

## **Applying Religious Interpretation on Social Responsibility to Build up Inter-religious Integrity.**

### **Introduction**

Conflicts among different religious groups can be seen throughout the history. When study the philosophy as well as the practices of different Religions, it can be identified similarities as well as differences. Conflicts among religions occur due to the differences. Practices are the practical part of the religion. These practices are focusing to the spiritual development of the individual through disciplining the mental, verbal and physical actions. Social responsibility of the individual is the part which connected the person to the society. Purpose of this research is to identify the potentials to build up the inter-religious integrity through religious interpretation on social responsibility, with special reference to the main four religions of Sri Lanka: Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.

### **Methodology**

Documentary study of religious texts is the method used to collect data, and content analysis is the method to analyze the data.

### **Results**

Religions in the world can be divided into two categories as theological religions and non-theological religions. Religions which are based on believes of god or gods are call theological religions; such as Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Those religions which are not based on believes of gods like Buddhism and Jainism are call as non-theological religions. Other than the main difference mention above, religions are having some philosophical differences with each other. But most of the teachings relevant to practices, which are focusing to the spiritual development of the individual through disciplining the mental, verbal and physical actions are having many similarities. Especially the section which is focusing to the social responsibility of the individual is very much similar. The religious interpretation of social responsibility can be divided in to two parts as:

1. Responsibility of the individual as a member of the main society, and
2. Responsibility of the individual as a member of social institutes.

### **Responsibility of the individual as a member of the main society**

Moral codes of all four religions are focusing to protect basic rights of the other social beings as a member of the main society. Every religion gives guidelines or moral codes to be virtuous.

Five Precepts of Buddhism<sup>1</sup>, Yāmas and Niyāmas of Hinduism, Ten Commandments of Christianity<sup>2</sup>, are giving summarize version of basic virtuous practices, which is mainly focusing to protect the others' rights by disciplining oneself. These moral codes are focusing not to disturb other social beings' right to live, family life, and properties. And also not to cheat others. On the other hand most teachings in Tipitaka, Manusmruthi and other religious texts of Hinduism, Holy Bible, and Al-Quran giving guidelines to live in harmony with society and one's self. Those guidelines and moral codes are having more common characteristics than differences. For instance five precepts of Buddhism, has no contradiction with any theological religion, as all four religions agrees that one should, refrain form, hurting or killing others, stealing from others, sexual misconduct and laying. The first precept, refrain from the destruction of life and abstains from it, is discussed in first Niyāma, fifth Commandment. Al-Quran also discussed the same matter.

“Ahimsa: abstinence from injury, harmlessness, the not causing of pain to any living creature in thought, word, or deed at any time.” (1<sup>st</sup> Niyāma)

“You shall not murder.” (5<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

“Do not kill unjustly: Nor take life – which Allah has made sacred – except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority (to demand qisas or to forgive); but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the Law).” (Al-Quran 17:33)

Content of the second precept, refrain from the taking of what is not given and abstains from it is discussed in third Niyāma, seventh Commandment, and Al-Quran.

“Asteya: non-stealing, non-coveting, non-entering into debt.” (3<sup>rd</sup> Niyāma)

“You shall not steal.” (7<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

“And (as for) the male thief and the female thief, cut off (from the wrist joint) their hands as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise.” (Al-Quran, 5:38).

<sup>1</sup> *Puññbhinanda Sutta*, AN V - p 166-71

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 20:1-17- p63-64, and then at Deuteronomy 5:4-21- p134-35

The third precept is refrain sexual misconduct and abstains from it. The same content is discussed in fourth Niyāma, sixth, ninth, and tenth commandments, and Al-Quran.

**“Brahmacharya: divine conduct, continence, celibate when single, faithful when married.” ( Fourth Niyāma)**

“You shall not commit adultery.” (6<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

“You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.” (9<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

“You shall not covet your neighbor's house.” (10<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

“Do not commit adultery: Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils).” (Al-Quran 17:32)

“Refrain false speech and abstains from it;” is the fourth precept. Same content can be seen in second Niyāma, eighth Commandment, and Al-Quran.

