

## **The Ideology of Peace**

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The Centre for Peace and Spirituality aims to promote the culture of peace.

According to Maulana, peace is not simply the absence of war. It means the absence of all kinds of negative feelings, such as hatred, anger, intolerance, because violence is only a manifestation of these negative feelings. Peace therefore is the presence of all kinds of good, such as love, compassion, and tolerance.

Drawing inspiration from the Quran and the Sunnah, that is the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, Maulana is working to promote peace both at the level of the individual and at the level of society.

Maulana believes that individual minds need to be transformed because individuals constitute the basic units of society and unless change comes at the individual level, no true change can come about in society. At the individual level, Maulana emphasises the importance of converting negative thinking into positive thinking. This is of crucial importance when seen in the context of the creation plan of God mentioned in the Quran. According to the creation plan, God has bestowed freedom on human beings in order to test us in this world. Obviously, where there is freedom, there is also misuse of freedom. There will always be such individuals in society who choose to misuse their freedom. All the problems and evils in society are the result of people misusing their freedom. However, God will not abolish the freedom of anyone, because He is testing us in this world.

The truth is that problems will always remain in society. We cannot eliminate problems from our society. We cannot establish an ideal society. Therefore, the only option we have when faced with unpleasant circumstances is that we should, by our own accord, convert our negativity into positivity. This is the only way by which we can live with peace of mind in this world. If we do not learn to convert negativity into positivity, then we will never experience peace of mind in this world.

What is far more important is that the price we would have to pay for harbouring negative feelings is that a positive personality would not develop within us. According to Islam, only purified souls will enter paradise, and purification of the soul is another name for developing positive thinking in oneself.

As far as social peace is concerned, Maulana has formulated an ideology of peace in the light of Islamic teachings. Maulana believes that adhering to peace or

adopting a peaceful course of action in challenging circumstances is possible only when there is a very strong justification for peace. The truth is that where there is peace, there are opportunities. Opportunity is an integral part of peace and opportunity is essential for all kinds of constructive activities. Without peace, there is no opportunity, and without opportunity there is no scope for progress and development. Therefore, Maulana advocates the establishment of peace on a unilateral basis as peace opens the door of opportunities.

The case of modern Japan serves as an example in this regard. By the time of the Second World War Japan was of the view that it could fulfil its national goals by means of military action. But it suffered a severe defeat in this war. America dropped two atomic bombs on two of Japanese cities. Japan's economy was destroyed. After the war, a new thinking surfaced amongst the Japanese. They abandoned the path of war and confrontation and focused all their efforts in the fields of education, commerce and industry. The result of this change was that an annihilated Japan could stand up once again and become an international economic power.

The lesson we learn from the example of Japan is that even though one may have suffered some loss, one is still in possession of many resources, on the basis of which one can rebuild one's life. The great benefit of establishing peace on a unilateral basis is that one is in a position to utilise one's energies in constructive pursuits without wasting one's effort in destructive activities. And, it is only by engaging in constructive activities that we can achieve success in this world. This is why the Quran says: "Reconciliation is best." (4:128)

CPS aims to help people to understand the value of peace and tolerance as against intolerance and confrontation. It is from such realisation that a non-violent world and a peaceful society can be established.