



WORLD PEACE CENTRE (ALANDI)
MAEER's MIT, PUNE, INDIA

(UNESCO Chair for Human Rights, Democracy, Peace & Tolerance)



RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES
ARE
TRUE LIFE-GUIDING
SCRIPTURES



Concept, Editing & Presentation by

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World Peace Prayer

ॐ नमोजी आद्या । वेद प्रतिपाद्या । जयजय स्वसंवेद्या । आत्मरूपा ॥१॥
देवा तुंचि गणेशु । सकलार्थ मतिप्रकाशु । म्हणे निवृत्तिदासु । अवधारितो जी ॥२॥

Salutations! To 'OM' ॐ The Ultimate "TRUTH" -
The Ultimate "REALITY" - The Ultimate State of Matter
As enunciated in Vedas!
Salutations! To the self CONSCIOUSNESS! The Pure INTELLIGENCE!
The True "KNOWLEDGE" - The True Nature of the Soul "ATMAN"
O God! Thou art Ganesha! The Illuminator of all Intelligence!
The disciple of Saint Nivriti, says,
Please, pay attention, to my discourse (on Geeta)

गुरुब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः । गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरुवेनमः ॥
Prostrations! Unto "The GURU" - "The TEACHER"
who is BRAHMA, VISHNU and MAHESH;
who in reality is the Supreme Brahman! The Almighty-Incarnate!

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्टे ॥
ॐ शान्तिः । शान्तिः । शान्तिः ॥

'OM' is the "Entirety!" - "The Complete" - "The Whole!"
The Whole has emerged out of the Whole/the Complete!
If the whole is taken out from the whole, what remains is still whole!
'OM' itself is, Peace! Peace! Peace!

हरि ॐ ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वम् । यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् ॥
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः । मा गुधः कस्यस्विद् धनम् ॥
All this whatever exists in the world, is manifested by God!
Hence by renouncing it, Enjoy, covet not wealth which belongs to none!

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं ॥ भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥
"O" Mother Earth and the Entire Cosmos
The adorable luster of GOD - SAVITR! - The SUN !
We contemplate! May that Supreme radiance stimulate our INTELLECT.

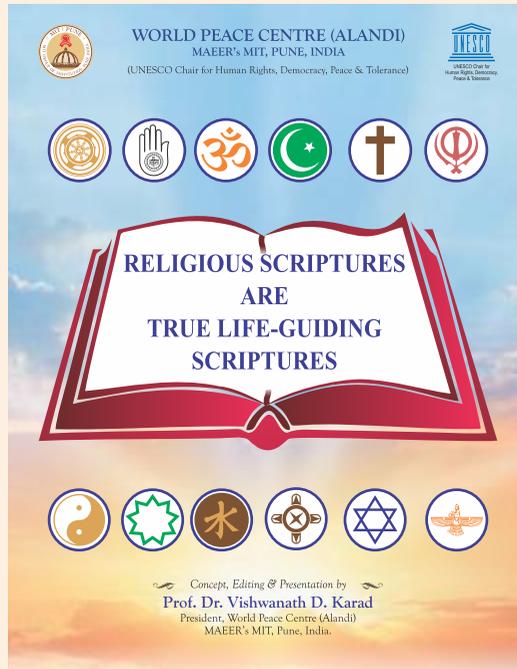
सर्वेऽपि सुखिनः सन्तु । सर्वेऽसन्तु निरामयः सर्वेऽभद्राणि पश्यन्तु । मा कश्चिद् दुःखमाप्नुयात् ॥
May all be happy !
May all be healthy !
May all enjoy prosperity and experience auspiciousness !
May none suffer from grief and sorrow!

द्यौः शान्तिः । अन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः । पृथ्वी शान्तिः । आपः शान्तिः । औषधयः शान्तिः । वनस्पतयः शान्तिः ।
विश्वेदेवाः शान्तिः । ब्रह्म शान्तिः । सर्व शान्तिः । शान्तिरेव शान्तिः । साऽमा शान्तिरेधि ॥१७॥

ॐ शान्तिः । शान्तिः । शान्तिः ।
May Peace Prevail in the Sky !
May Peace Prevail in the Cosmic Space !
May Peace Prevail on Earth !
May Peace Prevail in the Waters !
May Peace Prevail in the Herbs !
May Peace Prevail in the Vegetation/plants !
May Peace prevail in the Lord of the Universe !
May Peace prevail in Brahma - The Creator !
May Peace Prevail with everyone !
May there be nothing but peace everywhere !
Let that Peace Prevail in Me !

(Interpreted by Prof. (Dr.) Vishwanath D. Karad)

RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES ARE TRUE LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURES



Friends,

All the religious scriptures of the world are not meant only for performing religious rituals and blind worship but they are “TRUE LIFE GUIDING SCRIPTURES”, which are based on Scientific Laws of Mother Nature and Life, for establishing a Holistic Peace Loving Global Society.

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Philosopher Saint Shree Dnyaneshwara World Peace Library

Science - Religion/Spirituality

- The ultimate aim of science is to find “Unity”.
- Religion is nothing but to learn.
- Science is both analysis and synthesis and it is based on reasoning and logic.
- All religions are true and equal and they teach the same universal principles of human values such as morality and ethics so as to establish peace and harmony in the society.
- Science provides material comforts and religion provides spiritual or mental comfort (Peace)
- Religion attempts to define the relationship between the individual and the “Ultimate”.
- Science is a two-edged weapon, either it can be used for the welfare and comfort of the human race or for its devastation.
- Religion/spiritualism teaches the methods and practices regarding how to control, minimize and if possible, shun the vices like lust, anger, temptation, greed, jealousy, ego etc.
- All religions lay down the code of conduct for the smooth and harmonious functioning of the society.
- True knowledge of spiritualism with scientific vision only will provide the ethical base for the survival of the mankind in the 21st Century and beyond.
- Where science ends, spiritualism takes over, thus religion and science are complimentary to one another.
- Religion is blind without science, while science is lame without religion.
- Albert Einstein
- No religion teaches hatred, jealousy or disrespect for any one, nor propagates rituals and blind faith, rather, all religious teach love, compassion, reverence and respect for all living beings.
- The eventual ultimate goal of science is to find a unified theory/law to describe the universe.
- Religion is nothing but a constant search and quest to understand the nature/mind of God.

Our Inspiration

Swami Vivekananda

Great Noble Son of India

**“Education is the
manifestation
of the perfection
already in man.”**

**“Religion is nothing but
to perform your duty -
duty towards the mother,
the father, the family the nations
and the whole world.
- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
(World as one family)”**

**“Union of Science and
Religion/Spirituality
alone will bring
Harmony and Peace
to the Humanity”**



From Spirituality...



Philosopher Saint
Shree Dnyaneshwara

दुरितांचे तिमिर जावो । विश्व स्वधर्मसूर्ये पाहो ।
जो जें वांछील तो तें लाहो । प्राणिजात ॥

May the darkness of ignorance disappear
May the Universe see
the Sun of self consciousness
May any aspirations of those be fulfilled
Of all living beings!

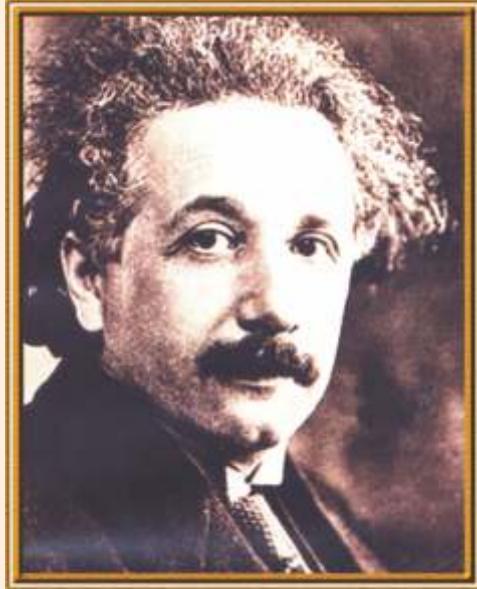


Philosopher Jagadguru
Saint Shree Tukaram

शांतिपरतें नाही सुख । येर अवघेचि दुःख ।।
म्हणुनी शांति धरा । उतराल पैलतीरा ॥

There is no happiness like peace,
everything else leads to sorrow.
As such, follow the path of peace,
which will lead you
to the other bank of happiness.

...to Science



Dr. Albert Einstein

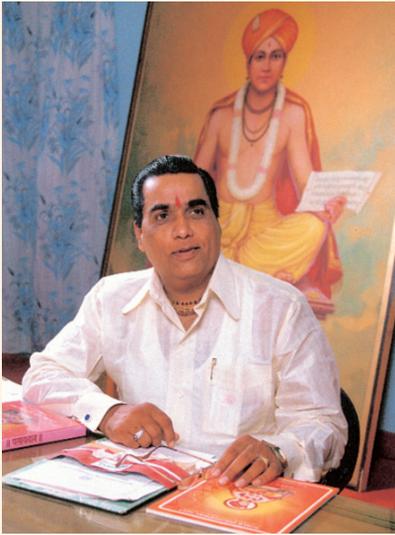
The MAEER Trust identifies itself with
Albert Einstein's assertion
"I believe in God,
who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of
the universe, and I believe that intelligence is
manifested throughout mother nature."

The great saints, sages, seers and
scientists of the world
have always a common goal i.e.
'Welfare of the entire Humanity'.

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PREAMBLE



Prof. Dr. Vishwanath D. Karad

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Friends,

It was due to my own inner urge or passion in my heart and mind and the fire in my belly that I became highly sensitive and emotional about the situation prevailing in the world of chaos, confusion, conflict, bloodshed, massacre, terrorism and wars over trifle issues like boundaries of nations etc right from my young age of about 16-17 years.

Particularly, I was feeling deeply hurt and felt great pain that in spite of the of the fact that the world had been experiencing mind-boggling scientific and industrial developments like Artificial Intelligence, Internet, IT, journey to the outer space and enjoying possibly the most

luxurious and materialistic pleasures and various other sources of enjoyment available around us, on the other hand, there was so much of anger, hatred, jealousy, envy, violence, misery, sorrow and suffering all over the world.

As I grew up in years and set off in pursuit of my education in the field of Engineering Sciences and started realizing and appropriately

understanding the values of religiosity and spirituality in life, because of my family background of Warkari/Vaishnavite Tradition, I started pondering deeply upon the true essence and philosophy of not just the Hindu Religion, but about all the other major religions of the world like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism, Taoism etc. I realized that religion is a way of life, based on time-tested values, and that all the religions are pious in nature and preach the same basic philosophy and convey the same message of love, ethics, morality, respect for others, sacrifice, reverence and compassion to lead a happy, contented and peaceful life for the establishment of a Holistic Society.

Friends, I have been greatly influenced by the profound philosophy enunciated by **Philosopher Saint Shri Dnyaneshwara and Philosopher Saint Shri Jagadguru Tukaram Maharaj** through their Holy Scriptures viz. **Dnyaneshwari and Gatha**, which are based on the ancient Indian Scriptures like the Four Vedas and Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, which do not ascribe to any particular religion and definitely not to Hindu Religion. **On the contrary, they speak about the principles and scientific laws of Mother Nature and Life and relationship between Knowledge, Science, Religion and Spirituality.**

Further, I would like to emphatically state that the **Great Noble Son of India, Swami Vivekananda**, has greatly influenced my thinking and my personality and throughout my life I have been trying to follow the words of wisdom spoken by Swamiji that **“Union of Science and Religion/Spirituality alone will bring Harmony and Peace to the entire Mankind”** and bring them to reality in my own way through **Value Based Universal Education System** for establishing the **Culture of Peace** in the whole world.

Friends, I would like to assertively state and appeal to all of you to realize that these above words of wisdom spoken by Swami Vivekananda

are not only restricted to Indians or Hindus, but they are meant for the well-being of the entire humanity going far beyond any caste, creed, religion or boundaries of nations.

It is also worth noting that in almost all the religions of the world, the existence of the invisible force/energy – the Almighty God, is accepted in principle, the forms or the names given may be different. However, there is only one truth that is Almighty God, as said in Bhagwad Geeta:

एकं सत्, विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ।

It is worth noting that the scholarly people from different religions may call their Almighty God as per their own concept in their own language like Ram in Hinduism, Rahim/Allah in Islam, Jesus Christ in Christianity, while even though concept of God as in other religions is not acceptable to Buddhism or Jainism, still Lord Gautam Buddha and Bhagwan Mahavir are supposed to be the ideal Almighty or Supreme Power, while in Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev or Guru Granth Sahib itself, is the supreme Almighty Guru for them.

It is equally true in the case of other religions like Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Taoism, Shintoism etc. that their Supreme Masters or their Gurus have been accepted as the incarnations of the Supreme Power - the Almighty.

Friends, the more one studies the religious scriptures of the world, the more one is convinced that all these scriptures speak about the Scientific Principles or laws of Mother Nature and life and show the pathway to leading a pious, peaceful, happy and contented life.

It is further revealed that these religious scriptures of the world do not merely teach you rituals of worshiping a particular deity/religion. Instead, these scriptures of various religions are actually TRUE LIFE GUIDING SCRIPTURES, which teach us how to lead a healthy, happy and contented life in co-existence with Mother Nature.

Friends, it is said that even the *‘Law of any Nation must run close to the Rule of Life of the People and Rule of the Life of the People, which is made and practiced by the people themselves, must run close to the Laws of Mother Nature’*.

It is equally important to note that these various religions and the religious scriptures came into existence on the basis of words of wisdom and preaching by some Supreme Human Beings, like the Prophets in Islam & Christianity or incarnations of God in other religions like Hinduism etc.

It is highly important and revealing to note that all the religious scriptures of the world religions speak about offering prayers in different forms i.e. Worship and Meditation in Hinduism & Christianity, Namaz in Islam, Vipashyana & Meditation in Buddhism, Prayers in Jainism, recitation of Gurbani in Sikhism, reciting Gatha in Zoroastrianism, reciting the Torah in Judaism and some similar acts of worship/prayer in all other religions of the world to minimize the vices like anger, ego, lust, greed, jealousy, hatred and other bad habits, which ultimately helps to **minimize the disorders and disharmony** in the mind, heart and body of individuals and also the society at large.

Interestingly, the common practice in almost all the religions of the world, as prescribed by their respective religious scriptures is that of **“chanting” (जप)** the name of their own Deity/Almighty God as and when possible, for attaining purity of mind, purity of thought and purity in each and every action in life. We find another practice, which is common in the most of the religions of the world, and that is drawing on the **ROSARY BEADS OR JAPMAAL (जपमाल)**. In Hinduism, it is made of either **RUDRAKSHA** or **TULSI BEADS**, while in other religions it is either made of wood or some other suitable material.

This very practice of offering prayers / worship / meditation etc. clearly shows that almost all the religious scriptures have been trying to educate and train the masses to themselves live happily and peacefully

and let others also live happily and peacefully with love, compassion, respect and reverence towards all the living beings.

Friends, I sincerely feel that after having nurtured all these concepts, ideas and thoughts in my mind for almost 30 to 40 years, it is my humble duty to present these thoughts before the world community with the sincere hope and expectation that you all will appreciate this very **noble concept, essence and philosophy of each religious scripture** and also realize that these **RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES (धर्मग्रंथ)** are, in fact, **TRUE LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURES (जीवनग्रंथ)** for the respective followers of various world religions like:

1. Followers of Holy Bhagwad Geeta	1 Billion Hindus
2. Followers of Holy Quran	1.6 Billion Muslims
3. Followers of Holy Bible	2.2 Billion Christians
4. Followers of Holy Dhammapada/Tripitak	376 Million Buddhists
5. Followers of Holy Agam	4.2 Million Jains.
6. Followers of Holy Avestha	2.6 Million Zoroastrians
7. Followers of Holy Guru Granth Sahib	23 Million Sikhs
8. Followers of Holy Scriptures of Torah	14 Million Judiasm
9. Followers of Holy Scriptures of Shintoism	4 Million
10. Followers of the Holy Scriptures of Baha'i	7 Million Jews
11. Followers of Confucianism	6 Million

There are nearly 1.1 Billion Secular / Non Religions / Agnostic / Atheist people in the world.

Total Population of the World Approx. 7 Billion

(Source – Wikipedia)

Friends, I earnestly appeal and request you to kindly note that each world religion, within itself, has a number of sects like **Vaishnava and Shaiva in Hinduism, Sunnis and Shias in Islam, Catholics and Protestants in Christianity, Mahayan and Heenyan in Buddhism, Shwetambar and Digambar in Jainism, conservative and Orthodox in Judiasm, Nihangs and Naamdharis in Sikhism** etc. Similarly, the world is also divided into nations, based on religions like Christian Countries, Islamic Countries, Buddhist Countries, Hindu Country, Jewish Country etc.

Despite all these differences of caste, creed, religions and boundaries of nations, it is necessary to understand that all the religious scriptures, in which their respective followers have immense faith, teach love, brotherhood, respect, reverence etc. However, at times, one feels that only his own religion is true and superior to others, which many times results in conflicts, clashes, bloodshed and violence.

Friends, I sincerely feel that it is high time now for the scholars, thinkers and philosophers of the respective religions to come together the world over on a common platform, understand the essence and philosophy of not only their own religion as enunciated in their religious scriptures but also those of other religions and show the pathway to the world to co-exist peacefully for the welfare of the entire humanity.

The Genesis of Life

The birth of this infinite and endless universe took place billions of years ago as a result of the **“Big Bang”** of the smallest of the small, but most powerful and energetic particle. Recent scientific studies and investigations have identified this smallest of small but energetic particle of the Universe and it has been named as the **“Higgs-Boson / God Particle”**.

As a result of this **“Big Bang”**, different solar systems, planets, stars, constellations, zodiacs, celestial bodies, etc. have emerged in this

universe. One of these celestial bodies happens to be just like a very small particle of sand lying on the vast seashore, which is our **Planet Earth**. For millions of years after the Big Bang, this newly born planet Earth kept on expanding and contracting repeatedly as a part of the Universe. Over a period of time, the positions and orbits of all the planets, stars, constellation etc. got fixed.

The process of formation of this universe continued for millions of years. During this process, life was created on planet Earth, because of the creation of conducive natural conditions, which included the five elements (**Panchmahabhootas**) viz **Earth** (Prithvi), **Water** (Jal), **Fire** (Agni or Tej), **Air** (Vayu) and **Ether or Space** (Akash). It is believed that after the lapse of considerable time, life emerged on this planet earth in the form of a **single living cell**.

The first known living being was unicellular and this was born first in the water, which is one of the five basic elements. Subsequently, as per the scientific theory of evolution, the first living beings were aquatic (living in water), then the amphibians evolved (living in both water and on land) and lastly terrestrial living beings took birth, which live on the land. In between, there evolved species, which lived in the air. The Human Being is taken to be the last living being to have come up in this process of evolution.

This sequence of evolution is also found in the scriptures propounded in the philosophy of Hinduism in the form of the ten incarnations (Dashavtar) of Lord Vishnu viz. Fish - मत्स्य (aquatic), Tortoise - कूर्म (Amphibian), Boar - बराह (Terrestrial), Narsimha - नारसिंह (half man, half lion - living in forest), Waman - वामन, Parshuram - परशुराम, Ram - राम, Krishna - कृष्ण, Buddha - बुद्ध, Kalki - कल्की (half human, half horse).

The process of evolution of living beings (life) as enunciated in the philosophy of Hinduism may have been even possibly enunciated in other world religions and perhaps in other countries also. We sincerely feel

that possibly, although they may or may not be in the written form, they might still have been in existence as per the philosophies of the respective religions.

Friends, it has been revealed and accepted by the greatest scholars, philosophers, thinkers of the various religions of the world that the evolution of human beings took place by the union of the male and female. As per the philosophy of **Hindu Religion, Purush (male) and Prakriti (female)** are the symbols of **Shiv and Shakti, who are responsible** for the emergence of human race. On the same lines, in **Christianity, Adam and Eve** and in **Islam, Aadam and Havva**, happen to be the original progenitors, from whom the entire human race took birth.

Friends, from the above narration, it is clear that in the process of human evolution, the concept of **Shiv-Shakti (in Hinduism), Adam-Eve (in Christianity) and Aadam-Havva (in Islam)**, are in keeping with the basic principle of male and female (father and mother). **This means, the entire human race is born out of single parents, which is the accepted natural scientific truth.**

Based on the different geographical situations on this earth, evolution of living beings and their growth took place continuously. Out of this process were created various living beings with different forms, shapes, colors and habits. Whether it is the Polar Regions with extreme cold or equatorial regions with extreme heat, the evolution of human race continued in keeping with Mother Nature. With a curious and inquisitive mind, man went on discovering various new things and continued to adapt himself with Mother Nature to lead as much of a happy and comfortable life as possible.

As a result of this, different human groups/colonies following the same lifestyle came in to existence. Based on the lifestyle of these groups/colonies, a number of rules and regulations for leading a peaceful life also came into existence.

Friends, it may be worth noting that even in the primitive stage of evolution of the human race, after the union of male and female, when the child/baby birth took place, the male, looking at the delicate condition of both the new born child and the mother, possibly felt love and compassion towards them and he took the initiative to provide them food, shelter and protection and also help in their upbringing, which possibly became his Sacred/Natural Duty, which possibly is the origin of the concept of Religion as a Duty.

Genesis of World Religions

Basically, the conditions before the dawn of various religions, in spite of being duty bound and propagating good conduct, must have been filled with anarchy, bad conduct, hatred, violence, chaos, inhuman traits, torture, slavery, cruelty, discrimination etc. On the background of such an extreme situation, any way of life which shows the path of happiness, satisfaction and inner peace to all human beings and the society at large is always welcome.

Friends, almost all the world religions emerged and took birth on the background of the horrifying confusion, chaos and anarchy in the human society of that time. Someone who was a great humanitarian with a great vision and foresight, having full realization that some method or way needed to be evolved to save the human race, tried to show the appropriate pathway to minimize this chaos, confusion, bloodshed, anarchy and cruelty.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य, ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानम् सृजाम्यहम् ॥४-७ ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनाम् विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ ४-८ ॥

Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bharata,
And there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I Myself come forth;

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers,
For the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to
age.

As said above, the philosophy and way of life expounded in Holy Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta as well as in other Religious Scriptures like Holy Bible, Holy Quran, Holy Torah, Holy Dhammapada etc on similar lines for the welfare of humanity, happiness, satisfaction, peaceful thoughts etc are identical. The reason behind this is already given above. For example, Bhagwad Geeta has been narrated actually on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Similarly, Quran and Bible and the Ten Commandments given to Moses, came into existence as a result of the then prevalent devastating situations.

Based on the available information, the various religions in the world came into existence as given below -

1. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta** symbolizing **Hinduism (Sanatan/Arya Dharma)** - Nearly 4,000 to 5,000 years ago
2. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Holy Bible** symbolizing **Christianity** - Nearly 2000 years ago
3. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Holy Quran** symbolizing **Islam** - 1,400 years ago
4. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Holy Dhammapada** symbolizing **Buddhism** - 2,500 years ago
5. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Holy Agam** symbolizing **Jainism** - 2,500 years ago
6. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Holy Torah** symbolizing **Judaism** - nearly 5,000 years ago
7. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Holy Avestha** symbolizing **Zoroastrianism** - nearly 3000 years ago

8. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Holy Guru Granth Sahib** symbolizing **Sikhism** - 400 years ago
9. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Taoism** - Nearly 2500 years ago
10. The concept, philosophy and emergence of **Shintoism** - Nearly 2600 years ago

Friends, it is highly essential to understand the very **essence and philosophy of all the world religions**, which are based on the concept of morality, ethics, love, compassion, reverence, respect for others, good conduct, brotherhood, sacrifice etc is enunciated in all these scriptures.

When one looks at the information about the emergence of various religions and their holy scriptures across the world, one needs to seriously contemplate about what must have been the situation existing in those geographical regions before the very birth of the religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Shintoism etc.

Here it is worth noting that in Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta of Hindu Religion, one finds an in-depth discussion ranging from daily duties to be performed by a person to the philosophy of the highest order like Advaita (Non-duality) for the welfare of humanity in general.

Similarly, the Holy Bible advocates a lifestyle based on Love, Compassion and Service. On similar lines, the Holy Quran, as enunciated by Prophet Mohammad, gives the message of Peace and co-existence. Similarly, all the other world scriptures give a similar message of Harmony and Peace for the well-being of the mankind.

We need to understand that basically the concept of 'Dharma' i.e. 'Religion' has been misinterpreted. Instead of treating Religion as one's duty and way of life and equally 'scientific, logical and highly

philosophical’, it has been misinterpreted as **“Rituals and Blind Faith.”**

Friends, over the ages, it has been found that a very few egoistic, selfish, people with lust for power, having completely wrong notions about the concept of “Dharma / Religion” itself because of its misinterpretation, have caused much of the chaos, confusion, violence and bloodshed on this earth throughout its history. Unfortunately, in the present scenario as well, the human race is experiencing a similar phase of violence, perhaps even worse than what it was during the two world wars earlier. Today, there is an increasing amount of suspicion, hatred, intolerance, selfishness and ego seen throughout the world, over trifle and insignificant issues.

Hence, it is necessary that the true essence, philosophy and the very purpose and meaning of religion/dharma should be presented before the world.

Friends, the purpose behind publishing this book **“RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES ARE TRUE LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURES”** is to create an awareness about the fact that all the religious scriptures of various religions are, truly speaking, **True Life Guiding Scriptures**. In fact, all these scriptures are Scientific in their approach and they tell us about how to live a **happy, peaceful, contented life without any hatred towards others, irrespective of caste, creed, race and boundaries of nations**.

Looking at the present scenario, which is full of increasing fanaticism, selfishness, ego, negative attitude and superiority complexes etc, it is essential to convey this message of all these **RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES IN THE FORM OF TRUE LIFE GUIDING SCRIPTURES** to the people all over the world, so that they develop a positive mindset, to establish a **CULTURE OF PEACE** on this precious **PLANET EARTH** of ours.



SHRIMAD BHAGWAD GEETA

Friends, in Indian Culture, Tradition and Philosophy, Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta holds a unique and important place. Traditional Hindu Culture in India considers **Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta as a True Life-Guiding Scripture and a Way of Leading Holistic Life.**

Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, recognized as the Religious Scripture of Hindus, came into existence on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, fought between the Kauravas and Pandavas probably 5000 to 6000 years ago, as a **sermon** given by Lord Shri Krishna, to one of the greatest warriors and archers Arjuna, who was completely confused and feeling dejected when he saw all his brothers, cousins, relatives, kith & kin, elders, Gurus (teachers), mentors and others on either side of the battlefield ready to fight against each other for the kingdom of Hastinapur.

It may be worth noting here that such a situation of confusion and uncertainty arises in the life of every human being under various circumstances, when one is required to face some such dilemmas and uncalled for situations.

Friends, this divine narration - **Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta** by Lord Shrikrishna is not just a religious scripture of the Hindus, but is in fact a **True Life-Guiding Scripture (Jeevan Granth)**, which shows the pathway to lead a pious holistic life. **Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta** truly helps to distinguish between good and evil, virtues and vices, truth and untruth, sacrifice and greed, tolerance and stubbornness, religious co-existence and fundamentalism, traditional time-tested values and quick gains, and further helps to minimize the vices like anger, ego, lust, greed, hatred and jealousy and helps in leading a life full of harmony, happiness and peace.

The entire Philosophy of Geeta is based on the concept of Advaita or Non-duality, which is also the philosophy of Science as demonstrated by the one of the greatest scientists Dr. Albert Einstein through his famous equation $E = mc^2$, which is now being more known and recognized as Aum (ॐ) = $E = mc^2$. It may also be noted that the word “Aum (ॐ) is not confined to only Hinduism, but rather it denotes and symbolizes that invisible Energy or Force that binds the entire universe together and keeps it moving on for billions of years and may continue to do so for an infinite period.

Friends, it is equally pertinent to note that Philosopher Saint Shri Dnyaneshwara, in his divine scripture Dnyaneshwari, which is a commentary on Bhagwad Geeta, makes a very assertive statement that the entire Universe is a manifestation of pure consciousness and intelligence and equally helps to understand the “ultimate reality/truth – the Knowledge Divine”.

It is interesting to note that a scripture like Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, supposed to be the religious book of Hinduism, which actually shows the pathway to a holistic peaceful life, took birth on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, through divine utterances of Lord Shrikrishna, who is a personification of intellect and Knowledge Divine, and who tried his level best to avoid the two warring sides from entering into a devastating battle.

In the entire history of the world, Srimad Bhagwad Geeta is perhaps the only scripture that guides a person on how to act when in a confused and dejected state of mind, even when on the battlefield like that of Kurukshetra. It further guides one about how to perform one's duty and not aspire for any returns (Karmaphal). Due to this, it can rightly be termed as "Jeevan Granth". In fact, Lord Shri Krishna advises Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra to this effect:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारास्ते माफलेषुकदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा तेसङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ २-४७ ॥

Do Your Duty without aspiring for any return.

In the entire universe, every living being from the smallest to the largest, including human beings, has a right to survival, keeping oneself healthy with strong determination, which in turn requires one to struggle and perform one's own duty religiously, the duty towards one's own mother, father, the family, the society, the nation and the entire world at large as per the Universal Message of Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta as enunciated in the following shloka from the Indian Scriptures

मातृ देवो भव । पितृ देवो भव ॥ आचार्य देवो भव । अतिथीदेवो भव ॥

A Great Philosopher Saint of India, Jagadguru Saint Shri Tukaram Maharaj, in his Holy Scripture 'Gatha', which is based on the philosophy of Bhagwad Geeta, very assertively states that if one wants to achieve

complete success in all the fields of life, one's mind should always remain happy and cheerful.

मन करा रे प्रसन्न । सर्व सिद्धींचे कारण ॥

All the ancient Indian Scriptures i.e. four Vedas viz. Rigved, Yajurved, Atharved and Samveda, Sixteen Upanishads, Eighteen Puranas along with Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Brahmasutra, Dnyaneshwari, Gatha, Dasbodh and all other scriptures written by the Great Saints, Sages and Seers of India truly form and constitute the Indian Culture, Traditions and Value Based Time-tested Indian Philosophy of Human Life.

In Indian Culture & Traditions, there are a number of Life-Guiding Scriptures, which really help in attaining real joy, happiness, satisfaction and inner peace. The scriptures, viz. Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and Geeta help and guide in leading a peaceful, happy and contented life. They also help us in controlling the six vices i.e. envy, lust, anger, ego, greed, jealousy and all other disorders of mind, body, intellect and spirit. This will help in maintaining purity of mind, purity of thought and purity in each and every human action, thereby the followers of all religions will experience Real Happiness and will forget the differences between one and other, which in turn will help in creating a Global Holistic Society. Thus, we find the essence and philosophy of all the Life-Guiding Indian Scriptures in Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta.

Concept of Religion

How the concept of religion has evolved in the human civilization is a subject matter of further discussion with respect to the time of its evolution, the circumstances and the purpose. According to Indian philosophy and tradition, the word “**Religion**” is taken to be **human thought process leading towards the ultimate goal.**

Philosopher Saint Shri Dnyaneshwara, in his 'Bhawarth Deepika' i.e. Shri Dnyaneshwari, which is based on Bhagwad Geeta, says -

हे धर्मजात आघवे। युगायुगी म्यां रक्षावे॥

Here 'Dharmajat' does not reflect any caste, creed or religion but the entire universe. It is my humble duty to practice the Universal Religion, acceptable to the Universal God after meditating and studying about the entire Universe, for ages.

A similar philosophy was put forth by Philosopher Saint Shri JagadguruTukaram Maharaj in his scripture "Gatha", which is also known as "Pancham Ved" (the 5th Veda).

धर्म रक्षावयासाठी । करणेआटी आम्हासी॥

Philosopher Saint Shree Dnyaneshwara says that according to the Indian Tradition, the entire Knowledge Divine and principles are based on scientific thoughts. In Indian Scriptures, it is categorically mentioned that religion is nothing but the principles and laws of Mother Nature and Life, for the peaceful and co-ordinated movement of the entire universe with the living beings. The way of life, which is evolved inadvertently, based on the nature of the earth, water, air, light, space and climatic changes etc. in different parts of the world, may also be termed as Religion.

The good deeds carried out in the different parts of the world for one's own survival based on nature, with healthy mind and body for social well being, cooperation and understanding, may also be termed as religion and it is the real life of human beings.

Friends, one of the greatest gifts of Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta for making the human life truly healthy, happy and cheerful is the Science of Yoga (योगशास्त्र). Yoga is one of the scientifically proven ways of maintaining a healthy mind in a healthy body, which goes beyond

any caste, creed, religion and boundaries of nations and truly helps in experiencing peace and realizing the Ultimate Truth - God. Fortunately, Lord Shrikrishna himself is known as “**Yogeshwar Krishna**” - **Lord of Yoga**. It is interesting to note that Lord Krishna has devoted one entire chapter on Yoga, describing **Dnyanyoga (Yoga of Knowledge Divine)**, **Bhaktiyoga (Yoga of Devotion)** and **Karmayoga (Yoga of Duty)**.

