

## **SELF-REGULATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE: A HARBINGER OF PEACE**

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### **Abstract**

*Peace for a common man indicates the existing condition in his/her surroundings. Everyone expects peace to come from the external sources to the extent that can fulfil one's satisfactory level. Man is not separate from his society. So, if s/he has expectations of a peaceful environment there are duties/skills which he himself or herself should develop and follow. It can be started from one to many and vice-versa and in harmony. For this there is a need of self-regulation in everyday life which can foreshadow peace in gradual steps. This is possible only when one understands his/her Self. Peace is each one's responsibility in every simple manner one can. We should not depend on the Government or any authority or organization to grant peace. This attitude has to be changed because Government is of the people, by the people and for the people. One of the biggest reasons of conflict, violence and unrest is that we try to think for ourselves first, our own needs and desires too. There are ways to peace if we all are willing. First of all, the goal and then our efforts with mutual trust and respect can make everyday life better. To know about other people, their way of life is necessary for a better communication and to maintain healthy relationships. Even the stranger in a remote place, though harmful, is our responsibility, to prevent him/her from disturbing peace and to know the root cause of his/her inner conflict or state of mind. It is the self-regulation strategies which everyone should follow and practise in his/her immediate environment such as home, neighbourhood, institution and workplace. This can start from the local to the global level. This paper is a humble attempt to reflect on our everyday life, how we lead it, our thinking, feeling and doing that not only affects ourselves but also the surroundings and society. Health factor both physiological and mental has a role to play in inner peace and the peace to be built all around us. Several other causes as obstacles to inner peace, how to deal with them and self-regulation in various ways are included in this paper. Also to be aware of the basic life skills which will help to maintain our inner peace and our peaceful co-existence with the living and non-living around.*

**Keywords:** *Peace, harmony, Self, Health, life skills*



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### **Introduction:**

Inner peace (or peace of mind) indicates a state of being both mentally and spiritually at peace, with enough knowledge and understanding for keeping oneself strong in the situation of discord or stress. To be "at peace" is considered by many to be in stability and harmony

with oneself first of all and the opposite of being anxious or stressful. Peace of mind is generally associated with happiness, bliss, serenity and calmness. In some cultures, inner peace is considered to be a state of consciousness or enlightenment or self-realization that may be cultivated by various forms of training and orientation, such as prayer, meditation, or yoga, for example. Many spiritual leaders and practices refer to this peace as an experience of knowing oneself. Finding inner peace is associated with all the religions and above all it is a symbol of humanity. All these methods of inner peace lead to our positive approach towards life and people and to establish peace in our surroundings also.

### **Ancient Civilization of Man:**

Lewis H. Morgan, an American anthropologist in his book "Ancient Society" arrived at the idea of a society's progress in three stages, from Savagery to Barbarism to Civilization in part or stage-wise through an analogy to the individual development and society's progress in large. It is an ascent to Man's power, control and human supremacy on the earth. The dominant or central idea of Morgan's thought is that of progress. He considered it as a career of social position arranged in a hierarchy on which man has gradually reached each higher level from the bottom. Historically progress has been a characteristic of the entire human race, but not constantly or consistently. The different types of the human family in the evolution theory have witnessed human advancement and seen modern times by being subjected to different conditions, harsh and favourable. His theory was established on the idea of substantiality of the position of man unless interfered by some special causes. His ideas proposed to recognize the human development stages. This means it is expected that man is civilized and there should be no situation of unrest, violence, conflict and destruction. Otherwise the ancient savage man and the modern smart man has no difference. Peace is an epitome of civilization.

### **Interrelationship of Peace and Harmony:**

Peace and harmony have often been taken together as a concept. One is just the mirror image of the other. If there is harmony it is understood peace will exist and if there is peace it is understood that harmony will be or has taken place. We can also say that harmony is the cause of peace or depending on situation peace can finally bring harmony. A deep and constant reflection can enable us to realize what I mentioned just now. This concept is based on deep-rooted thinking and application and of course not immediate result-based. Every

good result/outcome needs time and can gradually happen. It is to be understood that peace is nothing material that can be created. It can only be felt and emphasized. It is first of all a state of mind which when disturbed is not peace. Our mental conflicts are the barriers of peace. Conflicts arise from external sources and our own behavior. So all the negativity has to be changed to bring about peace. In my opinion, harmony can go hand in hand with peace. No cause and no effect in peace and harmony. Our heart and mind should be pure with good thoughts. This leads to good conduct in which harmony can be an aspect/characteristic. Finally we ourselves will be in peace and also in peace/harmony with others. When people of various cultures live together there is more demand for living in peace and harmony. A challenge to live in peace and harmony with unknown and variety people can make our efforts easier in doing so with our neighbourhood and known people. Both peace and harmony simultaneously will help us to create a better future. Also refraining from doing harm to others or killing others unnecessarily should be stopped unless it is of self-defense. This can also help in bringing peace. Above all, to live, let live is what we already know and now also along with it, to live for each other's cause and in harmony should be added.

