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# BEYOND CASE STUDIES: ALTERNATE METHODS FOR TEACHING ETHICS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE JEWISH TRADITION

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## Abstract

There is evidence that traditional courses in business ethics have not been successful in making students ethical. The conventional methods used to teach ethics include discussing case histories and studying the writings of great philosophers such as Kant. Using a text-based approach may not be ideal for reaching today's digitally-savvy students. The authors demonstrate numerous ways to instill values that include analyzing and studying cases, philosophy, history, literature, film, television, YouTube/TED talks, music, famous speeches, quotations, social justice humor, Scripture, Talmud/Midrash, Kabbalah, and Mussar.

**Keywords:** Ethics, Business Ethics, Philosophy, Kabbalah, Talmudic Ethics, Mussar

## Introduction

In 1947, Martin Luther King, Jr. asserted that "We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education." He recognized that "If we are not careful, our colleges will produce a group of close-minded, unscientific, illogical propagandists, consumed with immoral acts" (King Institute, n.d., paras. 6-7). In 2004, an AACSB task force recommended that ethics be taught in business schools, and many schools fell into line with the accrediting agency's suggestions, but it is not clear that these efforts were successful.

Scholars such as Milton Friedman and Peter Drucker feel that ethics cannot be taught in a classroom, and there is substantial evidence supporting this opinion (Altmeyer, Yang, Schallenkamp, & DeBeaumont, 2011; Bowden & Smythe, 2008; Friedman, Fogel, & Friedman, 2005; Etzioni, 2002; MacDonald, 2007; Stape, 2002; Wang & Calvano, 2015). One study found that 56% of MBA students regularly cheated in college, more than students majoring in other areas (Holland, 2009). Many scholars believe that MBA programs have been unsuccessful in teaching ethics (Etzioni, 2002; Hühn, 2014).

Bazerman and Gino (2012) posit that the correct way to teach ethics is by using a behavioral ethics approach. Behavioral ethics takes a descriptive rather than a normative approach and attempts to assist professionals and students in understanding their behavior

when facing an ethical dilemma. By making people aware of the contradictions between how they act and contrasting it with how they would ideally behave, they can develop their moral sensitivity. It may be challenging to teach individuals to be ethical, but it does appear possible to instill ethical awareness into students (Altmeyer et al., 2011; Bowden & Smythe, 2008; Koehn, 2005; Williams & Dewett, 2005).

In the Information Age, we should be using an assortment of tools – including internet-based ones – to teach values and ethics and not limit ourselves to one particular approach. A multi-modal approach may be the best way to get the message across to students that ethics and values matter and that greed is not good (Carnes, 2011; Ryan & Bisson, 2011). A sizable number of scholars are urging educators to make use of Internet-based tools as a way of making education relevant and exciting to the students of today, who spend a great deal of time with social media and the Internet (Battalio, 2007; Brown, 2000; Carnes, 2011; Friedman & Friedman, 2011; Friedman, Lynch & Herskovitz, 2013; Gee, 2003).

### **Cases**

One popular approach to teaching courses in business ethics relies on case studies. Many professors feel that case studies enhance students' critical thinking skills because they can expose them to all kinds of issues that may arise in various organizational settings (Corey, 1998; Pomykalski, 2010). One obvious problem is that they are subject to selection bias. Moreover, an approach used by one company may not necessarily work for another firm, and it can be dangerous to generalize from one specific situation to all circumstances. Despite all the concerns about this method, it is a helpful tool in teaching ethics across many different disciplines.

In using case studies, students take the ethical theories and arguments they have been studying in the classroom and apply them to a situation that either did happen or could plausibly happen. In doing so, the students are given opportunities to practice identifying relevant principles and problems and to apply various sorts of ethical analyses (Burns et al., 2012, p. 2).

The primary objection to limiting ethics classes to an examination of case studies is that they are abstract and theoretical, and they speak to students' heads, not their hearts. The result is that the lessons taught by case studies do not seem to be internalized by students and thus do not appear to guide ethical decision-making down the road.

### **Philosophers**

Another popular and traditional approach for teaching ethics relies on studying great Western philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant, and Mill. These courses focus on normative applied ethics employing the significant theories of philosophical ethics, such as Kantian deontology (duty-based), Millian utilitarianism (consequences-based), and virtue ethics (character-based). It appears, however, that these techniques are not doing the job, and other approaches to teaching ethics may be needed. Perhaps these theories are too abstract and theoretical; students do not have a visceral response to these ideas and ideals. They appeal to the intellect rather than the emotions and do not seem to lead to behavioral changes.

We will examine one overlooked philosopher, Adam Smith, and a few other Eastern sages and philosophers to understand how much can be learned about ethics from these less-often thinkers. Of course, other major Eastern philosophers should be studied (e.g., Lao Tzu), and there is no reason to only focus on Western philosophers.

