# Being Human
## in Multicultural Traditions

Edited by
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Vensus A. George

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# Foreword

GEORGE F. MCLEAN (1929-2016)

Dear Professor K. Remi Rajani,

It is an honor and great pleasure to be able to join you in this endeavor - even if only in writing. The theme "*Being Human in Multicultural Traditions*" which you have chosen is most important for our world in these complex and global times.

We experience the many ways, in which the world is falling apart as peoples conflict one with another. Is it possible to discover ways, in which conflicts can be modified and converted into cooperation? Can we transcend the harsh conflicts and build rather upon the principles of love and mercy, cooperation and harmony, which have ever been the backbone of each culture and each civilization? Seeking answers to these questions will challenge your conference.

Indeed, the theme of the next World Congress of Philosophy to be held in Beijing, August, 2018, will be "*Learning to be Human*." Developing your studies on that topic is a vital need of our times with which the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) would offer its cooperation.

May your work in these days on "*Being Human in Multicultural Traditions*" launch just such an effort on your part.

The RVP wishes you great success one and all - indeed, in these global times, for all humankind.

With all best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours

George F. McLean, President
The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy
Washington, D.C., March, 28, 2016

# Preface

REMI RAJANI KALANGI

I am indeed happy to be associated with the peace dialogue of international importance. Humanness is the essential quality of human beings; yet, it is fading out from the hearts of mankind. As a result, majority of people are losing the essential quality of their being. What should be done to rectify this erroneous attitude of human beings? Since ages, our classics, scriptures and philosophies all over the world proclaimed the need to be human. Our foremost duty in this precarious global times - whether one is a political leader, an administrator, an academician, a jury, a doctor or an ordinary citizen - is to sensitize and motivate people and help them learn to be human, so that they can live a peaceful and harmonious life on this planet.

With this very concern from the core of my heart as a responsible academician, I have organized the International Conference on the theme "Being Human in Multicultural Traditions" based on the two MOUs we have: one, with The International Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), and the other, with Professor K. Satchidananda Murty Centre for Religious Studies, wherein Acts Academy of Bangalore has extended an endowment.

The idea of conducting this International Conference took shape in my mind when I represented India in a RVP International Annual Seminar entitled "Religion, Reconciliation and Peace: Philosophical, Theo-Political Perspectives," August 18 - September 19, 2015, in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. I am glad that it has become a reality in organizing the Conferences in the Department of Philosophy, Andhra University, Andhra Pradesh, India, in line with a number of RVP Conferences across the world.

The very objective of the Conference is to reach out to people across the world with our deliberations, discussions and solutions, thereby facilitate people to *Rethink, Stimulate, Learn and Live as Humans*. One cannot change people all of a sudden. However, this is a motivational Conference and a sincere attempt to lit a light, to set the world on fire, to bring a ray of hope, and send out beams of

peace and harmony into the hearts and minds of people, inviting them to be human in all activities of their life.

I am thankful to all the enthusiastic delegates, specially to all the distinguished guests: Mr. V. Jaya Surya (Honorable Principal District and Sessions Judge, Visakhapatnam), Mr. Amit Garg, IPS (Commissioner of Police, Visakhapatnam), Mrs. Chandralekha Mukherjee, IRTS (D.R.M East Coast Railway, Visakhapatnam.), Professor M. Sundara Rao (Principal, College of Arts and Commerce, Andhra University), Professor V. Umamaheswara Rao (Registrar, Andhra University), Professor V. Bala Mohan Das (Former Vice Chancellor, ANU, Guntur), Professor Ken R. Gnanakan (Founder President, ACTS Group of Institutions, Bangalore), Professor K. Rama Krishna Rao (Chancellor, Gitam University, Visakhapatnam), Professor Dilipkumar Mohanta (Vice Chancellor, Sanskrit University of Calcutta), Dr. Richard Gnanakan (Vice Chancellor, ACTS Academy, Bangalore), Professor P. George Victor (Former Vice Chancellor, Adikavi Nannaya University), Professor Paul Mohan Raj (Vice Chancellor, William Carey University, Shillong) and Dr. Thomas Menamparampil (Archbishop), who were pleased to join us, as they are predominantly "humane" in their vision and mission.