“Satya: truthfulness, word and thought in conformity with the facts.” (2<sup>nd</sup> Niyama)

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” (8<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

“Allah will grab him by the (naseyah) [frontal lobe of the brain], the lying sinful (naseyah).” (Al-Quran 96:16-18)<sup>3</sup>

“It is only those who believe not in the Ayah (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah, who fabricate falsehood, and it is they who are liars.” (Al-Quran 16:105)<sup>4</sup>

The fifth precept is refrain from intoxicants which lead to loss of mindfulness. Even though it is not included in moral codes of other three religions, they also discouraging in their religious texts, the use of intoxicants which lead to loss of mindfulness. For instance Manusmruthi 11:90-

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<sup>3</sup> Al-Quran 96:16-19 – p 629

<sup>4</sup> Do16:105 - p 261

98 explain the place it has in Hinduism, why the individual should not take alcohol if he take alcohol how he can purify himself.

“A twice-born man who has (intentionally) drunk, through delusion of mind, (the spirituous liquor called) Sura shall drink that liquor boiling-hot; when his body has been completely scalded by that, he is freed from his guilt; or he may drink cow’s urine, water, milk, clarified butter or (liquid) cow dung boiling-hot, until he dies; or, in order to remove (the guilt of) drinking Sura, he may eat during a year once (a day) at night grains(of rice) or oilcake, wearing clothes made of cow hair and his own hair in braids and carrying (a wine cup as) a flag.

Sura, indeed, is the dirty refuse (mala) of grain, sin also is called dirt (mala); hence a Brahmana, a Kshatriya, and a Vaisya shall not drink Sura.

Sura one must know to be of three kinds, that distilled from molasses (gaudi), that distilled from groundrice, and that distilled from Madhuka-flowers (madhvi); as the one (named above) even so are all (three sorts)forbidden to the chief of the twice-born.

Sura, (all other) intoxicating drinks and decoctions and flesh are the food of the Yakshas, Rakshasas, and Pisakas; a Brahmana who eats (the remnants of) the offerings consecrated to the gods, must not partake of such(substances).

A Brahmana, stupefied by drunkenness, might fall on something impure, or (improperly) pronounce Vedic (texts), or commit some other act which ought not to be committed.

When the Brahman (the Veda) which dwells in his body is (even) once (only) deluged with spirituous liquor, his Brahman hood forsakes him and he becomes a Sudra.

The various expiations for drinking (the spirituous liquors called) Sura have thus been explained; I will next proclaim the atonement for stealing the gold (of a Brahmana).”

Al Quran and Bible also discourage using alcohol.

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah ], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.

Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?” (Al- Quran 5:90-91)<sup>5</sup>

“It is not right to drink wine or do anything that make your brother stumble.” (Romans 14:21)<sup>6</sup>

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)<sup>7</sup>

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:10)<sup>8</sup>

“Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:21)<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand religions advise to treat other social beings the way the individual like to be treated himself. The way the individual practicing moral codes may directly effect to the society. Nevertheless all religions are teaching that individual is having positive or negative outcome according to his actions, and he has to take the full responsibility of his actions in this life as well as after the death.

Sāleyyaka Sutta in Majjima Nikāya explain the tenfold of wrong conducts under physical, verbal and mental conducts as follows<sup>10</sup> :

1. Threefold of wrong bodily conducts
  - i. Engaged in destroying living things without compassion.
  - ii. In village or forest takes others' possessions stealthily.
  - iii. Misbehaves in sexuality, misbehaving with those
    - protected by father,
    - protected by mother,