### Smith, Confucius, and Hillel

Interestingly, one philosopher that is not usually studied is Adam Smith. He was an economist and moral philosopher and asserted in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* that economic growth depended on morality. Adam Smith, a believer in the "invisible hand" of free markets, did not believe in predatory, ruinous capitalism that only enriches the few at the top (Friedman & Adler, 2011).

Two great historic figures influenced billions of people: Hillel and Confucius. Hillel had a considerable impact on the Western world and Confucius on the Eastern world, especially in China. Hillel and his descendants headed the Great Sanhedrin, one of the major academies of the ancient world. Confucius was born around 550 BCE and died c. 479 BCE. According to tradition, Hillel was born c. 110 BCE and died c. 10 CE. The *Analects* of Confucius was written by his disciples posthumously and has a great deal to say about humanism, moral leadership, learning, and humility. He believed that Jen (translated as goodness or humanity and benevolence) was necessary for society to function correctly and prevent war and evil. Jen is similar to the Hebrew word *chesed* (deeds of lovingkindness), a foundational value of the Judeo-Christian philosophy. Friedman and Friedman (2008) compare the philosophy of the two great thinkers. Both are famous for the negative formulations of the Golden Rule.

Confucius:

Zigong asked. Is there a single word that could guide one's entire life? The Master [Confucius] said, "Should it not be reciprocity? What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others" (*Analects XV:24*).

Hillel:

A prospective convert asked Hillel to teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel replied, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man, that is the whole Torah, the rest is commentary" (Hillel, *Babylonian Talmud, Shabbos 31a*).

Both were big believers in humanism:

Love all people, but associate with the virtuous (Confucius, *Analects I:6*).

Be among the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people... (Hillel, *Babylonian Talmud, Avot 1:12*). (Aaron, brother of Moses, was known as a peacemaker in the Talmud and Midrash.)

And humility:

Don't worry if people do not recognize your merits; fear that you may not recognize theirs (Confucius, *Analects I:16*)

He who seeks renown destroys his reputation (Hillel, *Babylonian Talmud, Avot 1:13*).

Confucius stated the following about moral leadership:

He who rules by virtue is like the polestar, which remains unmoving in its mansion while all the other stars revolve respectfully around it (*Analects II:1*).

One of Hillel's most famous aphorisms:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But If I care only for myself, what am I? If not now, when? (Hillel, *Babylonian Talmud, Avot 1:14*).

There are other philosophical systems that emphasize ethical conduct that may be unfamiliar to most business students. For example, ubuntu, a sub-Saharan African philosophy, is based on the principles of justice, responsibility, equality, collectiveness,

relatedness, reciprocity, love, respect, helpfulness, community, caring, dependability, sharing, trust, integrity, unselfishness, and social change. This philosophy emphasizes 'ubuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,' translating from Zulu to 'I am because of who we all are.' (West, 2014; Lutz, 2009). There are clear overlaps with the teachings of both Hillel and Confucius.

### **History**

At first blush, one may not see the connection between ethics and history. Given the enormous amount of violence and wars, it may be valuable to demonstrate how the two are related (Edling, Sharp, Löfström, & Ammert, 2020; Hendrick, 2005). One question that might be addressed is whether sexism, racism, religious intolerance, and classism were morally wrong back when they were societal norms? By examining history, one learns to appreciate the consequences of unethical beliefs.

The number of deaths that can be attributed to the Mideast Slave Trade (7<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries) and the Atlantic Slave Trade (1452-1807) is greater than 34 million (White, 2012, p. 529). More than 27 million people starved to death in India during several famines (18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries). Adam Smith wrote in 1776 that famines occur when governments get involved and thus interfere with free-market capitalism and natural market forces. This view was eventually refuted by the economist Amartya Sen (pp. 309-310).

Lloyd (2017, para. 5) feels that moral certainty is dangerous. He posits, "History overflows with misery inflicted by well-intentioned people who were convinced that they had seen the only true moral values, and who sought to convert or destroy those who would not agree." His examples include the Inquisition, which was based on the moral certainty of the Roman Catholic Church, which was convinced that only its interpretation of Christian scriptures was correct. Similarly, Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, and Hitler's Germany were totalitarian societies built on the belief that they knew the truth and anyone who disagreed had to be exterminated. Mao Zedong's certainty about communism and how to make it stronger resulted in the most severe famine in history. The "Great Leap Forward" killed 30 million people besides squandering natural resources and labor (White, 2012, p. 433-434).

### **Literature**

Cases are used to teach ethics, but they rarely arouse passion the way literature can. Cases and history are limited to facts; literature can use fiction, parables, fables, and various tools to teach values. Many scholars advocate using fiction to teach business ethics (Brawer, 1998; Clemens & Mayer, 1999; Kennedy & Lawton, 1992; Singer & Singer, 2005; Williams, 1997). Aesop's fables date back to the sixth century BCE and teach ethics and values. Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel, *The Jungle*, describing the corruption in the meat-packing industry, changed the way business was conducted in the United States. It was as crucial as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* describing the horrors of slavery and was described as "the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of wage slavery."