My thanks are due to Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and Professor K. Satchidananda Murty Centre for Religious Studies (wherein the Acts Academy of Bangalore installed an endowment) for sponsoring the International Conference.

I am thankful to the International Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) for its emotional support to extend the "Mission of Peace" across the globe.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God!" George F. Mclean (Late), the RVP President, was certainly the child of God by having lived a peaceful life by making peace tirelessly in academic circles across the world. It is my privilege and honor to present his greetings as "foreword" to the proceeding volume.

I am grateful to Professor S.R. Bhatt, Chairman, ICPR, for sending his insightful address, and to Professor K. Rama Krishna Rao and Professor P. George Victor for their thoughtful Keynote and valedictory addresses respectively.

I thank and appreciate all the participants for taking part in the peace-dialogue. By virtue of academic quality, thirty-five papers are being selected to be published by the RVP. I express my deep sense of gratitude to all the thirty-five scholars, who have contributed papers for this volume, taking each by name.

I have great joy in extending my heartfelt applaud to Professor Dr. Vensus A. George, who toiled to edit the manuscript of this volume with an ample full of patience and wisdom. Thanks, indeed, Dr. Vensus.

I am happy to thank Dr. B. Ravi Babu, Head, Department of Philosophy, the Guest faculty, Supportive Staff, Research Scholars and Students of the Department of Philosophy and the Centre for Religious Studies, Andhra University. Also my thanks are due to Professor S.V. Naidu, Director, Platinum Jubilee Guest House and his team for providing a comfortable accommodation to our delegates.

The last, but not the least, to my family members who made the event possible in a meticulous manner. Firstly, to my husband and friend, Dr. G. Subhakar, Professor of Education; to my daughter, Mrs. Snigdha Christie Rai and Son-in-law, Mr. Sudeep Rai; and my son Mr. G. Spenser Davids for their constant support and love.

*Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India*

# Introduction

VENSUS A. GEORGE

The world is becoming more globalized and the coming together of people of diverse cultures has made this world a melting pot of cultures. Globalization, market economy, internal conflicts within nations, economic disparity among nations and similar factors have necessitated migration and movement of people of diverse cultures within the entire globe. Thus, multiculturalism has come to stay as a living reality in the life of all the nations of the world and it is difficult to reverse it. Denying and ignoring the reality of multiculturalism do not alter the actual situation. Embracing multiculturalism and dealing with it rationally is the best way to cope with its consequences. However, there is a general trend among the majority communities of the diverse nations to discriminate the minority cultural communities and deny them their rightful place in the society. While the development in communication technology and other related factors attempt to bring peoples and cultures together, peoples and cultures seem to be moving far away from each other. Humanity seems to be losing its essential quality of "being human." The theme of this volume "being human in multicultural traditions" implies that "being inhuman" has become the norm and "being human," in the sense of "being humane," as a quality of mind and heart, is falling apart as peoples and cultures of the world are more in conflict with one another than build bridges among themselves. Hence, there is the need to discover ways to transcend conflicts and animosities among diverse cultural groups of this multicultural world: to turn situations of conflict into opportunities for cooperation; to transform points of difference into moments of convergence; and to make diversity as something that attracts rather than repulses one another.

This volume entitled *Being Human in Multicultural Traditions* attempts to do the above-said tasks. The essays contained in this volume unfold multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a social practice, and spell out some of their positive and negative consequences. They propose means to cope with these consequences as an individual human person and a society; and as philosophical

perspectives and religious ideologies. The essays also present intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and the right type of education for the multicultural society as means to overcome some of the negative consequences of multiculturalism, thereby attempt to build a peaceful and harmonious social order in today's multicultural world. In view of presenting the theme of this volume with clarity, we divide this volume into six parts. Here below we state the titles of these parts and briefly consider what each part does in expounding the theme of this volume.

