

Messiah

By

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Preface

Early in the 21st Century the human race finds itself reeling from the pressures of increased population levels, a worldwide decline in environmental quality, intense global competition for energy, water, and other natural resources, with underlying political, cultural and religious conflicts, and great inconsistencies in the wealth of nations among the various regions and within individual countries.

The leaders of nations meet to address these issues, to find common ground and implement strategies to help ensure viable outcomes for all of us, even for the very planet upon which we live and from which we all derive our sustenance. We are not separate from the earth, we are not separate from each other, and our passions may very well consume us.

In order to survive, every culture and nation form laws, rules of engagement for themselves and for engaging with others, common practices that enable life to continue on in a civilized manner. The rule of law has proven wiser than anarchy. It is a necessity. Despots create laws that are self serving. Great rulers create laws that are equitable and just.

The underlying morality and laws of a nation typically originate with a wise and revered law giver from within their culture in times past. Or they may have adopted the morality and laws of a neighboring culture. It is morality and law that form the basis for religion. The world has many religions and there are many variations in practices among adherents. Consensus between and within various religions has proven to be impossible to achieve. Yet there is still hope for consensus with regards to law.

We all aspire to be free and to live in peace. Our task is to perpetuate a moral, ethical, and just world that our children may inherit and live in

without fear. We seek a common bond with enhanced trust and cooperation, a universal kinship with each other and with the world around us. We seek power but only such power that is limited by a sincere desire for the common good. If we can agree on common laws there is still hope.

Hebrew Law Givers and Prophets

An early example of a law giver was the Hebrew prophet Moses, who with divine inspiration, received the Ten Commandments and gave them to the Hebrew nation while they were still in the desert after having escaped their bondage in Egypt. While in Egypt they had been forced to live under Egyptian law as slaves.

The Ten Commandments were for living in the new land upon which they were about to enter as a free nation and people. The Hebrew God did not want them to enter this new land lawless. Neither did he want them to practice the existing laws of the land nor the existing cultural morality.

The nature of the Ten Commandments is inherently moralistic. Morals across cultures and even within cultures are not necessarily the same, and morality and law do not necessarily coincide even though the opportunity is always there. The laws of a land stem from the underlying morality of the culture or nation. Often these are not fixed, and may change subject to time and circumstance, changes in the makeup of its people, and changes in government.

The Ten Commandments offer a moralistic basis for derivation of law. A generally accepted translation of the Ten Commandments as given to Moses and delivered to the Hebrew people is provided below. Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Deuteronomy 5: 6-21,

6 I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

8 Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the

waters beneath the earth: 9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, not serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. 10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

11 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

12 Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. 13 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 14 But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. 15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.

16 Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

17 Thou shalt not kill.

18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

19 Neither shalt thou steal.

20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.

It is important to note that God and Moses knew that the Hebrew people would fail to keep the law. Therefore God tempered his justice with mercy, compassion and forgiveness, giving opportunity to repent and return to Him. This compassionate nature of the Hebrew God is characterized in his name. It is revealing to look at the attributes of God, self-declared by God to Moses, quoting from the King James Bible, Exodus 34:5-7,

5 And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6 And the Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Although God's justice is tempered with mercy and forgiveness, we see that disobeying God's commandments has an effect on the individual, the family, the community and the nation, across multiple generations.

Some countries have already implemented aspects of these Ten Commandments as their own underlying morality, which has also influenced their laws. For example, murder is a crime punishable by imprisonment and even death; adultery which often leads to violence, property disputes, and the destruction of the family, requires judicial resolution; stealing is a crime punishable by imprisonment, fine or restitution; lying under oath is a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment and fine; coveting a neighbors possessions may lead to adultery, stealing, lying, and even murder.

The Hebrew God

Hebrew means 'from the other side'. Abraham entered into Canaan Land from the other side of the Euphrates River. Ever since then, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their wives and all of their progeny, has been called the 'Hebrew God'. It is important to note that in Abraham's time many Gods were worshipped on both sides of the Euphrates River and across the entire known world. But Abraham began worshipping a single God forsaking all other Gods, and hence his was a monotheistic religion.

Jews (a name derived from the tribe of Judah) are those descendants of Abraham, through his son Isaac's seed, including all of those strangers that have joined themselves to this people. The Hebrew language is the official language spoken by the Jewish people in the Nation of Israel and it is also the prayer language of most Jews around the world. A 'Jew' was originally called a 'Hebrew'. Not all Jews are religious. Some are even atheistic. The Jews that are religious typically practice one of the various forms of Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform).

