
UNIT 16 TOWARDS PEACE AND HARMONY

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16.1 INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades, humanity has entered into a new epoch in its history. This has been brought about by a convergence of many factors – finite environmental barriers are now being reached and on multiple fronts. World population recently reached seven billion and in many places it is already at straining capacity. Peace and harmony are essential conditions of life and growth. At the same time, they are the cardinal signs of civilised life. These are the indispensable elements of progress and prosperity of mankind. Peace and harmony are mutually inter-connected, and in Indian perspective they are bedrocks of successful life. Therefore, study and analysis of peace and harmony is a significant aspect of the Indian Way. Peace and harmony are essential prerequisites because without them we will never be able to achieve the levels of cooperation, trust, inclusiveness and social equity necessary to solve the challenges.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this unit, you would be able to understand:

- concept of peace and harmony;
- importance of peace and harmony;
- types and pillars of harmony; and
- path to the realisation of peace and harmony.

16.2 UNDERSTANDING PEACE IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

“Peace” is a word that is uttered almost as frequently as “truth,” “beauty,” and “love.” It may be just as elusive to define as these other virtues. Common synonyms for “peace” include “amity,” “friendship,” “harmony,” “concord,” “tranquility,” “repose,” “quiescence,” “truce,” “pacification,” and “neutrality.” Likewise, the peacemaker is the pacifier, mediator, intermediary, and intercessor. While some of these descriptions are appropriate, they are still quite limited in describing both the nature of peace and the role of the peacemaker. Any attempt to articulate the nature of peace and peacemaking, therefore, must address those conditions which are favourable to their emergence. Freedom, human rights, and justice are among such prerequisites. Also included are proactive strategies such as conflict resolution, nonviolent action, community building, and democratisation of authority. The peace process additionally must acknowledge and contend with its alternative – war – because of the high value status of violence. For example, while war has brought out the worst kind of behaviour in humans, it has also brought out some of the best. Apart from relieving boredom and monotony, war has been shown to spawn self-sacrifice, loyalty, honour, heroism, and courage. This phenomenon connotes absence of fight or war between or among the nations and is the generally accepted notion of peace at the international level same as for the general Indian perspective.

The popular Hindi words [derived from Sanskrit] such as *Vishram*, *Nivriti*, *Nistabdha* and *Ananda* are used to describe a state of peace – *Shanti*. However, the entire Indian concept related to *Shanti* is mammoth covering the universal peace, which embodies all creatures, the nature and the whole of the universe. The exclusive and extraordinary *Vedic Shanti Prakrana*, (The Yajurveda 36:17) envisages: “Unto The Heaven Be Peace, Unto the Sky and the Earth be Peace; Peace Be Unto The water, Unto The Herbs And Trees Be Peace; Unto All The Gods be Peace, Unto Brahma And Unto All Be Peace; and May We realise That Peace! Om Peace, Peace, Peace.”

The *Shanti Mantra*, that ends with the utterance of word *Shanti* {Peace} thrice is for soothing of and removing obstacles in the path of the three realms of existentialism, which are physical, i.e., *Adhibhautika*; divine, i.e., *Adhidaivika*; and internal, i.e., *Adhyaatmika* which is also reflected in Upanishadic dispensation {The *Brihadaranyaka Upanihad* 1:3:28) same triple recitation in order to reach the Real, the Luminous, the Immortal:

“Lead us from the unreal to the real, Lead us from darkness to light,

Lead us from death to immortality, om Peace, Peace, Peace!”

Indian scriptures, besides those related to Vedic-Hindu Philosophy and way of life, like Jainism and Buddhism also harp on centrality of peace. They all define peace similarly by including all creatures and the whole of universal order- visible as well as invisible. Buddhist approach of *Karuna* [compassion] towards all living beings and jain viewpoint of *Ahimsa*, which carries *Prakriti* [nature] within its fold for lasting peace, can be counted in the same league. Hence, the Indian perspective of peace is monumental and matchless, and no other philosophy in the whole world can surpass the Indian view of peace.

