

**Peace**

*by*

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(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

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Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,  
the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls  
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Beloved Ones of God:

The problem of peace is ever with us. Despite the great world war, despite conference after conference, hatred, suspicion, intrigue, conspiracy still exists and wars continue. Are we to be resigned to the fact that there can be no peace under such conditions? Or shall we at length realize that something is lacking, something perhaps fundamental in our lives.

The world has made a great step in advance in that it is willing to consider the desirability if not the possibility of a universal peace. But the most important questions and problems have not been faced: What causes wars? Are we able to abolish those causes? If so, how? Can men live in peace together? Is peace necessarily desirable? In fact, what is Peace?

Many books have been written and many theories advanced on the causes of wars and attempts have been made to solve the problem. Each one feels confident that his plan will be effective; unfortunately, many of our writers are not acquainted with every side of human nature, nor is their knowledge of history always so adequate that they do not know often such a scheme has been tried and failed. This does not mean that many of the suggestions so made will not be suitable ones. You will find that one sees economic beings, another treats humans as political pawns, others see racial groups and some are more interested in the psychological aspects, the human or animal qualities in man. Few have been able to look at humanity from every point of view. Some do not see the resemblances in the differences between the individual person and mankind collectively. Would nations be selfish if men were not selfish? The wrong ideals have been held before us: material comforts and possessions, position, power, titles, fame. How can the ideals of nations differ from those of the inhabitants!

A nation is said to be at peace when it is not fighting another country. Yet look within its borders and what do we see: strikes, riots, activities of criminal gangs, murders, suicides, divorces, wranglings and clashes between group and class and party and sect. We are right and you are wrong. If people, citizens of the same country, speaking the same language and having the same customs cannot understand one another, cannot dwell alongside one another in amity, how can it be expected that such a nation will continue to have friendly relations with other countries having different languages and customs, a different religion, or even a different form of culture?

This condition can be seen even more plainly when we notice the jealousies between neighboring communities, between districts and between neighbors. Fences between one's property and one's neighbors are too often not only physical but also mental fences. And within the family one generation is pulling against the other, and husband against wife and brother against sister. All this shows that something is universally wrong. Man cannot have peace—he does not even understand what peace is.

Peace is not a condition that takes place when a highwayman knocks you over the head with a sandbag and takes your money, when you are too weak to defend yourself. Yet when one nation does this to another and the weaker accepts the terms, being unable to do otherwise, we call that "peace."

Neither is it the condition like that after two boys who have had a bitter fight over a stick of candy which the stronger one gains. Peace must mean something more than the cessation of hostilities.

The fact of the matter is that man is no longer at peace with himself. He is dissatisfied and does not know why. He is looking for something and does not even know that for which he is searching. He knows he lacks something and is unhappy and that seems to be all. That is why pain and disease are not necessarily evils but often the best servants of good. When men do not suffer they see no reason for change, but when they undergo hardships and trials, they realize something must be wrong and sometimes actually find that the source of that wrong is within themselves.

Bertrand Russell has probably gone deeper into the causes of war than most investigators, but he has been little understood. He was to begin with a mathematician and a scientist rather than an economist or diplomat or historian. Dr. Peirce, who was his teacher in philosophy and who was the son of one of the world's greatest mathematicians, delving into the problems of philosophy and logic and the social sciences, helped formulate a new philosophy which Russell himself has greatly developed. It has done for mathematics and philosophy and hopes to do for the social sciences what Einstein is doing for physics. The point of view is somewhat as follows:

1. In the investigation of scientific problems, to get the best results we must lay aside preconceived notions as far as possible, unlearn as it were. But in the social sciences we approach our problems with a host of emotions, sentiments, and prejudices generally derived from our ancestry and community.
2. Given a set of postulates in any branch of mathematics or philosophy and we have the whole system. Reason alone cannot supply us with any data. Whatever conclusion we reach has been predetermined, and what is true in a system is only true so far as that system of teaching is concerned, and is not a universal truth. For instance, according to some types of mathematics, parallel lines meet, and in others they do not meet. Do the mathematicians of one branch of investigation criticize the others? No, they try to learn the point of view. But when we come to religion, social science, nationalism, diplomacy, we fix our point of view, and as soon as we do this, we have automatically made the rest of the world our enemy.
3. Man himself has not been given the opportunity to express his inner self. He is bound by a host of restraints—economic necessity, customs, beliefs, traditions, forms, inability to find his life work.

Pierce and Russell propose then a world point of view instead of a fixed point of view. If you are putting on your necktie you may look in the mirror, but if you are dealing with taxes you must see the whole country, and when you deal with peace or international problems, you must take the

same attitude toward the whole of humanity as you take between different sections of your community.

This does not mean abandonment of nationalism—it simply means that whatever your problem is when you are investigating buys or chemical formulae or philosophy or distributing oranges like the Sunkist Corporation, you must see all sides of the problem and remove your prejudices and preconceived notions.

Now the Sufi idea is essentially this and our motto has been **Unity** and not been uniformity. In dealing with this problem the Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan presented what he called **“Interdependence is a law of nature.”** (*In an Eastern Rose Garden*, page 272 and following).

“We make our life by sharing the joys and pleasures and sorrow of another, but it takes us a very long time to understand this one thing. Our observation and study of man’s nature shows that his life demands freedom, and yet on the other hand we find that nature develops selfishness in man, more than in any other creatures. The demands of his life are so much greater, and he becomes so absorbed in satisfying these demands, and possessing and enjoying them when he has them, that he really forgets the secret of nature, really forgets the secret of his happiness, as well as that of others.

