

EDITORIAL

There is something mystical about peace that one naturally desires to experience it as one becomes aware of it. The idea of peace has been associated with the virtue of justice which when realized in its full measure would beget peace. Justice is not an easy concept to define. One of the earliest attempts to define it is found in Plato's *Republic*: the discussion starts with the definition put forward by Simonides, "That to give back what is owed to each is just." Thrasymachos gives the definition that justice is whatever suits the strongest. In this sense, for him, even injustice also would be virtuous. Against this view Socrates takes the position that justice is a value for its own sake. In the second Book of the *Republic* he suggests that the nature of justice is more easily to be discovered in the macrocosm, the State, than in the microcosm, the individual. A well-ordered society enables each person to devote himself to the task he is best fitted for, and this guarantees peace in the state. Applying the concept of order of classes in the society to the soul, Socrates defines justice as the due arrangement of the three elements—gold, silver and iron—in their proper stations in the soul namely that the reasoning part rules, with its auxiliary spirited part, over the desiring part. In Plato the highest truth of all, which underlies justice and all other virtues is the idea of the good, the guiding star of the soul, and end of the philosopher's study. Only the soul of the just seeks Supreme Good which generates Supreme wisdom, happiness and peace. Thus, the central philosophy of the *Republic* is built upon the concept of Justice, which ultimately brings supreme peace and happiness.

From a philosophical point of view, the *Saṃkhyan* philosophy also speaks of an equilibrium or peaceful and harmonious existence which can be attained by the proper ordering of the three qualities of *prakṛti*, namely, *sattva* (intelligence); *rajas* (activity); and *tamas* (inertia). Observing each human being enmeshed in a state of real suffering, the *Saṃkhyan* philosophy seeks an adequate cure for it in the self-consciousness (*ahamkāra*). Though it did not deal with the concept of justice, it passes from *ahamkāra* to a *puruṣa* which is the source and fullness of all reality as the supreme good in Plato's *Republic*. Peace can be achieved only with the dawn of the mysterious *Saṃkhyan* wisdom, namely in the knowledge of that "no one is bound, released; similarly, no one transmigrates. Only *Prakṛti* in its various forms

transmigrates, is bound, and is released.” There is no real suffering, no bondage, either for the root—cause (*mūlaprakṛti*) or for the *Purusha* and a such, there is no need for any release for either of them. For the attainment and experience of this settled consciousness, *yoga-sadhana* is added as a complementary discipline.

The peace-experience, the ever-sought for goal of man, is equally a vital concern of world religions as in the philosophies in the East and the West. In the three semetic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the word ‘peace’ epitomizes the whole content of believer’s religious experience. A Christian, to be a man of God, has to accept the reign of God or become a member of the Kingdom of God. In the Christian revelation the word of God made flesh in Christ is regarded as “our peace” (Eph 2:14). The mission of Christianity itself is conceived as guiding men into the way of peace (Lk 1:79). It is bestowed on man by Jesus’ healing, uplifting, forgiving word (Lk 7:50; 8:48; 24:36). Since Christ is conceived as the bond of peace, the experience of peace in Christianity has to be based on a deep faith in Christ. Christ is Plato’s ‘Supreme Good’ for a Christian. It is the Supreme Good that has to order the whole life of a philosopher or a believer and thereby bring peace and happiness into his life.

The point that is stressed here is the fact that the universal search of man for peace is catered even by the world religions in the same way as philosophies do, namely by proposing a supreme ideal such as Yahweh/Torah, Christ/Bible, Alla/Koran, *Nirvana*, *Brahmasakshat-kara*, *Sunyata* etc., as the religious goal of human endeavour. The last *mantra* of *RgVeda* beautifully expresses what all religions and religious philosophies long for. It is a prayer for harmony and peace:

United your resolve, united your hearts,
may your spirit be at one,
that you may long together dwell
in unity and concord! (X, 191, 4).

The present number of the *Journal* is dedicated to the study of man’s search for peace which is the common goal of philosophy and religions. Carl A. Raschke in his article discusses the thesis that religions no longer possess monopoly on sacrality, but that there is just as much marvel, mystery, metanoia, and meaning in science today

as there is in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Asher Finkel explains how the separation from secular activities and the appropriation of spiritual gifts constitute Sabbath experience leading to peace in the biblical tradition. Evil and suffering are universal experience of mankind. In a study on these issues, Paul W. Gooch shows that religious perspectives on suffering help believers to experience peace. Charles E. Vernoff's account of the Fundamental Structures of ancient religions in the writings of Mercea Eliade, establishes convincingly that the orderly stability found in the way of life of the primitive people itself is an essential factor in their peace-experience. The aim of Lawrence E. Frizzell's essay is to sketch the principles that the major movements among the Jewish people in the Holy Land developed for maintaining a peaceful and cordial relation with God and one's neighbour. An attempt is made in A. Pushparajan's article to describe four principal models of peace-experience prevalent in India, and to show their convergence in Gandhian model. The article by Alexander Thannippara explains how peace and its experience is the central issue in the sacred books of the Hindus.

Can we understand the peace man looks for as an inner experience of it with God or as something which is defined by the absence of struggle and strife in the world and the soul? It means perhaps more than these; it could be a quality of relationship, a relationship which respects wholeness, uninjuredness, totality or completeness, well-being, prosperity, harmony and concord as one can find it from the articles in this issue of the Journal.

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