Most non-atheistic Jews consider God to be the divine, hidden, emanating source of our entire universe and of all worlds, past, present and future, the creator of all life and the one and only rightful King over his own creation.

A religious Jew makes a conscious choice to serve the Hebrew God and to identify with the Hebrew/Jewish people. As a Jew, he or she is bound to obey the commandments of God. To obey God and keep his commandments is considered the primary duty of man. A Jew is also obligated to study God's word and to conduct their life in a manner that meaningfully addresses all relationships; those with God, self, and others.

All Jews worship the same Hebrew God as did their father Abraham. This is fundamental to their religion and it is reinforced daily in the Hebrew prayer Shema, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One', the essence of this prayer being, there is only one God and him only shall you serve.

Ideally a Jew is a human being that is at peace with his or her place in the universe, content with the natural order of things, having right relationships with God, self, and others, no usurper of authority, willing and faithfully serving God as King, being ethical, moral and just, promoting and pursuing peace, seeking truth and justice for the sake of mankind and for the sake of the world that God has created, all in accord with God's inspired word that has been delivered to mankind through the Jewish prophets of righteousness.

According to Jewish belief, as revealed in the inspired scriptures, God is King, God Remembers, and God Reveals and Redeems. God is holy and calls all of mankind to be holy. All Jews sin, but when Jews sin they must seek forgiveness from the person they have sinned against as well as from God. Every year on the high holy day of Yom Kippur, Jews seek atonement from God not only for their own sins and but also for the sins of all the Jewish people.

Another Hebrew Prophet

Moses speaks of another prophet that God will raise up, and that we should hearken unto him. Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Deuteronomy 18: 15,

15 The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

And God confirms this again, quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Deuteronomy 18: 18,

18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

It is important to consider what this coming prophet might say concerning the Hebrew nation, its morality, its laws, and its religion. Otherwise Moses and God would have spoken in vain. The contributions of this prophet are apparently necessary and of importance to the Hebrew nation.

Many religious people around the world consider Jesus to have indeed been that prophet to which God and Moses were referring. Jesus was a Jew descended from the Tribe of Judah as was his ancestor King David.

Although not everyone agrees that Jesus was that prophet, assuming for the time being that he might have been that prophet, what did he say about Hebrew morality, laws, and religion?

Jesus warned us to beware of the scribes and Pharisees (the religious leaders of the day), those that profess to be a Jew and appear to be in outward appearance, basing their claim to God's inheritance upon being a descendent of Abraham. He found fault with the religious teachings, doctrines, and practices of the scribes and Pharisees, declaring them to be

hypocrites concerning the law. The zeal and vehemence of his declaration is quite strong, quoting from the King James Bible, Book of St. Matthew, 23:23-39,

23 Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partaker with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34 Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the alter.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

So what else did Jesus say concerning the Hebrew morality, laws, and religion? Jesus taught that he came not to destroy the law but to fulfill the law. Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of St. Matthew 5:13-20,

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whomsoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say to unto you, That except your righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

In addition to finding fault with the religious leaders of the day and emphasizing the validity of the Hebrew law, did Jesus add anything to Hebrew morality, laws, and religion?

Jesus summed up all of Hebrew morality and law into two commandments. Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of St. Matthew 22: 37-40,

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

To this summation of the existing Hebrew law, Jesus added only one additional commandment. Quoting from King James Bible, Book of St. John 15:12-14,

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Jesus further expounded on this additional commandment, making it clear that this love is to extend to all of mankind, even to our enemies. Quoting from King James Bible, Book of St. Matthew 5:44-48,

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans so?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Just as Moses instructed and elaborated on the Ten Commandments, Jesus instructed and elaborated on the commandments using parables from real life as examples. Jesus revealed the meaning of these parables to his disciples. Of all that God revealed to him nothing was hidden from them. He spoke all of the words that God had commanded him to speak. Jesus taught that mercy, compassion and forgiveness should overshadow justice. If we forgive others, then God will forgive us.

Note that the New Testament Bible concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not included in the Jew's religious practices. Even so, it is of importance to understand that Jesus Christ and his original twelve disciples were all Jewish and that the New Testament containing the four Gospels of Jesus Christ, the Acts, the Epistles, and other books attributed to St. Paul, books attributed to St. James, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude, and the Revelation of St. John the Divine, were all written and handed down to us by Jews.

It is recognized that the books of the New Testament were recorded and written in the first several centuries following the deaths of the original disciples and not by the actual disciples themselves. These scribes were later referred to as Christians, based on their belief that Jesus was the Hebrew Messiah.

Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of The Acts 11: 21-26,

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Jesus spoke of no other prophets to come except for false prophets that would attempt to deceive the nations. With this revelation, the Hebrew law is now complete. Regarding the Hebrew law, God has finished speaking to the Hebrew nation. Everything else is commentary. Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of St. John 19:28-30,

28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Just as there are many stories concerning Moses and the Hebrew Nation, there are many stories concerning Jesus and his Apostles. These all may be found in the Old and New Testament Bibles in their various translations. These two bibles are the most read books in all of history and many wise

men and women have looked to them for instruction in personal righteousness and for wisdom for the ruling of nations.

Abraham's Children of Promise

Abraham had two sons; his first being Ishmael by his wife Hagar; his second being Isaac by his wife Sarah. Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Genesis 16:1-16,

1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid unto thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee.

6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

7 And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

9 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

10 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

11 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

13 And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

14 Wherefore the well was called Beer-la-hai-roi; behold it is between Kadesh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

16 And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Genesis 17:1-8,

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Genesis 17:15-21,

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations: kings of people shall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old bear?

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed: and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Genesis 21:1-5,

1 And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

5 And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Genesis 21:8-21,

8 And the child grew, and was weaned: And Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham mocking.

10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of the bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

15 And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

16 And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.

19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

20 And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

The Religion of Islam

Today in the Middle East, many of the Arabic speaking peoples in the surrounding region are descendents of Abraham through his son, Ishmael. Most of these have adopted the Islamic religion, considering Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, to be the direct descendent of Abraham's son, Ishmael, and the Seal of the Prophets, the last prophet of God, whose purpose is to set all things right pertaining to God. Although the Islamic religion recognizes both Moses and Jesus as God's prophets, the Prophet Muhammad is the supreme Law Giver. And the Quran is held in higher regard than the Old and New Testament Bibles of the Jews and Christians.

Muhammad was born in 570 CE in the city of Mecca and died in the city of Medina in 632 CE. It was in a cave in Mecca, where the angel Gabriel visited him, and revealed what was to become the text of the Quran. He subsequently migrated to the city of Medina, where the Islamic religion really began to take root. Muhammad's followers captured the city of Mecca sometime between 629-630 CE. Mecca and Medina are considered to be the two holiest sites in Islam, whereas Jerusalem's temple mount is considered to be the third holiest site in Islam. It was there, in Jerusalem, where The Prophet Muhammad finally ascended to heaven. The Islamic religion has subsequently spread around the world.

Consensus on Law

All three of the monotheistic religions originating in the Middle East, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, have religious followers that are of varied nature, often at odds with one another, even within their particular religion, and unfortunately, each religion also has adherents that are extremists. The Middle East is a religious tinder box and it only takes a spark to ignite a raging fire. Therefore great patience, wisdom, and understanding is required by governmental and religious leaders in this region to avert truly catastrophic events as the Middle East has been in continual conflict for centuries.

The Ten Commandments are a very reasonable place to start for building a consensus on law. With the one additional commandment attributed to Jesus, that we love one another including our enemies, there is actually hope for bringing peace and for putting an end to ceaseless wars. The opportunity is there for all of us. We must not let religion divide us.

Just because it was the Hebrew people who were given the Ten Commandments by a Hebrew God in times past, does not mean that others cannot benefit from them. Nor does it mean that they are not relevant for today. One need only turn on the news. And it is easy to see that there is none righteous, no not one. There are so many voices, all clamoring for solutions, floundering in their attempts to find any consensus on practically anything, particularly with regards to religion.

In order to entertain the notions of God, angels, prophets, and a Messiah, takes more faith than most people are able to embrace, particularly in today's prominently scientific world. That is not to say that being religious is a bad thing. Good morals and good laws can make for good religion and good traditions. But the world needs a consensus on law that is

independent of religion. When the Ten Commandments are considered as a basis for common law, they appear to be very wise, regardless of their source of origination. But are they adequate? Jesus taught that without love, they are not. If loving mankind, including your enemies, allows for consensus and implementation of these laws around the world, then perhaps Jesus is the Hebrew Messiah, indeed.

A consensus on common laws, independent of religion, will allow leaders to sit down at the table as wise men and women, willing to become partners in solving the world's problems, and in putting an end to war. Working together, we can all have hope that we will survive the trials and tribulations that are yet to come in the 21st Century, and leave absolutely no one behind, regardless of their nationality, race, color, creed or religion.

Even if a consensus on law can be found there is still one great hurdle, what to do with the law breaker? How do we effectively apply justice that is tempered with mercy? Can we find any common ground? We recognize that morality, laws, and religion are intertwined. What is considered to be just and reasonable punishment may vary greatly between and even within nations.

