

14/07/2017

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks states that “all human beings, them and us, enemy and friend, are equally in the image and likeness of God. **Our common humanity precedes our religious differences.** Until the world religions stop taking sides and become instead an active force for peace, sectarian violence will continue, and God in heaven will weep.”

The Indian sub-continent has produced great spiritual figures like Buddha, Mahavira, Swami Vivekananda, Guru Nanak, Gandhi and many Sufi and Christian saints, all of whom have advocated peace and non-violence. There is no lack of spiritual, religious and secular texts on the need to maintain communal harmony. And yet we see that deep suspicions exist between the religious traditions, occasionally erupting into violence. (The partition of India into Pakistan and India on the basis of religion caused riots that claimed about two million lives.)

India has been a spiritual laboratory from the very beginning. Apart from contributing priceless spiritual texts like the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita, Buddhism was born here. Legend has it that the Christian apostle St. Thomas came to the western shore from the Middle East. Jainism and Sikhism have their roots in India as well as great Sufi traditions. Islam came to India as early as the 7th century, and today South Asia hosts the largest Muslim population in the world.

An ancient Indian spiritual text from the Maha Upanishad states, “The whole world is one family”, echoing Rabi Sacks statement that our common humanity precedes our religious differences.

While practically every religious tradition in India is partially guilty of mixing religion with politics to promote sectarian ends, the people of India remain by and large a tolerant and peace loving lot. A large number of efforts from all over the country, emanating both from religious and secular groups, are at the forefront to foster inter-religious dialogue and communal harmony.

The [2017 Intercultural Calendar](http://intercultural-calendar.in) of Pipal Tree provides inspiration from the different religious traditions to promote inter-religious understanding. Apart from the writings of both religious and secular leaders there are also stories of ordinary people doing their bit to living in harmony and peace. [<http://intercultural-calendar.in>]

15/09/2017

What is Prayer?

Prayer doesn't just happen when we kneel or put our hands together and focus and expect things from God.

Thinking positive and wishing good for others is a prayer.

When you hug a friend,

That's a prayer.

When you cook something to nourish family and friends,

That's a prayer.

When we send off our near and dear ones and say, 'drive safely' or 'be safe'.

That's a prayer.

When you are helping someone in need by giving your time and energy,

You are praying.

When you forgive someone by your heart,

That is prayer.

*Prayer is a vibration. A feeling. A thought. Prayer is the voice of love, friendship, genuine relationships.

Prayer is an expression of your silent being.*

Keep praying always...

Note from the editors:

We are not sure where this prayer comes from and who wrote it. It is doing the rounds on the internet. But it expresses Meeting River's and Pipal Tree's belief that prayer cannot be relegated to mere ritual, habit or sectarian practice. We do believe that the above prayer expresses the best in secular and religious traditions.