One of the greatest masters of Scientific Yoga Practice, Muni Patanjali has written **Patanjali Yoga Sutra**, the most well-known scripture on Yoga, which is practiced all over the world even today with complete faith in its teachings. **This is yet another indication that Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta is truly A Life Guiding Scripture i.e. Jeevan Granth.**

Here, it is also worth quoting from Philosopher Saint Shree Tukaram Maharaj’s Gatha, the following verse based on the concept of **virtue and vices, good deeds or virtuous acts (Paropkar) that help others and give happiness against evil acts (sin - Paap) that cause misery and disorder in the life of others and the society.**

पुण्य ते परउपकार । पाप ते परपीडा ॥

This, actually, sums up the essence and philosophy of Hindu Religion i.e. the Way of Life.

Friends, Religion is possibly nothing but a way of life of a conglomeration or a group/colony of human beings/people co-existing or living together. The natural and geographic diversity in the different parts of the world also creates differences in the lifestyle of all the living beings. As such, the coming together of living beings having the same lifestyle and thought process, is not decided by any individual but is dictated by Mother Nature. The definition of religion may change from place to place and from one individual to another individual, but what is worth searching

for is, how the basic concept of religion was evolved. It is presumed that the concept of religion came into existence more than 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. In fact, there is no doubt that even before, the concept of religion in the accepted form today i.e. Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrian, Judaism etc., it must have been in existence as a way of life of different groups/colonies of human beings.

The word 'Life' is associated with natural inspiration and intelligence. When we speak of Human Beings, then the word "Human" is associated with intelligence and Being is associated with "Inspiration." Living being is associated with food/diet, sleep, fear and coition as "instincts" in Indian Scriptures. These four basic instincts, which are known as '**Chatushtaya**' are found in all the living beings. In the context of food/diet, based on "**Jivo Jivasya Jivanam**", life continues to take place. Based on the evolution of the Human Life, the food habits went on changing. Also, as per the progression of evolution, human body was endowed with intellect, followed by memory and understanding. The human intellect recalls good and bad memories and within itself creates some rules and regulations of living based on these experiences. A human being lives his life based on these rules and regulations, which later on came to be known as One's Way of Life i.e. "**One's Religion.**"

Ultimately, as per the Philosophy of Geeta, all the laws of life have been evolved to help the human beings to lead a happy, contented and peaceful life. The satisfaction drawn from natural inspiration is temporary but it is the one which is drawn from the blending of Intelligence with Mind and Body, which gives us real inner peace. Control of natural inspirations by intelligence gives real happiness and peace to the human beings. Such a control leads to performance of one's own duty (**Dharmapalan**) and this helps in guiding people about how to behave with one another and live together happily and peacefully as per the words of wisdom spoken by

Lord Shrikrishna in Bhagwad Geeta in the following verse-

अद्वेषा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १३ ॥

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्योमद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १४ ॥

i.e. one who doesn't hate others or causes misery to others, who also has friendship and compassion for others, one who isn't self-centered, one who keeps a balance between happiness and sorrow, one who is forgiving and compassionate and satisfied and one who has oneness (identified) with Me (God), one who has control over his mind, organs and body, one who is mentally strong, such a **Satvasheel (virtuous and devoted person)** is very much dear to Me (God). This Philosophy expounded in the Bhagwad Geeta is true for the entire Humanity as a guiding principle, as to how they should lead a holistic happy and peaceful life.

Lord Shrikrishna, while describing the virtues of intelligence to Arjuna, has said -

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानाम तथापहतचेतसाम ।

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धीसमाधौन विधियते ॥

One who is fully engrossed and merged in the materialistic pleasures and affluence is considered as Rajas (Royal) and Tamas (over-passionate with lust and greed), but one who carries out his duties with full determination deserves Trance (Samadhi) and Salvation (Moksha). How to live a pious life in one's last stages is rightly explained in **Bhagwad Geeta, which makes it a Life Guiding Scripture.**

According to Bhagwad Geeta, religion means one's own duty; towards self, family, society, country and the world at large. This is the

Indian definition of Dharma / Religion i.e. “Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam” - The Entire World Is One Family.

The global concept of word religion has been given in Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta. The Warkari Tradition has full faith in this concept and according to Philosopher Saint Shri Tukaram,

जे जे भेटे भूत। तयासि मानिजे भगवंत।।

i.e. every Living Being that one comes across should be treated as God. This is the real identity of Indian Culture and Philosophy.

According to Bhagwad Geeta, “Worship of virtues is worship of God – The Almighty (सद्गुणांची पूजा हीच ईश्वरपूजा).” According to Indian Culture, Traditions and Philosophy, the concept of God is nothing but worship of Knowledge Divine and search for the Ultimate Reality/Truth. According to the Upanishadas, truth means the Almighty God. To know the truth is to know the Almighty God. One who religiously tries to know the Absolute Truth with full devotion and determination only can realize and experience the Ultimate Truth - Almighty God.

As said in Upanishadas -

सत्त्वेनलभ्यं: तपसा हि एषः आत्मासम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।

अत्तः शरीरेज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रः यं पश्यन्त यतयः क्षीणदोषाः ॥

i.e. one who has avowed to seek the ultimate truth and is able to bear anything for the sake of it and goes in for penance can only identify the Soul, which leads to self-realization. Enlightenment of the highest order and control of senses only can help in identifying the Soul, the spirit, the self-consciousness. An Enlightened Soul is in fact there within our body. One who has gained through deep penance can only visualize the soul.

The concepts of virtue-less and formless God (निर्गुण निराकार) and

God with virtue and form (सगुण साकार) have been thought of in ancient Indian Vedic Culture. While giving the concept of virtuous life, it is said –

ब्रह्मचारीगृहस्थश्चवानप्रस्थोयतिस्तथा।

एतेगृहस्थप्रभवाः चत्वारः पृथगाश्रमाः ।

सर्वेऽपि क्रमशस्त्वेते यथाशास्त्रं निषेविताः ।

यथोक्तकारिणं विप्रनयन्तिपरमां गतिम्।

There are four important stages prescribed in the Indian Scriptures for leading healthy and happy human life viz. Brahmcharya, Grahastha, Vanprastha and Sanyas. One who follows all these stages successively in life as per the scientific norms laid down, experiences happiness of the highest order.

Philosopher Saint Shri Dnyaneshwara, while writing the commentary on Bhagwad Geeta very emphatically says -

ॐ नमोजीआद्या। वेदप्रतिपाद्या। जयजय स्वसंवेद्या। आत्मरूपा॥

That he is writing this scripture of Dnyaneshwari to really understand the Ultimate Reality/Truth of this entire universe, which is enunciated in the Vedas and he begins with salutations to Aum (ॐ)- the Ultimate Truth, the Ultimate Reality, salutation to self-consciousness, the pure intelligence, the True Knowledge Divine and the True Nature of the Soul - Atman.

The ancient (Sanatan) religion has two parts viz. (1) Religious Rituals part & (2) Knowledge part.

The singular thought process adopted by a mass of people can be termed as religion. Religion moulds the mentality of the society. According to Philosopher Saint Shree Dnyaneshwara, a religion based on total devotion should be respected. According to Bhagwad Geeta, Almighty God is infinite and endless and so are all the living beings.

In his commentary on Bhagwad Geeta Saint Shri Dnyaneshwara has further explained the philosophy of Knowledge Divine in the following simple words:

आइकां मग तो श्रीअनंतु। पार्थातें असे म्हणतु॥ पैं गातूं योगयुक्तु। जालासि आतां ॥

मज समग्रातें जाणसी ऐसें । आपुलिया तळहार्तीचें रत्न जैसें॥

तुज ज्ञान सांगेन तैसें । विज्ञानेसीं ॥

एथ विज्ञाने काय करावें।ऐसें घेसी जरी मनोभावें।।तरी पैं आधींजाणावें। तेंचि लागे॥

मग ज्ञानाचियेवेळे।झांकती जाणिवेचे डोळे।।जैसीतीरींनाव न ढळे। टेकलीसांती॥

अर्जुना तथा नाव ज्ञान । येर प्रपंचु हे विज्ञान ॥ तेथ सत्य बुध्दी तेअज्ञान । हेंही जाण ॥

The above verse from Dnyaneshwari reveals that the information and knowledge about everything external to one's soul is the scientific knowledge and the true knowledge about the self or the consciousness the ultimate reality/truth is the real Divine Knowledge. Those who think that the scientific knowledge itself is the true Divine Knowledge then it is their ignorance, however, Lord Krishna Says to Arjuna, "if you think here, what is the need of the scientific knowledge for attaining that Supreme Divine Knowledge, remember that you have to first understand and acquire the Scientific Knowledge, then and then alone you will acquire the True Divine Knowledge. Both these are essential components of True Divine Knowledge required to build the appropriate concepts of morality, ethics and virtues and hence, the character, so as to help in establishing happy, contented holistic peace-loving society."

Friends, realization of the self i.e. Atman is the "True Knowledge Divine (ज्ञान)", the understanding & knowledge about material world is "Science" (विज्ञान) and thinking that the knowledge about material world (प्रपंच ज्ञान) itself is true knowledge is "Ignorance (अज्ञान)." Such a meaningful and realistic definition of knowledge (ज्ञान), science (विज्ञान)

and ignorance (अज्ञान) has been made more than 700 years ago by Philosopher Saint Shri Dnyaneshwara, which is really commendable. In keeping with it, he further says -

सत्य ज्ञानानंत गगनाचे प्रावरण। नाही रूपगुणवर्ण जेथे ॥
तो हारे श्रीहरी पाहिला डोळेभरी। पाहता पाहणे दूरी सारोनिया ॥
ज्ञानदेव म्हणे, ज्योतीची निजज्योती। ते हे उभी मूर्ती विटेवरी ॥

All pervading infinite Knowledge Divine, the only Ultimate Truth, encompassing the entire universe, having no form, no shape or color is “Shree Hari - the God” whom I have personally experienced and intimately seen from very close quarters with my own inner eyes, setting aside the seen and the very act of seeing.

न हि ज्ञानेनसदृशं पवित्रम् इह विद्यते। तत् स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥

He has experienced and seen the very divine light of knowledge in the idol of the Lord Vithoba standing on a brick pedestal for generations together and nothing else in the world is as pure and pious as Divine Knowledge.

श्रद्धावान लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः । ज्ञानं लब्ध्वापरां शान्तिमचिरेण अधिगच्छति ॥

One who is a true believer in the selfless action with a sense of devotion and practices transcendental meditation, can acquire this Divine Knowledge, over a period of time.

A person having full faith and control over his sense organs and is ever ready, acquires the Divine Knowledge. On acquiring this Divine Knowledge, one attains the Supreme State of Peace of Mind, the Bliss.

जेजे उपजे ते नासिजे । नासिजे ते पुनरपि दिसे ॥

This shloka by Saint Dnyaneshwara simply means that whatever is created is destroyed, and whatever is destroyed is recreated. This is

an excellent explanation of the universally accepted law of science (Thermodynamics), that the matter or energy can neither be created nor destroyed; they can only be transformed from one form to another. And the cycle goes on.....

Friends, from the above narration, which is ultimately based on the Philosophy of Dnyaneshwari, reveals that in the world, there is nothing as pious as Knowledge Divine. One who has gathered knowledge about Yoga and fully concentrated his mind will be able to gain the Knowledge Divine of the highest order about the Soul – Pure Self-consciousness (आत्मन) over a period of time.

Philosopher Jagadguru Saint Shri TukaramMaharaj Says –

शांतिपरते नाही सुख। येर अवघेचि दुःख॥
 म्हणुनी शांति धरा। उतराल पैलतीरा॥
 खवळलिया कामक्रोधी।अंगी भरती आधी व्याधी॥
 तुका म्हणे त्रिविधताप। मग जाती आपोआप॥
 म्हणुनी शांति धरा।उतराल पैलतीरा॥

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आहे ऐसा देव वदवावी वाणि। नाही ऐसा मनी अनुभवावा॥

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पाषाणदेव, पाषाणपायरी। पूजा एकावरी पाय ठेवी॥

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अणूरेणू थोकडा। तुका आकाशाएवढा ॥

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i.e. There is no happiness like Peace, everything else leads to sorrow. As such, follow the path of peace, which will lead you to the other bank of happiness.

If lust and anger overtakes, one will be afflicted by various ailments.

Saint Tukaram further says that all sorts of worries and sorrows will vanish, if one follows the path of peace, which will enable one to smoothly sail through this ocean of life.

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Always, one (the wise men) should speak of the very existence of God, the Almighty (which is nothing but invisible force or energy, which binds and steers this universe), though in the inner conscious mind of the self, one should realize that physically He is not.

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Philosopher Saint Shri Tukaram says that, the idol of god is carved out of a stone and step is also carved out from the same stone, while one is worshipped as God and the other is stepped upon.

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Saint Shri Tukaram further says that,

I am the smallest of the smallest of the small particles of this universe, which can encompass the entire universe - meaning thereby, I can take the minutest form - even smaller than a sub-atomic particle, which is most beautiful and Divine, most Energetic and Powerful – in modern scientific terms, it is known as God Particle or Higs -Boson Particle.

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Friends, as narrated above, you will appreciate that almost all the so-called Indian Religious Scriptures are mostly based on the Vedic

Philosophy and Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, which elaborate the scientific principles and laws of Mother Nature and Life for the wellbeing of the entire mankind.

Particularly, it is worth mentioning that starting from the ancient religious texts / scriptures written by Ved Vyasa, Vasishtha, Gautam, Kashyap, Kapil, Atri to Purandardas, Kanakdas, Saint Kabir, Saint Mirabai and others reveal the True Essence and Philosophy of Human Life and show the pathway, how to lead a holistic peaceful life.

As per the philosophy of Bhagwad Geeta, truth is one and ultimate. There is no difference between truth of science and spirituality. There is a common element in the science of happiness and happiness in science and as such super human experiences in science and spirituality are two sides of the same coin and it is worth noting that Holy Bible, Holy Quran, Holy Geeta, Holy Dhammapada and all other scriptures of world religions speak simultaneously about war as well as peace.

The Present Global Scenario of Science, Spirituality/Religion and World Peace

Friends, you are well aware that the entire world is passing through a tense and chaotic stage, even worse than what was experienced during the two world wars. The present one is also a war, war between good and evil, sacrifice and greed, virtues and vices, tolerance and stubbornness, religious co-existence and fundamentalism, traditional time-tested values and quick gains and ego, and so on. The various issues involved are not only local i.e. restricted to one's own country, but are global as well. The world is witnessing mind-boggling scientific and industrial developments like artificial intelligence, Internet, IT, journey to the outer space and what not on one hand and on the other, there is total chaos, confusion, terrorism, bloodshed and massacre in the name of caste, creed, race, religion and

boundaries of nation. The family system, which is vital for the survival of the mankind, is on the rocks.

The industrialized society should have helped in preserving the human values apart from providing the materialistic gains, and achieve sustainable development. Even though the present scientific innovations and technological advancements have converted this world of ours into a global village on the face of it, but the hearts and minds have drifted far apart with deep valleys and barriers being created between man and man, one nation and the other, one religion and the other, and between different races, castes and communities.

It is worth noting that in spite of the fact, all the world religions teach principles of Ethics, Morality, Love, Affection, Compassion, Reverence, Respect for others, still very unfortunately possibly because of the ignorance, ego and some ulterior selfish motives, there have been clashes and conflicts are going on in the name of Religion, caste, creed and the trifle issues of boundaries of nations.

Srimad Bhagwad Geeta lays great emphasis on true love, affection, faith and loyalty between the husband and the wife, which is most essential for an everlasting family system as propagated by Hinduism for a peace loving and holistic society.

It is again because of the erosion of the time-tested value system, we have forgotten our ethos, culture and traditions. The human spirit and approach is missing. The most unfortunate part of it is that this is taking place with a highly developed education system carefully devised by the great thinkers, philosophers, academicians, scholars and scientists. The values of bygone era, which helped this planet earth to sustain over the ages, are missing. Once the value system is missing, then there is no difference between human beings and other living beings. The future will

depend upon the decisions and actions we will take today. It could be either peace, tranquility and prosperity or global conflict, disaster and destruction with the survival of human race at stake.

In some of the so-called advanced countries, because of collapse of the **Family System**, the school children are starving for the Love and Affection from their parents, which unfortunately is missing. As a result, they are suffering quite a lot because of the failure of the present Education System, which is devoid of any human values like Love, Affection, Compassion, Reverence and Respect for Elders, particularly parents because of the missing component of appropriate understanding of the Role of Science, Spirituality/Religious Aspect in our life.

Friends, looking at the present scenario all over the world, it is imperative that we carry out introspection, search where we have gone wrong, and decide about the measures, which can help in setting the things right. It requires sincere efforts and firm action by all the right thinking people without any further loss of time. Any further delay will make the process irreversible and whatever rot has set in will get perpetuated.

Friends, the only way to get rid of this deteriorating situation of chaos, confusion and bloodshed and massacre taking place, possibly in the name of trifle issues of caste, creed, religion and boundaries of nations, it is highly essential and inevitable for the learned people of various religions **to understand the true essence and philosophy of all the world religions**. Particularly, scholarly people, who are involved in **Educating and Training** the masses about their religious holy scriptures like **Geeta, Bible, Quran, Dhammapada, Guru Granth Sahib, Torah, Agam etc.** should initiate the interfaith and inter-religious dialogue and understand each other to promote the Culture of Peace all over the world.

As enunciated by the Great Noble Son of India **Swami Vivekananda**,

“Education is a manifestation of pure intelligence” & “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man”, and is obviously closely related with the proper understanding of the **Role of Science and Spirituality/Religion for the well-being of the Mankind.**

As discussed above, it will be revealed that most of the clashes, conflicts and even wars, the highest bloodshed and massacre in the present world, are taking place in the name of caste, creed, religion for want of proper understanding of the scientific principles and laws of Mother Nature and life behind the concept of World Religions.

As such there should be a change in the mental setup from time to time i.e. people should come together forgetting their differences to lead a happy and contented life. According to laws of Mother Nature, changes in the human life are mandatory. Those who do not change with time get destroyed, this is the nature’s law. Change is nature’s perpetual law, whether it is animal or human being. If there is no change according to nature’s laws then destruction is inevitable. If we do not change with time and understand the appropriate principles and laws of nature and life and the aspects of the development of human intelligence through sciences like I.T, Computers, Artificial Intelligence, etc. then such a group of world community will lag behind and in the long run they will create hurdles for themselves and the society at large in promoting the Culture of Peace in the world.

Friends, it may also be noted that in the history of every religion, one will find reference to war, in fact, most of the destruction, bloodshed and massacre is around the concept of **“Dharma” i.e. Religion.** This has prompted Gautam Buddha and Bhagwan Mahavir to take up the cause of Ahimsa – Non-Violence and Peace.

Friends, as per the Indian Culture, Tradition and Philosophy based on

all the ancient Indian Scriptures like Vedic Literature and Bhagwad Geeta one of the finest prayers for the noble cause of World Peace is as follows –

सर्वेऽपि सुखिनः सन्तु । सर्वे सन्तु निरामयः ॥

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु । मा कश्चिद्दुःखमाप्नुयात् ॥

द्यौः शान्तिः। अन्तरिक्षशान्तिः ॥ पृथ्वीशान्तिः । आपः शान्तिः॥

औषधयः शान्तिः। वनस्पतयः शान्तिः॥ विश्वेदेवाः शान्तिः। ब्रह्म शान्तिः॥

सर्व शान्तिः। शान्तिरेवशान्तिः। साऽमा शान्तिरेधि॥

ॐ शान्तिः। शान्तिः। शान्तिः॥

The summary of this entire text is that the Holy Scriptures of all the world religions are basically truly life-guiding scriptures, as they guide all the human beings how to lead a holistic, peaceful and contented life. If we are able to successfully demonstrate to the world that the Holy Scriptures are Truly Life-Guiding Scriptures, then the pathway of the Harmony and Peace will become much easier and the prophecy of the great noble son of India **Swami Vivekananda that, Union of Science and Spirituality/ Religion alone will bring Harmony and Peace to entire Mankind, will come true.**

- Dr. Sanjay Upadhye

Executive Director, Vishwa Shanti Sangh
MAEER's MIT, Pune, India

Friends, let us be true partners and join hands together to work incessantly and learn to devote all our resources, strength and energy for the well-being of all the living beings and respect for life on the earth and try to develop a culture of tolerance, universal brotherhood and peace based on the Philosophy of Bhagwad Geeta and Ancient Vedic Literature as seen from the following verse of Atharva Veda.

FELLOWSHIP

We are the birds of the same nest

We may wear different skins

We may speak different tongues

We may believe in different religions

We may belong to different cultures

Yet, we share the same home, Earth

Born on the same planet

Covered by the same skies

Gazing at the same stars

Breathing the same air

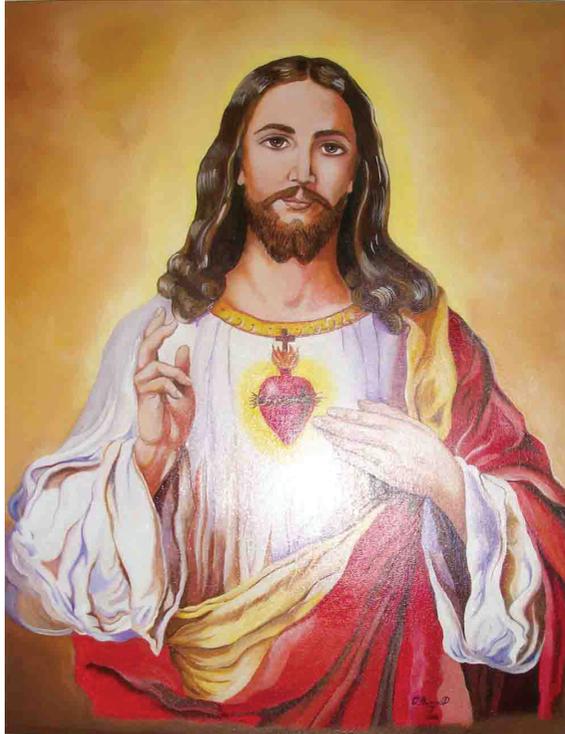
We must learn to progress together

Or, miserably perish together

For a person can live individually

But, can only survive collectively

- Atharva Veda.



HOLY BIBLE - TRUE GUIDING LIGHT FOR HOLISTIC LIVING

True light embedded in word of God offers perfect peace, hope for the hopeless, love for the unloved and faith for the faithless. Every word in the Holy Scriptures is inspired by the Spirit of God. It is not a book, it is not fiction, it is not history, it is inspired word of God. Because, all scriptures is given by inspiration for correction and for edification of the soul. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit is critical for scripture to be valid and transforming. It becomes a lamp unto our feet and light unto our path. It is indeed life transforming, it gives direction, it gives meaning, it gives purpose, it gives salvation. Therefore, it is important to recognize that scripture is the blueprint by God to the human race to receive perfect peace, perfect hope and perfect love. The way it is actualized in

the life of a believer is that it touches us through His amazing grace and affects through His tender mercy. This is unconditional love. What follows is the outline of this transformational dynamic that captures the essence of change.

The inspired scriptures as taught in the Holy word of God impacts life in unique and significant ways. I would like to offer several ways in which it changes the human heart. I believe those who read it and dwell upon its truth will be changed and transformed.

I would like to offer seven interesting ways, it will change your life.

1. Firstly, it changes the way think of ourselves – The Bible teaches us that we are all created in the image of God. This means, we are equal and we are born with special gifts to enrich each others' life.
2. Secondly, it alters the way I relate to others – I treat others as subjects and not as objects. This is because “the other is as important as I am” and it is critical that I treat others with sensitivity and compassion and that is why the Holy Bible says, “Love thy neighbor as thyself.”
3. Thirdly, it transforms the way I look at the world and gives me a better world view. It answers basic questions of life of who am I, why I am here and where I am going.
4. Fourthly, it gives me a clear idea of what I am at the core of my being. This is the most critical thought that comes through scriptures that my heart is above all things deceitful and no one can understand it fully and therefore, it is imperative that I understand who I am before I can begin the change process.
5. Fifthly, the reading of the word of God changes the circumstances and the attitude of everything I experience. For example, suppose tragedy happens in my family, I look upon it positively. This is dif-

difficult but in the infinite understanding of life, one can make sense and see the big picture of what this life is all about, so that's why scriptures says, "all things work together for good that love God." (Romans 8.28)

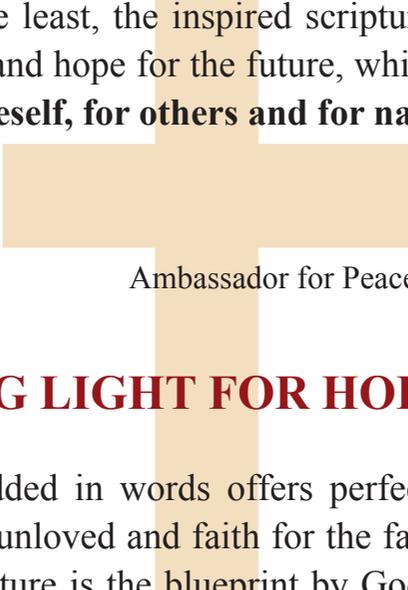
6. Sixthly, it offers evidence of how the power of the world transform the human soul, Dr. Peter Stoner, Former Chairman of Dept. of Mathematics, California, worked with 600 students for several years. He applied the principle of probability to the prophetic word. The conclusions he came to all the claims to the future came to pass, and it was true. For example, the Book of Daniel outlines the world empires in logical sequence beginning from Babylonian Empire to the present day nation states. Every single transition was in perfect harmony with what was affirmed. If you want to read its historical fulfilment, its detailed study will amaze you and make you a better person and prepare you for a greater and brighter future.
7. Lastly, it offers a sense of purpose that is deeper than life. Many times, people who did not seek the world, do not have a sense of purpose. It is critical that men of understanding must constantly interact with the mind of God revealed in inspired scriptures. This brings stability of purpose, which is unparalleled. This change and transformation brings about the integration of the head, heart and the hand, which is the essence of Peace and Harmony within and without.

I believe, that the insights we have gleaned from the inspired scriptures will make all things beautiful in His time.

In conclusion, it is necessary to summarize the true pillars of the Christian Faith, Love, Compassion and Grace as integral to a Holistic Life. Love is the most misunderstood word in modern life. Human Love cannot experience true love because it is conditional, whereas God's Love

is unconditional. That's why he loves everyone with an everlasting Love. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3.16). More importantly, we have been gifted with grace that is free but costly. This grace transforms the way I look at myself others and nature. When grace operates in everyone's life, you are a new person. This is the result of God's Amazing Grace. By Grace you are saved (Eph 2.8).

Lastly but not the least, the inspired scriptures offer unconditional love, peace with God and hope for the future, which is **a life transforming experience for oneself, for others and for nature.**



- **Dr. Edison Samraj**

Ambassador for Peace, UNESCO for South Asia

TRUE GUIDING LIGHT FOR HOLISTIC LIVING

True light embedded in words offers perfect peace, hope for the hopeless, love for the unloved and faith for the faithless. It is important to recognize that scripture is the blueprint by God to the human race to receive perfect peace, perfect hope and perfect love. The way it is actualized in the life of a believer is that it touches us through His amazing grace and affects through His tender mercy. This is unconditional love. What follows is the outline of this transformation dynamic that captures the essence of change. For more details on this, read the document carefully so that it will impact your life for the better.

The Value of Studying the Scripture

The study of the Bible is superior to all other study in strengthening the intellect. What fields of thought the youth may find to explore in the

word of God! The mind may go deeper and still deeper in its research, gathering strength with every effort to comprehend truth; and yet there is an infinity beyond. Those who profess to love God and reverence sacred things, and yet allow the mind to come down to the superficial and unreal, are placing themselves on Satan's ground, and are doing his work. If the young would study the glorious works of God in nature, and His majesty and power as revealed in His word, they would come from every such exercise with faculties quickened and elevated. A vigor would be received, having no kin to arrogance. By a contemplation of the marvels of divine power, the mind will learn that hardest but most useful of all lessons, that human wisdom, unless connected with the Infinite and sanctified by the grace of Christ, is foolishness.

The work of God's dear Son in undertaking to link the created with the Uncreated, the finite with the Infinite in His own divine person, is a subject that may well employ our thoughts for a lifetime. This work of Christ was to confirm the beings of other worlds in their innocence and loyalty, as well as to save the lost and perishing of this world. He opened a way for the disobedient to return to their allegiance to God, while by the same act He placed a safeguard around those who were already pure, that they might not become polluted.

While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise and honor and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan has brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is mediat-

ing in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by His mediatorial work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?

Open the Bible to our youth, draw their attention to its hidden treasures, teach them to search for its jewels of truth, and they will gain a strength of intellect such as the study of all that philosophy embraces could not impart. The grand subjects upon which the Bible treats, the dignified simplicity of its inspired utterances, the elevated themes which it presents to the mind, the light, sharp and clear, from the throne of God, enlightening the understanding, will develop the powers of the mind to an extent that can scarcely be comprehended, and never fully explained.

The Bible presents a boundless field for the imagination, as much higher and more ennobling in character than the superficial creations of the unsanctified intellect as the heavens are higher than the earth. The inspired history of our race is placed in the hands of every individual. All may now begin their research. They may become acquainted with our first parents as they stood in Eden, in holy innocence, enjoying communion with God and sinless angels. They may trace the introduction of sin and its results upon the race, and follow, step by step, down the track of sacred history, as it records the disobedience and impenitence of man and the just retribution for sin.

The Highest Cultural Experience

The reader may hold converse with patriarchs and prophets; he may move through the most inspiring scenes; he may behold Christ, who was Monarch in heaven, equal with God, coming down to humanity, and working out the plan of redemption, breaking off from man the chains where-with Satan had bound him, and making it possible for him to regain his

godlike manhood. Christ taking upon Himself humanity, and preserving the level of man for thirty years, and then making His soul an offering for sin, that man might not be left to perish, is a subject for the deepest thought and the most concentrated study.

Let the mind grasp the stupendous truths of revelation, and it will never be content to employ its powers upon frivolous themes; it will turn with disgust from the trashy literature and idle amusements that are demoralizing the youth of today. Those who have communed with the poets and sages of the Bible, and whose souls have been stirred by the glorious deeds of the heroes of faith, will come from the rich fields of thought far more pure in heart and elevated in mind than if they had been occupied in studying the most celebrated secular authors, or in contemplating and glorifying the exploits of the Pharaohs and Herods and Caesars of the world.

The powers of the youth are mostly dormant, because they do not make the fear of God the beginning of wisdom. The Lord gave Daniel wisdom and knowledge, because he would not be influenced by any power that would interfere with his religious principles. The reason why we have so few men of mind, of stability and solid worth, is that they think to find greatness while disconnecting from Heaven.

God is not feared, and loved, and honored, by the children of men. Religion is not lived out, as well as professed. The Lord can do but little for man, because he is so easily exalted, is so ready to think himself of consequence. God would have us enlarge our capabilities, and avail ourselves of every privilege to unfold, to cultivate, to strengthen the understanding. Man was born for a higher, nobler life than that which he develops. The period of our mortal existence is preparatory to the life which measures with the life of God.

The Impact it makes in our Experience

O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him (Ps. 34:8.) There is evidence that is open to all - the most highly educated, and the most illiterate - the evidence of experience. God invites us to prove for ourselves the reality of His Word, the truth of His promises. He bids us “taste and see that the Lord is good.” Instead of depending upon the word of another, we are to taste for ourselves. . . . And as we draw near to Jesus, and rejoice in the fullness of His love, our doubt and darkness will disappear in the light of His presence.

The Christian knows in whom he has believed. He does not only read the Bible; he experiences the power of its teaching. He has not only heard of Christ's righteousness; he has opened the windows of the soul to the light of the Sun of Righteousness.

Everyone who has passed from death unto life is able to “set to his seal that God is true.” (John 3:33). He can testify, “I needed help, and I found it in Jesus. Every want was supplied, the hunger of my soul was satisfied; and now the Bible is to me the revelation of Jesus Christ. Do you ask why I believe in Jesus? Because He is to me a divine Saviour. Why do I believe the Bible? Because I have found it to be the voice of God to my soul.” We may have the witness in ourselves that the Bible is true, that Christ is the Son of God. We know that we are not following cunningly devised fables.

Let the youth make the Word of God the food of mind and soul.... Thus through faith they will come to know God by an experimental knowledge. They have proved for themselves the reality of His Word, the truth of His promises. They have tasted, and they know that the Lord is good.... It is our privilege to reach higher and still higher for clearer revealings of the character of God.... In His light shall we see light, until mind and heart and soul are transformed into the image of His holiness.

The Secret Power for Change

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word (Ps. 119:9).

It is one thing to treat the Bible as a book of good moral instruction, to be heeded so far as is consistent with the spirit of the times and our position in the world; it is another thing to regard it as it really is - the Word of the living God, the Word that is our life, the Word that is to mold our actions, our words, and our thoughts. To hold God's Word anything less than this is to reject it.

