

community (brotherhood and sisterhood) and service (kindness, compassion and help) that underlie almost all faiths.

It is always awkward to write of religious faiths, and of their injunctions to act with kindness and compassion in service to others, in a textbook because, obviously, faiths do differ, and unfortunately in the past and continuing into the present, those differences have been far more emphasized than the similarities. But, there are similarities. Let me give an example. Variations of the well-known "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" Golden Rule of Christianity can be found in most of the other religions of the world, and many of these predate by a considerable extent the beginning of the Christian era:

Buddhism (religious creed and ethical system of central and eastern Asia, founded about 460 BC): "Harm not others with that which pains yourself."

Confucianism (ethical system added to the existing Chinese religious creed about 510 BC): "Loving kindness is the one maxim which ought to be acted upon throughout one's life."

Hinduism (traditional religious creed and social system of the Indian subcontinent): "This is the sum of duty: do nothing to others which if done to you would cause you pain."

Islam (religious creed of western and southeastern Asia, founded about AD 630): "Not one of you is a believer until you wish to everyone what you love for yourself."

Judaism: "What is hurtful to yourself, do not do to others. That is the whole of the Torah, and the remainder is but commentary. Go and learn it."

Taoism (religious creed and philosophic system of northern China, founded about 550 BC): "Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain, and regard your neighbor's loss as your loss."

The basic teachings of most religions stress a sense of community among all holders of a given faith, a belief in a common goal for that community, and a duty of kindness, compassion, and help to people, even to those outside the faith. The modern version expressed as "Never take any action that is not kind and understandable by all, can be and that does not forward a sense of true community, a belief that all of us should work jointly toward a common goal."

### **Principle of Government Requirements (Hobbes, 1588–1679, and Locke, 1632–1704)**

Kindness, compassion, and a sense of everyone working jointly toward a common goal would be ideal if everyone would be kind, compassionate, and oriented toward the well-being of the full community, but everyone won't be. Hobbes, as was explained earlier in Chapter 3 and consequently will be summarized only briefly here, returned to the early "people truly are self-centered" assumptions of the pre-Socratic philosophers, before the "moderated" and "long-term" assumptions were added.

Hobbes proposed that people were essentially equal in strength of body and mind, and that this equality of ability lead to an equality of hope in the achievement of ends, and that in turn led to a constant struggle for gain, for safety, and for reputation. This constant struggle, he claimed, could easily become a war where "every man is enemy to every man," and the resulting chaos would probably result in a decline in science, trade and production with the final outcome: "the life of man: solitary, poor, nasty, trade and short."

To avoid that outcome, Hobbes proposed that men and women living in a state of nature, a free association of individuals before any corrupting political and economics institutions had been invented, would agree to surrender their most crucial right—enforce the law. Locke added the rights to liberty and property to make the peace and the rights considered most crucial.

Together these two writers developed the idea of the Social Contract. Here the question was what would free people—deciding among themselves to advance their individual self-interests but *ignorant of exactly what those self-interests really were* had been created—choose as their most basic ethical principle, applicable to all and understandable by all. Hobbes and Locke both concluded that that basic ethical principle would be "obey the law to avoid chaos and loss." The modern version of this "obey the law" rule can be expressed as "Never take any action that violates the law because the law represents the agreed-upon minimal moral standards of our full society, and those minimal moral standards must be observed by all to maintain the peace among all and advance the well-being of all."

### **The Principle of Utilitarian Benefits (Bentham, 1747–1832, and Mill, 1806–1873)**

Bentham and Mill jointly made the argument that, clearly, obedience to the law was a basic requirement of a productive and pleasant society, but that specific laws could be either manipulated or misdirected for individual gain, particularly by the powerful central authority proposed by Hobbes and Locke. There had to be a means of evaluating which laws were good and consequently should be obeyed, and which were not and consequently should be replaced.

Bentham proposed that all individuals are governed by feelings of pleasure and pain, and they naturally act to increase the pleasure and decrease the pain. This net effect he termed "utility": that phrase is still in use, more than 200 years later, to refer to individual preferences in economic theory. Utility, he continued, could be defined as the benefit, advantage, or happiness of the party involved. That party could be an individual or, more frequently, a collection of individuals freely associating in an ongoing community, and then Bentham concluded that laws could be considered to be good, and therefore should be obeyed, and not replaced if they advanced the utility or the happiness of all of the persons freely associated within that full community.

Mill later formalized this concept. He started by saying that there had been little progress in the search for the true criteria that would separate right from wrong in human