relatively little about human kindness. Most references are to the imagined kindness of the Hebrew's imagined god. Thus, when I searched for the word "kindness" in the OT (using the "Bible search engine" at www.gospel.net) there were 65 "matches", but essentially all refer just to comments about God's supposed kindness or about specific acts of kindness that occurred between two identified people. Three exceptions are the following.

The first "exception" (that is, the first case in the OT where an attempt appears to be made to express or "formulate" a kindness principle) is in *Leviticus 19*, 11–18, which is easily argued to be the best few lines in the whole Bible – including everything in the New Testament (NT)! Below, I'll quote the passage, but I'll eliminate all supernatural jabberwocky [and add a few notes in "square brackets", whereas the note in "curly brackets", {...}, are from the Bible].

You shall not steal; you shall not cheat or deceive a fellow-countryman [It's rather sad to see this restriction just to "fellow-countryman"...] *You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him.* [Although, again, it's rather sick to see that this recommendation is restricted just to neighbors!] *You shall not keep back a hired man's wages till next morning.* [Weekly and monthly paychecks are out of the question – and of course, billing for services rendered is strictly prohibited!] *You shall not treat the deaf with contempt, nor put an obstruction in the way of the blind.* [I should hope not!]

You shall not pervert justice, either by favoring the poor or by subservience to the great. [That's a very good statement!] *You shall judge your fellow-countryman* [and everyone!] *with strict justice.* *You shall not go about spreading slander among your father's kin* [or among anyone!], *nor take sides against your neighbor on a capital charge.* [Which, on the face of it, appears to be a perversion of justice – if you have evidence that your neighbor is guilty!] *You shall not nurse hatred against your brother.* [Which, again, can be a perversion of justice.] *You shall reprove your fellow-countryman frankly and {for that you will incur no blame}.* *You shall not seek revenge, or cherish anger towards your kinsfolk; you shall love your neighbor as a man like yourself.*

And of course the last phrase (which I italicized) is what Christian clerics reported (in the NT) that their Jesus advocated and is what they wrote in the slightly modified form: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*"

Subsequently – and unfortunately – Christian (and Mormon) clerics mangled this concept from the OT rather badly, for in the NT at *John 12*, 25, the

clerics have their Jesus state: “**The man who loves himself is lost, but he who hates himself in this world will be kept safe for eternal life.**”

Consequently, if you’re to love your neighbor as yourself and you’re to hate yourself, then guess how you’re supposed to treat your neighbor! Further, as I’ll mention now and dig into in more detail in the next chapter, notice the foolishness of ordering (or commanding) people to love (their neighbors): people can satisfy an order to be kind; not to love!

Anyway, such foolishness aside for a while, a second example in the OT of an attempt to formulate the kindness principle (if the common meaning of ‘kindness’ is stretched a little) is contained in *Proverbs*. Here, for reasons to be explained, I’ll quote this version of the kindness principle from Bartlett’s:

Rob not the poor, because he is poor [Does that mean: there’s no point in robbing the poor, because the poor don’t have anything worth stealing?!]; **neither oppress the afflicted in the gate** [whatever that means!]. *Proverbs 22, 20-21*

Remove not the ancient landmark. *Proverbs 22, 22.*

These (and nine others that you can find listed in Bartlett’s) are especially interesting to me, because (as shown in Bartlett’s) they’re so similar to saying of Amenemope (an Egyptian), written in the 11th century BCE. To see the similarities (suggesting that whoever wrote this part of the OT’s *Proverbs* was just copying Amenemope), compare the above with what Amenemope wrote:

Beware of robbing a wretch or attacking a cripple.

Do not move the markers on the border of the fields.

A third exception that I found in the OT (i.e., a third example dealing with human kindness) also has a strange twist. This example is in *Proverbs 31*, “**the words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him**”, about the characteristics of a “virtuous women”. Here, I purposefully quote from *The King James Version* of the Bible:

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. *Proverbs 31, 20*

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
[underlining added] *Proverbs 31, 26.*

The two features about these quotes that I find interesting are: 1) they hint (incorrectly!) that kindness is mainly the concern of women (because there's so little written about kindness elsewhere in the OT), and 2) the second quotation refers to the potentially important "law of kindness", which a "virtuous woman" has "in her tongue". Amazingly, though, this "law of kindness" doesn't seem to be defined anywhere else in the OT! And then, in the version of the Bible (The New English Bible, which I've been quoting elsewhere in this book, mainly because it's easier to read), 'lo and behold (☺), *Proverb 31*, 26 is changed to:

When she opens her mouth, it is to speak wisely, and loyalty is the theme of her teaching.

That's very strange! It suggests to me that the authors of *The King James Version* were disturbed by the lack of meaning for "loyalty" and substituted the Christian concept of the "Law of Kindness" – but then, the group that wrote *The New English Bible* realized that the OT never defined "the law of kindness" and therefore reverted to the "original" (but also rather meaningless) "loyalty" (to whom?) "is the theme of her teaching."¹⁰

Some Written Sources of the New Testament's Kindness Principle

As you probably expect and as I'll show you below, other cultures (besides Egyptian and Hebrew) were also developing what could be called "a law of kindness". I've taken the examples that follow from many web sites, including <http://www.christainfaith.com/articles/golden.html>, <http://www.churchofhumanbodies.org/christinsanity/goldenrule/index.shtml>, <http://www.unification.net/ws/theme015.htm>, and Lyndale@axess.net. As you read these versions of "the kindness principle", Dear, if you become impressed that they're so similar, then please consider two factors.