### **Film**

Films today may have the same ability to motivate and inspire as literature and music in ancient times. The advantage of films is that they relate complex themes using visual images that can be unforgettable. Movies also can "show how actions are interconnected and how people and institutions are interdependent, helping students understand that a small or isolated ethical act may affect a larger whole and that business and non-business are not distinct realities" (Bay & Felton, 2012, p. 161). The 1983 television film *The Day After*, dealing with the aftermath of a nuclear war, caused President Ronald Reagan to work hard to ensure that there would never be this kind of war. Films such as *Dr. Strangelove or How I*

*Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* and *The China Syndrome* also helped shape the public's attitude towards nuclear war and nuclear power. The people involved in the film *Don't Look Up* are hoping that this satire will help change attitudes towards the problem of climate change (Buckley, 2022).

One of the most memorable lines dealing with business ethics is from the film *Wall Street*. Gordon Gecko, a fictitious corporate raider, says, "The point is, ladies and gentlemen, that greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right. Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit." There are websites dealing with the most ethical films of all time, e.g., Carnegie Council's list at <http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/education/002/film/index.html>. Stillman (2006) discusses various movies helpful in teaching ethical leadership.

### **Television**

Television is similar to film and may also teach business ethics. One can find clips from several television shows to teach ethics. Several episodes of *American Greed* and *60 Minutes* may be of value as real-world cases of unethical behavior. Television has played a significant role in changing attitudes concerning various controversial issues. Then Vice-President Joe Biden attributed changing attitudes toward gay marriage to the television series *Will & Grace* (Buckley, 2022).

### **YouTube/TED Talks**

YouTube provides a vast amount of visual material that can be used for instruction. The Department of Business, Government & Society at the University of Texas produced a handy website for teaching ethics that uses YouTube at <http://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/>. Several of Michael Sandel's lectures on justice, ethics, democracy, and markets are available on YouTube. For example, Sandel's "Moral Limits of Markets" is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdBv2ZGC2VI>

### **Music**

One way of delivering inspirational messages to students is through music. Most students listen to music, so this can be a unique way to teach them values. There are several examples of songs that helped change the world. Lynskey (2011) wrote a classic work describing the history of some of the great protest songs, and many were part of the music of the American labor movement. It was then fairly dangerous to go on strike, and many workers were killed by private militias working for employers. During the Vietnam war, anti-war songs had a powerful impact on society. The song "Strange Fruit," written by Abel Meeropol and recorded by Billie Holiday in 1939, is available on YouTube. It made everyone aware of the viciousness of racism, particularly the lynching of black Americans in the South. The "strange fruit" suspended from a tree was an eerie symbolism for young black men who were hanged from the limbs of trees.

"Let my people go!" a proclamation from Exodus (5:1), became a famous African American spiritual and a mantra of the civil rights movement. It was also used as the battle cry of Soviet Jewish dissidents and refuseniks who sought permission to leave Soviet Russia. Jews all over the world and many gentiles rallied to that passionate appeal. Muravchik (2010) believes that this chant helped make the world aware of the horrors of Communism. A country that has to imprison its citizens behind an iron curtain cannot be a workers' paradise. It reminded the world of the virtues of living in free countries where anyone had the right to emigrate. Some other famous hymns are "We shall overcome," associated with the civil rights movement, and "By the Rivers of Babylon" (see Psalm 137), used by Frederick Douglass to denounce slavery, which includes the verse "How shall we sing the Lord's song

in a strange land?" Pete Seeger's "Where have all the flowers gone" is a memorable song describing the futility of war.

### **Speeches**

Speeches are somewhat similar to songs and can also influence people. Students can learn so much about values and morality (as well as some history) from orations. Some of the most powerful statements in history were part of speeches. Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death!" was part of a speech he made. Fortunately, one can find the "Top 100 Speeches" of the 20<sup>th</sup> century compiled by Lucas and Medhurst (2021) on the American Rhetoric website. According to Lucas and Medhurst, the best speech of all time is Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream Speech." The last passage in the address is from Isaiah (40:4-5). Reverend King often quoted from biblical sources to impact his listeners emotionally and psychologically. This was an ingenious way to demonstrate to believers that his messages of equality and justice for all were based on core biblical values.

Lincoln's Gettysburg address is considered among the classic speeches of all time. Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks, said that Lincoln "taught us that whether you are a business leader, an entrepreneur or a government official, one's foremost responsibility is to serve all of the people, and not just one's self-interest." (Koehn, 2013, para. 37).

