

MORAL LAW. To obey the law is paramount for most. Others, as they advance their own cause, accept they may contravene general law - especially since a lot of laws seem counterintuitive; where what is acceptable in one society may be improper in another. But the major moral laws permeate most cultural and political systems or religions. The earliest laws were drafted by Confucius, Zarathustra, Buddha, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed; they are followed by - among others - Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, Christians and Muslims. **I**s there a universal moral law then, one that applies to anyone, at anytime, in any respect? Yes. The 500BCE Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata* states: "**D**o naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you." And Confucius said: "What you don't wish upon yourself, don't do to others." Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh holy book): "Don't create enmity with anyone, as God is with everyone." Zarathustra: "That is good which only shall be done to another when it is good for one's self." Buddha: "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful." Jesus: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Mohammed: "None of you truly believes, until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." **B**eit Hillel: "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. That is the whole Torah (law); the rest is commentary; go and study it."

When Hillel the Elder - a Jewish religious leader who lived during the time of King Herod - was asked for a summary of Judaism, he cited this well-known paradigm (the Golden Rule). Thus Hillel, like other sages, recognised as the fundamental imperative for moral law the ancient principle of brotherly love.

But man is embroiled in warfare - and it is tragic to see members of either side mourn their dead. Furthermore, it is bewildering to see that to ease their excruciating pain they demand the same pain be inflicted on their fellow humans in retribution. Both sides thus patently breach the universal law.

Therefore the reversal of the universal law 'do unto others as they do unto you', or the biblical 'an eye for an eye' is a distortion of the Golden Rule, in fact an abomination of moral law. As the principle of retributive justice it panders to the perceived need to discipline or punish rather than pardon and forgive.

However, it is possible to perceive of areas where the Golden Rule could break down. For instance, a religious fundamentalist may well wish to impose his restrictive dogmas on others in the belief that, while he deems them good for himself, they're good for all.

Thus an addendum to the Golden Rule is Ethical Law, which prescribes what we ought to do or ought not to do based on what's ethically right as opposed to what's preferred and agreed to by a community, or dictated by traditions and regulations.

The Golden Rule states: "Do to others as you want them to do to yourself" i.e. it refers to the notion of brotherly love positively. The version of the saying that frames it negatively, i.e. by Confucius and many others, is referred to as the Silver Rule: "Don't do to others what you don't want done to yourself".

see also ETHICS