

## Multiple Viewpoints on Terrorism (*Aatankvaad me anekantvaad*)

By Pandit Fulchand Shastri

Do not show hatred or anger for the terrorists who came by the sea route on 26/11/2008. In fact, show compassion at them since they are drowning in the sea of unending cycles of birth and death.

The aim of these terrorists is not to spread terror in the country, but to unfold fear in the hearts of the people of the country.

It is possible that you will feel angry with me for this article, but the principle aim of “Multiple Viewpoints of Terrorism” is not to create hatred in any Indian heart. The religious point of view is different from the worldly point of view and this may cause it to look contrary or complicated. The aim of this article is for everyone to attain ultimate happiness. Everyone wishes well for people who are good to them, but the wise persons will also wish well for people who are bad to them. This is known as *anekantvada* or doctrine of multiple viewpoints.

You cannot extinguish fire with fire; you need water to do so. You cannot answer a bullet with a bullet, nor with curses.

Many people feel that in a time like this we do not need a leader like *Gandhiji*, but we need someone like *Subhashchandra Bose* or *Shaheed Bhagat Singh* to make the country contented and prosperous. My inner self feels that today our country requires a leader like *Lord Mahavira*.

*Pujya Kanjishwami* used to say that those who have not known or understood their own Soul (like the terrorists) are like the “living” dead. Even though they are living, they are “dead”. We have to think deeply and seriously about what we will gain by killing them, because we would be killing someone who is already dead. Forget about killing them, why should we even have the desire to kill them? By our such desires and thoughts, we are increasing our own cycles of birth and death.

The terrorist attacks on Mumbai have caused a lot of pain in the immediate days following the attack, but this will reduce in the days to come. The epic Mahabharata war of 18 days has been forgotten. Similarly, this devastation of 2 days will also be forgotten in the future. Though it is true that in these 60 hours, people have had inauspicious karmic bondage (*paap*) added to their Souls. Due to their depressive and inauspicious thoughts, it may take 18 or more lives of suffering in future to get rid off these *karma*. It is therefore our duty to not allow this terrorism in our country to reach our Souls. **It is our duty to protect our Soul together with our country.**

Our biggest mistake is that we do not accept the reality but imagine many unusual thoughts. We imagine that if the government was honest and reliable this calamity would not have happened. Why don't you think that the catastrophe has already occurred and we cannot change that? Since the past, the

ignorant person tries to cover the facts with his imagination. But the knowledgeable and wise person covers his imagination with the truth.

It is true that our compassion cannot change the destiny of the terrorists. Their destiny is determined by their *past karma*. But our good wishes for them will definitely result in auspicious *karma* for us in the future.

Why do you believe that the terrorists killed innocent people? Think for a moment with a different viewpoint – did the people who were killed not have their own life span determining *karma (ayu karma)*? The truth is that no one can die until his life span is over and no one can live even for a moment after his life span is over. The terrorists were only the external cause (*nimitta*) of their death, so why should we blame and hate them?

During discussions in groups, we criticize terrorism and the government after each such episode. We should think for a while that none of the persons in this group will help me in the future when I have to suffer the consequences of my *karma*. That is why we should not support such criticism.

Terrorists do not spread violence to hurt people. They do it to go to Heaven (*jannat*). They have been brain washed and ingrained with the teaching that if you die whilst fighting, you will definitely go to Heaven. No religion teaches that Heaven or happiness can be attained by violence. The sad part is that some treacherous people use religion for their own selfish gains. They drown in this ocean of sorrow and take the others with them by showing them the wrong path. It is also worth showing compassion to such people. People with infinite cycles of birth and death will get such treacherous thoughts and their destiny is the also the same. It is not right to hate them also.

The terrorists have done all this to go to Heaven (*jannat*) and to get happiness there. However, they have followed the wrong path to get happiness.

What are we doing right now? We also want to get happiness by gaining material objects. This is also the wrong path to gain happiness. Think for a moment with a true heart that is there some terrorism hiding in our hearts also?

A kind person was trying to save a scorpion drowning in the river. The scorpion bit the kind person. Another person asked this kind man, why are you trying to save this scorpion that is biting you? The kind man replied, “If the scorpion does not leave his nature of biting, why should I leave my nature of saving”?

We should also not renounce our inherent nature of saving any life in any form.

If we think from multiple viewpoints and with respect for differing and varying opinions (*anekantvaad*), we can destroy the creation of bad thoughts related to terrorism (*aatankvaad*) from our minds.

*Pandit Fulchand Shastri* was asked what should be done about the terrorists?

He answered: “We should wish that the terrorists also follow the right path of liberation and attain liberation (*moksha*) and ultimate happiness”.

## An Interview

Question: Should we have good thoughts for the sinful terrorists' benefit?

Answer: Why not? Don't you wish that all Souls who are caught in the cycle of birth and death in this universe should attain liberation (*moksha*) and supreme happiness? When we wish for all Souls to attain liberation, aren't the terrorists included amongst them?

Q: Can they also attain liberation from the cycles of birth and death?

A: If the terrorists cannot attain *moksha*, why would we wish for their liberation? Any Soul has the right to attain *moksha*.