Rardon (1988) insists that “peace is the absence of violence in all its form – physical, social, psychological, and structural (p.16). But this, as a definition, is unduly negative in

that it fails to provide any affirmative picture of peace or ties ingredients (Copy and Cohen 195). Perhaps that picture must come, as O' Kane war in order that we might, find ways of reaching human goals without resorting to force. That process should help us "uncover" the possible conditions of Peace" In its most myopic and limited definition, peace is the mere absence of war O'Kane (1992) sees this definition as a "vacuous, passive simplistic, and unresponsive escape mechanism too often resorted to the post-without success."

Peace may be conceptualised as having two separate dimensions (Johnson & Johnson, 2006) (Figure 16.1). On the first dimension, war, violence, and strife are at one end; at the other end are settlements, agreements, or common understandings that end or avert hostilities and violence. On this dimension, if war or violence is absent, then peace is assumed to exist. On the second dimension, discordant, hostile interaction aimed at dominance and differential benefit (i.e., winners and losers) and characterised by social injustice is at one end, and mutually beneficial, harmonious interaction aimed at achieving mutual goals and characterised by social justice is at the other end. On this dimension, if the relationship is characterised by positive relationships, mutual benefit, and justice, then peace is assumed to exist. Thus, *peace* may be defined as the absence of war or violence in a mutually beneficial, harmonious relationship among relevant parties (i.e., aspects of a person or among individuals, groups, or countries).

16.2.1 Nature of Peace

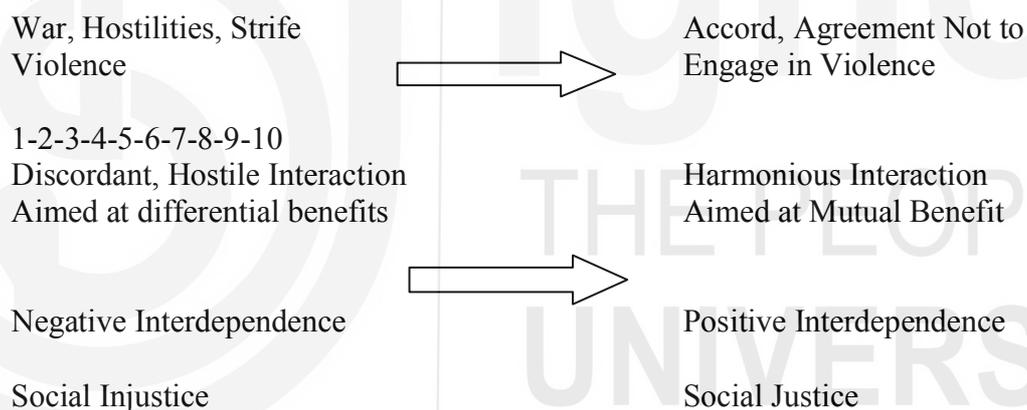


Figure 16.1: Nature of Peace

Inherent in this definition are several characteristics of peace (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). First, peace is a relationship variable, not a trait. Peace exists among individuals, groups, and nations; it is not a trait or a predisposition in an individual, group, or nation. As a relationship, peace cannot be maintained by separation, isolation, or building barriers between conflicting parties, all of which may temporarily reduce violence but will not establish the relationships required for long-term peace. Second, peace is a dynamic, not a static, process. The level of peace constantly increases or decreases with the actions of each relevant party. Third, peace is an active process, not a passive state. Passive coexistence is not a viable path to peace. Building and maintaining peace takes active involvement. Fourth, peace is hard to build and easy to destroy. It may take years to build up a stable peace, and then one act can destroy it. Finally, peace is characterised by continuous conflict (not the absence of conflict) managed constructively (rather than destructively). Conflicts occur continually, and it is not the avoidance, suppression, or denial of conflict that maintains peace but, rather, facing conflicts as they occur and resolving them constructively. Ways of establishing and maintaining peace may be classified

on a dimension with imposed peace at one end and consensual peace at the other end (Clark, 2001).