“Not only does individual man seek freedom, but also the nations and races and peoples throughout the whole world have been absorbed in the pursuit of freedom. Whenever wars have taken place, whenever there is bloodshed in the world, whenever there have been revolutions and troubles in life—all the different disasters that have occurred are due to this same reason: on the one side man’s selfishness and on the other his neglect to understand the **law of nature and the law of happiness** ....

“He never understands what Justice is, even though he may speak of it. Real justice cannot be perceived until the veil of selfishness has been removed from the eyes. The least spark of selfishness will prevent man from being just; he will continue to have a partial interest, because he will be looking to his own interest; he will call this “his right,” “his justice,” which he makes the means of accomplishing his own interest.”

The Sufi is merely one who sees life from another’s point of view as well as his own, and in his analysis of the problem of war and peace he quite agrees with the view of some of our present day philosophers and scientists.

Too often it is believed that peace can be settled by a formula. The word democracy is used, even by those who are not in the least democratic. Yet to the fair minded observer there is more unity among the peoples of Italy and Russia together than in Ireland or Jugo-Slavia. No doubt we admire the type of government in the latter countries more, and despise any form of despotism, but if it is peace we wish, we must strive for peace. Mussolini may be a tyrant but he has struck one truth: There must be one keynote for the whole nation. If we could get to the point: There must be one

keynote for the whole of humanity, then the concert of nations would be a concert in harmony.

The suggestion has often been made, "If the whole world could only unite in Christ." The remark might be made that there have been thousands of books written in defense of Christianity, and millions of people have spoken for it, and another remark might be made, "if the teachings of Christ are so wonderful and beautiful, why don't a few of the people who say they believe in them put them into practice and show us." But on deeper analysis we will find that all that is beautiful in Christ's teachings is also all that is beautiful in Krishna's teachings and in Buddha's and Mohammed's and in all the great teachings and philosophies.

The question may be asked, can men live the life of brotherhood? It has been done, and if the race is evolving, it should be more possible now than in the past. It may be doubted that with all the studying that is done of the Bible, that many really comprehend the polity of Moses, his laws, the economic order which he wished established, and the form of government. The very basis of these morals was forgiveness—forgiveness of sin and debt. What we consider impractical now, was tried and found excellent thousands of years ago, and I believe that at this hour some attempt is being made by the Zionists to re-establish such a system in Palestine.

Many examples might be given of people living in brotherhood, most of them in Oriental countries, but this may not interest you now or you may say that it was possible only for such a people and such a times. No doubt, but we have to learn that for some democracy may be best, for others monarchy, for others another form of government, each to his needs, and there may be no universal form of government any more than insisting to have harmony in an orchestra where only string instruments are permitted.

But like in an orchestra, the first step in life is to attune our instrument, which is our self. And how can this be done? By surrender, by surrender to God's will, or as Christ said, "He who will give up his life shall find it." By surrender to God we conquer. We will find it possible to live in amity with relative, with neighbor, with fellow-citizen, with the whole of humanity, by learning how to attune ourselves, or as the scientists would say, by adaptation.

If there is hatred and jealousy there can be no peace. When the Samnites defeated the Romans while Rome was still a city-state, they consulted a sage who told them they had three courses: to enslave the vanquished, to offer them friendship or to humiliate them. They chose the latter course which not only did not weaken the Romans materially but strengthened them spiritually. The time came when they crushed their former foes.

But the true spirit was shown by Mohammed, for when he conquered Mecca he forgave the whole city, including his worst enemies; the only exception was that a few who had been traitors were sent to exile. Within a short time everybody in the city was his friend and he hardly had time to himself. No one ever tried harder than Mohammed to put to practice all that Jesus preached despite the calumnies and imputations of ignorant critics. This was the source of great strength to the early Khalifate.

Each time the Christians have captured Jerusalem—from the Parsis, and during the Crusades, there was a terrible massacre of foes. Twice the Arabs took it, once by Omar and once by Saladin and the terms offered have never been equaled by any European nation. When Omar was Khalif he would not permit the soldiers to plunder or ransack or destroy in Egypt any property except that of the Greek masters, and while the Greeks and Egyptians were both Christians, he Omar, a Musselman, turned the country of Egypt, that is the law and property, over to the Egyptians, and Amru the ruler had to give his orders from his own home in Mecca, not even a house being taken. And in his days Christian and Jew and Moslem lived side by side in peace.

Akbar the greatest Mogul of India who was a Sufi carried this principle even further for he tried to make it possible for every race and every religion and caste to live together in harmony. British authorities are beginning to feel that if there can be any model government for India, all of which was never united under one rule at any time, it is the plan Akbar used.

So long as men and nations are not willing to forgive and forget, there can be no peace. You cannot lay the Sermon on the Mount or the Bible or any Scripture on one side, and our recent treaties on the other. There is not a single principle in one group found in the others. Crushing and enslaving a country, taking away possessions and lands, humiliating the inhabitants—this does not bring peace. But how can it be otherwise when man has not learned to control his own passions, to make peace with himself.

Only when man has settled the war within himself and learns to have a wider point of view in life, can we have peace. The whole evolution from family through tribe and race to nation has shown this. This is the message which Sufism is giving to the world today, the same message given before, but represented in the spirit of the day. True peace maybe called Islam, the resignation of the Will to God, the Universal Will—this is also the fundament of Catholic Christianity, and when we go further, of every religion. Each heart becomes attuned and all can take part in the Divine Symphony of the Universe.