

THE BREAKING OF A WALL AS A SYMBOL OF DISCORD LEADING TO
CONCORD

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INTRODUCTION:

In the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, discord refers to a state that is characterized by lack of agreement or harmony which produces quarreling, factiousness or antagonism such as family quarrels, group clashes and wars. Harmony or concord refers to the pleasing arrangement of parts or congruence, agreement or accord and internal calm or tranquility. Harmony as integration leads to peace. Peace is derived from the Latin word “pax” meaning a pact or a contrast or an agreement to end the war or dispute or conflict between two groups of people. The idea of peace refers to a state of mind in tranquility where one is free from all sorts of worry, there is satisfaction in his mind, body and soul and is an element of joy, happiness and fulfillment that thrills his life. It is the law of nature where everything functions smoothly and is an essential condition for social good be it for societies, states or nations of the world. Peace forms the basis of happiness, creativity, development and growth. Harmony and peace take a community on the path of development. Pope John Paul II states “Development and solidarity are the two keys to peace” (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”).

The breaking of a wall as a symbol of discord leading to concord refers to the wall being a symbol of discord which is characterized by family quarrels, group clashes and wars. In the poem “To Althea from Prison” (1642) by Richard Lovelace (1617-1657), the poet who wrote the poem when he had been imprisoned in the Gatehouse Prison adjoining Westminster Abbey for encouraging the annulment of the Clergy Act of 1640 which prevented the clergy

involved with the Church of England from exercising temporal control. The poet states in the poem:

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage:
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage. (“To Althea from Prison”)

The poet attempts to show that the stone walls of a prison which symbolize discord cannot perplex the minds of the innocent and the quiet people as they are sagacious enough to meditate and arrive upon the cause of the conflict or disagreement thereby resolving it. The resolution of the conflict leads to harmony or concord as there is internal calm leading to tranquility signified by a prison becoming a hermitage a place where peace is attained through meditation.

In the poem “Mending Wall” in the anthology *North of Boston* (1914) by Robert Frost (1874-1963), the poet states:

There is something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast. (*Footprints II* 46)

The poem highlights the wall as a symbol of conflict or disagreement between neighbors and the poet states that the wall is man-made and that nature never intended any wall or conflict but wanted all living beings to live in harmony or concord so nature destructs walls by making the ground freeze under the wall and spilling the upper boulders of the wall in the sun so that the wall will become weak and finally dismantle thereby ending the disagreement.

In the poem “The Berlin Wall” by Herbert Nehrlich, the poet states:

It was the day after,
John Kennedy had
uncharacteristically loud,

shouted the unforgettable
and oft misquoted words
'Ich bin ein Berliner',
words that echoed back
from the remnants of
a wall that had been built
with capitalist material
and communist anger. (*Footprints II 68*)

The poet in this poem talks about the historical event of the construction of the historic Berlin Wall dividing East and West Germany due to the animosity between the capitalists and the communists. The wall is an ideological wall constructed out of hatred and difference in ideologies thereby signifying conflict, disagreement and group clashes. The breaking of the wall is signified by the bringing in of harmony or concord leading to true peace and happiness for some and fake happiness for others. This is described in the poem as:

'Mr. Gorbatschov, tear down this wall',
the entire world applauded,
though some did not mean it at all. (*Footprints II 68*)

In the poem "A Wall is Just a Wall", by Allan James Saywell, the poet speaks of a psychological discord or disharmony caused by an ideology in an individual's mind but the poet believes that no wall is strong enough to last forever thereby every instance of discord gives way to harmony or concord, for example,

Can an **Ideology**, put a wall around your brain
The brain will have a revolution
A sudden radical, **sweeping** organic change (*Footprints II 65*)

In the poem "The Wall" by the poet Neha Kaushik, the wall is shown to be a symbol of discord. She states:

When the people had differences,
I was created between them.
When the people needed protection
I was made their defender. (*Footprints II* 45)

Here the wall is a symbol of discord or conflict or disharmony and its function as a protector of people also presupposes threat leading to insecurity. The existence of a wall itself is an indication of conflict and insecurity.

