

A Service Supplement for Commemorating the 10 Year anniversary of 9-11

The atrocities of 9-11 affected people all over the world.

Those acts of terrorism ostensibly carried out in the name of religion created a culture of fear and suspicion that remains with us to this day. The present times afford a unique opportunity for people of all faiths and worldviews to come together in a global movement of peace, solidarity and reconciliation.

Ten years later it is essential that all religions play their role by spreading a message of love and awareness. We must confront terrorism's culture of fear and hatred and replace it with a culture of trust and respect. Today we call on people of all faiths and worldviews to:

- Counter this evil with a global call for peace and reconciliation,
- Play our proper role in spreading a message of love and awareness,
- Replace the culture of fear and suspicion with a new culture of trust and respect.^[i]

A Litany of Remembrance, Solidarity and Hope^[ii]

We remember all those who suffered and died on September 11, 2001, in New York, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. We remember those who still live and who suffer because of the events of that day.

One: When we remember the stockbrokers, office workers, maintenance workers, bystanders, window-washers and all the others who worked together so valiantly to help each other, we can say together,

All: We remember great courage.

One: When we recall the firefighters who rushed upstairs as most everyone else was racing out, we can say together,

All: We remember selfless service.

One: When we recall the police officers who stood to protect and defend the people and performed their duties until the towers came crashing down on top of them, we can say together,

All: We remember selfless sacrifice for the safety of others.

One: When we recall the thousands of workers, women and men and, old and young, single and married, American-born and those born in countries around the world who did not escape the buildings, we can say together,

All: We remember the loss of human life.

One: When we recall those citizens who rushed to help, did all they could to help, we can say together,

Unison Prayer: God of the ages, before your eyes all nations rise and fall yet you are beyond all. Be near us in times of terror and in these moments of remembrance. Uphold those who work and watch and wait and weep and love. By your presence inspire us to boundless sympathy for all the peoples of your earth. Strengthen us to comfort those who mourn and to work in ways great and small for those things that make for peace. Bless the people and leaders of this nation and all nations so that warfare may become only a historic memory. We pray together and let us say, – Amen.

All: We remember and give thanks for dutiful commitment to those in distress.

One: When we recall the people who stood in line at the nation's blood banks to make living donations from their very bodies, we can say together,

All: We give thanks for those who live on to pass on life and love.

One: When we remember the millions of Americans who gave so generously of their life and labor to endow funds to help the survivors and their families recover from their losses, we can say together,

All: We are grateful for generosity. Remembrance begins with deep, personal identification. It begins with recalling the affliction of our brothers and sisters, and marking their pain as our own. Remembrance is a sacred moment when we raise up and hold to the light of the eternal moment, the good who have passed.

One: We recall with joy the unity we felt in the outpouring of help, kindness, thoughtful words and deeds from at home and around the world.

All: We must hold firmly to our unity, borne forward now not of tragedy but of loving kindness.

As we remember all those who were harmed on 9-11 and in its aftermath, we also reject its damaging impact on friendships among religions. Our thoughts turn to interreligious respect. We will hear a selection of readings from various religious traditions that remind us to be committed to one another across religious boundaries.

Calling upon several religious traditions we reflect on these themes.

Religious Teachings on the Meaning of Justice

From the Jewish Tradition:

Let Justice well up as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.
– Amos 5:24

The world rests on three principles: On justice, on truth, and on peace. And all three are intertwined. When justice is done, truth is served and peace ensues.
– Jerusalem Talmud Ta'anit.

From the Christian tradition:

Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.
– Ephesians 4: 31-32

From the Christian and Jewish traditions:

What does the Lord require of you? But to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
– Micah 6:8b

From the Islamic Tradition:

The One God enjoins justice, and kindness that transcends justice, and graciousness to ones kin and kin; and He forbids every form of iniquity and whatever vitiates intrinsic human dignity, and oppression. He admonishes perchance you may heed.
– Qur'an 16:90

Believers, arise for The One God by ensuring justice, and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you deviate from justice. Be just for that is nearer to piety. The One God is well-aware of whatever you do.
– Qur'an 5:8

From the Baha'i Tradition:

I swear by Thy might, O my God! Wert Thou to regard Thy servants according to their deserts in Thy days, they would assuredly merit naught except Thy chastisement and torment. Thou art, however, the One Who is of great bounteousness, Whose grace is immense. Look not down upon them, O my God, with the glance of Thy justice, but rather with the eyes of Thy tender compassions and mercies. Do, then, with them according to what becometh Thy generosity and bountiful favor. Potent art Thou to do whatsoever may please Thee. Incomparable art Thou. No God is there beside Thee, the Lord of the throne on high and of earth below, the Ruler of this world and of the world to come. Thou art the God of Bounty, the Ever Forgiving, the Great Giver, the Most Generous.
– Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah

Now as we have learned about the broad teachings of Justice, we are encouraged to move toward helping increase peace in the world. In order to do our part of creating a better world we reflect on teachings from various religions on Peace and Reconciliation.

Religious Teachings on Peace and Reconciliation

From the Islamic Tradition:

Undoubtedly, whoever exercises patience and forgiveness would be practicing that which is of the fundamentals of piety.
– Qur'an 42:43

"O Allah! You are Peace and from You is peace. Blessed are You, O Majestic and Generous!"
– Sahih Muslim, Book 4, #1227

From the Christian tradition:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted; Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth; Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled; Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy; Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God; Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake's, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
– Matthew 5: 3-10

From the Jewish tradition:

There is no vessel that holds blessing more safely than peace.
– Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot

May the One who brings peace to the universe will bring peace to us and to all the people Israel and upon all the inhabitants of the Earth.
– Jewish Liturgy

From the Hindu tradition:

Loving Father, perfect teacher, patient guide in these troubled times; sitting with you, the perfect One, I take the influence of your company to teach me the way of reconciliation, wisdom and harmony. I see you, the embodiment of all solutions for the world and myself at this time. Touch my heart and my conscience daily, that all I do will work towards your goal of perfection and peace for all people.
– Lama Zopa Rinpoche^[iii]

From the Buddhist tradition:

All the peace and happiness of the whole globe, the peace and happiness of societies, the peace and happiness of family, the peace and happiness in the individual person's life, and the peace and happiness of even the animals and so forth, all depends on having loving kindness toward each other. May all beings be happy and at their ease, free from pain, fear, distress or enmity; untroubled, well, unharmed, in peace.

We close our ceremony with prayers of peace:

O God of mercy and love, heal the deep divisions of our world. Set in our hearts the spirit of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace, that the day may soon come when we no longer distrust or fear one another, but are drawn together in unity of purpose, in understanding, in love, and in peace. We pray this in God's name. Amen.

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

As we end this special memorial and remembrance service, remember each of us can and should be Ambassadors for Mutual Respect and Understanding.

[1] Adapted from Awareness Sunday www.awarenesssunday.com

[ii] Adapted from A Litany of Remembrance, Penitence and Hope by Rev. Eileen W. Lindner and Rev. Marcel A. Welty, National Council of Churches; which may be found at <http://www.nccusa.org/interfaith/sept-11-litany>.

[iii] <http://viewonbuddhism.org/compassion.html>

