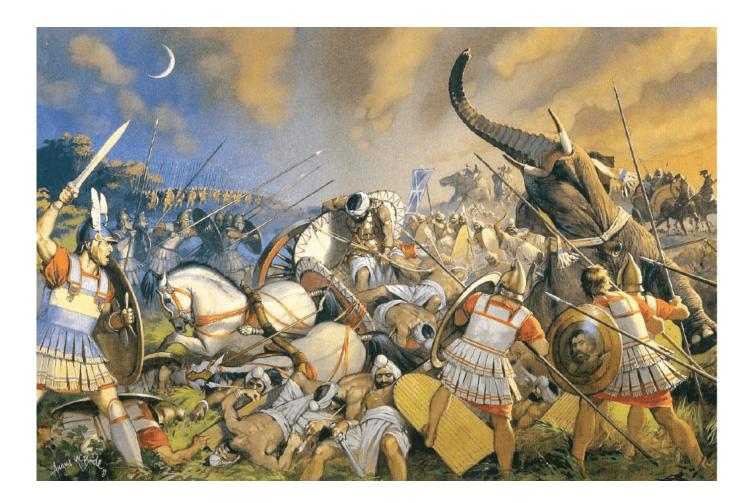# Victory is War and Peace?

Posted on

War has not been strange to this world since the beginning of human history, from ancient times up to now. War is a part of human nature as humans engage in many battles. Among them, the most disastrous is the arms war. Therefore, we can divide the war into two – physical and mental wars. For example, if one gets anxious, sometimes it is a war for the relevant person.

According to world history, there were small armed struggle groups and vast world wars, like World War I and World War II. Wikipedia explains it: "There have been two World Wars so far, World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1939– 1945). Wars, such as the Seven Years' War, were fought in many places worldwide, but they were wars among European

countries." The first biggest war in the world was World War I, or the First World War, abbreviated as WW1, which was a major global conflict (1914–1918). In this fight, two coalitions have fought throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Pacific, and parts of Asia. And in the Second World War, it is said that most of the world was involved. World history says, "Most of the world's countries, including all of the great powers, fought as part of two military alliances: The Allies and the Axis Powers." Meanwhile, critics of the war review its disaster. When they were involved in wars, they had to spend a lot of money, involve many people, and kill many people. They estimate that about 50 to 85 million people have died, most innocent. Many people were also afraid of World War III during the Cold War. But after that, people were less fearful that World War III would begin. Similarly, Albert Einstein is supposed to have said, "I don't know what weapons countries might use to fight World War III, but wars after that will be fought with sticks and stones." That is because WWIII would probably be the biggest disaster in the world; it might destroy the whole civilization on the planet.

> "If a man was to conquer in battle a thousand men, and another conquers himself, the one who conquers himself is indeed the greatest of conquerors." In psychology, conquering oneself is explained as self-actualization.

But the ancient wars were very different from the later ones. At that time (in B.C.E.), there were no world wars but battles with a few countries; we can call them invasions. The considerable invader was King Alexander II, or Alexander the Great. He was a rare character in the wars, invaded many countries, and was a pride youngster. His first turning point in life was at the age of sixteen. It depicts, "As an instance of his pride, it is recorded that when Alexander was asked by his friends if he would compete in the Olympic Games, he replied that he would if he had kings to run with him. He won his spurs in battle when he was a boy of 16" (One Hundred Great Lives, The Home Library Club, P. 508). Also, after his father, Philip, had been assassinated, he became king of Macedonia before he was 20. According to history, "During his 13-year reign as the king of Macedonia, Alexander created one of the largest empire of the ancient world, stretching from Greece to northwestern India." In his short reign of 13 years, he had won a large area of the world but not his own life. The book reviews "Alexander the Great, who passed away in the palace at Babylon after a few days' illness following a great banquet (323 B.C.). Rumours spread that he had been poisoned, but it is more probable that Alexander had burned himself out."

Besides that, there was another Great king in India, Ashoka the Great (268–232). We talked about him in earlier months in detail. His Empire consisted of five great rivers named the

Yamunā, the Ganges, the Sarabhu, the Achirawathi, and the Mahi, and 16 states named Anga, Magadha, Kāsi, Kōsala, Vajji, Malla, etc. Though he was an Emperor, he was best known for his renunciation of war, and he developed his concept of avihinsā (non-violence). His last battle was Kālinga, and he saw many people dying in the war on both sides; he was frustrated with it and became non-violent, hence named Dharmāshoka. If you look at his character a little closer, it differs significantly from Dharmāshōka. Before conquering those 16 states, he was named Chandhāshoka (cruel Ashōka) though his real name was Ashōka. After war he became Dharmāshōka. However, he could live a long time, spreading the concept of non-violence in many countries.
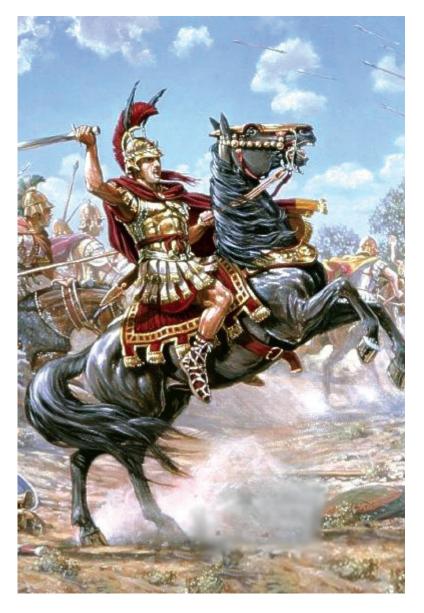
Although both are worse, ancient wars between a few kings were less disastrous than today's wars. Some great thinkers say that there are many atom bombs in some countries, and if they activated them, all people on the planet would disappear. So, who can win a war? No one can win a war. Because, after a battle, you can see so many casualties, maimed and disabled, and most of the property and infrastructure is destroyed. In addition, most people are left with mental disorders, and relatives and family members get displaced, and they finally become psychopaths. After the war, they must replace everything and renovate houses, schools, hospitals, bridges, and roads. When the economy is down, they must spend much money to restore it. That is more money than they paid for the war. Though they restored the economy, recovering from mental problems is not easy. Sometimes they may be like Holocaust survivors. Is the war finished? No; one country blames another country, one nation blames another nation, one religion condemns another religion, and most of the time, they are divided forever as enemies. They are likely to be divided as provinces, too. There is no peace in the world, no peace in the countries, no peace between borders, and no peace in the mind.

Then what is the answer? The answer is in the Dhammapada, which is explained by S. Radhakrishnan as;

"yō sahassam˙ sahassena san˙gāme mānuse jine

ekam˙ ca jeyya attānam˙ save san˙ gāmajuttamo"

"If a man was to conquer in battle a thousand men, and another conquers himself, the one who conquers himself is indeed the greatest of conquerors." In psychology, conquering oneself is explained as self-actualization. Finally, he has given a significant quotation as well. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty who is quick to anger, and he that rules his spirit is better than one who conquers a city."

Alexander the Great.

Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Siriwardhanaramaya Temple, Kollupitiya.