Discord *vis-à-vis* Concord in Western as well as Indian Philosophical Systems:

The ideas of discord and concord as embodied in Western and Indian philosophical systems are: In the tradition of Western Philosophy, discord leading to harmony or concord and finally peace has been explored by various Western philosophers such as Plato (428/427 or 424/423 BC - 348/347 BC), Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Bertrand Russell (1872-1970). Plato's quest for peace of mind made him express it as a "Form" which is the very essence of peace and harmony of living. The difference between thought and perception leads into the realm of the "Theory of Forms" which he further uses to argue about the immortality of the soul. In *Theological-Political Treatises* (1670), the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) states that peace is not an absence of war but a virtue or a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice (qtd. in "Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace"). Jean-Jacques Rousseau describes the state of human nature as free, joyful, peace loving and unperturbed by the inequality of human beings. In *The Social Contract* (1762), he states "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains" and proceeds to argue that men need not be in chains. He states that the civil society comes into being to serve two purposes to provide peace for everyone and to ensure the right to property for anyone lucky enough to have possessions. Man is ready to submit to the will of the society for peace. Thus, Jean-Jacques Rousseau states that the basis of societal harmony or peace is a harmonious

relationship of individual members and society like parts and whole. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke both the philosophers consider human nature as nasty, selfish and brutish. They evolve a social contract theory to explain the necessity of state to ensure law and order as well as peace in social relationships. In 1795, Immanuel Kant composed an essay on eternal peace in which he states that the state of peace among men who are neighbors is no state of nature. The state of peace may be founded within a state of law as law guarantees security otherwise it is a state of war although actually it may not be in progress. The communist theories of Karl Marx appealed to the laboring class as their purpose was to teach them to live their lives in a way worthy of their humanity and to aspire to get economic equality and peace. Jeremy Bentham's (1748-1747) proposals for universal and perpetual peace occur in his Essay IV on the principles of International Law. The western philosophers advocated the idea of peace through education which establishes coordination between mind and body ("Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace").

An example of discord vis-à-vis concord in Western philosophy is witnessed in the poem "The Berlin Wall" in the construction of the Berlin Wall which was the result of differences in ideologies of the people of Germany and also further divided the people of the country thereby introducing discord. At the same time the idea of its dismantling itself introduces concord as it presupposes the reunification of a divided country and harmonious relations between the people of both the sides of the divided nation (*Footprints II* 68-69).

In the tradition of Indian philosophy, the ideas of discord vis-à-vis harmony or concord leading to peace which as per the Indian perspective is personal and social as well as positive and negative. The idea of peace in the Sanskrit texts refers to tranquility, quietude, calmness of mind, absence of passion, aversion of pain and indifference to the objects of pleasure and pain. *Vedic Samhitas*, *Brahmanas* and *Srautasutras* posit "shanti" to be implying absence of evil, long life and increase in property which may be described as "sukha" (comfort, prosperity and happiness). "Sham", "shanti" and "samadhanam" are words used in various Indian languages. "Sham" is the root verb of "shanti" which means tranquility, calmness, rest,

repose, cessation, absence of restraint, freedom from passions, mental quietness, emancipation from all worldly illusions and attachments. The *Upanishads* and *Gita* explain “shanti” as tranquility or equipoise and achievement of personal integration and individual harmony (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”). An example of discord vis-à-vis concord in Indian philosophy is witnessed in the poem “The Wall” where the wall is shown to be personified and bears all the atrocities of human beings in silence braving all the odds (*Footprints II* 45). Here the existence of the wall itself is a symbol of discord but the same wall bears the brunt of revolutions, uprisings, violence, nature’s fury, tyranny etcetera and metamorphoses into a symbol of harmony or concord by transcending the mundane state of affairs. The wall here becomes an example for human beings to follow by remaining calm in the face of adversities.

