

Brother Vijayananda
How to Dissolve the Causes of War
October 23, 2011

When Brother was about seven or eight years old he spent a week's vacation at the home of some relatives who didn't live too far away from his own home. He didn't really want to go but everyone told him he'd have such a good time so he agreed. It was his first time away from home and as soon as he arrived he started feeling homesick. It was, also, the first time he had that type of experience. The feelings kept increasing for a few days and by the time the week was over he said he was just moping around, watching the clock and waiting for the week to be over. He explained that it also felt like the longest week of his life.

Just recently Brother recalled the experience and it occurred to him that feelings of homesickness is a good metaphor for life on the spiritual path. We all in a sense, metaphysically speaking... spiritually speaking, we all long to go home. We are all searching for that lasting fulfillment, happiness, joy and contentment, the ideal that home represents to each one of us. Normally we try to fulfill our desires by going outward into the material world. All our goals and so forth normally revolve around things outward. The scriptures tell us that the true lasting happiness that we are all seeking is found within. "The kingdom of heaven is within you" is what Christ said.

It is that joy of contacting the joy of the blissful soul where our true home lies. Paramahansa said, "Material desires come through certain mistaken conceptions about the purpose of life. This earth is not our home. The scriptures have told us that we are children of God, made in His image, and that it is the will of the Divine that we return to our Source. What mankind does not realize is that unless and until he goes back to the Source, back to God, he will have to struggle to fulfill that bliss desire."

Meditation is the process of interiorizing our consciousness, which is usually outgoing and taking it back to its Source, back to God. As we interiorize we begin to perceive the stillness, the calmness and the peace; the outer doors of home where we came from. All things flow from that inner Source. The world is a manifestation of consciousness and consciousness is not dependent on matter, it's the other way around.

The subject this morning is a very serious one; a sobering topic, but it is also very relevant. It is "How To Dissolve the Causes of War." War is always very tragic and difficult to understand. It's difficult to understand because it doesn't ever bring any lasting peace. The devastation, destruction and the toll it takes in terms of human lives and property is horrendous.

Unfortunately, it seems that the whole history of the human race is almost one of warfare. In the late '70's a group of historians from different countries, both East and West, came together to study the history of war. They came up with some really sobering information. Brother shared some of the more prominent statistics that they came up with.

In the last 3,000 years the world has known only about 292 years of peace. During this time there have been over 14,500 wars, large and small, and over 3.5 billion people have died. That's over half the population on the planet right now and over a 100 million people have perished since the

beginning of the 19th century. They said the value and destruction would pay for a belt of gold around the world 97 miles wide and 33 feet thick by their day's standards. But you get the idea. The fruit, the legacy of war, is not a very flattering one for our civilization. War only breeds war. To brandish a sword against our enemy only excites him to take whatever weapon he can to defend himself. And on and on it goes down through the millennium where it has gone right up unto our present time and yet despite all the devastation and destruction, the ideal, the hope, of achieving world peace, a civilization united, is a dream that still persists in all the chaos. We all strive for peace, unity and harmony because intuitively we know that is how things should be. That at some basic level we know we are united despite all our outer differences and diversity. Despite all our efforts throughout the millennium we just haven't been able to achieve it at least until the present time.

One of the astronauts after returning from an orbital flight echoed the same thoughts. He had this to say: "It's quite something to look down on this blue planet, seeing that little film of air that surrounds it. You fly over the Mediterranean, over the Middle East and it's so beautiful. You wonder why in the world humans can't resolve all the problems they've created and left to fester over the centuries."

Down through the centuries many, many people have worked to foster the spirit of peace and unity. Wherever we find different minds coming together in a true spirit of fellowship, there we do find great harmony, understanding, peace and cooperation. With so many troubles plaguing our planet at this time, we all understand that never before perhaps, was the need for world peace so great as it right now. Yet we look at the world with so many different countries, languages, customs, different values, so many different ideologies, so many different ways of just looking at the world and experiencing it, we wonder how can we bridge this diversity, how can we have any peace at all?

