

THE SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST

An Ezine for Those Who Think

Published by VOICE, ISKCON, Pune

Seek Spiritual Unity Amidst Religious Diversity

Communal conflicts make some people feel that the world would be better off without religion. But the plight of a godless modern world is poignantly caught by Martin Luther King Jr in his comment several decades ago, ‘We have guided missiles and misguided men’. While science and technology have helped us to control the external world to some extent, control of the inner world is sadly lacking, as can be seen from the alarming increase in depression, hypertension and other mental health disorders as also in addictions, criminality, violence, suicides and homicides. It is genuine spirituality alone that can provide the inner strength and fulfillment that can lead to lasting morality and real character in the individual

All religions have two aspects – exoteric (external) and esoteric (internal). Most religious practitioners focus fanatically on the exoteric aspects such as rituals, institutions and mindsets, which often differ according to time, place and culture. These superficial religionists are often unaware of the essence of the religion that they profess to follow. Consequently they tend to become sentimental or fundamentalist and have internecine conflicts, riots and crusades. When we dig through the misconceptions, misinterpretations and mistakes that have over the centuries obscured the essential truths of all religions, we will find that these core principles are consistently identical and can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. God is the Supreme Father of all living beings and He is the Supreme Owner and Controller of everything.
2. We are accountable for all our actions to God. If we encroach upon the property of God or the rights of the other children of God, we will in time get an appropriate reaction as per the laws of God. .
3. We are spirit souls, eternal sons of God and our real happiness is not in material acquisition, but in spiritual realization, in lovingly harmonizing ourselves with nature and God.
4. We can easily and effectively achieve this harmony and the resulting highest happiness by chanting the holy names of God – Krishna, Rama, Allah, Christ, Jehovah or any other name as stated in the authorized religious scriptures

These spiritual precepts do not contradict the principle of secularism because secularism should not be misunderstood or misinterpreted as atheism. Secularism basically implies impartiality towards different religions and the above precepts are the common underlying teachings of all the major religions of the world.

When people harmonize themselves with the essential principles of their respective religion, then we will be able to celebrate spiritual unity amidst religious diversity.