The Concept Of Peace In The World Of Philosophy

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Abstract Peace is a state of tranquility where both outer peace and inner peace are ensured. It is a calm state of mind where there is no room for excitement. Thus, peace cannot be signaled only by the end of war and the absence of violent conditions. Many philosophers, political and social workers and statesmen from antiquity to present time have expressed their own views on peace. The issue of peace is very crucial and topical one, which now absorbs humanity.

IndexTerms - Humanity, Inner peace, Outer peace, Philosopher.

I. INTRODUCTION

Peace is said to mean human security and justice as these are the great contributions towards peaceful and friendly world. Indeed, it can be said that it is possible to establish outer peace by improving inner peace. Therefore, the urgent need is to build up and nurture the inner peace. Kindness, empathy and generosity are some of the most important elements which can improve one's own peace of mind and help us bring peace of mind to others. As a result, it becomes possible to eliminate violent conflicts from the human society. So, in this sense, the internal peace is considered as the key to external peace. In fact, it is only by the will of the rational human beings who are managing this world that it is possible to establish peace in the world. The only requirement is to transform one's suffering, insecurities and fears into positive energy. It is important to listen to the inner voice more distinctly and cultivate a peaceful disposition in the rational minds of the humans. On the whole with a loving attitude towards humanity and all sentient beings it is possible to build a world of peace.

The objective of the present research work is to provide an explanation of peace following different philosophical perspectives.

The method of the present research work is critical and analytical in nature. The work is a theory oriented and so I had to depend on different books, journals and articles available in different libraries of India. Moreover, I attended many seminars, conferences and workshops related to the subject.

II. DISCUSSION

The discussion of peace in the world of philosophical history has been going on since time immemorial. Plato in his text "*The Republic*", which was based on Socrates' dialogues focused on what to do for justice. He presented a peace plan based on his city-state. His interpretation of forms or ideals also includes the notion of peace. In the philosophical text "*The Symposium*" (dated 385-370 BC) Plato says that love is the means of establishing peace among people. Moreover, in his last dialogue "*Laws*" he considered peace and friendship as the highest duty. Like Plato Aristotle also gave importance to justice and considered it as virtue. In this context, it can be said that Aristotle's virtue ethics is related to peace since many pacifists associate peace with justice.

If we look at the medieval period we see that Saint Augustine of Hippo thought that what we call evil is nothing but the absence of good, which is harmoniously related with the notion that negative peace is nothing but the absence of positive peace. Similarly, in his philosophical treaties, "*The City of God*", he mentioned that losing the good has been called 'evil' and made a difference between temporal human city characterized by violent conflict and the eternal divine city characterized by peace. Another medieval philosopher named Saint Thomas Aquinas in his work "*Summa Theologica*" (Summary of Theology) made a discussion on the nature of peace and considered that peace is a work of justice as well as a work of charity or love.

In the Renaissance period which is also known as the era for the growth of humanism, the humanist writer Desiderius Erasmus, who is also known as the philosopher of peace, in his various works, recognized compromise and arbitration as alternative to war. In 1524, in his polemical work "*De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio"*, commonly called in English "*The Freedom of the Will"*, he pointed out that peace is a method or means, not just a goal. Another Renaissance humanist writer Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*'s second text, written in 1516, reflects a broader theory of peace by describing an agrarian egalitarian society where there is no private property, no genocide or city destruction; where young people are educated in pacifism and where the purpose of war is only to defend and liberate the oppressed from oppression.

Among the various modern western philosophers who emphasized the importance of peace, Thomas Hobbes, Benedict de Spinoza, John Locke, Jean- Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant and George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel are notable. According to English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), violence prevails in the state due to lack of humanitarian and civilizational influence. He mentioned in his two notable works, "*De Cive*" (On the Citizen) and "*Leviathan"*, that human nature is basically selfish. He described the war as a "fighting habit" and said it was only due to lack of law enforcement. So, for lasting peace he emphasized comprehensive external authority. The Dutch philosopher Benedict de Spinoza's philosophy of peace can be cited in the context of his support for tolerance in religious doctrine. In his text "*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus"* or "*Theologico - Political Treatise"* (written in 1675-76) published after his death in 1677, we find that Spinoza emphasizes that peace is not just an absence of war, but a virtue that arises from the power of character. Like Spinoza modern English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) also advocated religious tolerance to avoid destructive religious wars. In his work "*Two Treaties of Government"*, which was published in the year 1689, we notice that Locke argued that every person has the right not to be harmed by another person, that is, there is the right to life, and that political authorities have a role to play in protecting this right. This argument is inextricably linked with the right to peace.