16.2.1.1 Imposed Peace

Imposed peace is based on domination, power, imposition, and enforcement. High-power groups use their military and economic power to force low-power groups to end hostilities and implement the peace accords (Figure 16.2). The long-term result often tends to be *structural oppression*, the establishment of social institutions (such as education, religion, and mass media) that create the social, economic, and political conditions (i.e., systematic inequality, injustice, violence, or lack of access to social services) that result in the repression, poor health, or death of certain individuals or groups in a society. There are two ways in which peace may be imposed: by the winners in a conflict (i.e., domination) or by powerful third parties, such as the United Nations, NATO, or other international alliances (i.e., *peacekeeping*). In both cases, military or economic power is used to ensure that hostilities are ended. Imposing peace, however, suppresses the conflict, but it does not resolve underlying grievances and does not establish positive long-term relationships among disputants.

	Oppositional Goals		Differential Success	
	Differential Benefits		Hostile, Negative Relationships	
Efforts to Dominate, Competition		Oppositional Unequal, Superior-Subordinate Interaction a. Competencies b. Attitudes, Values		Institutionalisation of Intergroup Conflict
	One-Way Dependence On Resources		High Power Has High Self-Efficacy, Low-Power Has Low Self-Efficacy	
	Differential Identity		Differential Self-Esteem	

Figure 16.2: Imposed Peace

16.2.2 Consensual Peace

The consensual approach to peace is based on reaching an agreement that (a) ends violence and hostilities and that all parties believe as desirable, legitimate, just, and beneficial and that (b) establishes a new relationship based on harmonious interaction aimed at achieving mutual goals, justly distributing mutual benefits, being mutually dependent

on each other's resources, and establishing a mutual identity (Figure 16.3). It leads to *structural liberty* where social institutions promote equality, justice, and the well-being of all relevant parties. Since all parties have a fair chance to influence the decision, their commitment to implement the decision is maximized, and they are obligated to abide by the agreement and promote each other's efforts to do so (although a small minority within each party can sabotage the agreement by violating it). What tends to result is joint success in maintaining the peace, positive relationships among the involved parties, a sense of joint agency and efficacy, and joint self-esteem. Positive interdependence is the foundation on which consensual peace is built.

There are two levels of consensual peace. The first level is *peacemaking*, in which the parties involved negotiate a cease-fire, an initial agreement, or a framework for resolving future conflicts. Peacemaking typically manages the immediate conflict but fails to deal with underlying structural issues. The second level is *peace building*, in which the economic, political, and educational institutions are used to create long-term peace. Peace building deals with the structural issues and is aimed at creating long-term harmonious relationships based on mutual respect and social justice. Peace education is one means of institutionalizing consensual peace and structural liberty.

	Mutual Benefits		Positive Relationships	
Efforts To Establish Mutuality Cooperation		Promotive Interaction As Equal a. Competencies b. Attitudes, Values		Institutionalisation Of Peace
	Mutual Dependence On Each Other's Resources		Joint Agency, Efficacy	
	Mutual Identity		Joint Self-Esteem	

Figure 16.3: Consensual Peace

16.2.3 Different Types of Peace

Some different types of peace can be understood over terms like types of peace and war. Thus, there can be hot war, Cold War, cold peace, and hot peace. In hot war, commonly called war, there is a condition of mutual hostility and active physical engagement through such forms as artillery, missiles, bombs, small arms fire, mortars, flamethrowers, land and sea mines, hand-to-hand combat, and the like. The aim is the destruction of the enemy or his surrender by intimidation. The object is to have a winner and loser. Nationalism reaches its zenith here. In Cold War, there is mutual hostility without actual engagement. Intimidation is the sole means of preventing hot war. This

condition is characterised by propaganda, war preparations, and arms races – always at the expense of human needs. During a Cold War, nationalism prevails, and the object is to have a stalemate where neither side will initiate aggression – nuclear or conventional – because of the overwhelming destructive capability of the retaliatory response. In cold peace, there is almost a neutral view of a previous enemy. There is little mutual hostility but there is also a lack of mutually beneficial interactions aimed at developing trust, interdependence, and collaboration. There may be a longing for an enemy because nothing has replaced it as an object of national concern. In this situation, isolationism and nationalism occur simultaneously. There is no clear objective because there is no well-defined enemy.

The notion that “there are still dangerous people in the world” is often used to advance the cause of military preparedness and at least some momentum toward a restoration of Cold War thinking and behaviour. The term “peace dividend” that expressed post-Cold War optimism is hardly verbalized anymore. Hot peace involves active collaborative efforts designed to “build bridges” between and among past and present adversaries. This involves searching for common ground and the development of new nonhuman enemies – threats to the health and well-being of humankind and the planet. These new enemies could include human rights abuses, air and water pollution, dwindling energy resources, the destruction of the ozone layer, famine, poverty, and ignorance.

