

Tolerance In Indian Culture – A Philosophical Perspective

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Abstract: Tolerance has been proclaimed as the hall mark of Indian culture, and the sense of synthesis. Universal outlook and respect for individuals peculiar to it have shown as flowing from this central point. The basis of tolerance is supposed to be the overall philosophical outlook characteristic of Indian culture and yet Indian culture is supposed to be neither otherworldly nor unsocial, neither fatalistic nor wanting in ethical context. Tolerance is equated with the essence of Dharma or Rta which is the same as the harmony of cosmic order from which creation emerges. To live in conformity with this cosmic order and to dedicate oneself to it are supposed to constitute the Highest Good and, in the attempt to realize this, are said to originate virtues like ahimsa, aparigraha and vairagya. The three forms of tolerance in the sphere of individuals conduct and a non competitive hierarchical society idealized as a triumph of discipline, duty and selflessness over egoism, acquisitiveness and hedonism. Fourfold division of hierarchical society is justified on the basis of a factual observation that all men are not equal in their capabilities and aptitudes.

The spirit of tolerance has acted as a unifying force contributing to the evolution of Indian culture notwithstanding the vastness of the country, the extreme diversity of physical feature, endless variety of races and magnitude of its population, divided into countless caste, professing numerous creeds, speaking a variety of languages and dialects. We have also seen that spirituality is the hall mark of Indian culture. Since the beginning of Vedas, the seers and rishis had innovated the experimental and reflective method of gaining knowledge and establishment of way of life. It is the cultivation of inner states it is the inward exploration and aspiration to materialize the human power ability and spirituality.

I. INTRODUCTION

The tradition of tolerance is not an attitude of indifference to others. It is a fundamental Postulate of Hindu thought that every way of life has its own contribution to make human welfare. It is this positive approach to other groups and communities which gives to the Indian doctrine of tolerance its special significances. Religion is not a matter of exclusive dogma. It is a widetolerance, a feeling that others may be equally right in the methods they follow, that is the essence of Hindu teaching. This has coloured Hindu life to such an extent that it may truly be considered the differentiating mark of Indian culture, a respect for the faith and beliefs and others and a generous charity in understanding the approach of others problems of life. It is this sense of tolerance that gives harmony to the inner life of Indian culture. Hence the spirit of tolerance in Indian culture is considered to be very significant.

Therefore, this paper deals about tolerance in Indian culture in its philosophical perspectives.

II. INDIAN CULTURE

Today's world challenges everyone to understand culture. Culture can be used to convey various meanings, without an understanding of what culture stands for, it is clear that all discussion would be meaningless. However the word 'culture' has been recently so greatly used and abused that one does not really know what one is speaking about or is expected to dilate upon. Before going into the definitions of culture we shall now consider the etymological significance of that word culture. It is essentially connected with the word cultivate. The human sphere means the training of the body, of the mind, and the spirit, conjointly and in a co-ordinate fashion, to view and to

resolve the problems of the universe that confront man and woman.

It has been rightly pointed out that science means a curiosity about life or arts means a wonder at life, Philosophy means an attitude towards life, and religion means a reverence for life. Culture embraces and involves all these elements it is a mixture of that never ending curiosity towards the phenomena, elements it is a mixture of that never ending curiosity towards the phenomena, physical, psychological and spiritual and unceasing wonder and reverence at the ultimate facets of life. Culture makes social charm and intellectual excellence. Mathew Arnold defines culture as sweetness and light. Sociologists like Sorokin and Maciver to whom culture stands for the moral, spiritual and intellectual attainments of men. David Bidney, a philosopher and an anthropologist, defines it is the self cultivation of human nature and also the cultivation of natural, geographical environment.

The anthropologist Tylor, culture stands for the beliefs, ideas, customs, laws, arts and other capabilities and skills acquired by man as a member of society and culture is a social heritage ; it is the gift of society to an individual, culture is the complex of ideas, conception, developed qualities and organized relationships and courtesies that exist generally in a society. Our culture is more spiritual than that of others. We may claim the following are the outstanding facts of Indian culture.

- ✓ Spirit of tolerance
- ✓ Sense for synthesis
- ✓ Universal outlook
- ✓ Philosophical outlook
- ✓ Respect for the individual.

III. MEANING OF TOLERANCE

Before going into the details we shall consider the meaning of the tolerance. To tolerate is to bear with patience the existence of others. It is put up with the views and sections of others people. It consists of permitting other persons to express their views freely and implement them into activity. Toleration is essentially a state of mind for there is the positive action of non-interference in activity of other persons. Toleration can be between one person and other person, as between husband and wife, mother and child and among friends. It may be between one individual and group, group and another group, community and community, race and race, class and class. There can be toleration in religion oriented culture at the same time it is possible for toleration to prevail in on direly secular culture. Compromise and adjustment are important ingredients of tolerance. Tolerance gives us spiritual insight and a respect to others beliefs and practices.

IV. SPIRIT OF TOLERANCE

Spirit of tolerance is the very foundation of Indian culture, and it is looked upon with respect and admiration because it is a land of variety with rich culture and moral traditions. There are fourteen important languages spoken in different areas and each of those has a rich literary tradition and two hundred

different dialects and languages are spoken in the land. Another remarkable feature of the country is that all the world religions are found here, people differ considerably in their social customs and life style and each religion had developed its own peculiar culture. For all this 'unity in diversity' tolerance is the main force.

