

## *On Pacifism*



Pacifism is a doctrine subscribed to by all those who find war and all its attendant evils abhorrent—violence, destruction, loss of life and, in particular, the disruption of normal human existence. Throughout the ages, from the earliest times, peace has been a subject of compelling interest and study for all thinking people. Right from Aristotle to St. Augustine, from Bertrand Russell to Mahatma Gandhi, great minds have been preoccupied with this subject and have advocated adherence to the ways of peace. 1937 even saw the publication of an Encyclopaedia of Pacifism, yet a generally acceptable formula for establishing peace has yet to be arrived at.

The basic question is: peace for what? Or what is the criterion of peace? Pacifists generally maintain that peace must include social justice, or that peace is only that which gives justice to all. The Constitution of the International Labour Organization, a United Nations body dealing with labour issues, affirms,

‘Universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice.’<sup>1</sup>

This concept of peace has won general acceptance among scholars.

The question arises as to how peace in this sense has never been established throughout human history, that is, peace with social justice. History itself provides empirical proof of the fact that this definition of peace is not in accordance with the law of nature. And it is a fact that, in this world, one cannot achieve anything without adhering to natural laws.

The reason behind this failure to establish peace is that almost all the scholars have bracketed peace along with certain irrelevant factors. Their concept of real peace is one in which there is no injustice, no violation of human rights, no inequality and no violence of any kind.

Let us take the analogy of the soil giving us the foodstuffs without which we cannot continue to exist. According to the law of nature, we have first to acquire fertile land and then prepare it for the cultivation of crops. The same is true of peace. Peace is like ‘social soil’, by cultivating which we can receive the fruits of social justice. Just as it is not possible to derive food directly from the soil, similarly we cannot derive social justice directly from peace.

According to the law of nature, peace can be attained only on a unilateral basis, and not on a bilateral basis. This means that first of all we have to abandon all kinds of confrontational methods such as political activism, protest-based activism and human rights activism. This kind of unilateralism will establish normalcy, normalcy will then lead to peace and peace will open the door to all kinds of opportunities. Then, by wise planning we can achieve all those goods that we want in terms of social justice and human rights.

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This may be called a peace strategy. One historical example of this is the Hudaibiyyah Treaty entered into by the Prophet of Islam in 628 AD. This entailed the Prophet having to agree to all of the conditions demanded by his opponents. Such concessions may have seemed demeaning to his compatriots at the time, but the main feature of the treaty was that it guaranteed a lengthy period in which no war could be waged.

In essence, it amounted to a ten-year no-war pact, which gave the Prophet and his companions ample opportunities to spread the message of Islam far and wide.

This was a great success story and, by studying its implications, we can form a complete picture of the subject and develop a successful method for achieving the desired goal.

Peace can be established on a unilateral basis, without confrontation with others. But when we want to establish social justice and human rights, it becomes a bilateral issue, because we have to fight other groups which we think are responsible for injustice and the violation of human rights. If we start our journey towards this goal, it is bound to lead to confrontation with existing groups and, instead of reaching the desired goal, the concerned people will become engaged in violence. So we have to evolve a method that will work without involving confrontation with other established groups. Indeed, the achievement of social justice or human rights calls for very wise planning. It is not a journey along a highway, but through thickets of thorny bushes.

Therefore, peace for the sake of social justice is not a practicable formula. There is only one workable formula and that is peace for the sake of normalcy. Normalcy gives us the opportunity to do the wise planning necessary to achieve our goal.

Wise planning is non-controversial in nature. It is something that can be done without engaging in any kind of confrontation with others, regardless of the section of the society to which they belong. The formula in this regard is: Establish a peaceful atmosphere at any cost: it will open up all kinds of opportunities and then by availing of these opportunities through wise planning, we can achieve success.

## *Peace: the Summum Bonum*



*L*iterally meaning the greatest good, *summum bonum* is an end in itself and at the same time contains all other goods. What, in practice, is the summum bonum? People have different opinions on this. Most people hold that freedom is the greatest good, but freedom cannot be so described. For the summum bonum is something the maximum use of which does not have any negative results, while the unchecked use of freedom can result in anarchy. Anarchy is something which creates unmanageable problems and which is bound to jeopardize the success of all kinds of developments, both material and spiritual.

