



Tomorrow's Child
by Rubin Alves

What is hope?
It is a presentiment that
imagination
is more real and reality less
real than it looks.
It is a hunch that the
overwhelming brutality
of facts that oppress and
repress us
is not the last word.
It is a suspicion that reality is
more complex
than realism wants us to believe
That the frontiers of the possible
are not
determined by the limits
of the actual;
and that in a miraculous and
unexpected way
life is preparing the
creative events
which will open the way to
freedom and resurrection -
but the two, suffering and hope
must live from each other.
Suffering without hope produces
resentment and despair,
But, hope without suffering
creates illusions, naivete,
and drunkenness.

A Morality of Love

We are being called like our foremothers and forefathers to be the moral defibrillator of our time. We must shock this nation with the power of love. We must shock this nation with the power of mercy. We must shock this nation and fight for justice for all.

~ Reverend Doctor William Barber II at the DNC

Morality often gets a bad rap. It evokes finger-wagging and holier-than-thou disapproval and blame. The Judeo-Christian tradition portrays us as flawed at the core: imperfect humans, beset by unruly impulses and urges. In this context, morality can become oppressive and dangerous, used as a force to appraise and repress.

But there is another option. As Reverend Doctor William Barber II suggests, morality can also be a powerful force of healing and of love.

Sila, Buddhist ethics and morality, cracks this option open. Instead of rigid rules to keep our baser instincts in check, Buddhist morality helps us unfold and reveal our fundamental goodness.

Buddhist precepts-not killing or stealing or lying or misusing sexuality or intoxicants-offer guidelines for contemplation and observation. They are not commandments, but questions to ponder in the nitty-gritty of daily life: How to respond to the homeless man asking for money? What does it mean to speak with skill in the face of injustice? When is it wise to say "no," in order to tend and care for oneself?

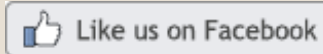
There is a beautiful passage in the Pali cannon of a conversation between the Buddha and his son, Rahula. "What is a mirror for?" the Buddha asks. "For reflection," Rahula responds. "Yes, and in the same way, Rahula, all of your actions-of body, speech and mind-should be done with repeated reflection," his father replies. Rather than telling him how to behave, the Buddha gives Rahula instructions for how to live with skill and kindness. Before, during and after you say or do anything, he counsels, pause to consider the consequences. Will this lead pain or suffering for myself or others? If so, don't do it. Or will it lead to positive consequences and results? If so, forge ahead.

If we take up this advice, it quickly becomes clear that there are rarely simple answers. Life is ripe with paradox and mystery. It is richer and more complex than our ideas and opinions about it. This is not an excuse for apathy or inaction. Rather, by grappling with complexity and ambiguity, bit by bit we cultivate confidence in our own inner wisdom, and develop the capacity to engage with keen attunement and poise under fire.

Let us plant dates
even though we who plant them
will never eat them.
We must live by the love of what
we will never see.
This is the secret discipline.
It is a refusal to let our
creative act
be dissolved away by our need
for immediate sense experience
and it is a struggled commitment
to the future of our
grandchildren.
Such disciplined love is what has
given prophets, revolutionaries
and saints,
the courage to die for the future
they envisaged.
They make their own bodies the
seed of their highest hope.

[Click here to hear Doctor
Reverend Barber's full speech](#)

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So much of the violence and hatred spilling across the news and into our lives is laden with unyielding convictions and strident points of view. Passion and conviction are powerful. But when they slide into dogma and doctrine, we run amok.

It takes pluck and presence to stand up for what we care about without rigidity or bias. It takes courage and humility and bottomless compassion-for ourselves and for each other-to keep doing our best, falling down, brushing ourselves off, and getting up again. Again and again.

This is how we become the "moral defibrillator of our time;" how we learn to shock our lives and our nation with fierce love, tender mercy and justice for all.

With love and appreciation,
Pam

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awakening **Wisdom** in leadership and life.