

**The Golden Rule**  
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**Question:** What does your faith say an effective leader's qualities should be?

**Answer:** Recently several of our political leaders have disgraced themselves by sexual misconduct, accepting bribes and other moral lapses. So, how should a politician or leader conduct him or herself?

Over two thousand years ago, the Buddha established a set of guidelines for kings. They are known as the “Ten Royal Qualities.” Although these rules were designed for kings, they are just as relevant for our leaders today. The ten qualities are:

1. Charity – willingness to sacrifice one’s interest for the good of the people.
2. Morality – maintaining a high moral order in one’s personal conduct.
3. Altruism – generosity toward people, avoiding selfishness.
4. Honesty – fulfilling one’s duties with loyalty and integrity.
5. Gentleness – being kind and gentle, never arrogant.
6. Self-Control – performing one’s duties with dispassion.
7. Non-anger – remaining calm in the midst of confusion.
8. Non-violence – being non-violent, not persecuting the people.
9. Forbearance – practicing patience in one’s duties.
10. Uprightness – respecting public opinion, promoting harmony.

It might seem impossible for any ruler to cultivate all ten of these ethics, however, King Asoka (304-232 BCE) is remembered by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike as an example of a truly compassionate and just ruler, who lived according to the ten royal qualities while ruling India for forty one years.

While these ten ethics were designed for kings or political leaders, they are just as relevant for any type of leader today. Can you imagine what an enlightened society we would have if all of our leaders practiced these ten virtues?