

never have known real homes. It would seem that closing our doors and glorifying what's inside may not be enough of a contribution. It may be the foundation, but the emphasis may be exaggerated—not in the world, perhaps, but in the Church.

Now what of women and all the dire things that are supposed to happen when they venture outdoors?

Most of the warnings seem directed at women who *work*, those actually leaving home for *pay*. Those who do this, either while the children are small, or who wait until they are in school, are seen as shirking their duties, and it is usually assumed that the children are being left to themselves. Other women who spend their time shopping, attending luncheons, doing clubwork or churchwork, and possibly leaving their children at a different spot every day, are seldom mentioned. In fact, it would almost seem women are encouraged in these pursuits with no questions as to how they manage.

I am acquainted with large numbers of women, in and out of the Church. I think I can say that except for brand-new mothers and poverty-stricken women with large families, *none of these women are home*. Does this come as a shock? My friends take classes, attend school functions, shop frenzily, attend Church; they may trade sitting with friends, leave their children in nursery schools, or drag them along. The only ones who ever seem at home are those with recent illnesses, or those who are recluses in the tradition of Emily Dickinson or the Hawthorne sisters.

And yet when I went to work part-time, taking a job which included travel, great was

the shock in some circles. All my children were in school, and trustworthy Mormon couples were hired to replace me; yet it seemed somehow freaky for me to be accepting money for leaving home.

Were my children neglected? I don't know, but I do notice that they are able to get their own meals, and since I make enough to hire help with the housework, I have more time to spend just talking to them. They seem to enjoy conversing with a mother who can discuss something besides *them*, and my adolescent son has even owned up to loving me! I do not say that they won't suddenly go wrong next year, only that the cliché about quality over quantity still holds.

Of course, there isn't a one of us who wouldn't give up our own interests and activities to save any member of our family or to keep our houses from burning down. But I hope that applies to all members of the family, including father.

After observing the almost superhuman activities that some women, especially Mormon women, indulge in, I am reaching the conclusion that we women want to go where the need is. Sometimes the need is at home with little ones; sometimes it's at school or in the community; sometimes it involves us in paying work where we can use some of our expensive training. If we can be wise enough to time these pursuits, and lucky enough to be able to give ourselves to them freely without coercion from leaders or lovers, we need not destroy the foundations of home and hearth while yet contributing some of that much-vaunted "womenpower" to the world.

Faith and Reason

Religion and Morality

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In an open forum discussion on religion, a college student asked the panel: "Can an atheist be moral?" (He was using the word in its broad meaning to include all behavior deemed good or bad). One panelist answered, "No;" another said, "Yes."

Personally, I have known atheists whom I could trust to be honest and just. Religion is not always essential to the moral life, although it does inspire high moral living for many. I have also known both avowed atheists and professed believers whom I would not trust out of sight.

My interest here is not to discuss the morality of the non-believer, but to examine the role morality should play in the life of the

believer, particularly in the daily living of a Latter-day Saint whose religion is grounded in the teachings of the Jews, early Christians, Nephites, and Latter-day prophets. How important is morality in the gospel? That is the question.

Morality is not the most distinctive element of religion. Looking across the centuries at many religions, whether in primitive or more developed faiths, one finds that the heart of religion is man's desire to feel at home in the universe, to find some meaning in his life, to cope with the unknown, to deal with uncertainty, to find answers to ultimate questions: Who am I? Does God exist? Why do men suffer?

Moral questions seem to be of secondary concern and grow out of these ultimate questions of belief. Morality reflects man's view of the character of God and man's place in the universe. This is illustrated in the Scriptures of the world religions over and over again. In the *Tao Teh King*, the classic scripture of Taoism, for example, the word "Tao" stands for Ultimate Reality or the underlying divine reason in the universe. This Tao is quiet, unassuming, humble, yet the source and servant of all things. The word "Teh," meaning virtue, represents the way of life or the morality one should follow to live in harmony with Tao. A virtuous Taoist, like "Tao" itself, is peaceable, humble and simple in his tastes and demands.

The morality of Israel reflects the Hebrew concept of Jehovah. "Ye shall be holy for I the Lord thy God am holy" introduces the significant moral exhortation in Leviticus, Chapters 19 through 26. The prophets of Israel, in turn, continued to teach a morality consistent with their conception of God.