### **Understanding the Self:**

Self is to be known and understood before making an attempt to know about others. If we are not satisfied with our own selves it is obvious not to be satisfied with others. The meditation process and spiritual activities can enlighten ourselves towards knowing our inner selves and thus helping us to understand the outer world as similar beings as us and treat everyone with positive approach without expecting anything good from anyone. Our own satisfaction and faith in ourselves will change our attitude towards life and other people assuming their limitations which will bring healthy relationships with commitment. Meditation is a tool to create balance and to expand our consciousness.

### **Being Aware of the Common Goal:**

We may differ in our viewpoints and opinions/ideas regarding any matter at home, neighbourhood, institution and workplace but we have to overcome our own preferences and choices and likes/dislikes for the welfare and concern of our countrymen and the society and nation. We agree or disagree is not the ultimate. Ultimate is our goal for which the process varies. Awareness is very important to reach to the goal for a developed and prosperous nation. We have to sacrifice our desires, selfish motives and differences that exist and come

to common terms which will be beneficial towards a peaceful nation. A proper planning, co-ordination, co-operation, execution, mutual respect and support in our activities can bring peace.

### **Knowing People's Way of Life:**

With reference to some points mentioned in my third sub-heading, peace can be brought by developing oneself but in addition to that knowing people's way of life can make this process easier and more simple. We should try to know the lifestyle, behavior, habits, fooding, clothing, location, likes/dislikes, ideas, values, language, culture and tradition for a better communication and to establish healthy relationships whether the person is living near or far though our immediate surrounding should get the first preference. With so many people in a particular place coming from different cultural backgrounds, it's really fruitful and an art to understand other cultures. There are a variety of ways to get an idea of cultural differences. But, utmost importance lies in remembering that every individual is ultimately a person or human being first - so judging or assessing each person as a personality on their own abilities and merit is the most appropriate way to become a more thoughtful, kind, understanding, caring and empathic person.

### **Following the message of Bhagavadgita:**

Avoiding anger, lust, desire, fear and developing tolerance, faith in God and serving the society without any expectations and meditation and concentration and the endless process of seeking real knowledge and wisdom are the key points to peace as taught by Sri Krishna to his disciple and follower Arjuna. It is eternal truth and applicable everywhere and everytime. We should follow such scriptures to make our personal and social life better in every way we can. Forgiveness is the key to peace. Violence is necessary for destroying evil and restoration of righteousness (dharma). The lord says to Arjuna to hate the sin and not the sinner because all are part of the Supreme Soul/Creator.

### **Self-Regulation Strategies:**

1. **Finding out the origin of conflict by ourselves: Deutsch and Coleman (2000)** says about agreement on the actual origins of conflict by the opposing parties to resolve conflict.
2. **Goal Setting and Implementation: Gabriele Oettingen and Peter M. Gollwitzer (1999)** says that perception of reality is most important based on our past experiences

which help to upgrade our thinking process. We have to set our individual and common goals based on chance of success and considering its effectiveness in practical life. Goal implementation should not be biased, it should be for the common welfare.

3. **The myth of being social: Immanuel Kant** says with irony that it is “unsociable sociability”. Man’s existence is represented by social groupings and these groups again create inevitable conflicts to break such groups apart. It is wise to approach groups with contrasting mode of thoughts and not a fantasy of good things to happen. Such contrast well perceived in advance respects obstacles to peace.
4. **Belief in ourselves:** It is we who can bring peace. It is possible when we realize our own strengths and weaknesses, our faults and merits and come to the thought of peace from a position of humbleness and groundedness - after having examined our own beliefs, backgrounds and perspectives - that we can be available in a way that permits us to engage honestly and earnestly with others. We have less in differences and more in common than we can even imagine, and we all have the options or individual ways to respond to conflict that can heal and preserve rather than destroy. Once we create that change in our consciousness, with a sense of responsibility and purpose of how we each can contribute to the greater/bigger whole, we can begin the countdown finally to collectively bring peace to India and the world.
5. **Understanding relationships:** The term self-regulation implies several cognitive processes that manage our drives and emotions. Most important is that self-regulation keeps us away from acting on our own choices and helps us to concentrate on others. When we talk and communicate with each other, we do not say directly what we think or whatever we feel like— and this is for a good reason. We are imposed by the rules of our culture and sub-culture to communicate in a way that respects the feelings, emotions and personal space of others. The most effective tool in successful relationships is self-regulation. Since self-regulation is such an important strategy or skill in present society, it is associated with many positive outcomes, such as good academic results and good rapport with teachers and peers in school and higher education, high social economic status, good health and also relationship satisfaction. Loss of self-regulation is most often related to problems in interpersonal and inter-cultural relationships, lack of self-restraint or addiction to harmful objects and mental

illness.