V. THREE STEPS OF TOLERANCE

Firstly, since the beginning of Indian culture various races which were originally called varnas have been absorbed and they have been integrated. Secondly Hindu religious and Indian culture have essentially dynamic, experiential, reflective and valuation with the result that they have permitted and encouraged multifaceted ways of devotion, worship and approaches to the understanding of world and reality. Thirdly the concept of Dharma has been intensive and all embracing. The right law of this automatic harmony is the RTA. Means truth of the Reality and the universe.

VI. TOLERANCE IN HINDU SCRIPTURES

A. VEDAS

The history of Indian philosophy shows a remarkable spirit of tolerance. There have been systems of specialization, conflicting claims and counterclaims but the supervening tendency has been to continue, assimilate, harmonies and synthesize diverse tendencies. In the past, there had been at least four great stages of synthesis represented by the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the Tantra. Vedas are not produced by the human beings and are called Apaursheya. Sources of Dharma are

- ✓ Sruti or the Vedas
- ✓ The tradition and practice of those that know smritis
- ✓ The conduct of virtuous man
- ✓ Individual conscience

B. EPICS

The epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata have brought out the dissemination of moral ideas among masses of India. The ethical and social ideas of India culture have been to a large extent found in these two Epics. We may put forward certain central moral ideas in the Epics. The following are the foundation of tolerance.

- ✓ Reverence for seers, parents and elderly persons
- ✓ Penance
- ✓ Keeping of promise
- ✓ Suffering for others good and welfare
- ✓ Observance of rules even in hostility and war
- ✓ Loyalty
- ✓ Rectitude and righteousness.

C. BHAGAVAD GITA

Bhagavad Gita which is a part of Mahabharata is advocating for synthesis of knowledge, action, devotion and

other parts of development and liberation. It advocates toleration among ideas as well as colour and castes. All the castes have been created according to quality and action. Analysis of human temperament, mind, desires, passions and impulses are attempted in thorough going manner. There are persons in whom the element of virtue intelligence and reflection are predominant. Secondary there are persons, who are mainly active, extrovert, and socially co-operative. Thirdly, there is the quality of inertia, inactivity and slothness that all dominant. With its comprehensive approach and interpretation of man and world, Gita has appealed to classes and masses and has been instrumental in inculcating moral, social and culture ideas into – day – today life.

D. SMRITIS

According to smritis division of people are on the basis of those who can read Vedas and those who cannot read Vedas, do performance of sacrifice, rituals, chanting of hymns and mantras of Vedas, thread ceremony and Varna. In the period of Smriti the virtue of toleration is mentioned in Dharma Sutras which mentions the following moral virtues absence of anger, non excitement in loss and gain, tolerance of those who do harm to oneself, absence of greed, contentment, not being given to delusion, absence of hypocrisy, hostility, and truthfulness, charitableness, non covetousness, gentleness and others. These should be observed in all stages of life, can attain salvation.

VII. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

- ✓ Investigation of means of knowledge
- ✓ Nature of Self
- ✓ Nature of liberation
- ✓ Moral endeavour
- ✓ Interpretation of external world
- ✓ Mind, vital urges and consciousness and
- ✓ Metaphysical seeking.

It seems that entire philosophical quest in india is compact and harmonious in spite of there being darshanas. Each philosophical system has got specific approach towards the institution of knowledge, self, reality and goal of life.

VIII. PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Tolerance has been proclaimed as the hall mark of Indian culture, and the sense of synthesis. Universal outlook and respect for individuals peculiar to it have shown as flowing from this central point. The basis of tolerance is supposed to be the overall philosophical outlook characteristic of Indian culture and yet Indian culture is supposed to be neither otherworldly nor unsocial, neither fatalistic nor wanting in ethical context. Tolerance is equated with the essence of Dharma or Rta which is the same as the harmony of cosmic order from which creation emerges. To live in conformity with this cosmic order and to dedicate oneself to it are supposed to constitute the Highest Good and, in the attempt to realize this,

are said to originate virtues like ahimsa, aparigraha and vairagya. The three forms of tolerance in the sphere of individuals conduct and a non competitive hierarchical society idealized as a triumph of discipline, duty and selflessness over egoism, acquisitiveness and hedonism. Fourfold division of hierarchical society is justified on the basis of a factual observation that all men are not equal in their capabilities and aptitudes.

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Integrating occupation have played the vital role in Indian Culture similarly the entire spectrum of Indian Culture its religion, ethics, Philosophy, literature, art, architecture, dance, music and even its polity social and economic organization all these have been considerably influenced and moulded by inspiring force of a multi sided spirituality.

IX. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have seen the spirit of tolerance in Indian culture in its philosophical, perspectives. It is variously the unity of essence co exists with the diversity of name (nama) and form (rupa). Thus the apparent polytheism of the Vedas is underlined by the feeling of monotheism. Tolerance is a very high and noble quality by the feeling of it strengthens our cultural heritage. Our culture is comprehended by the term Dharma which includes kindness to everybody and appropriate attitude of Ahimsa.

Before concluding we may suggest some solutions for creating tolerance, communal harmony, cultural and emotional integration among the people of India.

- ✓ Equalization of socio economic status
- ✓ Inter religious dialogue and world religious conference,
- ✓ Religious and moral education,
- ✓ Removal of dispersing words, deeds and action.
- ✓ Study and Research on essentials of religion, philosophy and culture.
- ✓ Meeting of the religious leaders and National leaders,
- ✓ Patriotic Spirit,
- ✓ Nationalization of education.
- ✓ Universal primary education.

Hence, tolerance and culture like charity begins at home. Every human being embodies his culture his level and aspects of tolerance, irrespective of its nature and embodies all of it. Along with self control, self restraint, patience and discipline tolerance is a passive aspect of the human beings.

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