Q: Can the terrorists transform into spiritual persons in an instant?

A: Till now, all Souls who have attained self-realization and renunciation have done so in a split moment. It does not need infinite time to eliminate the ignorance of the infinite past. It does not take a whole day to put out the darkness of the night.

Q: Can a person who has killed innocent people change in a moment?

A: In the past, many kings and emperors who had killed millions of people and had 96000 queens. They still relinquished their empires in a moment and became monks. So why can't the terrorists? Of course they can.

Q: The terrorists slaughtered more than 200 innocent people and hurt the sentiments of the whole nation. What do you feel about the collective death of so many people?

A: If you think deeply about it, the 200 people were not killed at the same time, but over a period of time. When we walk over an anthill and we kill 200 ants together, that is called collective death. Our biggest weakness is that we think that killing a human being is "killing", whereas killing other living beings is not "killing".

Our thinking is also very narrow. Why do we forget that our commandos also killed 9 terrorists in the same time period? Did you feel that some Souls died? Why didn't you show the same sympathy for the 9 terrorists also? The reason was that you thought they were guilty. If you considered them also as Souls, you would have had the same sympathy for the 9 terrorists as you had for the 200 people killed.

We should never forget that we are also going to die one day. If we do not want to carry the burden of inauspicious bondage or *karma* (*paap*) to the next birth, we have to change our thinking and feelings. I challenge if our thoughts to change the world disappear, the cycle of birth and death will also end in the near future.

Q: Can we do any good for our Soul in this fifth era (*kalyug*), which is very different from the previous eras?

A: Even though the era is different, the Soul's nature is constant. The power of the Soul in the fourth era (*satyug*) is still present now. Knowledgeable spiritual preachers give advice in this era, because you can purify your Soul even now.

Q: What if the terrorists harm us?

A: The knowledgeable preachers say that the objects (e.g. body and objects related to the body) that you think belong to you are in reality not yours at all. There is no force on this earth, including terrorists, who can destroy your Soul. So, become calm and fearless.

The eternal truth is that whatever happened is due to our own *karma* (bondage resulting from our actions) and the destiny of that particular time and not due to the terrorists.

Q: How much injustice should we suffer? Till what time will we go on wishing well for them? Till they get liberation from the cycle of birth and death?

A: By our good feeling towards them, we are actually benefiting our own Soul. Till we don't attain liberation, we have to keep wishing for their liberation. We should not have bad feelings for anyone even momentarily.

Q: Are the terrorists your relatives? Why are you taking their side?

A: See, I am not taking their side. I am only telling you that the terrorists are also Souls similar to us. I want you to think about what you would have done if they were your relatives? Suppose you had been born in the same family and were their brother or sister? I am confident that you would not have hated them, but would have forgiven them and shown them the correct path.

Q: Are you a coward and are therefore talking of forgiveness for the terrorists?

A: Only the brave know how to forgive; it is the most refined and generous pitch of virtue human nature can arrive at. The cause of unhappiness is enmity and not the enemy. We have to destroy the enmity inside us and not try to destroy the enemy outside. If we destroy one enemy, thousands of other enemies will rise before us, and if we destroy a thousand, millions will rise and there is no end to this cycle. Hence, if we end the enmity there will be no enemies against us in this world.

Q: It is not so easy to destroy enmity. How can we forgive those who have caused us so much harm and damage?

- A: We find it difficult because we feel that they did the damage to us. If our good (*punya*) *karma* were in fruition, they could not have harmed us. We should not blame others for our *karma*. You got angry with them only when you recognized their form as “terrorists”, not before that.
- Q: What mistake have we made in knowing them in the form of terrorists because they were terrorists?
- A: I agree that they were terrorists and that is why you knew them in the form of terrorists. But why did you forget that they were also Souls (*atma*)? Why did you not recognize them as Souls? You would not have got angry with them if you knew them as “Souls”. Seeing all people as Souls is the only way by which you can prevent hatred and anger.
- Q: What is the significance of multiple viewpoints (*anekantvaad*) in terrorism (*aatankvaad*)?
- A: Both the killers and the killed are worthy of compassion. This is called the compassion with multiple viewpoints and the respect for differing and varying opinions (*anekantvaad*). If a butcher kills a cow, the ignorant person will feel sympathy for the cow and hatred towards the butcher. The wise and knowledgeable person feels compassion for both the butcher and the cow since he knows that both actions result from the fruition of each of their *past karma*.
- Q: Do you not love your country? If you do so, you would not talk of non-violence.
- A: Did Gandhiji not love India even though he preached non-violence? In reality, Gandhiji obtained independence for our country on the strength of non-violence.
- Q: If we do not forgive the terrorists and do not follow the principle of non-violence, then what will you do?
- A: I will not do anything. I will only show you the same compassion as I show the terrorists since you are both Souls and because I want to stop my cycles of birth and death. These cycles of birth and death since eternal time can only be stopped by showing compassion and forgiveness to everyone.

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If you read this article with rage, you may feel angry towards me too. However, if you think with a cool and awakened mind, you will understand what I am trying to say.

If I have caused any hurt to your feelings by this article, I ask for forgiveness. I end with wishing that all Souls give up hate-love and attain ultimate happiness.