

ONLY THE BUDDHA CAN SAVE US

By Sri Jawaharlal Nehru
(Late Prime Minister of India)

It is essentially through the message of the Buddha that the individual, national and international problems of today can be looked at from the right perspective.

The Buddha Jayanti celebrations have led people to look deeper to the problems – individual, national and international – and make them realise that they have to search for some kind of union between their day-to-day political, scientific, technological and other activities and a certain measure of spirituality.

The progress of science has done much good to humanity, but there is something lacking in it and hence scientific progress has sometimes led to disaster. Some kind of spiritual element which will restrain the powers let loose by the discoveries of science is lacking.

Desire for Peace

In the world of today, we find the peculiar spectacle that while the vast majority of mankind, possibly all of them, desire peace, for whatever reasons it may be, nevertheless, the forces of evil and the forces of violence are spreading, bringing in their train hatred and the desire to destroy and crush others, which again spread hatred.

Surely, this is a vicious circle. How are we to get out of it? We have failed to get out of this situation for many years and many generations.

There must be some way or other than the normal politicians' way to deal with such a problem. I feel that unless we tackle this problem, in some other way, there can be no solution to it and no assurance of peace.

We all talk glibly of peace, goodwill and cooperation, but yet at the same time, we often act in a different way, belying our own profession. We live two different lives – one concerning practical affairs and the other which we reserve for our secluded moments.

Vital Importance

A stage has now come when it has become of vital importance that some element which is beyond the ken of the practical politician should be found for the solution of the world's problems.

The forces of evil and the forces of violence have become so tremendous that unless they are held in check, they might lead to disaster for the world.

The way of violence is certainly not a good way, but only in principle, but also because of the evidence of history and that of recent events. The way of violence is also not the practical way.

I know that the Buddhist symposium has dealt with only scholarly subjects and not with the vital problems of the day. Nevertheless, the deliberations will have a considerable effect on the peoples' minds.

The great event of the celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's Parinirvana has directed the attention of the people to the Buddha's essential message. It is not quite true to say that Buddhism has disappeared from India, the land of its birth.

Buddha's Message

There is no doubt that the message and the personality of the Buddha has impressed themselves on the Indian people and entered the very texture of their thinking and life. Nothing can take them away.

The Buddha's teachings and thoughts are a product of an essentially Indian background. The desire in India to know and understand the message of Buddhism is there, because the people's mind has been prepared not only by past happenings but by India's great leader, Mahatma Gandhi, "Who conditioned us in the last generation and whose voice and message sounded often to us as a repetition of the Buddha's message".

The dark clouds hover over the world and have created an atmosphere of war which threatens to go out of hand. It can be controlled if man understood the message taught by Gautama Buddha, thousands of years ago.

No New Path

No new path can be found to save mankind through fresh conflicts and wars but by pursuing the old path shown to the world by the greatest path-finder it had known – Gautama Buddha.

I cannot tell you the path by which this sentiment of enmity, war and violence can leave the minds of people except that, until it goes, strife and conflict will remain and the world cannot go very far.

In these grave times, I see a ray of hope in the path shown by Gautama Buddha, one of the greatest revolutionaries of the world. My mind gets a little relief and confidence not from what is happening in the world but from the message of the Buddha. I am convinced that the world cannot find a new path for itself by war and violence, but by following the path shown by the greatest path-finder of the world – Gautama Buddha.

On this day specially, we again, remember Gautama Buddha. If we remember the Buddha more often, and with our hearts and minds open go towards Him, then it will be good for all of us. The more we do so, the bigger we will become.

The people have to see what qualities there are in one son of India who shook the world for thousands of years and created a revolution in the minds of men in our country and outside also.