### **Maxims and Quotes**

A maxim is a "brief statement that contains a little piece of wisdom or a general rule of behavior. Maxims are sometimes written by a single author, for example in the form of philosophical quotations" (Literary Terms, 2015). The concept of a maxim played a prominent role in Kant's moral philosophy. He believed that "all actions imply a 'maxim of behavior' – i.e. if you steal because you're greedy, the implied maxim is 'it's OK to steal out of greed'" (Literary Terms, 2015). Examples of powerful maxims are, "Whatever you do, do it 100%," "Always do what you're afraid to do," and "Stop looking for happiness in the same place you lost it."

A teacher can use maxims or quotes in several ways in class. They can be introduced as discussion points. Students can be encouraged to "adopt" a maxim that talks to them and transform it into refrigerator magnets or bumper stickers. As Bertram Russell said, "every young person should decide on his or her own credo." Akhenaton, ancient pharaoh of Egypt, would agree. He said, "Hear the words of prudence, give heed unto her counsels, and store them in thine heart; her maxims are universal, and all the virtues lean upon her; she is the guide and the mistress of human life."

Inspirational quotes can become personal mantras that, in turn, serve as behavioral guideposts and help one make decisions when confronted with serious problems. Think of some of the quotes and maxims from your own childhood. One author of this article wholly believes that she will be muttering "a stitch in time saves nine" on her deathbed – although she never sews! A recent article reported on a study of Chinese medical students and the impact of maxims on decision making. The authors found that "maxims, slogans and proverbs" can be decision-making "nudgers" under certain circumstances. (Huang et al., 2020) Several websites provide ethics quotes that make people think (e.g., Kidadl, 2021). The following are interesting quotations dealing with ethics; most are from the Kidadl website.

"A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world." — Albert Camus

"Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil." — C.S. Lewis

"Relativity applies to physics, not ethics." — Albert Einstein.

"In civilized life, law floats in a sea of ethics." — Earl Warren.

"Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what's right."  
— Isaac Asimov.

"On three things the world stands: On justice, on truth, and on peace."  
— Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel

"Let your friends wealth be as precious to you as your own." — Rabbi Yossi

"This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness." — Dalai Lama XIV.

"Live one day at a time emphasizing ethics rather than rules." — Wayne Dyer.

"It is curious - curious that physical courage should be so common in the world, and moral courage so rare." — Mark Twain

"In law, a man is guilty when he violates the rights of another. In ethics he is guilty if he only thinks of doing so." — Immanuel Kant.

"Before I can live with other folks, I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience." — Harper Lee, *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

"Ethics must begin at the top of an organization. It is a leadership issue and the chief executive must set the example." — Edward Hennessy.

"In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you." — Warren Buffet

"Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not." — Oprah Winfrey.

"There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest." — Elie Wiesel

### **Social Justice Humor**

Some researchers have been examining the use of comedy to get people to pay closer attention to social justice issues (Chattoo, 2019; Feldman & Chattoo, 2019; Friedman & Friedman, 2020). Comedy is more likely to engage and persuade people than simple facts. Fosco (2018) asserts that humor is changing, moving away from being self-deprecating and focusing instead on "using comedy specials and stand-up routines to vocalize marginalization and injustice they've faced — while making the audience laugh." The goal of the humor is to mock the oppressors and those in power and demonstrate how absurdly they behave. Bigots and sexists have no reason to feel superior.

Zekavat (2019) posits that "satire [and humor] can be used as a strategy to raise ethical and political consciousness and persuade people to change their attitudes in certain regards." He demonstrates that satire can be used to make people environmentally conscious. Kramer (2015, p. 61) shows how subversive humor can be a powerful tool to fight racism and oppression. He remarks, "I am concerned most with the cultural stereotypes engaged in racial and gender categorizations that sustain psychological oppression." Subversive humor can be considerably more effective than lecturing people about the evils of stereotyping.

The following is an example of how humor may be used to make people aware of racial inequality in the U.S.:

Here's the amazing part. For South Africa to achieve that kind of black-white wealth gap, we had to construct an entire apartheid state denying blacks the right to vote or own

property. But you, you did it without even trying. We trained for decades, and you just waltzed in and won the gold medal (Trevor Noah, BBC News, 2015. Para. 5).

The aforementioned film, "Don't Look Up," chose to approach our blindness to climate change elliptically and satirically, describing a globe-destroying comet hurtling to Earth and the politicians and journalists who dismiss the threat, advising citizens just not to look up. The use of metaphor and humor were more effective tools to convey a message that may not have been heard had the director chosen instead to preach earnestly.

### **Scripture**

One can easily contend that religions have not been successful in making the world a more moral place. White (2012, p. 554), who did an extensive study of mass killings (he refers to them as multicides), found that about 10% of deaths can be attributed to religion. With that fact in mind, it may be problematic to posit the use of religion as the vehicle through which one should teach ethics. But that sort of attitude ignores the precepts of many faiths and instead focuses on the individuals who have perverted its teachings. Furthermore, the reality is that, in more modern times, ethnic violence (including genocide), communism, and economics are responsible for many more deaths. The leaders responsible for the most deaths —Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong, and Joseph Stalin — were not fighting religious wars.

