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Why is there war

There has always been violence, at some place or the other, throughout history. War and peace alternate in the world. It is quite amazing; countries that were completely devastated in the World War II have today become strong and self-reliant. Germany which was defeated then, is today supplying food and other aid to Russia which was then victorious. Same is the case with Japan. Though we believe only peace helps human beings, war has its benefits. But just as science has made life more comfortable, it has also made war more intense. In ancient days, life was not all this comfortable; nor was war so devastating.

Unless and until everyone blossoms into higher levels of consciousness, war will continue on this planet. It is inevitable. A war is merely a magnification of the violent tendency present in all individuals; you will observe that you are in war constantly, either with the people around you or within yourself. This warring tendency is present in everybody. That is why some spiritual practice is required - to burn down the seed of violence. Only when the seed of violence is burnt down can unconditional love dawn. Otherwise even your love is violent.

Most people, except for a meagre handful of sensitive individuals, derive entertainment from the sight of the boxers punching and pushing each other. Today, the majority of successful entertainments are marked by violence. As long as violence is not plucked out of people's minds, war is inevitable. And when war is inevitable, there is no point in saying “I am peace, I am quiet”. One has to be with it fully; acknowledge that both war and peace are part of this existence. In times of external pressure, the threatened come together. The smallest threat is enough. Even if the threatened have nothing in common, in moments of common risk, they unite. You can see it happening throughout history; it could be any community, any country. Christianity, for instance, expanded in the beginning because threat from outside made a few people close, committed and strong.

Thus, in war too, there is some co-operation. There is harmony, as there is in peace. We can only wonder about this paradox. In life, some things that appear beautiful on the surface may have a seed of something unpleasant deep inside. And something that is very unpleasant on the surface may possess much beauty deep within.

After Mahabharata, India lost the courage for any war. People were completely fed up and nobody wanted anything to do with war. Thus, when Buddha came, people only wanted peace. All military activities, including the protection of the country, were being ignored. The prevailing environment was of peace and renunciation. Even Buddha, a king and an emperor, renounced everything.

Because everything was so peaceful, people became soft and lethargic, and the country weak. Which is why a mere handful of Arab invaders were able to conquer and rule over this huge country, not for a year or two, but for a few hundred years. India lost all its power, glory, everything. In the name of peace, in the name of friendliness, in the name of values, we saw the might of the country perish.

So discrimination and wisdom are essential. Discrimination is to understand that when there is sword, peace is essential and when there is peace, sword is essential. Both go together.