

THE RELEVANCE OF RELIGION IN TODAY'S WORLD

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Abstract

Religion is a source of morality. Every society has certain moral ideals and these moral ideals are rooted in religion. They have given a stable form to our social behaviour and conduct. The society needs religion for the maintenance of moral law and order. The role of religion in today's world is very significant. It rationalizes and makes bearable individual's suffering in the world. Man cannot live by knowledge alone; he is also an emotional being. It is religion which serves to soothe the emotions of man in times of suffering and disappointment.

Keywords: morality, cohesive force, spirituality, brotherhood.

Religion is one of the most important aspects of human life. Man is inherently religious. It is basically man's belief in a supernatural power on whom human beings depend for their well being. The term 'Religion' is derived from the Latin word 'religare' which means bond. As such it means a bond which unites the human life as well as social life. The Indian term for the word 'Religion' is 'dharma'. 'Dharma' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhri' which means 'to sustain'. So Dharma is that which sustains life.

We have found various definitions regarding religion. But it is very difficult to have a suitable definition of it. James Martineau, defines, 'Religion is the belief in an ever living God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the universe and holding moral relations with mankind'. According to Herbert Spencer, 'Religion is the recognition that all things are manifestation of a power which transcends our knowledge', According to Robert Flint, 'Religion is man's belief in a Being or Beings mightier than himself and inaccessible to his sentiments and actions, with the feelings and practices which flow from such a belief'. Comte identified religion with humanity which goes against the whole tradition of mankind which has always thought of God as the central element of religion.

Swami Vivekananda comments on religion on Jnana Yoga, 'Nothing has made the brotherhood of man more tangible than religion; nothing has made more bitter enmity between man and man than religion; nothing has built more charitable institution, more hospitals for man

and even for animals than religion; nothing has deluged the world with more blood than religion.'

The world is now a global village. But we people are becoming more selfish and narrow. Science has relieved us of grinding poverty. The discovery of nuclear energy presents great possibilities of human progress, yet we suffer from an inward loneliness. All growth is marked with pain. Now we have to face violence, injustice and social evils. It is religion which can guide our present world to find mental satisfaction and to overcome the paralysing sense of despair and create a less imperfect society. In the present day situation religion can play an important role which can help our youth become moral, disciplined and socialized citizen of society?

Now modern life becomes mechanical and people have no moral values. Cases of suicide, violence and crime are also increasing day by day. Science and technology cannot solve all these problems of modern life. As long as suffering exists in this world, the value and essence of religion cannot be ignored.

We all human beings are inhabitants of this planet where science and technology has its influence in every aspect of life. It makes our life more comfortable by fighting against nature. Invention of efficient mechanism leads us to the state where human race is the king. But the question arises; does science can remove fatigue of our soul? It is only religion which can satisfy our spiritual hunger.

Besides, religion acts as a cohesive force. It unites man to his fellow beings. It is the bond that unites man to God, strengthens the bond of unity existing between man and man. Through the institutions of religion like church, temple, mosque, it establishes a centre of human fellowship. Religious associations collect funds and work for the poor and needy. Religion acts as a common platform by which we can unite the whole community as one. The great religious books such as Bible, Koran, and Vedas are the maps of particular religion to have conception of them. The values of religious books are like the different gateways to the same goal—God. Every religion consists truth and each truth is the vision of same reality namely God. Religion is like a river and we try to fetch water with different vessels of various shapes. Harmony of religions is the crying need of present day. Every religion teaches us love of mankind. Every existing religion teaches us that we all are the children of God. We have come from God, going back to God. Same principle of unity in variety is consisting everywhere. A Mohammedan sufi says 'Anal Haq' which means 'I am He'. Similarly Hindu sages say 'Aham Brahmasmi' which means 'I am He'. Every religion contains in it the germ of unity and brotherhood which is badly needed by the modern world. Even if the scientist has to understand more perfectly the nature of man and his universe, religion can play a vital role.

In the present world of science and technology we have material comforts but real peace of mind has not yet been found. Every country is competing with one another in the production of material wealth and destructive weapons. This has brought the modern world on the verge of total destruction. In this period of crisis, it is only religion which can save the strife-torn world of today. The basis of this religion will be service, brotherhood and love. Religion plays an important part in the social development also. It can save the human society and civilization from evil influences. In the present society, religion is the only cementing bond among the members of society.

There are some thinkers who consider religion as a disruptive force rather than cohesive. They believe that religion is the cause of quarrels and violence in the society. Crusades and

various religious warfares, communal riots have been cited as evidence in their support. But we cannot blame on religion. Religion is not simply the ceremonies and rituals. It is not simply dogmas. When we dispute over dogmas we are divided, but when we take to the life of worship and contemplation we are brought together. All religions are fundamentally one. The bond between man and man is spiritual. We are all brothers under the fatherhood of God. It is religion which is a common basis for the good of mankind as a whole. Hence we cannot deny the relevance of religion in today's world.

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