The authors of this paper posit that ignoring religion and focusing solely on Western classical philosophers is not the way to inspire students, especially those who may have profound and deep-seated religious beliefs. Instructors should instead explore the question as to why sacred texts have often been misinterpreted and used to justify terrorism and religious wars. A discussion of moral certainty might shed some light on this question; there is a relationship between religiosity and moral certainty (Alsaad, Elrehail, & Saif-Alyousfi, 2021). Ethical thinking requires critical thinking, so ignoring religious texts in teaching ethics makes little sense. The question as to whether religion does or does not provide the wisdom to teach humankind about morality should be addressed when discussing ethics.

Surveying all major religions and their moral and ethical values is beyond the scope of this paper. The authors have decided to focus on the teachings of one religion, Judaism, as an example of the lessons that can be drawn from examining religions. Judaism is being chosen because “the relationship between Jewish law and morality is a critically important issue for Judaism, for it traditionally has put so much store in defining moral norms in legal terms” (Dorff & Crane, 2013, p. 4). Judaism agrees with philosophers who have “identified justice and compassion as the root values of moral experience and ethical logic” (Korn, 2019, p. 26).

The Hebrew Bible is replete with precepts dealing with business ethics. These include laws dealing with caring for the poor, treating employees fairly, paying wages and rents on time, providing fringe benefits for employees, maintaining fair and stable prices, not wasting natural resources, providing an honest day's work, and not discriminating against the stranger. The regulation demanding that one act transparently and not arouse anyone's suspicions also has its roots in the Torah (Friedman, 2000). The Torah demands that individuals and society do everything possible to "raise the needy from the dust" by providing training, jobs, and loans (Mizrachi & Friedman, 2021). It further insists that "Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge" (Deuteronomy 24:17). The commandments dealing with affection are loving God (Deuteronomy 6:5), loving your fellow as yourself (Leviticus 19: 18), and loving the stranger (Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19). Precepts involving not mistreating or oppressing the stranger are mentioned an incredible 36 times in the Torah. The idea of *imitatio Dei* (imitating God) has its basis in the Torah (Leviticus 19:2): "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (see also Leviticus 11:44 and 20:26).

Nehemiah dealt with a serious situation: the exploitation of poor Jews by the wealthy in the Jewish community he was desperately trying to rebuild. Note that debtors had to bring their children "into bondage" to pay off their debts.

And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brothers, the Jews. For there were those that said: "We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore, we must buy grain for them, that we may eat and live." And there were those that said: "We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine." And there were those that said: "We have borrowed money for the king's taxes, and that on our fields and vineyards." Now, our flesh is as worthy as the flesh of our brothers, our children as worthy as their children: yet, see, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants! Some of our daughters are brought to servitude already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our fields and vineyards (Nehemiah 5: 1-5).

Nehemiah understood that without social justice, the Jews would have no future. He succeeded in convincing the nobility to remit the debts and restore the forfeited fields of the poor. This type of financial and agrarian reform was unheard of in its time and is one of the earliest examples of progressive land reform.

Few have described the ideal vision for humankind better than Isaiah. He rhapsodizes of a perfect society wherein social justice is the order of the day and people live in harmony with each other and with the land:

He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isaiah 2:4).

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat; the calf, the lion cub, and the fatling [will feed] together, and a small child will lead them. A cow and bear will graze together and their young will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the cattle. An infant will play over a viper's hole, and a newly weaned child will stretch forth his hand over an adder's den. They will do no harm or damage anywhere in all of My holy mountain...(Isaiah 11:6-9).

The *Book of Psalms* (*Sefer Tehillim* in Hebrew) consists of 150 inspiring and rousing hymns. The Hebrew word *Tehillim* means praises, and it is a book of praises of God. But it is much more than thanksgiving and praise. Many human emotions, faith, joy, trust, lament, grief, confession, thanksgiving, awe, remorse, anger, and happiness – are revealed in *Psalms*. The ancient psalms were songs accompanied by musical instruments, and these songs had powerful messages. Many did deal with the oppression of the poor and helpless. Three major religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – consider its words holy.

The idea of helping the weak is repeated numerous times in Scripture. The orphan, widow, and stranger are paradigms for those who can effortlessly be taken advantage of. In modern times, one might add the disabled. Psalm 146 demonstrates what God does for the oppressed, the poor, and the helpless.

He secures justice for the oppressed; He gives bread to the hungry. The Lord releases the imprisoned. The Lord gives sight

to the blind; The Lord straightens those bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord protects the stranger; orphan and widow He enables to stand firm; but the way of the wicked He thwarts (Psalm 146:7-9).