CONCEPT OF PEACE IN SOME RELIGIONS:

Religion helps human beings to achieve peace. Thus, the idea of peace in various religions are:

Concept of Peace in Hinduism:

Hinduism which is not only a religion but a culture and a way of life professes peace and universal brotherhood through the attainment of individual and collective peace. It considers truth to be an element of peace. Hinduism teaches that peace deals with all aspects of human existence. The concept of “Brahman” and “Atman” are important in relation to peace which aims for harmonious relationship between the universe and the individual which further envisages harmonious relationship between the interest of the individual and that of society and nature. The state of harmonious relationship is a state of peace (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”). In the poem “Mending Wall”, the harmonious relationship between the poet and the neighbor is maintained for the attainment of individual and collective peace by keeping the wall between their territories although the poet feels that the wall should not be there as it is constructed to give offence to the other party and moreover, nature too does not like walls but he has to relent to his neighbor’s idea of “Good fences

make good neighbor” to maintain harmony and friendly relations with his neighbor. The poet is shown to negotiate and collaborate with his neighbor in the poem to establish harmony or concord in their relationship (*Footprints II* 47-48). This idea itself is based on the ideals of Hinduism although the existence of a wall is inimical to nature.

Concept of Peace in Buddhism:

In Buddhism, Buddha is considered to be the true exemplar of peace and Buddhism emphasizes on non-violence and harmony as the foundation of peace. Buddhism preaches that internal and external peace can be attained when it becomes a part of one’s conception of the world and of those who live within it. Peace is conditional for Buddha as insistence on any type of permanence led to inflexibility and ultimately to conflict. According to Buddhist philosophy, man consists of five heaps or “skandhas” namely the body, feelings, perceptions, impulses and emotions. When an individual is taken out of these five heaps he ceases to exist and is said to achieve “Nirvana” which is infinite and eternal without any boundary or causation or concept of self. It is an experience of great happiness or peace. Buddhism describes cosmos as a flat disk with heaven above and hell below. Heaven may be described as peace and hell as conflict. The *Lotus Sutra* describes that there is only one or single path “ekayana” to *salvation* or enlightenment. The doctrine of emancipation as expounded in Buddhism is categorized into two stages of relative peace or “lokiya shanty” and of absolute peace or “parama shanty”. Peace in Buddhism in its relative sense is not an end in itself but a means to an end whereas absolute peace is an end in itself (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”). The idea of non-violence and harmony as foundation of peace can be seen in the poem “The Wall” where the wall is personified and is shown to brave all the atrocities and odds despite being a symbol of discord. Moreover, in this poem the wall is projected as a mute sufferer or victim of atrocities of humans as the humans are shown to create a wall when they have differences with others but abuse it when they feel the need to do so and also seek protection from it at the time of necessity. The wall, on the other hand, is shown to be a passive sufferer and a silent observer in history which does not believe in

retaliation thereby bearing all the injustices of humans to maintain harmony (*Footprints II* 45).

Concept of Peace in Jainism:

Jainism is a philosophy and a religion that considers peace to be a state of perfection wherein exists the “triratna” perfect knowledge, perfect or right perception and perfect or right belief. When the soul achieves the “ratnatraya” which is a state of peace it is freed from the cycle of rebirth. It is a state of infinite knowledge, infinite intuition, infinite happiness or “Ananda” and infinite potency which is a trait of peace. Jainism preaches peace to all living beings. It believes the internal peace of mind and the external peace in the world are independent of each other but in practice they are inter-related. Jainism believes non-violence and forgiveness to be the prime requirements of peace (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”). An instance of non-violence and forgiveness which are considered to be the requirements of peace are implied in the poem “Mending Wall” where the poet wants to get rid of the wall that stands between his and his neighbor’s estates because he finds it to be needless and offensive. But he has to give his consent to it being there as he has to respect his neighbor’s opinion, he should not end up imposing his view on him and should also forgive his neighbor’s short sightedness for the sake of harmony and peace.

