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Let no one be misled into the idea that we were a community of devotees lashing ourselves into religious frenzy every minute of the day. We were intensely human. We talked and laughed and sang and spun. Some of us played cards and smoked and told each other stories which were by no means of a religious nature. We read newspapers avidly and prophesied the fates of armies and nations. We fed birds and squirrels and, as is the wont of prisoners, petted the jail cats almost to death.

These cats had, more over, a special claim on us, as their pedigree could be traced back to the famous cat which, in 1933, delivered its kittens in Gandhiji's lap as he sat praying under the mango tree.

It was Gandhiji who awoke the spiritual instincts in all of us. Those who came into contact with him directly or indirectly experienced a compelling urge to a quest for life's spiritual foundations. And thus in the sanctuary of the Sacred Mango Tree, we wove a beautiful fabric of religious experiences.

From the Bhavan's President For Peace in a Unipolar World

R. Venkataraman

More blood has been shed by terrorism than by Wars.

Our ancient scriptures had declared millennia before Christ that the world is one family, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. They also declared that the Atman – the individual soul in all living beings—is the same and that the Atman, the soul and Brahman, the Supreme Being, is one and the same. In such a concept there is no scope for animosity and hatred.

beings and sees all beings as himself thereafter hates no one.

These thoughts apply to the entire world and not confined to India or any region religion, creed or ethnic group.



It is from this country Bhagavan Mahavira whose 2600 Birth Anniversary India is celebrating

now and the Buddha sent out messages of peace and harmony to the entire world. Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, won freedom for India without fighting a war of Independence, an example, which later led to peaceful liberation of several countries of Asia and Africa. It is, therefore, appropriate that India should be chosen as the venue of this

The Upanishad says:

*Yastu sarvani bhutani
atman eva anupasyati
Sarva bhuteshu cha atmanam
Thato na vijugupsate*

One who sees himself in all

ESTD. 1902

A Timeless Tradition A Legend

Vaidyaratnam P.S.Varier's

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mammoth World Conference on Global Cooperation for Peace and Harmony. India is thankful to the Global Cooperation Society and its eminent leader Dr. Young Seek Choue for holding this important Conference in this country.

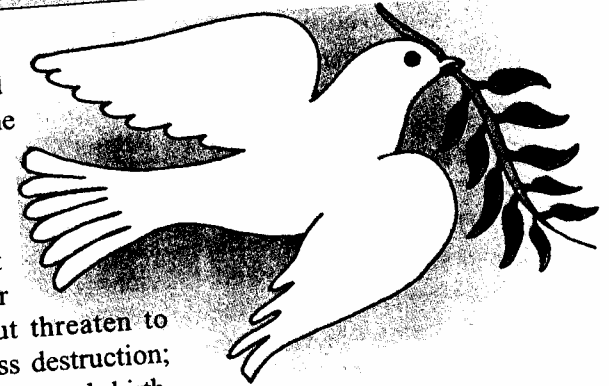
Shocked by the death and devastations, caused by the First World War (1914-18), the leaders of the various nations felt the need for formulating an International organization which could prevent the future wars and for that purpose set up the League of Nations with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The League of Nations, however, failed since the only power it had to prevent aggression, was an economic sanction against the offending country. Since National self interest was hurt by adopting sanctions, the member countries were clandestinely violating the sanctions and made them ineffective for preventing aggression.

Moved by the death, destruction and desolation, caused by the World War II, the surviving generation yearned for peace and

harmony and set up organizations like the United Nations, the UNESCO, WHO, ILO with the avowed objects of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, ensuring equal rights of men and women and, the nations great and small, and protecting the dignity and worth of man. However, these agencies have not been effective in averting local wars, eliminating jealousies and competitive arms race among many countries of the world. By the seventies of the 20th century, all those generous and pious resolves had been defiled and destroyed. Local and regional wars have been continuously waged between neighbours or between ethnic groups within the nation itself. It is estimated that after the World War II, there have been more than 2000 conflicts between and within the nations.