Psalm 15 and Psalm 25 describe what it takes to be a righteous person. For example, only those who "walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart" are entitled to dwell in the house of the Lord (Psalm 15:2). The writer goes on to beg God for "integrity and uprightness" (Psalm 25:21) as desirable attributes worthy of God's attention.

### **Talmud and Midrash**

The Talmud, Judaism's Oral Law, primarily contains rabbinical discussions and commentaries on the Torah's written text. The Talmud, mainly concerned with *halacha* (Jewish law), also provides a detailed record of Jewish people's beliefs, philosophy, traditions, culture, and folklore, *i.e.*, the *Aggadah* (homiletics), is replete with legal, ethical, and moral questions. The Midrash, a separate scripture, records the views of the Talmudic sages and is mainly devoted to the exposition of Biblical verses. The Babylonian Talmud, a product of the academies in Babylon, was completed in 500 CE; the Jerusalem Talmud, a creation of the academies in Israel, was finished in 350 CE.

The Talmud has much to say about the proper way to live an ethical, rewarding life (Friedman, 2012). Friedman & Fischer (2014) demonstrate how the ethical and moral principles of *Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), one of the 63 tractates of the Talmud, can influence people's behavior to improve the world. According to Socken (2009), the Talmud is as relevant today as when compiled about 1,500 years ago. Solomon (2009: xi) agrees: "The Talmud, frequently censored and occasionally banned and burned by the Catholic Church, is one of the most influential, though seldom acknowledged or properly understood, writings of Late Antiquity."

Rubenstein (2002, p. 14) stresses that the correct question to ask about a Talmudic story is "What lesson did he [the storyteller] wish to impart to his audience?" and "What does the story teach us about rabbinic beliefs, virtues, and ethics?" Those are more important questions than whether the story is entirely accurate, partially true, or a metaphor.

The Talmud sees obeying the strict letter of the law as insufficient; therefore, one must go beyond the requirements of the law — *lifnim mishurat hadin* (literally, inside the line of the law). Indeed, the Babylonian Talmud (Bava Metzia 30b) declares that Jerusalem was destroyed for following the strict letter of Torah law and not doing more than the law required. The following story is a classic going beyond the letter of the law case. What is remarkable about this narrative is that it suggests that one who only follows the basic rules is a "barbarian." Korn (2019) uses this narrative to prove that one must do what is ethically correct and not simply follow the law. Halacha (Jewish law) is merely a foundation for building an ethical structure.

Shimon ben Shetach was struggling in the flax business. His students said: Rabbi, abandon this business and let us buy you a donkey, and you will not have to work so hard. They went and bought a donkey from an Ishmaelite, which had a jewel hanging on its neck. They returned to him happily, saying, thanks to this good luck, you'll never have to work again! When he learned about the jewel, he asked his students whether the donkey's owner knew of it at the time of the sale. When they said no, he ordered them to return the jewel. [The voice of the Talmud's editor intervenes and asks:] But why should this be so?! For later, in Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi's time it was ruled that although

stealing from pagans is forbidden, one may keep an item that a pagan has lost. [So why did Shimon ben Shetach not permit himself to benefit from the pagan's mistake?]

Rabbi Shimon answered them: Do you think Shimon ben Shetach is a barbarian?! Shimon ben Shetach would prefer to hear the words "Blessed be the God of the Jews" than all the money in the world (Jerusalem Talmud, Bava Metzia 2:5; translation by Halberstadt, 2019 and Amital, 2016).

The following is another example of a Talmudic story. Shmuel was an expert in astronomy/astrology (back then, the two were not separate disciplines). It was essential to instruct people about free choice and not believe that the stars controlled their fate. This story emphasizes the importance of charity.

Shmuel and Avleit [Avleit was an astrologer] were once sitting together watching people go to the swamp to cut reeds. Avleit said to Shmuel, "That man over there will go to the swamp, but he won't return because a snake will bite him and he will die." Shmuel said: "If he is a Jew, he will return." While they were sitting, the man returned. Avleit stood up and threw off the man's pack of reeds. He found among the reeds a snake that had been cut in two pieces. Shmuel said to the man: "What did you do to be saved from death like that?" The man replied: "Every day, we pool all our bread together and share it. Today, one man had nothing to contribute, and he was ashamed. I, therefore, told everyone: "Today, I am going to collect the bread." When I got to him, I pretended to take something from him so that he would not be ashamed." Shmuel said to him: "You have done a good deed." Shmuel went out and lectured: "Charity saves one from death" (Proverbs 10:2), and not just from an unnatural death, but even from death itself (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbos 156b; ).

The following narrative teaches one how to argue constructively. There were numerous rancorous debates between the Academies of Hillel and Shammai. The Babylonian Talmud (Eruvin 13b) explains why the law is determined according to the Academy of Hillel and not Shammai. The Hillelites had humility, and they were kindly. They studied their opinions as well as the views of the Shammaites. And not only that, they would mention their opponent's arguments before mentioning their own. The way to debate is to listen to the other side's view, respect it, and learn from it. That is the secret of Talmudic debate: respecting the opinion of others. This is a timeless lesson for today when disagreements have become destructive. Terms such as post-factual and post-truth are used to describe the age in which we live.