Many Christians identify the morality of the Old Testament with "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" and contrast it unfavorably with the Christian teaching of love and forgiveness. In like manner, the God of the Old Testament is portrayed as a harsh, revengeful Being in contrast to Jesus' emphasis on the compassion of a benevolent Father. Such over-simplifications give birth to unfortunate misperceptions. Jesus, himself, had a profound regard for the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets, making repeated affirmative references to them. He was a Jew who knew and accepted the finest ethical standards of his people, often repeated in his own eloquent style.

Many of the moral teachings of the Law of Moses no longer apply to our day — diet and hygiene rules, even some concerning the treatment of slaves, wives, and children. The Law of Moses is the morality of a people fresh out of slavery, constantly tempted by idolatry. Because other tribes and nations threatened to undermine their faith and moral fiber, their leaders took drastic measures to preserve their integrity as a God-fearing people. Harshness and ethnocentricity have an understandable place in the Mosaic law and in the Old Testament narrative.

These shortcomings of a people in a particular historical setting ought not to obscure the great contributions of the Hebrew people to the moral legacy of mankind. The Law of Moses is wonderfully concrete and applicable to every aspect of daily life. It teaches one exactly what to do in human relations — not to bear false witness, or steal, or commit adultery; to honor father and mother, let the slave go free after seven years and then not empty-handed, and leave the corners of the field and the gleanings of the grapes for the poor and the stranger. A devout Jew could not

be moral merely in the abstract as many "Christians" are, believing in general principles of goodness; he was compelled to weigh every deed thoughtfully before its execution.

There is also much humaneness and compassion in the Mosaic Law. The young bridegroom was not to go immediately to war but was to stay home and cheer up his wife for a year. A thief was to be whipped with forty stripes, but with no more lest he appear vile unto him who administered the punishment. Every seven years men were to glorify God by letting people who had lost legal right to their property redeem it.

The high point of moral teaching in the Old Testament is reached by the great literary prophets of the 8th to the 6th centuries B.C.: Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. They stress the moral character of God above everything else in religion. He is a person of unflinching justice who is equally concerned with rich and poor, and rulers and the ruled. He will not hear the prayers and hymns of praise nor accept the offerings of those who cheat their neighbors, who change fence lines, who bribe judges, who mix refuse with the wheat, who falsify weights and measures, who use the Sabbath to scheme against their brethren, who drink wine in bowls but are not concerned for the suffering of their fellow Israelites.

These Hebrew prophets make morality pre-eminent in religion. No other expression of faith — prayers, songs, offerings, sacrifices — is of any worth unless the people are also practising justice and mercy man to man. Hear the cry of Isaiah:

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? (Read Isaiah 1:11-15)

What does God want of man?

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil. Learn to do well: seek judgment [justice], relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widows. (Isaiah 1:16-17)

Micah, in a classic statement, asks what is acceptable religion. Note the importance of morality in his answer:

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with the thousand of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of

oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, *but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* (Micah 6:6-8, italics added)

Jesus was a true disciple of the prophets; He quoted them affirmatively. In Mormon theology, it is believed that He inspired them as Jehovah, "Lord" of the Old Testament. Jesus had two basic loyalties: to his Father in heaven and to his fellowmen. He turned to his Father for strength and sustenance and then "went about doing good," healing the bodies, minds, and souls of his afflicted brethren.

One can examine the content of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt: 5-7) and see how much of it is spirituality, referring to man's relationship to God, and how much of it is morality, emphasizing man's relationship to his fellowman. This is not easy to do, because in Jesus' thought spirituality and morality merge into one another. Even so, note the moral emphasis in these sayings:

Blessed are the merciful . . .
 Blessed are the peacemakers . . .
 Agree with thine adversary quickly . . .
 Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her . . .
 Judge, not, that ye be not judged . . .
 All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them: for this is the law and the prophets, etc., etc.