<sup>5</sup> Al- Quran 5:90-91- p113

<sup>6</sup> Romans 14:21 – p 953

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 5:18 - p982

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:10- p 958

<sup>9</sup> Galatians 5:21 - p 978

<sup>10</sup> *Sāleyyaka Sutta MN 3:5:1 Sutta*

- protected by mother and father,
  - protected by brother,
  - protected by sister,
  - protected by relations,
  - with those with a husband,
  - becoming liable to punishment,
  - even those garlanded and made to promise.
2. Fourfold of wrong verbal conducts,
- i. a certain one tells lies.- In an assembly, in a gathering, amidst relations, in the guild, or in the presence of the royal family, called upon to stand witness and when asked to tell what he knows.
    - Not knowing would say I know and knowing would say I do not know.
    - Not seeing would say I saw and seeing would say, I did not see.
    - Thus for one's benefit, for another's benefit, or for some small gain would tell lies with awareness.
  - ii. Would slander, hearing here would tell it elsewhere to make a split here and hearing elsewhere would tell it here to make a split there. Thus would disunite the united, fond of disuniting would talk words to disunite.
  - iii. Would talk roughly, saying insolent words that are sharp and cursing. Words bordering on anger and not conducive to concentration.
  - iv. Would talk frivolous, untimely, untruthful words, not in keeping with the Teaching and the discipline. Words that could not be treasured.
3. Threefold of wrong mental conducts.
- i. Covets others' possessions, thinks may they be mine.
  - ii. Angry with a defiled mind, thinks may they come to destruction and may they not exist.
  - iii. Having wrong perverted view, such as there are no results for a gift and sacrifice, there are no results for pure and impure actions. There is no this world, other world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously arisen beings. There are no recluses and Brahmins who have come to the right path and by themselves realising declare this world and the other world.

Above ten actions are also named as ten wrong actions in Manusmruthi.<sup>11</sup>

1. Three kinds of sinful mental actions
  - i. Coveting the property of others,

<sup>11</sup> Manusmruthi:12:3-9

“Action, which springs from the mind, from speech, and from the body, produces either good or evil results; by action are caused the (various) conditions of men, the highest, the middling, and the lowest. Know that the mind is the instigator here below, even to that (action) which is connected with the body, (and) which is of three kinds, has three locations, and falls under ten heads.”

- ii. Thinking in one's heart of what is undesirable,
  - iii. Adherence to false (doctrines), are the.
2. Four kinds of sinful verbal action
- i. Abusing others,
  - ii. Speaking untruth,
  - iii. Detracting from the merits of all men,
  - iv. Talking idly
3. Three kinds of (wicked) bodily action.
- i. Taking what has not been given,
  - ii. Injuring (creatures) without the sanction of the law,
  - iii. Holding criminal intercourse with another man's wife

According to both sources the individual who did not discipline himself and do above actions will get negative outcome.

“This is the threefold mental misbehaviour. On account of this wrong conduct and not living according to the teaching, a certain one after death is born in loss and go to hell.” - *Sāleyyaka Sutta*<sup>12</sup>

“In consequence of (many) sinful acts committed with his body, a man becomes (in the next birth) something inanimate, in consequence (of sins) committed by speech, a bird, or a beast, and in consequence of mental (sins he is re-born in) a low caste.”

*Manusmruthi*<sup>13</sup>

Christianity and Islam also stating that those who are not protecting moral codes and the individual who is having wrong mental, verbal and physical actions will go to hell after the death.

*Singalovada Sutta* in *Dīgha Nikāya* gives six kind of relationships one should maintain. All kind of relationships one should maintain though out his life, can be summarize within these six categories.

