



# War and Peace: WHY IS THERE NO PEACE IN THE WORLD?

Man, in his supremacist arrogance has forgotten that he also has a heart. He forgets that if Man collectively treats the world kindly, the world of Man will treat him kindly in return. Since Man is preponderant, he can easily do this.

We live in a world of amazing contradictions. On the one hand, people are naturally afraid of war; on the other hand, those who feel powerful prepare for it with frenzy. They produce goods and services in abundance, but they distribute them in a miserly manner.

While the world becomes more and more crowded, man becomes increasingly isolated and lonely. Man lives much more close to each other than earlier centuries, but each individual finds himself more than ever before, separated from his neighbour. Mutual understanding and sincerity are lacking very badly. One man cannot trust another, however good the former or latter may be.

When the United Nations was formed after the horrors of the Second World War, the heads of Nations who gathered to sign the charter agreed that it should begin with the following preamble: 'Since it is in the minds of men that wars begin, it is in the minds of men the ramparts of peace should be erected'. As all mental states have mind as their forerunner, mind is their chief and all actions are mind-made. If one speaks or acts, with a defiled mind, suffering follows.

The self-justified belief that the only way to fight force is by applying more force has led to the arms race between great powers and emerging powers. And this competition to increase the weapons of war has brought mankind to the very brink of total self-destruction. The advice to those who preach the doctrine of antagonism and ill-will, and who set men to war and rebellion against one another is that hatred only begets more hatred.

Man has learned to spurn the advice to return good for evil as impracticable and outmoded. Actually, it is probably the only method to solve interpersonal problems. This method was introduced by great teachers from their own experience. Because we are proud and egoistic, we are reluctant to return good for evil, thinking that other nations may treat us as a cowardly people. Some in the West even think that kindness and gentleness are effeminate, not 'macho'! But what harm is there if we settle our problems and

bring peace and happiness by adopting this cultured method and by sacrificing our dangerous pride?

Tolerance must be practiced if peace is expected. Force and compulsion has only created intolerance. To establish peace and harmony among mankind, we must first



**Lasantha Pethiyagoda**

learn to practice the ways leading to the extinction of hatred, greed and delusion, the roots of all evil forces. If mankind can eradicate these evil forces, tolerance and peace will come to this restless world.

Peace is the result of man's harmony with his fellow beings and with his environment. The peace that we try to introduce by force is not a lasting peace. It is an interval in between the conflict of selfish desire and worldly conditions.

Peace cannot exist on Earth without the practice of tolerance. To be tolerant, we must not allow anger and jealousy to prevail in our mind.

Man's mind is given to so much self-deceit that he does not want to admit his own weakness. He will try to find some excuse to justify his action and to create an illusion that he is blameless. If a man really wants to be free, he must have the courage to admit his own weakness.

The history of humankind is a continuous manifestation of man's greed, hatred, pride, jealousy, selfishness and delusion. During the last several thousand years, men have fought tens of thousands of major wars. Is it a characteristic of man? What is his destiny? How can men bring destruction to one another?

Although men have discovered and invented many important things, they have also made great advances towards the destruction of their own kind. This is how many human civilizations have been completely erased from this Earth. Modern man has become so sophisticated in his art and techniques of warfare that it is now possible for

him to turn the whole planet into ashes within seconds. The world has become a storehouse of military hardware as a result of a game called 'Military Superiority'.

Man should not pander to his aggressive instincts. Man should uphold the ethical teachings of the religious teachers and display justice with morality to enable peace to prevail.

Treaties, pacts and peace formulae have been adopted and millions of words have been spoken by countless world leaders throughout the world who proclaim that they have found the way to maintain and promote peace on Earth. But for all their efforts, they have not succeeded in removing the threat of war to life on Earth.

The reason is that we have all failed to educate our young to truly understand and respect the need for selfless service and the danger of selfishness. To guarantee true peace, we must use every method available to us to educate our young to practice love, goodwill and tolerance.

It is the duty of every cultured man to find all possible ways and means to settle disputes

in a peaceful manner, without declaring war to kill his fellow men.

If we cannot secure our own lives, then how can world peace be possible? To obtain peace, we must train our minds to face facts. We must be objective and humble. We must realise that no person, or one nation is always more wrong than us. To obtain peace, we must also share the richness of the earth, not necessarily with equality but at least with equity. Whereas absolute equality is impossible, a greater degree of equity is quite easily achieved.

It is simply inconceivable that five percent of the world's population should enjoy fifty percent of its wealth, or that twenty-five percent of the world should be fairly well-fed and some overfed, while seventy-five percent of the world is always hungry. Peace will only come when nations are willing to share and share equitably, the rich to help the poor and the strong to help the weak, thus creating international goodwill. Only if and when these conditions are met, can we envision a world with no excuse for wars.

The madness of the armaments race must stop! We must try to build schools instead of battleships, hospitals instead of weapons. The amount of money and human lives that various governments waste in the battlefield should be diverted to build economies to elevate the standard of living for all.

The world cannot have peace until men and nations renounce selfish desires, give up racial arrogance, and eradicate egoistic lust for possession and power. Wealth cannot secure happiness.

Very unfortunately some people in certain countries bring religious labels, slogans and banners into their battlefields. They do not know that they are disgracing the good name of religion.

Struggle must exist, for all life is a struggle of some kind. But make certain that you do not struggle in the interest of self against truth and justice. He who struggles out of self-interest to make himself great or powerful or rich or famous, should have no reward. But he who struggles for peace and truth should have great rewards.

There is no justice in war or violence. When we declare war, we justify it, when others declare war, we say, it is unjust. Then who can justify war? Man should not follow the law of the jungle to overcome human problems that he himself has brought upon himself.

## සමුදා Cartoon by PK