The truth is that the true summum bonum is peace, which is good in all situations. Whatever use we make of peace, it never has any negative effects. Peace brings normalcy. That is the best thing about it, for all developments and progress can take place only in a normal situation.

There are two kinds of peace: individual peace and social peace. Another name for individual peace is peace of mind. Peace of mind is of the utmost importance for all individuals. Peace of mind is an issue of self-management and only if one is able to manage oneself, can one enjoy peace of mind. Bringing peace to society, on the other hand, is an issue of social management.

When we look at history, we find that social management, in the ideal sense, is an elusive goal. Those reformers who have worked for ideal social peace have seen their endeavours result in violence instead of leading to social peace.

What is the reason for this negative outcome? The reason is that these social activists have linked the concept of social peace with social justice. They have developed the theory that there is no social peace without social justice. First of all they felt they had to establish social justice, and then as a result social peace would ensue.

But this theory is quite unnatural, and therefore not workable. According to the law of nature, the role of peace is to provide the basis for all kinds of activities, by availing of which we can achieve the goal of justice. The basic role of peace is to establish normalcy, that being a prerequisite for all kinds of success. So, first of all we have to establish peace at any cost.

The problem is that social peace is a bilateral issue. There are always several groups which make up a society. It is a sine qua non that it is only when all the groups accept the scheme of peace, that there can actually be peace.

Then, what is the mutually acceptable position for every section of the society? The best formula for peace is status quoism. That is, if one tries to bring about change in the status quo, this can lead to violence, but if one accepts it, then there is peace.

The practicable formula in this situation can be expressed thus: Idealism with regard to individual peace and pragmatism with regard to social peace. In this scheme of things, no other formula will work.

After the Second World War, both Germany and Japan tried to re-develop their countries which had been devastated by war. For this purpose a peaceful environment was necessary in both the countries. But there were some problems. For example, Germany had lost the eastern part of its land. This was true also of Japan, which had lost its strategic island of Okinawa. But both adopted the formula of status quoism.

Without attempting to change the existing state of affairs, they began to execute their plan of re-constructing their countries by using the resources which were still within their control. Both proved to be successful and achieved a high standard of development within a short period of time.

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This is the only way to establish peace in society. If one wants to achieve any goal, spiritual or material, one has to follow this formula: Accept the status quo and try to achieve your goal by peaceful planning. In this way you will certainly achieve success.

It is a fact that peace is the summum bonum, but if you want to establish peace you shall have to follow the law of nature—that is, that peace provides the basis for performing all activities and is not the result of these activities. The right way is to first develop the correct basis and then achieve your goals through wise planning.

Peace is like the soil. Without the soil there can be no tree. Similarly, without peace there can be no social development.

## *Peace and Justice*



There are some groups in the modern world which are engaged in violence. If you ask them why they are spreading bloodshed, they will answer: 'We are victims of injustice. Give us justice and we will give you peace.'

This condition for peace is unnatural. It is impossible to achieve justice by fighting for it. This is like putting the cart before the horse. In this world, everything follows the law of nature and the task of achieving justice is no exception.

According to the law of nature, justice cannot be given to someone as a gift. The correct approach is first of all to establish peace on a unilateral basis. Peace will open the door to all kinds of opportunities. Then, availing of these opportunities through wise planning will help you to achieve justice. There is no example in history of anyone attaining justice by fighting.

Peace is not desirable for the sake of justice; peace is desirable for the sake of establishing normalcy. When there is normalcy, every opportunity is available. It is by availing of such opportunities that one can achieve justice.

Justice cannot be achieved as a right: rather one receives justice when one proves oneself deserving of it. If you are complaining against social injustice, then blaming others for it is not the right approach. You should try rather to identify your own shortcomings. Because, according to the law of nature what you call injustice is the result of your own lack of merit. That is why to achieve justice you have to accordingly prepare yourself. Injustice can be removed through education

and hard labour, not by demand. The strategy of complaint and protest will not give you justice.

Our world is a world of competition. In this world one can achieve something only on the basis of merit, and not through complaints and demands. There have been a number of great reformers whose goal was to achieve social justice through demands. But they failed. The reason for this was that their starting point was not realistic.