Citizenship, Naturalization, and Extradition

It seems reasonable that a citizen, naturalized or other should have a right to be judged and punished in accord with the laws of their own country. When a grievous crime is committed in another country, the charges should be filed, and they should be deported or extradited to be tried in their own courts of law. A thorough accounting should be made and a full report issued to the country of complaint. This would eliminate hostage taking, unjust incarceration, and any international conflict based on real or perceived unreasonable punishment of their citizens.

When a grievous crime is committed, the perpetrator should understand that they will be at the mercy of the courts in their own country of origin or citizenship. This will give visitors and illegal immigrants great pause before committing a crime, as they will shortly be deported or extradited to their own country. No country would be permitted to reject the return of their citizens for trial. Whether a perpetrator would be allowed to return to foreign soil after having appeased the courts, would be based on the relations between the countries in question. Rights to property would be handled by the courts in both countries. Dual or multiple citizenships would require special enhanced jurisprudence. In this case, the country for deportation or extradition would be determined by the country in which the crime was committed.

In the case of non-grievous crimes with minimal penalty, the deportation or extradition of a citizen to another country would be up to the country in which the crime was committed. It would be up to the court to decide. Standards would need to be set locally, regionally, and nationally for handling these decisions. The practice of judging and punishing crimes in a manner consistent with the country of citizenship would still allow for

countries to have their own set of laws for crime and punishment. Each country would need to document the citizenship for all of its people and these records would need to be judiciously kept.

The State of Israel

In the spring of 1948 the sovereign State of Israel was created. Through much debate, preparation, and meaningful sacrifice, the State of Israel was 'miraculously created in a single day' by resolution of the United Nations. Fundamental to the creation of the State of Israel was the good will of many non-Jewish people who believed that Israel had a right to exist.

It is interesting to note that many Orthodox Jews were against the formation of the State of Israel without Messiah having come first. They feared for a secular state that might be displeasing to God and become fleeting and transient and unable to sustain itself.

The Jewish people once again have a homeland in which they may freely practice their religion and govern themselves. Yet to this day Israel is surrounded by enemies on all sides, and some are calling for its total destruction. Particularly disconcerting, is that many of Israel's enemies call for its destruction 'in the name of God'. This is all very real and cannot be ignored. It must be understood.

Today the entire region surrounding Israel is in great turmoil. There are forced migrations of people fearing for their lives. And these forced migrations are affecting the entire world. Too many innocent people have already died. Innocent people are very likely dying even as I write. Many ancient landmarks have been removed and the cultural artifacts of ancient civilizations are being willfully destroyed. This is like a curse on all of humanity. Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Deuteronomy 19:14,

14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmarks, which they of old have set in their inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it.

Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Proverbs 22:28,

28 Remove not the ancient landmarks, which thy fathers have set.

Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Deuteronomy 27:17,

17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Moses instructed the Hebrew people to set aside three cities to which a person unintentionally killing or doing harm to another could flee to be safe from revenge. There they would dwell in sanctuary and be safe from harm. Today it is righteousness and peace that need sanctuary. Let the Nation of Israel be accountable as that sanctuary. And may righteousness again flow out of Mount Zion to water the whole earth.

May the morality, laws, and religions of all people living together within the State of Israel, far exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees of the day, regardless of their nationality, language, race, color, creed, or religion.

May the true competition of all nations in the future be for promoting peace and may there be an end to war. May we forgive and be forgiven. We must learn to dwell together in peace. Isaac and Ishmael are brothers, both of them children of promise.

May the rest of the world have patience with these children, as they will eventually all grow up into responsible citizens, being responsible not only for themselves but also for each other.

The End of the Matter

Yesterday is gone, although its memories haunt the globe. Around the world pain and sorrow from words spoken and actions taken under philosophies of hatred, leading to violence and revenge, death and despair, injustice and man's inhumanity to man.

Do not let these wounds become infected and lead to death through disease of the soul. Embrace each other and walk together to a new home of the heart and mind. Let love take us home together. No more fear, no more hatred, no more violence. Let the armies march no more. It goes without saying that no one should die homeless in the street.

Do not forget what we look like, smiling from ear to ear, with an unwrinkled forehead, an open hand, and a lively gait. With thoughtful words and loving kindness, make the journey together and come home in peace. Care for the orphan and widow, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, and set the captives free, on this we can all agree. And may the end of the matter be as wondrous as the beginning. Quoting from the King James Bible, Book of Genesis 1:3,

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.