

Religious Harmony and Peace: The tool against violence

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Abstract: *We have witnessed tensions and conflicts in societies in the name of religion in past as well as in present. Although every religion teaches as the ultimate reality of life that is God. In this article we have discussed various religious traditions of India. The challenge to us that when people misuse our religious identity how we challenge them. Dialogue is the best means which can persuade the effective spirit of religion in the democracy. Great religion has their historic origins in persons who represented in their life a truth which was not cosmic and unmoral, but human and good. Religion gives us peace and we adopt uniqueness in the shadow of it. The presence of religion gives us strength, voice and permanent structure to humanity to fulfil their desire.*

Key Words: *Practice, Sacrifice, Worship, Rituals, Liberty.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

It is very common to hear about violence and bloodshed in the name of religion. But all religion and their core values always teaches us love and tolerance. The tension in Israel and Palestine between Jews and Muslims, in Ireland between catholic and Protestants and inter-community discord in India poses a greater threat in between us. Great Indian thinkers and ancient Indian philosophy always teaches us the spirit of religious tolerance. India has been defined with pluralistic society in which inter religious tolerance and cooperation existed. Such religious tolerance has given a clear message to contemporary world who are always in a tradition to make countries plugged with such tensions and violence.

2. RELIGION:

Religion is not a theory and doctrine but it is an act of realisation. According to Oxford Dictionary ",the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially personal God or gods, a particular system of faith and worship and a pursuit or interest followed with devotion. According to Encyclopaedia of philosophy there has been some list of traits across diverse cultures.

- Belief in supernatural beings.
- A distinction between sacred and profane objects.
- Ritual acts focused on sacred objects.
- A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the Gods.
- Prayer and other forms of communication with Gods etc.

Numerous issues may be raised in defining religion but only one understands religion as belief in something sacred and prayer and other forms of communication with a supernatural controlling power. Worship is perhaps the most basic element of religion, but moral conduct, right beliefs and participation in religious ceremonies, services and Institutions are also constituent elements of the religious life as practiced by believers and worshippers and as commanded by religious scriptures and sages.

3. INDIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITION:

From historical times India is known for its liberal attitude and tolerant behaviour towards people of different beliefs. Major religion that has been practiced in India Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. The religious practices of Harappan people are first come to our mind when we talk about historical context of religious tradition. The worshiper of supernatural forces and male and female deities have developed religious practices and symbolism. This was later be followed as Rig veda, Yajur veda, Sama veda and Atharva veda and four fold subdivisions in the Samhitas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the upanishads. Rituals and sacrifices makes the important constituent of Vedic religion. The self realisation of upanishads bestowed with dispel ignorance and immorality. Religion has always looking for a search and experience of God, with a higher place of faith. Although Hinduism is based on corpus of vedic text and other religious text like Dharmasutras, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Purana, but the basic tenet of Hinduism confined in the religious tolerance and pluralism that remain unchanged. According to Bhikhu Parekh ", in spite of doctrinal differences and sectarian quarrels, the Hindu

religious tradition succeeded because it places tolerance at the centre of morality and religion, and avoids the all too familiar monistic disputes about which way of life is the best and imposed on others.

Against the rituals and brahminical authority both Jainism and Buddhism originated in India around sixth century B.C. The consequence of such change is because of change in polity and society. The perfection of character and devotion to virtues is the code of Buddhism. The relief from all forms of discontent and reality of human suffering are the central teachings of Buddha. Islam which emerged in west Asia and incurse in northern and central India in 11th century gradually increases in whole of the country. Quran regards that all creators are the family of one God. Sikhism founded by Guru Nanak based on monotheistic teachings having no scope for the worship of any deity or human teacher. Equality, good action and having no boundaries between colour, caste and creed are his basic teachings.

India having home of various religious traditions on fundamental level recognizes essential unity among all and respect to all. The concept of universal brotherhood are reciprocated through this. Religions failing to understand and appreciate the principle of tolerance and co existence witnessed religious conflicts that causes great human suffering.

