

Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

GROUNDING QUOTE

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

Nelson Mandela

The Bahá'í Faith

O children of dust! Tell the rich of the midnight sighing of the poor, lest heedlessness lead them into the path of destruction, and deprive them of the Tree of Wealth. To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues. (Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, Persian No. 49)

O ye rich ones on earth! The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease. (Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, Persian No. 54)

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 285)

God has created all, and all return to God. Therefore, love humanity with all your heart and soul. If you meet a poor man, assist him; if you see the sick, heal him; reassure the affrighted one, render the cowardly noble and courageous, educate the ignorant, associate with the stranger. (Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 290)

Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Buddhism

If beings knew, as I know, the fruit of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart and stay there. Even if it were their last bit, their last morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it, if there were anyone to receive it. (Itivuttaka 18)

Better than a hundred years lived in idleness and in weakness is a single day lived with courage and powerful striving. (The Dhammapada, 112)

Whatever living beings there may be—feeble or strong, small or large, seen or unseen, those who live far or those near, those who are born and those who are yet to be born—may all beings, without exception, experience a happy mind. Let one not deceive another nor despise any person whatsoever in any place. In anger or ill will let one not wish any harm to another. Let one's thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity. (Samyutta Nikaya, The Buddha Speaks)

It is in this way that we must train ourselves: by liberation of the self through love. We will develop love, we will practice it, we will make it both a way and a basis, take our stand upon it, store it up, and thoroughly set it going. (Samyutta Nikaya, The Buddha Speaks)

Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Christianity

Then someone came to him and said, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to him, 'Which ones?'

And Jesus said, 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The young man said to him, 'I have kept all these; what do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions. (Matthew 19:16-22)

When [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Next Page

Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Christianity con't

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:31-40)

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

"Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

"Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

"Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

"Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven;
for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

"But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

"Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

"Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

"Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.
(Luke 6:20-26)

Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Hinduism

Ajyesthaso akanishthaso ete sambhrataro vahaduhu saubhagaya

No one is superior, none inferior. All are brothers marching forward to prosperity. (Ancient Hindu hymn)

The husband and wife of the house should not turn away any who comes at eating time and asks for food.

If food is not available, a place to rest, water for refreshing one's self, a reed mat to lay one's self on, and pleasing words entertaining the guest — these at least never fail in the houses of the good. (Apastamba Dharmasutra 8.2)

A householder must give (as much food) as he is able (to spare) to those who do not cook for themselves, and to all beings one must distribute (food) without detriment (to one's own interest). (Manu Smriti 4.32)

In the kingdom of God there is no premature death or suffering, everyone is healthy and beautiful. No one lives in poverty and want; no one is without learning or virtue. (The Ramayana)



Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Islam

And they feed, for the love of God, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive. (Qur'an 76:8)
"The creatures of God (i.e., humans) are the children (i.e., liability and responsibility) of God, and the most beloved to God are those who show kind and excellent treatment to His children." (Qur'an 60:8)

Goodness does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who believe in God and the Last Day, in the angels, the Scripture, and the prophets; who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travelers and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage; those who keep up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms; who keep pledges whenever they make them; who are steadfast in misfortune, adversity, and times of danger. These are the ones who are true, and it is they who are aware of God. (Qur'an S. 2:177, M.A.S. Abdel Haleem translation)

They ask thee what they should spend (in charity.) Say: Whatever wealth Ye spend that is good, is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers and whatever ye do that is good, Allah knoweth it well. (Qur'an S. 2, 215, IFTA translation)



Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Judaism

Thus said the Eternal: A cry is heard in Ramah, wailing, bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, who are gone.

Thus said the Eternal: Restrain your voice from weeping, your eyes from shedding tears; for there is reward in your labor — declares the Eternal. They shall return from the enemy's land, and there is hope for your future — declares the Eternal, and your children shall return to their country. (Jeremiah 31:15-17)

Defend the poor and the orphan; do justice to the afflicted and needy. (Midrash Tehillim 82:3)

You shall not subvert the rights of the stranger or the fatherless; you shall not take a widow's garment in pawn. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I enjoin you to observe this commandment...when you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. (Deuteronomy 24:17-18, 21)

Although the giving of charity is a sacred obligation, the ultimate aim of tzedakah is to abolish poverty and to enable the poor to help themselves. (Talmud, Shabbat 63)



Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Sikhism

To do good deeds is the best rosary.

Chant on the beads within your heart, and it shall go along with you.

Chant the Name of the Lord, Har, Har, the Lord of the forest.

Have mercy on me, Lord, and unite me with the Sat Sangat, the True Congregation, so that I may be released from Maya's noose of death.

Whoever, as Gurmukh, serves and works hard,

Is molded and shaped in the true mint of the Shabad, the Word of God.

The Guru has revealed to me the Inaccessible and Unfathomable Lord.

Searching within the body-village, I have found the Lord.

I am just a child; the Lord is my Father, who nurtures and cherishes me.

Please save servant Nanak, Lord; bless him with Your Glance of Grace.

(SGGS, Ang 1134 Raag Bhaira-o Guru Ram Das)

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

No one should be proud of his social class and status.

He alone is a Brahmin, who knows God.

Do not be proud of your social class and status, you ignorant fool!

So much sin and corruption comes from this pride.

Everyone says that there are four castes, four social classes.

They all emanate from the drop of God's Seed

The entire universe is made of the same clay.

The Potter has shaped it into all sorts of vessels.

The five elements join together, to make up the form of the human body.

Who can say which is less, and which is more?

Says Nanak, this soul is bound by its actions.

