



Editor's Note

The old cliché, “We are the citizens of the world” has never been so true as it is today. Swift air travel and the pervasive power of the internet have shrunk the distances—“the Far East” no longer seems far and mystifying. The rapidly accelerating rate of globalization in the 21st century has had far-reaching effects on the hearts and minds of people everywhere: a great sense of liberty has emerged, and a deep feeling of interconnectedness between all the beings of the world has been generated. However, in this rapidly changing world, these very same technological advances, and the ensuing hasty rise of industrialization also pose a new threat to ancient cultures by testing established moral values and reshaping the religious paradigms.

In this age of disappearing boundaries—nations becoming melting pots of a myriad of cultures—the validity of the ancient faith traditions, along with their myths and ethos, are facing countless challenges. Some people fear a cataclysmic end to the world or, at least, to the “world” as we know it. Some factions are outraged by the emerging patterns of world culture and by the reshaping of ancient ways of religion. The result: distrust, anger, hatred and animosity. The fiercest expression of this anger and distrust became most visible



in the events of September 11, 2001. On this day the world helplessly watched as the symbols of global and industrial progress—the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City— came crashing to the ground.

From that day forward our whole world has changed. The “shock and awe” experienced by people everywhere who witnessed the destruction of the towers sent shock waves through all the established value systems of the world. The ensuing feelings of fear and distrust have maimed the hearts of people worldwide and have paralyzed the sense of clear vision. But this time of despair must be taken as an opportunity, an opening to search for new horizons, to re-assess our values, to understand and respect other cultures and religions. This is exactly what the great sant, Maharishi Shri Santsevi Ji, has sought to accomplish through his book, *Sarvadharmā Samanvya (The Harmony of All Religions)*. Shri Santsevi Ji Maharaj has been teaching the Santmat tradition for many decades and believes in the underlying principles found in all the prominent religions of the world.

In *The Harmony of All Religions*, Swami Ji delves deeply into each of these strands of the religious



traditions: the Vedic tradition (*dharma*), Buddhism, Jainism, the Judeo-Christian tradition, Sikhism, and Islam. By illustrating the main tenets of these religions together in one volume, Maharishi Santsevi Ji, in his wisdom, has shown that all of these religions, so seemingly different in nature, are nevertheless inherently rooted in the one Truth, which is expressed variously.

Traditionally, Santmat is concerned with the esoteric teachings of the various sants, but Swami Ji has extended the scope of Santmat by relating it to the core of each of the major religions of the world, through survey of the sacred texts and teachings of their prominent exponents. He explores the fundamental principles within each of the religious traditions. At the same time, Swami Ji is careful to not undermine the external doctrines and expressions which give form and structure to these traditions.

Shri Santsevi Ji has thereby confirmed the ancient Vedic saying: *Truth is one; the sages speak of it in various ways*. The purpose of religion (*re-legare* in Latin, meaning ‘to unite’) is, indeed, not to divide, but to unite. The intent of this presentation is to sustain unity and harmony, as the Sanskrit word *dharma* connotes. *Dharma*, often translated as ‘religion,’ indicates the



principle of sustenance and holding together. *Dharma* functions to bring peace, love and unity, and at the same time to remove hate, distrust and divisive forces.

Through this book Shri Santsevi Ji seeks to present a path that will instill harmony instead of conflict, establish trust in place of doubt, and replace hate with love. This volume will serve as a balm to tender wounds, and may provide hope to despairing hearts. It points the way beyond a mere outer harmony of apparently divergent religions, which could be possible by an intellectual analysis of ideas. But even more deeply, Swamiji's intent is to invite fellow human beings to realize inner peace and harmony by walking on the path tread by the great saints, seers and prophets.

In the original form of this treatise, *The Harmony of All Religions*, Maharishi Santsevi Ji also includes a study of the mystical principles of Santmat that are concealed within the teachings of the major theistic sects of Hinduism. These include, the worship of Lord Shiva (a Hindu deity); the worship of Surya (the Sun god of ancient times); the worship of Lord Rama (the incarnation of Vishnu, as worshipped in the *Ramacharitamanas* by Sant Tulsidas); and the worship of Bhagavati (the goddess, the principle of Divine



Energy). As commonly understood, these sects are associated only with the personal god or the qualified form of the Divine, worshipped through rituals and devotional practices. But Maharishi Santsevi Ji underscores the transcendent elements of the Divine, and the references to the esoteric practices of Divine Light and Sound that are present in the literature of these sects. However, in this present translation we are unable to include this unique and valuable exegesis of Swami Ji. We hope that it could be made available to readers at a later date.

This translation was undertaken to render the original Hindi exposition, *Sarvadharmā Samanvya* (Harmony of All Religions) into a more widely accessible English version. The task of translation is always a difficult one, but this text presented even more challenges with its frequent references to the texts of different religions in a variety of languages. These included Sanskrit, Hindi, Pali, Prakrit, Gurumukhi, Avadhi, several regional vernaculars of Northern India, Arabic, and English. Moreover, many terms in the original languages have no equivalent in the English language.

The primary task of this translation has been to preserve the voice of Swami Ji and thus render a translation



which remains faithful to the original. This book was initially written for the native people of India and, specifically, for those who would already have some familiarity with the principles of Santmat. But in the course of development, and for the purpose of making it accessible to a wider audience, we have added many explanatory notes.

Shri Santsevi Ji's concern has been to reach people in all walks of life, especially the underprivileged and illiterate masses who reside in the deep villages of India. Accordingly, the style of the book follows the oral tradition, in which repetition of ideas is frequent and often desirable. In this translation some editorial license had to be taken to make the text accessible to the western mind. All editorial decisions have been made for the purpose of clarifying the original intent of the author. In a few cases the editor has applied the comments suggested by readers and students.

We offer this translation to Swami Shri Santsevi Ji on the occasion of his 86th Birthday. Swami Ji has inspired and guided us through every step along the way. We are deeply grateful for his monumental endeavor and this momentous treatise, unique but essential to the Santmat tradition. Without his encouragement and loving



guidance it would not have been possible to produce this translated and edited version of his book. May he always guide us!

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