One group, one country wants one thing; one group, one country wants another thing and a third wants something else still and we all vie with each other to achieve the goals. Even religion down through the centuries has been the cause of division and war. Paramahansa Yogananda said: "I believe there will always be wars until perchance we all become so spiritual that by the evolution of our individual natures we will make war unnecessary. No matter what their differences, if great minds such as Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed sat together they would never use the engines of science to destroy one another. Where there is understanding, peace reigns. Why must people feel it necessary to fight? The power of guns evokes no wisdom nor has it ever accomplished lasting peace."

Then he goes on to say: "War is like a poison in our system. Whenever we have toxins in our bodies that impurity has to get out somehow. We get sick; we get a disease or illness. Likewise when there is too much selfishness in the international system that poison comes out in the world as the disease of war. And then many people die and then there's a lull and then war comes back again and it will continue to come back again until people become perfect citizens of the globe. Until there is no more ignorance, until we all perceive our underlying unity. God has given us all intelligence and he's placed us all in an environment where we have to use our intelligence. The universe is like a shell and we are like little baby chicks in the shell. We have to ask ourselves though what is beyond the shell of matter? What is beyond the three dimensions? We have to use

our intelligence to analyze the mysteries of life and explore the secrets of life that God has hidden behind the veil of nature.”

This is a more constructive use of our intelligence rather than trying to develop or invent new means of destructions, new instruments of war. We have to use our intelligence to create peace, to have peace with one another.

A reporter once asked the great scientist, Albert Einstein, what he thought might be any new weapons that might be used if there was a third world war. And he thought for a few moments and then he said, "I don't know for sure what weapons will be invented for a third world war but I can tell you with absolute 100% certainty what would be used as weapons in a fourth world war." The reporter asked, "What are they." And he very seriously and very soberly said, "Spears and stones."

President Kennedy said: “Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind.” We all know this and we want to avoid being blown back to the Stone Age. We have to now have international peace, harmony and goodwill the world over. With technology today the world has become too small a place for any one nation, any one country, to consider its own welfare to the exclusion of the others. We have to have this global kind of consciousness. In one sense you could say we are all aliens in this world. No territory belongs permanently to any one country. Time eventually erases all nations. Their boundaries don't last because they represent divisions that were created by force. They are not natural. Patriotism, love of ones county, is a good thing but if it becomes narrowly focused only on the country's own interest to the exclusion of others only creates the condition of jealousy and ill-will that eventually blossoms into wars and other national and international disasters.

What's the value of patriotism that destroys human life, killing many innocent men, women and children? War was supposed to be the demonstration of a nation's love of country but that isn't the way to show it. The best way to show it is to behave as children of God and to give divine understanding to all people. Again, coming back to this concept that we are one spiritual family, one global family.

Perhaps the day will come when with greater understanding we will have no boundaries anymore. We shall call earth our county and we shall be a process of justice and international assembly distributes the goods of the world according to the needs of the people.

But obviously, peace and equality cannot be established by force. We know this! It can't be established by legislation; it has to come from the heart. The greatest blessing the world would have is to develop this understanding on an international level to realize this truth. Force does not bring people together; it only separates.

Peace is not something that you and I and a few great souls can create at once by command. Even a million Christ's or Krishna's could not do it. All humanity has to become Christ-like to bring peace on earth. When each one of us shapes his life according to the wisdom of the example of a Christ, a Krishna or a Buddha, we can have peace here but not before. We must start now with ourselves. We should try to be like the Divine Ones who have come on earth,

again and again, to show us the way by loving each other and keeping our understanding clear as they exemplified. Then peace can come.

This is what it comes down to all the time is that it always begins with each one of us as a personal responsibility. There can be no peaceful nations unless each individual living in those nations has peace within themselves. It is always manifested outwardly. We have to realize that it begins with us.

About 800 years ago in Italy, a war broke out between Bologna and Medina. What happened was one of the soldiers from Bologna defected over to Medina taking with him an old wooden broken bucket that was used as a water trough for horses. The Bologna officials waived their rights to the return of the soldier but they insisted on the return of the bucket. The proud people in Medina refused and so they went to war over a worthless bucket. It was very devastating war; it was very bloody and many people were killed. It lasted for 22 years. Many atrocities were committed all for the bucket, which is still on display in one of the tower in Medina. It was never returned.

