

Love, Self-sacrifice, Forgiveness: Weapons of Mass Peace

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Moses, Jesus and Muhammad were in inspirational leaders of their time. In a corrupt and chaotic environment, they alone were daring and bold enough to break through the barriers of injustice and stand up for the needy and helpless by establishing peace, justice and equality. They dedicated their lives to ridding war, injustice and corruption from the world and creating a land of peace and tranquility on earth. They conquered numerous hardships and transcended the ordinary. They demonstrate that to be a leader one must never give up and always be willing to make sacrifices for the greater cause. As a result of their extreme courage, outstanding virtues and undying love for their people, millions of people today, follow in their footsteps to continue their mission of preserving world peace and making the earth a safe place for future generations. Moses, Jesus and Muhammad all used love, self-sacrifice and forgiveness as effective weapons that they used to shatter the injustice their time. Despite, the enormous contributions these leaders have made towards creating peace for mankind, much of the world today is still submerged in conflict, dishonesty and poverty. Now, it is time for us to reflect on the actions, words and beliefs of these three great prophets, to find meaning in the teachings they have left behind and to utilize that knowledge to help reach the goals that they dedicated their entire lives towards accomplishing. One place we can start is in China, we can utilize the wise words and teachings of these three great prophets, learn from them and try to aid and diminish the current outbreak of poverty in China, the greatest populated and economically increasing country in the world.

Moses was the prophet who emphasized self-sacrifice for the greater good, love and forgiveness towards his people as vital traits for taking on the role of a leader of peace. Even in a life of luxury, as the pharaoh's daughter's adopted son, Moses learned to love others as his equal. Moses was in a position of great power where he clearly could have chosen to ignore the harsh treatments the Jews were subjected to by Egyptians. However, not only did Moses refuse to overlook the harsh treatments, once he even killed an Egyptian for beating a Hebrew. This act showed extreme selflessness, not only did Moses risk his wealth and status, but also his life as well. Upon killing the Egyptian, Moses was forced to flee from Egypt and leave his adopted parents whom were the pharaoh's children. This type of selflessness is necessary in a leader of peace, as it is a display of the willingness to sacrifice one's self not for self-gain but to establish a just environment and stand up for what is right. After Moses, frees the Jews from Egypt and guides them towards paradise, Moses acting on God's orders climbs to Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. While on Mount Sinai, the Jews betray Moses' trust and begin to worship a Golden Cow relic that Aaron created. This act by the Jews angered God and caused Him to punish the Jews; However, Moses again demonstrates tremendous willingness to self-sacrifice for the good of his people when he asks God to share the same punishment as his people for being unfaithful to God in his absence. In pleading to God to share the same punishment as his people Moses shows that he loves his people so much that he takes personal responsibility for their action, even to the point where holds himself accountable for the sins committed by his people. The love Moses has for his people is similar to that of a parent's love towards his/her children and this kind of unconditional love and self-sacrifice can only be shown by a peace leader who truly loves his people and will do any thing to make sure they are safe. Moses reveals that to establish peace one must love those you lead. Moses shows this when God forbids Moses

from entering paradise and tells him that he will die at the doorsteps of paradise if he continues to lead his people there. Despite this warning, Moses does not hesitate and continues to guide the Jews across the Jordan River to the doorsteps of paradise. Not only does this demonstrate that Moses loves his followers, but also his selflessness towards his people, as he knows that in performing this act he has sealed his fate and will die. Moses was a very great prophet who was a great leader and also a great peace advocate; sadly, as God warned, Moses was successful in guiding his people to paradise; however, the price he paid was his life and he died just before reaching paradise.

Jesus was another influential prophet who through selflessness and love nurtured the minds of his people, overcame corruption and established peace, equality and justice. Jesus first shows the necessary characteristics to be a peace leader when God leads him to a desert where the devil tries to tempt Jesus into performing miracles to defy God. However, through extreme courage, determination, and strong will power Jesus drowned out the temptations from Satan to perform miracles. Instead, rather than defy God, Jesus endured the hunger, humidity and desolation of the desert. Through Jesus' choices in this situation, it is clear that Jesus is a peace leader that has unwavering determination and stays true to his values and his people. This type of dedication is extremely important in a leader of peace. A leader act as a guide, one who breaks barriers between worlds, but before one becomes a leader one must hold firm ground and possess extreme dedication in even the harshest circumstances. Otherwise, those you lead will slowly lose faith in you and even distrust your leadership. Jesus is an example of one who is not afraid to endure pain to advocate his belief. That is what separates, Jesus from many other ordinary leaders, which is also why so many trust Jesus as their savior. Another time Jesus shows his overwhelming ability to stand up for both his people and what he believes in is when he