¹⁰ Well, Dear, it became even stranger! Many months after I wrote the above paragraphs, I read Thomas Paine's book *The Age of Reason* (which is available on the internet). As I've mentioned before, Paine was one of the greatest of this country's "founding fathers" – but he received enormous condemnation from Christian theologians for his book *The Age of Reason*. In his book, he writes the following:

That the Jews did translate the literary productions of the Gentile nations into the Hebrew language, and mix them with their own, is not a matter of doubt; the thirty-first chapter of *Proverbs* is an evidence of this; it is there said . . . : "The words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him." This verse stands as a preface to the Proverbs that follow, and which are not the proverbs of Solomon, but of Lemuel; and this Lemuel was not one of the kings of Israel, nor of Judah, but of some other country, and consequently a Gentile.

One factor to consider is that “being kind” is a “natural law”, in the sense (as mentioned earlier) that natural selection apparently gives a survival edge to vulnerable animals (such as humans) that cooperate. And a second factor that I hope you’ll consider is that, when the OT was being written in its current form by Ezra and co-authors, the world was “shrinking”, fast, in that, with writing on paper (rather than clay or stone!), ideas could be transferred between and among cultures relatively easily. Further, by Ezra’s time, the Persians (who, as I’ll show you, had taught Ezra his “new” religion – which he then inflicted on the Jews as Judaism!) had opened up their “Royal Road” across their empire (stretching from Greece to India) and on which “mail” was carried by the first version of the “pony express”, described by the world’s first historian, Herodotus (~485 – ~425 BCE) as follows:

Not snow, no, nor rain, nor heat, nor night keeps them from accomplishing their appointed courses with all speed.¹¹

Therefore, Dear, expect that most cultures wrote similar versions of “the kindness principle” during roughly the same time period. In particular, when Ezra and co-authors were writing the OT (mixing together myths from many cultures with Jewish stories and customs – and claiming that the first five books of the OT were written about 800 years earlier by Moses!), they were exposed not only to Egyptian teachings but also to the teachings of the religions of the East, including the religions (and their myths) of India (Hinduism), Persia (Zoroastrianism), and Ancient Mesopotamia. Example of attempted formulations of the kindness principle include the following:

1. From ~2,000 years before Christianity, as given in the article by Edward T. Babinski entitled “*The Golden Rule*” and *Christian Apologetics* at <http://www.christainfaith.com/articles/golden.html>:

Ancient Babylonian sacred teaching from ~2,000 years before Jesus was born: “Do not return evil to your adversary; requite with kindness the one who does evil to you; maintain justice for your enemy; be friendly to your enemy.” (Akkadian Councils of Wisdom, as cited in Pritchard’s *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*)

2. From Hinduism, which predates Christianity by at least 1,000 years:

“Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you” or

¹¹ As you probably know, Dear, the U.S. Postal Service adopted a slightly modified version of Herodotus’ description of the Persian “Pony Express” to describe their own service: “Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”

“Let no man do to another that which would be repugnant to himself” or
 “One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself.
 This is the essence of [interpersonal] morality.”

3. From Zoroastrianism, which predates Christianity by at least 500 years (Zoroaster may have lived from perhaps ~630–550 BCE, but perhaps as early as 1200 BCE, in what is now Iran):

“Nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself.”

Similar formulations of the kindness principle emerged in various philosophies (which are sometimes mistakenly considered to be religions), such as Taoism (or Daoism), Confucianism, and Buddhism. Below, I’ll provide some examples, plus give you a little information about the founders of these philosophies:

- Lao-tzu lived from ~604–531 BCE in China and was, in some ways, the founder of the philosophical system known as Taoism or Daoism. An example of the kindness principle in Daoism is: [Regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain and your neighbor’s loss as your own loss. Whoever is self-centered cannot have the love of others.](#)
- The Buddha [Siddhartha (or Shakyamuni = the sage from the tribe of the Shakyas) Gautama] lived from ~563–479 BCE in India and founded the philosophy (not a religion) known as Buddhism. An example of the kindness principle in Buddhism is: [Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.](#)
- Confucius [Latinized from "Kung the master", i.e., Kung (or K'ung) Fu-tse (= the master)] lived from ~555–479 BCE in China and founded the philosophy (again, not a religion) known as Confucianism. For the time being (I’ll return to the brilliance of Confucius later in this chapter), I’ll quote just his: [What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.](#)

Meanwhile, many other “infidels” or “heathens” or “pagans” (as defined by Jews, Christians, Muslims, or Mormons!) formulated similar expressions for the kindness principle. One example is from the Greek fable “The Lion and the Mouse”, attributed to Aesop (who lived ~500 BCE, but the origin of the fable is probably much earlier). The moral of this fable (using the word ‘moral’ as a noun rather than as an adjective) is:

[No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.](#)

Even earlier, in The ODYSSEY (Book 5) written in about 700 BCE, Homer had Calypso say to Odysseus:

“I will be as careful for you as I should be for myself in the same need.”

Other examples from “heathens” include the following, mostly taken from <http://www.churchofhumanbodies.org/christinsanity/goldenrule/index.shtml>:

Pittacus (~650 BCE):

Do not do to your neighbor what you would take ill from him.

Thales (~464 BCE):

Avoid doing what you would blame others for doing.

Sextus (~406 BCE):

What you wish your neighbors to be to you, such be also to them.

Plato (~390 BCE):

And may I do to others as I would that others should do to me.

Aristippus (~365 BCE):

Cherish reciprocal benevolence, which will make you as anxious for another’s welfare as your own.

