

JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Torah

"At the end of every seven-year period you shall have a relaxation of debts, which shall be observed as follows. Every creditor shall relax his claim on what he has loaned his neighbor; he must not press his neighbor, his kinsman, because a relaxation in honor of the Holy One has been proclaimed." (Deuteronomy 15)

Nevi'im

"Here is the God of my salvation, I shall trust and not fear; for the strength and praise of the Eternal the Lord was my salvation." Yeshayahu 12:2

"For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make everlasting covenant with them." Yeshayahu 61:8

"They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals - they who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and push the afflicted out of the way...so that my holy name is profaned "" Amos 2:6-7

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Amos 5:24

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Mikhah 6:8

Ketuvim

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Tehillim 119:105

"He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." Mishlei 14:31

"Do not rob the poor because they are poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; for the Lord pleads their cause and despoils of life those who despoil them." Mishlei 22:22-23

"Did you not pour me like milk and curdle me like cheese? Clothe me with skin and cover me with bones and sinews? You have granted me life and kindness, and Your providence watched my spirit." Iyov 10:10-12



MUSLIM SCRIPTURES

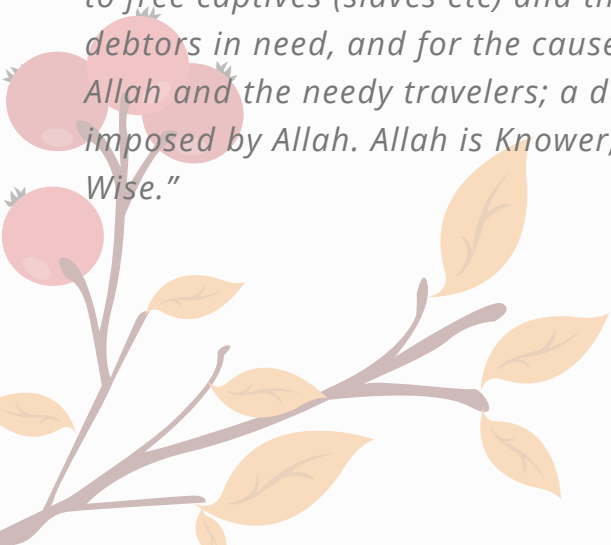
Qur'an

2:282 *"O you who believe, when you transact a loan for any period, you shall write it down. An impartial scribe shall do the writing. No scribe shall refuse to perform this service, according to Allah's teachings. He shall write, while the debtor dictates the terms. He shall observe Allah his Lord and never cheat. If the debtor is mentally incapable, or helpless, or cannot dictate, his guardian shall dictate equitably."*

9:60 *"The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them (for distribution), and those whose hearts are to be reconciled (resettlement of families, refugees etc), to free captives (slaves etc) and the debtors in need, and for the cause of Allah and the needy travelers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise."*

59:07 *"That which Allah giveth as spoil unto His messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah and His messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, that it become not a commodity between the rich among you."*

4:75 ***"And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the Cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill treated and oppressed among men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help."***



CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

The Old Testament

"He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." Prov. 14:31

"Thus says the Lord, 'For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals - they who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and push the afflicted out of the way...so that my holy name is profaned.'" Amos 2:6-7

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies." Psalms 103:2-4

The New Testament

*"Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. **For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me...Amen, I say to you, what you did for one of these least ones, you did for me.**'" Matthew 25: 34-36, 40*

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

"Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." James 5:14-16



PROPHETS

of a Future not Our Own

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future that is not our own. Amen.