



FOUNDATION *for* RESTORATION of NATIONAL VALUES

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः॥
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु। मा कश्चित् दुःखभाग् भवेत्॥

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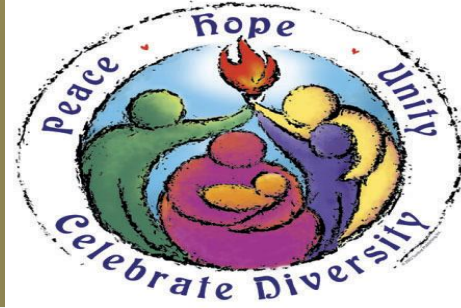
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NEWSLETTER

September 2017



A duty of tolerance

- By Soli J. Sorabjee (Reproduced from -The Indian Express, published on January 11, 2017)

Intolerance has a chilling effect on freedom of thought and discussion. It places democracy under siege.

An unmistakable feature of any nation which professes to be democratic is the prevalence of tolerance therein. Tolerance is not merely a goody-goody virtue. It is vital because it promotes the receiving or acknowledging of new ideas and this helps to break the status quo mentality. Tolerance is particularly needed in large and complex societies comprising people with varied beliefs, as in India. This is because readiness to tolerate views other than one's own facilitates harmonious coexistence.

A liberal democracy accepts the fact that in a free country, one can have different opinions and should have equal rights in voicing them. This is pluralism, and tolerance is its ultimate rationale.

Tolerance accords high respect for human rights, especially freedom of conscience and freedom of thought. Disagreement with the belief and ideology of others is no reason for their suppression, because there can be more than one path for the attainment of truth and salvation. Even if there is only one truth, it may have a hundred facets.

Intolerance stems from an invincible assumption of the infallibility and truth of one's beliefs, the dogmatic conviction about the rightness of one's tenets and their superiority

over others, and with the passage of time, this leads to forcible imposition of one's ideology on others, often resulting in violence. At present, the virus of intolerance has acquired global dimensions. Religious and political persecution has become rampant and curiously that too sometimes in the name of God Almighty or some Divine Power.

An intolerant society does not brook dissent. Suppression of dissent by censorship is an indispensable instrument for an intolerant authoritarian regime. Censorship, indeed, is its natural ally.

The necessity for tolerance has been internationally recognised. It is noteworthy that the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations proclaims that to achieve the goals of the Charter we need to "practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours". Another significant UN instrument is the Declaration of November 25, 1981 on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief which emphasizes that it is essential to promote tolerance and requires states to adopt all necessary measures for the speedy elimination of intolerance in all its forms and manifestations. It is evident that there is an essential linkage between tolerance, human rights, democracy and peace.

Intolerance does not always emanate from official or state action but also from certain groups or sections in society. A not too recent instance was the determined effort to ban the exhibition of the film Ore Oru Gramathiley by a group of persons who regarded its theme and presentation as hostile to the policy of reservation of jobs in public employment and seats in educational institutions in favour of Scheduled Castes and backward classes. There were threats of attacking cinema houses where the film would be shown.

The Madras High Court in an incredible judgment

revoked the certificate granted by the Board of Censors to the film and restrained its exhibition.

The Supreme Court promptly reversed the judgment in a landmark decision, *S. Rangarajan vs P. Jagjivan Ram*, where Justice K. Jagannatha Shetty, speaking for the court, laid down an extremely important principle: "Freedom of expression protects not merely ideas that are accepted but those that offend, shock or disturb the state or any sector of the population. Such are the demands of the pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness without which there is no democratic society".

Intolerance has a chilling, inhibiting effect on freedom of thought and discussion. Remember how Galileo suffered for his theory that the sun was the centre of the solar system and not the earth. Darwin was a victim of intolerance and was lampooned and considered an enemy of religion for his seminal work, *The Origin of Species*. Nearer home we have the example of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, whose efforts for reform, especially for the abolition of Sati, evoked fierce opposition because of intolerance. We must not revert to those dark days because when that happens democracy is under siege.

We must combat intolerance and its manifestations resulting in human rights violations by appropriate legal remedies. However, the crucial point is that tolerance cannot be legislated. No law can compel a person to be tolerant. Therefore, we must develop the capacity for tolerance by fostering an environment of tolerance, a culture of tolerance. Stereotypes and prejudices about certain classes and communities must be eschewed. Educational institutions have a vital role to play in this connection. The immense value of tolerance must be ingrained in the hearts and minds of the students. Our Supreme Court's judgment in *Bijoe Emmanuel vs. State of Kerala* is significant. Students belonging to the faith, Jehovah's Witnesses, stood up when the national anthem was sung to show their respect but declined to sing along. The students were expelled by the school authorities. Their expulsion was upheld by the high court.