Aristotle (~340 BCE):

We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us.

Isocrates (~340 BCE):

Act toward others as you would desire them to act towards you.

Thereby, Dear, given what you’ve been taught in Mormonism, I trust that you’ll appreciate the significance of the following statement, made by Kersey Graves in his 1875 book *The World’s Sixteen Crucified Saviors – or Christianity before Christ*:

... [The] Golden Rule [was] proclaimed [by “heathens”]... long before it was republished by the founder of Christianity... proving that it does not transcend the natural capacity of the human brain to originate, and hence needs no God to reveal it. Indeed, it is one of the most natural sentiments of the human mind. “Would I like to be treated thus?” is the first thought which naturally arises in the mind of a person when maltreating a neighbor; thus showing that the Golden Rule is a spontaneous utterance of the moral feelings of the human mind.

But although there’s no doubt that all formulations of the kindness principle are merely reflections of a sentiment “programmed” into our genes (and the

genes of many other animals, including dolphins!), I'll continue with this examination of how the principle might have been incorporated into the NT, by turning now to some pre-Christian Jewish literature. My first additional example [besides those already listed from the Old Testament (OT or *Tanakh*), especially the formulation at *Leviticus 19, 18*: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself**] was written in the 2nd Century BCE and is at *Tobit 4, 14* (an “apocryphal” book of the Bible, i.e., not “sanctified” as a “revelation from God” – at least, not by some Christian denominations, but it is by the Catholics): **What you hate, do not do to anyone.**

Another example from the pre-Christian Jewish literature is from the Jewish philosopher Philo (also known as Philo Judaeus, ~20 BCE – ~50 CE). Philo lived in Alexandria, Egypt, seemed to consider Plato almost as a god, and (as I'll show you later) probably had substantial influence on the clerics who wrote the New Testament (NT). He wrote: **What you hate to suffer, do not do to anyone else.** As you can see, Philo's statement is almost the same as the quotation from the Bible's *Tobit* (given in the previous paragraph).

And my third example from pre-Christian Jewish literature (probably predating Philo's statement, but I put it as the last of the three because of its importance) is from an amazing fellow, the Jewish rabbi Hillel (~60 BCE – ~10 CE). Approximately a generation before the clerics allege their Jesus lived, Hillel not only essentially repeated the above from *Tobit* but also added the amazing statement (*Talmud*, Shabbatt 31a):

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.

Now, Dear, I expect that you don't understand why I describe Hillel's statement as “amazing”, and I'll need to ask for your patience, because I won't get to my “full” explanation until the “excursion” Yx (dealing with “Your Indoctrination in the Mountainous God Lie”), where I'll dig into some historical details. For now, I'll just list a few points whose “justification” I won't get to until Yx:

- At about the time when the clerics who wrote the NT allege that Jesus was born, the leaders of “conservative” and “liberal” Jews were the rabbis Shammai and Hillel, respectively, with Shammai emphasizing “the letter of the law” (of “Moses” – at least as claimed by Ezra and co-authors!) and Hillel emphasizing “the spirit of the law”.

- If a historical Jesus existed (a much debated supposition), living when the clerics claim (another debated supposition), then it would have been consistent if he had been a follower of Hillel, emphasizing the spirit of the law. It would then be inconsistent, however, for Jesus to have criticized the Pharisees so frequently, e.g., from the Gnostics' *Gospel of Thomas*: **Damn the Pharisees! They are like a dog sleeping in the cattle manger: the dog neither eats nor [lets] the cattle eat.**
- If, instead, a historical Jesus lived almost a century earlier [born, as recorded in Jewish literature, as the child of the young woman Mary (or Mariam) who either had an affair with or was raped by the Roman soldier Pandera (or Pandira, Pantera, Pantere, or Pantheras, which in English may mean 'panther'), whose name was therefore Jesus ben (= "born of") Pandera – and this Jesus was eventually stoned to death (and his body hung on display) for being a "wizard"], then it would be consistent that he would have criticized the Pharisees vehemently, particularly his possible rabbi, Yehoshua ben Perachya, who considered Jesus to be a sorcerer, for practicing Kabbalistic methods and Egyptian "magic".
- If Jesus was entirely a literary character (similar to William Tell), then as I outlined in the "excursion" **Ix**, the essence of the NT may simply be an overlay of astrology (associated with the start of the Age of Pisces) upon the teachings of Rabbi Hillel, for example, **What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it** – by which Hillel probably meant not only learn "the commentary" but also learn to put into practice the kindness principle, either from *Tobit 4, 14* (**What you hate, do not do to anyone**) or from *Leviticus 19, 18* (**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**).

In summary, Dear, although you've been indoctrinated ever since you were a baby with the idea that Jesus conveyed a message direct from God that you were to be kind to others, I hope you see, both from results of behavioral studies of animals and from the historical record, that there's nothing "supernatural" about the kindness principle. It's a principle that social animals (such as dolphins and humans) adopted, because it promotes survival, and it's a principle that written records show was well described long before stories about Jesus (or Muhammad or Joseph Smith) were promoted by clerics (for their own benefits). Furthermore, as I'll now try to show you, attempts in some of these earlier cultures to express the kindness principle resulted in formulations that surpass the wisdom of the version in which you've been indoctrinated.