Recent studies on the nature and quality of self-regulation indicate that it is not only a trait but also an ability which anyone can develop. Control of impulses is much easier in people with high self-regulation ability than people with low self-regulation ability. However it has also been studied that self-regulation can be trained. Continuous and repeated acts of self-regulation enhance and enlarge the total pack of energy we have (**Muraven & Baumeister, 2000**). Contemporary scientific knowledge assures that all the energy of a person is received from a single source (**Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996**). Even one single act of self-regulation can have a great effect on our behavior related to some different task. But to have this kind of regulation the ego has to be depleted. And this again is possible by rest and positive outlook in life.

### **Obstacles to Inner Peace:**

The first obstacle to personal and planetary peace is our **inner restlessness and conflict** which is our own cravings and desires and have to be controlled and our talents have to be realized.

The second obstacle is **personal and collective wounding**. Many of us carry grudges and negative thoughts individually and from generations to generations which other people have to suffer for no reason.

The third obstacle is based upon the previous two: **breakdowns in communication**, where there is more talking and little listening out of own self-interest, pain and revolt at home, political arena or international level.

The fourth obstacle is the outcome or manifestation of the previous stages: **systems based on dominance and control** to exercise power over weak and needy people and this creates social and global inequalities and inequities.

The fifth obstacle is **disempowerment and paralysis**, a result of feeling annoyed by life's challenges and this creates unrest at individual and global level.

## **Basic Life Skills:**

### **Self - Knowledge Skills**

- To know who we are, our talents and potentialities.
- To know the purpose of life.
- Make intelligent life choices that suits ours and others interests.
- Build a strong character with virtues to survive in a real world.

Self-suffering is the truth and reality to give service to mankind and society. So not having desires is the way to peace.

### **Work Skills**

- To know in what skills one is good and bad and to proceed accordingly.
- To be sincere, ethical, hard working and not to indulge into controversies or useless gossips.
- To be self-dependent and self-sufficient and look after the needs of our dear ones and the community.
- Time-management is very important to work efficiently and to give time to family as well. Pending work gives stress and working in the last moment may even spoil our health.

### **Managing Money Skills**

1. To manage the budget at home to avoid family conflicts.
2. To know the priorities on expenses and have a good calculating ability.

### **Problem- Solving Skills**

1. To be able to critically solve the problems in life and have alternatives to solutions.
2. To be able to learn from one's own mistakes and as well as other's.
3. To be able to identify the root cause of the problem and effectively and collectively try to solve it.
4. From my personal experience, If elders criticize in bad times, it should not be revolted because it is they who have supported in those times though dual act, but more support and affection in times of need and crisis in comparison to criticism. Also this gives a will power to improve and prove ourselves.

## **Communication Skills**

1. To not only be capable of reading well, but becoming literate in all ways and knowing common themes and universal issues.
2. To be able to express our thoughts, ideas and beliefs to avoid misinterpretations.
3. To converse very comfortably with a wide variety of people and speak the truth and be honest from one's heart.

## **Living Skills**

1. To be able to take wise decisions in life.
2. To value other's happiness more than ourselves.
3. To know the correct path to earn a livelihood.
4. To live a healthy and stress free life with regular exercises, healthy food habits, drinking adequate amount of water and living in a clean environment with proper sunlight, fresh air and meditation to think better each day. Both physiological and mental health matters in inner peace. Stress management is very important. We mostly are unable to avoid stress. It is like an unwelcomed guest but have to tolerate. It is better to worry but not take unnecessary stress which occurs when we think too much on our future. If we concentrate on our present, work with dedication and plan our future well, we can avoid stress to a certain extent.
5. Relax when stressed.
6. Meditate to expand consciousness and regulate thoughts.
7. Rejuvenate the mind at the end of each day to release heaviness.
8. Connect with your own source before sleeping to wake refreshed.
9. Exercise regularly.
10. Eat simple, natural food.
11. Go to bed early to be in tune with natural cycles.
12. Remember your goals and focus attention on them.
13. Treat others with great kindness.
14. Accept whatever life brings you graciously, with a cheerful disposition.
15. Be grateful for everything.

(Points 5-15 collected from "Heartfulness" Magazine, Issue January, 2017.)

## Relationship Skills

1. To be caring and affectionate towards the young and the old.
2. To be responsible towards the family and fulfil all the necessary duties.
3. To be careful in considering other's emotions in whatever we say or do.
4. To be attentive in performing immediate duties in crisis period.
5. To give required freedom and space to the family members, children and partners to attend to their own hobbies and work until they feel comfortable to spend time with family.
6. To appreciate each other's thoughts and opinions and help each other in pursuing their dreams and aspirations.

## Conclusion:

The meaning of peace and peacelessness in today's world has to be understood before we take any steps or approaches to peace, contributions of many disciplines and ideas towards peace and the quest for peace and a variety of strategies to achieve peace. Students should be encouraged to explore the various dimensions of violence and the chances or prospects for peace in our world today. It is hoped that by gaining a clear and deeper understanding of the national and global dialogue on the meaning of peace, students and common man will be able to participate in creative and divergent thinking about how mankind might be able to build a new civilization or societies based on non-violence, social, political, and economic well-being, social justice, and ecological balance.

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