

Mr. Andrei Adaryukov
Head Librarian
Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI)

Religious Perspectives – Buddhism

What is the common thread between the different faiths?

“I would like to illustrate the, what’s been said here very correctly about the ethical precepts being probably the strongest common thread. Now, here are five basic vows that when I was taking my layman vows in a Buddhist temple, I had to take. See if they remind you of anything.

The first one, I am going to refrain from taking life of any being – don’t kill.

The second one, I am going to refrain from taking anything that is not mine – don’t steal.

The third one, I am going to refrain from improper sexual conduct – don’t cheat.

I am going to refrain from improper speech – don’t lie, don’t slander, don’t swear, all that kinds of things.

The fifth one was funny for me cause it said, I am going to refrain from taking intoxicating substances that cloud one’s mind. Now when that came up I looked at the abbot and said, ‘What?’ He said, ‘Don’t get roaring drunk so that you forget yourself.’ I said, ‘okay.’

So, the ethics yes. The ethics is the strongest thread that unites us all and fortunately this kind of universal ethics is what makes the coexistence, a peaceful coexistence, ultimately possible. But, on the other hand, again, middle way, right? I don’t want to overemphasize because sometimes I get, it gets a little too much when you read you know all the religions are just different paths to this exactly same place on top and if you look at it, no, not really.

We have some very fundamental differences in some of our deepest beliefs about the nature of reality, the nature of life and death, and so on and so forth. So there is your balance. There are common ethics, that we can all agree on, and that can enable us to coexist peacefully with each other. And then there are whole different universes that anyone who is willing can investigate, study, apply to themselves, convert or not, and so on.”

Disclaimer

The preceding individual religious awareness perspective is provided by a practicing member from a religious group for the purpose of better understanding the religious practices of others. This individual perspective is designed to orient viewers to religious aspects/beliefs for a referenced group. It should not be interpreted as official or final religious doctrine or as the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States Government, the Department of Defense, or the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute.

15 August 2013