The Global Ethic

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The idea of a global ethic is variously understood, but for me it means basic moral principles that are common to all the main religions and cultures of the world. Is there such a global ethic?

I only have space here to refer to one aspect. All the long-lived cultures have so far been religiously based. Within the world religions there is the universality of the Golden Rule, in either its positive or its negative form.

We find this in the Hindu Mahabharata, 'One should never do that to another which one would regard as injurious if done to one's self'; in the Jain Kritanga Sutra, where we are told that one should go about 'treating all creatures as one would oneself be treated'; in the Buddhist Sutta Nipata, 'As a mother cares for her son, all her days, so towards all living things a man's mind should be all-embracing'; a Zoroastrian scripture declares, 'That nature only is good when it shall not do to another whatever is not good for its own self'; Confucius taught, 'Do not do to others what you would not like yourself'; Jesus taught 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye likewise to them'; the Jewish Talmud says, 'What is hateful to yourself do not do to your fellow man'; and Muhammad taught, 'No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desired for himself'.

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