4. INDIAN THINKERS ON RELIGIOUS HARMONY:

Due to tensions prevailed in our society in terms of religion the concern over religious tolerance and harmony are expressed many times in our society. Ancient Indian ruler Ashoka and religious policies of Akbar has preached the merit of religious harmony. Rock edict XII of Ashoka mentions that faith of others deserves to be honoured for one reason or another. To make services of one's own faith and at the same time performs a goodwill and services to another is the religious tolerance that recognises duty on account of religion. On World parliament of religion in 1893 at America Swami Vivekananda said that "I am proud to represent that nation which are believer of both the tolerance and universal acceptance. India since very long do not follow only follow universal tolerance but accept all religions as true.

Mahatma Gandhi said ones that "I feel Hinduism with its faults and limitations". He said the music of Gita or the Ramayana by Tulsidas makes him elates so much. Hinduism makes room for the worship of all the prophets of the world. It has absorbed many tribes by its evolutionary imperceptible character. Hinduism makes liberty to worship God according to one's own faith or dharma and this makes it to live in peace with all other religion. Dr S Radhakrishnan in his Hindu view of life wrote ",while fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets no such limits.

Indian religious traditions make core of spirit of tolerance from the very beginning. If we look back towards ancient Indian religious traditions we find that the days of brahminical religion dominated by ritualism and priest craft, there was also tolerance for understanding the dissenting religious thought. Otherwise it could be very difficult and no one challenged the vedic ritualism and practices of casteism. The Charvaka or school of materialism didn't believe in rebirth and transmigration of soul. Kasyapa and Katyayana like teachers raises the question on role of Karma on the soul. Modern period witnesses Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Ramkrishna Paramhans and many others who were critical towards certain aspects of Hinduism. Indian religious traditions raises the virtue of secularism which give space to individual according to their belief and conviction. Gandhi recognizes secularism as 'Sarva Dharma Sambhav'.

5. RELIGIOUS HARMONY AND PEACE:

Liberalisation and globalisation cutting regional, religious and other boundaries and industrialisation and other economic liberty makes communities closer to each other. The world is full of pluralistic and multicultural character. The cultural diversity has contributed with new ideas and beliefs. India has been multi religious society since centuries ago. In his essay "Tagore and his India" Amartya Sen argued that we did not see the contemporary world having clash of civilization as Muslim civilisation, Hindu civilization and the western civilization. Rabindranath Tagore argued that his family is confined of three cultures i.e.; Hindu, Mohammedan and British. The reasoning and freedom we found in the writings of Tagore helps us to understand various tradition and non sectarian outlook. But we still fail to achieve the greatness in the religion of others.

Mahatma Gandhi who are always stood for religious tolerance became victim of inter religious violence. Religious diversity makes crucial social and political conflicts in the past as well as in present. But it does not drive us away from religion. Like other identities as national, linguistic, caste, gender etc religion is also among them. Even though in the same religion the differences among its believer on various issues should be different. Bangladeshi Muslims always felt oppressed under the non Bengali Muslims. The conclusion is that when people of different or same religion makes disharmony or engage in conflict we should not blame religion for that but because of different ethical and moral values every human identity are different. People of different race and religion from the time being lived happily together. Therefore the religious fundamentalism are the curse for our society and this could not hampered through violence but through peace.

To make the prosperity and peace among masses we should not always tried to suppress the voices of fundamentalist but we must opt for dialogue with them. The civil liberties of ordinary citizens are costly and 21st century regards with the dialogue among all, to make them better understanding in between true and false.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. Peace among religious unity are the need of sound society. Peace is something that everyone wants but no one know how to achieve it successfully. Religion has significant role in the development of peace. Scholars credited religion in the promotion of peace at different points in history. But recent ages have seen a tremendous threat by religious identity by agglomeration of fundamentalist affairs by some groups and countries. Violence as a necessary cost also act as a religious actors and movements. So it is time to cut edge such involvement of conflict in the name of religion.

The coexistence and dialogue are the principles of religion as well as for peace. Promoting this virtue is very common in every major religion. Both religion and conflict are driver for peace. Also religious groups and NGOs have increasingly active in making harmony and peace building. Religious universities developed peace building groups that are active in making solutions of ongoing conflicts. It is our primary concern to evolve the basic principles of religion that makes some directions to society and makes graveyard for those which are barriers for civilization. The core concern of every religion is that human kind helps every individual and realise the well being and ultimate truth of human life. It is a duty for each and every individual that to create discord in the society so that in the long run harmony prevails over conflict. We have to raise our voice against the misuse of religion and allow people to live according to their respective belief.

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