

CONCEPT PAPER

Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam : The Whole World is a Family

HINDU-MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

In India's unique synergetic culture lies the ability to transcend inter-community barriers . Its composite culture is a unique force in the world. The heritage of India's multi-religious, multilingual and multi-racial diversity, its inclusiveness has forged through centuries. For centuries India has provided a home to very significant number of practitioners of practically every other major religion of the world, be it Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism or the Baha'ism. India is the birthplace of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism .

In the core of India's diversity, unity and integrity we discover the proverbial concept of its philosophy of harmonious and peaceful coexistence. Against this reality, in India, we find various diverse religions and cultures coexisting peacefully within the same society under the democratic system.

Notwithstanding the blinkered "divide and rule" policy of the British Raj closely followed by political parties in India to gain political mileage, Indians have understood the importance of building alliances among religions, cultures and ethnic groups . India considers liberal democracy, secularism and successful pluralism grounded in the basic tenets of mutual understanding and respect for diverse traditions. These are a vital part of our Constitution. It needs to be stated that we Indians by and large reject religious polarization by divisive forces. These have little to do with enlightenment , spirituality and values that all religions teach.

Tolerance and inclusion are undoubtedly the sine qua non of Indian Democracy. However, presently National commitments to secular religious tolerance seem to be challenged. The current narrative of mutual suspicion and mistrust can only be wiped out through engagement, empathy, exchange, knowledge and interaction. The intensifying extremism, lack of tolerance and religious pandemonium needs to be countered.

We need to revisit some of the widely held but unfounded fallacies regarding communities, fed by a deliberately "monochromatic view of history". We need to restore the age-old synergetic fiber of our country.

With a view to augment peace and conflict resolution, a systematic understanding of the dynamics underpinning Hindu-Muslim-Christian and other religious traditions in India, an adequate exploration of those issues that enhance common grounds between traditions, mutual respect , humility and self-restraint need discussion. Dialogue is the key.

In order to bring transformation leading India towards the goal of national integration, development and achieving its rightful position as a future world power, the prophets of doom need to be dismissed. India is a land of equal rights, equal opportunities for all its citizens alike. Recognizing affirmative action by enlarging areas of socio-economic inclusion, equal opportunities and jobs for all its citizens are an indispensable part of India's democratic ideals .

We need to follow the age old Indian dictum of Vasudeva Kutumbakum or the world is a family and Sarva Dharma Sambhava or equal regard for all religions.

The Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi , the greatest apostle of peace and non-violence said "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible".

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