

## K – Kindness with Keeness

Dear: With this chapter I want to begin a several-chapter “trek” comparing different opinions about morality, starting with differences between what you have been taught versus what I wish you had been taught about ‘kindness’ (this chapter, **K**) and ‘love’ (next chapter, **L**). Then in **M**, I’ll address other aspects of ‘morality’. My goal is to try to show you how the “god-awful mess of muddled morality”, caused by the clerics of the world, 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 “moral principle” for society: *try to be kind*. Another potential moral principle, one with which you’re very familiar, is: *love one another*. In this chapter and the next, I want to show you some natural origins of those two moral principles and to indicate how badly they have been mangled by either ignorant or deliberately deceptive clerics.

Also in an earlier chapter, I described my own “judicial principle” or “moral code”, which I consider to be a still better moral principle for anyone in any society, namely (in any of many equivalent statements):

- *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!*

This 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.

In my experience, the above moral principle (in any of its “bulleted” forms) is better than the two familiar principles “try to be kind” or “love one another”, because (as I’ll try to show you) it contains those two as special and restricted cases – as well as much more. Thus, Dear, if you do “evaluate” or “use your head” or “use your brains 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’m sure that one of the many conclusions that you’ll come to is similar to the one that I remind myself when I’m walking:

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

And although the above probably needs little explanation, I’d like to try to show you 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!

To start, let me sketch some history of the concept of kindness. To show you a “complete” history of kindness, I would need to start from the observation that most animals display cooperation within groups, which is another way to describe “kindness”. If you would like to explore this idea, Dear, you may want to read a book entitled *Good Natured – The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals* by Frans De Waal (Harvard University Press, 1996). Although I’ve read only a review of this book, apparently it’s written for a “lay audience” (but it’s “scientifically sound”, at least according to the reviewer). According to the reviewer, the book 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 those animals (including humans) that established a “morality” promoting the survival of the group’s (shared) genetic code.

Alternatively, you might want to search on the internet using “search words” such as “history ethics morality altruism kindness animals”. I suggest such a long string of “search words”, Dear, because (as you can determine for yourself), there’s an enormous amount of information on such topics on the internet. I found the article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (at [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)) 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 this 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 my plan is about as crazy as they come, Dear, then please allot just 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 even a dolphin will swim beneath its wounded cousin, periodically lifting it to the surface so that it can breathe?

Sorry, Dear, but I don't want to be rational all the time!! The ideas in that question just blow me away!

But meanwhile, if you want to help your “poor old grampa” return to reality, then how about your searching out the original source of the information about the dolphins and then informing me. The nearest I was able to find, which suggests that dolphins actually help more than just “fellow dolphins” is the following fable by Aesop, from more than 2500 years ago!<sup>1</sup>

**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 the above fable to

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<sup>1</sup> Dear: All Aesop's wonderful fables are available at [www.classics.mit.edu](http://www.classics.mit.edu).

support the contention that dolphins practice kindness (or talk to monkeys or punish liars!), but at least the possibility that dolphins practice “kindness with keeness” has been hinted for a long time!<sup>2</sup>

But 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. Nonetheless, 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 are 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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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, 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 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of his book) he writes:

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 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”!

- Because food would, almost certainly, 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.
- 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, I'm sure that such a list could continue, but I trust I've listed enough so that you'll permit me to draw what I think are some obvious conclusions.

Thus, surely it's obvious that cooperation among humans, altruism, kindness, "love one another", and so on, weren't some proclamations that came down to us from some giant Jabberwock in the sky. They're not HIS "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 humans promotes the group's survival; those groups with noncooperating members didn't survive (as groups, and maybe, then, not even as individuals); therefore, consistent with Darwin's principle of natural selection, propensity for cooperation among humans was promoted by rewarding (with a greater chance of survival) those who practiced cooperation, altruism, sharing, kindness, etc.

This natural selection must have continued for tens (or hundreds) of thousands of years, and maybe even millions of years. As a result, people 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", somehow "programmed in our genes") that our survival – the survival of the human genetic code – is promoted if we cooperate with one another. Surely the same is true for all "social animals". 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.

During the first few tens- or hundreds-of-thousands of years (or even millions of years!) no doubt this cooperation, "programmed in our genes", was also promoted by its practice. Eventually, humans developed capabilities to communicate ideas in words (which arguably could be said to be the beginning of humans). With words, via scoldings, stories, legends, myths, and so on, older generations could instruct younger generation about the values of cooperation. Then, relatively recently (a mere 5,000-or-so years ago!), humans learned how to record their words in writing – no doubt so that old grandfathers, who live on the other side of the country, could convey their ideas to their grandchildren!

