

[World Scripture](#)

SERVING OTHERS

The way of serving others is the topic of passages in this section. The purest service is to help others and to seek the welfare of others without the expectation of reward. On the contrary, the way of selfishness brings only disharmony and failure; the selfish person eventually will find himself alone and without friends in his time of need. In the Bhagavad Gita, and paralleled by passages in the Tao Te Ching, the way of selfless service is described as the fundamental principle by which God creates and sustains the universe; whenever a person acts selflessly in the service of others, that act is born of God. Another group of passages connects service with true lordship. While the conventional rulers abuse their powers by seeking to be served by their charges, the true leader is a servant to his people; as exemplified by Jesus, who came "not to be served, but to serve."

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

[1.Christianity. Galatians 6.2](#)

Rendering help to another is the function of all human beings.

[2.Jainism. Tattvarthasutra 5.21](#)

All men are responsible for one another.

[3.Judaism. Talmud, Sanhedrin 27b](#)

The best of men are those who are useful to others.

[4.Islam. Hadith of Bukhari](#)

Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

[5.Christianity. 1 Corinthians 10.24](#)

Galatians 6.2: Cf. John 15.13, p. 236. This fulfills not only a law of Christ, but also a dhamma of Buddhism; cf. Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life 8.112-16, p. 165. Hadith of Bukhari: Cf. Bodhipathapradipa, p. 404. 1 Corinthians 10.24: Cf. Galatians 5.13, p. 465; Philipians 2.3-4, p. 787.

Without selfless service are no objectives fulfilled; In service lies the purest action.

[6.Sikhism. Adi Granth, Maru, M.1, p. 992](#)

He who prays for his fellowman, while he himself has the same need, will be answered first.

[7.Judaism. Talmud, Baba Kamma 92a](#)

The man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.

[8.Confucianism. Analects 6.28.2](#)

I tell you these things that you may learn wisdom; that you may learn that when you are in the service of your fellow beings you are only in the service of your God.

[9.Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Book of Mormon, Mosiah 2.17](#)

One who serves and seeks no recompense Finds union with the Lord. Such a servant alone takes the Master's guidance, says Nanak, As on him is divine grace.

[10.Sikhism. Adi Granth, Sukhmani 18, M.5, pp. 286f.](#)

Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

[11.Christianity. Philippians 2.3-4](#)

God's definition of goodness is total giving, total service, and absolute unselfishness. We are to live for others. You live for others and others live for you. God lives for man and man lives for God. The husband lives for his wife and the wife lives for her husband. This is goodness. And here unity, harmony, and prosperity abound.

[12.Unification Church. Sun Myung Moon, 10-20-73](#)

Until now each and everyone throughout the world has been concerned only with himself. How pitiful it is! You have no mind to help others, however hard you may think it over. Henceforth, replace your mind indefinitely! I, Tsukihhi, request it from you all equally. If you ask what kind of mind it is, it is the mind to save single-heartedly all people of the world. Henceforth, if only all people of the world equally help each other on any and every matter, believe that I, Tsukihhi, will accept your minds and will work any and every kind of salvation!

[13.Tenrikyo. Ofudesaki 12.89-94](#)

Sun Myung Moon, 10-20-73: See Sun Myung Moon, 10-20-73; Key to Theosophy, p. 356; Key to Theosophy, p. 356.

Do not seek to benefit only yourself, but think of other people also. If you yourself have an abundance, do not say, "The others do not concern me, I need not bother about them!" If you were lucky in hunting, let others share it. Moreover, show them the favorable spots where there are many sea lions which can be easily slain. Let others have their share occasionally. If you want to amass everything for yourself, other people will stay away from you and no one will want to be with you. If you should one day fall ill, no one will visit you because, for your part, you did not formerly concern yourself about others.

Grant other people something also. The Yamana do not like a person who acts selfishly.

[14.Native American Religions. Yamana Eskimo Initiation](#)

Heaven is eternal and Earth everlasting.
 They can be eternal and everlasting because they do not exist for themselves,
 And for this reason can exist forever.
 Therefore the sage places himself in the background,
 but finds himself in the foreground.
 He puts himself away, and yet he always remains.
 Is it not because he has no personal interests?
 This is the reason why his personal interests are fulfilled.

[15.Taoism. Tao Te Ching 7](#)

At the beginning, mankind and the obligation of selfless service were created together. "Through selfless service, you will always be fruitful and find the fulfillment of your desires": this is the promise of the Creator....

Every selfless act, Arjuna, is born from the eternal, infinite Godhead. God is present in every act of service. All life turns on this law, O Arjuna. Whoever violates it, indulging his senses for his own pleasure and ignoring the needs of others, has wasted his life. But those who realize the God within are always satisfied. Having found the source of joy and fulfillment, they no longer seek happiness from the external world. They have nothing to gain or lose by any action; neither people nor things can affect their security.

What the outstanding person does, others will try to do. The standards such people set will be followed by the whole world. There is nothing in the three worlds for Me to gain, Arjuna, nor is there anything I do not have; I continue to act, but I am not driven by any need of my own. If I ever refrained from continuous work, everyone would immediately follow my example. If I stopped working I would be the cause of cosmic chaos, and finally of the destruction of this world and these people.

Strive constantly to serve the welfare of the world; by devotion to selfless work one attains the supreme goal in life. Do your work with the welfare of others always in mind. It was by such work that Janaka attained perfection; others, too, have followed this path.

The ignorant work for their own profit, Arjuna; the wise work for the welfare of the world, without thought to themselves. By abstaining from work you will confuse the ignorant, who are engrossed in their actions. Perform all work carefully, guided by

compassion.

16.*Hinduism. Bhagavad Gita 3.10-26*

Bhagavad Gita 3.10-26: Vv. 10, 15-26. See Bhagavad Gita 3.4-9, p. 847; 5.10-12, p. 674; Satapatha Brahmana 5.1.1.1-2, pp. 383f. On Gandhi's interpretation of selfless action as satyagraha, see Bhagavad Gita 2.31-38, p. 887n.

Guardianship is not to give an order but to give one's self.

17.*African Traditional Religions. Nyika Proverb (Kenya and Tanzania)*

Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

18.*Christianity. Matthew 20.25-28*

The sage does not accumulate for himself.
 The more he uses for others, the more he has himself.
 The more he gives to others, the more he possesses of his own.
 The Way of Heaven is to benefit others and not to injure.
 The Way of the sage is to act but not to compete.

19.*Taoism. Tao Te Ching 81*

If, for my own sake, I cause harm to others,
 I shall be tormented in hellish realms;
 But if for the sake of others I cause harm to myself,
 I shall acquire all that is magnificent.

By holding myself in high esteem
 I shall find myself in unpleasant realms, ugly and stupid;
 But should this [attitude] be shifted to others
 I shall acquire honors in a joyful realm.

If I employ others for my own purposes
 I myself shall experience servitude,
 But if I use myself for the sake of others
 I shall experience only lordliness.

20.*Buddhism. Shantideva, Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life 8.126-128*

Matthew 20.25-28: Cf. Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life 5.51-52, p. 791. Tao Te Ching 81: Cf. Tao Te Ching 64, p. 790.
