

BETWEEN SILENCE AND VIOLENCE

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Abstract

In the contemporary world which is full of rat race and rush and run there are many bruises. Modern man has scarcely any time to stand and stare and take a spiritual breath. In such a context contemplation plays a vital role and acts as an elixir. This paper probes into the prospects and profits of peeping into one's own self.

Key Words: Contemplation, peace, creativity, non-violence, society, civilization, etc.

PEACE. Peace is the eternal *manthra* wherein the roots of Indian ethos have been implanted deeply and unshakably. Peace is an offspring of silence and contemplation. Silence is merely a state where there is no sound. Mere soundlessness cannot bring forth the peaceful atmosphere both inward and outward. It must always be accompanied by contemplation. It often keeps us conscious of something and attempts to charge us with that something. Therefore, Toynbee's remark, "...the art of contemplation is normally another name for the art of living."¹ holds enough truth. The ancient Indian seers hence insisted on emulating the habit of contemplation. When Bhrgu, son of Varuna, approached his father with a question "What is Brahman?" Varuna's reply to his beloved son was "...*tapasa Brahma vijinasasva...*"² here the word *tapasa* which means "through contemplation", is important. It must capture our attention immediately. Contemplation becomes powerful when it is backed by study. Study, contemplation and conference. Yes, they are the three sides of the triangle of life that make it meaningfully well framed.

If we cast a look at the society around us it does not allow us to have a discernment that there is any peace. There is enough dearth for these three things. Everybody is on the run to reach somewhere and get something. In this mad rush there are sometimes minor bruises and major accidents both physical and mental. Why is it so? The answer to the question is quite evident that modern man, being in an irrepressible hurry cannot scan the ideas. Before getting into some kind of speedy action he cannot contemplate on the pros and cons of the action he is getting into. This kind of rhapsodically getting into action shows that the doer's mind and life are without any tinge of peace. Peace dawns upon us, only when there is contemplation. Further the peace and peaceful analysis of the thing provide us also with at least a prospect of probable consequences of the action that is at our hands.

Peace engenders creativity. For all creative processes emerge themselves from within the peace only. A seed germinates in peace. A bud blossoms into a flower and flower again into a fruit all in peace. Peace, like the one that prevails on the top of a mountain, is certainly invaluable. But being the children of contemporaneity instead of starting from peace, we go in search of happiness after shattering the peace. We have become slaves of Mammon. Today man's mind is crammed more with the ideas about money and materials. Of course, money and materials contribute in their own way to make man's life happy. But being not indispensable, they must not become all in all. They must be taken into consideration only as the means to achieve an end on the worldly plane. They contribute in no way to make our journey of spiritual progress easy. Moreover while amassing the materials, we hope that we are mastering them, knowing little that we are being mastered gradually till we are maimed. Therefore, we must learn to attach more importance to spiritual power rather than material mastery.

Our country has been respected for the spiritual glory it possessed. Alas! Where are those days gone? Once *jnanabhoomi*, *yogabhoomi* and *karmabhoomi* has become a mere *bhogabhoomi*.

When there is a strong attempt to acquire the wealth, slowly their creeps in violence. Violence is the result of vibration. When the emotion and feelings in a being become vibrant and surgent e grows into a volcano to disregard the virtues like tolerance, accommodation and contemplation etc., which are godly qualities, Violence deposits us merely into a desert of brutal level. Lest we reduce ourselves to that level, we must practice these godly qualities. Therefore, the Mahatma's insistence on the principle of non-violence Being non-violent does not mean, remaining inert to alien forces, a coward. Speaking of the choice between the two Gandhi said, "Non-violence should never be used as a shield for cowardice. It is a weapon of the brave"³ further he emphatically opines, "...where a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence... But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment..."⁴ Violence is an eruption which disorganizes the individual in particular and society or civilization in general. That is why king Ashoka, though an invincible warrior, though became victorious in the war of Kalinga, abandoned the weapons permanently and took shelter under the grotto of the Buddhist principle of non-violence, and made it a motto to propagate the principle to the world for the rest of his life. Mahatma Gandhi too waged a relentless battle with the Britishers through non-violence and became victorious in winning freedom thus violence has been viewed as venom to the health of humanity all over the world in all times.

But when a population subscribes itself too much to a principle it must not become sluggish enough to ignore alien attacks and their impairing impacts, on its inward thought and outward practices. But the various invasions documented by the chroniclers from time to time hold up a mirror to the fact that our courteous behavior and love of peace have, not infrequently, been misunderstood and mis-utilized by the aggressive civilizations. One came with a desire of extending one's empire, another with a desire to acquire the wealth and yet another as a trader. But history stands a witness to the fact that, these aggressors, with whatever individual intentions made in their entry into this country, swerved from them in due course of time, to settle here as rulers, and exercised their authority. These aggressors were not satisfied merely with political power. Some of them, if not all, tried to implant their religions and cultures inveterately during the days of their reign. This they did under the pretext of educating the innocent, un-objecting young generations of their times by way of opening educational institutions. Thus, the principles, which our ancestors believed in and had cherished reverentially turned into a mesh whereinto they themselves got caught unconsciously. It was tolerable when the population had not grown as dense as today.

But today the fabric of life of our country has become so complex that the yarns are inscrutably involuted. It's an abracadabra of various yarns which are all the while tugged by political motifs. Today though we are a republic no aspect of our life is free from global politics. Under the guise of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization from music to mathematics, from cricket to kitchen, from education to entertainment, from culture to agriculture all fields are affected and afflicted by the alien invasions. Our indigenous systems, to whatever field they may belong seem to have reached a state of collapse. Each organizes its own schemes in every walk of life. But the present scenario is quite unhappy. When our national / political leaders make a peregrination to foreign country / countries they come back with their heads crammed with alien new ideas eagerly enthusiastic to disgorge them into the channels of administration even without waiting a moment to ponder over their pros and cons. A look at the contemporary society, and the affairs therein, staggers one's imagination as to the thought of the repercussions and consequences of the implementation of various so-called new schemes. Because it has become a habit with the men with political powers to implement new rules and withdraw them immediately if the opposition becomes irrepressible.

On the one hand we have a band of enough educated youths who are eagerly waiting for jobs and on the other the political leaders in the position of power are more intent to computerize each of the administrative/ bureaucratic corners. Innocent school - going children's minds are applied to slow poisoning of the mass media. They are, sans culture and heritage, shorn of the knowledge of our glorious past. This leads them to a state of unrest and frustration during the days of adolescence, which in turn lead them towards deviant behaviour. If this state, like whirl - wind that upsets many things, has generated a sort of righteous funk among the true intelligentsia, which is slowly recoiling into silence on the one hand, on the other, it has given a push to the wisecracks who have become verbose and lobby- makers. This is really a ruinous stage for the society or civilization. As, elsewhere, Toynbee, a great historian of our times, says that when a civilization/ society is on the brink of disorganization / destruction, "the minority group" must come to its aid and protection. The bad luck of our country is that the gap between the silence and violence is growing constantly in its width like the yawning jaws of a chasm. But somewhere between the silence and violence there should be vigilance instead of vengeance. It is the time for us to undertake the journey of progress in the light of experience of our prestigious past masters and to make an attempt to restore the pristine glory of our country.

References

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