COMPARING VERSIONS OF THE KINDNESS PRINCIPLE

Dear: If your first impression is that the various versions of the kindness principle given above are all essentially the same, then please consider the following. Below, I'll focus on five of them,¹² namely those from:

- Confucius (~555–479 BCE): **What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.**
- Plato (~428–348 BCE): **And may I do to others as I would that others should do to me.**
- Aristotle (384–322 BCE): **We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us.**
- The Gnostics' Jesus, as given in the *Book of Thomas*, 25: **Love your friends like your own soul, protect them like the pupil of your eye.**
- The clerics' Jesus, as given in the *King James Version* of the NT at *Matthew 7, 12* (probably first written in about 100 CE): **Whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets**, or, from the *New English Bible*, **Always treat others as you would like them to treat you: that is the law and the prophets.**¹³

At first glance, perhaps all the above “formulations” look pretty much the same, but below I'll go through them again, to suggest that these different statements do convey different messages.

¹² Dear, I didn't include suggestions of any formulations of the kindness principle in Islam, in part because the founder (Muhammad) lived much later (from about 570–632 CE), and in part because, when I did an internet search in Islam's “holy book” (the Koran or sometimes spelled Qur'an or Quran) for “kindness”, the search engine didn't reveal to me that Muhammad had focused on any new formulation of a kindness principle. Instead, in the Koran there are many statements of Allah's (or God's) kindness and then statements for the “faithful” to follow, such as at *QS:4:36*, “(Show) kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and unto the neighbor who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbor who is not of kin, and the fellow-traveler and the wayfarer and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess.” Nonetheless, there are good formulations of the kindness principle in Islam, though not from the Koran. For example, there is: “Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” (Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi 13), and also “That which you want for yourself, seek for mankind.” (Sukhanan-i-Muhammad, 63).

¹³ Dear: In case you, too, wonder about the meaning of “That is the law and the prophets”, on the internet you can find the explanation (for which I can't vouch) that it was an old way of saying something similar to “That's what the *Tanakh* (the Old Testament) says.”

The Silver, Golden and Diamond Rules

First, Dear, notice that, in the above five formulations of the kindness principle, there's quite a shift in meaning during the approximately 600 years from when the first was written until the time of the fifth. Thus, with the “negatives” in his statement, Confucius urged constraint: “**What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.**” There's similar negativity in the formulations from Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Judaism. To provide a contrast with “positive” formulations of the kindness principle (commonly called “the Golden Rule”), some people call such negative formulations “the Silver Rule”.

In contrast, Plato's formulation of the Golden Rule (“**And may I do to others as I would that others should do to me**”) suggests that people should be “proactive”, seeking to help others. Meanwhile, Aristotle was also quite positive (proposing that we be proactive), but he limited his recommendation to friends: “**We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us.**” To contrast Aristotle's formulation from the Golden Rule and to emphasize its superiority (which I'll explain, shortly), his might be called “the Diamond Rule”.

Versions of the kindness principle attributed to Jesus thus appear to be re-statements of expressions formulated many centuries earlier by Plato and Aristotle. Thus, the Golden Rule given by the clerics' Jesus (“**Always treat others as you would like them to treat you**” or “**Whatsoever ye would that [others] should do to you, do ye even so to them**” or “**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you**”) is apparently just an unacknowledged rephrasing (plagiarism!) of Plato's Golden Rule, “**And may I do to others as I would that others should do to me**”. Similarly, the Diamond Rule given by the Gnostics' Jesus, “**Love your friends like your own soul**” seems to be just an unacknowledged rephrasing of Aristotle's Diamond Rule, “**We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us.**”

Inadequacies in Available Versions of the Kindness Principle

Now, Dear, I should admit that I find inadequacies in all five of the above formulations of this potential moral principle – although I have least trouble with the formulations by Aristotle and the Gnostics' Jesus. To understand my difficulties, consider some examples.

First, suppose that, when you're sad, you like to eat chocolates. Then, suppose you saw a girl looking very sad; so, you offered her some

* Go to other chapters *via*

chocolates. She takes one, and bursts into tears – because the original source of her unhappiness was: she felt she was overweight and couldn't restrain herself from eating candy. Consequently, your “kindness” (applied following the Golden Rule from Plato or the clerics' Jesus) was actually a very cruel thing to do. If she had been your friend, in contrast, you probably would have known what her problem was, and if you then had followed the advice from Aristotle (or the Gnostics' Jesus) rather than Plato (or the clerics' Jesus), you wouldn't have offered her chocolates. I therefore conclude that Plato's and the Christian clerics' code was formulated – and is still promoted – with insufficient thought, a theme to which I'll return.

Consider another example of my dissatisfaction with the statement of the kindness principle formulated by Plato – and then, almost certainly, copied by the clerics who wrote the NT, ~500 years later, claiming that their Jesus had said it. This example occurred when I was a kid and we were very poor. I remember that, every week, an old lady from about a half a mile down the road would exercise her “Christian charity” by bringing the previous week's newspaper to my mother. I was grateful to receive the paper: I could read the news, and it meant that we had a fresh supply of “toilet paper” – for the out-house! But I remember how, every week, my mother would dread that old woman's visit. To my mother it meant that a neighbor was saying: “You're so poor, you can't afford even a newspaper.” (I assume that she never knew that the paper was also our weekly supply of toilet paper!)

My point, Dear: maybe that old lady felt “warm and fuzzy” following Plato's Golden Rule, but apparently she (and the clerics' Jesus, i.e., in reality, whoever wrote the NT) never paused to think about what the recipient of the “kindness” wants. That is, if you do unto others what you would have them do unto you, then you are too damn self-centered!

