

A Jewish Peaceful Warrior's View by **Dr. Michael Andron**

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It's Shavuot, 5760. We celebrate the giving of the Torah. We try to remember the receiving of the Torah every day by our thoughts, words and actions. It is a dramatic moment for our souls and our people. We don't just remember one mitzvah. We view the totality of the Torah world-view. Many of us stay up all night to touch the light of the Torah to our souls. We read the greatest

testimony to our faith in the Book of Ruth. We read Ezekiel's legacy for prophecy in the Haftara.

For our special Tora-Torah interest group, let me share something with you that I was moved to write a few years ago. It is appropriate because it is not just one idea of Tora Dojo but a sort of statement of the "Tora-Torah" worldview. It is, in a sense, a summary of many of the ideas that I have discussed this past year in Tora-Torah columns. I only wrote the third line of each paragraph and I have highlighted that line in color.

Here's how I came to write it. A few years ago a student sent me a copy of an article. It was written by Dr. Mai Van Trang as part of Reasons for Living and Hoping: The Spiritual and Psycho-Social Needs of Southeast Asian Refugee Children and Youth Resettled in the United States. As I read it (with my background in Asian cultures) I, first, did not relish some of the generalizations and, second, did not feel I fit into either his Eastern worldview or the Western one he compared it to.

I felt there was a third alternative. I entitled my version: **A Jewish Peaceful Warrior's Third Alternative**. Read them all and find your paradigm within.

Remember: the first two lines are his...the third line is mine.

An Asian View of Cultural Differences by **Dr. Mai Van Trang**

and

A Jewish Peaceful Warrior's View by **Dr. Michael Andron, LaoShih**

We live in time.

You live in space.

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We live both in and beyond time-space (e.g. the secular week and the holy Sabbath)

We are always at rest.
You are always on the move.
We find balance in peaceful movement.

We are passive.
You are aggressive.
We can be both passive and active, choosing the one that is appropriate. When aggressive, we "fight peacefully", power from a tranquil center.

We like to contemplate.
You like to act.
We cultivate stillness, attention, memory, understanding, action. ("First, be still, so thoughts can enter your mind. Then listen, so you can learn. Remember, so you can consider it. Understand, so it will have meaning. And, then. act.")

We accept the world as it is.
You try to change it according to your blueprint.
We search for sparks of holiness to help repair the world.

We live in peace with nature.
You try to impose your will on her.
We try to respect nature's wonders while mastering her potential.

Religion is our first love.
Technology is your passion.
We seek to master the technology of re-linking (the Latin root of 'religion' is re-ligo, to re-connect).

We delight to think about the meaning of life.
You delight in physics.
We delight in the union/interface of physics and metaphysics.

We believe in freedom of silence.
You believe in freedom of speech.
We seek the creative power of silence to inspire the spoken word.

We lapse into meditation.
You strive for articulation.
We separate (Kodesh, holiness, comes from the Hebrew root to

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separate) in meditation and try to bring back it's light to sweeten the world a bit through word and action.

We marry first, then love.

You love first, then marry.

We love and marry (marriage in Hebrew is 'holiness')

Our marriage is the beginning of a love affair.

Your marriage is the happy end of a romance.

Our soul mate is both beginning and continuity... two halves of a soul each rediscover the other half and seek whole-ness and holiness.

It is an indissoluble bond.

It is a contract.

It is a contract of the heart and mind and soul.

Our love is mute.

Your love is vocal

Our love is both silent and expressed through actions and words.

We try to conceal it from the world.

You delight in showing it to others.

We seek balance and holiness in the both private and public.

Self-denial is the key to our survival.

Self-assertiveness is the key to your success.

Self-discipline is the key to both our survival and our success.

We are taught from the cradle to want less and less.

You are urged every day to want more and more.

We enjoy possessions but try not to attach our souls to them.

We glorify austerity and renunciation.

You emphasize gracious living and enjoyment.

We live to be in the world but not of it.

Poverty to us is a badge of spiritual elevation.

It is to you a sign of degradation.

Poverty only allows us to help others less.

In the sunset years of life we renounce the world and prepare for the hereafter.

You retire to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

We never lose sight of our mission to grow and learn and to sweeten

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the world and help repair it. This is a never-ending process, from youth to the death of the body, of removing veils and revealing the divine spark within us.

"Tora-Torah" is written by Michael Andron and includes insights into the inner aspects of the Jewish martial arts as founded and taught by Grand Master H. I. Sober in the International Tora Dojo Martial Arts Association.

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