

WORLD PEACE THROUGH ANCIENT INDIAN WISDOM

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The world is heavily marching ahead in 21st Century but the peace of the world is still standing at a cross road. Conflicts between nations are growing. Humanity has been living under the shadow of a nuclear holocaust. The efforts to impose ban on the use of nuclear weapons have failed.

In fact we have two kinds of ways in front of us for achieving the world peace. One is bringing peace by infrastructural development which is possible through science and scientific progress and various facilities and heavy constructions for the sake of well being of mankind and the other way is giving importance to inner peace following the advice of our ancestors.

Materialistic development is needed but, but today's science and scientists have failed to bring peace in the world. Unfortunately science is being utilised for manufacturing nuclear weapons and other destructive arms resulting from the misuse of scientific energy. In fact since the discovery of atomic disintegration and of the endless chain reaction in the atom, the whole human world has been living under the threat of death.

Therefore it is not wise to say that only through the materialistic development peace can be possible. On the other hand, our ancient cultural wisdom including the Indian wisdom has showed to mankind the way for the new world peace and world prosperity. From the dawn of human civilization, India has projected the lofty ideals of cosmic and Universal peace. Vedas advised us to be peaceful in daily life. They have elaborated the benefits of Universal brotherhood and explained to us how to achieve the peaceful life. Jawaharlal Nehru once remarked that all technological and scientific progress of the world, unless it is balanced by some kind of moral standards and ethical values, was likely to lead us to destruction.

The ancient Indian literature explains that a happy and contented life cannot be achieved if we waste our time and energy in conflicts. If we have to achieve the peaceful life we have to at first renounce all kinds of conflicts. Once we are free from such conflicts, peace will jump into our lives.

Upanishads, in which the ancient wisdom is preserved, proclaim to have the "Sama dr̥ṣṭhi" (Self Same-ness) and universal well-being. Bhagavad Gita clearly says that "how can there be happiness to one who is not peaceful within himself (ashantasya kutah sukham?)

There cannot be a transcendental intelligence to one who is not connected to God. There is neither be transcendental intelligence, nor steady-mind, without which there is no possibility of peace and how can there be happiness without peace. One whose senses are restrained from their objects is certainly of steady intelligence.

Our ancient Indian Literature always maintained that human happiness doesn't depend upon the satisfaction of only physical appetites and physical passions or through the acquisition of material wealth. Worldly pleasures cannot give peace to the mankind. Even if human beings have

all kinds of worldly pleasures they cannot still be happy and peaceful if their minds are constantly obsessed with anxiety and hatred which rise disturbance instead of peace.

In fact ancient sages have realised that peace is an important necessity for all human beings. They realized that peace is the ultimate objective of all existence in the world. Peace is the necessary and essential requirement for any society for a sustainable growth and development. Individual peace heads to the world peace gradually and steadily. In Hindu scriptures Gods are described to be the embodiments of peace where there is peace there live Gods. Lord Vishnu had been described as an Embodiment of peace. (shantakaram bhajaga shayanam, padmanabham suresham etc.) In a society where social or political discrimination is there, there can be peace. Peace exists in a society in which domination, discrimination and deprivation etc. have no place.

Indian literature has been emphasising since the dawn of civilization for the quest of peace and thereby perfection. Rgvedic hymns are replete with prayers for peace. In Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata we can find high appreciation for the peace. Before the commencement of great a war ‘Kurukṣetra’ elders of Kauravas and pāṇḍavas and their teachers have tried for peaceful negotiations. Krishna has made efforts for bringing peace in the kingdom. Epic Mahābhārata in fact wants to show the bad consequence of failure of peace treaties. This epic suggests how every worrier and wise people dies due to war.

Lord Mahāvīra and Buddha both equally lay a great emphasis on peace and non-violence. Buddha says in **Dhammapada (Verses 102 and 103)**

Yo ca gatha satam bhasse
anattapadasamhita
ekam dhammapadam seyyo
yam sutva upasammati.

Yo sahaṣṣam sahaṣṣena
sangame manuse jine
ekamca jeyyamattanam
sa ve sangamajuttamo.