More generally, Dear, to see what I'm trying to say, please consider the following quotation from the well-written article by Edward T. Babinski entitled “*The Golden Rule*” and *Christian Apologetics*.¹⁴

Lastly, there appears to be a flaw in the Golden Rule itself. If you simply try to “do unto other as you would like them to do unto you”, then you could wind up doing things to others they might not enjoy as much as you do! Do you like listening to rap music? Then do it to others! Crank up those speakers so others can enjoy it as well! Do you like having sex? Then go out and initiate sex with others! Do you love your

¹⁴ Copied from <http://www.edwardtbabinski.us/religion/golden.html>.

particular religious beliefs? Then initiate conversations with others about your favorite beliefs.

Worst case scenario is that if someone fears they will be sent to eternal hell for doubting a particular religious belief, they might welcome being coerced and tortured to “correct” their beliefs and assure them eternal heaven, in which case the Golden Rule would imply that other people would be equally appreciative of being “corrected” rather than “risk eternal hellfire.” So, we need both the Golden Rule and also the “negative” Golden Rule, working together, to avoid the kinds of excesses mentioned above.

An even more “finely tuned” rule might be what some call “The Platinum Rule”, namely, “Do Unto Others as They Would Have You Do Unto Them”. In other words, take time to learn about your neighbor’s tastes, their mood, their nature, and their temperament, before you start “doing” things “unto them”. Treat others the way they want to be treated.

If Plato and the (mostly Greek) authors of the NT had given the matter more thought, perhaps an improved statement would have been something similar to what Babinski refers to as “the Platinum Rule”, i.e., some version of “Do unto others as they would have you do.” Yet, I wouldn’t have liked that “rule”, either, because, as I’ll get to (and anyway, as you already know!), sometimes it’s unwise to do what others want; i.e., sometimes it’s kindest to seem to be cruel.

Now, Dear, it might be thought that the formulations as given by Zoroaster or the Buddha, or used in the Hindu religion, or Confucius’s statement show more wisdom (e.g., “don’t do to others what you don’t want done to you”), but these statements appear to have weaknesses, too, because they say nothing about being kind when kindness is obviously desirable. For example, Dear, if you see a child playing with matches near a can of gasoline, you should act with kindness, immediately. [By the way, Dear, best is to immediately yell “Stop!” – before approaching the child. Thanks to my stupidity (i.e., my lack of knowledge), I’ve had the experience of a can of gasoline exploding in my hands.]

In some cases even the Christian code is too restrictive. For example, consider those people who (for a huge number of possible reasons) want to be left alone. If such people apply “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, then they’d conclude that they shouldn’t help others. That is, the Christian code (“do unto others as you would have them do unto you”), makes sweeping generalizations about the character of “you”. As a result,

this code recommends that some people should behave in ways that reasonable people would conclude are unwise and unkind – ways that even less intelligent animals wouldn't practice.

For the case of interactions among friends, I can agree with Aristotle's relaxing the negative constraints in the kindness statements of Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (i.e., "don't do... what you don't want done"), because friends generally know each other well enough to be able to judge what will help – and friends have even some approval (if only implied) to try to help their friends. In contrast, the blanket kindness principle of Christianity (and therefore of Mormonism) seems to be, in various instances: too arrogant (presupposing that you know what's best for others!), too impractical (e.g., if you would have others give you money, how do you give them money if you're broke?), too restrictive (e.g., for people who desire to be left alone), and far too intrusive in others' affairs (even if you did know what's best for others, what actually might be even better is to let them learn what's best by themselves!).¹⁵

But let me add, Dear, that if Jesus did exist, then maybe he wasn't so dumb as Christian clerics portray him to have been. Thus, notice that, in all the above, I identified the source of the fifth quotation as "the clerics' Jesus" to distinguish this source from the less familiar "Gnostics' Jesus" (less familiar because the Christian clerics attempted to destroy all the literature of the Gnostics). But, as I'll go into more detail in later chapters, some of this literature was recently found (buried in the Egyptian desert near the town of Nag Hammadi in 1945) and (in the *Gospel of Thomas*) provide the following two versions of the kindness principle attributed to the Gnostics' Jesus:

- Love your friends like your own soul, protect them like the pupil of your eye.
- You see the sliver in your friend's eye, but you don't see the timber in your own eye. When you take the timber out of your own eye, then you will see well enough to remove the sliver from your friend's eye.

¹⁵ And of course I realize that this suggestion of appropriate constraint also applies to me, Dear. Thus, many times I've wrestled with myself, wondering if I should write any of this to you, thinking that you might be better-off learning anything that is of value, herein, by yourself. But I've continued, because this case is even more than what Aristotle suggested: these aren't suggestions for only a friend to consider, these are suggestions for how to carry these genes forward! That is, as I've said before: I'm sorry, Dear, but you have no choice; you're me, going forward. And I hope (for both our sakes!) that you'll have the opportunity to decide how to advise your own grandchildren, carrying us forward still further.

Thereby, with this emphasis on kindness to one's friends, it appears that the Gnostics' Jesus (or, better, the mostly-Greek Gnostics who wrote these "gospels") followed more closely Aristotle's statement of the "law of kindness", whereas the clerics' Jesus (or, better, the mostly-Greek clerics who wrote the New Testament's "gospels") used Plato's.

In addition to defending statements attributed to the Gnostics' Jesus, I want to attempt to defend the statement by Confucius, viz., "[What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.](#)" I'm not sure, but Confucius may have been trying to improve on Lao-Tzu's statement, "[Try to recompense \[or "repay"\] injury with kindness.](#)" If so, then notice more of the wisdom of Confucius.