#### 1. Parent – Child relationship

<sup>12</sup> *Sāleyyaka Sutta*<sup>12</sup> *MN 3:5:1 Sutta*

<sup>13</sup> *Manusmruthi*:12:9

2. Teacher – Student relationship
3. Husband – Wife relationship
4. Friend – Friend relationship
5. Employer – Employee relationship
6. Layman – Clergy relationship

There it explains individual's responsibility for other parties according to the social roles he has to play. The *Sutta* summarize the relationships individual should maintain throughout his life; but more detailed descriptions of each relationship can also be found in other places of *Tipitaka*. Religious text shows that, all four religions are giving attention regarding these relationships in a proper manner.<sup>14</sup>

### 1. Parent –Child relationship

According to Buddhism and Hinduism, one cannot repay the parents, even within the period of hundred years.<sup>15</sup>

“If one had borne his father and mother on his shoulders and lived a hundred years and meanwhile rubbed and massaged their bodies and they let loose urine and excreta, yet he have not returned the gratitude shown to him. ‘Even if he offer them all the wealth and make them rulers of the earth, even then he has not returned the gratitude shown to him, because they have done much more. They fed him when he could not walk and showed him the world.’”<sup>16</sup>

“That trouble (and pain) which the parents undergo on the birth of (their) children, cannot be compensated even in a hundred years.”<sup>17</sup>

So in Buddhist tradition, parents are respected as the Lord Brahma, early teachers, early deities, and those, who worthy of respect.<sup>18</sup> And according to Hinduism ‘

“Father the image of Prajapati (the lord of created beings), the mother the image of the earth.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Manusmruthi Chapter 2:1-4:185  
Ephesians 4::25-5:9

<sup>15</sup> Dutīya Sutta - AN I - 2:1:4:2 Sutta  
Manusmruthi Chapter 2:227

<sup>16</sup> Dutīya Sutta - AN I - 2:1:4:2 Sutta

<sup>17</sup> Manusmruthi Chapter 2:227

<sup>18</sup> Sabrahma Sutta - AN II - 4:2:2:3 sutta

<sup>19</sup> Manusmruthi Chapter 2:231



Christianity and Islam also give special place to the parent child relationship. In Ten Commandments and Al-Quran, next to God discussing the parents. This shows the place they give to parents.

“Honor your father and your mother.” (3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” (Ephesians 5::1-3)

“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.” (Quran 17:23-24)

All four religions advice parents to provide the necessities of the children and discipline them. Guiding their children to become useful members of the society is the responsibility of parents.

When a child does his responsibilities parents will give him following benefits. (Singalovada Sutta)

1. They will restrain him from evil
2. They will support him in doing good
3. They will teach him some skill
4. They will find a suitable spouse for him in due time
5. They will hand over his inheritance in due time<sup>20</sup>

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 5::4)

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<sup>20</sup> Putta Sutta - AN III - 5:1:4:9 sutta - p 67  
Singalovada Sutta DN - I - 3:8 sutta - -p 304-05

“Fathers, do not provoke your children; let them not become discouraged.”  
(Colossians 3:21)<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Husband- Wife relationship

Husband and wife should have practice and maintain same qualities in their life to lead a successful life as they are the first teachers of their children. And all four religions agree with the physical and mental difference between two genders. So husband and wife has unique rolls to play within the family. According to Buddhist teachings to have successful marriage life husband and wife should have equal qualities in faith, wisdom, and understanding.<sup>22</sup>

In Sigalovada Sutta Lord Buddha also discussing the relationship between husband and wife. It says husband is having following five responsibilities regarding his wife.

1. Being courteous to the wife
2. Not despising the wife
3. Being faithful to the wife
4. Handing over authority to the wife
5. Providing the wife with adornments

These five responsibilities show that husband should treat his wife with respect, should provide her needs and look after her well. Having these things from her husband is a right of the wife. Sutta further says that when husband is fulfilling his responsibilities wife will do following thing because of the compassion wife has for her husband.

1. Performs her duties well
2. Hospitable to relations and attendants
3. Faithful
4. Protects what husband brings
5. Skilled and industrious in discharging her duties.

It is clear that, Buddhist point of view of responsibilities of husband and wife, is giving and taking relationship. In this description, third responsibility of both husband and wife is faithfulness to each other. It is the third perception in five perceptions. So it is clear that husband and wife's faithfulness to each other is also a common social responsibility.

