

Research Paper

BUDDHA'S PEACE AGAINST WAR: APPLICABLE IN THE GLOBAL SOCIETY**Prof. Subhash Randhir**Head, Dept.of English,S. S. G. M. College,
Kopargaon Dist. Ahmednagar Pin-423601(M.S.).**ABSTRACT**

In the hectic modern time, with the deluge of knowledge, man has lost wisdom guided by reason. He has become unwise enough to lead to his own destruction. Many wise men, in the course of time, have stood as pillars of light of wisdom to the world. However, the Buddha happens to be the first great wise man to uphold principle of peace against war in the human world.

Keywords: Human mentality, Buddhism and world peace.

1. Introduction:

Man, despite being a social animal, does not tolerate his own fellowman with brotherly feelings. He competes with others for his survival and it is manifestation of his greed. Envy, as it is ingrained in the human temperament, gives rise to quarrels among people in group and it ultimately leads to wars when it is allowed to operate at national or state level. It has been a point of human anxiety and a threat to global peace ultimately to human existence.

2. BUDDHA'S PEACE AGAINST WAR

It reminds me of Aldous Huxley in this regard that:

War is purely a human phenomenon. The lower animals fight duels in the heat of sexual excitement and kill for food and occasionally for sport. But the activities of a wolf eating a sheep or a cat playing with a mouse are no more war-like than the activities of butchers and fox hunters. Similarly, fights between hungry dogs or rutting sags are like pot house quarrels and have nothing in common with war, which is mass murder organized in cold blood. Some insects, it is true, go out to fight in armies; but their attacks are always directed against members of another species. Man is unique in organizing the mass murder of his own species. Certain biological, of whom Sir Arthur Keith is the most eminent, consider that war acts as 'nature's pruning hook', ensuring the survival of the fittest among civilized individuals and nations. This is obviously non-sensical. War tends to eliminate the young and strong and do spare the unhealthy. Nor is there any reason for supposing that people with traditions of violence and a good technique of war-making are superior to other peoples. The most valuable human beings are not necessarily the most warlike. Nor as a matter of historical fact is it always the most warlike who survive. We can sum up by saying that, so far as nations and peoples are concerned it selects purely at random sometimes ensuring the domination and survival of the warlike peoples, sometimes, on the contrary, ensuring their destruction and the survival of the unwarlike. There exist at the present time certain primitive human societies, such as that of the Eskimos, in which war is unknown and even unthinkable. All civilized societies, however, are warlike.¹

The whole of human society may grow civilized and may materially be progressive in due course of time, but the problem of war will keep pace with it as it has done since the

time immemorial. It could be said that Siddhartha Gautam was born to become the Buddha, but the immediate cause was the issue of war that forced him to take to renunciation, i.e. Parivraja. In fact, his mindset was against killing any living being, mainly mankind. If he was told that he was Kshatriya and so was his duty to fight, he used to reply that there was no need for human being to fight. It clearly shows that he did not care what he was and what he was supposed to do as far as his status in the hierarchy of the varnas was concerned. The Varna system, in India, forced everyman to act according to his Varna. But Buddha was opposed to it. So he considered himself and all other human beings as parts of mankind only irrespective of their varnas, classes, nationalities, gender, economic and political status etc.

There occurred a dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas for a number of times before. The Sakyas wanted to wage war against the Koliyas. War, as they thought, was the only solution to put an end to the problem. Siddhartha tried to calm them down, but they asked him to be ready for the war otherwise, they said, he was liable to be punished.

He suggested that it was necessary to think with a calm mind on the disputable issue but the Sakyas remained equally aggressive. It was due to his tolerant attitude that he wanted to avoid clashes between the Sakyas and the Koliyas and create healthy atmosphere among them. He thought dispute can be settled with talks and negotiations so as to develop and perpetuate good relations. He was of the opinion that enmity breeds enmity; but, it can be conquered by love.

After he took to renunciation from his kingdom, Kapilvastu and began staying at Rajagraha, in a neighboring kingdom namely Magadha, he met the five parivrajakas. They told him that the problem was over because the Sakyas and Koliyas had been forced by their respective people to settle down the issue of water of river Rohini through peaceful negotiations instead of war. The parivrajakas suggested him to go back and resume the worldly life. But he said that war was not a problem limited to one country or the other; it was a common and ubiquitous problem. Conflict was the root of war. He thought that war was a constantly recurring problem and that it was not restricted to any specific time and space. It was a problem not only between kings and between nations, not between nobles and Brahmins, between householders, between a brother and a sister, a mother and a son, a

companion and a companion. It makes individuals to forget their relations; it was, therefore, Buddha rightly felt, an all-embracing problem of mankind.

