



Peace in Human Life: In the Eye of Indian Perspective

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Abstract:

We, as human beings, generally think living peacefully and happily is the purpose of this life. Therefore, we always expect peace in all our actions. But from various bitter experiences such as educational insecurity, job insecurity, wars and future expectations and so on, peace in human life seems like a myth. The possibility of it seems impossible. However, some ancient theories, in particular, four ashrama dharmas and some modern thinkers in India tried to show peaceful living is not impossible. They thought it is possible by bringing order and harmony in our thought process and in our day to day practices. They tried to provide a path by which one can live peacefully. Also, they tried to show what kind of results one can get from a peaceful life. The main aim of this paper is to understand those principles and their significant role to bring peace and consequently the positive results of it in human life.

Keywords: Human life, ashrama dharmas, order and harmony, peace

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Introduction:

Whenever the idea of peace² comes to the mind, there are a number of other ideas flowered in the mind. In that list, some ideas may give pleasure and some others may create terrific fear. In other words, on the one hand, whenever the idea of peace comes to the mind the ideas such as harmony, order, happiness, and freedom come to the mind. On the other hand, whenever the idea of peace comes to the mind the ideas of fear, insecurity, and war with a full of violence comes to the mind. When human beings start thinking rationally, which we have no idea about the time period, they might try to bring peace into human life and they might consider it as the aim, or purpose of human life. This might be the reason why the term peace occupied an important place in our literature, belief system, and day to day practices from the time immemorial. We have a number of religious systems—such as Hinduism, Buddhism and so on—and a number of teachers, for example,

Buddha. The systems and the teachers try to engage in different ways to bring peace into human life. But still, we are seriously searching for peace in our life. Especially in the modern world, it is a fruit which is very difficult to get. Is it really possible bringing peace into human life? Or is it searching for a black cat in the dark room which is not there? This is really an evergreen philosophical question which needs to engage seriously. The main project of this paper is to discuss the concept of peace and its possibilities in human beings' lives. Particularly, the paper shall focus on some of the Indian ancient as well as modern philosophical thoughts and how they play a role to bring peace in human life. The paper is divided into two sections: the first section deals with the role of four *ashrama dharmas* and its principal role in making human life peaceful; and the second section deals with a modern Indian thinker's thought on the concept of peace. In addition, the paper also discusses the fruitful results from

² The term “peace” is a noun. The Oxford English dictionaries' definition of the term “peace” is as follows: “freedom from disturbance”.

Peace | Definition of peace by Oxford dictionary on Lexico.com also meaning of peace. (n.d.). Lexico Dictionaries

English. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/peace>

the life of an individual who leads a peaceful life. Finally, the conclusion follows.

Section 1- Four Ashrama Dharmas and Its Role in Human Life:

In *Jabalopanishad*³, we can see the way Yajnavalkya's division of an individual life in four significant stages, namely, *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha*, and *Sanyasa*. The core idea of this division is that if an individual life goes through these four stages orderly then the individual life is fulfilled with peace since in each stage an individual has a particular set of desires which has to be fulfilled in a particular manner.

A brief picture of the four stages is as follows: firstly, *Brahmacharya* is a stage where a child, under the teachings of a right *Guru*, learns skills and knowledge about the external world and makes his behavior in a right way to live happily in the society. After completing this he enters into the *Grihastha* stage—householder stage—and uses all the learned skills and knowledge for the all round development of the individual's family. He works for his parents, wife, children, and relatives and makes them

happy consequently make himself happy. Put simply, in this stage, an individual has a strong attachment with family. In the third stage, *vanaprastha* stage, an individual has to detach from all the bondages of his family affections and make himself to live in the forest and participates in rituals and other related things. This third stage makes a path to the final stage, *sanyas ashram*. In this stage, an individual has to detach from all the bondages, even rituals. The main function of an individual in this stage is searching for the true nature of inner being.

If we observe keenly, in each stage an individual is assigned a specified duties. Our seers divided these four stages by their knowledge and suggest that an individual must have to follow these four stages to make their life purposeful and consequently to get peace in their life.

But the significant point here is that what we have seen so far is merely belonging to thousands of years back and related to a particular religion and moreover indicating to only men's life. One may question— who is living in the

³ Radhakrishnan, S. (Ed.). (1953). *The principal upanisads. Edited with introduction, text,*

translation and notes, (Pp.896-897). Humanities Press Inc.

modern, fully technological, and global cultural world—how could we use this principle in the present-day life? Well, the idea of the division of human life into four stages may develop a thousand years back but that idea is not applicable to any particular time period, a particular religion, or particular gender. It is beyond that. Therefore, we can say it is applicable to all human beings. Every individual must have to taste the four stages in his/her life to make their life happy and then peaceful.

But truly speaking, in the present day world, especially in India, an individual is living in the stage of *brahmacharya* with a lot of struggles and fears about the future whether he/she will get a job or not since he/she getting theoretical knowledge which is not at all relevant to the practical life. With this baggage of fears, an individual is entering into the householder stage where he/she is not able to manage their family since they are overrunning to satisfy future desires; therefore,

he/she is not able to fulfill their duties in the present. So to say, they are lacking the quality of maintaining good relations with their family members. With this baggage of fears and desires, an individual is entering into the third stage where he/she is not able to do something except thinking about his/her past and feel pain and guilt in the present. In addition, he/she is expecting good relationships and sympathy from their family members. In fact, the reality happening there is reversed. Finally, an individual life is ending with full of miseries and lack of peace.