Manusmruthi also giving instructions how to maintain husband and wife relationship in a proper way.<sup>23</sup> According to it husband should treat his wife well as he received her from gods.

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<sup>21</sup> Colossians 3:21 - P 988-89

<sup>22</sup> 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sanvasa Suttas - AN II - 4:2:1:3 sutta - ps -110 - 117

<sup>23</sup> Manusmruthi 9:21-22, 28-29, 95, 101-102

“The husband receives his wife from the gods, (he does not wed her) according to his own will; doing what is agreeable to the gods, he must always support her (while she is) faithful.” (Manusmruthi, 9: 95)

And wife should assume her husband’s qualities after her marriage.

“Whatever be the qualities of the man with whom a woman is united according to the law, such qualities even she assumes, like a river (united) with the ocean.” (Manusmruthi, 9: 22)

Wife should not do anything which causes her husband pain.

“If a woman thinks in her heart of anything that would pain her husband, completely removing such infidelity.” (Manusmruthi, 9: 21)

“She who, controlling her thoughts, speech, and acts, violates not her duty towards her lord, dwells with him (after death) in heaven, and in this world is called by the virtuous a faithful (wife, sadhvi).” (Manusmruthi, 9: 29)

Manusmruthi emphasis the stability of marital relationship by giving advisers in detail manner.

“Let mutual fidelity continue until death,' this may be considered as the summary of the highest law for husband and wife.

Let man and woman, united in marriage, constantly exert themselves, that (they may not be) disunited (and) may not violate their mutual fidelity.” (Manusmruthi, 9: 101-102)

According to Christianity, marriage union is made by god. Therefore it should not break.

“Haven’t you read “he replied,” that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' ? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Matthew 19:4-6)

And husband and wife should have a very close relationship with each other.

“Wives, be subjects to your husbands, as is filling in the Lord. Husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them.” (Colossians 3:18-19)<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Colossians 3:18-19 -p988

“Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.”

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Al-Quran also guide the individual to maintain a healthy marriage life by explaining the role of each other.

“Give unto the women whom you marry, free gift of marriage portions, but if they of their own accord remit unto your part thereof, then you are welcome to absorb it. Give not unto foolish what is in your keeping of their wealth, which Allah hath given you to maintain; but feed and clothe them from it, and speak kindly to them.” (Al-Quran 4: 4)<sup>25</sup>

Comment [H1]:

“Men are in charge of women, because Allah made them the one of them to excel each other, and because they spend their property. So good women are the obedient, guarding in in secret that which Allah guarded.” (Al-Quran 4:34)<sup>26</sup>

### 3. Friend- Friend relationship

All four religions advice to maintain good relationship with friends. Buddha encouraged the friendship with correct persons. In *Kalyana Mitta Sutta* in Kosala Samyutta Lord Buddha

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<sup>25</sup> Al-Quran 4: 4 - p73

<sup>26</sup> Al-Quran 4:34 - p79

advised the king Kosala to train himself thus “I will be one who has good friends, good companions, good comrades”<sup>27</sup> Therefore one should show his friendship:

1. By liberality
2. By courteous speech
3. By being helpful
4. By being impartial
5. By being sincere.<sup>28</sup>

When a friend receives such friendship from his friend he will show his gratitude by doing following things.

1. Protect him when he is heedless
2. Protect his property when he is heedless
3. Become a refuge when he is in danger
4. Do not forsake him in his troubles
5. Show consideration for his family.<sup>29</sup>

Hindu literature gives lot of examples of good friends. Bagavadgeetha, Ramayanaya, MahaBharath and other teachings giving role models for good friends.

Christianity encourage a kind of friendship which is shown by the Christ to others.

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:12-15)

Al-Quran guide the individual to select a friend whom not harmful to him.