The Word of God is a character-detector, a motive-tester. We are to read this Word with heart and mind open to receive the impressions that God will give. We must not think that the reading of the Word can accomplish that which only He whom the Word reveals, who stands behind the Word, can accomplish. Some are in danger of hastening to the conclusion that because they hold firmly to the doctrines of the truth, they are actually in possession of the blessings which these doctrines declare shall come to the receiver of truth. Many keep the truth in the outer court. Its sacred principles have not a controlling influence over the words, the thoughts, the actions.

In this perilous day of evil, when allurements to vice and corruption are on every hand, let the earnest, heartfelt cry of the young be raised to heaven: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" And may his ears be open and his heart inclined to obey the instruction given in the answer: "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." The only safety for the youth in this age of pollution is to make God their trust. Without divine help they will be unable to control human passions and appetites. In Christ is the very help needed.

Truth must reach down to the deepest recesses of the soul, and cleanse

away everything unlike the spirit of Christ, and the vacuum be supplied by the attributes of His character who was pure and holy and undefiled, that all the springs of the heart may be as flowers, fragrant with perfume, a sweet smelling savor, a savor of life unto life.

Food for Holistic Life

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Luke 4:4.)

The Word of God is to be our spiritual food.

The life of Christ that gives life to the world is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead.

As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the Word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's Word for himself. As we eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the Word for ourselves. . . .

In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. . . . The experiences related in God's Word are to be my experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine.

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. The word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. . . .

The life thus imparted is in like manner sustained. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4) shall man live. The mind, the soul, is built up by that upon which it feeds; and it rests with us to determine upon what it shall be fed. It is within the power of every one to choose the topics that shall occupy the thoughts and shape the character.

Youth, in the name of Jesus I appeal to you whom I shall soon meet around the throne of God, Study your Bible. It will prove to you not only the pillar of cloud by day but the pillar of fire by night. It opens before you a path leading up and still upward, bidding you go forward. The Bible--you do not know its worth! It is a book for the mind, for the heart, for the conscience, the will, and the life. It is the message of God to you, in such simple style that it meets the comprehension of a little child. The Bible - precious Book!

Truth Impacts Life

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63.

Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God's Word. Christ says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." . . . In every command and in every promise of the Word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the Word is receiving the very life and character of God.

By partaking of this Word our spiritual strength is increased; we grow in grace and in a knowledge of the truth. Habits of self-control are formed and strengthened. The infirmities of childhood--fretfulness, willfulness, selfishness, hasty words, passionate acts--disappear, and in their place are developed the graces of Christian manhood and womanhood.

In its power, men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have been transformed into the image of God.

Would you become assimilated to the divine image? . . . Would you

drink of the water which Christ shall give you, which shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life? Would you bear fruit to the glory of God? Would you refresh others? Then with heart hungering for the bread of life, the Word of God, search the Scriptures, and live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Your soul's sanctification and righteousness will result from faith in the Word of God, which leads to obedience of its commands. Let the Word of God be to you as the voice of God instructing you, and saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Isa. 30:21). Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17.)

Scripture Meets Man's Practical Necessities

The truths of the word of God meet man's great practical necessity--the conversion of the soul through faith. These grand principles are not to be thought too pure and holy to be brought into the daily life. They are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity, yet their vital influence is to be woven into human experience. They are to permeate all the great things and all the little things of life.

Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving.

The world regards as a mystery the man who is imbued with this principle. The selfish, money-loving man lives only to secure for himself the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world. He loses the eternal world from his reckoning. But with the follower of Christ these things will not be all-absorbing. For Christ's sake he will labor and deny self, that he may aid in the great work of saving souls who are without Christ and without hope in the world. Such a man the world cannot understand; for he is

keeping in view eternal realities. The love of Christ with its redeeming power has come into the heart. This love masters every other motive, and raises its possessor above the corrupting influence of the world.

The word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our association with every member of the human family. The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, because they appreciate his merits, but because they are Christ's purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God.

The apostle exhorts us, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (Peter 1:15, 16). The grace of Christ is to control the temper and the voice. Its working will be seen in politeness and tender regard shown by brother for brother, in kind, encouraging words. An angel presence is in the home. The life breathes a sweet perfume, which ascends to God as holy incense. Love is manifested in kindness, gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering.

The countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the heart shines out in the faces of those who love Him and keep His commandments. Truth is written there. The sweet peace of heaven is revealed. There is expressed a habitual gentleness, a more than human love.

The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the

coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Through its life-giving power it brings all there is of mind and soul and strength into harmony with the divine life. Man with his human nature becomes a partaker of divinity. Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break forth in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field.”

In ancient times it was customary for men to hide their treasures in the earth. Thefts and robberies were frequent. And whenever there was a change in the ruling power, those who had large possessions were liable to be put under heavy tribute. Moreover the country was in constant danger of invasion by marauding armies. As a consequence, the rich endeavored to preserve their wealth by concealing it, and the earth was looked upon as a safe hiding place. But often the place of concealment was forgotten; death might claim the owner, imprisonment or exile might separate him from his treasure, and the wealth he had taken such pains to preserve was left for the fortunate finder. In Christ’s day it was not uncommon to discover in neglected land old coins and ornaments of gold and silver.

A man hires land to cultivate, and as the oxen plow the soil, buried treasure is unearthed. As the man discovers this treasure, he sees that a fortune is within his reach. Restoring the gold to its hiding place, he returns to his home and sells all that he has, in order to purchase the field containing the treasure. His family and his neighbors think that he is acting like a madman. Looking on the field, they see no value in the neglected soil. But the man knows what he is doing; and when he has a title to the field,

he searches every part of it to find the treasure that he has secured

This parable illustrates the value of the heavenly treasure, and the effort that should be made to secure it. The finder of the treasure in the field was ready to part with all that he had, ready to put forth untiring labor, in order to secure the hidden riches. So the finder of heavenly treasure will count no labor too great and no sacrifice too dear, in order to gain the treasures of truth.

In the parable the field containing the treasure represents the Holy Scriptures. And the gospel is the treasure. The earth itself is not so interlaced with golden veins and filled with precious things as is the word of God.

The treasures of the gospel are said to be hidden. By those who are wise in their own estimation, who are puffed up by the teaching of vain philosophy, the beauty and power and mystery of the plan of redemption are not perceived. Many have eyes, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; they have intellect, but they discern not the hidden treasure.

A man might pass over the place where treasure had been concealed. In dire necessity he might sit down to rest at the foot of a tree, not knowing of the riches hidden at its roots. So it was with the Jews. As a golden treasure, truth had been intrusted to the Hebrew people. The Jewish economy, bearing the signature of Heaven, had been instituted by Christ Himself. In types and symbols the great truths of redemption were veiled. Yet when Christ came, the Jews did not recognize Him to whom all these symbols pointed. They had the word of God in their hands; but the traditions which had been handed down from generation to generation, and the human interpretation of the Scriptures, hid from them the truth as it is in Jesus. The spiritual import of the sacred writings was lost. The treasure house of all knowledge was open to them, but

they knew it not.

God does not conceal His truth from men. By their own course of action they make it obscure to themselves. Christ gave the Jewish people abundant evidence that He was the Messiah; but His teaching called for a decided change in their lives. They saw that if they received Christ, they must give up their cherished maxims and traditions, their selfish, ungodly practices. It required a sacrifice to receive changeless, eternal truth. Therefore they would not admit the most conclusive evidence that God could give to establish faith in Christ. They professed to believe the Old Testament Scriptures, yet they refused to accept the testimony contained therein concerning Christ's life and character. They were afraid of being convinced lest they should be converted and be compelled to give up their preconceived opinions. The treasure of the gospel, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, was among them, but they rejected the greatest gift that Heaven could bestow.

“Among the chief rulers also many believed on Him,” we read; “but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” (John 12:42). They were convinced; they believed Jesus to be the Son of God; but it was not in harmony with their ambitious desires to confess Him. They had not the faith that would have secured for them the heavenly treasure. They were seeking worldly treasure.

And today, men are eagerly seeking for earthly treasure. Their minds are filled with selfish, ambitious thoughts. For the sake of gaining worldly riches, honor, or power, they place the maxims, traditions, and requirements of men above the requirements of God. From them the treasures of His word are hidden.

“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are

spiritually discerned,” (1 Cor. 2:14).

“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Cor. 4:3, 4).

The Saviour saw that men were absorbed in getting gain, and were losing sight of eternal realities. He undertook to correct this evil. He sought to break the infatuating spell that was paralyzing the soul. Lifting up His voice He cried, “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26). He presents before fallen humanity the nobler world they have lost sight of, that they may behold eternal realities. He takes them to the threshold of the Infinite, flushed with the indescribable glory of God, and shows them the treasure there.

The value of this treasure is above gold or silver. The riches of earth's mines cannot compare with it.

“The depth saith, It is not in me;

And the sea saith, It is not with me.

It cannot be gotten for gold,

Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,

With the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

The gold and the crystal cannot equal it;

And the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.

No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls,

For the price of wisdom is above rubies.”

This is the treasure that is found in the Scriptures. The Bible is God's great lesson book, His great educator. The foundation of all true science is contained in the Bible. Every branch of knowledge may be found by searching the word of God. And above all else it contains the science of all sciences, the science of salvation. The Bible is the mine of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

True Education Through Studying

The true higher education is gained by studying and obeying the word of God. But when God's word is laid aside for books that do not lead to God and the kingdom of heaven, the education acquired is a perversion of the name.

There are wonderful truths in nature. The earth, the sea, and the sky are full of truth. They are our teachers. Nature utters her voice in lessons of heavenly wisdom and eternal truth. But fallen man will not understand. Sin has obscured his vision, and he cannot of himself interpret nature without placing it above God. Correct lessons cannot impress the minds of those who reject the word of God. The teaching of nature is by them so perverted that it turns the mind away from the Creator.

By many, man's wisdom is thought to be higher than the wisdom of the divine Teacher, and God's lesson book is looked upon as old-fashioned, stale, and uninteresting. But by those who have been vivified by the Holy Spirit it is not so regarded. They see the priceless treasure, and would sell all to buy the field that contains it. Instead of books containing the suppositions of reputedly great authors, they choose the word of Him who is the greatest author and the greatest teacher the world has ever known, who gave His life for us, that through Him we might have everlasting life.

Satan works on human minds, leading them to think that there is wonderful knowledge to be gained apart from God. By deceptive reason-

ing he led Adam and Eve to doubt God's word, and to supply its place with a theory that led to disobedience. And his sophistry is doing today what it did in Eden. Teachers who mingle the sentiments of infidel authors with the education they are giving, plant in the minds of youth thoughts that will lead to distrust of God and transgression of His law. Little do they know what they are doing. Little do they realize what will be the result of their work.

A student may go through all the grades of the schools and colleges of today. He may devote all his powers to acquiring knowledge. But unless he has a knowledge of God, unless he obeys the laws that govern his being, he will destroy himself. By wrong habits he loses his power of self-appreciation. He loses self-control. He cannot reason correctly about matters that concern him most closely. He is reckless and irrational in his treatment of mind and body. By wrong habits he makes of himself a wreck. Happiness he cannot have; for his neglect to cultivate pure, healthful principles places him under the control of habits that ruin his peace. His years of taxing study are lost, for he has destroyed himself. He has misused his physical and mental powers, and the temple of the body is in ruins. He is ruined for this life and for the life to come. By acquiring earthly knowledge he thought to gain a treasure, but by laying his Bible aside he sacrificed a treasure worth everything else.

The word of God is to be our study. We are to educate our children in the truths found therein. It is an inexhaustible treasure; but men fail to find this treasure because they do not search until it is within their possession. Very many are content with a supposition in regard to the truth. They are content with a surface work, taking for granted that they have all that is essential. They take the sayings of others for truth, being too indolent to put themselves to diligent, earnest labor, represented in the word as digging for hidden treasure. But man's inventions are not only unreliable,

they are dangerous; for they place man where God should be. They place the sayings of men where a “Thus saith the Lord” should be.

Christ is the truth. His words are truth, and they have a deeper significance than appears on the surface. All the sayings of Christ have a value beyond their unpretending appearance. Minds that are quickened by the Holy Spirit will discern the value of these sayings. They will discern the precious gems of truth, though these may be buried treasures.

Human theories and speculations will never lead to an understanding to God’s word. Those who suppose that they understand philosophy think that their explanations are necessary to unlock the treasures of knowledge and to prevent heresies from coming into the church. But it is these explanations that have brought in false theories and heresies. Men have made desperate efforts to explain what they thought to be intricate scriptures; but too often their efforts have only darkened that which they tried to make clear.

The priests and Pharisees thought they were doing great things as teachers by putting their own interpretation upon the word of God, but Christ said of them, “Ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God.” (Mark 12:24). He charged them with the guilt of “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (Mark 7:7). Though they were the teachers of the oracles of God, though they were supposed to understand His word, they were not doers of the word. Satan had blinded their eyes that they should not see its true import.

This is the work of many in our day. Many churches are guilty of this sin. There is danger, great danger, that the supposed wise men of today will repeat the experience of the Jewish teachers. They falsely interpret the divine oracles, and souls are brought into perplexity and shrouded in darkness because of their misconception of divine truth.

The Scriptures need not be read by the dim light of tradition or human speculation. As well might we try to give light to the sun with a torch as to explain the Scriptures by human tradition or imagination. God's holy word needs not the torchlight glimmer of earth to make its glories distinguishable. It is light in itself--the glory of God revealed, and beside it every other light is dim.

But there must be earnest study and close investigation. Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. No earthly blessing can be obtained without earnest, patient, persevering effort. If men attain success in business, they must have a will to do and a faith to look for results. And we cannot expect to gain spiritual knowledge without earnest toil. Those who desire to find the treasures of truth must dig for them as the miner digs for the treasure hidden in the earth. No halfhearted, indifferent work will avail. It is essential for old and young, not only to read God's word, but to study it with wholehearted earnestness, praying and searching for truth as for hidden treasure. Those who do this will be rewarded, for Christ will quicken the understanding.

Our salvation depends on a knowledge of the truth contained in the Scriptures. It is God's will that we should possess this. Search, O search the precious Bible with hungry hearts. Explore God's word as the miner explores the earth to find veins of gold. Never give up the search until you have ascertained your relation to God and His will in regard to you. Christ declared, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." (John 14:13, 14).

Men of piety and talent catch views of eternal realities, but often they fail of understanding, because the things that are seen eclipse the glory of the unseen. He who would seek successfully for the hidden treasure must rise to higher pursuits than the things of this world. His affections and all

His capabilities must be consecrated to the search.

Disobedience has closed the door to a vast amount of knowledge that might have been gained from the Scriptures. Understanding means obedience to God's commandments. The Scriptures are not to be adapted to meet the prejudice and jealousy of men. They can be understood only by those who are humbly seeking for a knowledge of the truth that they may obey it.

Do you ask, What shall I do to be saved? You must lay your preconceived opinions, your hereditary and cultivated ideas, at the door of investigation. If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says. If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God's word.

Faith in Christ as the world's Redeemer calls for an acknowledgment of the enlightened intellect controlled by a heart that can discern and appreciate the heavenly treasure. This faith is inseparable from repentance and transformation of character. To have faith means to find and accept the gospel treasure, with all the obligations which it imposes.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. He may conjecture and imagine, but without the eye of faith he cannot see the treasure. Christ gave His life to secure for us this inestimable treasure; but without regeneration through faith in His blood, there is no remission of sins, no treasure for any perishing soul.

We need the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit in order to discern the truths in God's word. The lovely things of the natural world are not seen

until the sun, dispelling the darkness, floods them with its light. So the treasures in the word of God are not appreciated until they are revealed by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

The Holy Spirit, sent from heaven by the benevolence of infinite love, takes the things of God and reveals them to every soul that has an implicit faith in Christ. By His power the vital truths upon which the salvation of the soul depends are impressed upon the mind, and the way of life is made so plain that none need err therein. As we study the Scriptures, we should pray for the light of God's Holy Spirit to shine upon the word that we may see and appreciate its treasures.

Let none think that there is no more knowledge for them to gain. The depth of human intellect may be measured; the works of human authors may be mastered; but the highest, deepest, broadest flight of the imagination cannot find out God. There is infinity beyond all that we can comprehend. We have seen only the glimmering of divine glory and of the infinitude of knowledge and wisdom; we have, as it were, been working on the surface of the mine, when rich golden ore is beneath the surface, to reward the one who will dig for it. The shaft must be sunk deeper and yet deeper in the mine, and the result will be glorious treasure. Through a correct faith, divine knowledge will become human knowledge.

No one can search the Scriptures in the spirit of Christ without being rewarded. When man is willing to be instructed as a little child, when he submits wholly to God, he will find the truth in His word. If men would be obedient, they would understand the plan of God's government. The heavenly world would open its chambers of grace and glory for exploration. Human beings would be altogether different from what they now are, for by exploring the mines of truth men would be ennobled. The mystery of redemption, the incarnation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice, would not

be as they are now, vague in our minds. They would be not only better understood, but altogether more highly appreciated.

In His prayer to the Father, Christ gave to the world a lesson which should be graven on mind and soul. “This is life eternal,” He said, “that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” (John 17:3). This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe.

This is the knowledge which is obtained by searching the word of God. And this treasure may be found by every soul who will give all to obtain it.

“If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” (Prov. 2:3-5).

Take the word of Christ as your assurance. Has He not invited you to come unto Him? Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressure come, you give evidence of a sickly, enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible. The Lord is rich in resources; He owns the world. Look heavenward in faith. Look to Him who has light and power and efficiency.

There is in genuine faith a buoyancy, a steadfastness of principle, and

a fixedness of purpose that neither time nor toil can weaken. “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isa. 40:30, 31).

There are many who long to help others, but they feel that they have no spiritual strength or light to impart. Let them present their petitions at the throne of grace. Plead for the Holy Spirit. God stands back of every promise He has made. With your Bible in your hands say, I have done as Thou hast said. I present Thy promise, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

We must not only pray in Christ’s name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit “maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Rom. 8:26. Such prayer God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” (Eph. 3:20).

Christ has said, “What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” (Mark 11:24). “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:13). And the beloved John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks with great plainness and assurance: “If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” (1 John 5:14, 15). Then press your petition to the Father in the name of Jesus. God will honor that name.

The rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We have sinned against Him, and are undeserving of His favor; yet He Himself has put into our lips that most wonderful of pleas, “Do not abhor us, for Thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us.” (Jer. 14:21). When we come to him confessing our unworthiness and sin, He has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us.

Like Aaron, who symbolized Christ, our Saviour bears the names of all His people on His heart in the holy place. Our great High Priest remembers all the words by which He has encouraged us to trust. He is ever mindful of His covenant.

All who seek of Him shall find. All who knock will have the door opened to them. The excuse will not be made, Trouble Me not; the door is closed; I do not wish to open it. Never will one be told, I cannot help you. Those who beg at midnight for loaves to feed the hungry souls will be successful.

In the parable, he who asks bread for the stranger, receives “as many as he needeth.” And in what measure will God impart to us that we may impart to others?

“According to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (Eph. 4:7). Angels are watching with intense interest to see how man is dealing with his fellow men. When they see one manifest Christ like sympathy for the erring, they press to his side and bring to his remembrance words to speak that will be as the bread of life to the soul. So “God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19). Your testimony in its genuineness and reality He will make powerful in the power of the life to come. The word of the Lord will be in your mouth as truth and

righteousness.

Personal effort for others should be preceded by much secret prayer; for it requires great wisdom to understand the science of saving souls. Before communicating with men, commune with Christ. At the throne of heavenly grace obtain a preparation for ministering to the people.

Let your heart break for the longing it has for God, for the living God. The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised.

Let the glorious conceptions of God possess your mind. Let your life be knit by hidden links to the life of Jesus. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness is willing to shine in your heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto you, conveying them as a living power into the obedient heart. Christ will lead you to the threshold of the Infinite. You may behold the glory beyond the veil, and reveal to men the sufficiency of Him who everliveth to make intercession for us.

Compiled by
Dr. Edison Samraj

PRAYER

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

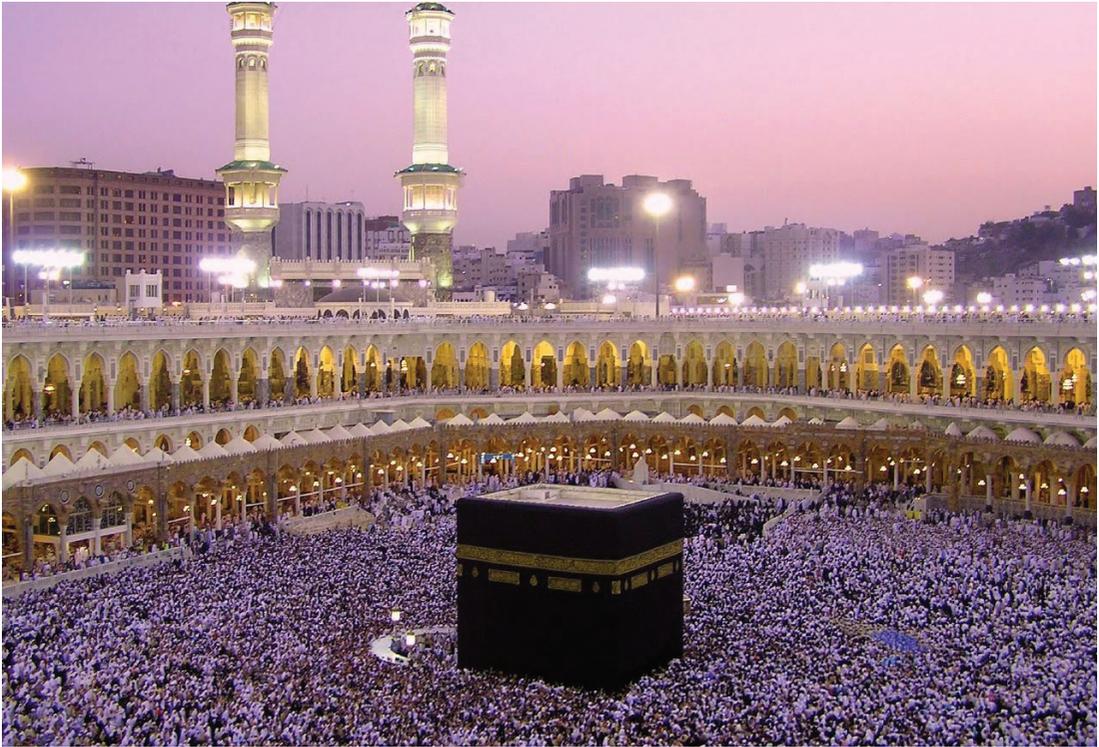
to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

- *St. Francis d'Assisi*



THE HOLY QURAN LIFE'S TRUE GUIDING SCRIPTURE (PART- I)

The word '*Islam*' is not indicative of any caste, creed or any individual. The true meaning of this word is to '*completely submit oneself to God*'. The term '*God*' in Islam is not confined to a nation or a religion. Rather, God belongs to the entire world (*Rabb ul Alameen*)!

The *Holy Quran*, which emanated from the divine utterance of *Prophet Muhammad (SA)*, may seem either religious or spiritual or both, but actually it is more of a guide for leading one's life with purity and devotion. Many scholars feel that the principles like truth, justice, good behaviour, tolerance, equality and others, ascribed to in the Holy Quran, are actually life's guiding principles. If everyone looks at the Holy Scriptures

of all religions like they are actually life guiding scriptures, then it will be an important step towards establishing World *Peace* in the 21st century. ***Dr. S. N. Pathan, Advisor, World Peace Centre (Alandi), MAEER's MIT, Pune, India,*** sheds some light on this aspect of the Holy Quran, through this 2-part dissertation.

FOUNDATION OF ISLAM

The land which gave birth to the Great Prophet Muhammad is known as Arabia. Prophet Muhammad spent his entire life in an effort to establish peace and happiness in the society and the world. Almost a third of Arabia is desert. Little grows in Arabia. Dates are its principle crop, while the camel its major carrier.

The area known as 'HARAM' is considered very holy. No bloodshed has ever happened there. The holy cities of Mecca, Medina and Ta'if lie in this region. Ta'if is considered as the hill station of Arabia. Mecca is the holiest place of Muslims. There are small hillocks around Mecca. Medina lies 270 km north of Mecca. The inhabitants of this land are known as Arabs and are known for their beauty and valour. Handsome horses and swords are considered as the principal wealth of Arabs.

Although Prophet Muhammad worked ceaselessly for social upliftment up to the age of 35 years, he did not derive any peace of mind. He would be extremely disturbed with the anarchy reigning in Arabia of those days. He would be shocked at the moral depravity of the people there. He would constantly think about what he should do to stop this. He would meditate about this problem in a cave on Mount Heera. He would be so immersed in this meditation that he would have no realization if it was night or day outside. This went on for many years. One night, as he was meditating, he had a Divine Vision. He was ordered by God to stop

the anarchy not just in Arabia, but in the entire world. He was stunned by this Vision. He went home and narrated this incident to his wife Khatijabi. Hearing this, Khatijabi exclaimed, “Awake, my Lord! This is a time to rejoice! You have been entrusted with the task of establishing a new world order!” Later, the Divine Utterances of Prophet Muhammad came to light in the form of **Holy Quran**.

MONOTHEISM (ONE GOD) AND BROTHERHOOD:

The first fundamental principle of Islam is that there is only one God. This itself is a revolutionary thought. This promotes warmth amongst fellow human beings and kindles the feeling that we all are the children of but one God and we should treat each other like brothers, be useful to others and try to alleviate the sufferings of others.

“I have created you from one man and woman” – Holy Quran (49:13)

The Holy Quran mentions this again and again. The philosophy of Non-duality (Advaita) makes one broadminded. The fact that God is the Creator of the entire humanity automatically strengthens the profound feeling of serving fellow human beings and being of use to them.

The assertion that Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of God is the latter half of this fundamental principle. Its realization is to imbibe the Divine Teachings of Prophet Muhammad and to tread on the pathway shown by him.

PRAYER (NAMAZ)

The second fundamental principle of Islam is Prayer, termed as Namaz in Arabic. In order to be one with the profound thoughts of God and to remember him at all times, this prayer has to be performed five times daily with regularity and punctuality. This practice also helps to develop the quality of punctuality within human beings, as a person who

prays five times daily with punctuality, automatically adopts punctuality for everything else also. There is no mediator required to perform the prayer or Namaz. There are also no prescribed rituals for this and can be performed at home, in a mosque or even in the open.

If one listens attentively to the verses from the Holy Quran that are recited during the Namaz, one can realize how profound the thoughts expressed in them are. Given below is an example of one such verse, which has to be recited during each prayer.

“O God, please lead us to the path, which is tread by those on whom You have showered Your blessings. Don’t show us that path which leads to evil or of the path of those who have been cursed by You!”

It is necessary that the faithful who performs the Namaz has to be clean thoroughly. This cleanliness pertains not just to the body, but to the mind also. There is a prescribed method of performing this ablution. This is called **Vaju**. A person starts feeling positively fresh and cleansed after performing Vaju.

For a person to feel fresh and cleansed five times during the day is like finding the pathway to good health. Also, if one observes the various actions performed during the Namaz, one finds that it is a fine blend of Yoga and Pranayam. A person who prays five times a day always stays healthy and also reflects the glow of good health on his face. If praying five times a day can grant good health to those who pray, then those who don’t pray are really unfortunate.

FASTING (RAMZAN)

The third fundamental principle of Islam is Ramzan or fasting. This has reference in the Al-Baqarah (The Cow 2:183 - 185) Sura of the Holy Quran. Every Muslim should observe fast for one month

(month of Ramzan) every year. The basic purpose of fasting is cleansing of the inner soul. It is observed so that one does not succumb to evil intentions. While observing the fast, one should ensure that he does not hurt any other person either physically or mentally and does not allow evil thoughts to enter his mind during the period of fasting. It is not compulsory for sick and ailing people, travelers and children to observe fast. By observing the fast, one can realize the pangs of hunger felt by poor and needy people who do not get food regularly. It also helps one to develop love and understanding towards the poor and lead to cleansing of the mind and body. Every faithful Muslim looks forward to the month of Ramzan for the Divine benefits it offers. The benefits of observing the ritual of fasting are so many, that one ultimately feels that the Holy Quran is, in reality, a Life-Guiding Scripture.

CHARITY (ZAKAT)

The fourth fundamental principle of Islam is Charity or Zakat. No rich Muslim should ever feel that his earnings are for him alone. He must realize that orphan children, widows, handicapped and needy also have a right to a part of his earnings. This is mentioned quite clearly in the Sura Al-Baqarah (The Cow 2:3, 43, 83, 110, 177, 277 Al Imran (The Family of Imran 3:85) (See for details: 4:77, 162; 5:12, 55; 6:141; 7:156; 9:5, 11, 18, 71; 19:31, 55; 21:73; 22:41, 78; 23:4; 24:37, 56; 27:3; 30:39; 31:4; 33:33; 41:7; 58:13; 73:20; 98:5 object of zakat and charity, 2:273; 9:60) of the Holy Quran. The liabilities of each person are spelt out quite clearly in the Holy Quran. Each person has to give 1/40 part of his earning to charity. e.g. a person having Rs. 1000/- with him, must donate Rs. 25/- each year to charity. The beneficiaries of this charity are not just the poor, the handicapped and the orphaned but also others who are in need like prisoners, debt-ridden persons etc. Helping them out is also charity, according to the Holy Quran.

When Prophet Muhammad mentioned that it is the sacred duty of every Muslim to do charity, one of his followers asked him, “what about those who have nothing to give?” To this, the Prophet replied, “then he should perform good deeds, because, good deeds are also a form of charity. By performing good deeds, one fulfills one’s religious obligations and provides relief to the needy, which brings happiness to them. On the other hand, one who performs charity actually provides financial relief to the needy and brings happiness to them.” Thus, this form of charity can become a succor for those farmers who are committing suicide due to debts.

PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA (HAJJ)

The fifth fundamental principle of Islam is performing the holy pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). It is a ritual to bring all the Muslims of the world together at a specified time of the year and develop universal brotherhood. The faithful who is performing this pilgrimage should first get rid of all his debts and provide for all those who are dependent on him, like family members and children. Besides this, he should also himself make arrangements for all the expenses that he will incur during the pilgrimage. Before leaving for Hajj, he should also pardon all his enemies with an open heart and if at all he has committed a crime, then he should own up for it before the aggrieved party and befriend him/them. This has been mentioned in complete detail in Sura Al - Hajj (The pilgrimage) of the Holy Quran. (See for detail: 2:158, 196-203; 3:97; 5:2; 22:30)

THE HOLY QURAN AS A LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURE

The purpose of the Hajj is not just to fulfill a religious ritual, but also to follow the path of ethics mentioned in the religious scriptures. These ethical principles should be regarded as religious commandments and

should be followed to the last letter. Islam believes that to nurture ethics within one self is to be one with God. No matter how many times a person prays or performs religious rituals, unless he follows the ethical and moral principles, it is of no use. The true religion lies in behaving ethically and providing for others' needs. These five fundamental principles of Islam thus act like a guiding light to mankind on how to lead an ideal and moral ideal life. Therefore, the Holy Quran is truly a LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURE.

THE HOLY QURAN LIFE'S TRUE GUIDING SCRIPTURE (PART - II)

Islam commands everyone to behave respectfully and amicably towards one's parents as they bear and rear us. The Holy Quran Says:

“And spread over them (one's parents) humbly the wings of thy tenderness, and say: “O my Sustainer! Bestow Thy grace upon them, even as they cherished and reared me when I was a child!”

(Holy Quran 17:24)

We should not hurt our lovely and kind hearted parents. We must behave in a way that will make them feel proud of us. The Messenger of Allah said that it is certainly a way to get Jannat by keeping our parents happy. If our parents abuse us in a fit of anger, we must not answer them back. Instead we must give them due respect and behave gratefully. The Messenger says further:

“One must behave properly with their parents even if they mistreat you”.

One can understand the uniformity imbibed in the teachings of all religions when one notices, as an example, the similarity between the

commandments laid down, as in Islam “There is Heaven in the feet of mother and father is a key that unlocks the door of the Heaven” and as in Hindu “**Matru Devo Bhav! Pitru Devo Bhav**” (Mother and Father are incarnations of God).

CORROBORATION OF GOOD CUSTOMS

If one abides by the teachings of Holy Quran, we will see the sum of all good customs in it.

“Oh, you faithful, do not enter houses other than your own house until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded.”

(Holy Quran 24:27)

The Prophet Mohammed (S.W.) used to get first of all the permission of the head of the family in order to enter his household. On the note of welcome only, he used to enter their house and greet the members of the family.

It is deemed as a duty to exchange greetings at the time of meeting. One must demonstrate one’s empathetic and congenial character by greeting on the occasion of meeting even if it takes place on road, in any function or anywhere, whether be it formal or informal. The meaning of ‘Assalaamu-walaikum’ is to wish peace and happiness to the one being greeted. The one being greeted is also obliged to reply with the same wish. There is a tremendous importance of such behavioural aspects in order to respect, and command respect from others, as well as to produce and promote fine feelings in every one’s mind.

