

Nectar of Governance

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Part 2: Why peace seldom prevails?



Vedic *mantras* begin with “*Om*”, which means addressing the Lord, and conclude with “*Shanti*”, which means peace. One of such Vedic *mantras* thus speaks as under:

omī sahanāvavatu / sahanāubhunaktu / sāha vīryāṅ-karvāvahai /
tejāsvināṅ adhītam astū mā vīdviṣāṅvahaḥ // omī śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ //

“O My Lord! Please protect both of us, nourish both of us. We may work together with great energy, may we acquire knowledge together, and may we not dispute mutually. Let there be peace, peace, peace!”

This *Taittiriya Upanishad mantra* sets a good platform to understand the process to invoke peacefulness around us. This *mantra* is often used as a beginning for studies of scriptures, where teacher and pupil are involved very intimately. So, in the beginning itself both of them are praying jointly to the Lord for their protection, nourishment and enthusiastic working for acquiring knowledge. Of course, they are well aware of the perils associated with joint working, namely dissension. Hence, they are praying together to avoid such situation of engaging in dissension over petty things. Finally, they are whole heartedly aspiring for the three levels of peace by uttering the word “peace” thrice. Why Vedic mantras end with uttering the word peace thrice? This has to be understood very carefully. The first peace refers to individual’s internal and external peace. Internal peace means balanced mind, ever active intelligence and enlightened consciousness, whereas external peace means healthy body. The second peace refers to the peaceful condition for all the people connected to the individual. The third peace refers to the peaceful condition of all human beings and other living beings on the earth. Vedic culture teaches only universal brotherhood and peace for everyone. “*Sarvesham santir bhavatu* - let everyone be peaceful”.

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Despite this great wealth of Vedic wisdom that guides one to absolutely assured peace, why do we not find peace in ourselves? Why peace doesn't prevail in our homes, offices, corporates, society, industries, countries, etc.? Where can we find the actual reason for this dangerous situation? Answer for this question is very simple and straight. Though Vedic wisdom prompts us to strive for peace, modern men, out of ignorance, strive only for pleasure. This is the biggest mistake. Let's take the example of above *Taittiriya Upanishad mantra* and analyze the case little differently. If the teacher and student aspire for pleasure instead of peace, certainly, there would be misunderstandings related to protection, nourishment, acquiring knowledge, which eventually results in dissension. Then, the most aspired pleasure goes for a toss and both of them end up in great miseries. This is what actually happens when governing principles are bypassed or breached. "Pray for joint protection, joint nourishment, joint working, joint acquiring of knowledge, no dissension, then peace would prevail" is the governing principle given by the Vedic mantra. When there is a breach in this governing principle, one can expect only miseries, not any peace.

This analysis brings about the most important principle that any breach of governing principles will eventually result in only pain, not pleasure. Then, what to talk about peace? We can take a good lesson from our former president of India Dr. Abdul Kalam's own words about the present topic of discussion. In 1979, he was the project director for SLV3 and the computer gave hold-message in rocket launching. But, he bypassed the computer and launched the rocket, which resulted in placing the satellite in Bay of Bengal instead of specified orbit. It means that the breach of governing principles is the cause of whole miseries, failures and ultimately restlessness.

Vedic mantras don't end with "*Om sukh sukh sukh*" (Om pleasure pleasure pleasure), but with "*Om shanti shanti shanti*". This clearly indicates that one who is intelligent should aspire for only peace, which is possible by abiding to governing principles. It means that by supporting good governance by the competent people peace would prevail everywhere. However, without connection to transcendence (the Lord) such transcendental knowledge and steady mind would not be awarded. This is clearly mentioned in Bhagavad-Gita (2.66), where the Lord says as under:

*nāsti buddhir ayuktasya na cāyuktasya bhāvanā
na cābhāvayataḥ śāntir aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham*

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“One who is not connected with the Supreme can have neither transcendental knowledge nor a steady mind, without which there is no possibility of peace. And how can there be any happiness without peace?”

Peace and prosperity go hand in hand. When there is unrest in a system all the energy is spent just resolving the issues or when there is some disease in the body, entire money and time are spent just for recovery without any productive work. Hence, aspiring and endeavoring for peace is the key for opening the locks of gates of prosperity. And the most important initiative towards fulfilling the aspiration of peace is to abide by the governing principles of any kind around us. How many times we are reminded of following the rules indicate our backward journey away from peace, whereas whole hearted adherence to rules, without any reminders, indicate our forward journey towards peace. All that we need is to change the mindset from non-adherence to adherence of governing principles, however simple they may be. Leaders not only change their mindset towards complete adherence to governing principles, but also constantly persuade people under them to adopt that culture. Maintaining a logbook of your adherences and breaches of governing principles on weekly basis, monthly basis and yearly basis, with corrections as required, would gradually evolve one as a complete man with full of peace and prosperity.
