

Religion should be respected and treated with

[Environment](#), [Climate Change](#)



Religion is a socially structured response to answer the big questions/mysteries of life. All of the five major religions; Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism were formed to provide answers to these questions in a morally structured way.

The differences between these religions create divisions due to prejudice and discrimination of people towards groups of faith. People fail to recognize that these religions are deeply connected and share a common goal which is to live a good moral life and achieve salvation. All of these religions have scriptures, teachings and beliefs, laws, and guidelines in hopes to teach us what it takes to be a good person. To walk on the path of a good life these religions use three different ways; defend human dignity, create a peaceful co-existence in the world and care for creation. These religions promote unity and peace in the world. By understanding and embracing these common beliefs and teachings of these religions we are a step closer to living in a more peaceful place. Human dignity implies that each person is worthy of honor and should be respected for the way they are.

Human dignity cannot be earned or taken away from us because we are born with this right. People have trouble with realizing that we should all join together in solidarity because of the negative and evil things in the world. In response to that human dignity is promoted and defended in all of the major religions and is the basic foundation of their teachings and beliefs. In Christianity, human dignity is promoted/defended in the Bible where it states that we are created in the image of God. In Genesis 1: 26-27; it says " So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them".

This means that everyone is created in the image or likeness of God. This doesn't mean that we resemble God in a physical matter. Instead, we are reflections of God in a mentally, morally, and social way. Keeping this in mind Christians understand that since we are reflections of God it is important to recognize that all of us should be respected and treated with dignity. Violating or taking away someone's dignity is degrading and disrespectful towards God. As sons and daughters of God, we believe that life is a sacred gift and it is our responsibility to protect and defend it.

Christians apply this teaching by defending the human dignity of the poor and vulnerable, speaking up for those without a voice, and protest against violence. Some examples would be abortion and how Catholics believe that abortion is wrong. They believe that a fetus has its own human dignity and it should be respected. They also protect human dignity with spreading awareness against euthanasia and violence. In Judaism, human dignity is protected through the Talmud. The Talmud is generally described as an interpretation as and a guide to morals & conduct. It is used to settle complicated problems concerning the obligations imposed on Jews by the Torah. It is comprised of two sections called Mishnah and Gemara.

Mishnah is a collection of oral laws handed down by word of mouth and Gemara are collections of commentaries on the Mishnah. One of the verses in the Talmud states that what is hateful to you do not to your fellow. This teaches that you should treat everyone with respect and dignity even if they have wronged you. In Judaism, people believe that they are the chosen people of God who are responsible for caring for his creation. The covenant

between the Jews and God demonstrates that there is a special closeness between us. As the chosen people of God, it is important that we treat each other with respect and dignity to uphold the covenant with God in order to receive salvation. Speaking hateful words, thinking evil thoughts, and doing evil acts towards other people is a violation of people's human dignity. In Islam, human dignity is defended in the five pillars and are the basic foundations of the Islamic faith.

The five pillars of the Islamic faith are creed, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage. The pillar that defends human dignity is Zakat which is the Arabic term for almsgiving. The purpose of Zakat is to purify your wealth and your spirituality. Muslims who are financially stable are required to donate 2.5 % of their earnings to charities and organizations.

Like Christianity and Judaism, they believe that they are created in the image of God. They believe that all lives are sacred and should be respected. It is our responsibility to help those in needs and ease them from their troubles. Zakat teaches you to care for others despite their appearance and wealth. By donating their money they are contributing to ending poverty, saving as well as defending the human dignity of the poor, and giving those people the same opportunities to live a better life. In Buddhism human dignity is protected through the Buddha's teaching the Eightfold Path. After Siddhartha achieved enlightenment he is now referred to as Buddha.

Buddha means the awakened one or the enlightened one. Buddha compiled a set of teachings which are expected to be followed by Buddhists in order to achieve enlightenment. One of his teachings is called truth of path which is

one of the four noble truths. The truth of path or the Middle way can be followed by the Eightfold Path. Four of those protect human dignity as it teaches you to treat people the way you want to be treated. These teachings are right of understanding, the right of thought, the right of speech, and right of action.