The Messenger of Islam has decreed that one should neither speak arrogantly nor look down upon others while interacting. One should speak politely and in a sweet tone even if we are dealing with our enemy. The

Prophet says, “No rite will cleanse one from the sin of impolite and sinister use of language for others”.

All the religious activities go in vain and fructify into nothing if one speaks in an impolite and abusive language to others. Islam never allows one to perform religious activities to please Allah when we annoy and hurt the fellow people.

HOSPITALITY IS A NOBLE DUTY

In Islam, hospitality is considered a noble duty. We should treat our guests respectfully. We should interact with them decently. These were the teachings of the Prophet to his followers. We should give priority to the comforts of the guests in order to make them feel at home. We should hardly think of ourselves at such a crucial time even if we are undergoing a critical condition. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran (10:69). We should treat our guests respectfully without any discrimination on the basis of caste, class, creed, color or religion. “Ibadat Se Jannat or Khidmat Se Khuda” means the same. Our prayers will give us Jannat but our hospitality will lead us to meet Allah. What else could be the meaning of the Sanskrit saying, “Atithi Devo Bhav”?

SLANDER IS SIN

It is rendered disgraceful in Islam to harm the feelings of others and hurt them by our behavior. It is pejorative in Islam to malign, to blame and defame others unnecessarily. In Islam, those who vilify women are condemned. **(Holy Quran 49:11)** Slander of any form is forbidden at all times in Islam. With reference to this, the Holy Quran reads:

Oh you faithful, let not a man ridicule another man; however he may be better; nor let a woman ridicule another woman. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by offensive names or nicknames. And whoever does not repent - then it is he

who is the wrongdoer.

(Holy Quran 49:11)

COURTESY: A JEWEL OF HUMAN BEING

What can broadly be perceived as the hallmark of refinement and civilized life is nothing but courtesy. The Prophet insisted everyone to adopt it. The Prophet deems it as a virtuous act to teach our children politeness and courtesy.

To give charity is considered next in importance to teaching our children courtesy. Charity is indeed a virtuous act. But civilizing our children is considered more important act than this. Such a project of creating an ideal society taken up by the Prophet during his time can be considered as a precursor of the campaign prevalent in today's world regarding the introduction of value-based education.

BANISHMENT OF SUPERSTITIOUS IDEAS

The Prophet uprooted all the old superstitious beliefs prevalent and powerful in his time. There is no place in Islam for superstitions such as futility or failure in our work due to cat crossing our way or a widow passing by or a bird flying by us from the left side. It is the teaching of the Prophet that clearly proclaims the dissociation of one's omen from one's onus. We must engage ourselves in deeds hoping for good to happen instead of thinking about good or bad omen. He weeded out our reliance on foretellers. There is no fashion of repentance in Islam if we go on sea voyage or we maintain 'Bread-Bride' relationship with inter-caste person. It is meaningless to repent for those actions that are good and suit our conscience. The Prophet has taught us the same.

MARRIAGE: A SACRED DUTY

The Holy Quran mentions in its verse (4:1-4, 20 -24, 34-35; 24:32;

30:21) the importance of marriage as an institution on which depends the stability and development of our life. Hence, marriage is not just a need but it is a sacred duty. The complete Surah (The Women 4) of the Quran addresses it. The love between husband and wife gives birth to love for the child and this love for children produces mutual love among all the inhabitants of the earth. Due to the sanctity of the marriage-act, one's 'house' becomes the educational 'home' of love and service. Working here and wearing out turns into an ecstatic experience. The philanthropic enterprise develops in such homes only. Islam denies the misconceptions such as marriage prevents one from living in communion with God or it mars one's spiritual inclinations. In contrast, marriage contributes and furthers one's spiritual life. The Prophet gave a verdict that the one who marries has half-followed the Islam and embarked himself/herself on perfection.

EVERY RIGHTEOUS ACT IS A VIRTUOUS ACT

Islam appreciates one's good deeds a lot. One is held high or in an esteemed position only on the basis of one's good deeds. In Islam, every righteous act is esteemed as a virtuous act. The one who performs good deeds is held in a high esteem. Only wealth, respect or belonging to aristocratic lineage do not make one to be great. It was taught by the Prophet to perform righteous acts in order to become noble.

“And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good.”

(Holy Quran 02:195)

“If somebody asks a question what is the key is to Heaven, then reply ‘it is to believe in God and perform good deeds’, the Prophet said so to his followers.

THE IDEA OF COSMOPOLITANISM

Islam is the religion of humanity. The professor and scholar Dr. Julius Germanus once said that Islam teaches to accomplish a sense of universal brotherhood by demolishing all the barriers and walls of caste-based-system and guard the weaker factions of the society. And the remarkable thing about Dr. Julius is that he had been a professor in 'Vishwa Bharati', an institute founded by Rabindranth Tagore. Islam started with a lofty and a sublime goal of bettering the lives not only of Muslims but the whole mankind. The whole mankind comes into the family of Islam. It is presumption of Islam to treat all alike and affectionately as one treats one's kith and kin.

“Oh mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another.”

(Holy Quran 49:13)

There are several people of different religions, speaking different languages, having different uniforms. But we all are born from the same (first) parents. So, we believe in no division or discrimination based on class (High-Low), caste (practice of Untouchability) and color (Black-White). 'We all are one and belong to One' is the core message of Islam that taught the mankind a lesson of cosmopolitanism.

ELIMINATION OF SLAVERY

At the time of Roman Empire, there was a custom of slavery. Arabia had been notorious for breeding a large number of slaves. It was a sin to speak with slaves or show sympathy to them. The condition was very bad for the slaves. The slaves used to have a ring around their neck, a mark of binding of his life to the owner. Groups of such slaves were transported from one place to other like cattle. These slaves were provided as subsistence by way of inedible stuff that even a beast would

have disliked. At night, these slaves used to have fetters on their feet. The situation of these slaves – having soul but denied voice, having heart but emasculated, only the tear-drops descending from their eyes were noticeable – made the Prophet to feel compassion for the slaves. The Prophet realized that the society would never prosper without freeing these slaves. Once the Prophet was asked what could be the way to get redemption from the burning fires of Hell. He replied that it would be possible only when these slaves would be freed. When one considers such thoughts then one is compelled to hail the Prophet as Maker of entire mankind. The Prophet decreed that the owner of the slaves must offer some amount of his wealth to them in order to help them start their life afresh and settle down. The slaves were given right to vote. He started to signalize the capability and accomplishment of slaves. In his book, Prof. Har Granz of Lidan University wrote that the practice of slavery would be effaced from the world history based on the Islamic principles. The eradication of slavery (2:177; 4:36, 92; 5:89; 24:33; 58:3; 90:13) is considered the most remarkable accomplishment of the Prophet in the world history. In addition to this, the Prophet got his cousins married to a slave and erased any public doubt and hesitation regarding his message of equality and fraternity. As such, no one maintains any type of segregation in Islam. One can see a king in the mosque performing salaah with a laborer beside him or a master dining with the servant. A rich Muslim marries the daughter even to a poor and a capable Muslim boy. These reforms brought in by the Prophet and the glorious teachings of Holy Quran guide even the contemporary Muslims.

DRINKING IS PROHIBITED

Addiction has the power to foul a society thoroughly. It is the reason why Quran prohibits all addictions. Gambling and drinking had been the major addictions at the time of the Prophet. Molesting women in public

places, desecrating them, prostitution etc were the common scenes taking place on a regular basis. The people were strongly addicted to gambling. It was a nightlong calling of the people. The Prophet stopped gambling that put at stake the family life of thousands. The big and the most difficult addiction to get rid of is drinking. An Arab used to risk his life only to get some drops of alcohol. Wine shops/pubs used to be open nightlong. Holy Quran prohibits drinking alcohol. As per the decree of Quran (2:219; 5:90), drinking is termed as a deadly sin. Several Muslim countries have alienated themselves from alcohol-consumption. It is needless to say more that the glorious command in the Holy Quran has been vital to get rid of the most destructive and heinous addiction of alcohol consumption.

RESPECT FOR WOMEN

Before the birth of Prophet Mohammad, women's plight was far from satisfactory. They had neither respect in society nor rights at home. Woman was considered as a plaything. A girl-child used to be killed. The Quran has convinced us that woman is not an insignificant and/or negligible entity but she is equal in status and a man's better half. So, it is commanded that one should treat woman fairly. In the Surah 'An-Nisa' of the Holy Quran, the noble teaching is laid about how men should behave:

“Oh you faithful, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not create difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good.”

(Holy Quran 04:19)

The Holy Quran clearly gives verdict that one must treat women fairly and not to hate or contempt them. The Prophet says, “According

to me, he is in real sense the best gentleman who behaves kindly with his wife.” Further he says, “Fear Allah and treat your wife fairly, your wife is your only helper. You have accepted her in the name of Allah.”

HEAVEN LIES AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER

Even the intimate friends, companions, close ones and kith and kin leave when one is in trouble but the one who does not leave in a crisis, partakes in his ups and downs, encourages him and forgets her own existence in order to hold him at the top is none but his Mother. Hence, the Prophet says,

“There is Heaven at the feet of Mother”

One can understand how high a woman is held by the Prophet who wishes good of child being mother, of a man being wife, of an old being daughter. That is the reason why it is invalid to say that Islam imprisons women within the four walls of a house. In reverse, we get the evidence of women praying in the mosque at the time of the Prophet. These women used to help their husbands tilling the land. They used to trade independently on their own. They used to fight with weapon in the battlefield, to provide ammunition to the soldiers and to nurse the injured ones. Besides these, the Prophet taught the women to spend most of their time with their family and to influence their children particularly by wearing decent uniform.

The Messenger not only respected women but also uplifted their status by granting equal rights to them.

RIGHTS OF WOMEN ARE SACRED

The Prophet did respect women. In addition to it, he championed the rights of women and uplifted their societal position by admitting equal rights.

Men have no right to trample the rights of women. Further, the

Prophet awakened the masses about the sanctity of the women's rights.

COMPLETE FREEDOM TO WOMEN

REGARDING MARITAL LIFE

The Prophet gave complete freedom to women regarding matrimony. No parents can forcibly and without the consent of their daughters make them marry. Even if you conspire to marry your daughter without her consent, the marriage ceremony does not take place before the approval of the bride. If a woman rejects her groom on the very day of her marriage, the marriage cancels. A bride conditions an amount before her marriage takes place that has to be handed over to her by the groom or his family. That is called 'Meher'. If she is forsaken in the course of time after her marriage, the same amount helps her as subsistence after divorce. Once divorce takes place, the man is bound to hand over the amount. A daughter can ask for her share in her father's property and she is liable for equal share in the property as a son is assumed. Such property is solely the property of the daughter. Even her husband as well cannot claim or intervene in it. Even today when one sees a woman fighting for her rights then one is reminded of the past 1500 years, where such rights were acknowledged in the Holy Quran.

DIVORCE IS A VERY PRIVATE MATTER

Men have been given the right to divorce. But this has to be strictly as per the commandments mentioned in the Holy Quran. Divorce is considered as not a public matter but as a very personal one. The Holy Quran forbids running to judiciary system and to demand divorce by shamelessly humiliating and insulting women in the garb of reasons behind the divorce. The divorce is not granted on the basis of repeated cry of a husband as to reiterate just "I want divorce, divorce and divorce". It is a misconception that divorce is granted as soon as the word is articulated. In

reverse, it completes only when it is pronounced three times within three months, each time in each consecutive three months. This three months' period is given only in order to prevent the couple from committing any blunder under the influence of temporary anger or whimsical babble that will eventually cause ruination of any woman. If a compromise between husband and wife takes place during these three months, then the divorce gets cancelled even if it was articulated twice. Women like men do have the right to divorce as per the verdict of the Holy Quran. It is inhuman and against religious doctrines to live with one's husband if she is not in agreement with him. If it is permissible for a man to divorce his wife because he does not like her, then it will be surely an injustice if a woman is denied the right to divorce her husband for the same reason. To put an end to this injustice, the Holy Quran has given women right to divorce. This is termed as 'open' divorce. By permitting a woman to divorce from her undeserving husband, the Holy Quran has freed women from the worst form of slavery. Indeed, the Holy Quran must be acknowledged as a life-book for women.

EDUCATION IS HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM

The Prophet in his entire life has given the most importance to education. He has beautifully presented the greatness of knowledge. He says, "Get knowledge, because one can distinguish good from bad, just from unjust and virtue from profane only due to its knowledge. The path of knowledge shows the door of Heaven. Knowledge is a guide to happiness, sharer of sorrow, the best friend and a guard protecting one from enemies. And hence, one can see the oft repeated message mentioned in the Holy Quran of 'Iqra' (Read). The Prophet insisted women like men to take education. He taught that education is one's birth-right as well as the primary duty. After the Prophet also, Muslims all over the world spread and propagated the message of getting education.

And the whole credit does go to the Prophet.

When the entire Europe had been lapsing in the darkness of ignorance, only Muslims illuminated their lives by the light of knowledge. The first university in the history of the world was founded in Spain by a Muslim. The Prophet while teaching the significance of education in one's life says, everyone should seek for knowledge from womb to tomb". One remains student forever. Further he says, "To acquire knowledge, go to China even". One should not seek for comfort by making up one's mind that my city fails to provide basic or enough education. If time demands, then one should go overseas to get education. This is what was intended when the Prophet mentioned the name of country 'China'. Once we are equipped with knowledge, then we must strive to utilize for the benefit and betterment of others. The Prophet opines that to teach what we learned is like performing prayers to God. "The one who sacrifices one's life in the path of knowledge is immortal one."

The martyr is held in high esteem. But the Prophet considers the wise person to be the superior one. He says, "The ink-drop tipping from the pen of a wise person is more sacred than the blood of a martyr".

One can see from the above quote how the Prophet has glorified wise-people in his beautiful words.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATION MEANS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

The Prophet established democracy in his state and won the title of a man chosen by the people. He proclaimed that the state does not belong to one group, party or faction of society but it belongs to every citizen of the state. He has put some guidelines for the government authorities on how to govern a state. The officials should keep their lifestyle simple. They should be accessible to all needy. They must give

shelter to all those who are unemployed and disable. The Holy Quran insists on keeping the rights of non-Muslims intact. One should give some amount on the basis of one's income which is known as 'Jakaat'. This money goes into the treasure of the state which should be utilized for the welfare of poor and needy people without any segregation. The money from the same avenue used to be utilized to free slaves from the shackles of their masters. Welfare of society is indeed the welfare of the nation and it is mentioned in the Holy Quran.

INTEREST IS PROHIBITED IN RELIGION

We see the tremendous difference due to an unequal distribution of wealth among the masses, one faction living in luxurious life and the other is in plight. It spreads discontent in the minds of the people that becomes a threat to democracy. At the time of the Prophet, there was an absence of equal distribution of wealth. So he structured the society in way that no capitalist will strangulate the poor people under the influence of amassed wealth. He prohibited the compound interest on wealth. He preached that it is anti-Islam to charge interest on debt-money. The one who demands an interest is deemed to be very inferior in Islam. Due to this revolutionary step, the centralization of money into the hands of the few stopped. In addition to this, the Holy Quran also insists on such wealthy people to spare annually 2% of their total income for the welfare of the poor. Such an amount becomes protector for the poor than to be a destroyer. The Holy Quran commands to offer others who have plenty. We have seen the suicide cases and attempts committed by farmers only because of piling of the interest by banks or moneylenders. In such a background, almost all Muslim countries to one's surprise run banks in their respective countries in this world of globalization without charging interest as per the verdict of the Holy Quran. Now it is needless to say how much the Quranic teaching is useful for the common and poor people.

NEVER DESECRATE JUSTICE

Like equality, the Prophet valued justice in democracy. Justice is neither sold nor does it favor any caste. He treated all alike whether one is poor or rich, master or slave, Muslim or non-Muslim. Once a case of a Muslim and a Jew came under the jurisdiction of the Prophet, and the Prophet found the Muslim guilty. He punished the Muslim and did justice to the Jew. Due to such incidents common in his time, democracy prospered. One will see prosperity where justice is revered. Once we start desecrating it, then the nation is bound to decay. As per the command of the Holy Quran, the Prophet placed justice in a supreme position.

Oh you faithful, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted.

(The Holy Quran 4:135)

CONDEMNATION OF VANITY

The Prophet used to be held in high esteem. He was the noblest one. It would have been excused if he had started self-appreciation egoistically. Nobody would have doubted if he had called himself a deity. But the Prophet hated such vanity. It never touched to his heart that the people should appreciate him and flatter him ceaselessly. He never signaled his greatness. He neither made display of himself as God nor proclaimed to be the son of God.

Say, “I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God.

(The Holy Quran 18:110)

He introduced himself in such simple words. He even admonished ostentation and forbade it. During a battle, the Prophet and his soldiers settled in a camp and they were in need of wood in order to cook. Even the Prophet set out to look for wood in the forest. The soldiers asked politely to the Prophet, “This is not the work of a great man like you. You relax in the tent. We will fetch it”. The Prophet replied instantly, “There is no difference between you and me. None is superior to anyone. We all are equal before God.”

SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS ARE HELD HIGH

We all are living in an age of science. If we read the mind-boggling stories of miracles, we distrust them and call it unreal. If our mind is clouded by such miraculous happenings and mysteries, then our scientific temper starts doubting. The Prophet founded Islam not on the basis of miracles but on the basis of Nature. Today's scientific findings are nothing but our introduction to the Nature. Scientific results have never contradicted Islamic teachings. In reverse, every Muslim is obliged to look at scientific investigation as respectfully as he looks at Islam. The Prophet has taught us the importance of science and research.

“The day spent in investigation and research is several times better than the day spent in parrot-like prayers.”

The Prophet Mohammad (pbuh)

The Holy Quran emphasizes the importance of research than of miracles. This proves that the Prophet is indeed the real champion of the new era.

IMPORTANCE OF NEIGHBORLINESS

Neighborliness teaches love to humans. It teaches us to treat our

neighbor affectionately, let your neighbor be of any religion. One should not think discriminately whether our neighbor is a Muslim or a non-Muslim. It is prohibited to help only if your neighbor is a Muslim and withhold your help if we find our neighbor to be a non-Muslim. The Prophet says,

“Let our neighbor be a Muslim or non-Muslim, treat him with love and affection. Those who believe should not hurt their neighbors.”

God does not like the one who hurts his neighbors and offers prayers to Him. God is never pleased by such prayers. The Prophet says,

“God never cares about those who annoy their neighbors and offers prayers to Him.”

We should behave affectionately with our neighbors. We should help them solve their problems. We should feel sorry if we are belching after having bellyful food while the family of our neighbor is starving.

We should share half of our bread with our neighbors who are on empty-stomach. Even if the time demands, one should stay half-empty stomach in order to satisfy the hunger of our neighbors. The one who behaves in this way will be considered a true Muslim. The Prophet says,

“He is a Muslim who never hurts others by his accents and/or actions.”

A Muslim should be magnanimous and open-minded. He should console the hearts of unhappy people by his sweet speech and good deeds.

If we practice these teachings of the Prophet, then surely our country will awaken into a new world where we will see an integration of Muslims and others. If we start administering our personal and public life as per the dictates of the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet (Hadith), then we will realize that the Holy Quran is not only a life-book but also a new lease of life that guides us to live our life ideally.

HUMANITY IS THE SOUL OF THE HOLY QURAN

The prophet preached his followers to love entire mankind. He says further that if we wish God to show mercy upon us then we should love all human beings created by Him. He says,

“God will never love them who do not love God’s creation”

The Holy Quran

Where there is no love, there is no lofty intelligence, no feeling of self- sacrifice and no welfare of human beings. If your actions do not contribute in creating happiness for the maximum number of the people, such actions will fail to please God. If we serve others, love them then your prayers will be accepted by God. Make others happy and that will help you to please God. Do care and have concern for fellow beings and God will care and have concern for you. The Prophet in his entire lifespan advised to strive for the happiness of our fellow – people and God will keep us happy.

He never made the difference between friend and foe while preaching us to love mankind. He used to run helping his enemy as he used to help his friends.

He used to communicate with non-Muslims in the same way as he used to speak with his followers. He never sinned of rejecting to help fellow people only because they are non-Muslims. He never adopted the practice of cursing others only because they are enemies. The Prophet was stoned several times in his life and he used to bleed. His followers insisted him to curse them but the Prophet said,

“I am not sent here to curse mankind. I am sent to love the mankind.”

PATRIOTISM IS A PART OF ISLAM

The Prophet declared that we should care and serve our motherland without which our adherence to Islam cannot be perfect. He commanded every Muslim to be patriotic. But this love-for-one's-nation is not the limited one that teaches us to kick the whole world to show 'one's patriotism'. His concept of patriotism teaches love for one's motherland and concern for all other nations. It is our duty to love all the nations existing on the world map. Such a sublime teaching of the Prophet is adopted by every Muslim. His teaching of patriotism is inclusive of the message of cosmopolitanism. The phrase from 'Bhagwad Geeta' "Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam" matches accurately with the teaching of the Prophet and therefore, it is mentioned repeatedly in the Holy Quran that the Prophet Mohammad has been sent to Earth for welfare of the whole mankind.

ADVOCACY OF RATIONALISM

The Prophet has given an eminent place to rationalism. When Muaz was appointed as the Governor of Yemen, the Prophet asked him what would be his strategy as a Governor.

Muaz replied, "As per the dictates of Quran".

The Prophet further asked him, "What if you did not find the order on a specific matter?"

"Then, I will abide to your (the Prophet's) teachings".

"What if you found no reference in my teaching as well?"

"Then, I will use my own reason."

The Prophet liked the last reply of Muaz and advised the other attendees to keep ideals of Muaz in this matter.

We see the band of so called reformers who think that Muslims have imprisoned themselves in the Holy Quran. But we will certainly realize from the aforementioned incident that the Prophet himself had been progressive enough to solve the problems that might emerge in future. Here we are allowed to use our reasoning ability by the Holy Quran itself. It says that it is enough to support progressive thinking. The great thinker Sane Guruji has made appreciatory remarks on these Quranic verses. Therefore, it is evident that the Holy Quran is a useful guide-book not only to Muslims but to all human beings. It is the most useful life-book for the whole mankind to make our life on Earth the most happy satisfactory and peaceful as well as our life hereafter in Jannat.

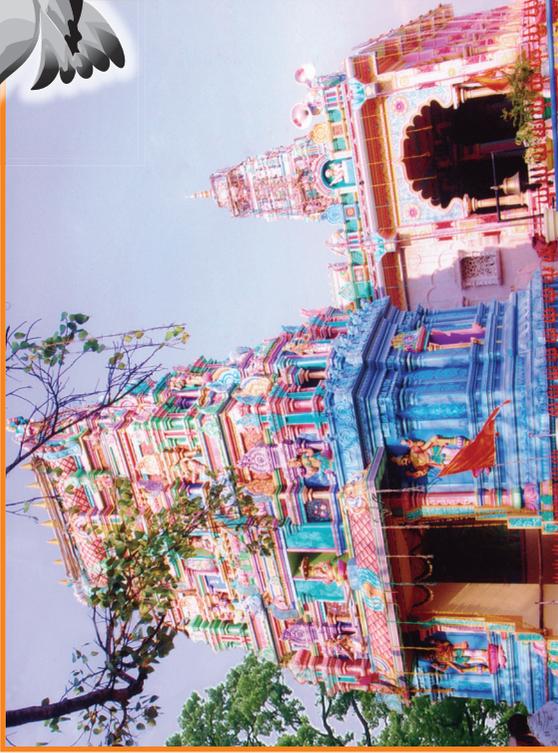


- Dr. S. N. Pathan

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PILGRIMAGE OF HUMANITY (मानवतातीर्थ)



In the village Rameshwar (Rui) in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, the Hindu and Muslim villagers came together under the initiative of **Prof. Dr. Vishwanath D. Karad** to reconstruct the **Shri Ram Mandir** which was destroyed by invaders nearly 280 years ago and the local **Jama Masjid** and **Khwaja Zainuddin Chishti Dargah** which was destroyed in communal violence nearly 68 years ago, demonstrating before the world a classic example of communal harmony, national integration and universal brotherhood.



DHAMMAPADA A TRUE LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURE

“सब्बपापस्स अकरणं कुसलस्स उपसंपदा ।

सचित्त परियोदपनं एतं बुद्धदानं सासनं ॥१॥”

To be free from all sins, to add to our good deeds and to investigate our own mind, is the philosophy of Buddha!

The said Dhammpada is a summary of the way of life advocated by Buddha.

The way of life advocated by Gautam Buddha is for all the living organisms on the earth, for the actual present situation and time. Dhammpada explains the dos and don'ts for the way of life in the present

time instead of unnecessarily worrying about the past or the future.

The thoughts explained through this Dhammpada are neither for any kind of heavenly, religious ritual or service nor for ultimate virtual heavenly pleasure. This path is for simple life style and for the peaceful happy life of the humanitarian society with value of equality.

If you wish to be in the company of any one book throughout your life, Dhammpada is one of the best epics available in any library across the world.

The entire Buddhist literature is found in three epics named Tripitak. Tripitak means three boxes. There are three parts of Tripitak. Sutta, Vinay, Abhidham.

Sutta Pitak includes the advice of Buddha and his disciples and conversation between Buddha and disciples about religion.

Vinay pitak is a compilation of the thoughts of Bhikshu and their stories.

Abhidham pitak is about the principles of Buddhist religion in the light of present day philosophy.

Dhammapada, though a small book, is a compilation of the most valuable principles of life, created out of these Tripitak.

Like Bhagvad Geeta, Dhammapada also spread far and wide. In ancient times, Dhammapada has been translated into Chinese and Tibetan languages. In the present time, dhammapada is translated into many languages. Dhammpada is found in other languages like English, German and French. Albert J Edmend mentioned in the preface of his English Translated version” If at all any long lasting epic has been created in the continent of Asia, it is Dhammpada....”

These Padas have kindled the flame of meditation in the hearts of many thinkers. It has been an inspiration for a Chinese Traveller while he was travelling in the deep valleys of Mongolia and the high mountain ranges of Himalaya to reach the land of India that is sacred due to the footsteps of Lord Buddha. King Ashok who protested against the death sentence, tried to stop slavery and opened hospitals for people and even for animals, all this is mentioned in the stone inscriptions. In spite of the spread of Roman religion and Christianity for almost two thousand years, this Indian Buddha culture is studied religiously in the universities of Europe and America right from International University at Copenhagen to Cambridge and from Chicago to Petersburg.

From Gautam Buddha to King Ashoka and further from Brudrath to the untrustworthy King Shashank and further in thousand years due to the tremendous violence, chaos, confusion and foreign invasions the Buddhist religion was on the verge of extinction.

At the beginning of 19th century the western Buddha scholars excavated the memorials of Buddha and the universal features of Buddha and tried to put forth Gautam Buddha in the historic form. A book 'Light of Asia' written by Arnold introduced Lord Buddha to the world.

Disciple Kosambi, a young lad at Goa took inspiration from the above literature, sacrificed all his happiness in life and studied Buddha literature in Pali language. Bhadant Anand Kausalyayana, Rahul Sankrutyayan took lot of efforts and put forth this valuable treasure of Buddha literature to Indians.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar struggled for the upliftment and freedom of the downtrodden people throughout his life. Due to inequality in Hindu religion Dalits were the sufferers, though there were the alternatives of Muslim or Christian religion, Dr. Ambedkar decided to embrace Buddhist

religion as he was impressed by its philosophy based on equality, free from all castes, world as one society and principles that appealed to the scientific mind.

In his speech on BBC he said...

All the religions of the world propagate and preach about God, Soul and Life after Death but the three important principles that are necessary for happy human life are given by Buddhist religion those are talent, Compassion and Equality. People should be intellectual, love all living creatures and treat everyone with respect and equality, is the meaning of these principles. If all human beings start behaving in this manner then the world will become heavenly place and this great principle is given by Buddhist religion. So I like this religion very much. This religion can bring stability to all the societies of the world. The thoughts of God and Soul are useless and so I like this religion.

If the political administration is supported by religious feelings only then it lasts longer. All the principles and philosophy of equality are stated in one concept of Buddhist religion that is 'Sangha'. The people from Buddha Sangha do not believe in material property but they carry out service to people with kind feeling, they lead spotless life and die in the same condition. Gautam Buddha is responsible for bringing about a revolution of such thoughts in the minds of the people of the society. This revolution did not last long but the philosophy still exists even after the period of two and half thousand years.

While understanding Dr. Ambedkar, Prof. G. S. Bhosale-

Buddhist religion is a religion with the philosophy that is conducive for the progress of mankind and social equality. In the present situation of the world, it is necessary for the people all over to follow this religion for the simple life, for happiness, satisfaction and peace.

Rise of Buddhist Religion

Thousands of years ago below the Himalaya Mountains, on the land with aura, human life and culture originated at Bharatvarsha, Aryavart, Jambudweep. Shraman was the first type of culture then. The first thirthankar of Shraman was Rishabhdev who built barriers on the river and provided many facilities to people. He also carried out number of experiments in agriculture and gave the capacity to provide food to all mankind. The society based on labour, the life style based on this society in turn assured good health of the society.

That time in India there were number of small agricultural states. The decisions of the entire state were taken unanimously. The head of such state was called King. In the grasslands of Himalaya there was a King Shuddhodhan of Shakya dynasty. This period is almost two and half thousand years ago. During that time the Aryans that came from north eastern frontier also were a part of this culture. Their Arya culture assimilated with the Shraman culture and a compound culture of Shraman-Brahman culture emerged. In order to maintain harmony in agricultural, natural and happy life, there used to be conflicts among groups of people over agriculture, borders of the kingdom and use of water. Siddharth was a son of King of Shuddhodhan. Prince Siddhartha was extremely handsome, brilliant, talented, knowledgeable, brave, sensitive and thoughtful. He made a minute observation of human life. He also observed origin, condition and rhythm. He thought about the human life and death. In spite of having all the material pleasures and having been trained in war fare, he thought about human sorrows. As a Prince he had the responsibility of his kingdom.

The conflict between the Shakya and Koliya over the waters of river Rohini resulted in bloodshed. At such crucial moment he was in two minds whether to wage a war to protect his kingdom or to sacrifice his kingdom.

Then he adopted the path of sacrificing his kingdom. In order to find a solution of human sorrows he decided to sacrifice his domestic life, that is called MAHABHINISHKRAMAN'

In order to gain knowledge Bhagwan Buddha studied under the great philosophers of the time who had their Gurekul. He follows their rules. Alarkalam and Uddalak ramputra were the the two main followers on the path of Yoga who gave Siddharth all their knowledge. While talking to Agnivesan, his fellow student, Buddha questioned Alarkalam about the realization of philosophy. At that time Alarkalam taught him the AKINCHAN NYATAN SAMADHI by which Buddha soon became at par with his Guru.

Later he went to Udak Ramputra who taught him 'Naiv Sandnyanatasangayatan samadhi'. He later reached Uruvela in search of eternal peace,happiness and salvation. While following the path of severe penance, meditation and self-pain his body became weak and pale. However Gautam Buddha decided to eat bare minimum food required for survival.

His five disciples who did not agree with his decision deserted him. Then with strong determination,Siddharth dispelled all the negativities from his mind and found the new Dharm-Marg to control all sorrows. Later Gautam Buddha attained knowledge under a bodhi tree and became known as Buddha. He attained this dharma mgr at the age of 36. Henceforth he came to be known as Sambuddha, Tathagat, Sugat, Dharmaraj, Marajeet, Jin etc.

Dhammchakra Pravartan

Buddha wanted to preach this new Dharma to Alarkalam and Udak Ramputra since they were capable of understanding it. But unfortunately they were no more.The five disciples who had deserted Buddhs lived in

Varanasi at Rushipattan. On the day of Ashadh Pournima Gautam Buddha reached there and gave them his first preaching.

“ Bhikshu, One should not follow two extremes, that is indulgence in material luxuries and infliction of pain on body. The former is comfortable and the latter is painful and useless. Hence one should find a golden mean.

Bhagwan Gautam Buddha's eight fold path:

1. Proper vision 2. Proper decision 3. Proper Speech 4. Proper action 5. Proper life. 6. Proper exercise 7 Proper memory 8 Proper Samadhi. The paths discovered by Gautam Buddha helps in attaining understanding, critical appreciation, address and salvation.

Bhikshu, the sources of sorrow in first Arya Satya are Birth, old age, death, relation with unwanted, separation from dear ones, unfulfilment of desire.

The second Arya Satya is Thirst. The one which is recurring for happiness, sensual pleasure, emotional and fulfillment.

The third Arya Satya is Nirodh. To stop the thirst, to sacrifice it, to give it up, to be free from it and to get rid of it.

