# Remedy for Terrorism

*"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."*

Terrorism is an act of violence that inflicts pain and suffering, and is destructive to oneself and others. Terrorism induces fear and increases poverty, suffering and loss of life with no apparent gain to anyone. Instead of offering or seeking solutions, terrorism looks to destruction as an answer. In acts of terrorism, human values are lost.

Why do people turn to terrorism? The first factor is frustration and desperation to achieve a goal. When people are desperate to achieve some goal and are unable to do it, the desperation brings up violence in them. The second factor is belief in a non-verifiable concept of merit and heaven: "if I die fighting for God, then I will go to heaven, because God wants this act to happen". Who knows? No one can verify these statements. The third is a staunch belief that "my way is the only way". Fourth is ignoring human values in order to achieve a goal and fifth is the lack of respect or honour for life itself.

Terrorism is based on a concept of God favouring some and being angry with others. This notion undermines the omnipresence and omnipotence of God. How can an omnipresent God exclude some people? How can an omnipotent God be angry? Anger and frustration arise when someone is unable to do something or control something. With this limited idea of God, you become the saviour of God rather than the servant of God.

Terrorism fails to recognise that God loves variety and diversity; that many different schools of thought exist in this world. Terrorism does not respect or honour life. Terrorism arises when someone identifies himself first and foremost as a member of any particular religion, and then is ready to give up his life for that limited identity. We need to first identify ourselves as part of the Divine and then as human beings.

What is the remedy for terrorism? As long as there is limited understanding, limited wisdom, there is no way we can get rid of terrorism from this world. We have to broaden our vision and educate people in all the different religious and cultural traditions of the world. Religious and spiritual leaders, in particular, should have a broad understanding of cultures and religions. Every mullah, every priest and rabbi should know something about all other religions. If we learn to broaden our vision and deepen our roots, people will not fall into a narrow idea of the will of God. Of course, it's not just religion that makes people become terrorists; there can be social and political reasons also.

Terrorists are completely mistaken; they are mistaken about their religious teachings, they have a mistaken idea of freedom, and they are mistaken in what they want to achieve in life because they are inflicting suffering on others and also on themselves. Directing hatred and anger towards terrorists will not change or improve them. We need to bring transformation in them and for this we need patience, endurance, and compassion.

The wrong understanding of the verses from scriptures has caused upheaval in the minds of many people and is used to justify narrow-mindedness. That is why we need to emphasise education of people in all the holy scriptures of the world. When we think that only our own scripture holds truth, then we are nurturing fanaticism. Terrorists have a very narrow vision. What is needed is broader vision and deeper roots. This could bring about harmony and a non-violent attitude in all people.

> *"We need to educate people in human values like friendliness, compassion, cooperation, a sense of belonging and spirituality."*

The only way to get rid of fanaticism in the world is through education that is broad-based, multi-cultural and multi-religious, so that a child growing up does not think that only the Bible or only the Koran holds the truth. Then, we have to value all human life value, value it more than race, religion and culture. Next, educate people in human values like friendliness, compassion, cooperation, a sense of belonging and spirituality. Spirituality nourishes the human values of compassion, love, caring, sharing and acceptance.

Spirituality is also finding the way to calm the mind and go deep in your prayers, irrespective of what prayer you do or what religion you follow. It is honouring the values that are found in all religions. If a person identifies himself with a race, religion, culture or nationality, that's it! He remains in that position and he will fight for that and die for that and others will die with him. Instead, give him a broader perspective. First and foremost we are part of the Divine. Our second identity is that we are human beings. The third identity we have is that we are male or female. The fourth identity is that we belong to a particular nation. The fifth identity is that we belong to a particular religion. If the right order of identity is understood, then human values are honoured. But if I identify myself with a religion or nationality, forgetting that first I am part of the Divine and that I am a human being, then I bring misery onto myself and onto others also.

Learn how to cope with the stress of life. Stress and tension are the root cause of violence. Have a sense of belonging to this planet and to all people. Cultivate confidence in achieving a noble goal in a peaceful, non-violent manner.

And finally, see that only spiritual awakening can weed out the destructive tendency in the human mind.