

India and the Abolition of War

The doctrine of Advaita has been slowly but definitely permeating Western culture in recent times. From the moment Isaac Newton discovered the derivation of the several colors from one primal white light, to the more recent work of Joule, Maxwell, Zeeman and our great present-day chemists and physicists, step by step Nature has revealed the unity of energy, the unity of matter, the unity of life. However, there still remains a vast unexplored region in Ethics and Metaphysics which may nonetheless become demonstrable to the visible eye in the coming centuries.

It is man and not God who has divided the intellectual sphere for the sake of convenience. It is man and not God who has selected moral qualities in place of a universal Morale. A modern Sufi (Inayat Khan) has said: "There is one Moral Principle, the love which springs forth from self-denial, and blooms in deeds of beneficence." We may speak of loving-kindness, of patience, of charity, of benevolence, of generosity, of friendship, of patience, of hope, of forgiveness. Do not all these spring from one root, a loving heart? How then can we separate virtue from virtue, one good quality from another?

Readers of the Upanishads who endeavor to understand the ancient wisdom through their intellect often criticize the sacred tradition for their lack of moral teachings. The beauty which they seem to find in the Psalms of David and the splendid spirit which they feel present in the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus seem missing. They do not comprehend that Omniscient Oneness includes not only metaphysical Unity, not only the Cosmic Oversoul, but all goodness, all beauty, all qualities, all belong to Brahman. Until the mind perceives from that magnificent point of view, so characteristic of many of the sages of Bharata, criticism only reveals a person's spiritual and intuitional shortcomings.

Now the whole world is concentrating, so to speak, on the abolition of political warfare, trying to mitigate its causes so that nations and groups will cease to resort to the field of battle to settle disputes. For how can human force represent Divine Justice, or any justice for that matter! Force can only prove the dominance of force and is therefore contrary to any morality although it sometimes appears that the righteous cause is victorious on the battlefield. At the same time, they have not reached the root of evil. If it is wrong for nations to employ force in their struggles one with another, is it proper to use force at all? And if force is justified even in maintaining internal order, does not force become paramount to justice—in the end is there any justice besides forceful compulsion?

Philosophical dualism becomes a cause for differences between mind and mind, between party and party. The principles of Unity and Harmony (which may be considered as one) alone can terminate internecine strife. Not that all must agree or should agree, but that all recognize the existence of some universal link, some cosmic harmony overshadowing all apparent differences. Those who differ on the mental plane will sooner or later come to difficulties on the physical plane unless they have a greater vision or understanding.

The late World War and the various social disturbances which followed it were accompanied by the declaration of "Ballots, not bullets." This maxim has never become truly philosophical, and lacked sincerity. The Proponents of the gesture recoiled when they saw that so large a portion of mankind was not composed of the free, the licensed, the privileged; that vast masses were deprived of any use of the ballot, even when they sought that self same ballot; and in the end the very groups

which had been repeating this declaration condoned the use of bullets when a definite situation arose (witness Amritsar, etc.).

Under these circumstances, where was there any redress for grievances? Where could the repressed masses turn? Compelled to choose between a violence that might drive them to a reckless revolution or to submit to an utterly indefensible status quo, the people of Bharata have submitted with patience, hoping against hope for a justice which never seems to come, living in dire poverty, and dying from disease, starvation and privation, much of which could be prevented, figuratively at least, by a turn of the hand.

During the present depression we find many world leaders blaming the war for the many evils that have arisen. Bank failures, crop shortages, over-production, ruthless and wasteful competition, unequal distribution of wealth, terrific movements on the stock exchange, wide spread unemployment—all are blamed upon the war. Mars, so to speak, has become the scapegoat for Mara, the spirit of evil and selfishness within man. The self seeker, the unscrupulous, the miser and the tyrant blame a war which ended over a decade ago for the misfortunes resulting in part, at least, from their own machinations.

They do not see and sometimes will not see, that behind all suffering of mankind in every age, has been that same spirit of aggression. There is one Light from which all virtues come, and shadows are only possible when human selfishness permits the mist of Maya to becloud situations. We cannot separate evil from evil or good from good. If peace is to come, it must be peace for all nations and for every person. If we are to have justice, it must be justice for all peoples. So long as one man is the despotic victim of another, one may talk about peace, discourse on justice, speak of mercy, preach on loving-kindness, but there is not life in it. Sincerity in such matters can only be proved by definite acts.

So long as a great and civilized nation is prohibited from self expression either by ballot or by bullet, just so long is there slavery upon earth, is there despotism upon earth, is there injustice upon earth. Talk of disarmament remains only talk, for the master class in each situation reserves the right to retain and employ armed forces.

Imperialistic nations are generally slow to perceive the evil they have wrought. Rome permitted herself to be destroyed rather than confess the wickedness of her institutions. The excellent advice given to the birds in the Pancha-Tantra still remains advice, and the feigned sagacity of modern man cannot be compared in degree or in kind to the noble wisdom of the ancients.

In 1932 we shall witness meetings of disarmament congresses, there will be conventions of religious groups to discuss world peace, there will be sessions of international bankers and diplomats, there will be numerous movements to better foreign relations. But what can such conventions, such congresses, such parliaments accomplish when 560,000,000 or more human beings are left out of account, whose welfare is regarded as affecting themselves and their overlords alone.

So long as this attitude continues, the political status and human relations of the masses of Bharata are on a par with those of the slave. The slave is ever counted as a human being when it is to the benefit of the master, but only as a sort of animal when the questions of consideration and treatment arise. This point can never be overstressed. On every hand it should be made clear. Without justice, there can be no peace; without honor, there can be no peace; without freedom, there can be no peace.

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Delegates may meet, vast demonstrations may be held, picturesque parades may delight the observers, but when hundreds of millions of potentially or actually enlightened human beings are deliberately kept in subjection and treated as chattels, then there is not peace, there can be no peace, and whatever means be used, spiritual, mental or physical, it is war and nothing but war until the cause of righteousness is triumphant.