

The Golden Rule
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Question: What verse or saying in your faith reflects the Golden Rule? (With background, of course.)

Answer: The golden rule that originated in the Bible and is sometimes referred to as the “ethic of reciprocity” can be found in nearly all of the world’s religions — Buddhism is no different. The Buddha said, “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful” (Udanavarga 5:18).

The logic behind this ethic is obvious. If we don’t like to suffer or experience pain, why would we want another to suffer? It is such a basic teaching, and takes no scholarly learning — you just have to look at yourself. If it harms you, then don’t do that to others. Anybody is capable of understanding this fundamental teaching.

In Buddhism we have a teaching about karma. This states that wholesome acts produce wholesome results, and unwholesome acts produce unwholesome results. Therefore harming another is believed to be the same as harming ourselves. H.H. Dalai Lama said, "If you can, help others; if you cannot do that, at least do not harm them."

Shantideva, the 8th century Indian saint, is among the most renowned and esteemed figures in the entire history of Buddhism. In his seminal text, *“A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life,”* Shantideva said, “All those who suffer in the world do so because of a desire for their own happiness. All those happy in the world are so because of their desire for the happiness of others.”

This principle of not harming others (ahimsa in Sanskrit) is one of the cornerstones of the Buddhist teachings.