Without meeting the True Guru, it is not liberated. (SGGS, Ang 1127-1128 Raag Bhaira-o Guru Amar Das)

As the king is entangled in kingly affairs, and the egotist in his own egotism,

And the greedy man is enticed by greed, so is the spiritually enlightened being absorbed in the Love of the Lord.

This is what befits the Lord's servant.

Beholding the Lord near at hand, he serves the True Guru, and he is satisfied through the Kirtan of the Lord's Praises.

The addict is addicted to his drug, and the landlord is in love with his land.

As the baby is attached to his milk, so the Saint is in love with God.

The scholar is absorbed in scholarship, and the eyes are happy to see.

As the tongue savors the tastes, so does the humble servant of the Lord sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord.

As is the hunger, so is the fulfiller; He is the Lord and Master of all hearts.

Nanak thirsts for the Blessed Vision of the Lord's Darshan; he has met God, the Inner-knower, the Searcher of hearts. (SSGS, Ang 613)

Those who remember God generously help others. (SGGS)

Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Indigenous Prayers

Great Spirit Prayer

"Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the wind,
Whose breath gives life to all the world.
Hear me; I need your strength and wisdom.
Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever
behold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have
made and my ears sharp to hear your voice.
Make me wise so that I may understand
the things you have taught my people.
Help me to remain calm and strong in
the face of all that comes towards me.
Let me learn the lessons you have hidden
in every leaf and rock.
Help me seek pure thoughts and act
with the intention of helping others.
Help me find compassion without
empathy overwhelming me.
I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,
but to fight my greatest enemy Myself.
Make me always ready to come to you
with clean hands and straight eyes.
So when life fades, as the fading sunset,
my spirit may come to you without shame.

Prayer for Wisdom

O Great spirits of Ancestors
I raise my pipe to you;
To you messengers in the four winds,
and to Mother Earth
who provides your children,
Give us the wisdom to teach our children to love,
To respect and to be kind to one another
So that we may grow with peace in mind.
Let us learn to share all good things
That you provide us on this Earth.

Thus I pause in this unending prayer, ending as was begun, with undying gratitude for everything
You have given and for all that You have done.

Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Indigenous Prayers con't

Mother Earth Prayer

Mother Earth, hear your child, As I sit here on your lap of grass, I listen to the echoes of your voice
In my brother, the Wind, As he blows from all corners and directions.
The soft and gentle raindrops are the Tears you cry for your children.
Teach me the Lessons you offer: To nurture my children, as you nurture yours,
To learn the Lessons of the Four Kingdoms, that make up this World of Physical Things, and To Learn
to Walk the Path chosen so long ago.
Mother Earth, hear your child,
Be a bond between the Worlds of Earth and Spirit.
Let the Winds echo the Knowledge of the Grandfathers.
Who await, unseen, yet visible if I only turn my eyes to their World.
Let me hear their Voices, in the Winds that Blow to the East.
From the East: I seek the Lessons of Childhood: To see with the trusting innocence of a small one,
The Lessons of Spirit, Given in Love by our Creator.
From the South: to Learn the Ways of Questioning: The Fire and Independence of adolescence, The
Truths, and how they help us Grow along this Path.
From the West: where the Grandfathers teach us Acceptance of Responsibility That come during the
years of Marriage and Family.
That my own children grow Strong, and True.
From the North: where the Elders, who by their long lives Have learned and stored Wisdom and
Knowledge. And Learned to Walk in Balance and Harmony with our Mother, the Earth.
Mother Earth, hear your child. Hold my hand as I Walk my Path in this World. Guide me to the
Lessons I seek, bring me closer to Our Creator, Until I return to the Western Direction, to once
again Enter the World of Spirit, Where the Sacred Fire Awaits, and I rejoin the Council of the Elders,
In the Presence of the One Who-Created-All.
— KiiiskeeN'tum- She Who Remembers

Cheyenne Prayer for Peace

Let us know peace.
For as long as the moon shall rise,
For as long as the rivers shall flow,
For as long as the sun shall shine,
For as long as the grass shall grow,
Let us know peace.

Sacred Texts on Love and Justice for Children

The following are excerpts from sacred texts of each religious tradition. There are, of course, many more passages from sacred texts as well as teachings and practices from each tradition related to poverty, love, justice, children, faith, and action. What inspires, guides, or sustains you from your tradition? What resonates with you from another tradition?

Indigenous Prayers con't

Mohawk Prayer

Oh Great Spirit, Creator of all things;
Human Beings, trees, grass, berries.
Help us, be kind to us.
Let us be happy on earth.
Let us lead our children
To a good life and old age.
These our people; give them good minds
To love one another.
Oh Great Spirit,
Be kind to us
Give these people the favor
To see green trees,
Green grass, flowers, and berries
This next spring;
So we all meet again
Oh Great Spirit,
We ask of you.

Sioux Prayer

Fill us with the Light.
Give us the strength to understand, and the eyes to see.
Teach us to walk the soft Earth as relatives to all that live.

Ancient Indian Proverb

You have noticed that everything an Indian does in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything and everything tries to be round.
In the old days all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation and so long as the hoop was unbroken the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living center of the hoop, and the circle of the four quarters nourished it. The east gave peace and light, the south gave warmth, the west gave rain and the north with its cold and mighty wind gave strength and endurance. This knowledge came to us from the outer world with our religion.
Everything the power of the world does is done in a circle.
The sky is round and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls.
Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours.
The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were.
The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. Our teepees were round like the nests of birds, and these were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests, where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children.
- Black Elk, Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux 1863-1950