The twentieth century witnessed far greater multi-directional growth and development than any other century in recorded history. The Wright brothers flew the flying machine, scientists put satellites in orbit and

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revolutionized communication; the computer exceeded all human capacity in every department of activity; we split the atom for peaceful uses but threaten to misuse it for mass destruction; communism went through birth, growth, resplendency, degeneration and decay in the Soviet Union; colonies were liberated by voluntary transfer of power and multi-polar world became bi-polar and the uni-polar towards the end of the century.

The dark side of the picture is equally stunning. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), out of the estimated 6 billion population in the globe, nearly a quarter is threatened by starvation for long spell. 80% of the World's resources are

consumed by 20% of the population. Such an unequal distribution cannot be sustained except by force, political or economic. Even among the advanced countries, all kinds of violence are breaking out. Renowned cities of the World are plagued by Mafia of different varieties like the arms, drugs and sex. Rivalries among the gangs lead to reckless killing, arson and loot.

Aggressive salesmanship through the electronic and print

media kindles consumerism and an uncontrollable desire to possess more and more. This breeds violence in the shape of robberies, deceptions and murders. In developing countries, consumerism leads to uncontrollable jealousies and engenders class conflicts.

Religious fanaticism and bitterness are major causes for violence. Though all religions preach "Thou shall not kill, rob, cheat, utter falsehood" and so on; their followers cast these to the winds and indulge in violence and hatred in the name of saving their religion.

Suppression of minorities and ethnic groups within the State, leads to State - Sponsored violence. The demand for self-determination by the ethnic minorities is also backed by terrorism.

Organized violence in pursuit of an objective turns into terrorism, taking toll of the lives of innocent people who have nothing to do with the issue. Indiscriminate bombing of public places, killing important

personalities, hijacking of aircrafts and derailing trains have become almost an every day occurrence all over the globe. The sufferings of the innocent people by terrorist activities do not receive as much attention as the inhuman treatment of those accused of such crimes. Human Rights Organisations seems to be more concerned with the rights of accused than with the sorrows and sufferings of the victims of terrorism. Not a day passes without reports of violence against individuals, against religious groups, ethnic communities, or state repression of minorities, class conflicts and terrorist onslaughts. Unless the World Community wakes up to the imminent danger, life in the planet may revert to the barbarian past.

Very often the malady is apparent but the remedy is elusive. There is no ready made panacea for social ills. Against individual act of violence, there is no other remedy than self-restraint. It is only religion with its taboos and mystic

admonitions that made man control his primitive passions. The fear of God and of His Judgement on the day of reckoning inhibited man from doing wrong, or a sinful act. This is the subjective check that unconsciously kept Man on the right path. No society can exist unless the people voluntarily observe the code of conduct. It is wrong to think that man adheres to the right path for fear of Law. It is because 90% of the people observe the law voluntarily and 10% violate it that law-enforcing authorities are able to maintain Law and order. If on the other hand, 90% of the people flout the Law and a mere 10% comply with it, there will be no Society; there will be only chaos. The fundamental unity of religions lies not in their acceptance of the Ultimate Supreme Being. Buddhism does not recognize the Supreme Lord. It is in virtuous life, preached and practiced, that all religions totally agree. If every person followed diligently, faithfully and conscientiously the tenets

of his religion there will be no violence, hatred, crimes and no human misery.

Religious and ethnic conflicts are the breeding ground for terrorism. It leads to counter-insurgency, genocide and terrorist movements. I think more blood has been shed by terrorism than by Wars. True democracy is a government in consonance with Public Opinion or as John Stuart Mill put it the 'general will of the people'. Periodical elections and debates in Parliaments are only trappings of democracy. These are means to ascertain the public opinion but are not themselves the pith and substance of democracy.

Recognition of minority rights, inspiring confidence in ethnic groups by liberal attitudes towards them, may save many ugly outbursts of violence. Instead, resort to suppression of these segments engenders only State terrorism, Civil Wars and disruption of life. The events in Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia bear testimony to this.

(to be continued)