This means that you should think kindly of others, speak kindly of others, and act kindly to others. Since we are all born with the human dignity it is important to follow these teachings because all of us has the right to be respected. It is our duty to make sure that human dignity is defended and spread throughout the world.

In both Buddhism and Hinduism, the totality of one's actions called Karma which determines one's future life. Actions and thoughts that are good or bad can bring you Karma. The amount of karma whether good or bad is accumulated throughout that person's lives and is the determining factor of your incarnation. The teachings of Karma spreads peaceful coexistence in the world because it encourages you to act and think kindly towards others. Actions that could help you to achieve good Karma would be being compassionate towards other, helping those people in need, sharing and being honest, as well as having the right intentions out of love and respect. The principle of karma is that in order to achieve good Karma you must have the right intentions. If everyone strives to achieve good Karma with good intentions then eventually the world would be balanced and peaceful. Peace and coexistence in the world can be defined as mutual toleration between groups with different beliefs and ideologies.

In Christianity creating peace and coexistence in the world is demonstrated through Jesus' teachings of Love. Jesus of Nazareth is believed to be the son of God who was sent down from heaven to teach us how to love each other and uphold the covenant. Jesus preached about love and how it is the key to bringing peace in the world and achieving salvation. These teachings include God's love for us, the primacy of love over law, limitless love, concern for the poor and vulnerable, forgiveness of sin, the victory of death and the equated love of God with love of people. His teachings demonstrate how we should act and treat people with respect because we are all born with dignity. Jesus' special concern with those who are weak and vulnerable demonstrates how we are all equal in God's eyes. He teaches us that status, appearance, and wealth are not important because we are all equal.

The most important teaching that he preached was an equated love of God with love of people. This means that we cannot truly love God unless we love other people including enemies and those who have wronged us. It teaches us that despite our differences we must love each other, speak kindly to others, and respect each other to bring peace and coexistence in the world.

In Judaism peace and coexistence in the world is promoted in the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are the guidelines in all of the monotheistic religions; Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The Ten Commandments were given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai to teach us about the expectations of God.

The sixth commandment states that you shall not murder. This doesn't just apply to the actual act of murder but the human dignity of people. God

wants us to treat people with respect and restrict ourselves from spreading more evil in the world. This commandment also teaches us to not kill anyone with words, thoughts, or literal actions as it contributes to a continuous cycle of hatred. In order to spread peace and coexistence in the world, you shall not hold grudges and you shall offer forgiveness if asked for mercy because we are all humans who make mistakes. In Islam peace and coexistence in the world is promoted in Sharia.

Sharia is an Islamic law based on the teachings of the Koran. Five of the main goals that are outlined in the Koran is to preserve life, preserve lineage, preserve property, preserve religion, and preserve reason. The Koran teaches a philosophy that prevention is better than a cure.

In order to accomplish these goals, a strict penal system is introduced to have a more stable society. They believe that if all of these things are accomplished then the world would be more peaceful and the crime rates would go down. Crimes such as slander, theft, fornication, and adultery are heavily punished in order to prevent it from happening again. The harsh punishments of Sharia prevent crimes and evil from recurring and therefore spread more peace and coexistence in the world. Care for creation is the responsibility to work together to care and respect for the creation of God. In Christianity care for creation is the seventh Catholic teaching which is one of the principles of the Christian faith. In Genesis 1: 26-28 it says " Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth".

Christians understand that it is our duty to protect all of the living things in the world. In humans, animals, and the environment Christians believe that we should try our best to ensure that they are all protected. For the environment, Christians care for creation by spreading awareness against climate change and practice recycling to ensure that all of the materials are well used. For animals, Christians care for creation by understanding that animals do have the same rights as we are. They understand that any type of violence towards animals like animal testing and animal abuse is wrong. For humans, they care for creation by obtaining from alcohol, drugs, sex before marriage, smoking, and gambling because our bodies are temples that should be treated with respect.

In Judaism, they demonstrate care for creation by following the dietary laws. Jews believe in practicing Kashrut which means eating Kosher foods. Kosher is another term for correct and proper. These dietary laws teach us what foods can and cannot be eaten.

