

JJAINISM AND WORLD PEACE

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It is cruel irony of fate that we find the present world most complex and dangerous. Undoubtedly the modern science in its long life of one hundred and fifty years has been able to conquer the dreadful forces and many of the hidden secrets of nature. But it has at the same time terribly failed to overcome the passions and prejudices that human flesh is heir to and which work more havoc than the destructive arms ever invented so far. Material machinery has practically overpowered us and we have become aware of the absolute ruin and carnage which atomic warfare can bring in. The wolf in man is becoming evident in every sphere of life. The war-torn world is lacking in spiritual values, which are the most precious heritage of each and every great religion aiming at serving the humanity and uplifting the divine in man. The only ray of hope at this crucial period of atomic nuclear energy and even attempted conquest over space is that no one can publicly claim or sincerely believe the total extermination of humanity as a part of our culture and civilization. Fortunately the human society has been surviving amidst itself from time to time. Mahavira or Buddha, Krishna or Christ, Gandhi or Vinoba, the selfless divine souls who have left no pains to show us the path leading to peace, harmony and happiness. Our main duty as pacifists and representatives of various religious thoughts is to find out how to prevent war and contribute to world peace. Late Shri K. T. Shah has rightly maintained: "The very conquest man has made by his intelligence over the brute forces of nature-his science and inventions-are employed to make man more savage than the beasts of jungle, more noxious than the most poisonous plant or vermin to his fellows."

The cardinal doctrine on which the edifice of Jainism rests from times immemorial is Ahimsa or non-violence. In Prashna-Vyakarana, it has been called Bhagavati. Jainism believes that weapons are in no way effective answer to weapons. Lord Mahavira has emphatically declared in Acharanga Sutra that one weapon is stronger than and superior to the other, but the path of Ahimsa or peace remains unsurpassed. Real peace can only be established by creating good-will in an individual soul towards other fellow beings on the basis of equality and sanctity of life. Various Governments may create the atmosphere of absence of war but not of the existence of peace. Inviolability of the individual self in all the forms is basic contribution of Jainism. When we begin to believe that all life is sacred, our attitude towards living beings is changed and we then desire to live and let live. To injure or harm others is to harm or exploit oneself. Jaina Agamas say that one abhors those who give pain to these living bodies or we feel ashamed of seeing others doing sins. Fire cannot be out with fire. For this purpose it is our duty to stop adding fuel to the flames. Jaina scriptures say that blood-stained cloth cannot be washed off with blood, we need water for that. To achieve world peace, we have to stop the race of armaments and have unbiased faith Samyag Darshana in the effective force of Ahimsa. Greek philosopher Pythagoras once said: "Fix on the course of life which is the most excellent, and custom will render it the most delightful." Jainism believes that force from above evokes fraud from below. Violence should be more terrible than that of opponent if it wants to succeed. Who can claim final and absolute victory in the race of armaments? Like Arjuna the nations believing in violent means shall have to declare, "Nor do we know which for us is better whether we conquer them or they conquer us." Ahimsa teaches us that recourse to armed force is not only infallible sign of the brute in man, but that war neither profits victor nor vanishes.

Only a few nations can afford to compete in armament race, but all the nations can easily afford to arm themselves morally. The famous scholar, A. J. Toynbee writes in his "Study of History"- "The truth seems to be that the sword which has once drunk blood cannot be permanently restrained from drinking blood again

any more than tiger which has once tasted human flesh can be prevented from becoming a man-eater."

Ahimsa as preached by Jaina Tirthankaras is effectively helpful in establishing world peace in another way as well. One of the outcomes of Jaina Ahimsa is that it emphasizes the intellectual aspect of non-injury. It expects us not to injure, disregard or abhor the views of others. The philosophy of Syadvada or non-Absolutism, a special feature of Jaina Ahimsa, tries to harmonize all conflicting interests, sees unity in diversity, rejects absolute arbitrary claims and puts forward most important synthesis of all the divergent and seemingly contradictory doctrines. According to Acharanga Nirukti noncontrol or wrong use of the mind, speech and body is mental violence or Bhava-weapon. Jainism holds that we should endeavor to find out truth in whatever form and wherever it exists. Perhaps Broadly has explained syadvada in his own way when he says that there is truth in every idea, however false, there is reality in every existence, however slight.

In the adoption of this philosophy of Anekanta in finding out solution of our day-to-day problems endangering world peace and creating ill-will and disharmony in our mutual relations, we can easily march forward out established goal. Invasions and battles, persecution and conquest either for political ends or fanatical theocracy have created hatred, greed, conflict and misunderstanding. To get rid of these passions which are major factors in disturbing the peaceful co-existence of various nations, philosophy of Non-Absolutism teaches us to be tolerant, charitable, unbiased, selfless, sympathetic and synthetic. Who can deny the importance of these qualities so essential for creating good-will and faith among all the national of the world?

If the causes of the wars, battles, and strifes are analyzed, we come to conclude that our ever-increasing material wants, self interests, greed, mutual hatred, and individual as well as national selfishness are the main factors. We seldom find fault with ourselves and usually assume that shoe is on the other leg we believe and criticize the society and state for our miseries and troubles. Jainism believes that individual reform is golden path leading to social reform. Our individual passions and evils have their reflection on society. Hence ethical code asks us to examine, reform and morally uplift ourselves without waiting other for lead. If we are individually peaceful within, peace without is certain and sure. Consequently the five famous main vows of Ahimsa, truth, non-possession or limited possession needs special attention. It encourages non-attachment to worldly things and promotes the growth of equitable social order by voluntarily limiting one's own possessions. It also avoids unnecessary hoarding which has become menace in the present capitalistic age. In a book named Atmanushasana, it is stated that masses of wealth cannot be accumulated by honest means of livelihood. Has anyone ever seen rivers flooded with pure water? Lord Mahavira says that greed goes on increasing as we go on gaining. Hence Jainism expects its followers to control and check their daily needs and lead pure, honest life.

Thus Jaina ethic trains good dutiful and morally conscious citizens who can help in maintaining world peace. If ethical code is followed, the heavy work of a state is facilitated and crores of rupees can be saved for other welfare activities. Jainism asks us to subdue our passions and always act with mindfulness and caution. The negligence of these ethical rules results in individual and national crimes. Does it probe that by neglecting ethical rules of life men are let loose with the result that the demon of destruction stalks this land of human beings? By stressing on pure, simple and honest household life, Jainism paves the way for world peace.

It is an admitted fact these days that vegetarian diet is the first step towards world peace. Jainism has been preaching and practicing vegetarianism from the hoary past. Jaina sages were the first to propagate vegetarian diet.

Besides these Jaina ascetics lead life of purity, celibacy, simplicity, selfless service and perfect austerity. They have nothing to claim of their own and all the living beings are their friends par excellence. Their high moral and pure character can appeal to the masses a great deal.

People of various religions and different countries should unite at this crucial juncture of world history and carry on ceaseless propaganda to save the humanity from its extinction. It is fundamentally essential that we try our best to revitalize religious and moral principles common to all the religious sects of the world. If pacifists all over the world stand up and unite together with an iron will to ensure peace and harmony, heaven can be established without fail on this very earth. Religious and moral disarmament need precede physical one. Jainism expects every individual to inculcate in him amity towards all beings, serene joy towards the good, compassion for the miserable and detachment towards the opponent.