Concept of Peace in Islam:

Peace is a basic concept in Islam and the term “Islam” means peace whereas the term “Muslim” means the person who submits to Allah in peace. It preaches the submission to the will of Almighty God (Al-Qudir) who is merciful (Rahim) and benevolent (Rehman) to all his creation. Qu’ran states that God is the source of peace. The Arabic word for peace “Salam” means salvation and “Assalamualaikum” means greetings of peace be with you and live upon the ideas of peace both in words and deeds. Asalam is the being who is the source of peace and concord and who assures peaceful existence to all living beings. Al-Mo’min is the being who shelters and protects all and bestows peace in every sphere of life. In the Qu’ran, anyone carrying out the will of God and giving all to exalt his sacred name including

the making of holy war “jihad” will receive the divine blessing of peace and eventually live with God in that perfect state. Peace is also an earthly state in which good Muslims desire temporal peace and not war realizing that through an Islamic polity serving Allah faithfully. The checks and balance maintained in the Islamic system of life ensure justice, welfare and peace for all (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”). An instance of a devotee submitting to his God in peace can be witnessed in “To Althea, from Prison” where the speaker states that a prison can confine a body but nothing can confine the innocent mind and the soul that loves God (“To Althea, from Prison”).

Concept of Peace in Christianity:

In Christianity, the *Bible* exhorts the faithful to strive for the establishment of peace on Earth and goodwill among all humanity through the establishment of the kingdom of God (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”). An instance of this ideal of peace can be witnessed in the poem “Berlin Wall” where the poet talks about the political leader who thinks of tearing down the Berlin Wall and uniting the population of East and West Germany as well as restoring harmony among the people of the divided nation (*Footprints II* 68-69).

Concept of Peace in Zoroastrianism:

In Zoroastrianism, it is believed that peace is created through good thoughts, words and deeds. An example of this ideal of peace is witnessed in the poem “To Althea, from Prison” where the speaker in the poem is shown to feel a kind of liberty when he interacts with his beloved Althea. The speaker feels the same liberty when he drinks alcohol and associates with others including presumably his male friends. The same kind of liberty is felt by the speaker when he celebrates the virtues of his king. Finally, the speaker declares that although a prison can confine the body but nothing can confine the innocent mind and the soul that loves God (“To Althea, from Prison”). Thus, the speaker is of the opinion that peace can be achieved through good thoughts, words and deeds.

Types of Peace: An Outcome of Harmony or Concord:

Peace is the harmonious state of the spirit and the body of the individual and community in an environment that is politically, economically, socially and earthly good and beautiful. It is categorized on the basis of its applications, utilities, aspects and situations of the individuals, groups, communities, nations and organizations. There is inner peace and outer peace. Peace in the mind and the soul which is a result of mental calm where there is no mental disturbance and sorrow. It helps to maintain the state of tranquility and equipoise with knowledge and understanding to keep oneself strong in the force of discord or stress. It calls for forgiveness and reconciliation. Repentance is a precondition of both. Religion is known to play an important role in one's search for peace. Peace within the individual is the basis of peace in the world among individuals, nations and religions. Swami Bhaskarananda is of the opinion that in order to attain inner peace, one has to love oneself and one another and pray to God unconditionally without any fear and expectation of reward (Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace). An example of inner peace is seen in the poem "The Berlin Wall" by Herbert Nehrlich as the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of discord, in this context thereby uniting the people of the two nations who had been forcibly separated due to differences in ideologies happens in the mind of the political leader thereby bringing about inner peace:

AD LITTERAM

Later, when the actor turned prez
threw down the gauntlet, loudly,
with the flushed cheeks of anger
and righteous indignation,
Mr. Gorbatschov, tear down this wall,
the entire world applauded,
though some did not mean it all.
But I do think that the wall was torn
down in its entirety, that day in the Sauna. (*Footprints II* 69)

The peace in society and environment is called outer peace. It involves the state of social harmony, cooperation, friendly relations between men and their fellow beings. It is not only a state of social harmony but also a state of social justice, social equality, friendly relations as well as respect to others. It includes communal, national and world peace. Outer peace is an outcome of inner peace. It encompasses economic, social, political and ecological aspects of human existence. Government and political leadership play their roles effectively in these areas to obtain outer peace (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”).