Peace as the mere absence of war is what Woolman (1985) refers to as “negative peace.” This definition is based on Johan Galtung’s ideas of peace. For Galtung, negative peace is defined as a state requiring a set of social structures that provide security and protection from acts of direct physical violence committed by individuals, groups or nations. The emphasis is on control of violence. The main strategy is dissociation, whereby conflicting parties are separated. In general, policies based on the idea of negative peace do not deal with the causes of violence, but only its manifestations. Therefore, these policies are thought to be insufficient to assure lasting conditions of peace. Indeed, by suppressing the release of tensions resulting from social conflict, negative peace efforts may actually lead to future violence of greater magnitude (Woolman, 1985, p.8). Accentuating the positive peace, in contrast, is “a pattern of cooperation and integration between major human groups...[It] is about people interacting in cooperative ways; it is about social organisations of diverse peoples who willingly choose to cooperate for the benefit of all humankind; it calls for a system in which there are no winners and losers – all are winners; it is a state so highly valued that institutions are built around it to protect and promote it” (O’Kane, 1991-92).

Albert Einstein’s thought was correct when he declared that Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order – in short, of government.

16.3 UNDERSTANDING HARMONY

Harmony is a universal aspiration. The English word comes from the Greek *harmōnía* (*harmonica*), meaning “joint, agreement, concord”, (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2007) from the verb *harmozo*, “to fit together, to join” (Harmonia, Henry George). Harmony signifying human unity, concord and agreement urges man for stepping forward to do concrete for the welfare of one and all. Hence, it is quite similar to peace; it is also dynamic and undoubtedly for the establishment of peace.

“Sahara” in Indian term reflects amity among fellow beings. It calls for benevolence or

goodwill, mutual care and love. In an atmosphere surcharged with harmony [southward], it is but natural that people will join hands for common cause, and the strength of prevailing harmony will open flood gates of prosperity and development of one and all. Harmony occupies a high pedestal in the domain of Indian philosophy, particularly the Vedic [Hindu] view of life. In the Atharvaveda [7:52:1; 12] it is prayed that:

“May we be in harmony with our kinfolk, in harmony with strangers, doing you, O Ashvina? Establish here agreement among us; May we agree in mind and thought, may we not struggle with one another, in a spirit displeasing to the gods; May the arrow not fly when the day of Indra has arrived.”

The Upanishads counsel that harmony on the Earth mandates restoration of human values, which is possible only by understanding and experiencing the sacred wisdom. This calls for broad and constructive approach, which accommodates polarity in viewpoints and advocates attitude adjustment for large scale welfare. The harmony of Indian viewpoint includes goodwill towards all that live. The nature, resources and all objects are within its scope.

The concept of harmony is also documented in the *Anekantavaada*, one of the core principles of Jainism, which accepts the reality of diverse viewpoints. It recognises existence of various paths to arrive at Truth [the Satya], despite ideological differences, and declares the *Satya* [Truth] as the ultimate goal. The *Anekantavaada*, thus, espouses attitudinal harmony. It beautifully suggests self-realisation and self-control by reining violent tendencies originating in mind, which if not checked, lead to clashed [also known as civilisation clashed in current perspective] and endanger humanity. Such realisations and control paves way to save humanity from terrorism, religious fanaticism, political ideologies, exploitations, corruption and class – struggle, which are prevalent all around us – all over the world. It can also save humanity from rampant erosion of environment and natural resources due to aggressive consumerist culture and thereby create an atmosphere of harmony and a state of lasting peace.

Besides love and mutual co-operation among people particularly in difficult time, Guru Nanak Dev [1469-1539 AD] inspired people to blend harmony with creativity, both in work and attitude. He laid emphasis on recognising other's viewpoint and realising the *Satya* [Truth] on the basis of harmony between one's own and other's point of view. It was indeed a landmark towards creating an atmosphere surcharged with harmony and peace.

