

RELIGIOUS

TOLERANCE

A MESSAGE TO HUMANITY

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Preface

The chaotic conditions commonly prevalent in the world today, especially in Pakistan, require, in order to secure the future of human society, such changes be arranged in the various sections of life that could bring about peace and harmony in the varied parts of the society, as well as among the different nations of the world. This is the only way by which the future of humanity can be safeguarded and made radiant.

In this context, an extensive and deep analysis is required to be done of the concept of "religion" because this issue is among the most important issues, which have cast negative and adverse effects on the course of history. The concept of religion has remained a grave obstacle in the way of improvement of human understanding and social conduct. This concept has hindered the advancement of culture. It has raised serious problems of economic development. It has strangled democracy and given birth to autocracy. It has stopped the political process from proceeding on healthy and fruitful lines.

Religion is a serious problem not only for Muslim societies; it has also spread disorder in Christian, Jewish and Hindu societies. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that we take stock of this issue in greater detail so that, as a result, we could make it possible for human beings to become sociable, peace loving, mutually cooperative and civilized personalities, and could work not only for the betterment of their own societies but also of other nations of the world.

Religious intolerance has ever remained an obstacle in the way of human understanding and human civilization and culture. It is largely on account of this prejudice that social progress, democratic accomplishment and political process could not be promoted on healthy and productive lines. The matter of religious tolerance is causing distress not only to the Muslim societies but also to the Christian, Jewish and Hindu societies. In our estimation, the standpoint of "religious tolerance", rather than that of religious intolerance, should be adopted. By going even further, the Quranic concept of "One God one people" should be accepted, which delivers an individual from all kinds of religious, racial, linguistic and national prejudices, and opens the door to comprehensive development in the

political, economic, social and cultural fields, thus leveling the way to a bright future. Therefore, all occurrences indicate that this very concept of 'One God One People' shall be the concept of the coming centuries.

An attempt has been made in this book, by discussing the various aspects of human life, to highlight the positive effects of religious tolerance on them. Primary importance has been given in it to facing the challenges of life and finding solutions to problems to people's problems. The status of divine worship has been given to 'working for the good of the society with complete sincerity, and divesting oneself of all sorts of prejudices'. To adopt such an approach in daily activities of life is always rewarding provided it is based clearly and consciously on the principle that all human beings, irrespective of gender, religion, sect, caste, color, race, language and physical and moral competence, have equal rights. We should, therefore, view each other, for all practical purposes, as human beings, not as individuals wedded to different religious groups.

In order to make this viewpoint realizable in practical life, an attempt has been made in this book to bring out a clear and broad-based solution of this important issue by bringing under consideration the basic aspects of religious tolerance and intolerance. This book has been divided into eighteen chapters, and the topics given therein have been dealt with in detail. It is hoped that this will help the reader realize the grave importance of the issue so that the people, the social institutions and the governments will be disposed towards finding its solution.