

Religion for Peace and Prosperity

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Abstract

Peace is the essence of all religions. The aims of every religion, in principle, are man's spiritual development and the turning of each individual into a responsible citizen. When we are lacking in spiritual and religious values, we tend to become frightened and distrust those around us. We have to engender in ourselves and in others a genuine spirituality. That is the only way to create a world, order based on love and compassion, which would in turn lead to the establishment of International stability.

KEYWORDS: Tranquility, Truth, Faith, Mankind, Humanity.

Today, all of us are perplexed by the question why human life has been bereft of peace and security? Why are we being visited perpetually by various kinds of troubles and hardships? Why has the scheme of our life gone awry? We find nations falling foul of one another, country, struggling against country, men tearing one another to bits like wolves. Millions of men are being killed, wounded, or uprooted by war, human habitations are being destroyed and property and business worth billions of rupees are being ruined. The strong are crushing the weak, the rich are exploiting the poor. Governments are tyrannical and the guardians of law have turned unjust. The rich man is intoxicated by his wealth; the man in authority is arrogant. There is no loyalty in the friendship and breach of trust is rampant. There is no moral rectitude. Man has lost faith in man; godlessness prevails even under the cloak of religion. Humanity is divided into countless groups and camps, and each of these is trying to harm others by force or fraud or any other means at its disposal – in the firm belief as if this were the righteous conduct.

What, then, is the root cause of all these evils and troubles? Outside the human world we find perfect peace and tranquility in the rest of the Universe. There is peace in stars, in air, in water, in trees and animals. The whole machinery of creation, excluding the world of man, is running peacefully and does not betray any imbalance or disorder or indiscipline in any respect. Why human life is deprived of this blessing?

The answer to this difficult question is: Man is suffering because he has adopted a way of life at variance with truth and reality; he will know no peace until he brings his life into harmony with truth and reality. It should be clear to you that God's sovereignty over the Universe exists by virtue of His own power and authority. Your very existence depends entirely on His will. All the power and faculties with which God has endowed men are being used for the destruction of mankind rather than for its welfare and progress. The reason why man has turned this world into veritable hell is that, like curious child, he has tried to run a machine about whose mechanism and working he knows little or nothing. If men can persuade themselves even now to retrace the steps

that they have taken on the path of perdition and start following scrupulously the laws laid down by the Maker of the human machine, the damage that mankind has done to itself so far can still be repaired and its life redeemed.

Human welfare signifies not the well-being of any particular individual, family, or nation, but the welfare of all men; entire mankind. All man-made laws betray injustice of one kind or another. The remedy for these prevailing injustices is to scrap man-made laws and accept, unconditionally and without reservations, the laws of God in Whose eyes all men are equal as human beings and who distinguishes between them on the basis of their piety, virtue, character, conduct and merits, rather than their race colour, class or nationality.

Peace has always been a human need. It is a prerequisite for all kinds of human progress. Peace is generally studied as the antithesis to war. It is the master key which opens all doors to success. It paves the way for the success of sincere efforts in all spheres. In the moments of crisis, when the individual opts for the way of peace, he cultivates positive thinking.

Peace is the only religion for both men and the universe. In a peaceful environment all good things are possible, whereas in the absence of peace, we cannot achieve anything of positive nature, either as individuals, or as a community. The same holds true at national and international levels. Widespread violence, ecological disturbance and global warming have together become a menace greater than that of a third world war. We have to work unitedly and sincerely to save Nature in the interest of all of humanity.

Although we have had a number of peace loving individuals, the establishment of a peaceful society on a mass scale has never become a reality. Human interests have been very deeply associated with peace. He needs an ideology which convinces him at the conscious level of the necessity to keep the peace at all times. Peace has become so vital to the survival of mankind that it has now literally become a matter of life and death for humanity. Man can properly fulfill any given mission only when he is ideologically convinced of its validity. A peaceful course of action is possible when there is a very strong justification for peace. While violence is instinctive, peace calls for strict mental discipline and self control to be exercised, everyone wants to assert himself by negating others, so that, one short emotional outburst is all that is needed for violence to be indulged in, unlike peaceful action, which requires serious thoughts to be given to it. It requires a positive and determined struggle.

Willingness to keep the peace is a matter of conscious decision-making and it is a noble human quality. For peace, man has to curb his anger and be forgiving. He has to control his feelings to hatred and project feelings of love for others. Negative thinking has to be suppressed and replaced with positive thinking.

Human life, like a flowing river, wants to surge forward under its own momentum. Where there is no obstruction, all life's activities will be set in motion, propelled by human nature itself. They come to a halt only when the artificial barriers of

war and violence are placed before them. Peace, from the point of view of its result, is like an opening of all the doors of life to the fullest possible extent.

The teachings of various religions in brief:

Peace in Judaism:

According to the Jewish religion, the ideal human society is one where people destroy their weapons; where war never takes place; where the building of life is done on the basis of peace rather than on violence. The desirable society of God is society where the weak and the powerful exist side by side without harming one another and living peacefully.

Peace in Christianity:

Jesus Christ laid the greatest emphasis on God-worship, love of human beings, service of mankind, spiritual development, rising above materialism, treating others well, even if they do not reciprocate, and so on. According to him, the most blessed task is to establish peace in the world, peace in family life, peace is social life. Establish peace at all costs. Do not counter violence with violence. Instead, counter violence by the unilateral exercise of patience and the avoidance of conflict, in order that the atmosphere of peace may not be disturbed.

Peace in Hinduism:

Tolerance is one of the basic principles of Hinduism. This concept of tolerance goes to the ultimate extent of encouraging belief in the truth of all religions. According to the Geeta, each religious path leads towards the same destination; the truth. When Swami Vivekananda said, 'Every religion is true', he correctly echoed Hindu belief. In Hinduism each religious tradition can be given equal recognition. The concept of tolerance instructs us to live in peace with others. Violence against any human group is unlawful.

Peace in Buddhism:

Buddhism is an ethical way of life. There is no place for violence. The aim of Buddhism is basically personal reform. And personal reform can come about only by striving hard against one's own self, rather than by committing aggression against others. Ideologically, Buddhism has no direct relation with violence.

Peace in Islam:

The Quran puts on record the many name or attributes of God, one of them is Peace. God Himself is the embodiment of peace. When God's dealings with human beings are based on peace and security, then man should also deal with other human beings in a peaceful manner, and not with harshness or violence.

Peace is something that can be opted for in all circumstances, whereas the decision to wage war should be taken only in times of emergencies for the purpose of defence, when it becomes inevitable, and that too at a time when all peaceful strategies

for avoiding confrontation have failed. Peace is desirable in Islam to the greatest possible extent.

Through the Prophet of Islam, God communicated those principles of life by opting for which man may inhabit the abode of eternal peace and security. Through him such teachings were revealed as would turn human society into a peaceful society. The Prophet of Islam presented a complete ideology based on the concept of peace. He was a peace lover to the ultimate extent.

The document prepared by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, President of the Islamic Centre, New Delhi, on the occasion of the International Peace Conference at Switzerland writes:

“Peace is essential for a better way of living peace of mind, peace in the family and peace in nature. Peaceful co-existence is the only way of existence in this world. Solve your problems without creating problems for your fellow human beings. According to the Divine law, you can take from the world whatever will satisfy your need not your greed. Resources may be utilized for the benefit of humanity, but not for purely exploitative purposes. You can make use of nature, but only by maintaining its balance”.

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