

GET RID OF ALL AGGRESSION

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Peace is not just absence of violence; it is complete cessation of aggression along with its roots and imprints in the mind. In Buddhist terminology, the word nirvana is used to refer to that state of the mind, meaning total peace.

The goal of religious practice is salvation but there are other goals as well apart from this and those that concern your own immediate future, next life and the life after that. You must consider the well-being of other sentient beings, work for the good of the sentient and the non-sentient and be useful. Universal altruism is the central message of Buddhism.

How does one apply great ideas and ideals to real life? What is the starting point? The starting point is: develop an attitude of concern and consideration towards viewpoints other than your own. You may find out later on that your view was wrong and the view of the other person is not only right, but led to greater understanding. The first requirement is to broaden your outlook so that your view does not remain narrow and restricted. The name of *Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara* is derived from the word *Avalokan* on having broader view.

If you adopt an attitude of aggression, combat and competition, no matter how high your ideals, they will lead you practically nowhere. Theological, religious and philosophical viewpoints are subjects of learning but they must be imbibed and brought into everyday life behaviour. Even to progress in matters concerning religion or philosophy, the right attitude is essential.

However, let there be no misconception. Non-aggression and non-violence do not mean that you should always be unreasonably soft or submissive. Even religion teaches us how to deal with people who are unreasonably aggressive. In Buddhism, this is called practice of skillfulness. Buddha never said that you should always be submissive. You should be skilful in communicating your disagreement and when the attitude is right, gentle, friendly and not competitive or combative, one can always be successful in such communication.

Buddhism tells us that dharma is something that's good in the beginning, good in the middle and good at the end. Similarly, peace and harmony cannot come only from either within or without unless we create a condition suitable for peace and harmony. Then, one must take care that conditions conducive to peace are not disturbed by unnecessary actions coming from us. There should be harmony between inner and outer worlds which means our entire being should be in consonance with the idea of peace and harmony. Peace is not a silent situation that can be achieved by shutting all the doors and windows and not allowing any disturbing noises to come in. The test of real peace comes when one is able to maintain calm despite a disturbing atmosphere.

Is there a secret to remaining calm even during adverse conditions? The answer is to develop one's consciousness. Raising human consciousness is a much talked about subject in the spiritual context. There can be many levels. The real signs of rising of consciousness are becoming more humble and more aware of interdependent nature of things around us.

There is a saying in Tibetan Buddhism which says: If you want to know about your deeds in the past, look at your present body. If you want to know your future destination, watch your present mind. Therefore, to ensure a better tomorrow, think and work for a better society today with the right attitude.