The Vedic-Hindu viewpoint as the primordial sources and other views related to peace and harmony, especially Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism or noble ideas of saints and sages from ancient to modern times reflect a comprehensive and all embracing Indian approach to harmony and peace which is not confined to any particular group of people or territory. Undoubtedly, its outlook is universal.

16.3.1 Types of Harmony

Carl Dahlhaus (1990) distinguishes between *coordinate* and *subordinate harmony*. *Subordinate harmony* is the hierarchical tonality or tonal harmony well known today. *Coordinate harmony* is the older Medieval and Renaissance *tonalité ancienne*, “The term is meant to signify that sonorities are linked one after the other without giving rise to the impression of a goal-directed development. Coordinate harmony follows direct (adjacent) relationships rather than indirect as in subordinate.

Close harmony and *open harmony* use close position and open position. Other types of harmony are based upon the intervals used in that harmony.

16.3.2 Pillars of Harmony

Harmony can be grounded on three, mutually-supporting pillars:

- Peace and security;
- Sustainable and inclusive development;
- Human rights and the rule of law.

These pillars of harmony are the foundation of successful societies even though every society has its own unique characteristics.

16.4 IMPORTANCE OF PEACE AND HARMONY

All people of all nations are like the various parts of our body. When every single part of our body works in cooperation with the other members of the body, everything moves smoothly. We enjoy life and all those around us are bound to benefit. However, when segments of our body become sick, cease to work constructively together, then we experience the creation of surmountable suffering unnecessarily.

Peace and harmony are basic prerequisites. Peace and harmony can bring a peaceful and stable order to society, and they are a necessary condition for the survival and development of mankind. A world deprived of peace and harmony certainly will fall apart and return to the jungle era in which the strong prey on the weak. Peace and harmony are an essential benefit. Peace and harmony are enjoyed and possessed jointly by mankind, which is a base for the full realisation of the creativity potential of individuals, the sustainable development of the economy and culture of nations, and a true security for the long lasting prosperity of mankind society.

Peace and harmony are an ideal path. Peace and harmony mean dealing with disputes and resolving conflicts fairly and properly with neutralisation and Middle Way principles to further the welfare of each individual as well as the wellbeing of mankind as a whole. Peace and harmony have long lasting value. Ever since the emergence of mankind, numerous cultures have been produced, among which most vanished as soon as they appeared and were forgotten in history for being partial to certain aspect or limited to certain period. Among those thoughts which have been handed down to the present and continuing to have important influence, peace and harmony occupy the most dominating position.

Peace and harmony are high wisdom. It is the height of wisdom that determines the breadth of vision, the depth of exploration, the extent of progress and the limit of transcendence. History shows that all the thoughts that are against peace and harmony are against the will of the people and shall perish by themselves.

16.5 THE CONTENT OF PEACE AND HARMONY

Peace and harmony of the mankind society should be integral and compressive. They consist of the following six areas:

- i) An international political order that embodies equality and mutual trust, maintaining security and justice jointly by political cooperation;
- ii) A world economy system that fully embodies balance and mutual benefit, eliminating discrepancy between rich and poor as well as regional imbalance;
- iii) A global cultural atmosphere that fully embodies diversity and integration, conducting dialogues and exchanges to consolidate and enhance friendship and dissolve historical prejudice;
- iv) A natural and ecological ethics that fully embodies coexistence and common prosperity, actively fulfilling the responsibility of improvement and resolving environmental crisis by ecological protection;
- v) Scientific and technological improvement that fully embodies human nature and humanity, prompting scientific and technological fruits to ultimately benefit the long-term welfare of mankind;
- vi) Spiritual and mental state that fully embodies health and morality, helping each individual obtain physical and mental serenity, harmony and happiness through traditional wisdom.

Among the areas mentioned above, cultural peace and harmony occupy a fundamental position. All in all, culture is a value system and the collection of its correspondent codes of conduct. There is no normal activity of a human society that is not the actual manifestation of its value. A culture with peace and harmony as its mainstream value will certainly implement peace and harmony in all the areas of social life. Historical experience has shown that a society can obtain continuous and steady development only when it truly loves peace and place importance upon harmony.