The history books tell us that the cause of the war was the bucket but they don't deeper. Obviously, the bucket didn't cause the war that lasted 22 years. The deeper underlying spiritual cause of the war was the failure of the people to live their lives by spiritual principles. Either by wrong thoughts or by wrong actions, whether it be greed, selfishness, arrogance, desire for power or domination. These are the causes of war. They put people and nations out of harmony with the Divine Order - with the Cosmic Order. Inevitably the result is war, economic depressions, national and international disasters.

So there is this Divine art of living. It is found in the moral and ethical code of all religions. When we live our lives in attunement with Divine Laws, then we find the peace, prosperity and the things we needed to live a good life come to us by divine fiat. When people concentrate on political and business selfishness or national and personal accumulation of power and luxuries at the expense of others, the Divine Law of happiness and prosperity is broken creating disorder and want in the family, the nation and the world. Nations living in tune with God and His ideals of brotherhood and peace can endure for centuries without war or famine with perpetual prosperity and spiritual happiness.

Enduring national prosperity depends not only on natural resources and the initiative of the nations citizens but primarily upon the moral conduct, harmony and spiritual living of the people. No matter how successful a nation may be if it becomes debauched, selfish and inharmonious it will have civil wars, treachery and foreign aggression to disrupt it's complacency and good fortune.

These are pretty poignant and timely comments when we look at the world today. There are Divine Laws by which the universe operates and when we put ourselves in tune with them, then we find prosperity, peace and the things that we need to live automatically come to us. All we give out individually, collectively as a nation inevitably returns to us. This is the law of cause and effect - the law of karma. When we look at it from a spiritual perspective if a nation is to prosperity, to endure and to have peace, then it has to fairly include the well-being of other nations in its own happiness and well-being. We cannot have this artificial distinction among

people. If we look back at history how many civilization have come and gone because they either didn't know about or disregarded this principle.

One of the most important aims and ideals that Paramahansa Yogananda created for Self-Realization Fellowship is "to spread a spirit of brotherhood among all peoples by teaching the eternal basis of their unity: kinship with God." Self-realization means to know the self as the soul made in the image of God. Fellowship stands for fellowship with God first and then through Him fellowship with all mankind. Just as soon as we learn to love God in meditation then we're able to feel that love for all mankind. We're able to feel when we have that realization that there is no distinction between race, class or creed. And ultimately it is on this principle of kinship with God that the causes of war will finally be destroyed and world peace be established. Nothing else will last or endure because it is more an effect from another cause - diplomacy, summits, treaties, different exchange of culture and so forth. These things are important and necessary but they don't last because things, people, circumstances and times change.

From the year 1500 BC to the present more than 8,000 peace treaties have been concluded and were all meant to remain in force forever but the average time they remained in existence was 2 years. It is not a very good track record for us but there is hope. When we come to this understanding, this broad realization, that we are united spiritually as children of God. As one undivided world, one spiritual family, then peace can be established.

If every citizen in the world is taught to commune with God, not merely to know Him intellectually, then peace can reign, not before. By persistence in meditation you realize God through communion with Him your heart is prepared to embrace all humanity.

What is needed at this time in history, perhaps more than at any other time, is that as many people as possible strive to realize the spiritual source of their nature, that underlying unity that is behind all the outer diversity. Also, by striving our best to live by spiritual principles. In his Autobiography Paramahansa Yogananda said that hundreds of thousands of Kriya yogis are needed to help bring that era of peace and prosperity that awaits the world once we make the effort collectively to reestablish our oneness with God. Of course, he didn't mean just one path but all people who are following a spiritual path and doing their best to bring in peace in the world.

For us as individuals, again, it comes down to the personal responsibility. Taking a little time to meditate, to pray each morning, each night, to do our best to change for the better and as we go about our daily lives to model these truths, these principles, that we're talking about. It is something we can all do. God doesn't ask us to be heroes, to do great things, but we can all do our part to bring peace in the world just by our own behavior. We have to think that a better world begins with a better me.

As we look at world events today it seems day by day, week by week, society seems to be breaking down in so many ways. Never before it is so important that we collectively and united focus our attention on the underlying unity of bringing this consciousness of unity to the world.

Brother closed with the following quote:

"If you contact God within yourself you will know that He is in everyone and that He has become the children of all races. Then you cannot be an enemy to anyone. If the whole world could love with that universal love there would be no need for men to arm themselves against one another. By our own Christ-like example we must bring unity among all religions, to all nations, all races."