These laws mainly focus on the consumption of meat and dairy products. There are specific rules on what types of animals can be eaten such as only meat and dairy product that came from animals with split hooves and chew their cud are kosher, and only fish with fins scales are kosher. For birds, there is a small list on which are kosher. These rules are not only for health reasons but for ethical reasons as well.

The Torah prohibits cruelty to animals and must be slaughtered in a moral way. It must be handled by a shochet who practices and follows the shehitah. It also needs to be handled with a sharp knife called a chalif which

is sharp enough to kill the animal in one stroke. The importance of this is that the animal should be slaughtered with the least amount of pain. If the cut is straight through it means that it didn't suffer and is considered kosher. The importance of this is that the animal has been sacrificed for our nourishment. It has the same amount of dignity as we do and we must respect it as it is a part of creation. In Islam, Muslims follow the rules of Jihad to care for creation.

Jihad is an Arabic word which means to struggle or strive. Jihad can be classified into three categories; the Greatest Jihad, the Greater Jihad, and the Lesser Jihad. The Greatest Jihad is the inner battle within yourself and your evil desires/temptations, The Greater Jihad is the fight between yourself and the other believers and preaching of Islam through the divine injunctions of the Koran, and lastly, the Lesser Jihad is the permission to fight battles of self-defense. With this permission, there are strict conditions that one must follow in order to be considered as the self-defense. Women, children, elderly and disabled people must not be harmed.

Noncombatants must not be harmed, the environment must not be harmed, and when the enemy asks for mercy it must be granted. These conditions make war more civilized and less destructing towards the environment and promote peace in the world. In Buddhism care for creation is demonstrated through the story of Siddhartha and the Swan. Before Buddha's enlightenment, he was called Prince Siddhartha. As a young boy, he would go and play in the palace grounds where all sorts of animals would live. Every year a group of white swans would nest there and he would sit next to

them. One day the group of swans flies by and one of the swans was shot and fell on the ground.

Prince Siddhartha came to his aid and says “ I’ll look after you until your wing is better”. His cousin Devadatta was the person who shot the swan and claims that it is his swan. As they argued about who got to keep they decide that only the King can say who can keep it. The King and the ministers were puzzled until the old man in the doorway spoke” if the swan could talk. It would tell us that it wanted to be well again and be free to fly and swim with the other wild swans. None of us wants to feel pain or die and it is the same for the swan. It wants to live, so it should go to whoever wants to give it life.

” This helped the King decide who can keep the swan and he chose Siddhartha. The moral of the story is that we should treat animals with respect and care for it when it is in danger. Siddhartha showed compassion to the swan and acted upon it. He sees the true value of the swan and he demonstrates that we should do the same for all of creation.

Despite our differences such as gender, age, wealth, appearance, and faith as a human race we all strive to be a good person and live a good life. In all of these religions, the most common teachings are to defend human dignity, create more peaceful coexistence, and care for creation. In order to defend human dignity, all of these religions acknowledge the fact that dignity is our inherent value/worthiness and it should not be taken away from us. We must respect that we are all here for a reason and that we are all the same. In order to build a more peaceful coexistence in the world, the religions acknowledge that we must learn to live with different types of people who

have different opinions and ideologies than us. We need to work together in order to live a better life and live in harmony.

These religions also acknowledge that we need to care for creation such as animals and the environment. They understand that animals and the environment have dignity as well and it is our responsibility to respect and care for them. I do believe that there is hope for unity and friendships between the religions because we are becoming more aware of the similarities between us. We are becoming more open to other religions and embracing the fact that we are all trying to live a good life. From a Catholic perspective, I think that we should understand that all of these religions are our allies and we are apart of a bigger team called the human race. In order to protect human dignity, build a more peaceful coexistence, and care for creation we need to work together because if we don't work together our world would become a more hateful and violent. We need to push away our differences and focus on our main goal and it is to become a better person and live a better life.

I think that acknowledging our similarities and appreciating each other's opinions and values we are closer to being united.