Thus, Lao-Tzu's statement, "[Try to repay injury with kindness](#)" (which of course is similar to the cleric's Jesus statement written about 600 years later, i.e., "Turn the other cheek") can be very dangerous, because it can encourage (or embolden) bullies and other tyrants. In contrast, Confucius' statement, "[Recompense \(or "repay"\) insult with justice](#) [my italics], [kindness with kindness](#)", is an amazingly perceptive recommendation.

Further, there's the following little story that I found on the internet in the book *The Story Of Religious Controversy* by Joseph McCabe (which, as I wrote before, I'll be encouraging you to read). The story is as follows.

[Several times he \[Confucius\] gave \[this\] rule in express words: "What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others." At last a disciple asked him if he could put it in a word. He gave the composite Chinese word 'reciprocity'.](#)

One must be careful with the concept of "reciprocity", however, because it can easily degenerate to a "rule of reciprocity" known as revenge, which is advocated in the OT (e.g., "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"). The authors/assemblers of the OT (who, as I'll show you in **Yx**, apparently were led by Ezra, who lived in the 5th century BCE) borrowed this "rule of reciprocity" from earlier cultures (e.g., as I'll show you, it's contained in Hammurabi's law code, which now resides in a museum in France and which was chiseled in stone more than 500 years before Moses allegedly chiseled his "commandments" into stone).

Unfortunately, the authors of the OT (first "published" or, better, "assembled" in about 425 BCE) were not so perceptive as Aristotle, who

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attributed the concept of reciprocity to “the Pythagoreans”, i.e., those who followed Pythagoras (~582–500 BCE), who in turn therefore lived at approximately the same time as Confucius. Approximately 200 years after Pythagoras, Aristotle gave the following criticism of the concept of “reciprocity” in his *Nichomachean Ethics* (Book or Chapter V, section 5), to which I’ve added some notes:

Some think that reciprocity is, without qualification, “just”, as the Pythagoreans said; for they defined justice without qualification as reciprocity. Now “reciprocity” fits neither distributive [justice, i.e., apportioning or distributing ‘whatever’ appropriately] nor rectificatory justice [i.e., attempting to ‘right’ or ‘rectify’ some wrong] – yet people want even the justice of Rhadamanthus [unknown!] to mean this:

Should a man suffer what he did [to another], right justice would be done – for in many cases reciprocity and rectificatory justice are not in accord; e.g. (1) if an official has inflicted a wound, he should not be wounded in return, and if some one has wounded an official, he ought not to be wounded only but punished in addition. Further (2) there is a great difference between a voluntary and an involuntary act. But in associations for exchange this sort of justice [reciprocity] does hold men together – reciprocity in accordance with a proportion and not on the basis of precisely equal return. For it is by proportionate requital that the city holds together.

That is, “reciprocity”, itself, must be applied with keeness.

In summary, Dear, and in case all of the above contained too many details, perhaps the following table will help you choose a formulation of “the kindness principle” that you consider to be most appropriate for yourself. In this table, the final entry is the version I’ve adopted.

KINDNESS “RULES”	
Silver Rule	Don’t do to others what you don’t want done to yourself.
Golden Rule	Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
Platinum Rule	Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.
Diamond Rule	Treat your friends as you would want them to treat you.
A Sensible Rule!	Be kind if you can, but be sensible: apply kindness with keeness.

APPLYING KINDNESS WITH KEENNESS

In fact, both reciprocity and kindness (including charity) should always be applied with keeness. To illustrate what I mean, I'll start by returning to the topic of 'charity', which in **J3**, I promised that, "later", I'd dig into more deeply. In **J3**, I wrote:

Now, Dear, this "interpersonal moral principle" or "interpersonal judicial principle" (of "bartering" or "reciprocity" or "give equal value for value received") may seem trivial to you, especially if you conclude that it basically means "don't steal" (that is, that you should give equal value for the value you receive). Actually, though, it contains substantially more: not only that you should pay for what you get, but that you shouldn't pay for what you don't get! Thus, if the young man in your life proposes not to carry "his fair share" of the burden [when, in this "limit argument", there was assumed to be only the two of you on Earth], then you should diminish the share of the burden that you carry: *it's morally wrong (that is, again, it's damaging to your survival goals) to give more than you receive.*

And of course I realize, Dear, that my advocating *it's morally wrong... to give more than you receive* is contrary to what you've been taught since you were a baby, namely, "it's better to give than receive." But, Dear, I'm certain that the morality taught by the clerics of our culture contains a huge number of monstrous errors – and I'm also certain that, in what remains of this chapter, I won't be able to reveal to you all the horrible ramifications of their errors. Therefore, please be patient with me: let me delay showing you the clerics' errors until later chapters (starting in **K**, which deals with Kindness), and let me now assume that you accept that "bartering" or "reciprocity" is a valid basis for interpersonal morality – so that I can continue with this limit argument.

So now, Dear, although I don't plan to show you in this chapter all of "the huge number of monstrous errors" (in the morality taught by the Christian and Mormon clerics of our culture), I'll begin to chip away at the task, focusing here on what is inappropriately and egotistically called "Christian charity". In subsequent chapters (especially **L & M**) I'll show you more, but I won't complete what I want to show you of the full extent of these "monstrous errors" until the "excursion" **Yx** and in some of the **X**-chapters dealing with "EXposing Evil" (i.e., ignorance).