“O you who believe! do not take for intimate friends from among others than your own people, they do not fall short of inflicting loss upon you; they love what distresses you; vehement hatred has already appeared from out of their mouths,

<sup>27</sup> Kalyana Mitta Sutta - SN I -p 162-63

<sup>28</sup> Do -p 302-03

<sup>29</sup> Singalovada Sutta - DN I - 3:8 -p 304-05 -

and what their breasts conceal is greater still; indeed, We have made the communications clear to you, if you will understand.” (Al-Qur'an 3:118)<sup>30</sup>

#### 4. Employer-Employee relationship

According to the Buddhist teaching, employer and employee are both should take each other's service without harming each other like a bee that gathers honey.<sup>31</sup> According to the Buddhist teaching, employer and employee are both should take each other's service without harming each other like a bee that gathers honey.<sup>32</sup> As an employer he should treat his employees well. He has following responsibilities towards his employees.

1. Assign them work according to their ability
2. Supply them with food and wages
3. Tend them in sickness
4. Share with them any delicacies
5. Grant them leave at times.<sup>33</sup>

When employer tending his employees well he receives following benefits from his employees.

1. They rise before him
2. They go to sleep after him
3. They take only what is given
4. They perform their duties well,
5. They uphold his good name and fame.<sup>34</sup>

These are the responsibilities of the person as an employee.

Other three religions also advice to be reasonable to ones employees. According to Manusmriti employer should treat his employees tenderly, like he treat his own daughter.

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<sup>30</sup> Al-Qur'an 3:118 -p62

<sup>31</sup> Do--p 304-05

<sup>32</sup> “The wise and virtuous, shines like a blazing fire. He who acquires his wealth in harmless ways, like a bee that gathers honey, riches mount up for him, like ant hill's rapid growth. With wealth so gained the lay man can devote it to his people's welfare.”

Singalovada Sutta - DN I - 3:8 -p 304-05

<sup>33</sup> - Do - p 305-07

<sup>34</sup> Singalovada Sutta - DN I - 3:8 -p 304-05

“One's slaves as one's shadow, one's daughter as the highest object of tenderness; hence if one is offended by (any one of) these, one must bear it without resentment.” (Manusmruthi 4:185)<sup>35</sup>

Bible advice the Employer and employee to treat each other the way they do their duty to the god.<sup>36</sup>

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, <sup>because</sup> you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.” (Ephesians 6: 5-9)

### **5. Teachers-Student relationship**

It is advised that teacher-student relationship should be maintain as father –son relationship in all four religions. The teacher student relationship is discussed in great detail in Sutta Pitaka and Vinaya Pitaka. According to that student teacher relationship should be maintain as father and son. The teacher ought to consider the student as a son- ‘Putta cittena’; the student ought to consider the teacher as the father- ‘Pitu cittena’.<sup>37</sup> This concept explains the mentality which should be maintained between teacher and the student. There is a sharp deference of a father’s relationship with a son and that of with the mother. The father’s relationship with son is a dignified one, while that with mother is more sentimental. The teacher’s relationship with his student is loveable and at the same time has respect and responsibility.

As a student person should serve his teacher.

1. By rising from the seat in salutation
2. By attending on him
3. By eagerness to learn
4. By personal service

<sup>35</sup> Manusmruthi 4:185 -p173

<sup>36</sup> Colossians 3:22-4:1 – p 989, Titus 2:9

<sup>37</sup> Upajjhaya Vatta – MVP I - P 94-95  
Ācariya Vatta– MVP I – p-132-33

5. By respectful attention, while receiving instructions <sup>38</sup>

The student who behaves that way receives following benefits from his teacher. These are the responsibilities of the teacher regarding his student as well.

1. They train them in the best discipline
2. They see that they grasp their lessons well
3. They instruct them in the arts and sciences
4. They introduce them to their friends and associates
5. They provide for their safety in every quarter<sup>39</sup>

Manusmruthi also describe the teacher –student relationship with father son relationship.

“The teacher is the lord of the world of Brahman, the father has power over the world of the Lord of created beings (Pragapati), a guest rules over the world of Indra, and the priests over the world of the gods.” (Manusmruthi 4:182)

It also describe the way student should treat his teacher.