When we teach students about business ethics, we sometimes forget that business ethics is a two-way street: Employers must behave ethically, but employees must also act appropriately. Almost all the sages of the Talmud had jobs—Abba Chilkiyah was a field laborer and would not greet the Sages who came to him to ask him to pray for rain. This was because he did not want to interrupt his work, even for a moment. After all, he was hired as a dayworker (Babylonian Talmud, Taanis 23a-23b).

The following story uses Heaven and Elijah to support the argument that laughter is, in actuality, essential, both for this world and the next. In addition, this narrative aims to answer the question: What does it take to get into Heaven?

Rabbi Beroka Hozaah asked Elijah the Prophet: "Is there any person in this market who is destined for Paradise?" He replied, no. ... While they were conversing, two people passed by.

Elijah said: "These two are destined for the world to come." Rabbi Beroka approached them and asked them what they did. They replied: "We are jesters, and we cheer up people who are depressed. Also, when we see two people who are quarreling, we work hard to make peace between them" (Babylonian Talmud, Taanis 22a; based on translations by Soncino and ArtScroll).

Helfgot (1998) advocates the use of Midrash as a tool to enhance the teaching of values. The following Midrash may be used to teach all kinds of ideals. This story about Moses when he was Jethro's shepherd teaches us valuable lessons about leadership:

Moses was shepherding his father-in-law's sheep one day when one of them bolted. Moses followed the runaway animal until it reached a body of water, where it stopped for a drink. Moses compassionately said to the sheep, 'If only I had known that you thirsted for water. You must be exhausted from running ...' Saying this, he scooped up the animal, placed it on his shoulders, and headed back to his flock. Said God: 'If this is how he cares for the sheep of man, he is definitely fit to shepherd Mine ...' (Midrash Shemot Rabbah 2:2; translated by Zarchi (2013, para. 4).

This story demonstrates that a leader must have compassion. There is a great deal of evidence that compassionate leadership is critical in the knowledge economy. It also teaches us that "when a single sheep leaves the group and goes off on its own, it isn't an act of rebellion. It's just thirsty, and its leaders have not been able to quench its thirst .... When Jews wander off from their community or even reject the Judaism they grew up with, it is a cry for help rather than insubordination. They are looking for inspiration, searching for meaning. Rather than criticizing, Moses lifts them up and says: I'm sorry, I didn't realize your spiritual needs weren't being met (Zarchi, 2013, para. 7).

## **Kabbalah**

Making the world a better place is the old idea of *tikkun olam* (in Hebrew, *tikkun* means to repair, and *olam* means world). It is the belief that one is obligated to repair and perfect the world by using the legal system to enact laws that help society. The sages of the Talmud used the principle of *tikkun olam* to enact various laws to help humanity (e.g., Babylonian Talmud, Gittin 32a, 34b, 40b, 41b, 45a, b); it is also an essential part of the kabbalah of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572).

The Kabbalah of Forgiveness is a commentary on a heroic and pioneering work on the mechanics of forgiveness. Rabbi Moshe ben Yaakov Cordovero of Safed, Israel, wrote the *Date Palm of Devorah (Tomer Devorah)* during the sixteenth century. The first chapter describes 13 distinct levels of mercy that God confers upon the world (Abramson, 2014). Rabbi Cordovero's discussion of the nature of forgiveness inherent in the 13 levels of compassion should be emulated by individuals in their routine relationships with others.

The *Zohar* (Splendor) is one of the foundational works in Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) and is often attributed to Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, a Second-century Tannaitic sage (many modern scholars believe that it was written by Moses de Leon (c. 1240-1305)).

Rabbi Abba was sitting at the gate of the city of Lod. He saw a man coming and sitting on a protrusion that bulged at the side of the mountain. The man was weary from the road, and he sat and slept there. Meanwhile, Rabbi Abba saw a snake approaching him, and a lizard came out and killed the snake. When the man woke, he saw the snake dead in front of him. The man rose, and the protrusion he had

been sitting on was torn off the mountain and fell to the valley below it. But the man was saved. [Had he slept on the protrusion for even a few more minutes, he would have plunged to the valley along with the overhang and been killed.]

Rabbi Abba came to him and told him: "Tell me, what have you done so that God performed for you these two miracles." He told him. "Throughout my whole life, never has anyone done me an evil that I did not make peace with him and forgave him.

Moreover, if I could not make peace with him, I did not go to my bed before I forgave him and all those who afflicted me. Thus, I did not hold any grudge for that evil that had been done to me. And I do not suffice for that, but even more, from that day forth, I have tried to do a kindness for them."