One of the errors of the majority of the clerics of our culture appears to be that they're not quoting a historical Jesus (who, if he existed, was probably closer to "the Gnostics' Jesus" than "the clerics' Jesus"); instead, they seem to be quoting the writings of the "lame-brain" clerics who fabricated the NT (i.e., quoting a fictitious person, whom I call "the clerics' Jesus"). Thus,

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Dear, in contrast to what you've been taught about "Christian charity" since the time you were a baby, consider what the Gnostics' Jesus reportedly said about charity in the *Gospel of Thomas* (which you can find on the internet using that title or type in "The Nag Hammadi Library" into a good "search engine"). Specifically, the disciples of the Gnostics' Jesus (who included Thomas) reportedly asked him "Should we give to charity?" His response is reported as: "If you give to charity, you will harm your spirit."

Now, Dear, admittedly it's difficult to understand what the Gnostics' Jesus meant by this statement. Perhaps his meaning is that, if you give more than you receive, then you threaten your survival; if so, I commend his insight. But if his meaning (which is almost always difficult to discern!) were a recommendation not to give to charity, then in general, I'd disagree with him. That is, Dear, I support charities and support giving to charities – provided, however, that donating to charity is another case of giving equal value for value received, e.g., the value I receive from living in society when people help each other – and, especially, from living in a society in which children are helped to achieve all of which they're capable, benefiting us all.

But in contrast to both the wise teachings of Confucius (i.e., the idea of "reciprocity" or "give equal value for value received") and the possibly unwise teachings of the Gnostics' Jesus (i.e., not to give to charity), the majority of clerics in our culture promote one of the most absurd "moral principles" that has ever been conceived: following the clerics' Jesus (rather than the Gnostics' Jesus), the clerics of our culture preach that it's "morally right" to give more than you receive. For example, as reported in the New Testament, the clerics' Jesus was asked by a young man what else he should do (besides obeying all the commandments) to "gain eternal life", to which Jesus reportedly responded (*Matthew 19, 20*): "Go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor."

And although I know that you're very familiar with this stuff (for you've been "spoon-fed" this junk since you were a baby!), let me give you some more examples of this "Christian charity", specifically, giving 'alms' (which is from the Greek word *eleos* meaning 'pity'). According to my dictionary, 'alms' means "money, food, clothes, etc. given to poor people" and it previously meant "any deed of mercy". Since the time you were a baby, you've been taught from the Book of Mormon ideas such as the following (3 *Nephi 13, 1-4*)

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Verily, verily, I [Jesus] say that I would that ye should do alms unto the poor [which, typical of Rigdon's writing, is rather poor English, because "unto the poor" is superfluous]; but take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when ye shall do your alms [which is an incorrect use of 'ye' and 'your'; it should be "when thou doest thine alms"] do not sound a trumpet before you, as will hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and that thy Father who seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

Equivalently, from the *King James Version* of the New Testament (which Rigdon obviously plagiarized)¹⁶, there is (*Matthew 6, 1-4*):

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men [notice that the authors of the King James Version knew not to write "alms unto the poor"!] to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. [Notice, also, the Rigdon's use of the pronoun "who" rather than "which" (is in heaven) is either sloppy English or contains the assumption that God is a person]. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Similarly, from the Book of Mormon there is (*3 Nephi 12, 42*)

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away.

whereas in the original, the statement is (*Matthew 5, 42*)

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

By the way, Dear, If you see no difference in those two quotations, look again at Rigdon's punctuation error.

¹⁶ Dear, if you wish to explore this assessment of plagiarism by the author of the Book of Mormon, then search the internet for "Book of Mormon + plagiarism". As I'll show you in detail in a later chapter (in **Qx**), the expelled Baptist priest Sidney Rigdon essentially copied approximately 10% of the Book of Mormon from the edition of the King James Version of the Bible that was available to him – compete with its translation errors!

But to the point, this “moral principle” of the clerics’ Jesus is absurd not only because it advocates that you damage your own survival by giving more than you receive but also because it’s a “moral principle” only for a portion of the people, namely (obviously!), those who have something extra to give! Meanwhile, the recipients – those who get more than they give (such as the clerics!) – have no choice but, thereby, to be “immoral” (as judged by the same “moral principle”, because they receive more than they give). So, this absurd “moral principle” advocates that, if you have set aside something for your survival, then you should damage your own survival by giving it to the immoral people who receive more than they give!

Of course the Christian (and Mormon) clerics argue that those people who give more “earthly possessions” don’t “in fact” give more than they receive, because “in fact”, such people gain much more: “eternal life in heaven”! To support their view, the clerics might quote their Jesus, e.g., from *Matthew 6, 19*: “**Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth... Store up treasure in heaven.**” But then, this moral code puts its followers in a terrible double bind: if you give more than you receive only to get even more (i.e., “eternal life in heaven”), then your “generosity” is, in fact, incredibly selfish!

Meanwhile, in reality, all data suggest that such people do, “in fact” give more than they receive, because there’s absolutely zero evidence of the existence of “life after death” – even the words are meaningless. Nonetheless, the people who buy into this nonsense are then demonstrating not only foolishness but also their unwillingness to give more than they receive: they claim they give more than they receive, but their intention is to get much, much, more than they give! That is, reduced to its essence, the morality taught by Christian and Mormon clerics of our culture is pure, unadulterated greed!

That these clerics should teach such absurdities is understandable, because their prime goal is to get the people to carry their useless carcasses. Clerics produce nothing of value (their prime product is confused thought and absurd moral principles); for this, they want a free lunch (and dinner, and house, and car, and...). They don’t preach “give equal value for value received”, for if they did, it would mean that they would get what they deserved: tarred and feathered and run out of town! Further, Dear, if you buy the absurdity of the clerics’ Jesus that it’s “morally right” to give more than you receive, then by giving to people who then receive more than they

get, you are promoting their immorality. But for some strange reason, no clerics complain that the parishioners promote the immorality of the clerics!