According to Geneva philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), culture, social and economic development, especially private property has corrupted human morality and humanity. He consciously rejected corrupt violent society and emphasized respect for nature and friendship to return to peaceful existence. In *Les Confessions* Jean-Jacques Rousseau praised the peace that comes from being one with nature. Among modern philosophers, Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) philosophy is considered to be the most comprehensive foundation of peace. Kant's "*Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*" (1795) clearly states that we have a moral obligation for peace. In the Second Definitive Article of the work he argued that we have an immediate duty to peace, and accordingly nation-states have a duty to cooperate for peace. The philosophy of the German philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) is also considered as a source of peace. Indeed, it can be said that his philosophical conception of the nation-state as the highest evolution of human society is compatible with the evolution towards a supra-national state with the goal of world peace.

Twentieth century Indian philosopher Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a prominent figure among the many notable contemporary philosophers and advocates of peace, such as the American pragmatist philosopher William James and the Austrian-Israeli philosopher Martin Buber. According to William James the moral equivalent of war is challenge. His approach here is consistent with the concept of positive peace that embodies the cultural challenge. In the same way Martin Buber's prominent book "*Ich und Du"* (*I and Thou*), published in 1923, which dates back to the genocide of World War 1, is a philosophical reflection of the true nature of peace, that peace involves this kind of dialogues with others, which is absent in war.

History bears witness to the disruption of peace at different times. The pages of history usually tell the story of the rise and fall of empires, wars and political revolutions. The glory of the warrior described in history inspires the people to fight for power and the result is inter-state, inter- ethnic and inter-cultural violence. But it is an undeniable fact that the progress towards civilization has sent a message of non-violence and peace to human society. Emperor Ashoka, the most notable Indian king of the Maurya dynasty, was initially a shrewd and cruel ruler. But he later disagreed with the doctrine that justified the use of war for power and victory. In order to achieve political goals, he abandoned the policy of war and adopted a peaceful policy whose influence spread beyond the borders of the Indian subcontinent.

However, the law that Ashoka introduced following Buddhist principles eliminates violence, human domination over others and domination over nature. It is said that the social and political structure of the Ashoka Empire and its underlying principles are closely related to the concept of universal peace. The adoption of "Asoka Pillar", a sculpture of the "Lion Capital" erected at Sarnath by the Maurya emperor Ashoka in 250 BC, as the State Emblem of India by the Indian government on 26 January 1950 reflects the

restoration of the country's ancient ideals of peace and tolerance as well as a future of lasting peace. According to the German philosopher Karl Jaspers, the notion of humanism and the great peace was developed in particular since the axial age and was manifested in all cultures.

At a time when today's world is going through various devastating wars, it has become extremely necessary to establish peace in the world. But, peace does not mean just refraining from war. The concept of peace is closely related to the concept of law and order as was meant by colonizers. It is also linked with equality, universal justice and a compassionate attitude. The Dutch Jewish Philosopher Benedict de Spinoza said: "Peace is not simply the absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind, disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice."[1]

By coping with conflicts through non-violence 20th century Indian philosopher M.K. Gandhi added a new chapter of peace in world history. He also remarked that peace does not mean absence of war but peace with justice and dignity. According to him, we need to change ourselves the way we want to see change in the world. He said: "if the recognized leaders of mankind who have control over the engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use, with full knowledge of its implication, permanent peace can be obtained"[2]

Thus, to the question "what is peace?" it is said that peace is not the absence of conflict but rather the coping with conflict, as was said by Dutch post-impressionist painter Vincent Van Gogh: "There is peace even in the storm."[3]

Indeed, at the present time there is an urgent need for peace in the world and also protection of human security and justice from any inhuman activity for the sake of posterity in the global human society. The spiritual leader of Tibet, the 14th Dalai Lama, addressed the European Parliament in December 1993:- "Human beings need to live together and are depended on each other in many essential ways. In Human society we therefore need moral codes of behavior in order to live in peace in harmony with one another. Religion and philosophy have a function to develop and explain these moral codes."[4]

III. CONCLUSION

With the help of various philosophical perspectives, we can reach the conclusion that peace has an important place in human life as it leads people to progress. Just as there is a need for peace in personal life, there is also a need for peace in social relations. Because if peace is maintained it is possible to form an ideal and developed society. Peace is a calm state of mind where there is no room for excitement. Human reason dictates peace in human society. Peace is a natural state of mankind. The ultimate concept of peace refers to inner peace. In fact, the establishment of outer peace requires the improvement of inner peace.

IV. REFERENCES

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