

Comparative Study of Religions: A message of Love and Peace

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Abstract: Present era is an era of conflicts, clashes, battles and war. Our Education is lacking the basic value system of India for which it was famous all over the world. “Satyam vada, Dharmam chara”, “Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktayet” Ancient Ashrams, Gurukul, Makhtabs and Universities like Nalanda, Takshshila etc. propagated the lesson of love and peace all over the world. The present social, political structure concentrating only upon economic benefits is neglecting the real essence of the Moral and Spiritual aspects. The only panacea for enhancing Moral and Spiritual faculties is through Education of the study of Religions for creating balanced personalities with qualities of Love, Wisdom, Sacrifice, Tolerance and Peace.

Key Words: Religious, Education, Study, Spiritual, Structure.

Introduction:

“Religion is the greatest gift of God to humanity and is also the most Ancient friend of Man. In the coming future it will prove itself to be the savior of human race. From Religion I mean the spiritual light that purifies and illumines heart, that elevates and expand the human soul and that makes it possible for human mind to realize the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man”.

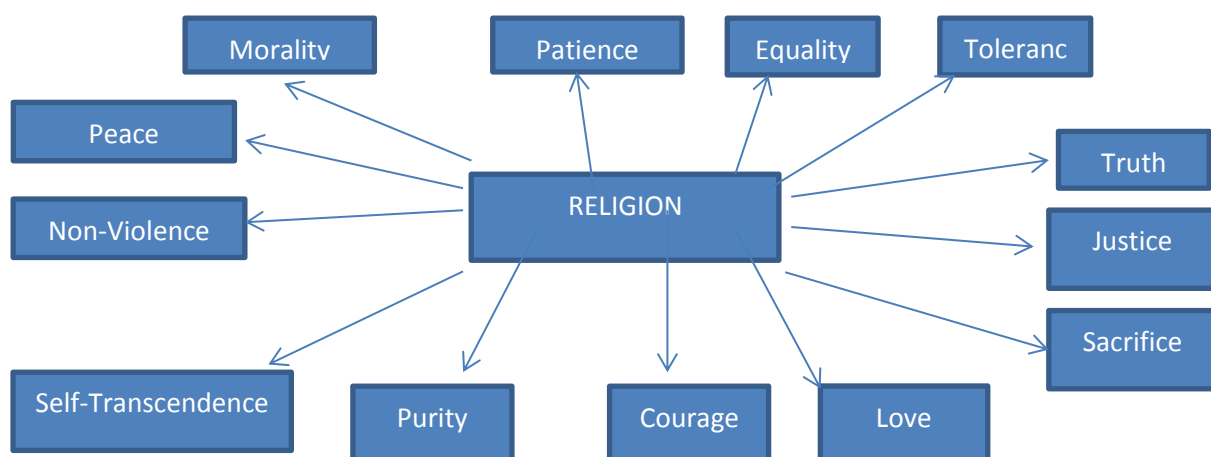
- Sir Sahabji Maharaj

The word Religion really means again, to tie back or it is the medium of tie back the human soul with the eternal soul again. All the human souls are the deserted children of supreme father (God) and it is the religion which can rejoin us to the Adobe of Supreme Father. There are numerous religions in the world and in each religion four major points should be considered.

1. The world that produced religion and the culture that hosted the religion.
2. The life of the Founder and the factors which influenced him to found this religion.
3. Literature or Sacred Texts
4. The major Historical Development of the religion.

Our country is a democratic secular country. Secular means not to be irreligious but it means equal respect for all faiths and equal opportunities to their devotees. Religion makes a man to believe in the supremacy of God and way and means to attain emotional control/ balance to attain oneness with God. Dharma or Religion is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness and whole range of man’s duties and responsibilities.

All the religions basically believe in the principle of Unity in Diversity. All of them believe in the principles of peace and co- existence and they also believe in the concept of universal brotherhood. This can be attained through the qualities such as-



