

UNIVERSAL THEMES FROM SACRED SCRIPTURES

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Scriptures are ‘writings’. The Latin word ‘scriptura’ means ‘writing’. When an idea is brought under the confines of script and has acquired the form of a document there emerges a scripture. What is written has certainly been preceded by an oral tradition and that in its turn springs from an unlimited reservoir of human experience. Scripture evolves from the womb of a particular culture at a particular time. It remains as an attempt to articulate the inexpressible experience of several individuals or a community. The recorded lived reality inevitably prompts new meanings and experiences every time it is read. The infinite possibility of every word that is written as well as the document in general makes the scripture worth being treasured. That determines the *raison d’etre* and relevance of the scripture at all times, as well.

Sacred Scriptures would mean ‘holy writings’. They take shape when divine stimulations intervene in human history. They are perennial sources of divine wisdom. They are eternal springs that come down to satiate human aspirations. They are wells of knowledge that can quench the human thirst for being enlightened. ‘To inspire’ is their basic characteristic. They are preserved in the written form and are communicated to the future generations. The limitations of the human language and of the authors themselves would certainly be reflected in the scriptures. Historical factors condition them, too. That would emphasize the symbolic character of all scriptures. They remain always in need of being interpreted and applied to the times and the situations in hand. This is inevitable because of the fact that the divine reality it stands for is certainly much richer than the virtual expression of it. The sacredness of the Sacred Scriptures is to be unearthed and highlighted every time it is read.

Themes of Sacred Scriptures are ideas pregnant with the supernatural implications of life on earth. These ideas sprouted in the noble minds of great men and women, who are elevated to the stature of being founders of diverse traditions of faith in human history. These thoughts serve a buffet of divine vibrations and mystical delicacies. Each of them indicates a human value that is par excellence. These themes embrace the entire gamut of human life. They touch upon the length and breadth of human life, at the same time. They appraise the depth and height of life, as well. Sacred themes of Scriptures represent the ‘voice’ of God. They unfold the divine mystery in the given historical and situational setting. They liberate the humans from all that is enslaving and helps them go towards eternity. They awaken, motivate, transform and re-create the humans in their respective sociological contexts. Their insightful messages become guidelines for the consciences of individuals and communities as an ever-speaking voice and give direction to the lives of generations.

Universal themes highlight the universal character of the themes. They have a universal significance. They underline the fact that ‘the themes are neither mine nor yours but they are ours’. ‘One is mine in special; the others are mine in general’. They are the shared cultural

heritage of the human society. They are the common gift of the one and same Creator of the world. The entire human society has a common origin, a common world to have its existence and a common destiny to attain. They are meant for the whole humanity and the whole creation. They are in no way to be monopolized by any particular community. Narrow interpretations and applications of these universal themes would mean contradicting the universal character of these themes themselves. That would be a sheer crime against the comprehensive message intended by the great Seers. Universal themes of the holy writings insist on broadening the horizons of the Scriptures of the world by interpretation and application according to the newer prospects that keep emerging.

Universal Themes from Sacred Scriptures are a unique collection of gems of sayings from enlightened men and women of various cultural streams of human history. They are excerpts from different Sacred Scriptures of the world. The sayings from one particular tradition in no way contradict those from other traditions. They clearly complement each other. The collection pointedly emphasizes a common message that can enrich the human society in various dimensions. The unity of their message for the world proves that they derive from a common plinth. They are living symbols of spiritual vibrations that are supernaturally inspired. They touch the hearts of human beings, irrespective of their affiliation to caste, creed, class, culture, ideology and nationality. Together they guide the destinies of human lives. Sacred Scriptures of the world are mutually inclusive in their nature. The Scriptural symbols, like Aagam, Avesta, Baha’I Teachings, Bhagwad Gita, Bible, Confucian Teachings, Dhammapada, Guru Granth Sahib, Quran, Shinto, Tao, Tora, Upanisad and Vedas are to be comparatively understood. They have to be owned and drawn inspiration from by seekers of all faith persuasions in a spirit of togetherness. Inter-Scriptural study, comparative understanding and contextually applied interpretation need to be promoted. Commonalities are to be searched for. Such a multi-Scriptural approach will not only enrich one’s own faith, but also make one’s life relevant always. This special collection of universally acclaimed pearls from the Sacred Scriptures of the world will contribute to eliciting a culture of harmony at the national and international contexts of the humans. This number of ‘Fellowship’ reaches its readers with such a humble and noble aspiration.

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