Now, Dear, please don't conclude that I'm opposed to helping others. Certainly I promote people helping one another – although not that the concept needs my promotion (at least, not until dolphins stop helping one another!), because helping others is “programmed” into our genes: our DNA molecules have “learned” that their survival is promoted if members of the same species are kind to one another. But just as certainly, I don't promote helping others to placate some giant Jabberwock in the sky and thereby to gain eternal bliss in some make-believe “life after death”! That is, Dear, help others for its value to you, in this (one and only!) life: there's substantial value to your dual survival goals (of yourself and your extended family) if you live in a society in which people help each other. And to give equal value for this value received (that is, for you to benefit from the help others give you), then as the saying goes, “[If you receive a kindness, pass it on](#)”, or as Confucius said “[Recompense injury with justice; recompense kindness with kindness.](#)”

Clerics will argue that it's “all the same”, because it leads to the same outcome (namely, people helping one another). But, Dear, it's not the same. The clerics (who preach that we should help one another because it's some giant Jabberwock's “commandment”) are behaving immorally: they're not using their brains as best they can, because they haven't evaluated their (crazy) ideas against data. Consequently, next week or next month or whenever, they'll preach some new and immoral idea, and urge their flock to adopt it, such as that all black people are... or all Jews are... or birth control is... or a holy war is to be started against... or whatever! Thereby, Dear, maybe you're getting the first hints of a theme that I'll return to, repeatedly: with their accepting their titles (ministers, reverends, priests, rabbis, imams, ayatollahs, or whatever), all clerics identify themselves as immoral fools. And if ever there was an obvious and an important general principle for people to follow, it's this: it's foolish to follow immoral fools!

Instead, Dear (and once again), I strongly encourage you to use your brain as best you can. That is, rather than adopt the clerics' ideas of kindness and charity, I strongly urge you to *apply the scientific method in daily life, i.e., test ideas with data and then decide and act as the data dictate*. In particular, the data that I've analyzed suggest to me that kindness should be applied with “keeness” (i.e., with some thought). Thus, when I'm walking,

* Go to other chapters *via*

I remind myself: *Be kind, if you can, but be careful: apply kindness with keeness – sometimes it's kindest to seem to be cruel*, because experience has taught me that sometimes it's best to restrain my “instinctive” desire to help (where by “instinct” I am referring to the million-or-more years' worth of natural selection, promoting cooperation among primates). Stated differently, I'm convinced that we should apply the characteristic that most identifies us as humans (to be able to look into the future) and attempt to assess the consequences of our actions.

As a summary of these comments about kindness, Dear, I hope you'll *use your brain as best you can* (or, equivalently, *apply the scientific method in daily life*) to try to discern the best way to help others. There's no doubt that kindness is a good idea; it's a good moral principle; in fact, it's such a good principle that even dolphins have adopted it! There's little doubt that pre-humans adopted the “moral principle” of kindness a few millions years ago – and it has absolutely nothing to do with some imagined giant Jabberwock in the sky. But when applying kindness, humans should use their heads.

Also, Dear, please be guided not only by “moderation in all things” but also by “be careful”! For example, if you see a family stranded on the road, of course you would want to help, but last week, just 30 miles up the road from here, when a fellow stopped to help such a family, the father took out his knife and cut the fellow's throat! That is, Dear, you must use your head (e.g., help by calling the Highway Patrol on your cell phone).

As a part of using your brain as best you can to discern how to *be kind with keeness*, Dear, please account for as much data as possible. For example,

- Account for the data that show ‘kindness’ is (almost certainly) instinctive, even among dolphins.
- Consider the enormous benefits you receive from living in a society of cooperating, helpful people.
- Be careful of how you choose to help: not only because there are many ignorant people in the world (thereby potential originators of evil) but also because “sometimes it's kindest to seem to be cruel”.
- If you're uncertain about how to help, evaluate the many ways to help (including through paying your taxes, working to increase the salaries of teachers, contributing to the ACLU, and so on).

Further, Dear, try not to be “pushed along by the crowd”. For example, if you’re encouraged by teachers or others to “volunteer” to do “good will” at some soup kitchen or similar, compare such a contribution to the potential contribution you could make if, instead, you used the time to learn more, to become an even more competent scientist, doctor, politician, or whatever. As another example, if you’re encouraged by your church leaders or others to “go on a mission” to try to “save lost souls”, compare such a “contribution” (to the clerics’ welfare!) to the potential contributions you could make in backward countries if, instead, you promoted birth control, taught science, promoted representative government, or similar – including the contribution you could make by helping to rid humanity of all religions!

And although, as I’ve written before, it’s always difficult to discern general principles, a few that may help you are the following.

- First and foremost, use your brain as best you can.
- In general, try to help kids: most adults have already had many opportunities to improve themselves; there’s a higher probability that your helping kids will be more beneficial to humanity.
- In general, you’ll help humanity most by doing whatever you choose to do as well as you can (subject to the many constraints under which we all must work).

Thus, Dear, you’ll best help humanity if you do accomplish so much in physics that you’re awarded the Nobel Prize, or do become the Secretary General of the United Nations, or do write the poem that will always be remembered, or do whatever that’s at the limit of your capabilities and constraints. But during it all, don’t forget to be kind also to yourself, e.g., get more exercise!