“But on the Parva-days let him go to visit the (images of the) gods, and virtuous Brahmanas, and the ruler (of the country), for the sake of protection, as well as his Gurus.

Let him reverentially salute venerable men (who visit him), give them his own seat, let him sit near them with joined hands and, when they leave, (accompany them), walking behind them” (Manusmruthi 4:153 -54)

“Let him never offend the teacher who initiated him, nor him who explained the Veda, nor his father and mother, nor (any other) Guru, nor cows, nor Brahmanas, nor any men performing austerities.” (Manusmruthi 4:162)

“With an officiating or a domestic priest, with a teacher, with a maternal uncle, a guest and a dependant, with infants, aged and sick men, with learned men, with his paternal relatives, connexions by marriage and maternal relatives.” (Manusmruthi 4:179)

Teacher also treat the students according to the law of the God

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<sup>38</sup> Singalovada Sutta - දීඝ නිකාය I - 3:8 සුඤ්ඤ - බුද්ධ ජයන්ති ත්‍රිපිටක ග්‍රන්ථමාලා : 9 -ඊ 304-05

<sup>39</sup> Singalovada Sutta - දීඝ නිකාය I - 3:8 සුඤ්ඤ - බුද්ධ ජයන්ති ත්‍රිපිටක ග්‍රන්ථමාලා : 9 -ඊ 304-05



“ Let him always delight in truthfulness, (obedience to) the sacred law, conduct worthy of an Aryan, and purity; let him chastise his pupils according to the sacred law; let him keep his speech, his arms, and his belly under control .” (Manusmruthi 4:175)

According to Bible disciple should treat the teacher respectfully.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.” (Luke 6:40)

## 6. Clergy-Layman relationship

Clergies are guiding the society to the correct path. So all four religions ask to maintain a healthy Clergy-Layman relationship. Catthama Sutta in Cula Vagga says when virtuous clergy once, gone forth abide supported on a village or hamlet, on three ways the people there, accrue merit. The three ways are:

1. By body,
2. By speech
3. By mind.<sup>40</sup>

Therefore relationship with the clergy is also a important one for the lay person. Because he is receiving many benefits from clergy, he should show his gratitude,

1. By lovable deeds
2. By lovable words
3. By lovable thoughts
4. By keeping open house to them
5. By supplying their material needs.

When one is having a close relationship with the clergy, will receive following benefits for them.

1. They restrain him from evil
2. They persuade him to do good
3. They love him with a kind heart
4. They make him hear what he has not heard
5. They clarify what he has already heard
6. They point out the path to a heavenly state.

<sup>40</sup> Catthama Sutta අංගුත්තර නිකාය I-3:1:5:6 සුත්තය - ඉද්ධ ජයන්ති ත්‍රිපිටක ග්‍රන්ථමාලා : 18 -පි-274 -75

Manusmruthi describe the role of clergy and lay person. According to it is the base of spiritual state of society.

“Early in the morning only let him void faeces, decorate (his body), bathe, clean his teeth, apply collyrium to his eyes, and worship the gods.

But on the Parva-days let him go to visit the (images of the) gods, and virtuous Brahmanas, and the ruler (of the country), for the sake of protection, as well as his Gurus.

. Let him reverentially salute venerable men (who visit him), give them his own seat, let him sit near them with joined hands and, when they leave, (accompany them), walking behind them.” (Manusmruthi 4:152-54)

Christianity and Islam also having teachings and practices to maintain the clergy –layman relationship in a proper manner. It is clergy’s responsibility to give the spiritual guidance to layman. Therefore layman should look after the clergy’s basic needs as his responsibility.

### **Conclusion**

So it is clear that among the religious teachings, teaching of social responsibility is the part that link the individual to the society. Most of the practices relevant to that are common. If all religions highlighted this, can avoid conflicts among religions.

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