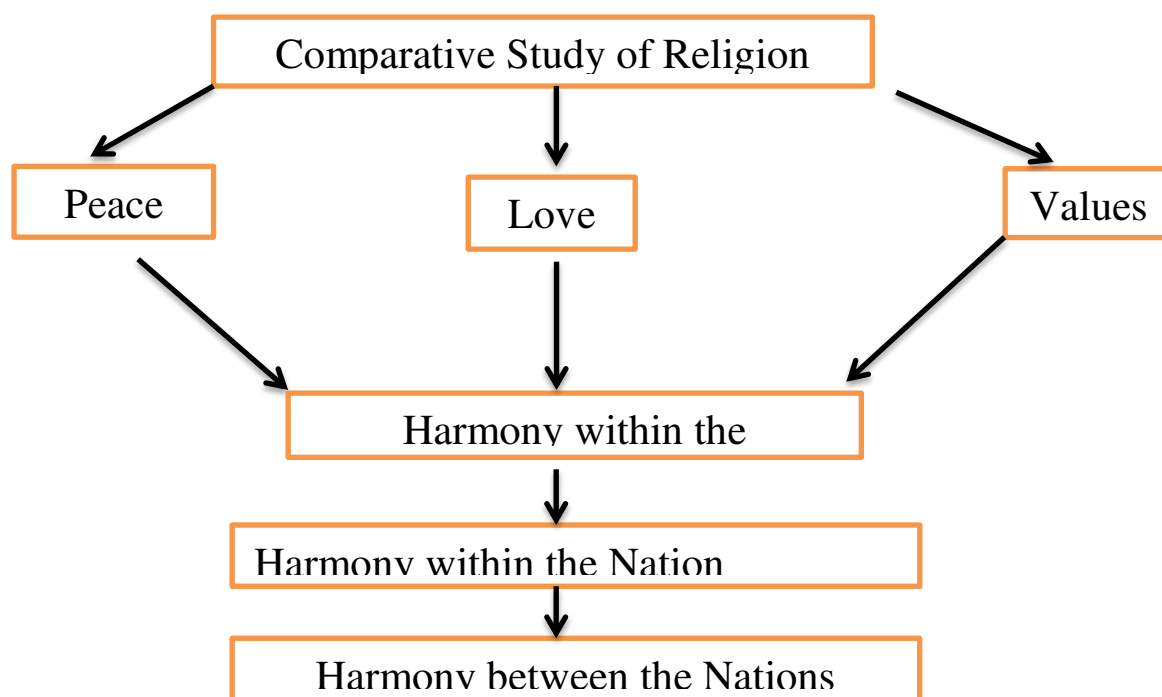
Thus religion is the instrument which makes the individual to identify, analyze, practice and evaluate the above qualities to attain excellence. Religion and peace are directly related to each other. The journey of peace calls for patience and tolerance and religion is the media which makes us realize the ultimate truth with a spirit of patience, devotion and tolerance. Both religion and peace bear fruits for a lifelong continuous efforts, trails and failures.

Peace can be achieved through the study of Religions. Peace is to stop aggression and aggression has no way in the sphere of religion. The aim of religion should be achieved with an immense balance upon ones desires, emotions and values. The feelings of I should be demolished and every one should think as a smallest particle of ‘Him’ or ‘God’. This realization makes him devotee, self-disciplined and peace loving creature and always thinks above these materialistic deeds. When a person attains this quality he is away from all grudges, conflicts, pride and prejudices. He always think of the welfare of the mankind and for this he performs all his duties and responsibilities with body, mind and spirit. He does not care for love or hatred of the people around him. He needs only the love of Supreme Father and serve him with his whole spirit. Religion controls the behavior of the individual and makes a man morally, spiritually and intellectually good. Right deeds bear the fruits of goodness, peace, Sanctity and morality. Religion should nurture tolerance, patience, and acceptance of other communities for eradicating the myths and misconceptions of the civilizations.

Education is a revolutionary instrument to bring about desirable behavioral changes which in turn develops moral, spiritual aesthetic cultural and intellectual values as suggested by various commissions and Reports (Report of Core Group on Value Oriented Education, 1992). Comparative study if a religion is the study of various religions in a comparative manner i. e. to know the similarity between the religions world over. This study makes the students to trace various paths to reach the adobe of God this study can be introduced to the young students of about 14 years of age who can realize the fact that all religions lead to the betterment of mankind. The major aim of Peace education is to equip human beings to build up a social order where violence, exploitation and inequity grow. All religions talk of peace and Co- existence. Fundamentalists misinterpret and mis-justify the teachings of their respective religions and provide images of cosmic struggle or spiritual war.