The fourth Arya Satya is Ashtang Marg

The first preachings of Buddha is known as Dhammchakra Pravartan. The Buddhist religion was established on the full moon day of Ashadh. Out of the five disciples of Buddha, Kaudinya, was able to comprehend and accept his preaching. Hence he became the first disciple of Buddha. He was therefore called Adnyat Kaudinya'. The other four disciples were Vapra, Bhadiy, Mahanam, Ashwjeet.

For over 45 years Gautam Buddha influenced the people of India by eradicating ignorance, blind faith, inequality, gender inequality, animal

sacrifice, by preaching talent, pity and character and by advocating simple and meaningful path of life through awakening and sweet oratory. He attained salvation at Kushinara at the age of 80.

Though born in a warrior family, he always thought winning minds was greater than winning any foreign state. He conquered his enemy not by any weapons but with the means of faith, peace, human welfare and firm enthusiasm.

One who has been able to conquer sensual desire will conquer everything.

Those who have succeeded in gaining control over all vices and have adopted the teachings of Lord Buddha have been able to spread his thoughts of welfare of the universe. There is no nation where his teachings and his disciples have not reached. In the true sense of the word Lord Buddha, as Sant Tukaram says....

सद्गुरू वाचोनि सापडेना सोय । धरावे पाय आधी त्याचे ॥
 आपणा सारखे करितो तात्काळ । कांही काळ वेळ न लगे त्याशी ॥
 लोह परिसाची न साहे उपमा । सद्गुरू महिमा अगाधाचि ॥
 तुका म्हणे, ऐसे आंधळे हे जन । गेले विसरून खऱ्या देवा ॥

Dhammpada

Dhammpada means the steps of religion, path of religion, precepts of religion and the path of good behaviour. In the ancient period 423 verses of the Dhammpada had been translated into various languages like Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, Japanese etc. They have also been translated into western countries like Latin, English, French, German and Danish. The story is also being done in the Russian and Polish language.

The good thoughts in the Dhammpada have been described as 'Goath' and the preacher Budhaghosh has elaborated on them. Budhaghosh has

explained the thoughts in a good and subtle manner with the help of various illustrations and stories.

There are 26 parts (Vagga) in it. We must try to understand every part, every thought which throws lights on all aspects of happiness of all living things in the world.

Yamak Vagga

Gautam Buddha is a psychological philosopher. He explains the universal truth by stressing upon mental strength.

नहि वेरेन वेराति सम्मतिध कुदाचनं ।
अवेरेनच सम्पन्ति, एस धम्मो सतन्तनो ॥

A person who does not harbour the thoughts of humiliation, violence, defeat or deceit inflicted by others can easily empower feelings of enmity because enmity does not destroy enmity but gets destroyed by love. This is the ancient principle.

Appvaad Vagga

The second is Appvaad Vagga it says we should be always careful not to hurt others by wrong thought, word or deed.

मा पमादमनुयुग्जेध मा कामरतिसन्दवं ।
अप्पमतो हि झायन्तो पप्पोति विपुलं सुखं ॥

A wise and knowledgeable person rises above all by his conscious behaviour. He attains a height from where he can view the others with a stable and sound mind. He is like the one on the pinnacle/peak viewing those down below. He has an elevated state of mind.

Chitt Vagga

The root of all human problems lies in the mind and thinking.

अनवस्तुत्त चित्तस्स, अनन्वाहत चेतसो ।
पुंज्य पापाशिणस्स नत्थि जागरतो भयं ॥

A person who has a stable mind which is free from materialistic gains and sinful thoughts and who is always conscious will have to fear nothing.

Puffa Vagga

चंदनं तगरं वापि उप्पलं अथ वस्सिकी ।
एतेसं गन्धजातानं सीलगन्धो अनुत्तरो ॥

The fragrance of good deeds is far more superior to the fragrance produced by Sandalwood, Lotus and other fragrant materials.

Bal Vagga

तच्च कम्मं कतं साधु यं कत्त्वा नानुत्पति ।
यस्स पतीतो सुमनो विपाकं पटिसेवति ॥

It is always good to perform deeds which bear the fruits of happiness and satisfaction than those which cause repentance.

Pandit Vagga

सब्बत्थं वे सप्पुरिसा चलान्ति
न काम काम लपयन्ति सत्तो
सुखेन पुट्ठा अथवा दुःखेन
न उच्चायचं पण्डिता दसयन्ति ॥

A person with good deeds is always dutiful does not speak about his deeds nor does he have any expectation of happiness. He is neither overjoyed or proud with happiness nor is he distressed in sorrow.

Arhat Vagga

यास्सि न्द्रियाणि समया गतानि,
 अस्सा यथा सारथिना सुदन्ता ।
 पहीन मानस्सं अनासवस्स,
 देवापि तस्स पिहयन्ति तपदिनी ।

Even Gods envy the person who has gained control over senses, who has no ego and whose sensual desires are no more.

Sahassa Vagga

यो सहस्सं सहस्सेन संडगणे मानुसे जिने ।
 एकं च जेरूयमत्तानं स ये संडगमजुत्त मो ॥

A person who conquers his own self is superior to all the victorious people, superior to one who conquers thousand people, thousand times in the battle,

Paap Vagga

मावमवत्र्जेय पुत्रअस्स न गतं आमयिस्साति ।
 उद्विंदुनिपातेन उपकुम्मोपि पूरति ।
 पूरति धिरो पुत्रजस्स थारूथोकाप्पि आचिनं ॥

A vessel gets filled with drops of water. A wise man becomes virtuous by accumulating virtues drop by drop.

Dand Vagga

सब्बे तस्सन्ति दण्डस्स सब्बे भायन्ति मच्चुनो ।
 अनानं उपमं कत्त्वा न हनेय्य न घातये ॥

Every person fears punishment. Every person loves his life. Remember you are like such a person. Hence do not kill or do violence.

Jara Vagga

Old age is imminent but how can it be made healthy?

जीरन्ति वे राजरथा सुचित्ता,
अयो सरीरम्पि जरं उपेति ।
सतं च धम्मो न जरं उपेति
सन्तो हवे सन्धि पवेदयन्ति ॥

A beautifully decorated chariot becomes old, the human body also becomes old but the religion of Buddha will never become old nor will it fade. So are the words of saints and holy people.

Atta Vagga or Atma Vagga

अत्ता हि अत्तनो, नाथो की हि नाया परो सिया ।
अत्तनाव सुदन्तेन नाथं लभति दुल्लभं ॥

Each one is his own master, by conquering over ones senses a person acquires such a master which hardly anyone gets.

Lok Vagga

The teachings of Dhamma are for the people.

धम्मं चरे सुचदितं न तं दुच्चरितं चरे ।
धम्माचाही सुखं सेति अस्मिं लोके परम्हिच ॥

Follow the rules of virtue; do not follow the laws of vices. Those who are virtuous will be happy on this earth and in heaven.

Buddha Vagga

In this world the saintly and the good are the Buddha. It is best to follow their path.

‘सुखो बुध्दानं उप्पादो, सुखो सध्दम्म देसना ।
सुखा संघस्स सामग्गो तपो सुखो ॥’

The preaching of Buddha, religion, the peace in unity all bring happiness. The worship and company of those who are peaceful brings happiness.

Sukh Vagga

सुसुखं वत ! जीवामं उस्सुकेसु अनुस्सुका ।
उस्सुकेसु मनुसेस्सु विहराम अनुस्सुया

Let us live happily by being greedless amidst the greedy.

Priya Vagga

सील दस्सन संपन्नं धम्मदूढं सच्चवादिनं ।
अत्तमो कम्मकुंब्बानं तं जनो कुरूते प्रियं ॥

People love the person who is modest, upright, wise, religious, truthful and responsible/dutiful.

Krodh Vagga

अकोधेन जिने कोधं, असाधु साधुना जिने ।
जिने कदरीयं दानेन सच्चेन अलिकवादिनं ॥

Conquer anger by love, do good to destroy evil, conquer a selfish person by charity and a liar by truth (anger is faster than fire, a person who controls anger will conquer the hearts of everyone)

Mal Vagga

अयसा व मलं समुद्धितं, तद्दुद्वाय तमेळ खग्दति ।
एवं अतिघोन चाटिनं, सवकम्मनि नयन्तिं दुग्गती ॥

Lust which is formed from iron, erodes the iron itself. Similarly a fickle minded person degrades himself with his own bad deeds.

Dhammattha Vagga or Dharma Vagga

न वाकरणमतेन वण्ण पोक्खरताय वा ।

साधुरूपो नरो होजि इस्सकी मच्छरी सठो ॥

However good looking a person may be or however good spoken he may be, he cannot be a virtuous one if his mind is filled with envy, jealousy or cunningness.

Magga Vagga or Marg Vagga

वाचानुररखी मनसा सुसंवृतो, कायेन च अकुसलं न कयिरा ।

एते तयो कम्मपथे विसाधये, आराधये मागपिसिप्पने दिंत ॥

One who gains control over his speech, mind and deeds and keeps them pure, only he can truly follow the path of Buddha.

Pakkinna Vagga

सुप्पबुद्धं पुल्लति सदा गोतमसावका ।

येसं दिवा च स्तो च विच्चं बुद्धगता सति ॥

Those disciples who always think of perpetually think of Buddha are always aware and conscious.

Niray Vagga

कयिरा चे कयिराधेनं उळ हमेतं परक्कमे ।

सिथिलो हि परिब्बाजो मिय्यो अकिरतं रजं ॥

Do your work whole heartedly. A monk who wears a long robe arouses a lot of dust.

Naag Vagga

अप्पमादरता होथ सचित्त मनुर क्खय ।

दुग्गा उध्दरथ-तानं पक्के सत्तो व कुञ्जरो ॥

Be conscious, control your mind, pull yourself from the vices of lust anger, greed envy, jealousy, just as the elephant which pulls itself from the

swamp.

Tannha Vagga or Trishna Vagga

यथापि मूले अनुपदद्वे दळ् हे । छिन्नोपि रूक्खो पुत्रदेव रूहति ।

एवम्पि तण्हानसवे अनुहते, निब्बतति दुक्खमिदं पनुप्पनं ॥

A tree which is not cut from its roots grows again, In the same way so long as desire does not get uprooted from the mind, sorrow is sure to grow again.

Bhikkhu Vagga or Bhikshu Vagga

नस्थि ज्ञानं अपञ्जस्स पञ्जनाहिस अज्ञायतो ।

याम्हि ज्ञानञ्च पञ्जाच स वे निब्बाणसन्तिके ॥

One who has no talent, is unable to concentrate. One who is unable to concentrate cannot be talented. But one who has both concentration and talent comes close to salvation.

Brahman Vagga

A true Brahman is one who has gained control over his anger, thought, word and deed. A true Brahmin is one who is as pure as the moon.

यस्स काचेन वाचाय मनसा नस्थि दुक्कतं ।

संवुतं तिही ठानेही तमहं ब्रूमि ब्राह्मणं ॥

One who has conquered all his instincts of body, voice and mind, is a true Brahman. One who is as pure and white as the moon and has foregone his thirst for the material world, is a true Brahman.

कायिक वाचिस भाव । पापाचरणे सोडिली सर्व ।

सत्कार्यासाठी धाव । म्हणे मी ब्राह्मण तयाची ॥

चन्दं व विमलं सुद्धं विप्पसन्नमनाविलं ।

नन्दीभवपरिक्खीणं तमहं ब्रूमि ब्राह्मणं ॥

Dhammpada which shows the path of peace has influenced the whole of Asia.

All the 'gathas'(preaching) in it prove as a source of guidance on the path of life. If we try to follow even one of these preaching we can make our life happy. Just as by practicing even one preaching thought from Dyaneshwari helps in bringing about a good change in one's life in the same way the Buddhist prayer helps in achieving the Panchsheel- five principles to make life fruitful.

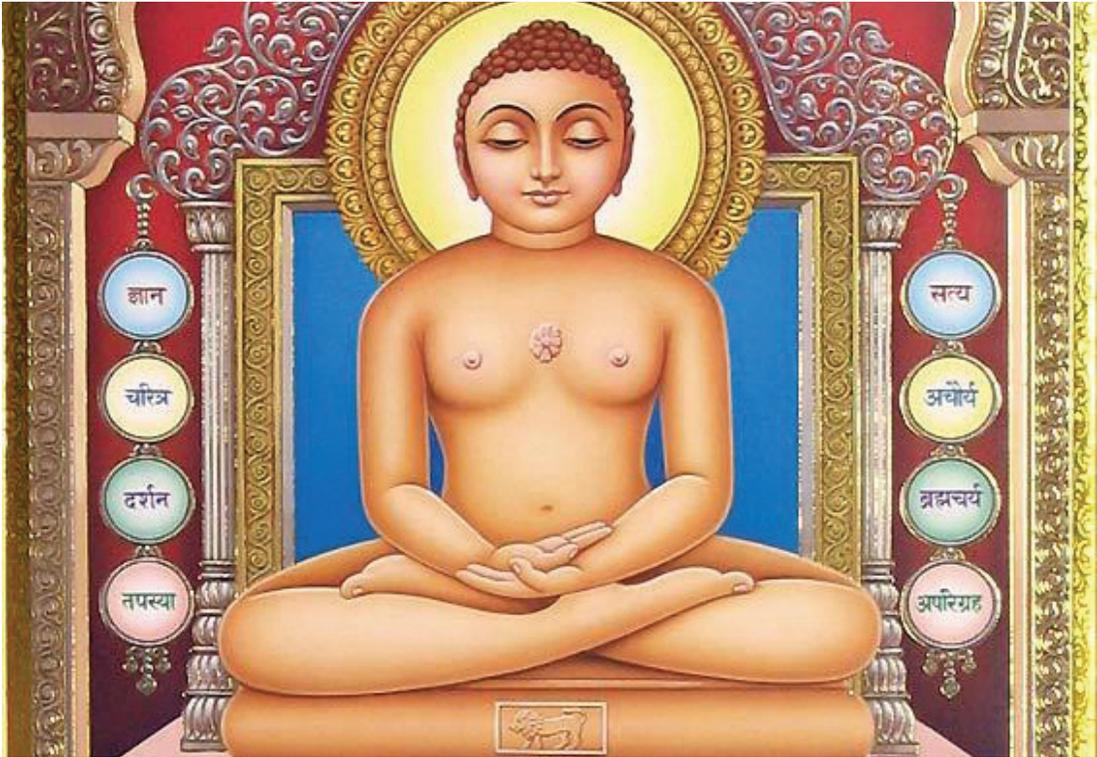
1. पाणात्तिपाणा वेरमणी, सिक्खापदं समादियामि।
I vow not to kill any life.
2. अदिन्नादाना वेरमणी, सिक्खापदं समादियामि।
I vow not to steal.
3. कामेसु मिच्छाचारा वेरमणी, सिक्खापदं समादियामि।
I vow not to break the rules of chastity.
4. मुसावादा, वेरमणी, सिक्खापदं समादियामि।
I vow not to speak lies.
5. सुरा मेरय मज्ज पमादट्ठणा वेरमणी, सिक्खापदं समादियामि।
I vow not to consume alcohol.

These five principles are the essence of Dhammpada. The Dhammpada is not just a compilation of thoughts but is a book of life or **True Life-Guiding Scripture** containing the jewels of thoughts that guide our actions.

- Acharya Ratanlal Sonagra

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AGAM - UTTARADHYAYAN SUTRA A TRUE LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURE

Prince Vardhaman, son of king Siddharth of Vaishali was sitting pensively, thinking about the welfare of the mankind. He was thinking that the humanity is divided into two (2) classes: one of them is that which has all the material comforts of the world, it is happy and contented, all the pleasures are available to the people of this class, and it is immersed in imbibing these material pleasures.

After having all this, still they are not happy, because there are so many pleasurable things in this world which are available, but they have only a limited capacity to absorb them. They are thus not satisfied, in spite of all the pleasures that they are enjoying.

On the other hand, there is a class of people who do not even have their basic needs fulfilled. When they are unable to procure anything on their own, they have to get them from people as charity.

The people from whom they fulfill their requirements become their rulers and these people become their dependents. The ruling class subjects these dependents to a lot of humiliation and ill-treatment. They have no alternative but to accept this treatment because they are dependent on these people. The shadow of this dependency is reflected in every aspect of their behavior.

Prince Vardhaman was contemplating on this situation. On the one hand, in spite of the abundance of pleasures available, their happiness is only momentary, which results into grief. On the other hand, there is scarcity and unavailability of even daily needs which also results in grief. The ‘haves’ of the society have misused their power and freedom and have caused untold misery to the ‘have-nots’ of the society.

One class is unhappy in spite of having too much still they feel they are not adequate, while the other class is unhappy because of not having enough. He thought, ‘I am looking for happiness, which is endless and infinite. A happiness which will never turn into grief and with which I will be able to abolish the grief of all mankind.’

Vardhaman became more and more immersed in thoughts, and one day, he left his palace to go to the forest like the Rishis, to seek liberation from grief for the entire mankind.

In the forest, he performed penance for twelve & a half years. He observed silence, performed meditation and sought self restraint. He roamed in the forest to personally experience the suffering of the mankind. This filled his mind with complete understanding of the sufferings and also human compassion.

On one hand, he was constantly performing penance, meditation, observing silence and self restraint to attain renunciation, while on the other, he was seeking a way to lead mankind out of sorrow and grief.

All this deep penance took him to such great heights that he became complete, and self-realization dawned on him.

Because he won over himself, he became Jinn (जिन). He worshipped his innate qualities, which made him Arhat (अरहत). He attained divinity and thus became Bhagwan (God). He also became the originator or pioneer of a Religion.

In reality, Jainism is a religion which moves in tandem with nature. As the order of nature changes, so does the order of Jainism. During this change of order, there came an individual who was born in a Kshatriya dynasty and set off in pursuit of knowledge. During this, he found the Ultimate Truth. When he found the Ultimate Truth, he become the pioneer of a religion.

The first pioneer of Jainism is Bhagwan Rishabhadev. He is also called as Adinath. There were 22 more Pioneers in the same tradition, at the peak of which is Bhagwan Mahaveer. In Jainism, they are referred to as Tirthankars.

The Tirthankars are the scholars of not just Mother Nature, but also the Soul. That is why, even if they are a part of nature, they seek the essence of the soul within. The reason why they leave their towns and villages and resided in the forests is because they wanted to exist in their own company and win over their own souls. They wanted to live with the external nature, while at the same time understand and realize their inner souls.

Lord Mahaveer knew that the road to freedom from sorrow begins

from getting rid of material pleasures. That is why he first went in pursuit of liberation from material pleasures. He did not shy away from the sufferings of mankind. Instead, he set off on the pathway to liberation from material pleasure and practices. This is not an easy task. Only a brave man can achieve this. That is why he was not called simply Veer (brave), but Mahaveer (Bravest of the braves).

When Mahaveer reached the stage of completeness, he began his journey in pursuit of liberating mankind from suffering and sorrow for his benefits. Anyone who performs penance for self realization and reaches the stage of completeness, realizes the Ultimate Truth and then the entire scattered humanity becomes one. Based on the order and practices, there are divisions called 'Teerth' and those who create 'Teerth' are called as Teerthankars.

Each Teerthankar preached as per the age (era-युग) in which he existed. Those who hear their divine voices for the first time and are able to awaken their souls and attain realization and offer themselves to the Teerthankars, they are known as Ganadhars (गणधर).

The utterances of the Teerthnakars are expressed in an order in the form of a theory or a philosophy. The Ganadhars expand it, compile it and put it in words. The form in which it is compiled is known as 'Agam' (आगम).

Agam means the voice of 'Aapt Purush (आप्त पुरुष)' or those men who have understood the 'complete form' of everything and can narrate the same with the same completeness. There is no antithesis in their narration.

The voice of Agam is immortal. It is the giver of life, comfort, happiness and has the power to drive away sorrow.

The books of Agam are not just a collection of words but are Guiding

Lights of lives, because they represent the voice of the Teerthankars. They teach the art of living, they show the right direction of life, have the power to change life, give joy to life, take the life from darkness to light and show the way to get rid of sorrows as well as imbibe the art of living.

UTTARADHYAYAN SUTRA (उत्तराध्ययन सूत्र)

The books of Agam are a compilation of Bhagwan Mahaveer's teachings. An important book amongst these is the Uttaradhyayan Sutra. Drawing inspiration from his compassion towards mankind, Mahaveer enunciated his messages of peace, of which, this is the last.

In the last two days of his life, he went on preaching ceaselessly. Thousands of people, including Monarchs, kings, elders and even the commonest of people gathered to listen to his discourse.

The Teerth founded by the Teerthankar is open for all to be a part of. The scholars have termed the Teerth of Mahavir as 'Sarvodaya Teerth' (सर्वोदय तीर्थ), which means the upliftment (uday) of all (sarva), the upliftment of the soul. Everyone is equal here.

There is no discrimination of caste, creed or religion. No one is higher or lower. In the eyes of God, all are equal. The compassion of Lord Mahaveer blesses everyone equally. Everyone gets an equal opportunity to self-realization. An infinite number of people have experienced self-realization in the Sarvodaya Teerth of Lord Mahaveer.

The final utterances of Lord Mahaveer are presented in the Sarvodaya Teerth. The Uttaradhyayan Sutra is a compilation of these utterances and is a miraculous volume. Two thousand verses set in various forms of recitation are distributed in 36 chapters. Whenever they are sung in a melodious voice, the atmosphere turns electric, and spirituality descends

everywhere.

The Uttaradhyayan Sutra is the nectar of spiritual life. It is a perfect guide to rational life and an indicator for living a restrained life. There are an uncountable number of indicators to uplift your life from the level of commonality. Also found in these Sutras are a number of ways to drive away the sorrows and troubles from one's life.

The value and significance of this volume are so immense, that long after the passing away of Lord Mahaveer, various scholars have written commentaries, treatises and essays on it in different languages like Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi, English, Ardhamagadhi, etc. Today books are also available, which contain illustrative descriptions of the events described in this volume.

Thousands of disciples conduct self-education from this volume every day. Many have also learnt it by heart. During Deepavali, during which period falls the death anniversary of Lord Mahaveer, there is a continuous chanting of this Sutra in many places. Many students have written theses on this, while many appear for exams with this as their subject.

There are hundreds of preachers who give discourses on this Sutra. It is an immeasurable pleasure to listen to the discourses on these sutras, which enrich one's life. The Uttaradhyayan Sutra has done the most commendable job of uplifting both, the practical and spiritual aspects of one's life. There are many topics in this Sutra which touch different aspects of our everyday lives and inspire us to lead a pious life, while providing solutions to many age old problems.

Discipline - The Key to Progress:

The very beginning of this Sutra deals with discipline, because Lord Mahaveer believed that discipline is unavoidable in every aspect of life.

Be it education, politics, professional or practical life or even when it comes to living a restrained life style, discipline is a must.

But today, no person in any field wants to follow discipline. Each one wishes to live an unfettered and unrestrained life. The place of humility and modesty has been taken by arrogance and uninhibited behavior. This is causing untold problems everywhere.

The level and stature of relationships elevates because of discipline, while indiscipline creates many problems, particularly in the field of education, this is growing rapidly. Educationists and social scientists are wondering why this is so. The students seem to have lost any respect for their teachers. This sector has become notorious because of arrogance and disrespect.

This is also causing problems to parents and elders in the family, as the children are overstepping their limits and don't want to be restrained. This is a problem engulfing the entire nation, and everyone is worried. This has become a burning problem and everyone's attention is drawn to it.

Bhagwan Mahaveer has laid down a 'Code of Conduct' at the very beginning of the Sutra. He begins by saying that one must sit respectfully in front of one's Guru. One should answer only when one is asked a question by the Guru. One should not raise one's voice while answering. While conversing, one should display proper respect. If one doesn't reply when questioned or if replies disrespectfully, it is the insult of the Guru. Wrong behavior of the disciple can also disturb the Guru. Hence a disciplined person should always behave respectfully with the Guru.

This is true not just in the sector of spirituality but everywhere in the life. For any individual who wants to progress in life, discipline acts as the perfect step of the ladder. Lack of discipline creates disorder and anarchy,

which makes progress impossible.

The status of an in-disciplined person is like that of a fly, which rejects fresh and aromatic food but instead, sits on dirt and rubbish and becomes dirty itself. Those who break discipline can never progress in life.

Those who want to become something in life, should follow the code of discipline preached by Lord Mahaveer.

Lord Mahaveer says, “those who wish to be educated, should first learn to be humble. An egoistic person is not suited to gain knowledge. Those who are arrogant, are physically and / or mentally not well, are involved in doing wrong deeds, waste their time in idleness and can never expect to gain any knowledge. Persons with a noble character, living a flawless life, who consume limited and nutritious food, who are calm and serious, don’t waste time in idle gossip, don’t lie even in fun, can only imbibe the knowledge given by the Guru.

Another important thing said by Lord Mahaveer is that those who rule should first be disciplined. The disciple who seeks shelter from such a ruler also becomes disciplined.

Maintain Emotional Balance:

Happiness and sorrow, good conditions and bad conditions come and go away from one’s life like sunshine and shadow. But there are people, who at the slightest hint of things turning bad, get scared and panic.

Mahaveer says that there is no one on this earth who has experienced only happiness or only sorrow in his life. Each one traverses through both phases, but one’s thinking makes the difference in one’s state of mind.

Those who are firm are not afraid of bad conditions, but the weaker ones immediately become scared. They bow down before the circumstances. A little shortcoming in their lives troubles them and they turn back. Such

people are soon defeated, while the firm ones carry on because they are balanced.

If we become hungry or thirsty and do not get food or drink of our choice, we become agitated. Even a little difference in the temperature of the atmosphere tests our limits of tolerance. If someone praises us, we become happy and if we face humility, we become disturbed.

In such times, Lord Mahaveer prescribes maintaining emotional balance. He says that fame, honour, position are the chief diseases of today's world. Every person, whether social, political or religious, seeks praise and honour. But a true disciple should stay away from all this. Whether in comfort or in discomfort, one should never lose one's emotional balance. The true pursuit of a disciple should be emotional balance at all times.

Everything is Momentary:

Everything in this world is momentary. The nature is changing every second. Man's life is also temporary. Birth-life-death are all unreliable. Time is dynamic. Each passing moment slips away from one's hand forever. It cannot be brought back by any means. There is no one who can save a breaking life or mend a broken life. We cannot even see the things that we spend our lives acquiring. The uselessness of relatives and wealth is really quite apparent.

In spite of knowing all this, people deviate from a noble path in pursuit of these temptations. Their condition is like that of a traveller who is carrying a lamp while travelling on an unlit path and suddenly the lamp is blown off. The path seen by him in the light of the lamp suddenly disappears!

Lord Mahaveer says that one should be alert and attentive every moment of one's life. One who is alert and leads an attentive life, easily

traverses through his life like an armour-clad warrior in a battle.

Those who let go of their present while believing in their future, can never achieve anything in life. What Mahaveer says is completely true that one who hasn't lived his past life attentively, can never live his future life that way. Such persons become sad as they approach their lent days.

Till such time as one has not learnt through past experiences, one cannot differentiate between pleasures and sacrifices. Therefore, it is necessary to discard greed and lust and walk on the path of life with alertness.

Child's Death - Scholar's Death (Baal Maran - Pandit Maran (बाल मरण-पंडित मरण))

The soul does not age, nor does it die. It is immortal. But the body is mortal. So when the soul leaves the body, then that event is called death

Why does a soul leave the body? The answer to this is, "just as a burning lamp gradually consumes all of its oil and extinguishes wishes, the life thread that ties the soul to the body gradually weakens and when it completely becomes feeble, then the soul leaves the body, which means death."

Most of the people do not know this process of death. This very ignorance about the process of death creates a fear in their minds. As a result, they become sad with the thought of death. If they realize the nature of soul and body, then they can rid themselves of the fear of death and appreciate it better. Mahaveer calls this Pandit Maran or Scholar's Death. It is also called as Sakaam Maran (सकाम मरण) in the language of Scriptures.

Those who do not realize this and die, Mahaveer calls their death as Baal Maran or Child's Death. Due to their lack of self realization and

understanding of death, they are sad, frightened and troubled by it. This is also called as Akaam Maran (अकाम मरण).

Suicide is a form of Baal Maran. The rising incidences of suicides is a cause of major worry across the nation. Some people who commit suicide cross the limits of life. They cross the boundaries of worldly pleasure and when they are unsuccessful, they choose the path of suicide. Sometimes the number of difficulties, conflicts, sorrow etc. increases in some people's lives. They become morose and frustrated. Instead of facing the challenges, they run away from them and choose the path of suicide.

Those who commit suicide are themselves unhappy. They lose the value of their lives and abandon those who are dependent on them. Along with destroying their own lives, they also destroy the lives of others.

Some people are merchants of death while some are worshippers of life. Those who steal others' lives are cowards and those who finish their own lives are escapists.

Lord Mahaveer does not speak about either escapism or cowardice. He says that when one's life reaches a stage where the body has become weak, the senses become weak, and the death is waiting to knock, then one should rid oneself of all temptations and accept death like a Samadhi. This process can turn even death into a celebration.

Greed is the Root Cause of All Evil:

All the conflicts, all the battles fought in this world are only due to greed. Even the conflicts between classes and castes are caused by greed.

Whosoever feels that the entire wealth in this world should be his or covets the wealth lying with others to be his, has set off on the journey of greed.

Lord Mahaveer quotes an excellent example to explain this, "There

is a huge festival of Vishal Kaumudi planned in Shravasti town. Priya, the fiancée of Kapil, the son of a Brahmin, wishes to participate in this festival. But she does not have any ornaments or jewelry to wear like the other women of the town. Both she and Kapil are sad because of this.

Kapil is aware that a wealthy merchant of Shravasti gifts 2 maasas (a measure of weight) of gold to the person who greets him first each morning. To reach there first to greet him, Kapil starts from his house in the midnight. The sentries think he is a thief and present him before the king.

Upon asking, Kapil confesses to the king. The king is impressed by the simplicity and forthrightness of Kapil and grants him some time so that he can ask for a suitable reward.

Kapil goes to the garden to think. His journey of what to ask starts from the point of 2 maasas of gold and gradually exceeds to more than twice this value. It keeps on doubling till such a stage that he finally wants the entire kingdom.

At that time, he is shocked by his greed and his journey is reversed. It leaves the road of greed and reaches the road to sacrifice, which ultimately leads to renunciation. The ultimate limit of greed touches the ultimate limit of infinite satisfaction.

Reflecting the glow of sacrifice on his face, he goes back to the court and says, “I got what I wanted. Now I don’t want anything from anyone.” Saying this, he walks away on the road to self restrain.

Mahaveer’s message through this example is that there is no end to greed. It is infinite like the universe. The verse that explains this goes thus:

जहा लोहो, तहा लोहो, लाहा लाहो पवड्ढई ।
को मास कयं कज्जं, कोडीए वि न निकियं ॥

It means, do not fall in the trap of greed and temptation. Greed is a mine of calamity. To hoard more than it is necessary is not just a religious sin, but a social sin also. The society is divided into two classes because of hoarding. Some people are at a great height, while some are at a very low level. After seeing the lifestyle of those on the higher side, there is an awakening of evil feelings of violence, lies, thievery etc. amongst the people at the lower level. This is the root cause of all social evil.

Mahaveer's style of living emphasizes that instead of spending / wasting one's life in pursuit of material things, trying to own them even for a moment of pleasure and in the end lusting after them and destroying one's life, it is better to conquer greed and become the owner of one's own self rather than any external possession.

Let Every Moment Count:

Today, there is a lot of emphasis on 'Time Management'. People attend workshops and training camps to learn this.

The same thing was preached by Lord Mahaveer more than 2500 years ago to his disciple Gautam through many examples. Every second, life is flowing away. It is changing. As one ages, one's senses also become weak. The material comforts given by scientific advancements cannot keep a person intact forever. That's why one should not waste any time. Life is too short. Utilize every second. Make it count.

It is so true. Anyone who is able to manage his time has been able to realize his dreams and complete every task that he has planned. That is why, do everything in time. Otherwise, if the soul sets off on its journey, then it will be difficult for it to come back to human form.

Some people manage their time well and do a lot of good during their lifetime, but in the end, fail to remain conscious and lose everything.

We too have ultimately reached human birth after traversing 8.4 million births, just like having reached the shores after crossing many seas.

Lord Mahaveer urges us not to get stuck on this shore, but move further, because that is the true meaning of life.

A Man is not Great by Birth but by Deeds

It is an insult to humanity to judge someone by his / her caste. To exploit someone based on caste and humiliate him, is a grave injustice. To distinguish anyone based on race or caste is like dividing humanity, so also is distinguishing on the basis of religion and / or politics.

Casteism, racism, color-bias are some of the most horrifying sins of mankind. This is one of the biggest problems facing mankind.

Lord Mahaveer said, “एगा मणुस्स जाई” Which means there is only one kind, and that is humanity. There is no caste, creed or race. The answer to all the problems lies in this small verse. If we assimilate this wisdom of Mahaveer, then the entire problem is solved. All the selfishness that we have nurtured by distinguishing between religion, race, caste and colour, vanishes with the acceptance of this tenet. The ego of superiority within us also vanishes.

