

THREE PILLARS OF LOVE

TRUTHFULNESS • LOVING KINDNESS • HUMILITY

A SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS must include a clear understanding of love. Some suggest that ‘all you need is love,’ and that this must be ‘unconditional love’.

Of course love, especially as loving kindness and compassion, is universally recognised as a vital part of what all mature healthy humans have in common. But this is not the only quality necessary for healing, or to restore the Whole.

Each of the three phases of the Abrahamic traditions necessarily includes the highest qualities of the other two, while at the same time,

Moslems must submit to Allah, and let go of their ego and worldly attachments. This is the function of the fruit, which must let go of the tree to provide the fertile ground for the next cycle of life. The Moslem covenant specialises in community and hospitality.

Put simply, Judaism is known for its Torah of integrity, Christianity is known for its Gospel of love, and Islam is known for its Quran of submission.

Of course, all three phases also include the other two. Jewish tradition is clear that not only are the law, reason, and integrity essential, but so too are loving kindness and compas-

passion, and they are also supposed to think and act with honour and integrity.

These days, it is politically correct to suppose that all that a person must do to make the world better is to act with unconditional love, and submit to the Will of God. The problem with this mode is that it is often advocated as enabling a reconciliation among all three of the faiths that derive from Abraham, when in fact it only represents two, and thus excludes one.

‘Unconditional love’ is, as the logicians say, a self-contradiction. For here we find the adjective ‘unconditional’ as the condition required for this sort

THREE ABRAHAMIC COVENANTS—THREE PILLARS OF LOVE

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All three pillars are essential teachings in each of the three Abrahamic Covenants

	JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
OUTER TEACHINGS	TORAH TALMUD	GOSPELS BIBLE	QURAN BIBLE
INNER TEACHINGS	KABBALAH	GNOSTICISM	SUFISM
PRIMARY ASPECT OF LOVE EMPHASISED	TRUTH LAW INTEGRITY REASON	GOOD WORKS LABOUR; DHARMA COMPASSION EMOTION	SELF-SACRIFICE SUBMISSION HOSPITALITY ACTION
SYMBOLS	LIGHT Menorah	CROSS Star	STAR & CRESCENT Green Flame
EMBRYOLOGY LIFE CYCLE ORGAN	SEED CONCEPTION HEAD	TREE GESTATION HEART	FRUIT BIRTH BODY
MANIFESTING PRINCIPLE	CLEAR THINKING	HARD WORK	LETTING GO

each is the primary representative of only one. So, I associate the conceptual stage with Judaism, and I identify it embryologically with the seed, and functionally with reason and law (Torah), the priestly tradition, and integrity. The Christian tradition is associated primarily with passion, compassion, ‘good works,’ and what the Eastern traditions call ‘Dharma’. Embryologically, it is identified with the tree that manifests the seed’s life-force in the world (the tree as the cross is the symbol of Christianity).

sion for all life, as well as yirat Hashem—awe, and submission to God’s Will.

Christianity is clear that not only are Christians expected to be loving and compassionate, but they are also supposed to honour the law (it is said that Jesus came to fulfil the law), and they can be reborn in their faith by entrusting their lives fully to their lord.

Islam is clear that not only are Moslems expected to submit to Allah, but they are also expected to exemplify hospitality, community, and com-

of love. ‘Unconditional love’ is not the higher love referred to in all of our traditions, but rather a self-defined perspective that politely overlooks, and then excludes, reason and integrity. Its invocation is naturally (and often unconsciously) anti-Jewish, because it implies that reason and integrity, the basis of the law, are not necessary, and because historically, it implies that the Holocaust was the fault of Jews and others for not acting with unconditional love towards nazis. ‘Unconditional love’ is the limited condition of

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love that mistakenly forgives the crime while the crime is ongoing. Thus it is the opposite of love, because it unconditionally encourages continued unloving behaviour.


The higher love, the love advocated in all three of the Abrahamic phases, the love that can be a unifying force, includes not only unlimited compassion and submission, but it also includes reason, integrity, and context. Neither the tradition of Moses, nor the tradition of Jesus, nor the tradition of Mohammed, ever endorsed unconditional love for an adversary while they were engaged in attack. All require a higher standard of love that takes into account not only

compassion for both the victim and the victimiser, not only submission to Allah and/or yirat ('awe of') Hashem, and/or giving one's life over to Jesus, but also consideration for the future, for both the victim and the victimiser, and for the rest of society.

Compassion and submission without integrity can easily lead to unintended perversion or unbridled lust. Integrity without compassion and without submission to God's Will can easily lead to cruelty. Thus, each of the specialties of each of the organs in the Abrahamic body politic must be fully engaged by all three.

While 'unconditional love' is not unconditional, love as a condition can

be. After all, one of God's Names is Emet—Truth. Thus, love of truth is a true form of love.

In all faiths, a saint or tzaddik is known by his or her loving kindness. In the Talmud, a tzaddik is said to have the quality of integrity, exemplified by the phrase *toku k'varo* ('their insides are like their outsides'). The love of the tzaddik is the identity of Beauty and Truth. 

© 2003 Stan Tenen. TheFool would like to thank Stan for contributing this article.

STAN TENEN is Director of Research for the Meru Foundation (Sharon, MA). Stan lives with his wife Lev-anah in Sharon, Massachusetts, USA, and may be contacted via email at meru1@well.com or through Meru Foundation's internet website at www.meru.org.