Rabbi Abba wept and said: "The deeds of this one are greater than Joseph's, for with Joseph, the wrongdoers were his brothers, and he certainly should have pitied them because of the brotherhood. But what this one did is greater than Joseph's deeds. He is worthy to have God perform for him one miracle after another miracle (Zohar, 201a, Parshat Miketz; based on translations by Laitman, 2011, p. 378-379; Drizin, 2018).

## Mussar

Mussar (original meaning was "instruction" — see Proverbs 1:2 —but now means ethics) is a traditional Jewish ethical and spiritual movement that became a widespread movement in 19<sup>th</sup> century Lithuania under the guidance of Rabbi Yisroel Salanter (1810-1883). One of his central beliefs was that Talmudic study should not be an end in itself and what truly mattered was virtue-based ethics; the spirit of the law was more essential than the letter of the law. Furthermore, people must work on character and ethical development, enhance their moral conduct, and improve. Self-awareness is an essential part of the Mussar process. One of the earliest Mussar books was *Duties of the Heart* by Rabbi Bahya ibn Paquda written in eleventh-century Spain. Dr. Alan Morinis, the founder of The Mussar Institute, is a prominent teacher in the modern-day revival of the Musar movement. It is currently being practiced by individuals worldwide from all religious denominations. Morinis (2007) has authored several books that promote the study of Mussar, including *Everyday Holiness*.

Mussar and Kabbalah are included in Jewish spirituality, but the latter focuses mainly on the mystical and efforts to experience and understand God. Mussar is much more practical and grounded in the real world and concentrates on living an ethical life and behaving righteously. There is an overlap between the two, and some great works of Mussar were written by Kabbalists.

The following is a selection from *Messilat Yesharim (Path of the Just)*, a significant work on Mussar written by the famous Kabbalist Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707–1746). The author also stresses how crucial it is for employees to provide an honest day's labor.

CLEANLINESS FROM THEFT: We can observe that even though most people are not blatant thieves, literally taking with their hands the possession of their fellow and putting it in their own possessions, nevertheless, most people experience a taste of theft in their business dealings by rationalizing permission to profit through their fellow's loss. They may tell themselves: "Business is different"...

They likewise exempted hired workers from reciting the (Hamotzi) blessing over bread and the last blessing of the grace after meals (*Birkat Hamazon*). And even in the case of reciting the Shema, they required them to pause from their work only for the first chapter (Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 16b). How much more so for things that are optional. And if he transgresses this, he is considered a thief. Abba Chilkiyah did not even return the greetings of Torah scholars in order to not be idle from the work he was doing for another (Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 23b). Yaakov, our forefather, peace be unto him, states explicitly, "in the day heat consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes" (Genesis 31:40). The summary of the matter: one who is hired out to his fellow for any kind of work, behold, all of his hours are sold to his employer for the workday as the Sages stated: "to hire oneself out is to sell oneself for the day" (Bava Metzia 56b). Whatever time he takes for his own pleasure, whatever it may be, he is completely guilty of stealing. And if his employer does not forgive him, he is not forgiven. For the Sages already stated: "sins between man and his fellow are not atoned for on Yom Kippur until he has pacified his fellow"(Yoma 85b) (Mesillat Yesharim, Chapter 11)

Interestingly, there is a crime recognized under American federal law known as "honest services fraud" (18 U.S.C. §1346) that can be asserted against both political figures and private sector employees. Although this law has been criticized for vagueness and has been limited by United Supreme Court decisions to situations where there are "fraudulent schemes to deprive another of honest services through bribes or kickbacks" (see *Skilling v. United States*, 561 U.S. 538 (2010)), in its simplest interpretation it could theoretically encompass any employee who does not provide full value for the work he has been hired to do.

In the classic medieval ethics (Mussar) work, *Orchot Tzadikim* (Chapter 14: Jealousy), the author notes that jealousy comes from observing what friends own. We become envious of a friend's garment, food, house, and/or wealth, and envy leads to coveting. Thus, individuals who purposely flaunt wealth to arouse their fellows' envy are guilty of the transgression of causing others to sin (*lifnei iver*). The *Orchot Tzadikim* recommends a life of moderation and simplicity so as not to arouse the envy of others.

## Conclusion

This paper demonstrates some of the many methods to teach values ethics, and educators should not limit themselves solely to cases and philosophers. Even if it is not possible to teach people to behave ethically in a classroom setting, academics need to use all available tools to teach ethical sensitivity. It is impossible to predict which of the many lessons will resonate with students, impact their thinking, and influence ethical decision-making. The more comprehensive the array of tools, the more likely that at least some of the lessons will stick. Undoubtedly, there are other approaches to teaching ethics. Future research should compare the various techniques and attempt to determine which, if any, do an exceptional job of teaching students to behave ethically. Until this is resolved, educators should not solely examine Western philosophers and case studies.

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