



GURU PURNIMA

The word 'war' creates within us a sense of fear, violence, destruction and uncertainty of a massive magnitude affecting adversely the lives of an unaccountable number of human beings. Historically, one recalls the massive destruction and trauma that the world faced during the first and second world wars in the last century. Besides the two global wars, history has recorded innumerable number of wars in the past. For the common man war generally means hostility or conflict or contest carried out by the armed forces between nations, or between parties within a nation; warfare by land, sea or air. The tale of many wars can be found in the famous epics of the world. For the Indians, "Ramayana" & "Mahabharata" are the two most valuable epic references in this context. In the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries the Christians of Europe undertook military expeditions to recover their land from the Muslims.

War is a turning point of history for both sides engaged in it. The best and the worst qualities of the human beings come to fore during the war. The best qualities are chivalry, sacrifice and an indomitable spirit to fight till death for the problem and honour of the nation to which one belongs. One who performs such an act is held as a national hero or a martyr and is remembered even after death. On the other hand, utmost violence and annihilation of human beings of the enemy country is undertaken with the least humane consideration. Murder or homicide is justified as an act of patriotism when one fights in favor of one's nation. However, the same acts are condemned and taken as inhuman brutality by the suffering country.

Can war be justified? While most of the people condemn it, some thinkers find a rationale for it.

"According to this conception, political organisations like the UN would always lead to a disappointment since the national states will never recognize, by their very intrinsic nature, any legal judge above them, apart the world history itself. Hegel goes further than that. Not only wars are not inevitable among states, but also, they are even healthy for improving the state's principles. Happy moments

are empty pages in History, says Hegel in the philosophy of History, showing the rational necessity of war.”¹

However, the fact remains that war within human beings leads to war without. Anger, greed, violence and territoriality are animal instincts. These are more intelligently displayed by the human beings through the use of their intellect during war. It is a matter of thesis and antithesis; outcome of these two is a synthesis that becomes the cause of creation of new civilization with different or updated norms and standards.

All said and done, none can justify war – subvert e.g., the present day’s terrorism or obvert e.g., international wars.

The very nature of human beings is to seek peace and prosperity and not agony and destruction. All the great saints of the world, including Shirdi Sai Baba, strived for it in different ways. This is the truth to realize as also the path to follow.

Jai Shri Sai.

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¹ Reference - *War and Perpetual Peace: - Hegel, Kant and Contemporary Wars. Maria de Lourdes Alves*