The point here is that if we fulfill our duties in the first two stages then the two stages automatically make a path for the other two stages. But contrarily, our first two stages are finishing with imbalance; consequently, the other two are going with unhappiness and lack of peace. Put simply, the present-day human life is missing order and harmony. There is one well-known *sloka*⁴ in *Bhagavad Gita*

⁴ *karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi* (Chapter II, Verse 47) - His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. (1986). *Bhagavad-Gita as it is* (p. 121). The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

which says an individual's duty is just doing prescribed actions not expecting the fruits of those actions. If we applied this to our four divisions of life then our life journey will go happily and peacefully.

In this way, we can say, our ancient thinkers, with their refined thoughts, tried to help human beings to live peacefully and consequently to bring prosperity in society.

In the next section, we shall see how a contemporary Indian thinker, Jiddu Krishnamurti, had explored his views on the notion of peace.

Section 2- Jiddu Krishnamurti's View of Peace:

We can see Jiddu Krishnamurti's, a well-known Indian thinker, views on peace in his several public talks, in particular, "Only in peace can the human mind be free"⁵ and "Why can't man live peacefully on the earth?"⁶ His arguments are as follows: unless and until we remove the conflict in ourselves and also in the society, where we are living, peace is not possible. For Krishnamurthy, indeed, conflict is

generated in the mind because we are seeing a difference between you and me, your religion and my religion, your nation and my nation and so forth. When these differences enter into the mind and how this kind of having the notion of differences impact the human mind is a considerable question for Krishnamurti. He argues, from childhood onwards we are trained regarding these differences in different ways: in the families by our parents, in the schools by our teachers, in the society by the different mediums. So we are well trained in differentiating instead of seeing the 'same consciousness' – in Krishnamurti's view, we have the same consciousness of pain but we have different notions about religions, gender and so forth – in all human beings. These differences among the different individuals, groups, nations, religions would create conflict then insecurity feeling, fear, and then unhappiness and then lack of peace in the entire life. To bring security in life, to get the freedom from fear, we are depending on wars and

⁵ Krishnamurti, J. (1983, August 28). *Only in peace can the human mind be free*. J. Krishnamurti. <https://jkrishnamurti.org/content/only-peace-can-human-mind-be-free-0>

⁶ Krishnamurti, J. (1985, April 11). *Why can't man live peacefully on the earth?* J. Krishnamurti. <https://jkrishnamurti.org/content/why-cant-man-live-peacefully-earth>

using terrific weapons which creates more insecurity feelings, more fear and more unhappiness and then lack of peace. He questions us if this is the case, is peace possible in a human being's life? Also, he says, along with this we always walk with a bag-full of memories which really makes us unhappy. He means that we always look into yesterday's happiness, burdens, and fears which really kills the present and creates conflicts and peace less life.

Therefore, Krishnamurti suggests that to bring peace in the life of an individual and consequently prosperity in the society we must have to see the nature of the *same consciousness* in all human beings instead of seeing differences in the name of gender, color, caste, religion, nation and so forth. Moreover, he suggested that we must have to get freedom from "known" that we get from our past memories and other sources. We have to keep a point in our mind that while saying this point Krishnamurthy is not suggesting we have to kill the thought power but he is

sincerely suggesting that living in the present is a solution to make our life peaceful.

We have discussed so far in the above two sections the importance of peace in our lives, and also how we could make our life peaceful. If we are in the state of peace then what will happen or what kind of results one could get is a significant question. We can get a beautiful answer to this question with a small four lined poem spoken by a well-known Telugu poet-philosopher, Yogi Vemana. The poem is:

*santame janulanu jayamu nondinchunu
santamunane guruni jaadateluyu
santabhavamahima jarchimpalemaya
viswadhabhirama
vinura vema⁷* (Verses of Vemana: 69)

The meaning of the poem is as follows. According to Yogi Vemana, the nature of peace gives victory to the people over the all bad characters, namely, *kama* (lust), *kroda* (anger), *loba* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (ego) and *matsarya* (jealousy). A person who is leading a peaceful life can get success

⁷ Vinay, K. V. (2009, November 27). *108 poems of Vemana – Komarraju Venkata Vinay*. Komarraju Venkata

Vinay. <https://komarrajuvenkatavinay.wordpress.com/category/108-poems-of-vemana/>

everywhere. Further, Vemana is saying that in the state of peace an individual can find the right *guru* for his/her bright future. Finally, he is saying that since the scope of peace is infinite, it is very difficult to discuss the power of the nature of peace.

Towards a Conclusion:

We have discussed so far the importance of four *ashrama dharmas* in an individual life, also, Krishnamurthy's view on the notion of peace. Additionally, we have seen Yogi Vemana's poetic expression regarding the power of peace. Whoever said, whatever they may say, the crystal clear point here is that if an individual maintains his/her life with harmony in all stages and refined his/her thought process then that naturally leads to peace and consequently he/she gets all the consequences of it. Therefore, we can conclude, peace in human life is not a myth.