

Violence

by quin *Saturday, Feb 2 2008, 12:11pm*

international / personal development / article

Violence has always been a problematic issue for humankind. The world is characterised by violence from storms/weather to the behaviour of microbes and large carnivores. However, the wanton violence of mankind is in a category all by itself. It is little wonder violence poses a major dilemma for all human societies.

Philosophers have taken extreme views on the subject, from 'might is right,' to gently sweeping ants from one's path in order to avoid stepping on them! Numerous combinations and permutations of these two extreme positions exist today; however, they only serve to highlight how violence and non-violence pose major dilemmas for human society and every responsible human being. Please note that editing a text is also a violent act; a broad perspective is required to understand this issue!

For aspirants of Truth the most violent act of all is Self-Realisation or realising Truth, as it totally subverts the prevailing worldview and ALL ITS VALUES! Ramana of South India is reputed to have said the perfect 'State' is the 'fourth,' turiya avastha, a reference to Realisation - I shall return to other controversial statements Ramana made regarding Adolf Hitler but first a brief reference to some texts that have fundamentally changed society and human behaviour.

The Hindu Bhagavad Gita relates the story of Lord Krisna and his faithful servant Arjuna; the scenario or context is a battlefield, perfect! Lord Krisna seems to encourage if not order the vacillating, doubt-filled, Arjuna to engage in battle though the ranks of the opposition force are filled with his relatives and loved ones. Krisna's response to Arjuna's dilemma is plain, to paraphrase for western readers; Krisna admonishes Arjuna for his ignorance and veiled arrogance and orders him to engage in battle and kill with absolute dedication (duty) and CLARITY! However, Krisna qualifies the order to kill with the Truth that [all] life and death emanate and resolve in HIM -- the personification of the creative/destructive principle of the universe!

Arjuna's arrogant false perception that it is he who kills is eliminated by Krisna who distinguishes/discriminates between the ultimate REALITY and the apparent 'reality' of the world. Arjuna is vindicated and absolved of the consequences of his actions PROVIDING he is able to ACT WITH CLARITY and DETACHMENT ie. performing acts free of any notion of GAIN or LOSS arising from personal desire or attachment! A very difficult balancing act for modern man to achieve but then, the prize of existence is only attained by the few.

It should be noted the above text also carries an esoteric interpretation, the 'battle' also refers to personal challenges and development. Nevertheless, the Bhagavad Gita is one of the most pragmatic of all theological texts and the exoteric interpretation should not be disregarded - you see, WE ARE THE WORLD!

The Old Testament relates a story of Jehovah requesting Abraham, the patriarch of three major religions, to sacrifice (kill) his own son - there are too many interpretations to this story to detail in this short paper; nevertheless, the story revolves around our values in relation to an extremely violent act!

Prior to dealing with Ramana's controversial statement in relation to Hitler and WWII, a brief reference to two famous figures, Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ, may assist in our understanding of the concept of violence.

We stated earlier that Realisation/Truth is the most subversive act that a human being can engage. After 20 years 'sitting under a tree,' the Buddha, immediately after achieving Enlightenment, attacked the corrupt ruling Brahmin elite and the caste system that sustained their power - this was an undisguised act of social SUBVERSION or violence! Jesus Christ makes his attitude to the ruling priests of his time clear in Matthew 23; he railed against the corrupt priest class and wealthy merchants!

Regardless of whether a violent act involves blood-letting/killing or is a bloodless subversion of prevailing values and institutions - both acts involve DESTRUCTION; the question is when is destruction warranted or justified, the end may provide an answer!

Now to Ramana, I must confess when I first encountered this information relating to a revered Indian Saint, it blew my mind, as you may appreciate!

During the Second World War an English student of Ramana was reading newspaper accounts of the atrocities and mass murders the Nazis were committing as their murderous campaign expanded throughout Europe and Russia. The Englishman could not hide his shock and disgust, which prompted Ramana to inquire what distressed the Englishman so? The English student, who held Ramana in the highest regard, answered that a European leader by the name of Hitler was responsible for killing millions of human beings in Europe! Ramana in a detached manner, replied, "how do you know Hitler is not a Jnani (realised being)?" Whoa! However, Ramana was acutely aware that it's not the action that is important, rather it is the manner in which it is performed/committed - we are immediately reminded of Krishna's discourse in the Bhagavad Gita!

Perhaps the above only serves to further confuse the issue for western students. It may be fact that only Realised beings are able to fully understand the real implications of what we consider to be violent acts. Nonetheless, I can assure the reader that the Saints and philosophers of India are not psychopaths!

Revered leaders, religious or otherwise, have all displayed extreme violence on occasion. Rest comfortably in the knowledge that violence is unavoidable for all living beings. However, wanton violence for the sake of personal gratification or gain is anathema.

The wise person when confronting a 'foaming mad dog' does not resort to discussion or deliberation, without hesitation he dispatches the animal with a single shot to the brain. The community at large is thereby saved from the ravages of a demented beast.

Perhaps the most extreme violent acts are passive in nature - food for thought!

Are YOU aware of any 'foaming mad dogs' affecting your life?

Peace.

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-907.html>