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Love is the missing link in War-on-Terror



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The recent declaration by the United Nations to commemorate October 2 (birthday of Mahatma Gandhi) as 'International Day of Non violence' is simply a reassertion of the need for a violence free society. The year 2007 is the centenary year of the Satyagrah Movement launched by the Apostle of Peace.

Nothing much seems to have changed on this front. The world today has become a cauldron of hate and strife. As our aspirations scale new economic heights and our possessions multiply, our tolerance and sensitivity levels get reduced.

Whether it is the cruelty of the military junta in Myanmar, the suppression of

democracy in Pakistan, the threat of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the continued hostilities between Palestine and Israel , the dangerous rise of Hindu fundamentalism in India or a world wide scare of terrorism / violation of human rights, we are in the grip of an acute fear psychosis. This constant fear and distrust of our fellow beings is nurturing hatred leading to violence.

Human beings, the so called superior creation of God, are destroying each other (and nature too) with a ruthlessness which is scary. We are bullying and killing each other in the name of religion and/or racial or social superiority. This is strange indeed as love and peace are common to all religions and not one of them is based on the premise of hate and violence. In Christianity Jesus comes to reveal God's love for humankind. The very word Islam means 'a religion of peace'. Almost all Hindu prayers end with the word Om Shanti (let there be peace). One of the main preachings of Buddhism is 'they do not follow dharma (righteousness) who resort to violence to achieve their purpose'. Yet our primordial urge to rule over the minds, bodies and thoughts of others has made religion a potent tool in our insatiable quest of power.

The power hungry politicians and fundamentalists are using religion to provoke group mentality, leading not only to loss of character but also of rational thinking. The communal violence in the Indian state of Gujarat saw the elite middle class looting shops and houses of a particular community. This was reciprocated in good measure later on in Mumbai and elsewhere. This grouping together in the name of religion (a religion about which we might be knowing very little actually) , throwing all sanity to the winds, makes a mockery of our sense and sensibility.

We stubbornly refuse to learn from past mistakes. A survivor of a concentration camp in Germany said, ' I have seen gas chambers built by engineers, children poisoned by physicians and nurses, men and women shot dead by college graduates. This has made me a little wary of our education which is producing learned monsters and skilled psychopaths.'

Yet this is exactly what is still happening. Most terrorist outfits are manned by highly qualified people. Many of our scientists and others think it is beneficial for India to have the atom bomb to protect themselves from Pakistan. While discussing this issue with my students I pointed out to them

that if we ever used this weapon against our neighbour then we would also be wiped out. They said that it should be there just to scare them, there is no need to use it. This is the general perception all around. So we are ready to spend millions to manufacture deadly weapons simply to put fear in our neighbours as if 'those who desire peace must prepare for war'.

But peace can never be a balance of terror. It can be realised only if there is a shift from the present Culture of Power to a Culture of Love.

Non violence is the need of the hour. And this can stem only from love and compassion of our fellow beings.

Hate has alienated nations and provoked war and cruelty. By forsaking the path of Ahimsa (non violence) we are punishing others as well as ourselves. Karma (action) needs always to be combined with Dharma.

I believe in the power of love. Love for others alone can make us respect human life and fight the forces of terrorism, fanaticism and communalism. Love alone can create a communion with life. We must love and live and let live. An 'eye for an eye' is making the world blind. Unless we live in peace and harmony with nature and with others ,this reckless drive of the human race towards self destruction cannot be stopped. In this endeavour we need to be more tolerant of unfamiliar neighbours, more wary of the violence of popular media and more aware that manufacture / trade of deadly weapons has no place in a world of peace. Our blue planet, (as seen from outer space) is the only home we have to care for and share in. Let us protect it with love and tolerance.

Love that caresses but not smothers. Love that gives a breathing space to all. Love that realises that my freedom ends where your begins. Love that lets no one remain unwanted, unloved and uncared for---- for that is a much greater hunger than of a person who has nothing to eat. Love that wipes out the inhuman acts of 'road rage', 'violence for fun' and 'honour killings' from our society.

There is no way to love for love is the only way to a non-violent and peaceful world.

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