(Better than the recitation of a hundred verses that are senseless and unconnected with the realization of Nibbana, is the recitation of a single verse of the Teaching (Dhamma), if on hearing it one is calmed. (Verse 102)

A man may conquer a million men in battle, but one who conquers himself is, indeed, the greatest of conquerors. (Verse 103)

The famous śāntipāṭha of Vedas (peace prayer) indicates the ancient Indian Vision of peace. The Hymn is as follows:

Which means, “may there be peace and prosperity in outer and inner space, on the earth in the waters, in the herbs in the large forest trees, in all wise men, in entire cosmos, in the supreme reality and everywhere in all times, there may be peace, may every one experience peace for ever, may there be peace, peace, Peace...

When Vedic seers sang such peace manta, Buddhists and Jains and other ancient Indian teachers too often stress on the importance of peace. Buddha’s five precepts are worth quoting in

this context. They spread mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual tolerance, mutual accommodation and mutual interface both at national and international level.

Thus Indian wisdom always stresses on wholesome peace. They advocated the inner peace which brings external peace gradually. If every individual becomes peaceful then eventually the whole world will become peaceful. In fact the inner peace is the basis for world peace. World peace is the only manifestation of inner peace. World peace is therefore dependent on individual inner peace.

Today whatever conflicts, violence and wars are taking place they are all just frustrate expressions of inner struggle. The real war takes place within an individual human being which gradually transforms to the outer war which we call world war or wars between nations. So the real enemy of peace is within us and not outside. Therefore all Indian scriptures emphasized on the individual peace. They emphasized on self- realization, Self restraint and control of sense organs and more importantly the control of mind. Ultimately it is the mind, which bring the peace to an individual and this individual mental peace leads to the collective cosmic peace. Without realizing this truth, if some modern scholars say that peace can only be possible through gender justice, social justice or community justice. They only see on surface level problems and not tried to understand the true nature of problems.

In 1950s non-aligned protest movement against the possession, proliferation, testing and employment of nuclear weapons gained importance in western European countries. Peace process initiated to negotiate the conflicts between political entities. During the cold War the Soviet Union and China have developed the concept of peaceful co-existence for communist states to coexist with capitalist states. In China it was needed to live harmonious with the regional powers. It was in fact in direct contrast with the theories that two regimes could not live in peace. In 1949 under the leadership of Stalin, the Soviet Union founded the world Peace Council to organize a global peace movement to promote the concept of peaceful co existence internationally.

In ancient Greece the word used for peace is *eiréné*, which means primarily the opposite of war. In ancient Hebrew peace (Shalom) was not only the absence of war, it also mean the well being. In Arabic Language the word ‘salam’ means the ‘peace’ or ‘health’ and this word had been used since the time of the Quran. In the New Testament both the Gospels and the epistles use the Greek word *eirene* for ‘Peace’.

In ancient Indian Literature peace was described as both personal and social. With famous word ‘Śāntiḥ’ (peace) scholars end their Vedic recitations. This word ‘Śāntiḥ’ is repeated thrice showing its importance. Sanskrit word for peace ‘Śāntiḥ’, ‘Śāntiḥ’, ‘Śāntiḥ’ appears at the end of T. S. Eliot’s famous poem “The waste land” which he composed in 1922.

According to Indian wisdom achieving the ultimate liberation is called “Mokṣa” This alone is the genuine way to universal peace. Peace can be achieve thus through the transformation of human beings from bad to good truth to untruth, from mortality to immortality. Social transformation is the establishment of a just social order in a democratic spirit based on freedom, justice and equality. This can ensure the peace free from conflicts not harming the nature around us is another foundation for peaceful living.

Nicholas Roerich was involved throughout his life with the problems of cultural preservation. He came to realize that the cultural heritage of each nation is in essence a world treasure. In his young age in the north of Russia, he unearthed the rare and beautiful ancient artifacts, he realized that the best products of humanity's creative genius were almost always neglected, or even destroyed, by humanity itself. He then made appeals to the Russian government for efforts to maintain and restore these priceless links to the past. According to his opinion the present generation should not forget the peace advice of their ancestors.

Ancient sages of India advocated for the worship of nature for peaceful coexistence only. Thus we have to understand the nature of Indian peace concept. Therefore all human beings have to lead a peaceful life which will open the doors for not only the community and national peace, but it can also lead us to the world peace.

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