Mahaveer himself took the initiative towards this by allowing in his Sangh, everyone including kings, monarchs, high-ranking officials, merchants, Scholars and the commonest of common people. Perhaps he is the first man in history to give women an equal status like men and make them an important component of his Sangh.

This revolutionary step proved beyond doubt that a man doesn't become great by birth, but by deeds. Mahaveer has reaffirmed this through the following verse.

“न वि मुण्डिण समणो, न ओंकारेण बमणो ।

न मुनि रण्ण वासेणं, कुस चीरेण न तावसो ॥”

No one becomes a monk just by tonsuring his head, nor does anyone become a Brahmin by chanting ‘OM’. No one becomes a sage just by living in a jungle, nor a hermit by wearing the clothes of grass. He adds;

“समयाए समणो होइ, बंभचरेण बंभणो ।

नाणेण य मुणी होइ, तवेण होइ तावसो ॥”

Holiness is achieved by practicing equality, Brahminism is achieved by celibacy (Brahmacharya). Sagacity is achieved by knowledge and performing penance makes one an ascetic. He makes it clearer in the following verse:

“कम्मुणा बम्भणो होइ, कम्मुणा होइ खत्तिओ ।

बइसो कम्मुणा होइ, सुदो हवई कम्मुणा ॥”

Deeds make a Brahmin, deeds make a Kshatiya, deeds make a Vysya and only deeds make a Shudra. The summary of Mahaveer’s teachings is that if you perform deeds that are noble, good and true, then your life too becomes more noble, better and truer.

The Identity of a Saint:

Saints are those who are the alert guardians of Mahaveer’s Dhamma Sangh. They are the messengers of the Life Guiding message of Lord Mahaveer. They are identified by various names like Sadhu, Shraman, Nirgranth, Muni, Bhikshu, etc. Each of these names has a very profound meaning.

Those who self–contemplate (atma-sadhana), seek the upliftment of self as well as others, who seek truth, practice equality and are endowed with the qualities of security and friendship, are called Sadhu.

These who toil inwardly for self-upliftment and toil intellectually for the upliftment of the society, are known as Shraman.

Those who are not affected by the vices like anger, ego, casteism, greed, wealth, anger, hatred and are beyond adamant insistence of...., such transparent persons are known as Nirgranthi.

Those who abstain from both, soul and senses, those who possess an ocean of peace and tranquility, they are Muni silence outside and turmoil from within, does not qualify one to be called a Muni.

Those who have gained self-restrain and have gained noble qualities through self-study, who subsist by asking for limited food, who are self-directed and who give advice that is useful and can be followed, they are known as Bhikshu.

These meanings attributed to the term ‘Saint’ show us the different internal and external aspects of life.

The Reasons for Sorrow and their Solutions:

One Bhikshu belonging to the Dhamma Sangh of Lord Mahaveer says, “I was a very dear son of my father. He possessed a lot of material wealth. There were many members in my family including father-mother, brothers, sisters, wife, relatives etc. But when I was suffering from severe eye trouble, there was no one who could alleviate this suffering. Some of the most renowned doctors came to treat me but failed. The massive wealth of my family could not provide me any relief. I had nothing around me which could relieve this pain.

At that time, I became assured of one thing, no one is complete just because he possesses money, wealth, relatives. All these are false. I cannot rely on them. I feel that instead of relying on these external alternatives, one should depend only on one’s self for peace and understanding.”

The words of the Bhikshu are completely true. We can see this truth around us at all times. Humanity is troubled by the curse of casteism. The happy and smiling faces that we see around us are actually hiding a lot of sorrow.

There are two types of sorrow; one is the sorrow arising out of personal behavior, while the second is one which arises out of physical discomfort.

Some people are so diverse by behavior that they get angry over small issues, get involved in anger and hatred, cross their limits, insult their elders and show disrespect. They expand the horizons of their ambitions based on their designations and honours. They pursue temptation, greed, lust and expect to derive pleasure from them.

Even after all this, they do not experience happiness. In the end, when they are helpless, they experience limitless sorrow and suffering. Their condition becomes similar to a driver who, in spite of knowing a smooth road, purposely chooses a rough road to drive on and laments when his vehicle breaks down. In the same way, these ignorant souls become troubled at the thought of death and mourn like a gambler who has lost everything in one game.

In their lifelong pursuit of material pleasure, they do not experience any happiness and by adopting the wrong path, experience endless and extreme suffering in the other world after death.

The second type of sorrow is the one which is derived out of physical discomfort. Nothing external can alleviate this sorrow. Whatever measures we take, nothing can give complete comfort to our body and nothing can protect it.

A Bhikshu of Lord Mahaveer, through deep penance, realized this

truth. He said, “during one night of pain, I realized that the entire wealth, money and my near and dear ones are all false. I must renunciate all this and set off on the pathway of Lord Mahaveer and become a Shraman. Whatever happens, by the dawn, I will sacrifice everything and become a Muni and try to eradicate the very seeds of sorrow and suffering”.

Further, he said, “my resolutions became stronger and stronger and my pain and suffering became weaker and weaker. By dawn, I became a Muni”.

This narration by the Sadhak presents before us the truth that the reasons for grief are external, but their solutions lie within us. When internally the resolution to perform good deeds becomes stronger then the grief goes away by itself. On the road to gaining knowledge, when the pursuit of truth becomes deeper and touches the soul, then sorrow goes away by itself.

When true knowledge and renunciation awakens within the inner soul, man truly becomes stronger and competent.

One’s Nature is One’s Religion:

Each component on this earth has its own nature. Their characteristic quality is defined by this very nature and so is their utility and their independence.

The characteristic of water is coldness, that of fire is heat, that of earth is to provide support, that of sky is to provide space and that of time is to change. In this way, whatever is present in this world, its nature is its religion.

In the same way, compassion, friendship, love, co-operation, empathy etc. are the religions of humanity. All these are the instinctive nature of mankind. There can be no other religion apart from these

because Lord Mahaveer says, “वत्थु सहावो धम्मो।” which means the correct nature of one is its correct religion.

A true religion does not change with the passing of time. Its institutions, its recognitions, its beliefs, its traditions can change. The practical religion makes suitable changes with time, but the spiritual religion always remains the same.

There is a lot of argument within people’s minds about religion. Some people believe that religion causes the maximum conflict. It urges people to fight with each other. It is only because of religion that there is so much conflict in the society.

But according to Lord Mahaveer, there is no debate about religion, in fact, there is a lot of compromise. Religion is not something just to give advice about, it is something to practice. Religion is very simple and uncomplicated. The traditions, rituals, fanaticism borne out of religion are because of ignorance and greed. It is this which causes bloodshed and violence in the name of religion and causes conflict. These are not religion.

Lord Mahaveer says that religion is not for breaking but for making. It is not a bondage but the road to freedom. In the sea of this world, religion is like an island which gives support to the travelers, who are sailing in this sea. Those travelers who take recourse to this island can traverse this sea with less difficulty. Only the Supreme Knowledge can actually understand true religion.

Penance - A Ritual in Pursuit of Knowledge:

During the period of his pursuit for knowledge, Lord Mahaveer would also perform penance. This is because penance is a way to absolve oneself from the baggage of hatred and anger that one has accumulated over a number of births.

For Lord Mahaveer, only fasting is not penance. Along with fasting, he also practiced different types of penance and devised a wonderful methodology to achieve self-realization through penance.

Lord Mahaveer has prescribed two methods of penance. In the first method, one should practice restraint over one's body and instinct, while in the other, one should elevate one's inner feelings to such heights that one experiences self-purification. The disciple can adopt any method according to his or her capacity to achieve self-purification.

Lord Mahaveer says, "Penance is an individual process of pursuit of knowledge. To give it a public form and make a big show out of it is just deriving publicity and not a true pursuit of knowledge."

During penance, one does not have to either trouble one's body nor does one have to adorn it. In fact, penance should be designed to control our instincts which are freely roaming about. They need to be brought under control and stabilized within ourselves. Along with this, one has to practice, humility, self-study, austerity and relinquishing any bodily activity. Together, these practices lead to a happy and contented life.

Bearing Pure Emotions:

Lord Mahaveer refers to Lesya, which are the currents of thoughts arising within one's mind. These thoughts can be pure or impure. A man can be recognized and identified because of these Lesya.

While analyzing them physically, Lord Mahaveer says, "the same way in which waves arise in an ocean, thought waves arise in the human mind. If these waves are of impure thoughts, then the Lesya are also impure and if they are of pure thoughts, then the Lesya are pure. These can be estimated from the nature and behavior of a person.

There are basically six types of Lesya. The first three i.e. Krishna

(dark), neel (blue) and kapot (brown) are impure. The persons possessing these Lesya are violent, cruel, severe, lustful etc. The other three i.e. tejo (red), padma (yellow) and shukla (white) denote calmness, innocence, stability etc. Such persons possess love, compassion and the capability to win over the basic human instincts.

One can try to understand the emotional turbulence which goes on within one's mind through this small example, which is a symbol of the various Lesya.

Six friends once approached a blackberry tree. The desire to taste the fruit started a conversation amongst them.

The first one said, "come, let us uproot this tree and then enjoy eating the blackberries." The second one said, "it is not necessary to uproot the tree. We can just cut the big branches and enjoy the fruit. The third one said, "why the big branches? We can only cut the smaller branches and eat the fruit."

The fourth friend used his intelligence and said, "why should we break the branches? We can just pluck the branches of blackberries and enjoy the fruit." Then the fifth one said, "instead of plucking the entire bunch, we can only pluck the ripe fruit."

The sixth friend quietly said, "friends, if we want to only eat the blackberries, why should we trouble the tree? See, there are so many berries lying on the ground around the tree. We can eat them and enjoy and satisfy our hunger."

This small anecdote shows us that everybody's needs are the same but the means that way we adopt to satisfy these needs vary from person to person. One person wanted to fell the entire tree to eat the berries. He is the symbol of Krishna Lesya. Progressively, the last person who advocates

eating the fruit without harming the tree is symbol of Shukla Lesya.

We have to think to which Lesya do we belong. How do we fulfill our needs? Is it by simplicity or by harming others? Are we giving grief to others in order to satisfy our needs? Is the peace derived by us based on the disturbance of others?

If it is so, then we are within the orbits of the impure Lesya. The code of conduct of Lord Mahaveer says that we must first see that the others are happy before thinking of our happiness. Only through such pure Lesya can we attain self-purity.

To explain this further, Lord Mahaveer says that a man can create his life based on the pure or impure thoughts in his mind. Impure thoughts cause the downfall of a person. They impart inertia to the soul. Impure thoughts convert into impure Lesya and can provoke impure deeds from a person.

Every Lesya has its own colour, smell and feel. The modern technological advancements have also been able to photograph these Lesya in the human mind. The good or bad colours in these photographs have correctly identified the thought patterns of that person.

These are the thoughts that influence our behavior. The circumstances within our family, our environment, the social conditions etc. influence these thoughts. All these are reasons but we have to remain alert and try to maintain ourselves in the orbit of pure Lesya because these are of immense value in uplifting our lives.

The Theory of Karma:

This theory of Karma is one of the main theories of Lord Mahaveer. He says, “all the souls in the world are one. The differences between them are mainly due to the existence or non-existence of karma amongst them.

The various thought processes and Lesya within each being, cause the different karma within each being.”

Lord Mahaveer has also propounded an important message, “we are free to perform any Karma and attach it to our souls but once they are attached to our souls, then the soul cannot be liberated unless it reaps the fruit of this Karma. That’s why, before doing anything we should think well whether we are adopting an impure way to do it. For this, we should first understand the nature of Karma to be performed and then use our wisdom before going further.

Lord Mahaveer has enunciated Eight (8) types of Karma, which can be explained in short as below.

- 1) Knowledge-obscuring (**ज्ञानावरणीय**) – In this type, there is a kind of covering over the soul which obscures the capacity to understand. A perfect example of this is a person with a blindfold. He has eyes but cannot see.
- 2) Perception-obscuring (**दर्शनावरणीय**) - This obscures even the normal ability to understand. A symbol of this is a sentry, who blocks our entry to a personal visit with the king.
- 3) Deluding (**मोहनीय**) - This becomes the cause of experiencing happiness or sorrow. A symbol of this is a person licking honey from a sword coated with honey. While he enjoys the honey, he also runs the risk of cutting his tongue on the sword.
- 4) Obstructing (**अंतराय**) – This type of Karma obscures the ability to differentiate between right and wrong and creates a perversion in our belief and behavior. A symbol of this is a drunken person who behaves badly and out of control after drinking.
- 5) Lifespan-determining (**आयुष्य**) – This type of Karma determines our

lifespan. A symbol of this is a person imprisoned in jail. He has to remain in jail till the limit of his punishment is reached.

- 6) Body-determining (**नाम**) – This type of Karma determines the type of body occupied by the soul. A symbol of this is a painter, who paints different coloured pictures using brushes and colours.
- 7) Status-determining (**गोत्र**) - This type of Karma determines in which family our soul takes birth, whether in a high ranking family or low ranking family. A symbol of this Karma is a potter, who fashions pots of different shapes and sizes from the same clay.
- 8) Feeling-producing (**वेदनीय**) - This type of Karma becomes an obstruction in obtaining results and also obstructs the ability to express the inner strength. A symbol of this is a treasure holder who does not let the abundant wealth in his treasury reach the needy.

All these Karmas bind together our past, present and future lives. Whatever we have acquired in our past life through our Karma, we are reaping the fruits of that in the present life and the Karma of present life will become the cause of our future life.

The fruit that we reap, whether good or bad, depends upon the Karma performed by us in the corresponding emotional status i.e. extreme or mild. The thing that we should realize from this is that it is not necessary that Karma begets Karma. If that were to be so, then this cycle would never end. But without understanding this, we keep blaming our Karma.

The same way in which a person bets money in a lottery or share market and does not use his common sense as to the amount he should bet, then the profit or loss made by him is not because of his Karma but because of his error in judgment or lack of use of common sense. If a person commits and acts wrongly or without understanding and does

not achieve the results desired by him then it is the result of his lack of common sense. Similarly, whether a person is rich or poor is not the result of his Karma, many times it is the imbalance of family or social orders that cause this.

Mahaveer established a Sangh, pioneered a religion and in his mellifluous voice, preached about the welfare of humanity. Some extracts of this preaching have been explained over here, which have been taken from his last utterances called Uttaradhyayan Sutra. It contains a lot more... many points of view on how to live.

The Agam, is like a tree full of juicy fruits. We can pluck these fruits, satisfy our hunger and yet new fruit grows on this tree. In the same way, anyone who deeply studies these sutras, is blessed with new thoughts, which enlighten him on how to live a peaceful and contented life.

Along with the Agam, Lord Mahaveer has enunciated many theories and principles, which are like guiding lights for humanity to live a happy life. One should also read them, imbibe them and learn from them how to live positively.

Ratnatraya – The Triple Gems of Jainism - Right Knowledge, Right Vision and Right Conduct:

A great ascetic named Acharya Umaswati, who rose in the tradition of Lord Mahaveer, once opened his eyes after completing his meditation. A knowledge seeker sitting before him, asked him, “Bhante, which is the correct pathway?”

To this, Umaswati replied, “right knowledge (Samyak Dnyan), right vision (Samyak Darshan) and right conduct (Samyak charitra) are the right pathways to restrained and coordinated life.”

There are many roads on which to travel but there is only one road

which takes us to the right destination.

The three formulae of “right knowledge (Samyak Dnyan), right vision (Samyak Darshan) and right conduct (Samyak charitra) are known as Ratnatraya or three Gems of Jainism. To learn them properly and imbibe them thoroughly is the right way to living a proper contented life, which can take one towards renunciation.

The word Samyak (right) is very important. It means whatever is true, whatever is right and whatever is real. To accept anything in the very form in which it is, accepting that every living being is living being, element is element is practicing Samyak. The correct identity of God, teacher and religion is fundamentally explained in Samyak.

Samyak Dnyan (Right Knowledge) – Knowledge is said to be the quality of soul. The speciality of knowledge is to know, to understand, feel and to experience. Inertia cannot achieve this that is why there is no knowledge in inertia. There are five type of knowledge.

- 1) **Matigyan** – Knowledge gained through intelligence (mind and senses).
- 2) **Shrutgyan** – Knowledge gained through hearing (signs, symbols and words).
- 3) **Avadhigyan** - Knowledge gained directly within limitations of space and time.
- 4) **Manahpariygyan** –
- 5) **Kevalgyan** – Knowledge gained without the aid of mind and senses.

The first four types of knowledge take one towards completeness, while the fifth type is completeness of knowledge itself.

Samyak Darshan (Right View) -

The word Darshan (view) has been adopted over here with reference to devotion. Our devotion should be meaningful, knowledge-based and mature. Just as the sun breaks over the horizon in the morning and makes everything visible to us, the same way the soul which has achieved Samyak Darshan can see the true meaning of life. From here, the soul sets off on the path to renunciation (Moksha).

Samyak Charitra (Right Conduct) -

To put into practice what is learnt and understood, is right conduct. If the knowledge and view are correct, then the conduct would also be correct. There is no double standard, lies or hypocrisy in this. Those people who have the right conduct do not exhibit any difference between what they practice and what they preach. They are the same from outside and from within.

Based on this Ratnatraya, Lord Mahaveer has given a wonderful discourse to both the Shraman and the Shravak on the way of life. This is called Agar-Anagar Dharma.

Agar-Anagar Dharma -

Lord Mahaveer has prescribed two systems of livings 1) Agar Dharma and 2) Anaghar Dharma.

Those people who wish to live along with their families and household can follow the Agar Dharma. Basically, they have to follow twelve (12) small vows called Anuvrata. By following these small vows, an individual can live a happy life within ethical, social and religious limits.

The Twelve Anuvrata of Agar Dharma -

- 1) **Pranatipat Virman Vrata** – This is also known as the vow of non-violence. The same way in which we love our lives and wish to remain safe, every living being in mother nature loves its life and wishes to

remain safe. Therefore, we have to refrain from committing violence against them.

- 2) **Mrishavad Virman Vrata** – The pursuit of truth is the pursuit of the God. That is why we should refrain from telling lies (Mrisha). A person who lies can never be a true disciple of the Lord.
- 3) **Adattadan Virman Vrata** – One should not commit robbery nor should one be part of it. One should always be honest in trade and business.
- 4) **Maithun Virman Vrata** – One should remain faithful to one's spouse and not commit adultery.
- 5) **Parigrah Pariman Vrata** – One should limit one's needs and should not hoard.
- 6) **Deesha Pariman Vrata** – One should not roam about without purpose. One should always remember that however much one may move about, one has to return home in the end.
- 7) **Upbhog Paribhog Pariman Vrata** – One should limit one's items for consumption, both in quality and quantity.
- 8) **Anarthdand Virman Vrata** – One should stay / keep away from useless influences. Similarly one should keep away from luxuries and not collect weapons.
- 9) **Samayik Vrata** – One should practice equality and keep away from discriminatory practices.
- 10) **Deshavgasik Vrata** – One should spend at least one day in a holy place and experience the life over there. ‘
- 11) **Paushadh Vrata** – At least for a day, one should sacrifice food and water and observe fast in a holy place.

12) Atithi Samvibhag Vrata – One should honour those Shraman and guests who have adopted the path of knowledge of Lord Mahaveer.

Anagar Dharma -

Lord Mahaveer has prescribed the practice of 7 Prig. Vows (Mahavrata) to those Shraman, who have risen above the material feelings and set off on the path of knowledge. This is the basis of Anagar Dharma.

The flowers of this Mahavrata have no concessions. These followers have to utilize their complete mind, body and speech, remain alert and desist from any committing any sins, keep others from committing them and not justify anybody doing so. They are as follow:

- 1) **Sarvatha Pranatipat Virman Vrata** - The Sadhak should prophet self & all other beings on this earth, treat every being as one and not harm them directly nor be a cause to it, not justify anyone who is doing so.
- 2) **Sarvatha Mrishawad Virman Vrata** - To practice truth in mind, body and spirit in totality. Not to utter a lie either by purpose, or in fun or out of fear in any way, or even justify it.
- 3) **Sarvatha Adattadan Virman Vrata** - A Sadhak should always be honest. He should not covet for anything.
- 4) **Sarvatha Maithun Virman Vrata** – One should rise above physical instinctive needs like lust. Both males and females should practice celibacy whenever possible and introspect.
- 5) **Sarvatha Parigraha Virman Vrata** – Do not covet others' belongings. Provide for the present but do not hoard thinking about the future.

Following these five big vows is mandatory for each Shraman –

Shramani. Any behavior by the Sadhak should be abiding with these vows.

Non-Violence As The Way of Life: According to Lord Mahaveer, harming any living being out of greed or ignorance should be avoided at all costs.

Mahaveer has classified violence in two types; **(1) Dravya Hinsa** - Violence of substance, **(2) Bhav Hinsa** - Violence of feelings. He has emphasized that Bhav Hinsa is worse, because even if one nurtures the feelings of violence in one's mind, it means killing a living being.

To harm any being partially or even completely kill it, is Dravya Hinsa, but even to nurture such thoughts in one's mind is the start of Bhav Hinsa. This includes scaring or terrorizing someone, causing injustice, exploitation etc, thus resulting in mental torture and more.

In the state of Bhav Hinsa, an individual does not actually kill another being, but his own emotions become violent and cruel and as per Lord Mahaveer, to hurt someone even unknowingly is violence.

Today, one sees a marked increase of violence within families, society, nations and religions. Lord Mahaveer speaks of getting rid of all this violence. He says that the seeds of violence are already present within the humans. That's why, wherever they go, they turn violent. If we want to practice non-violence, then we must destroy these seeds and not let them grow at all.

To let non-violence foster within us, Lord Mahaveer has put forth a small yet important theory, 'Am `Vwbo n`mgw' – by this, he means, “Consider everybody else's soul as our own. One should expand our sensitivities to such an extent that we start feeling that everyone else is just like us. There should be no difference between our souls and those of others.” He says, “this feeling should go so deep within us and should

rise from such depths, that if at all the urge to do violence rises within us, we must feel, who wants to kill? I! Whom do I want to kill? Me! Because, there isn't anyone else! I am the extension of each and every being! Which means, I am not killing anyone else, but me! If this emotion rises within us fully, then man won't be able to kill anyone!"

Today, this sensibility does not seem to exist within human beings. That's why there is such an increase in violence today. If violence is to stop, then our sensibilities need to be awakened! If the sensibilities are awakened, then we will also feel compassion and once compassion rises, then Bhav Hinsa will also end.

'Live and Let Live' is Lord Mahaveer's advice to humanity. The same way in which we desire to live and not die, so do other beings. We should learn to be sensitive about this, so that we can also let them live.

In the Sutra 'मित्रीमें सब्वा भूएसु', Lord Mahaveer advises us to become friends with the entire Mother Nature, including animals, plants, other living beings etc. The sensibilities of Lord Mahaveer start with our own self and merge into Mother Nature. That is why he is able to give such a wide meaning to the expression 'Non-violence'.

Lord Mahaveer advises that non-violence should begin from our own family. He clearly preaches that all those people who live under one roof commit injustice, cruelty, exploitation etc. on each other then it will have a forwarding effect on the society, politics, religion etc. and there will be no end to the disorder.

He has also advised that injustice should be opposed with non-violence. Any conflicts, reform movements which have taken place in the history of the world are a form of this. Non-violence also had a big role to play in the freedom movement of India. The powerful weapon of non-violence can stop all the forces of violence and displays the valour which

is present within the non-violent people and takes them to victory. That is why it is said that the non-violence advocated by Lord Mahaveer is that of the brave and not of the cowards.

A coward cannot follow the path of non-violence and bravery is not needed to commit violence. A coward himself is afraid and that is why attacks quietly. A non-violent person, on the other hand, is not afraid to come forward with resolution and achieve his goal.

Lord Mahaveer has advised his disciples not to cut trees, not to dig and damage the earth, as because of this Mother Nature is harmed. He believed that protection of environment is also a form of non-violence. The principle of non-violence has been accepted as the principle of ecology. If the environment is saved, so is the humanity and so is every living being. And this is possible only through non-violence.

That is why Lord Mahaveer has urged all his Sadhus, Shravaks and others to desist from violence through their mind, body and speech. He has also advised them to stop others from doing so as well as not to justify anyone committing violence.

Anekant Jeevan Darshan -

To address the conflicts, contentious issues, dissents in the families, society, politics, religion etc. Lord Mahaveer has propounded the theory of 'Anekant'.

Lord Mahaveer says that truth has many faces. One should not look at truth only through one's own eyes. One should accept that what others see can also be the truth. This attempt at redefining and understanding truth is known as Anekant Theory.

The theory of Anekant advices us to have the capacity to listen to the views of everyone. In fact, this is an expanded form of the theory of

Ahimsa (non-violence) and non-violence should also be worshipped as per the Anekant Theory.

Ahimsa is a way of life, while Anekant is the vision to understand the truth. If there is Ahimsa (non-violence) in deed and Anekant in thought, only then can one's life maintain a true equilibrium. A non-violent person only can practice Anekant. Adamant, competitive, supercilious persons cannot either understand or practice Anekant.

We can realize this through this small example given below. A person standing on the ground floor of a multi-storeyed building is having a conversation with another person standing on the top floor of the same building.

The person standing on the top floor sees an elephant walking on the street. He informs this to the person below. That person looks around but cannot see the elephant because it is far away.

He says to the person on the top floor, “why are you making fun of me? Why are you telling lies?” The top floor person says, “there is an elephant. I am not telling lies.” The person below is not convinced and argument starts amongst them.

That is all! Most of the conflicts in the world start over small matters. Each person sees truth with his own eyes and tries to prove the other wrong.

If we want to liberate ourselves from this then we will have to take recourse to Anekant Theory.

Today, there is a conflict within the family, the society, politics, religion and all over the world. The only reason for this is, we do not look at things from the other person's view. We feel that what we have seen is the only truth and we insist on its finality. The result of this is conflict and

violence.

The Anekant Theory of Lord Mahaveer says that truth is not one-dimensional, but multi-dimensional. Therefore, truth does not belong to one but many. When the incomplete truths of many people come together, then the whole truth emerges.

Aparigraha - The Art of Living :

Lord Mahaveer believed that temptations, desire, attraction towards anything is like greed or possessiveness. To hoard anything more than necessary is a kind of possessiveness, which converts in to greed. It is one of the many reasons of conflict.

There are some people who hoard so much that they are able to fulfill the needs of many of their future generation. On the other hand, there are many who do not have enough to even subsist for that very moment also. This is one of the most important reasons of the conflict. This has divided the world into rich and poor.

If one looks at the history of various conflicts, wars, violence of this world, this affinity towards possessiveness (Parigraha) has been one of the major causes. Whenever there is a war or a riot, one sees a lot of looting. This is the result of Parigraha.

Parigraha or possessiveness has now become a subject of competition. The massacre and killings that we see of small and big beings around the world are because of the tendency towards possessiveness.

Man has also converted the female into a possession. Like every other material things, she has become a commodity, which is to be used and even traded around the world. This is one of the most pervert forms of possession.

Lord Mahaveer first raised his voice against this. When he was so

strongly advocating for freedom of not just living but even non-living things, how could he tolerate slavery or bondage?

He fought against this and made women aware of their own rights and gave them a position of eminence. But in today's competitive world, she is once again being used as commodity.

To rise above this tendency of possession, we will have to ponder over this Sutra of Lord Mahaveer, which says that a desire is as big and endless as the sky. If one has to conquer this desire, one has to adopt a lifestyle of satisfaction. Only satisfaction can lead to victory over greed and possessiveness.

Lord Mahaveer has taught us the art of living based on the theories of non-violence (अहिंसा), Anekant (अनेकांत) and non-possessiveness (अपरिग्रह). This is perhaps one of the greatest philosophies ever. The solution to conflict, arguments and possessiveness perhaps lies in the three theories mentioned above. If we have to overcome the problems of environment, terrorism, social injustice etc. then we have to understand and absorb the three theories given above.

Vegetarianism:

The first condition to practicing non-violence is to become vegetarian. Vegetarianism is the outcome of the micro-thoughts of Lord Mahaveer. This theory is based on our acceptance of the 'right to existence' of all living beings in nature and developing sensitivity and understanding forwards them.

Vegetarianism is the best practice of living to achieve purity of mind and body as well developing spirituality. This word was not known till about two centuries ago. It has been brought into practice just a few centuries ago.

It was only when the followers of Lord Mahaveer took to vegetarianism that this word came into existence. Initially, it was limited to only not killing animals. But the followers of Lord Mahaveer took it even a few steps further.

Not to kill animals, not to encourage someone else to do so, nor support anyone doing so. It is who finally, turn the question of eating meat does not arise at all vegetarianism slowly grew out of their.

During life time, occurrence of a bit of violence is inevitable, but the objective is to keep it as minimum as possible. Lord Mahaveer developed these sensibilities to have the least possible Dravya Hinsa and totally got rid of Bhav Hinsa.

The inspiration behind the message of non-violence, vegetarianism, abolishing of sacrifices and animal killings amongst the people of India is the message of non-violence of Lord Mahaveer. Some people are attributing wrong meaning to the term vegetarianism. They are including eggs and fish as a part of vegetarian diet. This is the result of their perverted mindset and poor logic.

If Lord Mahaveer has advocated the saving of even the tiniest of beings, then how can we include the beings whose all five senses are either fully developed or about to develop, as part of vegetarianism? Diet comes later, but when we even think of killing them, then we are associating ourselves with Bhav Hinsa. We are killing them with very cruel emotional outcome so how can we be non-violent or vegetarian? This is worth contemplating.

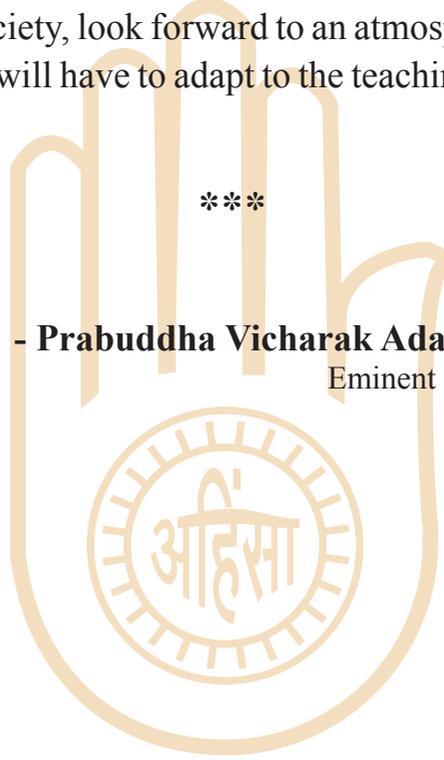
One thing is certain that, if we desire to nurture human sensibilities and maintaining environmental balance, then we will have to adopt vegetarianism. Going further, it can be said with assertion that if human beings are to survive on this earth, then they have no alternative but to

adopt vegetarianism!

There is a marked increase in the elements that will take humanity towards destruction. That is why there is so much unrest in the world. There is chaos and confusion everywhere. The environment is being destroyed. The atrocities on children, girls and women all increasing.

If we desire peace in the world, seek the development of the individual and the society, look forward to an atmosphere of happiness and satisfaction, then we will have to adapt to the teachings of Lord Mahaveer!

- **Prabuddha Vicharak Adarsh Rishi Ji Maharaj**
Eminent Jain Scholar, Ahmednagar



EQUALITY OF RELIGIONS

There are many faiths. They are all based on common fundamentals. The Soul is one, but there are innumerable bodies, which cannot be rolled into one. The root of religion is one like the root of a tree, but it has numerous branches.

The Principal faiths of the world constitute revelation of Truth, but they have been outlined by imperfect men; they have been affected by imperfections alloyed with untruth. If we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us also must be imperfect. And if all faiths outlined by men are imperfect, the question of comparative merit does not arise. Reverence for other faiths need not blind us to their faults. We must be keenly alive to the defects of our own faith also, yet not leave it on that account but try to overcome those defects.

All obstacles in our path will vanish, if only we observe the golden rule that we must not be impatient with those we consider to be in error, but must be prepared, if need be, to suffer in our own person. One must, therefore, entertain the same respect for the religious faith of others as one accords to one's own.

- Mohandas K. Gandhi



TORAH - THE HOLY SCRIPTURE OF JUDAISM A TRUE LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURE

THE DOCTRINES OF JUDAISM

The fundamental principles of Judaism is its belief in the Unity and oneness of the Universal Creator, as exemplified in its basic prayer, “Hear, O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Blessed be His name, whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever. “Israel here refers to the Jewish people, who are descendants of Abraham, Issac and Jacob (renamed Israel).