overturns the table of the money exchangers in the Herod Temple. Jesus does this because he knows that the money traders are taking advantage of the poor and robbing them of their money by tricking them in the trades. Jesus loves all his people equally and does not wish to see people take advantage or steal from each other, he does not feel that the businesses done in the Herod Temple are fair or just, so he take action against it and overturns the tables of the trading center, Herod Temple. Finally, not only does Jesus show unremitting love for his people, he also shows extreme love towards his enemies. When a soldier is sent to capture Jesus and one of Jesus' disciples cuts off one of the soldier's ear, not only does Jesus tell his disciples that he has done something wrong, but he immediately heals the soldier's ear. Despite the fact that the wrong doer was one of Jesus' disciples, Jesus did not hesitate to rebuke him when he does something wrong. Treating others equally is a necessary characteristic for a leader of world peace because in order to achieve world peace the world must first be just, and equal. This unconditional love Jesus posses for all of God's creation and also his sense of equality towards all is a very important characteristic that causes Jesus to be such an effective peace leader. Jesus applies a strong sense of equality in all his actions because he is a teacher and a leader for the people, he must guide them and teach them about the world, about God and teach them to differentiate between right and wrong, good and evil. In order to be a leader of peace first we hold a firm position then we must work hard and aim towards that belief. The unconditional love, unwavering determination and firm mind that Jesus possesses causes him to be an eternal symbol of peace, love, generosity, and compassion. Jesus was a successful peace leader and today no matter what one's religion may be or where one may live Jesus' presence whether in the Bible, movies or other popular culture mediums still surround us today.

Muhammad was the prophet who led the Islamic people and helped them establish their own peaceful civilization and is thought by many Muslims to be the last and greatest prophet of God. Muhammad demonstrates that in order to be a peace leader one must put the safety of the whole before oneself. Also, one must be willing to forgive not only one's followers, but also one's enemies as well. Muhammad was born into a very poor family and by the age of eight he began living with his poor uncle due to the deaths of both his parents. Although Muhammad's childhood was very harsh and deprived that did not stop Muhammad from growing into a generous, kind loving man. At the age of twenty-five Muhammad joined the *Hilf al-fudul* a group that whose goal was to provide help and aid to the poor, needy and oppressed people of Mecca. This shows that Muhammad was eager to help others even at a young age. Muhammad became a very kind and trustful merchant in the city of Mecca, his trustworthiness became renown throughout the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean where he traded and his reputation soon attracted him a faithful wife and they married when Muhammad was twenty-five years old. This also shows that Muhammad was a very trustworthy man, so much that he became known for it. During Muhammad's life he often retreated to the mountains around Mecca for deep meditation and reflection. Muhammad continued to mediate and reflect in these caves until he reached the age of forty and in the month of Ramadan, he received his first revelations from God. Thereafter, Muhammad, preached his revelations and soon received a few followers, but was met he and his followers were met with great hostility by the Meccan tribes. Thus to escape the injustice, Muhammad and his people left Mecca and took refuge in the city of Medina where they were more welcomed. Muhammad left Mecca not because he was unable to endure the hostilities of the Meccans but because he was worried for his people. Many of his followers were harassed in the city of Mecca, so Muhammad led them to Medina to keep them safe and away

from the danger. In Medina, Muhammad worked hard to establish peace and prosperity among the many conflicting tribes and after 8 years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, Muhammad's followers, which had grown to tens of thousands, conquered Meca. Despite the harsh treatment shown towards him by the people of Mecca, in the end Muhammad forgave them for their hostility and injustice. Muhammad, who had been a merchant in Mecca before the war, even returned all the money the Meccans left with him when then war was done. This reveals that Muhammad readily forgave his enemies and was very just and kind in his acts. For most of his life Muhammad acted as a kind charitable leader for the followers in the village of Medina. By the time Muhammad died he had accomplished an influential task having spread the word of God and had converted most of Arabia to Islam. Thus the men were brothers of each other, they treated each other with respect and proved that Muhammad's many sacrifices were worth something and that he did in the end in succeeding to create a land of peace on earth. Today, millions of people follow in the footsteps of Muhammad, and use his life to map out his own.

Finally, from what I have learned while studying this inspirational leader and also from my own experiences in the world I believe that that we should start to fight by fighting poverty especially in China. Last year when I traveled back to China I witnessed many scenes that have been shielded from us here in America. I personally saw war veterans whose bodies were mangled beyond comprehension begging for money in the streets. I also saw many young children begging in the streets for their parents because they could not find suitable jobs. Something I believe we can do that reflects the teachings of Moses is that we can use the government to help these people get employed. By doing this, we have helped them get another fresh start in life. This reflects the teachings of Moses in that Moses forgave his people for worshipping a cow statue in his absence. By providing people with fresh beginning we have also

forgiven the poor for any mistakes they may have made in the past and given them a fresh new beginning. Following the teaching of Jesus one could provide programs that teach the poor to better finance their money, and to stay away from unnecessary wasteful spending. This way we can teach the people to restrain themselves from sinful lures similar to when Jesus restrained himself from the lure of the devil to perform a miracle when Jesus was trapped in the desert. Finally, by acting in accord with what we have learned from Muhammad one could provide the poverty stricken with counsel to teach them how to live life and help with them move away from poverty. This reflects the act of Muhammad because Muhammad provided counsel and guideline for his followers. Even in the end after Muhammad died his records of his life became life guidelines for the average life of a Muslim. The three prophets were all unique in their own way and they each had their own ideas and ways of creating peace, but in the end they accomplished their goals and did in fact establish peace. Now, it is time for us to learn from the teaching and continue their goals and spread peace throughout the world.

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