The earliest written record that hints at recognition of the value of cooperation, kindness, and so on, is apparently 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 King Izezi. Ptahhotep claimed that he was 110 years old when he wrote the following – which, believe it or not, is even older than a certain grandfather! But unfortunately for my purposes here, Ptahhotep wrote in what appears to be a common style of the early Egyptians, emphasizing negatives rather than positives (a style that, as I'll show you in a later chapter, is 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 is doubtful that a better “kindness principle” has ever been written (taken here from Chapter 9 of John McCabe’s book, *The Story of Religious Controversy*, which you can find on the internet and which later I’ll be encouraging you to read): “*Let the love thou feelest pass into the heart of those whom thou lovest...*”

Another “kindness principle” from Ancient Egypt was written by an Egyptian king (whose name is lost) who wrote “The Teachings for Merikare” (his son), which is given in Bartlett’s book<sup>3</sup> as from ~2135 - 2040 BCE, more than 1,000 years older than the oldest part of *The Old Testament* and ~1,500 years before the majority of it was written. Some of the details in these “Teachings” (for how to be a king) are these:

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 Old Testament (the Jewish Torah) written, updated, and rewritten again (and again!) during the time period from ~1000 - 500 BCE, with most of it 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 Old Testament (using the “Bible search engine” at [www.gospel.net](http://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 where it appears an attempt is made to “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! Let me quote this passage here, but I’ll eliminate all supernatural jabberwocky [and add a few notes in “square

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<sup>3</sup> *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...”

brackets”, whereas the note in “curly brackets”, viz., {...} 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 the Christian clerics reported 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 Old Testament rather badly, for in the New Testament 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!

Anyway, such stupidity aside for a while, a second example of a “kindness principle” that appears in the Old Testament (if the common meaning of “kindness” is stretched a little) is contained in *Proverbs*. Here, for reasons to be explained immediately below, let me quote this “kindness principle” as given in 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 are so similar to saying of Amenemope (an Egyptian), written in the eleventh century BCE. To see the similarities (suggesting that whoever wrote this part of the Old Testament'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 Old Testament (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 is so little about kindness elsewhere in the Old Testament), and 2) the second quotation refers to the potentially important "law of kindness", which a "virtuous women" has "in her tongue".

But amazingly, this "law of kindness" (which a "virtuous women" has "in her tongue") doesn't seem to be defined anywhere else in the Old Testament! And then, in the version of the Bible (The New English Bible, which I've been quoting elsewhere in this book), '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 Old Testament 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."<sup>4</sup>

Be that as it may be, and as you probably expect, other cultures (besides Egyptian and Hebrew) were also developing what could be called "a law of kindness", as I'll show you below. I've taken these examples 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](mailto:Lyndale@axess.net). As you read these examples of "Golden Rules" or "Kindness Principles", Dear, if you become impressed that they're so similar, then please consider two factors.

One is that "kindness" 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'd consider is that, when The Old Testament was being written in its current form by Ezra and co-authors, the world was "shrinking", fast. With writing on paper (rather than clay or stone!), ideas could be transferred between 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:

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<sup>4</sup> Well, Dear, that was very strange! 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."

Not snow, no, nor rain, nor heat, nor night keeps them from accomplishing their appointed courses with all speed.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, Dear, expect that most cultures wrote similar “kindness principles” during roughly the same time period.

In particular, when Ezra and co-authors were writing the Old Testament (mixing together myths from many cultures with Jewish stories and customs – and claiming that the first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses!), they were exposed not only to Egyptian teachings but 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 “kindness principles” in these religions 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 “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 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):

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<sup>5</sup> 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.”

“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, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Let me show you 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, although its origin can be traced back to the *Book of Changes* or *I Ching*, written in about 1200 BCE. An example of “the kindness principle” in Taoism 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) Futs'e (= 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), let me 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, Moslems, or Mormons!) formulated similar “kindness principles.” One example is from the Greek fable “The Lion and the Mouse”, attributed to Aesop (who lived ~500 BCE – but the origin of the fables 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), 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 in my mind 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!), let me continue with this examination of how the principle might have been formulated, by turning now to some pre-Christian Jewish literature.

My first additional example from pre-Christian Jewish literature (besides those already listed from the Old Testament or Torah, especially the formulation at *Leviticus 19, 18*: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself") was written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 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. 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*.

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 two amazing phrases (*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, let me just list a few points whose "justification" I won't get to until Yx:

- At about the time when the clerics who wrote the New Testament 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 there was a historical Jesus (a much debated supposition) who lived 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, the 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 be 'panther'), therefore called 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 so vehemently, particularly his possible rabbi, Yehoshua ben Perachya, who considered Jesus to be a sorcerer, for practicing Kabalistic methods and Egyptian "magic".<sup>6</sup>
- If Jesus was entirely a literary character (similar to William Tell), then the essence of the New Testament 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

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<sup>6</sup> Dear: In Yx, I'll provide references for the information contained in this "bulleted" item.

learn it” – by which he 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”).

Now, Dear, especially if you’re almost overwhelmed by all these details and all these “formulations” of “the kindness principle”, and if your first impression is that they’re all essentially the same, then let me focus on five of them,<sup>7</sup> 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 New Testament at *Matthew 7*, 12 (probably first written in about 100 CE): “Whatsoever 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*:

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<sup>7</sup> 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).

“Always treat others as you would like them to treat you: that is the law and the prophets.”<sup>8</sup>

At first glance, perhaps all these “formulations” look pretty much the same, but let me go through them again (and also, in places, show you a little of their history), to suggest that these different statements do convey different messages.