The concept of the God of all creation and mankind carried with it the corollary of the brotherhood of man, bound together by mutual love. This was a revolutionary thought at a time when relations between human beings

were dictated almost solely by violence, fear envy and rivalries. There are innumerable examples of Jews in history who have died as martyrs, rather than give up their faith. When after the destruction of the second temple in 70 AD, the Jews scattered throughout the world and lost contact with the mainstream of their faith but retained their religion mainly by the daily recitation of the divine formula contained in their prayer. Judaism is one of the world's oldest religions. Judaism is more than a religion. It is a way of life. We should enjoy life and ensure that others do likewise. Over the centuries, it has created standards of practice, most of which have been codified in the Schulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law). Judaism has many lessons to teach addition to those about god. it has a history, a culture and at-least one language of interest. It has a strong ethnic dimension. Judaism gave the world the Torah (Book of Life - Jeevan Granth). The brotherhood of humanity is the natural corollary to the idea that we are all children of one and the same God and this was indeed a revolutionary thought when devotees of different Gods considered one another as rivals in antagonistic competition. From this very concept, Judaism evolved throughout the ages and was codified by the Prophet Moses (Moshe in hebrew) after the exodus from Egypt nearly 3500 years ago in the shape of the "Ten Commandments" given by the Almighty to those who agreed to abide by them. These form the foundation of the Torah the way of life and Learning (Torah is the Hebrew word for the Pentateuch, the first Five Books of Moses in the Old Testament of the Bible)..

SACRED WRITINGS OF JUDAISM

TANAK (BIBLE)

The Torah is a part of the Jewish Bible known is Hebrew as Tanak (the word is derived from the first letters of the three portions into which it is dived):

Torah (law or guide)

Nay-Bee-Eem (prophets)

Kay-Tu-Veem (writings – psalms, proverbs, etc.)

The entire Torah is read over a period of one year in progressive sections (Sidras) on every Sabbath; on festivals and on every Monday and Thursday in the Synagogue morning services when a quorum (minyan) of 10 men, which includes boys of 13 and above, is present. In most synagogues the prayers are recited in Hebrew and this has ensured the link between Jews of every generation with their ancient roots. It may also be mentioned at this stage that Judaism no longer has a system of a priestly cast; the rabbis are the qualified teachers and guides out any member of the congregation who has the necessary ability, knowledge and experience can conduct the religious services. The descendants of the ancient priests (Cohanim) do, however, perform a special role on certain occasions when they bless the congregation in a prescribed form, in commemoration of the ritual in the temple of ancient days.

TORAH THE BOOK OF LIFE (JEEVAN GRANTH)

Torah means “to teach” (Leviticus 10:11). The meaning of the word is therefore “teaching” “doctrines” or “instructions”, the commonly accepted “law” gives a wrong impression. The word is used in different ways but the underlying idea of “teaching” is common in all. In the “Pentateuch” it is used for all the body of laws. Prophet Moses received the Torah from Mount Sinai (Avot 1:1), yet there is an ancient tradition that the Torah existed in heaven not only before God revealed it to Moses but before the world was created. Rabbi Akiva called the Torah as “the precious instrument by which the world was created (Avot 1:14). It is said that God created the world by looking into the Torah as an architect builds a palace by looking into blueprints.

It was said that Commandment is a lamp and the Torah is Light of

Life (Proverb 6:23). Psalm 119 containing 176 verses is a song of Love for the Torah whose precepts give peace and understanding. The Torah was also called “Perfect” its ordinances “sweeter than honey and the flow of honey combs (Psalms 19:8 and 11, Proverb 16:24). Rabbi Simeon Ben Azzi, the disciple of Rabbi Akiva said that its fundamental principle is the verse (Genesis 5:1) which teaches that all human beings are descended from the same man and created by God in his image and likeness (Genesis 24:7) Often Torah was personified. Not did God take council with the Torah before He created the world but according to one interpretation the plural in “Let us make man” (Genesis 1:26) refers to God and the Torah (Tanh.Pekudei 3). The Torah appears as the daughter of God and the bride of Israel. On occasion, the Torah is obliged to plead the case of Israel before God (Exodus 29:4). It is said in Psalm 103 that the God our Lord is compassionate and gracious, Long suffering, abundance in mercy and slow in anger and therefore we all must have these virtues because we have been created in the image of God.

RELIGION

According to Torah, religion is thinking and awakening. It goes with one’s intellect. It is wisdom and enlightenment. It promotes precision and righteousness. It encourages one to turn to work to make a better life. It grants one true happiness. It gives peace and stability. It purifies mind, so much so that one engaged in good thoughts, words, and deeds becomes God-like. Religion is the straight path of truth that takes people ever forward to improvement in their mental, physical, spiritual and material life. Religion is a forward march to perfection. It is the march of perfecting life to eternity and divinity.

RELIGION AND GOODNESS

According to precepts of Torah, the practice of religion is be closely

integrated with daily living and every ordinary human action must be invested with the realization that it is being watched and noted by the Almighty. If we separate goodness from religion or religion from goodness then we are denying God's role in our everyday life. Religion is not given to us once and for all as something to be preserved in safe deposit box. Faith is not a commodity to be placed in a deep freeze to be defrosted in time of need. To be of value religion must be used and not abused. It must be used constantly, at all times.

UNITY OF MANKIND

“Hinney ma tov u-ma-na-im, Shevet Akhim gamy a-khad.” Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity. (Psalm 133). Unity is the very essence of the Creative Being. From this very concept Judaism evolved he ages and was codified by Prophet Moses. These form the foundation of Torah, the way of life and learning.

UNIVERSAL LOVE

There are 613 precepts in the Torah (first five books in the Bible) to regulate the daily life of every Jew and this number is symbolized in the threads of the prayer shawl (Tsisith) that every male adult Jew is enjoined to wear at prayers, as a reminder of the obligations imposed upon him and as a perpetual reminder of his duties and obligations.

Rabbi (the word means a teacher or guide similar to a guru or Shastri or Pandit in India). Hillel was one asked by an agnostic to propound the Torah to him while he stood on one foot, the Rabbi replied, “What is hurtful and hurtful to yourself do not to your fellow-man. That is the whole of Torah and the remainder is but commentary. Go learn it.” In other words, Love. The Ten Commandments are immediately followed by these words : And thou shall love thy Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might. And these words, which I command shall

be upon thy heart, and thou shall teach them diligently unto thy children and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and thou walkest by the way and when thou sittest in thy house, and thou risest up. And thou shall bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and thy shall be for frontlets between thine eyes and thou shall write them upon the doorpost of thy house and upon thy gates (Mezuzoth) which are fixed on the doorpost at the entrance to every Jewish home and building. The love of God which is meaningless if it is not displayed in the love of our fellowmen, is to be remembered and practised every moment of our life. For example the first thing we have to do in the morning, after walking and cleaning ourselves, is to thank the Almighty for the gift of life. The inspiration from this practice will be realised when we consider that there is so much we have to be happy about, rather than to make ourselves miserable by casting our eyes and desires on what we do not possess. One day each and every one of us has to give up our possessions, when we have to face the Almighty and on that day of Judgement only our good deeds will accompany us and be the defenders of our salvation. Similarly, the good and moral life has to be taught to our children at all times by example and precept and not only when praying in the synagogues. The precepts have always to be before our eyes and engraved deep in our hearts. Then only does religion cease to be hypocrisy. The emphasis in Judaism on loving kindness is a pointer to the universality and oneness of all religions having a common foundation, the outward differences being superficial.

In other words, love and social justice are the mainsprings of ethical behaviour and so important is it that in Judaism the cardinal daily prayer known as the Shema is immediately followed by these words “and thou shall, love the Lord thy god with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might and these words which I command thee this day shall be upon thy heart, and thou shall teach them diligently unto thy children and shall talk of them when thou liest down and when thou risest up, and thou

shall bind them for a sign upon thine hand and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes and thou shalt write them upon doorposts and upon thy gates.”

MORAL LIFE

Torah lays great emphasis on the importance of a good moral life at every living moment and does not advocate asceticism, celibacy and self-imposed suffering, since salvation is obtainable only through good deeds. The observance of certain rituals and formalities, while significant if they are properly understood, cannot be a substitute for right living and it is only if such an attitude is adopted that religion ceases to be mere hypocrisy. In the Bible there is a constant dialogue between God and man who is enjoined to be holy because “I the Lord the God am Holy”. Hence there is a daily discipline of prayer to be said, apart from the prayers on feasts and special occasions.

In the morning prayers, Jews are reminded to be thankful to the Creator for the great and wonderful gift of life, and if one follows this thought to its logical conclusion, one can achieve a spirit of peace and contentment by realizing and counting the blessing from day to day rather than by bemoaning what one does not possess.

Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments as contained in the Holy Scripture Torah were given to the Children of Israel, inscribed on two tablets of stone, five on each side. This arrangement of the Commandments emphasizes visually the two types of obligation that every being duty towards God and duty towards his fellowman.

The importance of the Ten Commandments lies in the moral and ethical purpose with which it invests man’s existence. And God spoke all these words, saying:

1. I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
2. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain;
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labour, and do all thy works; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea; and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day; and hallowed it.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
6. Thou shalt not murder.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

Exodus 30 1-14.

The first five commandments deal entirely with man's duties to God. It is interesting that the Fifth commandment, which calls upon us to honour our parents, is included as a duty to God. This is true because our parents are partners with God in creating us. When we honour our parents; we also honour and respect God with whom they are associated in the act of creation.

The last five commandments refer explicitly to man's duty towards his fellowman, teaching respect for life and property. All our laws against murder and theft giving false testimony come from these Commandments. Religious people have always claimed if every man lived by these laws there would never be bloodshed, hatred, war, envy, or evil in this world. A man, at all times, would have dignity and his life would have value.

It is very meaningful that, in the Ten commandments, God placed man's duty to man on the same level as He placed man's duty to God. We might have thought that the Ten Commandments, which are the most important religious teaching, would be concerned solely with how to worship God. But both sets of duties, the duty to God and the duty to man, are included in the Ten commandments.

Therefore, one cannot say, "How I behave towards my fellow man is not important as long as I believe in God and pray to Him." Nor can one say, "I do not have to believe in God as long as I behave properly towards others." Morality is based on belief in God, on God's commandments and His wishes. If we separate goodness from religion or religion from goodness, then we are denying God's role in our everyday life.

THOU SHALL LOVE THY LORD WITH ALL THY HEART AND SOUL

We fulfill our duties to God and man, not from fear, but from love of God and man. The Torah says: "And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might." It also teaches, "and thou shall love neighbour as thyself." How meaningful it is for love of fellow man and love of God to be intertwined, one with the other. It must be noted here when the Jews speak of their being a chosen people they mean chosen to receive and spread the divine commandments and not selected for special favours or privileges.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF

There is no one who knows your many faults better than yourself but still you love yourself, notwithstanding. And so you must love your neighbour, no matter how many faults you see in him. The Torah emphasizes this and equates our relationship to God with our relationship to our fellowmen. Jewish ethics are closely tied to the idea of unity of the human race. Judaism forbids every sort of animosity, envy or unkindness towards any one of whatsoever race, nationality, or religion. Judaism demands consideration for the life, health, powers and possessions of others and injuring a fellowman by force or cunning or in any other manner depriving him of his property. Again, Torah teaches that a fellowman's honor is as sacred as one's own. It, therefore, forbids degrading him by evil reports, vexing him with ridicule, or mortifying him. We must not hurt any other being through falsehood or slander. No hatred must be felt against evildoer. No act or word of kindness must ever be avoided. We have moral duties towards animals also. All unnecessary cruelty to any living thing is strictly prohibited, for all are God's creatures. Charity is of supreme importance because it saves you from death

Most importantly, Torah commands respect for the religious convictions of others. It therefore forbids aspersion or disrespectful treatment of the customs and symbols of other religions. It recommends the practice of charity towards all, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, nursing the sick, and comforting those that mourn. It therefore forbids limiting our care-giving acts only to our near and dear ones

while withholding our sympathy when our neighbour suffers.

PSALMS

The psalms are a set of 150 inspirational and devotional hymns that have a universal appeal and constitute the foundation of Jewish (and even

Christian) services throughout the world like the famous twenty-third psalm. They are a source of strength to those in doubt.

PROVERBS

About the proverbs, special mention need be made here of the one that says, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Fear here is not to be interpreted as cringing cowardly behaviour but rather as reverence and respect for the Almighty. For a healthy and disciplined society it is necessary that the individuals composing it should know that they cannot indulge in perversity and lawlessness (in infringing the Ten Commandments) with impunity. The evil qualities and inclinations of mere morals must be curbed and subdued by a real fear of wrongdoing, without which crimes both great and small would be uncontrollably rampant. The philosophy of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a was never intended to incite revenge but rather to emphasize that they must be apt punishment and retribution for harm done to another. At a time in history when it was a life for just a tooth or an eye, it was indeed a leap forward in thinking to ordain that the punishment must never exceed the extent of the sin or error committed.

TALMUD

The Talmud is a vast collection of writings, which contains the teaching of the rabbis. Its basis is the collection of rabbinical teachings made by Judah the Prince (the Mishnah). But the Gemara, the collection of discussions of the Mishnah, forms the larger part of the Talmud. The Mishnah is oral law codified around 200CE and the Gemara is commentary be considered an encyclopaedia of Jewish rules, Knowledge and folklore.

THIRTEEN ARTICLES OF THE CREED AS GIVEN IN TORAH

The thirteen principles of the Jewish faith formulated by Rabbi

Mainmonides (1135-1204), chanted by many congregations at the end of most religious services, may be summarized as follows:

Magnified and praised be the living God;

He is one

He has neither bodily form nor substance His existence has no beginning

He is the Lord of the Universe

He gave his gifts to His prophets

Moses was His special prophet

He gave us all the Law of Truth

God's Law is unchangeable

He knows our secret thoughts

He is kind to those who love Him but punishes evil

He will give us salvation in the end

He will revive the dead in healing love.

REPENTANCE

Torah teaches us that at nightfall, and at dawn, search well into the nature of your dealing. Let your dealings bring no blush upon the cheek, commit no sin in the expectation of repentance. At first sin is an indifferent stranger; later a welcome guest; finally the master. Better to suffer the derision of man than to be a sinner in the eyes of God.

SAYING OF THE FATHERS AS EXPLAINED IN TORAH

Four are the temperaments of men: easily provoked and easily appeased, his loss is cancelled by his gain. Provoked with difficulty and easily appeased, he is saintly. Easily angered and appeased with difficulty,

he is a churl.

Four are the characteristics found among students: quick to learn and quick to forget, his gain cancelled by his loss. Slow to learn and slow to forget, his loss is cancelled by his gain. Quick to learn and slow to forget, he is a happy lot. Slow to learn and quick to forget, he is an unhappy lot.

Four are the characteristics among those who attend the house of study: he who attends but practices not has the reward of his going. He who practices but does not attend has the reward of his practicing. He who both attends and practices is saintly. But he who neither attends nor practices is recreant.

When love is dependent on a consideration, should that consideration disappear so does the love; but a love that is free from ulterior interest will never come to naught. What is an example of such a dependent love? That of Amnon for Tama, and an example of a love that is free of all ulterior consideration is that of David and Junathan.

Whoever possesses these three qualities belongs to the disciples of our Father Abraham – a generous eye, a humble spirit and a meek soul; but he who possesses the three opposite qualities, an evil eye, a proud spirit and a haughty soul, is of the disciples of the wicked Balaam. What is the difference between the disciples of the one and of the other? The disciple of our father Abraham enjoy this world and inherit the world to come, in keeping with what is said in the Book of Proverbs, “That I may cause those who love me to inherit substance and may fill their treasuries.” But the disciples of the wicked Balaam fall heir to punishment and go down to destruction in the grave, in keeping with what is said in the Psalms, “But Thou, God wilt bring them down to the destructive grave, men of bloodshed and falsity who will not live out half their days; but as for me, I trust in Thee.”

PRAYER

The precepts of Torah says that Prayer plays a very important role in Judaism. They constitute an individual communal approach to God through meditation, pleas, requests, confession, supplication or expression of praise and thanksgiving, whereby communication can be established between human beings and the Creator. After destruction of the temple and the dispersion of the Jews, the temple rituals were replaced by devotional prayers in the synagogue in the spirit of the sublime teaching of the prophets. The rabbis in course of time formulated three daily religious services evening morning and afternoon – and each congregation was led by a professional or voluntary amateur cantor (termed Hazan) since a major portion of the services are sung or chanted. There are also special and additional prayer services on the Sabbath, and other holy days.

The synagogue

The synagogue is a place of Jewish worship, declared so by a religious ceremony when newly constructed or before initial use. It is generally a simple and austere structure devoid of any figurines or statues owned by the congregation for purpose of daily and other prayers; also very often a centre for Jewish communal, social and other sacred books. The synagogue originated with the dispersion of the Jews after the destruction of the first temple in 586 BCE and of the second temple in 70 CE, when the Jews replaced the temple rituals and sacrifices by prayer offerings and services.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Torah says religious observances and rituals are of no value whatsoever when do not lead to right conduct and moral behaviour. The principles have to be put into practice at every moment if they are to be meaningful. Gratitude to the Supreme Creator has to be felt and expressed at every

moment. Thus, a prayer of thankfulness has to be uttered every morning for the God-given gift of life. Blessings are recited on the occurrence of natural phenomena like rain, thunder and lightning; thanks must be tendered for the pleasures and sustenance derived from pleasant sight, odours, good news, food of all kinds and pleasant happenings.

Just as in the Torah there is a constant dialogue between God and man, so in journey through life every good act is sanctified by its relationship with the Divine. This is the best antidote to envy, jealousy and greed that play havoc with the human personality. The divine ties are emphasized at certain milestones of a Jew's journey from the cradle to the grave. On the eighth day after birth the male child is circumcised in accordance with God's covenant with Abraham, when child is named. For girls, there is also a religious naming ceremony. At the age of 12 the girl becomes a Bat Mitzvah (Daughter of commandment). At the age of 13, the boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah (Son of commandment) assuming the full responsibility of an adult and is capped up to read from the Sefer Torah in the synagogue congregational gathering. The girls and the boys are not only adults physically but also they are ethically and morally adult persons.

At the time of marriage, bride and bridegroom meet under the canopy (the Chupah on the Tebah/Bimah) in the presence of the whole congregation in the synagogue, with the rabbi or other leading member of the community officiating. The custom of the bridegroom crushing a tumbler towards the end of the ceremony is thought to be a solemn reminder for every Jew in the time of his highest joy of the tragedy of the destruction of the Temple thousand of years ago. The ceremony ends with the recital of seven benedictions changed by one of the congregants given special honour. The couple then go to the Holy Ark (where the Sefer Torah are stored) and after paying their respects to the holy words of the Lord enshrined in the Torah, leave the synagogue amidst congratulations.

Confetti and rice grains showered on the couple connote good wishes for fertility.

The Jew, if conscious, is enjoined to die with recitation of the shema – the fundamental article of faith in the unity and goodness of the creator. After bathing the body and before it is removed to the cemetery, psalms and prayers are said and more prayers are recited at the cemetery before the body draped in a white cotton garment is lowered into a freshly dug grave, with the head facing towards Jerusalem. In the case of a male, his tallith (prayers shawl) is buried with him. In accordance with the injunction in the Torah, “For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return”, the body is interred without any coffin, or if there is a coffin, the lid is removed so that the dust with which the grave is filled touches the body.

A Jew generally covers his head in the synagogues and elsewhere during the various religious services. This is considered sign of male piety and female modesty.

DIETARY LAWS

There are certain dietary laws laid down in the Torah like the prohibition of meat from animals that do not have cloven hoofs and do not chew the cud (so banning pig flesh), of fish that have neither scales nor fins and the draining away of blood from all animal food before cooking or eating it and avoidance of creatures that are scavengers. The meat eaten must be kosher (ritually cleaned) from minimize pain and make the blood flow out. Another example of a food restriction is the law prohibiting the consumption of meat and milk foods at the same time even the utensils and dishes therefore must be separate.

CHARITY

Charity must be practiced and a proportion of one’s income should be earmarked for this purpose, as a visible expression of universal love.

Charity also saves a man from death. And when you reap the harvest of the land, thou shalt not wholly Reap the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shall thou Gather the gleaning of they harvest; thou shall leave them for the Poor, and for the stranger, I am the Lord the Lord Thy God.

TOLERANCE

Torah teaches us how one has to be tolerant towards representatives of other religions, respect of human rights and rights of minorities must be the basis for peaceful co-existence between various religions and will defuse tension created by ignorance. It provides us with the opportunity to discover and remove stereotypes and social stigmas associated with perceived differences arising from nationality, religion or background. According to Torah, tolerance is an inner strength, which enables the individual to face and transform misunderstandings and difficulties. A tolerant person is like a tree with an abundance of fruits, even when pelted with sticks and stones. Tolerance is integral, and essential to the realization of human rights and the achievement of peace.

PEACE

Peace is one of the most desirable fruits of salvation as emphasized in the Torah. The peace that comes with reaching Ultimate Reality brings tranquility to the heart and clarity to mind. It is the essence of passions, desires, anxieties and wondering thoughts; the heart becomes cool and content. The Torah praise the peace and tranquility that comes to the soul that is firm in faith. Peace is the foundation, the major building block upon which a healthy, functional society stands. Peace is the prominent characteristic of a civilized society and the character of a society can be seen in and through the response of the collective consciousness of its members to the demands of peace. A civilization can be heaven or hell

depending on the character of the shared consciousness of its members. The world today lacks peace basically because we do not peace from core of our hearts. The major problem on earth is not the bomb or the presence of nuclear or chemical weapons. The are actually the products of the problem. The main problem is that human imagination has not yet expanded to the point where it comprehends its own essential unity.

Lev. 23:22

KABALLA AND JEWSISH MYSTICISM

The world Kaballa originally meant “reception” and related to the oral Jewish tradition handed down by Rabbis from generation to generation. The mainspring of the Kaballa is a deep rooted belief in a perpetual inter-relationship between God in the infinite power and man in the physical world as we know it; man can achieve closeness to God by subduing his own evil inclinations and bringing about spiritual regeneration of mankind, through prayers, meditation and interpretation of the Divine mysteries hidden in the Torah. Kabbalists emphasize the importance of mystical formulas and the like in the recitation of prayers and psalms.

TORAH AND MEDITATION/SPIRITUALITY

Every man should devote much time to meditation between hi Creator and himself. He should judge himself and determine if his actions are correct, and if they are appropriate before the Lord who has granted him life, and who is gracious to him every moment. If he finds that he has acted properly, he should fear no one – officials, no robbers, no beats – nothing in the universe except the Lord. When he learns this, he will have attained, first: perfection in the study of the Holy Scriptures and in meekness, and second: perfect worship wherein all material considerations are forgotten; worship asks for no personal benefits, and which prompts one to forget

his very existence. Meditation before God brings forth the holy spark that is found in every person, for it lights up his heart, and thereby deprives him of all desire for evil. In meditation a man may discuss his tribulations with God; he may excuse himself for his misdeeds and implore the Lord to grant him his desire to approach nearer to God. A man's offence separate him from his Maker. It is impossible to be a good person without devoting each day a portion of time to commune with the Lord in solitude, and to have conversation from the heart with him. Even though a man may feel he cannot concentrate adequately upon the theme of his meditation, he should nevertheless continue to express his thoughts in words. Words are like water, which fall continuously upon a rock until it breaks it. In similar fashion they will break through a man's flinty heart. In true meditation a man cries to the Lord like a child to his father who is about to go on a journey. There is no sadness in this weeping only longing and yearning. As per Torah, words are the shell, meditation the kernel. Words are the body of the prayer, and meditation its spirit. We do not even know how we are supposed to pray. All we do is call for help because of the need only we are not able to express what the soul means. That is why do not merely ask God to hear our call for help, but also beg Him who knows what is hidden, to hear silent call of the soul.

Nothing in this world can be thoroughly accomplished without concentration, which is the beginning of meditation. Once concentration is fully acquired, it is easy for a person to meditate. Mystical inspiration will automatically flow, once the power of concentration is acquired. Torah speaks of self-denial. People think it means not eating not drinking, giving up all that is beautiful and good in life, going somewhere in solitude never to appear again. It is wrong interpretation of a true teaching. Self-denial comes from self-forgetting. If one studies one's surroundings one finds that those who are happy are so because they have less thought of self. If they are unhappy it is because they think of themselves too much. A

person is more bearable when he thinks less of himself, and a person is unbearable when he is always thinking about himself. There are many marries in life, but the greatest misery is self-pity. That person is heavier than rock, heavy for himself and heavy for others. Others cannot bear him; he cannot carry himself. Meditation has nothing to do with the mind. This is the experience of the consciousness. Meditation is diving deep within himself. It is in this experience that one attains the bliss of meditation. In meditation, we communicate with our inner silent life. The knowledge of self is like union with God. Self-realization is spiritual attainment. Meditation in Jewish experience represent a rich treasure of wisdom of special interest to modern man. Meditative wisdom focuses on the inner man; the spiritual dimension of his nature and deeper hungers of his spirit that cannot be satisfied on the material or sociological planes alone. Like Abraham, Moses and Daniel there are many examples in the Bible about observance of the principles of meditation. Prophet Elijah, King Solomon, King David and others also practised meditation.

Torah also taught us : “If a man prays only according to the precise text of the prayer and adds nothing from his own heart, his prayer is not complete. After we have recited the traditional prayers, beautiful as they are, we often have the feeling that in our hearts there linger some precious sentiments to which we have no expression. These are our own personal yearnings, our most intimate thoughts. But sometimes even we are not able to find the words, for there are “thoughts that lie too deep for words”. At such a time, we pray without words, as Jewish people do in moment of silent prayer called Amidah. The Baal Shem Tov once declared: “When wood burns it is the smoke alone that rises upward leaving the grosser element below, so it is with prayer. The sincere intention alone ascends to heaven. Sincere intentions find wings without words. The Psalmist tells us, “To you silent is praise. We can praise in silence, we can petition in silence, we can pray in silence.” The true purpose of Torah is to elevate

our souls so as to bring us close to God as well as to sanctify the world and in order to achieve this goal, we must maintain a high level of spirituality. It is a quest for the perfection of the world through deeds of kindness, compassion so that the world will eventually become a place where harmony, compassion love and justice will reign. May we all have richer spiritual lives so that we will feel more connected to God and to man.

CONCEPT OF NON –VIOLENCE IN TORAH

The concept of Ahimsa (Non-Violence) in Torah finds expression in ten commandments, “though shall not kill” and “thou shall not covet” which goes to the root of all forms of crime, including murder since inordinate desire for anything sets in motion. The vision of non-violence and universal peace is gloriously expressed in chapter 2 of the book of Isaiah, the prophet:-

“...And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks.
nation shall not lift up sword against nation
neither shall they learn war anymore.”

It is not enough merely to keep in mind the negative admonition to kill but to transmute human energy and efforts into peaceful and constructive actions. The prophet showed a rare insight into human nature by stressing that the best way to destroy destructive ideas and inclinations is to replace them by peaceful, constructive once. The vision of non-violence and peace even extends to the animals.

In order to achieve the ideal state of non-violence and peaceful existence, a starts must be made in the mind itself and Judaism stresses this at all times and in every day. The commonest Hebrew word in this context is Shalom, which broadly connotes peace in all its ramifications. Shalom means not only freedom from all disasters but health, welfare,

security and tranquillity as so well put by Montefiore:-

“The peace which alone reconciles and strengthens, which calms us and clears

Our vision, which frees us from restlessness and from the bondage of unsatisfied desire, which gives us the consciousness of attainment, the Consciousness of permanence even amid the transit or iness of ourselves and Of outward things.”

The best non-violent way to respond to a rude, rough and violent world or action is to give a soft answer. In the worlds of the proverbs “a soft answer turneth away wrath; but a grievous world stirreth up anger.” It is not enough to be merely passively non-violent. We must aim to make friends of our enemies and of those who wish to harm us. Judaism holds all forms of vengeance, violence and bloodshed in deep abhorrence. The man of violence will bring retribution upon himself. The Lord frustrates the plans of nations to harm other nations wicked and arrogant people and nations cannot escape the eyes of the Almighty who brings succour to the poor and helpless. Rabbi Joshua said, “the evil eye, the evil inclination and hatred of his fellow creatures drive a man out of the world.

Since ideas of violence and hatred breed in the mind, non-violence cannot be fostered without a constant projection of its beauty and value in daily living. The man dedicated to non-violence has to be meek and even forgive insults hurled at him. Kindness has to be shown not only to human beings but also to animals. Rabbi Judah put it, “mislead no one through thy actions designedly, injustice must be done to none, whether he belongs to our religion or another. A person whose thinking is constantly oriented towards deeds will naturally be far removed from any act of Violence or evil.” Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi also said that “Whatever is obtained through violence and hatred cannot be retained for ever but

whatever is obtained through Non-violence and love may be retained for ever.

“What Is Brotherhood?” It Is the Wisdom of Lincoln and the Warmth of Gandhiji. It is the humility of Jesus, The Humbleness of Mohammed, And the Humanitarianism of Confucius. It is Catholic and Protestant and Jews Living Together In Peacefulness and Harmony. It is Italian And Dane And Bulgarian and Pole Working Side By Side On the Job and Sitting Shoulder To Shoulder In The Union Hall Searching For Ways To Advance The Common Good. It Is the Ten Commandments and The Sermon on the Mount. It Is the Bible, Talmud and the Koran. It Is the Essence of All Wisdom of All the Ages Distilled into A Single World. But Equally It Is the Understanding of Neighbours and Friends Who Sorrow at Your Misfortunes and Rejoice at Your Triumphs. You Cannot See Brotherhood, Neither Can You Hear It Nor Taste It. But You Can Feel It A Hundred Times A Day. It Is The Pat On The Back When Thing Look Gloomy. It Is The Smile Of Encouragement When The Way Seems Hard. It Is The Helping Hand When The Burden Becomes Unbearable.

-Peter E. Terzick.

If We Want More Brotherhood And Goodwill, More Intelligence, More Clear Thinking, More Honesty And Sincerity, More Tolerance And Human Understanding. We Must Concentrate Upon Cultivating These Qualities Within Ourselves.

All Holy Scriptures Call For Tolerance And Respect For Believer Of Other Religions. We Are All Citizens Of One World; We Are All Of One Blood. To Hate A Man Because He Was Born In Another Country, Because He Speaks A Different Language, Or Because He Takes A Different View Of This Subject Or That, Is A Great Folly. Desist, I Implore You, For We Are

All Equally Human.... Let Us Have But One End In View, The Welfare Of The Humanity.

- Johann Amos Comenius

The human response to the disclosure of divine compassion is to be found in man's behaviour toward his fellowmen, "Learn to do well"; seek justice' relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow" (Isa 1:17.19:17). "You shall not mistreat any widow or orphan" (Ex. 22:21). Nor is oppress him. Animals too are recognized as the objects of such solicitude. "When you see the ass of your enemy prostrate under its load and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless raise it with him (Ex. 23:5, Deut. 22:4). "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing" (Deut. 25:4).

The biblical concept of forgiveness presumes that sin is a malefic force that adheres to the sinner and that the forgiveness is divine means for removing it. Unless one is imbued with a spirit of forgiveness and mercy, human nature tends to react against any misdeed or injustice with anger violence. The creator, in Torah Let us all hope is often invoked as the father of mercy and we are enjoined not to be too harsh in our judgment of others if we would like to be forgiven for our own deeds or sin and violence. The most important date in the Jewish calendar is Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) when the pious fast rigorously for 24 hours and spend almost the whole day in the Synagogue asking God for forgiveness of their sins.

Let us all hope that we are all able to be kind, compassionate, loving, tolerant, non-violent and so that our planet is illuminated with peace and wisdom. Amen.

"The Lord is gracious and merciful,

Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The Lord is good to all,
And His compassion is over all that He has made.”

Psalm. 8-9

There are many passages in the Torah discussing God’s attributes of goodness and love often described as good, loving, beautiful, truthful, compassionate and faithful in personal terms. Goodness, compassion and love are the primary attributes of Ultimate Reality. They are seen in God’s gracious provision to human beings, where God’s goodness is especially manifest in his help for the poor and downtrodden.

Divine love and compassion is often expressed by the relationship of present and child. When the individual realizes Truth and fulfils God’s purpose for his life, he comes to embody universal love. He delights in the well being of others and selflessly works of their benefit.

Love or compassion, being the core of Ultimate Reality, is manifested by the saint who can rise above self-cantered attachments and desires. It is true love, love that is totally committed to the welfare of the other. It is love that is universal, overcoming the ordinary tendency to self-centeredness or favouritism for one’s own. Such love requires the foundation of integrity, truthfulness and unity with the Absolute.

Torah recognizes the biblical concept “Compassion” as an indispensable characteristic of the Jew. “Whoever is merciful to his fellowmen is certainly the Children of Abraham” (Bezah 32b). The Jews were popularly called rahamanim benei rahamanim – “Compassionate scions of compassionate forbears.” The rabbi conceived of the practice of compassion as an imitation dei, for the ways of God in which man was commanded to walk (Deu. 8:6) were those set out in Exodus 34:6-7. “The Lord! The Lord! A God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger rich in steadfast kindness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation,

forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.” These verses were understood to sum up and explain the divine attribute of compassion, and to set the norm for human conduct: “Just as God is called compassionate and gracious, so you must be compassionate and gracious, giving gifts freely.” (Sif. Deut. 49) Maimonides declared that arrogant, cruel, misanthropic, and unloving persons were to be suspected of not being true Jews (Yad, Issurei Bi’ ah, 19:17): The clear tendency of the Bible requiring compassion in dealing with animals was summarized in the Talmudic phrase, (relieving) the suffering of an animal is biblical Law.” According to a Midrash, both Moses and David were chosen to lead Israel because of their kindness to animal. The Hassidic teacher R. Moses Leib of Sassov epitomized the concept in his statement, “to know the needs of men and to bear the burden of their sorrow –that is the true love of man.