There is only one starting point, and that is, to educate people and make them deserving of being given justice. Justice is for the meritorious: it does not come automatically. If you deserve justice, you will certainly find it. However, if you lack the required merit, you will surely be denied justice. Like other things, attaining justice is also based on the well-known formula of give and take. If you pay the necessary price, you will achieve justice, otherwise not.

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The other obstacle to attaining justice is that people are obsessed with the concept of ideal justice. Because ideal justice is not achievable, what people get is, according to them, less than their requirement. Therefore, even after getting it, they think they have not achieved enough. The fact is that, in this world, a person can only have working justice, and not ideal justice. This is why even when people are in the category of the haves, they think that they are in the have-nots category. Thus, the solution to the problem is to allay people's feelings of unrest, rather than their sense of injustice.

There is a record in history of violence breaking out because people feel injustice has been done to them. But the reality is that they consider that whatever they get is less than what

they demand. So, they continue to feel a sense of injustice, although they do have whatever justice it was possible for them to have.

The way to bring an end to violence is to remove people's sense of injustice instead of urging them to engage in a struggle to achieve justice. Working justice is possible in all situations, whereas ideal justice is not.

The Constitution of the International Labour Organization affirms,

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But this assumption is unrealistic. The truth is that peace can be established only by the acceptance of the status quo. The religious equivalent of status quo is *qanaa'at*, that is, contentment. Through peace, opportunities are opened up and it is by availing of these opportunities that justice can be achieved.

## *The Power of Peace*



Scholars generally define peace as the absence of war. This is a negative definition. The positive definition would be that it is a state in which there are a great many opportunities. The most important role of peace is that it opens up the door of opportunities, giving each and every individual the chance to avail of these opportunities and reach his or her goal.

Opportunities are most important in life. Success can be achieved when one recognizes these opportunities and avails of them with wise planning. It is therefore most important to establish peace in life, at any cost. Peace will open up opportunities and by availing of these opportunities one can achieve anything that one wants to achieve. Those who engage in violence demonstrate their unawareness of this law of nature.

For example, if those engaged in violence are asked the reason for their actions and whether they are not interested in peace, the response expected from them will be that they know that peace is good, but that they have been deprived of justice.

This answer is like putting the cart before the horse. The fact is that no one can give you justice as a gift. Justice is the result of one's own effort. First of all, you have to establish peace at any cost. Then, you have to commence your journey towards justice with wise planning. This is the only road to justice. No other road leads to this goal.

After the Second World War, the Allied Powers divided Germany roughly into two – East and West Germany. This strategy was designed to weaken Germany on a permanent basis. This was a clear case of injustice, but the German leaders did not react. What happened was that nature was given a chance to work. A peaceful process followed and nature silently worked to establish normalcy. The Berlin Wall eventually came down, and after forty-five years, Germany became united in 1990. Today both parts of Germany constitute a single country, just as it existed before the Second World War. West Germany never fought wars to annex East Germany. All the Germans did was to tread the path of peace.

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cannot help you to grow a tree.*

The greatest strength of peace is that it allows nature to work. If you want to achieve your goal through war, then you yourself shall have to fight. Peace on the other hand works on its own. If you stop war, peace will prevail. In this case, we only need to give nature a chance. In such a situation, nature starts to have an instant effect. The only condition is that when nature is at work, one must not interfere. Peace works only in an environment of non-interference. When there is interference, this process of nature comes to a halt. Just as after the seed is sown, the tree starts to grow on its own, this is also the greatest strength of peace. Those who understand this inherent power of peace are never confronted by failure.

Through violence you can cut down a tree, but violence cannot help you to grow a tree. This is true likewise of human life. In the human world, war only leads to destruction. Peace, however, has a positive role. No constructive work can be done if there is violence, whereas peace facilitates constructive

work on its own. Peace paves the way for nation building along healthy lines.

War starts with anger and ends in anger. War does not have any healthy or constructive aspect, neither at the beginning nor at the end. But peace, from A to Z, is a healthy state of affairs. Peace, in every way, leads to a positive result, for it is in keeping with the law of nature. That is why, when a person adopts the peaceful method, the entire world of nature comes to his support. On the other hand, if a person adopts the violent method, the entire world of nature stands out in opposition to him.