

SHELF LIFE

Holding Out Hope



REVIEW

**What is Right with the
World: Human Urge
for Peace**

By Swami Veda Bharati

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Himalayan Yoga

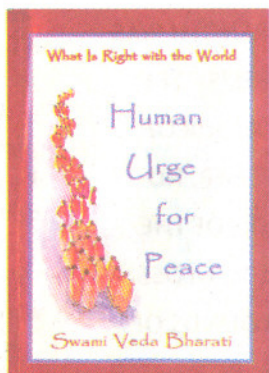
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SAKINA YUSUF KHAN

At a time when everybody seems to be talking about what is wrong with the world, Swami Veda Bharati's book *What is Right with the World: Human Urge for Peace*, comes as a whiff of fresh air. It is an extremely positive piece of writing much needed in an atmosphere of doom and gloom that we find ourselves in. The author has integrated inner peace with world peace and universal peace; a rare combination. "Peace," writes Veda Bharati, "is not merely an absence of war. Peace, like love, is experiential. We know experientially when we are in love. So do we know when we are at peace."

The clash of civilisations stems from various reasons and much is written about this problem. Swami Veda Bharati focuses on practical and universal solutions to these conflicts. He emphasises the need to discuss and debate our differences, rather than stand in opposite corners and shout at each other. He sets the tone in the introduction to the book with these lines: "May all opposites in the universe be seen as complementary and thus help to complete us who are yet incomplete beings in spiritual evolution." Veda Bharati, who has been researching world peace for several years now, takes us on a journey of re-discovery of the perennial peace process throughout our history. By exploring how people perceive each other and respond positively to each other in an atmosphere of harmonious living, he gives us a deeper understanding of the idea that respecting diversity is the key to peace.

The value of this volume lies in bringing home to us the commonality of good values and thoughts embedded in all religions. What is heartening is the liberal references with practical examples from all religions that the author provides. Talking of the universality of certain religious practices, he asks: "Who decreed that people of almost all faiths should kneel or bow in one form or another to the presence of Divinity; when was it agreed among various religions that prayers should be counted on rosary, *mala* or *tasbeeh*; who determined that sacred or holy water, whether from Jordan, Ganga or Zamzam should be an important component of religious observance for Christians, Hindus, Buddhist, Taoist and Muslims?"

In sum, a thought-provoking and inspiring book written in a simple, clear and easy-to-understand style. ■

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