Compassion, norm governing the relationship between men and also regulating their behaviour toward animals. Some scholars have proposed that its original meaning was brotherhood and other terms it as loving kindness. The concept indicated an essential relation between God and Israel rooted in the Covenant: “He being full of compassion, forgives iniquity and does not destroy”-Psalm 78:38, Exodus 33:19, Desut. 8:18). It was made manifest by the preservation of Israel destruction on its behalf.” In your love, you lead the people you redeemed.” (Ex, 15:13, Deut. 30:3).

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All Holy Scriptures Call For Tolerance And Respect For Believer Of Other Religions. We Are All Citizens Of One World; We Are All Of One Blood. To Hate A Man Because He Was Born In Another Country, Because He Speaks A Different Language, Or Because He Takes A Different View Of This Subject Or That, Is A Great Folly. Desist, I Implore You, For We Are All Equally Human.... Le Us Have But One End In View, The Welfare Of The Humanity.

The human response to the disclosure of divine compassion is to be found in man's behaviour toward his fellowmen, "Learn to do well"; seek justice' relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow" (Isa 1:17.19:17). "You shall not mistreat any widow or orphan" (Ex. 22:21). Nor is oppress him. Animals too are recognized as the objects of such solicitude. "When you see the ass of your enemy prostrate under its load and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless raise it with him (Ex. 23:5, Deut. 22:4). "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing" (Deut. 25:4).

The biblical concept of forgiveness presumes that sin is a malefic force that adheres to the sinner and that the forgiveness is divine means for removing it. Unless one is imbued with a spirit of forgiveness and mercy, human nature tends to react against any misdeed or injustice with anger violence. The creator, in Torah Let us all hope is often invoked as the father of mercy and we are enjoined not to be too harsh in our judgement of others if we would like to be forgiven for our own deeds or sin and violence. The most important date in the Jewish calendar is Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) when the pious fast rigorously for 24 hours and spend almost the whole day in the Synagogue asking God for forgiveness of their sins.

Let us all hope that we are all able to be kind, compassionate, loving, tolerant, non-violent and so that our planet is illuminated with peace and wisdom. Amen.

- Ezekiel Isaac Malekar

Hon. Secretary, Judah Hyam Synagogue &
Eminent Scholar of Judaism, New Delhi



GURU GRANTH SAHIB TRUE LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURE

Throughout the history, wise and learned people like the saints and sages of the world, silently developed a Code of Conduct for humanity to follow, with the purpose of maintaining harmony, peace and understanding between all the living beings on this earth. In the known history of this world, we have learnt about various cultures and civilizations like the Indus Valley Civilization, Greek Civilization, Roman Civilization, Shraman Culture etc. The Code of Conduct evolved in these respective cultures gradually developed into what can be called as the concept of Dharma i.e. religion.

The 15th Century is of great significance in the history of this world. In this century, the seats of power of many religions changed hands. In the place of religious rulers who called themselves as direct descendants of God, who claimed to possess miraculous powers etc. were replaced by saintly people who believed in practicing a Way of Life or Religion as they have learnt from the scriptures. This period is also known as Age of Knowledge. The common masses rebelled against the self-styled religious rulers in many parts of the world at that time. In India too, mainly saintly and pious people, belonging to various castes and creeds, tried to find solutions to the atmosphere of conflict, enmity, hatred etc. prevailing at that time. A weaver like Saint Kabeer, a carpenter like Mansoor Hallaj, a cobbler like Raidas, a tailor like Namdeo, a gardener like Savata etc. threw away the bondages imposed on them by the caste system in India, to spread the message of love, equality and humanity. Even in the orthodox Islamic culture, the Sufi Saints propagated the message of love and peace in the society.

During that period, a lot of evil practices like casteism, untouchability, superstition etc. were prevalent in India. Guru Nanak Dev, belonging to the Punjab province, set off on a journey of seeking knowledge around the entire country, during which he visited a lot of pilgrim centres. He also took went to Arabia. He discussed and debated with various scholars of different religions and also spoke to them about what he thought about religion and humanity. He found that the pilgrim centers, which should be truly knowledge centres, had lost this identity and had become places where people gathered in large numbers to practice only religious rituals in the name of religion, with hardly any trace of true devotion. Guru Nanak Dev, who propagated some path-breaking ideas about God and religion, inspired the society to turn towards.

To spread the message of humanity, he visited places like Afghanistan,

Turkey, Arabia, Burma, Sikkim, Sri Lanka and others. He observed the people over there, studied their traditions and passed on to them his ideas of love and compassion.

नानक नाम नीच न कोई ..

Everyone in this world is equal. There is no high or low...

Guru Nanak Dev was the first in this tradition. There were 9 more Gurus in this new order of Sikhs. Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas, Guru Arjandev, Guru Hargovind, Guru Harirai, Guru Harikrishna, Guru Tegbahadur and Guru Gobind Singh who took Sikhism to greater heights. They even defied death by their valour and sacrifice.

Guru Granth Sahib:

Guru Granth Sahib is one of the most unique and divine texts in the history of the world. This is not merely the preaching professed by the Founder of a new religion, but a confluence of the preachings of many saints and holy men throughout history. In fact, this is the most important feature of Guru Granth Sahib. These saints did not discriminate on the basis of caste or creed, but only preached love, compassion and humanity. With the noble intention that the ग्रंथ (text) be given more importance than the preacher, they formally brought it out in a written format.

The Emergence of Guru Granth Sahib:

The fifth Guru of Sikhs Guru Arjandev completed his 15-year penance on 16th August 1604. This also marked the end of the compilation of this Holy Scripture. In India, the land of saints, sages and holy men, many sacred texts like the Vedas, Srimad Bhagwad Geeta, Ramayana, Ramacharitmanas etc have been written over the ages. The world over, Holy Quran of the Muslims and holy Bible of the Christians are also ancient scriptures. In this tradition, the Guru Granth Sahib is now recognized as

the most recent sacred text known to the mankind.

The Guru Granth Sahib is an ‘all inclusive’ scripture which speaks about humanity. People from all the four castes participated in the compilation and drafting of this volume. This book does not glorify any single God, saint or holy person. Instead, it includes the utterances of many like Sheikh Farid, Jaidev, Kabir, Namdeo, Trilochan, Parmanand, Ramanand, Ravidas, Dhanna etc., establishing the supremacy of the divine utterances as a guideline for a contented life.

The Guru Granth Sahib was compiled at ‘Ramsar’. It does not glorify any caste or creed but the ‘वाणी’ or ‘voice’ of the Guru. Guru Nanak Dev says, “एक पिता एकता के हम बारिक”, which means, we are the children of only one Father. He also propounds the theory of ‘समता जीओ का एको दाता’, which means “to establish a society without any caste or race discrimination, free of any rituals.” The Sikh religion has always encouraged the concept of human welfare and advocated the fundamental principle of ‘Ek Omkar’.

The Guru Granth Sahib also promotes national integration. The Sikh sect emerged and grew in the province of Punjab. But while compiling the scripture, Guru Arjandev gave it a Divine Form by incorporating in it the verses of saints and holy men across the country, spanning a period of over 500 years.

If we see throughout the history, the preachings of Lord Gautam Buddha not there in a written form. The Founders of the Christian religion had also not written down what they preached. The interpretations made by holy people like John, Matthew, Luca etc are considered to be the words of God. Even Confucius did not write down his principles and theories. But in the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Gurus wisely wrote down what they intended to preach.

Emperor Akbar and Guru Granth Sahib:

If one has to rule a country, then one has to respect the prevailing religion, the culture, the people and the traditions prevailing there. Emperor Babar had given special instructions regarding this. He had instructed that cow be considered as a sacred animal in India and therefore it should be given due respect. Emperor Akbar took the efforts of bringing together various religious scholars of India and created a religion known as ‘Deen-e-Ilahi’.

When Guru Arjandev compiled this great scripture Guru Granth Sahib, Chandulal, a person opposed to Guru Arjandev complained to Emperor Akbar that Arjandev had compiled a new religious text which defames other religions. Akbar ordered that Guru Granth Sahib be read out to him. The first words were:

खाक नूर कर दे आलम दुनी आई
असमान जिमी दरखत आब पैदाइसी खुदाई....

This means that nature has given birth to the all elements like earth, light, sky etc. Hearing this, Akbar was quite delighted. But Chandulal said the Sikhs had come with the intention of quoting only this, to make them appear superior. Then Akbar turned the pages himself and laid his finger on some random text and asked them to read it. It read;

अल्लह अगम खुदाई बंदे
छोडि खियाल दुनिया के धन्धे...

(God and his creations are quite complex and we should not involve ourselves in petty matters)

Whenever the opponents tried to make Arjandev read his composition, the result was always in the recital of a beautiful and meaningful ‘Sabad’

(verse). This greatly increased the respect of Emperor Akbar towards Guru Granth Sahib and he bowed his head before the Granth. He presented 51 gold coins and respectfully bid goodbye to Baba Buddaji and Bhai Gurudas. Till such time as he ruled the country, he offered his respects to all the Gurus of the Sikh tradition.

There are many roads that lead to God. Some have performed penance while some have chanted His name to attain enlightenment. But Guru Nanak Dev chose the method of singing. Guru Granth Sahib is the only religious scripture that can be sung. It is composed based on as many as 33 ragas of the Indian classical music.

Japuji:

This is the compilation of the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev. He advises the devotees to meditate along with singing to attain peace of mind and sense of happiness. He also advocated equality of men and women.

In one of his verses, Guru Nanak Dev writes,

‘गुरु नानक शाह फकीर
हिंदुका गुरु मुसलमान का पीर!’

The second guru of Sikhism Guru Angad Dev developed the Gurmukhi script. He also advocated physical fitness for a healthy life. The third Guru Amardas made efforts to stop the practice of Sati. The fourth Guru Ramdas constructed the Harmandir Sahib and the Golden Temple. The fifth Guru Arjandas established the Guru Granth Sahib at the Harmandir Sahib.

The sixth Guru Hargovind was seated on the throne at a very young age after the death of his father. When he was offered the traditional ceremonial headgear, he refused it and instead asked for a more militant

headgear along with two swords. These swords were called Mari and Piri. The first one symbolized spiritualism and the other symbolized the material world. The seventh Guru Harirai was a devotee of Sheikh Baba Farid. He would say

‘सभना मन माणिक ठहणु मूलि मचांगवा ।

जेतऊ पिरिआदी सिक हि आठ न ठाहे कही दा॥’

Everybody’s mind is like a valuable diamond. To hurt it is like committing a sin. If you want to relate with the Almighty, please do not hurt anybody’s mind. His son Guru Harikrishna became the eighth Guru of the Sikhs.

The life of ninth Guru Tegbahadur was a symbol of sacrifice, valour, tolerance, forgiveness and many other noble qualities. All his life he advised his devotees to lead a life without fear and stress.

‘भै काहु को देत नहि नहि मै मानत आन ।

कहू नानक सुरु रे मना, ज्ञानी नहि बरखान ॥’

Do not scare anybody, nor be scared of anybody.

As per Nanak this is how a knowledgeable person behaves.

There are 57 verses of Guru Tegbahadur in the Guru Granth Sahib.

The tenth Guru Govind Singhji was an extraordinary human being. He was the protector of religion, a fearless general, a social reformer and person who truly believed in performing his duties above everything else.

He was proficient in Hindi, Farsi, Sanskrit and Braj languages and wrote many verses in them. It was he who stopped the practice of nominating Gurus in the traditional manner. Instead, he issued an edict to the Sikhs that after him, the Guru Granth Sahib will be the only Supreme Guru. The

divine utterances of Guru Granth Sahib are a treasure of knowledge not just for the Sikhs but to the entire humanity as well.

There are 5894 verses in the Guru Granth Sahib, which are known as ‘**Sabad**’. Of these, 938 Sabad are written by Sufi Saints, Fakirs and other devotees. Some of them include:

Jaidev (1170) - An extract from the famous epic poem Geet Govind by Jaidev has been included in the Granth Sahib.

Shekh Farid - He was a Sufi Fakir, who lived in the Multan province of Punjab. About 103 verses from his various devotional compositions in Punjabi are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.

He says, ‘it is not necessary to perform rituals, go to pilgrimages etc. to attain the blessing of the Almighty. It is as useless as churning water. A person reaps the fruit of his deeds. Nobody can avoid that -

फरीदा जंगलु किआ भवहि वणि कंडा मोडे हि ।

वसी रबु हिजलीए जंगलु किआ दूंदेह ॥ १९ ॥

Why do you roam about in the forests? Why do you look for the Almighty in the jungle? He is in your heart. You will only hurt your feet on the thorns in the jungle.

Guru Nanak Dev was born 2000 years after Baba Sheikh Farid. It was during his wanderings that he met Sheikh Brahma Farid, a descendent of Baba Farid, and the volume Farid Bani was created.

Trilochan - He belongs to the Barshi town near Pandharpur – Maharashtra. Four verses written by him are included.

Saint Namdeo - There are 60 verses of Saint Namdeo including in the Guru Granth Sahib. Saint Namdeo was a Vaishnav, who later on

developed faith in the formless (Nirgun) quality of God. There is a temple erected in Ghuman province of Punjab in his memory. Saint Namdeo holds a place of high reverence amongst the Sikh community.

Sadana - Sadana lived at the same time as Saint Namdeo. He belonged to Sahevagaon of Sindh province. One verse by him has been included in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Beni - He belonged to the Brahmin community. Three of his verses have been included in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Ramanand - He was the disciple of Saint Ramanujacharya of South India. One verse has been included.

Saint Kabeer - Saint Kabeer says

॥ ओंकार सतिगुर प्रसादि ॥

Which means, there is only one God, who is in the form of Omkar. One can reach him only through the blessings of the Guru.

He preaches – Man follows funny practices. When his parents are alive, he does not extend any respect to them. But after their death, he performs so many rituals. He prepares rich food but his parents do not get even a single morsel. The food kept aside in their name is also consumed by dogs. Can somebody tell me how to achieve happiness? The entire world is running after material pleasure and being destroyed but nobody is attaining happiness.

We prepare statues of clay and give them the names of God and sacrifice living animals to them. Your parents also tell you that during the rituals after death, you don't give them what they want but do only what you want.

You will have to pay the price of sacrificing live animals before

inanimate statues. You have never understood the importance of chanting God's name.

You roam around worshipping various Gods but you have no realization of the Supreme Beings. Kabeer says, 'instead of remembering the name of the Almighty God, you immerse yourself in materialistic pleasures. You will never be able to attain true happiness.'

Kabeer was born in the year 1398. 541 verses and dohas of Saint Kabeer are included in the Guru Granth Sahib. The Granth Sahib also contains verses by Saint Dhanna, Papi, Sain, Parmanand, Bhai Mardana, Bheerwan, Surdas, Baba Sundar, Rai Baldand, Saint Ravidas etc. It is like a literary congregation of saints from all parts of the country belonging to various caste and creeds.

The teachings of this great volume are so powerful that in spite of being so small in number, Sikhs are some of the most prosperous and well-to-do people in the world. As taught by their Gurus, they don't differentiate between 'Pangat (community meals)' and 'Sangat (company)'. That is why in all the Gurudwaras, we find the practice of Langar (free meals served to everyone). One can hardly find any beggars in this community. It is a community of brave men and loving families, which is devoted to Guru Granth Sahib.

- Acharya Ratanlal Sonagra

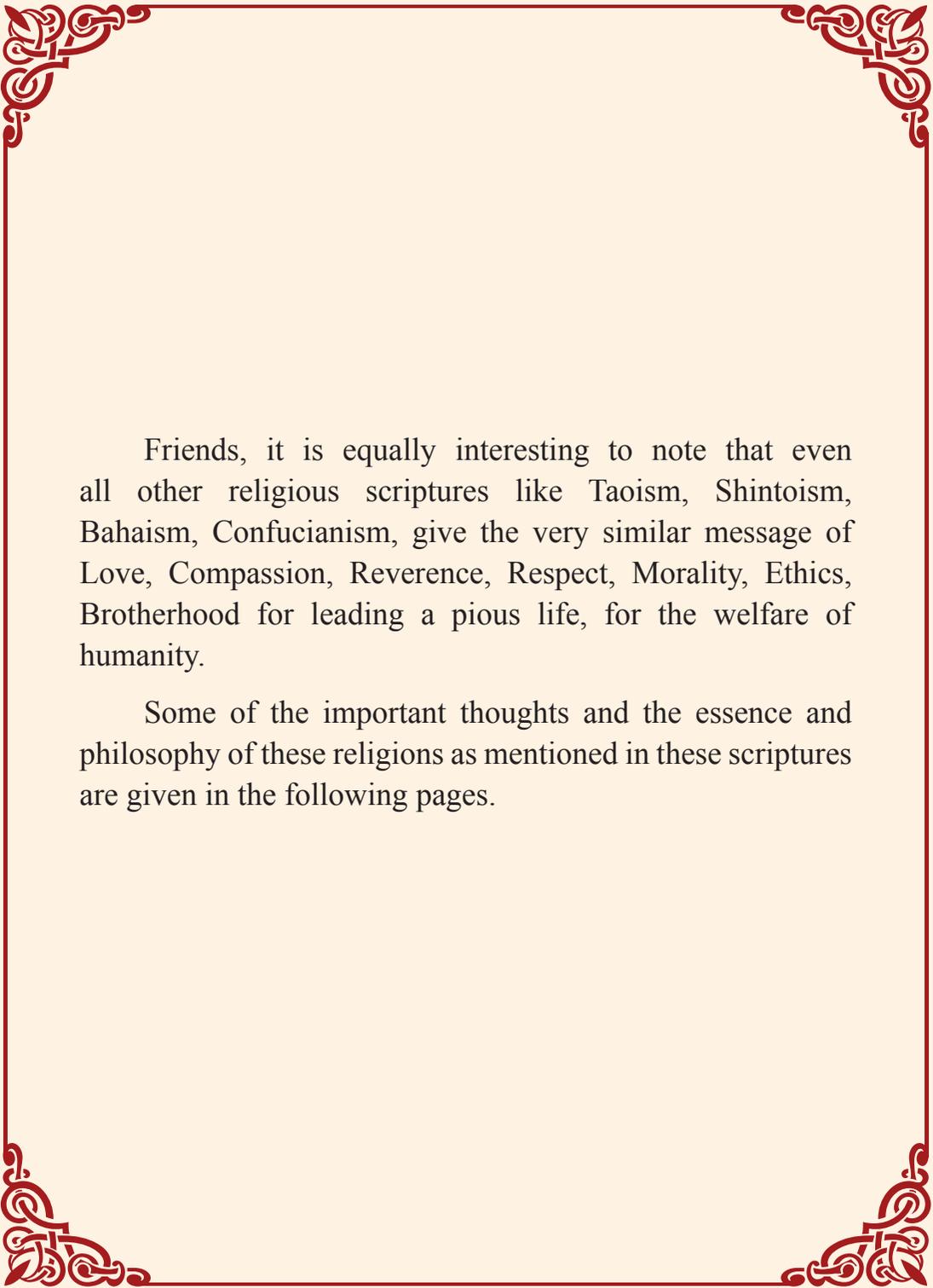
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Establishment of UNESCO Chair



Paris, 12th May 1996: Dr. Vishwanath D. Karad and Dr. Federick Mayor, Director General of UNESCO signing the agreement establishing the UNESCO CHAIR for Human Rights, Democracy & Peace at World Peace Centre, MAEER's MIT



Friends, it is equally interesting to note that even all other religious scriptures like Taoism, Shintoism, Bahaim, Confucianism, give the very similar message of Love, Compassion, Reverence, Respect, Morality, Ethics, Brotherhood for leading a pious life, for the welfare of humanity.

Some of the important thoughts and the essence and philosophy of these religions as mentioned in these scriptures are given in the following pages.

ZOROASTRIANISM



ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrianism is an early monotheistic religion founded in Persia by the Prophet Zoroaster or Zarathustra (628-551 BC). After the collapse of Sassanian dynasty, Islam started spreading in Persia and those who adhered to their faith (i.e. Zoroastrianism) immigrated to India, and first landed in Gujarat. As a result, Parsees, the followers of Zoroastrianism as are commonly known, are mostly concentrated in India and speak Gujarati and follow quite a few cultural traditions of Gujarat. The followers of Zoroastrianism believe in oneness of God. Ahura Mazda, the God, is the fountainhead of Good and Truth and is all pervading and omnipresent.

According to Zoroastrianism, righteousness, which signifies truth, holiness and pristine purity is the best good and is happiness. Purity of the mind and the body is the most excellent wealth and happiness of this

world. That happiness which is the highest in the matter of truth is attained by that person.

Good and evil fight an unequal battle in which the former is assured of triumph. In this struggle, man must enlist because of his capacity of free choice. He does so with his body and soul. Zoroastrianism is optimistic and has remained so even through the hardship and oppression of its believers.

Basic tenets of Zoroastrianism are - think good, speak good and do good.

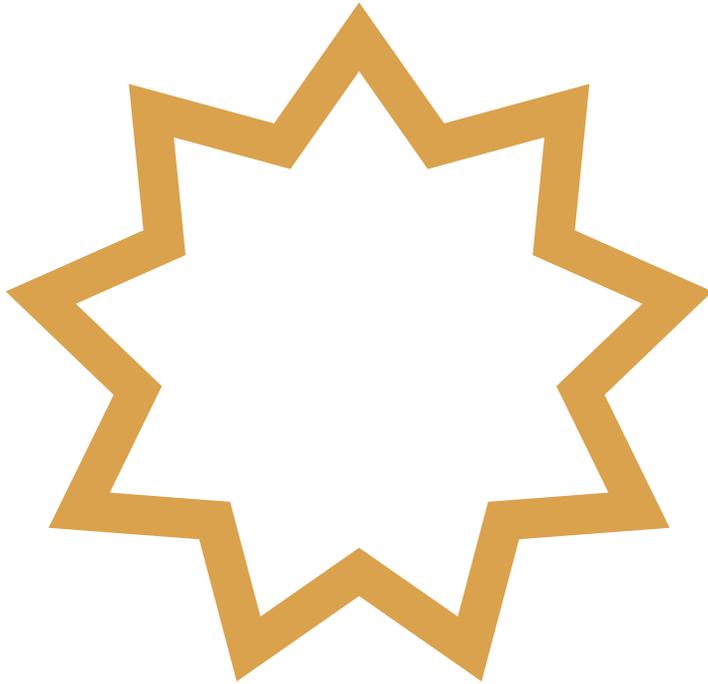
Agyari is the holy place of worship where only Parsees are allowed to enter the sanctum sanctorum. They worship fire, as ultimately it is the fire which is going to purify the body and soul. Fire is always kept in the south side everywhere, based on their belief that wind blowing from the south is always good. Parsees pray five times a day, both in standing and sitting positions. For Parsees, giving charities is a way of life. For them charity begins at home, then extends to neighbours, society and community at large.

Zoroastrianism's most important festival is Jamshedi Navroj, which marks the Parsi New year and is celebrated with a lot of pomp and joy.

Avesta, the holy book of Zoroastrianism, which was first revealed to the Prophet is read by Parsees daily. In addition, there are nine Gathas, which are in form of instructions for the devout Parsees to follow.

Message

Speak truth, be true to oneself. Truth will always triumph.



BAHA'I FAITH

Baha'is use the term “manifestation of God” to describe those people who are the founders of independent religions like Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed. They conceive of ‘God’ as an unknowable essence, revealed through messengers as mentioned above.

In 1817 Bahauallah was born in a noble family in Tehran. At the age of 27 he turned his back on wealth and position to dedicate himself to the newly formed Babi-religion. In 1853 Bahauallah was first imprisoned and then banished for following the teachings of the Babi. Baha' is believe that, imprisoned Bahauallah had the vision that told him of his mission. Ten years later, Bahauallah announced that he was the manifestation of God foretold by the Bab.

The Baha'is faith is a global religion, which aims to create unity and harmony between the diverse people of the planet. Being a Baha'i means fulfilling certain obligations, laid down in the writings of Bahauallah. Among these are requirements for prayer and fasting and laws regarding marriage. The most important prayers are those offered privately. They believe very strongly in the sanctity of marriage. Stable marriages and harmonious families are the bedrock of a properly functioning society. The consent of all living parents is essential before a marriage can take place.

The Baha'is believe in life after death and strive to be moral in caring. The concept of heaven and hell is that they are not separate places but rather the state of nearness to, or distance from God. As Baha'is faith has established itself worldwide, it has become increasingly involved with social and economic projects (literacy, agriculture, health care, the empowerment of women and conservation), on a global scale.

Message

It is a pure, kindly and radiant heart, which can reach the kingdom of God.



CONFUCIANISM

The term “Confucian” is an English Latinization of the name of the Chinese sage K’ung Fu Tzu. The common Chinese terms for the followers of traditional values and humanistic ideals is ju or ‘Scholar’. Educated followers of the Confucian School are called Ju Chia.

Confucianism was started by Confucius who was a social and ethical reformer. He was a firm advocate of filial piety and ancestor rites. He saw himself as an educator and transmitter of knowledge, rather than as a creative thinker. He believed that the moral force of humanity was ultimately derived from heaven, the Cosmos. In his views, the model and starting point was always the relationship with one’s parents and by extension one’s ancestors. He advocated that being a good son and an obedient youth is the root of man’s character.

Filial piety, respect for elders, teachers, traditional values, legitimate authority, hard work, self sacrifice for the benefit of the family, classical

Confucian learning, fondness for ceremonial protocol and rituals, selfless public service, preference for non-contractual and informal business relationship based on networks of mutual trust and reciprocity and self-restraint are the fundamental characteristics of Confucianism in traditional Chinese society.

The synthesis of Confucian teaching with elements of traditional Chinese cosmology and elements of Taoist and Buddhist theory, are the dominant intellectual and ethical influences in China, Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Confucian meditation (Seiza) or “quiet sitting” is seen as a method of cultivating a moral sense and as an antidote to the dehumanizing effects of modern technology.

Confucius and early Confucians such as Mencius, believed that the moral force of humanity was ultimately derived from Heaven. Morality was pursued by careful attention to the rites and proprieties governing family and social relationships. Respectful relationships between parents and children are fundamental to Confucian notions of morality and the basis of an orderly society.

In general terms, it is put forth that the rapid economic growth in the countries like Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Singapore is closely linked to the Confucian respect for hard work, and self sacrifice for the benefit of the family, regardless of personal discomfort or profit, though it is contradicted by others who argue that it is due to the introduction of western forms of economic and business organizations. Love for learning, respect for traditional values and a fondness for ceremonial protocol are basic to Confucianism.

Message

Do not impose on others what you do not desire to be imposed on yourself.



SHINTOISM

It is assumed that Shinto is Japan's ancient indigenous religion. Certain places like strange rocks, waterfalls and mountains were regarded as sacred or the abode of spirits before Buddhism entered Japan and these places developed into Shinto Shrines, which are around 100,000 in number.

Shinto Shrines and Buddhist temples are seen in every Japanese city, town and village. Buddhist Temples are mainly concerned with funerals and ancestor rituals whereas Shinto Shrines mark a sacred place identified with one or more Kami (spirit entities) for the benefit of the people such as healing, educational success and protection from accident.

Shinto and Buddhism are not two separate religions with different groups of followers; they represent complementary aspects of the religious

life of most Japanese people.

The Kami is understood as local manifestations of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, an eclectic mix of Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian ideas. Priests at Yoshida Shrine in Kyoto interpreted Kami as being inner spiritual qualities. Since 1868, Shinto shrines have been administered separately from the Buddhist temples and today these are independent religious bodies on exactly the same level as any Buddhist, Christian or new religious organization in Japan.

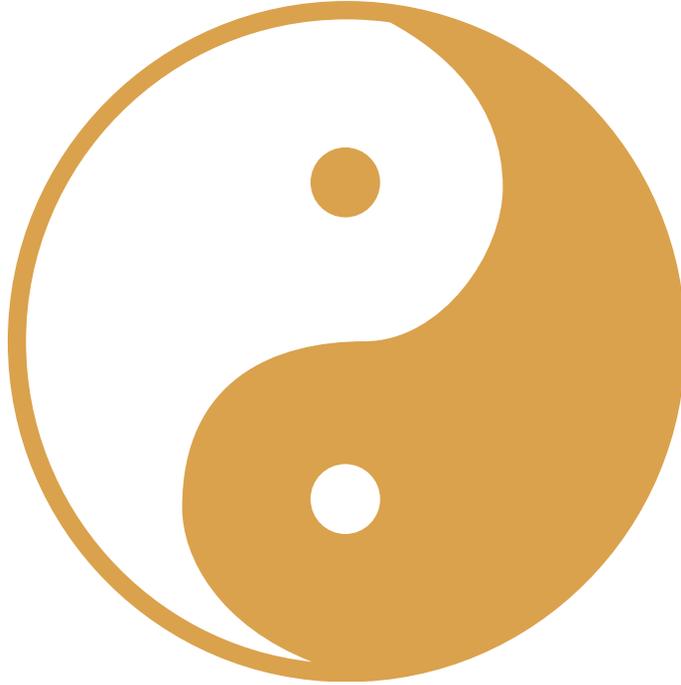
At special festival times such as New Year, more than 80% of Japanese population makes a first visit to a Shinto Shrine. They do not think that they are doing anything religious but rather a customary or traditional visit. At the same time visitors buy amulets at the Shrines to invoke the protection of the Kami for the coming year and many take the opportunity to be ritually purified in a simple ceremony performed by a Shrine priest.

Shinto ideas have drawn on a variety of sources - mainly Buddhism - Confucianism and Taoism - as well as local legends and oral traditions. For followers of Shinto, qualities of purity, honesty and sincerity are very sacred.

Shinto is a part of ordinary life in Japan and 80% of Japan's 125 million people participate at least occasionally in Shinto rites with a hope to get a little bit of extra help from the Kami.

Message

The well being of the people can be achieved by offering prayers to Kamis (spirit entities), which should be part of daily life, or at least occasional visits to Shinto shrines.



TAOISM

Taoism belongs to a tradition of thought that has much in common with Confucianism but stands alone as a separate system of ethical and spiritual practices. Where Confucianism is primarily concerned with the secular values that ensure good order in human culture and society, Taoism is also concerned with religious issues. These are often mediated through the observation of nature. It is mostly followed in China.

There are two main threads to Taoism - Taoist Mystical Philosophy and Religious Taoism. According to Philosophical Taoism, The true sage is one who follows the path of heaven and earth without pursuing selfish goals. He or she flows with the natural order, accepting success or misfortune equally. Resilience, longevity or even forms of spiritual immortality are regarded as the consequences of living without conflict

and contention. Such notions have inspired many Chinese scholars, poets, artists and craftsman.

Religious Taoism is practised by religious sects and traditions, which seek access to the Tao as the supreme reality. Followers seek immortality through meditation, liturgy, alchemy and philosophy. Energies are channelled in order to perform healing, exorcism and to regulate important festivals such as the rites of cosmic renewal. All Taoist are concerned with harmonizing the fundamental energies in the Universe.

The Tao Te Ching (the Classic of the Way and its Power) is a pivotal text for all Taoists.

In Taoist theory and traditional Chinese medicine, the human body is thought of as an energy system consisting of patterned flows of ch'i (vital energy) and blood. The ch'i in the body is as subject of change and variability as are the forces in the weather. Beneficial exercises, called Taoyin (literally 'guiding and stretching') were developed, with early forms being described in the Chuang Tzu.

These include various postures and breathing exercises. The notion of Ch'i is fundamental in Taoist thought and practices.

Message

Taoist does nothing but there is nothing that he does not do.

Friends,

We sincerely hope and feel confident after having gone through the contents of this particular volume pertaining to various scriptures of the world religions, you must have noticed that the fundamental principles and basic philosophy of morality, ethics and a pathway to lead a peaceful life for the establishment of a harmonious holistic society, are very much common.

In today's progressive world, Science and Technology are integral part of our everyday living. The various scientific innovations and discoveries are opening new opportunities to the present day generation in the fields of I.T, Computer, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Space Technology etc. and they find little time to pursue and understand their own cultural, spiritual and religious heritage.

Friends, in such a scenario, if we are able to convey to the younger generation about the essence and philosophy of their own religion as well as others, they will be able to appreciate the fact that the religion is in fact a way of leading a happy and peaceful life and the RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES ARE ACTUALLY LIFE-GUIDING SCRIPTURES BASED ON SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES OF MOTHER NATURE.

Once the present younger generation realizes the basic philosophy and science behind all the religions, they will be able to promote World Peace and Holistic Global Society as well as establish Universal Brotherhood for peaceful co-existence.



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