The Supreme Court reversed the high court judgment. Justice Chinnappa Reddy, who headed the bench, in the course of the judgment, observed that the students did not hold their beliefs idly or out of any unpatriotic sentiment but because they truly and conscientiously believed that their religion forbade singing the national anthem of any country. After a careful consideration of the issues, the

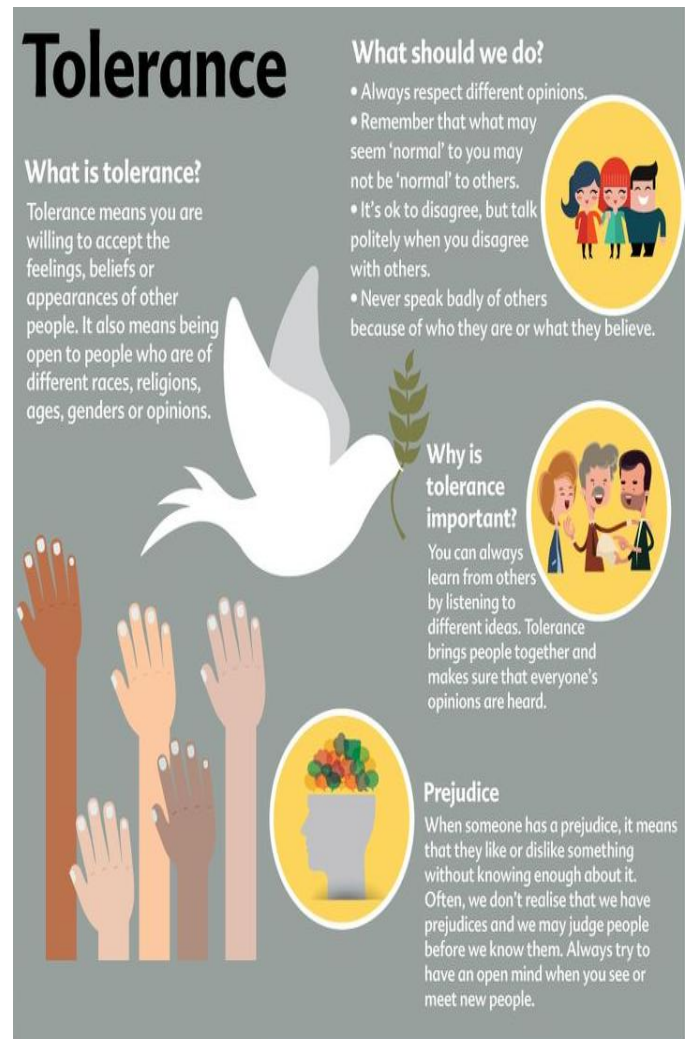
Supreme Court concluded: "Our tradition teaches tolerance; our philosophy preaches tolerance; our Constitution practices tolerance. Let none dilute it".

This is a classic judicial affirmation of tolerance. Let us resolve to promote tolerance in our multi-religious, multi-cultural nation and thereby strengthen and enrich our pluralist democracy which is the pride of our nation.

Certain fundamental duties have been prescribed by Article 51 A of the Constitution. To my mind, the practice of tolerance is the most fundamental duty of every citizen to curb the growing menace of intolerance.

Source:

<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/intolerance-censorship-democracy-india-freedom-of-speech-expression-needed-discrimination-religion-4364832/>



Understanding, Tolerance and Peace for Diversity

-By Dr. Seema Pawar, Project Director, FRNV

The Indian society has been multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic from time immemorial. However, India has also encountered various kinds of divisiveness. Therefore the biggest challenge before our country is to preserve the pluralistic tradition and to bring the various communities into the mainstream society by promoting tolerance, understanding and peace. Consequently, it has become even more critical for each Indian citizen to preserve the core values of our civilization that observe diversity, plurality and tolerance.

It is clearly evident from the Indian history that our civilization has enjoyed diversity, plurality and promoted and advocated tolerance. These core values have kept us united despite the fact that India is a multi-faceted nation of 1.3 billion people, 122 languages, 1,600 dialects and encompasses people following almost every major religion in the world. We know that there are various examples of ancient civilizations those have collapsed because of intolerance, division, and so on; but the Indian civilization has endured because of its core values and devotion to them.