“No servant of God looks upon the world with difference, but God also makes wisdom to grow in to his heart and makes his tongue to speak by it, and show him vices of the world and its diseases and its remedies and carries him safely through it to the Adobe of Peace”

Abu Bakr Ahmad



Study of religions removes the outer hard rough spiny and tough shell of religion and explores a soft and trust worthy inner shell of spirituality. This spirituality is the real essence of Love- Love towards humanity. Love is the binding force for the cause of selfless service to beings. Feeling of Love liberates soul from physical bondage and elevates his soul towards eternity by which he will become purely spiritual in his thoughts and actions. All religions speak of Love, patience, compassion, sacrifice and non-violence. A person is considered to be spiritual when he is happy, sincere, bears, no malice, exploits no one and acts with a pure mind. Gandhiji believed Religion as the beautiful flower of a garland Faith in God results in non-violence. Lord Buddha, Jesus. Mohammad, Guru Nanak-all is warriors of peace. God is there where love is prevailing. Every religion has a prominent concept of Love as its Essence.

For developing peace among people, we should understand the spirituality of religions and the spread of love to humanity through their sacrifices, preaching, values, morals and their tolerance. Non- violence is to love those who hate you. If this principle of Love is understood from any religion then the flame of peace can be spread in every corner of the world.

Techniques/ Methods for peace inculcation through Comparative study of Religions:

Stories or life sketch and discourses of the leaders' or prophets of various religions, discussions, lectures, seminars, conferences, micro and macro projects, learning experiences, development of communicative skills through languages, literary competitions, documentations, film shows, extension lectures, orientation, clarification of the queries of young students teachers impressing the students by their behavior, conduct, social service and role play method etc.

Suggestions for world peace through the concept of Love through the study of Religions:

Life sketches and discourses of religious teachers should be taught in a comprehensive manner to develop a positive outlook for religions.

- Historical perspective of various religions, their origin, need and development should be explained in a logical way.
- All the similar points of the religions should be charted in a tabular form for developing an opinion that universal love is the base for attaining ultimate bliss.
- Dissimilar points should be explained with proper justification and analytical thinking to establish the aptness of that point in that particular condition
- The growth of civilization with respect to different religious beliefs can be given by chronological charts and pictures.
- Teacher should take care of emphasizing only the positive points of any religion but not the negative ones.
- A small scale project of religion leaders , Scriptures, objectives, spread and development of various religion can be conducted in groups in colleges or universities to develop a feeling of cooperation and Love.
- Micro projects at University Level should be given upon the values underlying in each religion, independently to the students.
- Elocution, debates, seminars, dramas, monoplays, mimes and poetry competitions related to religion to be conducted in co-curricular activities at any level of Education.
- Fancy dress competitions related to religion and their leaders should be conducted at school level.
- Topics related to religions should be included in literatures, language social studies etc. in school curriculum.
- Comparative study of religion should be the core subject at graduate level as the students of this stage can think critically , logically and analyses the facts.
- The concept of peace should be highlighted with the basic features of each religion.

- Every teacher should correlate his subject with peace and religion to whatever subject he may be concerned and with current affairs also.
- Through the development of cleanliness, safety and cooperation the students get the ideas of “Service to Man is the service to God”, “Work is Worship”, “Perform your duty but do not wait for the fruits”, “God is Omnipotent and he is behind you in every activity”, “Do not Think , listen or Act badly to any creature”, “Human race is a highly civilized race and being a human being do good things every day”.
- Students should be given assignments to highlight the points of their religion for promoting values and peace.
- Quotation of various scriptures can be quoted while teaching some topics or they can be displayed on the notice boards or in the prayer to develop good healthy ideas.
- Teachers should try to drive away students from the myths and misconceptions of each religion so that a feeling of oneness can be attained.
- “ No religion is neither better nor worst than the other religions”. This concept should be emphasized through comparative study of religion.

If comparative study of religion is taught in a healthy comparative way without stressing upon any particular religion, the students will be able to realize the ultimate aim the word Religion i.e. the medium of rejoin Atma with Parmathma from which has been detained long ago. By this understanding they realize the fact that all religion having different religion paths leads to the single ultimate reality or Almighty which may be Moksha, Mukti, Dham, Jannat or Heaven. This ultimate understanding leads to achieve the goals of Science- Truth, Philosophy-Ultimate Reality and Religion- God.

‘The paths to Peace are different, but pursue them we must. They alone enable survival and fulfillment. The Journey calls for Patience and Tolerance and belief in our objectives. They demand more than all, an equation of means and ends. They call for the endeavor of us all’.

H. Wallace

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