An instance of outer peace is witnessed in the poem “A Wall is Just a Wall” by Allan James Saywell where a wall, a symbol of discord, is shown to be a mere nothing in front of the spirit of freedom of a human being which is the symbol of harmony or concord leading to establishment of outer peace:

Tie a human being up
Put a wall around him
Yes, even kill him
But to him, a wall is just a wall
Freedom is life (*Footprints II 65*)

Democratic Peace is considered to be an idea of political globalization. It is an instrument to create a politically homogenous world. It is a method of non-violence and entails that the democracies do not make war on each other (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”). In “The Wall” by Neha Kaushik, the fact that the wall itself talks about bearing the nature’s fury advocates the idea of political globalization, thereby establishing a borderless world where there are no barriers separating nations leading to the establishment of democratic peace.

I’ve stood against the nature’s fury,
from the times unknown.
Waves tried to gallop me,
winds tried to trodden me apart. (*Footprints II 45*)

The integral peace implies an integral vision of life. It is the outcome of an integration of the human with the divine, the secular with the sacred, the masculine with the feminine and science with religion. It encompasses the personal, societal and ecological dimensions of human life in which the economic and political dimensions are very important (“Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace”). The integral peace advocates an integral vision of life thus; walls are not appreciated by nature which is depicted in “Mending Wall” where the poet talks about the gaps occurring in the wall despite the best of efforts to keep the wall intact. It shows that walls are not really needed as divinity can be realized only through unity among human beings. The humans are the ones who create walls and they are the ones who dismantle the walls thereby establishing integral peace.

The work of hunters is another thing:

I have come after them and made repair

Where they have left not one stone on a stone,

But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,

To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,

No one has seen them made or heard them made,

But at spring mending-time we find them there. (*Footprints II 47*)

The idea of cold peace refers to a neutral view of a previous enemy. There is little mutual hostility and a lack of mutually beneficial interactions aimed at developing trust, interdependence and collaboration. An idea of cold peace can be witnessed in the poem “The Wall” as the wall is shown to be neutral and mute in braving the odds thereby showing a break in the communication process although there is peace as the wall is bearing all the atrocities silently.

Still I’m standing unmoved,

untouched by atrocities,

tolerating all the tyranny,

bearing every pain & blow

At times I felt helpless over my disposition,
several times I wanted to speak,
but my shouts of silence went unheard in crowd,
and today me 'The WALL' is still braving against the odds. (*Footprints II 45*)

The idea of hot peace refers to collaborative efforts designed to build bridges between past and present adversaries thereby involving searching of common ground and development of new non-human enemies such as threats to health and well-being of the humankind and the planet. It promotes global interdependence, human rights, democratization and a diminution of national sovereignty ("Philosophical and Historical Concept of Peace"). An idea of hot peace can be seen in the "Mending Wall" when the poet and his neighbor have to negotiate and collaborate regarding the wall that separates their territories, for example,

I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go. (*Footprints II 47*)

This example shows that although the poet and his neighbor have not dissolved their differences completely by doing away with the wall but are making collaborative efforts to negotiate and reach a common ground.