The diversity in traditions, ethnicity, belief and language is what makes our country unique and a land of unity in diversity. We derive our strength from tolerance that has been part of our consciousness for centuries. Tolerance is the admiration, recognition and acceptance of the cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of our nation; and the ability to live and let others live. It is the ability to exercise a fair and objective attitude towards those whose opinions, practices, religion, language and so on differ from one's own.

The direct result of understanding the practice of tolerance is peace. Achievement of peace at the individual, family, societal and global level is only possible with tolerance practiced based on understanding the principle of unity in diversity. Peace is not absence of war. Peace is absence of fear. Peace is tolerance based on love and understanding. Peace cannot co-exist with even traces of any kind of terrorism or misunderstanding between people. From time immemorial, the Indian society has given importance to all-round peace in its culture.

The principle of unity in diversity, tolerance and peace are all inter-related and need one other for co-existence. The Indian heritage emphasizes this in well-known saying that “*Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu*” which means that ‘May All People be Happy’. This is only possible by having the goal of peace achieved through the practice of tolerance based on the understanding the principle of unity in diversity.

TEACHING KIDS TOLERANCE & DIVERSITY



We live in a time in which the world is becoming increasingly more diverse. However, even though the world is more diverse, racism and intolerance still exists. Here are eight ways you can teach children about tolerance and diversity.

1 PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

Children will often practice what they see and hear as opposed to what they are taught. This is why children are more inclined to treat others with respect when they see you practicing tolerance and accepting others for who they are.



2 DISCUSS TOLERANCE & DIVERSITY HONESTLY

Many adults tell children things like “we don’t see color” and “we are all the same on the inside.” The truth is, people do come in different colors. It is more important that children learn to accept others for who they are instead of pretending that differences don’t exist.



3 EXPOSE KIDS TO DIVERSITY

Have your child participate in activities or play dates with children from diverse backgrounds when possible. This will help them understand that although people are different, they can still work and have fun together.



4 CORRECT RACIAL & CULTURAL INSENSITIVITY

Sometimes children will repeat things they hear not knowing that what they are saying is offensive. It’s important to correct them and explain why it is unacceptable to speak negatively about people because they are different.



5 HELP KIDS EMBRACE THEIR OWN CULTURE

This is helpful because when a child accepts who they are and have a positive self-esteem, they are less likely to see people who are different as threats. They will be more likely to respect others because they appreciate and respect themselves.



6 READ DIVERSITY & TOLERANCE THEMED BOOKS

There are many great, kid-friendly books that teach children about diversity and accepting others for who they are.



7 WATCH DIVERSITY & TOLERANCE MOVIES

Popular films such as Mulan, Brave, Frozen, Wreck it Ralph, Monster’s Inc., and Shrek are just a few movies you can choose from. Make sure that you discuss any elements of diversity and tolerance that come up while watching these films.



8 COMPLETE DIVERSITY & TOLERANCE ACTIVITIES

Play dress up and provide children with clothing from different cultures. For example yarmulkes, kimono, sari, etc. Discuss with children what culture each piece of clothing is from and why it is worn.



NEWS AND EVENTS

❑ FRNV organized an event on Independence Day on August 14 which was celebrated with the community members at Hauz Rani, Malviya Nagar. Children perform dances and sang patriotic songs. A quiz was also conducted on Freedom movement.



❑ FRNV's Kochi chapter of Kerala was inaugurated on August 26, 2017 at 5:30 pm, at IMA House, behind Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium, Kochi. Dr. Devika Menon is the convener of FRNV Kochi Chapter.



❑ The 9th AGM of FRNV was held on August 28, 2017 at the registered office of the society. President Dr. E. Sreedharan, General Secretary Sri Bharat Wakhlu, Treasurer Sri Prem Arora and others were present on the occasion.

General Secretary Sri Bharat Wakhlu gave an overview of major activities that happened in the last financial year. The general body approved major decisions taken during the last one year by the governing body. The treasurer presented the financial report on the occasion.



❑ A workshop was conducted by Dr. Seema Pawar, Project Director –VBE on August 31, in Sarvodya Kanya Vidyalaya, Malviya Nagar on importance of values with girls of grade XII. The idea was to interact with the senior girls who are about to complete their school and are ready to enter college.



Dear Readers,

FRNV invites stories from its readers on deep-rooted values that have helped us in our everyday lives. Some of these stories will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter. So put your thinking caps on, recall the values integral to your life which you cherish and write to us at shilpi@valuefoundation.in.