When he was on his mission of delivering discourses on various issues related to human life, he was reported about the ensuing war between Ajatshatru, the son of the queen consort of Videha, origin, the King of Magadha, and Vajjins, he commented that war delimits the freedom of a country even though it is victorious.

Those who really believe in democracy never think of attacking others or waging war against any neighboring countries. Conquest engenders hatred; the conquered lives in misery.

'A man may spoil another, just so far as it may serve his ends, but when he's spoiled by others, he, despoiled, spoils yet again... So long as evil's fruit is not matured, the food doth fancy 'now' the hour, the chance! But when the deed bears fruit he forth ill. The slayer gets a slayer in his turn; the conqueror gets one who conquers him the abuser wins abuse from another. Thus by the evolution of the deed, a man who spoils is spoiled in his turn'.²

Lord Buddha denounced war and advocated peace against it. Peace is an enduring basis of a harmonious society. But peace that Buddha meant was to be used not only to settle disputes between contentious parties, but to sustain the human society in the universe. Buddha's philosophy is very much relevant to trouble-infested times today. Pacifists like Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley and many others might have criticized war and given lots of guidelines on and tips how to establish peace in the modern times, but Lord Buddha has looked at it as the universal problem and has given correct directions about how to cope up with the warmentality of some brutal people so as to preserve peace and thereby save mankind from self-destruction. Peace begins from individual or individuals and then it spreads to the other parts of the universe. Economic and political remedies are not adequate to establish peace and harmonious relations among nations. Unequal distribution of property, hunger for political power, social discrimination and such other evils put hurdles in the path of establishment of peace and justice in the society. Buddhist approach goes beyond all these limitations and barriers of mundane and teaches the ideal happiness to the whole mankind.

Buddhism recommends good conduct for deriving happiness. Violence of any sort, therefore, was totally unacceptable to Buddhism. The cultivation of human mind is totally dependent on its pure, tranquil state which has the capacity to change the disturbed world into an abode of peace.

Buddhism has come out of the strenuous efforts of a noble and lofty mind, essentially a mind purged of all passions. It was the true wisdom leading to peace and understanding of human condition which is always afflicted by suffering. The four noble truths encourage and lead to the purity of an individual's mind, create social harmony and facilitate peaceful co-existence of nations in the world. Buddhism advocates devotion and dedication towards the welfare of mankind through peaceful co-existence and without any divine aid. The Buddhist approach looks at human existence as the highest of the various levels of existence and it is only through man's awakening that peace can be attained.

Buddha's Dhamma is the source that generates peace and "If it is taken as the guiding principle of the State, then human beings can look forward for peace in the world".³ The Dhamma is meant to extend peaceful, harmonious relations between man and man and in all the spheres of life.

If a man is virtuous, he is judged by the morality and love he exhibits. It is also accompanied by Prajna and Karuna. Prajna is the right understanding and Karuna, the love. The two horses of prajna and Karuna, the Buddha made, and running towards true progress of mankind. If prajna is one of them, it leaves no room for superstition and Karuna makes the society to live and grow properly. The true purpose of Dhamma is to reconstruct the world and to establish good relations between man and man and nation and nation.

Though Buddha in his life-time taught mostly about improvement in personal life as well as the society as a whole, still it is found that after his death, the Buddhist tradition appears to have functioned as a guideline for running the affairs of some states and resultantly we have had a number of states run in the light of Buddhist ideology. It expects the government to uphold moral and spiritual laws to run all the affairs of the states. The State has to be aware of the Nirvana; therefore, the whole state, as an organization, from monks to laymen, should walk in the light of Dhamma. The political theory of Buddhism is totally based on spiritual laws. It has no objection to either a socialistic or to a capitalistic state provided it makes provision not only for material, but also for moral and spiritual well-being of its subjects. The state, in Buddhism, has a significant role to play by self-restraining itself from evil designs. A government can make some part of the world develop and prosper and also it can contribute quite a lot to the means which are likely to maintain peace in the world.

References:

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Notes:

Karuna – compassion
Pradnya – wisdom