Positive peace refers to tranquility, calmness, quietness, harmony and friendship which is the outcome of a pattern of cooperation and integration between major human groups. It calls for social organizations of diverse people who cooperate for the benefit of the humankind and the system has no winners and losers. Moreover, all are winners. An idea of positive peace can be witnessed in the poem "Mending Wall" as it is seen in the poem that the neighbor comes to the negotiating table to decide regarding the condition of the wall but the poet has to give his consent regarding keeping the wall intact as per the desire of the neighbor to maintain an amicable relationship with his neighbor (*Footprints II 47-48*).

Negative peace refers to absence of war, conflict, disagreement, struggle, violence, terrorism and social disorder. It means mental disturbance and anxiety. It is maintained by social and political repression of dissident individuals, groups, religious or cultural minorities. In this context, “peace-keeping” is done through military power and coercive force. The main strategy is dissociation, that is, to separate the conflicting parties. The policies based on the idea of negative peace do not deal with the causes of violence but only its manifestations. Thus, the policies do not bring lasting conditions of peace. Indeed, by suppressing the release of tensions resulting from social conflict result in negative peace efforts which may lead to future violence of greater magnitude. An instance of negative peace can be witnessed in the poem “To Althea, from Prison” where we get an account of the poet’s imprisonment for encouraging the Clergy Act of 1640 to curb dissent.

EVOLUTION OF PEACE:

War begins initially in the mind of man and peace is absence of warfare both within and without between groups, nations, races, classes or ideologies. The conflict within results in the conflict without which it is ultimately followed by harmony or concord within as well without leading to peace. This aspect is well highlighted by the selected poems:

An instance of the conflict in the mind of man is described in “The Berlin Wall” by Herbert Nehrlich:

Gorbatschov sat
In the Sauna of his datscha,
partaking liberally of
near-frozen Vodka, pure,
while sweating in the name
of the people and humanity. (*Footprints II* 68)

This example explains the conflict or discord in the mind of the political leader regarding the existence of the Berlin wall between East Germany and West Germany on the foundation of self-interest, hatred and animosity thereby dividing a nation.

A discord within evolves into a discord without or external discord and is expressed beautifully in “Mending Wall” by Robert Frost as the poet says that there is a trust deficit between the neighbors which results in the poet’s neighbor saying “Good fences make good neighbors.” (*Footprints II 46*). The discord within which is expressed in the neighbor’s utterance gets converted into the discord without when the poet sees his neighbor bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top in each hand like an old stone savage armed to rebuild the wall (*Footprints II 48*).

Similarly, the harmony within results in the harmony without. In “To Althea, from Prison”, the poet states that if he is free in love he will be free in his soul then he will enjoy the kind of liberty that the angels enjoy thereby being at peace with himself.

If I have freedom in my Love,
And in my soul am free;
Angels alone that soar above,
Enjoy such Liberty. (“To Althea, from Prison”)

The harmony without is symbolized by the metaphorical act of breaking a wall in the poem “A Wall is Just a Wall” which is considered to be the first step towards establishing peace. A wall which symbolizes discord does not have much power over human beings if they will to break it to give way to harmony or concord they can easily do it.

A wall is just matter
Yes, you can break it up
Hold it in your hand
Admire it’s color
But a wall is just a wall. (*Footprints II 65*)

CONCLUSION:

The main focus in the poems is on the “wall” as a symbol or metaphor for discord and the breaking of the wall as a symbol or metaphor for harmony or concord. The wall can also be exemplary for human beings by projecting the spirit to brave odds in the face of adversities and changing into a symbol of harmony or concord. The wall has always been constructed by man for protection and security but the same wall could be the reason to keep man away from the much-needed protection and security. It will exhibit the creation of a wall to be a man-made phenomenon which leads to conflict and the dismantling of the very same wall as a path to happiness and spiritual well-being. It shows that wall was never intended by nature so it does not support the existence of a wall. The paper aims towards showing the benefits of living in harmony with each other. It shuns the existence of any wall whether ideological or physical thereby establishing the fact that the ideological walls are the ones that create physical walls. It manifests that harmony is the essence of peaceful living in a pluralistic society which can only be achieved by demolishing walls.

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