

Everlasting Peace is but a Dream

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Abstract - FOR AGES, SAINTS, SAGES AND THE VAST MULTITUDE OF ORDINARY mortals have sought lasting peace , but all in vain . Dryden , the famous writer , was stating the truth when he said peace itself is war in masquerade . There is also the saying that only the twinkling of a star distinguishes a man of peace from a man of war . Even while many people realize that permanent peace is now a question of life and death for humanity itself , the threat of war hovers over the globe so often that the preparation for war absorbs greater attention of statesmen and politicians in almost all countries than the far more vital tasks of peaceful reconstruction .

INTRODUCTION

Why is the fear of war constantly gripping mankind? The major cause of the international tensions is the ceaseless rivalry between the Great Powers. Despite their frequent and high-sounding professions of global peace, the Big Powers have been making feverish preparations to outbid the other in possessing the latest and the most destructive military hardware. Both national and international prestige seem to lie in adequate military strength; that is perhaps the greatest tragedy of modern civilization. But that is not the only irony of the times. Normally, the man or the country which has everything required for material comfort and prosperity should be fully in favor of peace and order . The USA, for instance, has everything it needs in manpower and natural resources . The Soviet Union also, though not as prosperous, is by no means a needy country. And yet the actions of these two Powers frequently lack an innate desire to tire more, win greater influence, establish many more military bases and ensure greater prestige for themselves. Hence the tensions, the conflicts and the rivalries on both land and sea . It is obvious that peace cannot descend straight from the heavens; it can emerge gradually and steadily when the root causes of international troubles are eliminated. Almost every statesman realizes this and yet does little to weed out such causes of friction. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stressed the point thus: “The

great nations and the various power blocs all talk of peace, and yet peace and the earnest pursuit of it) is considered a dangerous word in some countries. One’s loyalty is doubted if one so much as mentions peace. On the other hand, there are countries where peace is talked of so aggressively and in such deafening tones that it almost sounds like war If we analyze these trends and counter – trends, we will come to the conclusion that, basically, peace is a distinct quality and a way of approach. Unless this approach becomes universal, it is futile to talk of everlasting. Peace cannot be had by shouting about it in the marketplace or by knocking down those who differ from you, or by allocating large sums for destructive weapons in the totally erroneous belief that the best guarantee of world peace is adequate preparation for war. This, in fact, is a tricky slogan devised by war mongers and the “ hawks “ in the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union . It is, of course true that one cannot risk national security, dismiss the army, the air force and the navy in the complacent belief that if we announce a policy of peace and friendship for all nations, we shall be quite safe from invasion . That, in effect, would be a false sense of security. Precautions have to be taken, and indeed must be taken against any eventuality. But the overall policy should be wholly peace – oriented. There need be no doubt that if all countries of the world follow this policy, the danger of war would be minimized and the attention of the people everywhere focused on peaceful reconstruction , on the measures to meet the needs of the masses within the country and also in other parts of the world. Just as there cannot be lasting peace in a town where a handful of persons live in luxury and comfort while the majority of the inhabitants are on the borderline of hunger , similarly there cannot be global peace and tranquility if a handful of nations continue to live in prosperity and show little consideration to the vast mass of humanity around the globe who have very little food to eat, very poor or no accommodation, and very little clothing to cover their bodies This implies that social and

economic justice is quite essential for global peace. Happiness of mankind and overall prosperity are indivisible in the sense that there cannot be pockets of prosperity amidst a vast sea of want and hunger. We have also to counter the philosophy of war – mongers who proclaim from the house – tops: it is war that ultimately helps to establish order. War is supposed to bring out the heroic virtues of man; valour and bravery, it is said, are best manifested in the battlefield. But this is totally fallacious. The tasks of peace are no less challenging than the tasks of war. Among the famous advocates of war and military prowess was Nietzsche. He said it was the need of power that governed, or should govern, the actions of man; he defended the concept of the Superman which was the basis of his war and – power philosophy. He thought all war was good, despite the “vulgar pettiness of the causes”. He went to the length of saying that any cause could be hallowed or sanctified by a good and successful war. But only those people defend war who have not seen or experienced the brutalities, the misery, the destruction and the immense, often indescribable havoc, of a war. Nietzsche had not experienced any such thing; hence his pleadings for conflicts and war. Besides, wars have in recent decades become more destructive than ever, thanks to the atom bomb and other nuclear weapons which can destroy cities in a flash, ruin countless homes and even wipe out all traces of civilization in a matter of minutes. Modern wars know no distinction of boundaries or races; they just ruin and destroy everything; that is why there would be no victors and no vanquished in such a war. They would all suffer beyond measure. So long as avarice and jealousy remain, wars — the curse on humanity — would remain and will not vanish from this earth. It is true to say that man betrays all the education he has received and all the civilization he has developed when he indulges in war or warlike operations. The relapse into barbarism, in fact, shows that the education he was given at much expense has been fruitless. Who can deny that war is a plain denial of culture? Was man given the power of thinking by God to devise weapons of mass destruction? What happens to Truth and Justice when man begins to fight and destroy man in savage style? And yet, ironically, wars and massacres attract much attention. So lopsided is human preference that war and conflict are considered as real news, while peace and unobtrusive efforts to provide

succour to the needy are considered as routine and are given only a few lines on the back pages of newspapers, as if such measures are merely secondary. How, then, are we to ensure a peaceful world, free of tensions and conflicts which always lead to war sooner or later? The primary task, of course, is to remove the economic and political causes which lie at the root of conflicts. The political causes would disappear if freedom is assured to all people in all continents. Aggressive nationalism is one of the major causes of the political storms and has to be suitably tackled. The suppression of one nation by another, the exploitation of the poor and the weak, in sum, colonialism and imperialism, have to be eliminated. Since these are practiced, overtly or covertly, by the giant Powers, both capitalist and communist, the inference can safely be drawn that these Big Powers are to blame for almost all the major wars that take place. The industrialized countries want raw materials and markets to ensure their continued prosperity. These are among the economic causes of wars. If the quest for colonies is stopped and economic exploitation ended, the stage would be set for a peaceful world where the fullest importance is given to truth, culture and all the other qualities on which alone humanity can flourish. The choice indeed is clear: survival or destruction. Do statesmen and other people have to be reminded again and again that the way to happiness and safety is not to destroy the very house where they live and where all their cherished treasures are housed? We have also to expose the theory that another major war is required to all wars. For many centuries this belief has gripped the minds of some leaders. No war can end wars for all time; in fact, every war, small or big, sows the seeds of another. Nor can there be a war for democracy. There are cases where people have struggled hard to attain democratic rights and freedoms. But these are wars of liberation; they can be avoided, as India has shown to the wide world. In any case, such wars are short, unless some giant power or the other backs one party or both parties. Passion, revenge and retaliation can never ensure everlasting, however large the military forces employed to attain the immediate objective. Every war is a step towards barbarism, a reversal of human progress, and the affected nations have to start all over again. So, everlasting peace is indeed a dream, an elusive dream. May — be it will never be realized. The conditions for its fulfillment require a radical change in human nature. Of this there

seems to be little possibility in the foreseeable future. All we can do meanwhile is to make the best of such opportunities as we get to strive for justice both economic and political.

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