The apostle Paul is known as a mystic and theologian who strongly influenced later theological systems, particularly those of Luther and Calvin. Paul did emphasize faith and worship and the spiritual aspects of religion because his central theme was man's redemption from death and sin through Jesus Christ. Despite this theological emphasis, which is often quite difficult to understand, in every epistle Paul also stresses the ethical life abundantly and concretely. In fact, he usually ends his epistles with one or more chapters exhorting the Saints to live righteously. A choice example of his moral emphasis is found in I Corinthians, Chapters 12, 13, and 14. Word had come to Paul that the Saints he had converted at Corinth were exercised about who among them possessed the greater spiritual gifts. Some envied those who could speak in tongues; others were boastful of their gifts. In response to this situation, Paul made it clear what is most important in the Christian religion with his renowned eulogy on love or "charity" as it is called in the King James translation.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. (I Cor. 13:1-2, read the entire chapter).

The Latter-day Saint movement began in a search for the true church and the pristine gospel of Christ. It was born in an age of dispute over religious beliefs. It is only natural, therefore, that there should be a strong ecclesiastical and theological emphasis in the Restoration. Missionary work further emphasized the belief-dimension of the new religion. The thirteen *Articles of Faith* all begin with "We believe," yet a close examination of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants reveals a very strong emphasis on morality.

The Book of Mormon is, above all else, a cry of repentance, a plea for both Nephites and Lamanites "to think of their brethren like unto themselves." It is predominantly a compassionate work which repeats the ethical emphasis of the Hebrew prophets at many points. One illustration of this is found in Alma 34. Amulek is persuading men to repent and to pray over their flocks and herds and households and then continues:

Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, *and also for the welfare of those who are around you.* And now behold, my beloved brethren, *do not suppose that this is all;* for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of the substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need, I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith. (Alma 34:28-29, italics added)

One of the most interesting aspects of the Restored Gospel is that each ordinance has a moral emphasis and purpose. Baptism is a witness of repentance and a determination to bear one another's burdens (Mosiah 18). In the confirmation, the Holy Ghost comes to one who is meek and lowly of heart and fills his soul with perfect love (Moroni 8:26-28). Partaking of the sacrament is man's witness that he takes upon him the name of Christ with all that represents in moral action (Moroni 4). Eternal marriage, to be efficacious, must be sanctified by the Holy Spirit of Promise (D. & C. 132). And the priesthood does not bless the holder if he uses it to

exercise unrighteous dominion (D. & C. 121: 34-46).

How then should a Latter-day Saint live his religion? What is important? A Latter-day Saint believes in God, has faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Redeemer of men from death and sin. A Latter-day Saint is active in the Church, doing his duty, serving his fellowmen through his various callings in the Church. He gives generously and gladly of his time and means to build the Kingdom of God.

But this is not all there is to the life of a Latter-day Saint. He is also honest in his dealings with fellowmen. He does not lie, cheat, or steal whether in school or in business. He pays his bills; he does an honest day's work. His word is as good as his bond.

A Latter-day Saint is merciful. He is kind to little children and to widows, orphans, the sick, afflicted, and the aged. He has compassion and empathy for the retarded and the mentally ill. He does not judge his neighbor or broadcast his weaknesses and sins. The Latter-day Saint does not stereotype minority groups. He is respectful of racial and religious minorities.

Though he may radically disagree with persons who live a different life-style than his own, he does not reject people who have

objectionable standards. Like the Master, he can separate the deed from the doer.

The Latter-day Saint does not lay up for himself "treasures on earth." He does not live in luxury while at least a third of mankind goes to sleep hungry. If he has wealth, he uses it to provide opportunities and to relieve suffering.

A Latter-day Saint is not narrowly patriotic. He is loyal to his country but not in the spirit of "right or wrong my country first." His first and greatest loyalty is to God and to mankind. He looks beyond and across the borders of his own country. He is a world citizen. All men are his brothers.

In summary, a Latter-day Saint follows the admonition of Jesus, he seeks to love God with all his heart, his mind, and his soul and this motivates him to learn to love his neighbor as himself, for on these two commandments, as Jesus said, "hang" everything written in the law and the prophets, and, one might add, in all scripture.

How can the religious life *without morality* be aught but offensive to Him who came "that men might have life and have it more abundantly" and who died that men might have eternal life? Jesus loved God and men and beckons us to follow Him and do likewise.



