Some Musings On 'Shanti'

By Mons. Nicholas Roerich

VISION, a true vision, leads us to mutual understanding, to goodwill, creative labour, and ultimately to peace. We have to express our hearty gratitude to all who affirm peace. We have to send our best thoughts to everyone, who in spite of difficulties invokes the great conception of Culture and strives to a better future of humanity. The betterment and adornment of life is realized not through abstractions, but right here, on the suffering earth, amidst the turmoil and whirlwind of threatening events.

Vision, a pure vision, helps humanity on this thorny path.

People talk especially about Peace when they are afraid of War. There are different kinds of wars—internal and external, visible and invisible. Which of them are more horrible remains to be seen. Peace!—in this one word is expressed the whole essence of life. “To live in peace means never to raise arms against each other”—this commandment was given in all languages, in all ages.

The human heart wants a real peace.
It strives to labour—creatively and actively. It wants to love and to expand in the realization of Sublime Beauty. In the highest perception of Beauty and Knowledge all conventional divisions disappear. The heart speaks its own language; it wants to rejoice at that which is common for all, uplifts all, and leads to the radiant Future.

To the Temple of Peace all the best thoughts of humanity should be directed. Beautiful rays of hope illumine mutual understanding. In all languages, in various symbols, in exalted prayers the same thought is manifested as the most sacred one, as the most opposing to evil. And evil—this fruit of ignorance, finally shall wither before the great image of Peace.

We shall cement space with our imperative calls for Peace and this penetrating call shall span all precipices of old prejudices. While everything about War and hostility is pronounced with averted eyes, each word of Peace is proclaimed with a straightforward glance and uplifted countenance. In the sacred conception of Peace we are creating high constructive enthusiasm and everything constructive and everything enthusiasm is the basis of the coming evolution. From the all-unifying fields of art and knowledge permit me to express my best wishes that the idea of Peace should flower and shall bloom as a beautiful tree, yielding its shade to all peaceful travellers and creative workers.

Blessed is India, where everywhere are towering benevolent Ashrams of Peace. On the quiet shores of sacred rivers and lakes from ancient times resound prayers for Shanti—Peace. We should be grateful that these holy Ashrams exist, and that they saturate space with blissful thoughts.

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**CAN I BELIEVE THEM?**

*By Mons. Nicholas Roerich*

Shall we believe?
Finally we learned
Whereto the King went
To the old square of the three towers.
There He will teach.
There He will give His commands.
He will speak once. Twice
Has never spoken the King.

We shall rush to the square through an alley,
Avoiding the hurrying crowds.
We shall reach the base of the Wind-tower. To many this path is unknown.
Everywhere are people.
All by-paths are crowded.
Around the passage-gates people are thronging.

And there already He speaks.

Farther we shall not go.
The one who came first
Nobody knows.
But dimly is glimpsed the tower.
Sometimes it seems as though the Kingly Word resounds. But no.
One cannot hear the words of the King.
People are transmitting them to each other.
A woman—to a warrior.
A warrior—to a great lord.
A shoemaker, my neighbour—to me.
Does he hear them correctly from the merchant standing on the stoop of the porch?
Can I believe Them?

*(From Russian)*