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Planetary Ethics

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The essence of ethics is: Respect the other; respect, honour and accept all.

Why is this?

Socrates observed long ago: There is something in us which is corrupted by doing injury to others.

Human beings are so constituted that true personal well-being is connected at some deep level with the wellbeing of others. This is the way the universe is constructed. No one is an island, but the lives of each one of us are interwoven with other lives which help society to flourish, with other lives around the globe who produce our food, clothing and shelter. Everyone plays some essential role in the life of this planet, as do the trees, plants and animals. All are interdependent.

The heart of all ethics: self-limiting, of one's desires, of one's actions, of one's consumption, on behalf of others.

And respect yourself. If one does not respect oneself, one cannot respect others. Never put anyone down, never allow your-self to be put down.

Derivative of "respect," ethics can be formulated very simply: In its negative phase, it is "Don't hurt anyone." This is the basic law of the Earth plane, and everyone knows this subconsciously when they come here. In its positive phase, it is: "Help everyone." Those who harm others are drawn back to the Earth plane again and again until every debt is paid.

The fullness of ethics: Further the well-being of all.

To be able to respect and help everyone in our overcrowded world, requires a spiritual path of self-healing: deal with your inner life, deal with your anger, know when you are projecting your own fears and hatreds on someone else. Ethics is an inescapable call to some kind of spiritual way, and deep self - knowledge and self-help.

What is to be gained by being ethical, which requires some effort on our part? The well-being of one's own soul, both now and in the future, whether that future be taken to be a reincarnational future or simply an after-life. Being ethical safeguards the well-being of one's own soul, which is immortal.

If we understood correctly the great cosmic laws, this would not be a question for us. The greatest of cosmic laws is that of reincarnation. Souls don bodies again and again until their earthly incarnations are complete.

Love is the law of the Earth plane. We come from spiritual worlds of love and unity into the physical world of fear and separation, and our task is to overcome our fear and learn to live in love. Simply, because Spirit is Love, and has created a universe in Love beneficial to every creature within it. Fear has destroyed the balance.

Every human being holds his/her own fate in their own hands. The great law of life, taught by both Buddha and Christ, was: Treat others as you would have them treat you. Why? Karma operates. Whatever you do to others will be done to you, if not in this life-time, then in another. It is all very simple, that is the law of the universe. Ethics is wholly derivative from self-love, "If you want to live, to truly live, then this is how you must live." When the spiritual workings of the cosmos are understood, this is no problem. You have chosen your life, to learn this law.

It is necessary, now, to be ethical with respect to other human beings. It is even more necessary to be ethical with respect to the Earth, and to every tree, plant, and animal, to every ocean, lake and river, mountain and hill, on the Earth.

The Earth is ecologically One, and the human is part of the Earth, the Earth is part of the human.

Our belief structures, our ideologies, our cultures, differ, but we are all, Earthlings, and share common needs, together with the plants and animals, for food, covering, shelter, fresh drinking water, clean air. These are basic.

Now, some people have too much of these things and live with a guilty conscience, or in denial, other people have too little, the animals have even less, the plants are being poisoned, as we all are.

A few considerations must be made: Our planet is such that it has limits. Its material, its quantitative goods are limited. The human has to cut back on its consumption of the planet, that the Earth may live.

In the human sphere, because goods are limited, what one has another cannot have. The fates of the rich and the poor, here and hereafter, are inextricably connected. The rich have more than they need by virtue of taking it from the poor who have less than they need.

As great a saint as St. Augustine wrote: If the rich will not give the poor their sustenance, the poor have the right to take it.

Every being on this planet, including animals and plants, has the right to have basic needs met. For the animals, that means habitat, nesting and den sites, migration routes, their lives. For plants, it means a freedom from being poisoned by human-fabricated chemicals. For human beings, it means a fairer sharing of the planet's wealth.

Excess material goods do not make for happiness, having material needs met, a clear conscience about one's manner of life on this planet, and an alive inner child, is what makes for happiness. No rich person can be truly happy knowing he or she lives by depriving others of their lives, the rich live in guilt or denial, the poor live in the agony of physical deprivation. Both hold the keys to one another's happiness.

As has been scriptural wisdom through the Ages, the mean is best. If all lived

temperately, *all* could live, including the animals and plants.

Those who have wealth or power have a tremendous responsibility to everyone else to use it for the benefit of all. Nowadays, people with power or wealth think it confers upon them a life of privilege. It doesn't. The wealth of this planet, which is one, belongs to all its inhabitants. I simply state what all, in their innermost selves, knows to be true.

We human beings, collectively, have taken so much from this planet, who increasingly reveals herself to be one living organism - in which every part is inter-connected with every other part, and a conscious, spiritual being as well, that now her very survival is in doubt. We have acted on the assumption that natural "resources" are there purely for human use, that nature is our property. The truth is that every natural "resource" - forest, fish, animals - serves some vital function in maintaining the planet as a whole before it is useful to us. If we want to survive here, we had better consider its function in the whole before we cut or shoot it.

The recession human beings are experiencing in their various economies is not just a global recession, it is a recession of the Earth, who is recoiling from our assault upon her. Basically, we are reaching the limits of growth. Corporations have always pursued policies of slash and burn, cut and run. Increasingly, there is nowhere to run, we all have to settle down upon the Earth as if we meant to live here forever. That means, developing sustainability, simplifying our lifestyles so that the Earth can sustain us in perpetuity. All are called to be a part of this task. The planet can be saved, but we have to act now.

It is primarily the rich and powerful in the West, and the rich in poor countries, who must give up what they have in assuming their rightful responsibility for the whole. From those, to whom much is given, much is expected.

The human community as a whole must cut back at every level - -it must self-limit, the heart of all ethics, with respect to the Earth - that the survival of the planet may be made possible.

All need to get in touch with their Love for the Earth and for others - that all may become willing.

I envision a planet at peace, free from both want and fear, in which the lives and happiness of all may flourish. Let us be guided by one desire: To make the world safe for children.

Truly, what the sages said is so: One cannot be happy unless all are happy.

Ethics on a world-scale is justice, fairness with respect to the distribution of the planet's abundance.

It is a question, now, of a little common sense about how to live with each other, about how to live with the Earth.

And let this understanding guide all in the formation of just policies.

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