

## [Don't Let Religions Divide](#)

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# Don't Let Religions Divide

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All rivers lead to the sea, but one cannot follow all of them at the same time. Even so all religions direct us towards God but one cannot follow all of them at the same time. To attain the sea quicker, it is preferable to follow just one river. Mahatma Gandhi has said, "Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter which road we take so long as we reach the same destination?"

So we human beings can only adopt and profess one religion. And in so doing we have no right to say that the religion we follow is better than any other. No religion is superior or inferior. All religions are equal. True, each religion differs from the other in approach and system. But in essence, they carry much the same message. Study any religion and we shall find that like all the others, it enjoins on its votaries to speak the truth, to love one's neighbors as oneself, to live and let live in harmony and peace, to respect one's elders, to honor one's parents and so on. A religion is not worthy of its name if it preaches hatred, injustice, falsehood or discrimination. If it preaches discrimination, it does so between good and evil, but not between man and man.

Religions are best and nobly used when we translate their lofty messages into reality in our way of living, and when we see in them the different roads converging to the same destination. Only in this way will religions be instrumental in regulating and sublimating our lives. Judged by religious criterion, only these persons deserve to be called religious who shun temptation, evil thought and evil action. The moment a person does not practice the teachings of the religion he belongs to, he forfeits his claim to being a religious person.

They who cross themselves at the sight of an idol of Jesus Christ or a church are

not Christians in the true sense of the word if they do not put the teachings of Christ into practice. That is to say, if they do not love their neighbors as they love themselves, if they cannot turn the other cheek and if they do not share their bread with those who are starving. In the same way they cannot claim to be Hindus who perform an action, not just for the sake of action, but craving for the fruit of their action, who just take care of number one and are on the make all the time, who bully the weak and who connive unjustly and perform wicked acts. They cannot say that they are practicing Islam who see their friends falling down and yet do not move a finger to help them up.

Unfortunately we have only a few people who view religion in its right perspective. Often because one is a Hindu, one thinks one's Rama is superior to another's Rahim, or to another's Christ. What one fails to realize is that, though their names are different, their languages different, their messages are the same: victory of good over evil, of truth over falsehood, of humility over arrogance and of justice over injustice. People often tend towards bigotry because of their ignorance of what religions are all about. Religions cannot play their roles properly so long as ignorance is not removed, and so long as there are such people as claim monopoly on them. Therefore let the religion we profess be in the immortal words of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, "The religion of man." And by the same token, let us sincerely proclaim that "All men are brothers."

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