First, Dear, notice that in the above five “formulations”, there’s quite a shift in meaning during the approximately 600 years from when the first to the fifth were written. 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” given above 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 get to, shortly), some people call this “The Platinum Rule”.

Next, consider the two quotations attributed to Jesus. 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”) seems to be just an unacknowledged rephrasing of Plato’s Golden Rule, “And may I do to others as I would that others should do to me”. In **Yx**, I’ll give reasons for suggesting that this “plagiarization” of Plato shouldn’t be surprising, because the clerics who wrote the New Testament were strongly influenced by Philo, who considered Plato almost as a God. And finally, there is the Platinum Rule given by the Gnostics’ Jesus, “Love your friends

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<sup>8</sup> 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 Torah (the Old Testament) says.”

like your own soul”, which seems to be plagiarized from Aristotle’s: “We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us.”

Now, Dear, let me admit that I have difficulties with all five of these “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, Dear, 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 chocolates. She takes one, and bursts into tears – because the original source of her unhappiness was she felt that she was overweight and that she 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 certainly 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 that I’ll be returning to.

Let me give you another example of my dissatisfaction with the statement of the kindness principle that was formulated by Plato – and then, almost certainly, was just copied by the clerics who wrote the New Testament, ~500 years later, claiming its origin to be their Jesus. I remember that, when I was a kid and we were very poor, every week an old woman 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 woman felt “warm and fuzzy” following Plato’s Golden Rule, but apparently she (and the clerics’ Jesus, i.e., whoever wrote The New Testament) 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! If Plato and the (mostly Greek) authors of The New Testament had given the matter more thought, perhaps an improved statement would have been something similar to: “do unto others as **they** would have you do” – although I wouldn’t have liked that version, either.

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 shows more wisdom (e.g., “don’t do to others what you don’t want done to you”), but these statements appear to have weaknesses, also, 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. And 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 personal experience of a can of gasoline exploding in my hands.

Similarly, 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 would conclude that they shouldn’t help others. That is, the Christian code (“do unto others as you would have them do unto you”), makes the sweeping generalization 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 or authority (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 cases: 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 for them by themselves!).<sup>9</sup>

And in case my inadequacies as a writer have failed to convey my message, Dear, let me quote more from the article by Edward T. Babinski entitled "*The Golden Rule*" and *Christian Apologetics*, which you can find at <http://www.edwardtbabinski.us/religion/golden.html>.

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 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.

But let me add, Dear, that if Jesus did exist, then maybe he wasn't so dumb as the Christian clerics portray him. 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 a later chapter, some of this literature was recently found (in the Egyptian desert near the town of Nag Hammadi in 1945), from which (in the *Gospel of Thomas*) there are the

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<sup>9</sup> 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 same genes forward! That is, as I've said before, Dear: I'm sorry, 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.

following two statements of the “kindness principle” given by 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.

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, Dear, let me attempt to defend Confucius, who apparently stated: “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. 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 is 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 Bible (e.g., “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”).

The authors/assemblers of the Bible (who, as I’ll show you in **Yx**, apparently were led by Ezra, who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 approximately 500 years before Moses allegedly chiseled his “commandments” into stone). Unfortunately, the authors of the Old Testament (first “published” or, better, “assembled” in about 425 BCE) were not so perceptive as Aristotle, who 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.

Thus, approximately 200 years after Pythagoras, Aristotle gave the following criticism of the concept of “reciprocity” in his *Nicomachean 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, Dear, “reciprocity”, itself, must be applied with keeness. To illustrate, let me return 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 here show you all of "the huge number of monstrous errors" (in the morality taught by the Christian and Mormon clerics of our culture), let me 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 New Testament (i.e., quoting a fictitious person, whom I call "the clerics' Jesus"). Thus, in contrast to what you've been taught about "Christian charity" since you were a baby, Dear, 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."

\* Go to other chapters *via*

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 would 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 both to the wise teachings of Confucius (i.e., the idea of “reciprocity” or “give equal value for value received”) and to 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 he reportedly responded (at *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 have 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*)

Verily, verily, I [Jesus] say that I would that ye should do alms unto the poor [which 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)<sup>10</sup>, 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.

But to the point, Dear, 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

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<sup>10</sup> 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 **Yx**), 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!

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 the clerics of our culture is pure, unadulterated greed!

That the clerics of our culture 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 is great value to your dual survival goals (of yourself and your extended family) if you live in a society in which we help one another. 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 its some giant Jabberwock’s “commandment”) are thereby 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, I remind myself: *Be kind, if you can, but be careful: apply kindness with keeness – sometimes it’s kindest 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 humans). 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 very much hope that 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 a lot of ignorant people in the world (thereby potential originators of evil) but also because "sometimes it's kindest 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 are 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 are 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.
- 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 will best help humanity if you do win the Nobel Prize in physics, or if you do become the Secretary General of the United Nations, or if do write the poem that will always be remembered, or whatever it might be that’s at the limit of your capabilities and constraints. But thereby, Dear, you’ll need to stay healthy – so, how about getting some exercise, now!