16.6 PATH TO THE REALISATION OF PEACE AND HARMONY

Ever since the beginning of the 21st century, cultural problems have aroused world-wide concern. It has been deeply realised by those who have insight that without global cultural harmony, mutual political trust and economical benefit are mere theory or become mere formality, not to mention forming effective international cooperation when confronted with global challenges. Therefore, an integration of global cultures at in-depth level is of pressing urgency to human society. Thus following three points are to be taken care of:

- i) ***The organic integration of overall diversity and regional diversity.***

With exchanges becoming increasingly frequent, diversity is not only a description of the status of the world as a whole, it is also a reflection of the reality of most countries. It can be foreseen that cultural diversity of the world as a whole in the future will take root in the cultural diversities of each region. In some places, because people pursue unitary domination with one-sided approach and fail to achieve diversity and mutual integration, a great number of confrontations among ethnic groups and social conflicts are created which not only affect their only stability, but also produce elements of instability in neighbouring regions. If the ethical requirements of a particular cultural tradition are taken arbitrarily to judge the normal living styles of other cultural traditions, some conducts which are irrelevant to ethics at all will also be coloured as right, wrong, virtuous or evil,

which will certainly result in false value judgments and even ultra emotional reactions. Therefore, every cultural tradition should exercise tolerance and reconciliation, and resolve the tension within society with mutual sincerity.

ii) *The organic integration of consensus thinking and diversity modes.*

Regarding values, we should help the major cultural traditions reach certain universal consensus under the precondition of mutual respect. Although varying living environments have produced varying cultural traditions, among them there should still be many common concepts which have common spirit. We need to make such common thinking cohere into consensus thinking that has universal meaning and become the common spiritual wealth of all human beings.

Concerning the mode of practice, we should encourage all the cultural traditions to adopt diverse and localised methods for practice in respect of such consensus thinking in accordance with their own needs and circumstances. Whichever cultural tradition is formed by long-term exploration and endeavours in their adapting to living environments, it is a unique manifestation of the common thinking of mankind. Thus, there does not exist a best cultural mode that can fit all situations. As a matter of fact, the more common a concept is the more proper mode of practice needs to be selected in accordance with specific causes and conditions of specific time and space.

iii) *Organic integration of absorption value and contribution value*

Absorption value is comprehensively examining the existence of other cultures as reference and turning the advantages of other cultures into resources that are beneficial to perfecting one's own culture. It is because different cultures complement each other remarkably that conducting dialogue among each other becomes highly necessary. During such a process, each culture should be established on its own position and enlarge its vision, enrich its content and elevate its state by understanding and learning the excellent fruit of other cultures.

Contribution value refers to making in-depth summary of the positive values of the existence of one culture that contributes to other cultures and making appropriate constructive suggestions to other cultures. The more positive values a culture contributes to other cultures, the more it can be respected and recognised by other cultures, and the more it can make great contribution to the whole human culture. The underlying driving force of the improvement and progress of human culture comes from the gathering and integration of the positive value of all the cultures.

16.7 SUMMARY

Peace and harmony of all the human beings mean peace and harmony among all the nations, ethnic groups and religions. Meanwhile, it is peace and harmony of each nation, ethnic group and religion that constitute peace and harmony of all the human beings. Religious culture epitomizes the achievement of culture and wisdom of mankind, and all the major religions regard selfless great love as their fundamental tenet. Promoting peace and harmony of all the human beings is the common noble mission and great cause of all the religions.

According to Indian viewpoint, peace and harmony are generally synonymous. Peace connotes an atmosphere or time where there is no fighting, no rudeness, no cruelty, but

what prevails is calmness, absence of hostility, existence of healthy or newly-healed interpersonal or international relationship, socio-economic welfare, acknowledgement of equality and fairness in political relationships and global matters. It is also the basic spirit in the root of welfare state. The purpose of peace is to provide a solid and comprehensive ground to one and all to tread the path of large scale welfare, prosperity and development. In such a state, each and everyone gets equal opportunities to rise on the strength of their physical, mental and professional abilities. Hence, the importance and all-time significance of both, peace and harmony for society, a nation or humanity as a whole, is self-evident.

16.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the concept of peace and harmony.
- 2) Discuss the significance/importance of peace and harmony in the present context.
- 3) How will you distinguish between imposed to consensual peace?
- 4) What are important paths to realise peace and harmony?

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