### Part I: Multiculturalism and Human Person

Part I entitled *Multiculturalism and Human Person* clarifies how multiculturalism affects the human person and suggests ways in which he can learn to cope with some of its consequences in the multicultural context. It comprises of the first seven chapters of the volume. These chapters highlight the tensions and anxieties the individual human person faces from the push-pull factor of cultural diversity and multiple identities he needs to cope with. They also point to the loss of spiritual, cultural and human values because of over-stress on economic enhancement through scientific and technological development, and the consequent situation of crisis in which the human person lives, which includes poverty, discrimination, conflict between different cultural groups, leading the human person to isolation, anxiety and fear. These chapters also suggest concrete ways in which the individual human person can capture and build up his true self amidst the diversities of multiculturalism by the right use of art forms such as music, and by the spiritual practice of meditation. These practices empty all thoughts from one's mind, destroy one's *ego*, and lead one to self-discovery and enlightenment, thereby help one to uncover the original facets of one's personality and the essence of Reality. As a result, the human person ceases to be *ego*-centric and becomes *cosmo*-centric, in the process recognizing himself to be only an individual-in-*cosmos* and the people of diverse cultures as one cosmic family. This holistic perspective of himself in relation to the *cosmos* makes the human person to recognize his true nature as a body-spirit complex; helps him to integrate the values of technology and science with values of philosophy and religion; guides him work together with people of

diverse cultures; persuades him to build up an atmosphere of mutual love, friendship and understanding among people; thereby leads him to bring about pace and amity in the multicultural social order, as he moves towards his ultimate destiny. Now, we briefly consider how the contents of these seven chapters unfold multiculturalism as related to the human person.

In the first chapter, "Aporia of Tension and Value in Multi-culturalism," C.D. Sebastian begins by stating that multiculturalism is a reality in the world, for we live in a society that has diverse languages, food habits, dress habits, ethnic identities, races, and religious affiliations. Living in such a multicultural setting, one while safeguarding his/her indigenous identity, attempts to move beyond the parochialism of his/her own culture and embraces values beyond one's own. Thus, the individual, who lives in a multicultural context, experiences tension in being caught up in the values of one's own culture and being pulled towards the values of other cultures. This is the aporia of tension associated with living in the multicultural society. The author elaborates on this issue in three sections. In the first section, he considers the pluralistic nature of contemporary society and the self that encounters pluralism. Living in a multi-cultural setting, the self experiences multiple subcultures and social-life-worlds, thereby could get attracted to their trappings. Either limitations of the indigenous culture push one out, or the better possibilities offered by the other cultures pull one into accepting their values. Thus, there comes the issue of multiple identities, the question of one's ethnic identity in a multiple identity context, and the conflict within the self regarding these multiple identities. In the second section, the author deals with multi-relatedness of the self, and the subsequent possibility of a divided self due to the multiple identities it has to cope and live with, which in turn, can give rise to a tension within. Besides, he also pinpoints the possible anxieties that do arise due to the reality of multiculturalism that was a dream in the twentieth century; but could become a challenge in the present century. In the third section, the author suggests three new para-digms - cultivating a dialoging self, multicultural and intercultural education, and being flexible to accept multiple identities rather than being stuck with a singular identity - that would remedy the aporia of tension the self experiences in the multicultural context, and recognize the value of multiculturalism. The conclusion points to the

need for constant becoming rather than being fixed in our attitudes and outlooks to get ourselves integrated into a multicultural lifestyle. When we do not absolutize, but recognize the relational, complementary and situational nature of our life and our identities, we can ease the aporia of tension involved in multiculturalism and experience its true value.

Thomas Menamparampil, in the second chapter entitled "Being Human amidst Multicultural Traditions" begins, in the introduction, by stating that the over-emphasis - on advancement in technology, expanding trade, competing with others economically, production of better consumer goods and enhancing the material wellbeing of the people - by modern day societies has led to the loss of spiritual, cultural and human values. The loss of these values, in turn, has made human persons heartless and inhumane. Thus, the modern-day societies - instead of bringing people and communities together, promoting human values and harmonizing the opposites - have brought about modern-day tragedies, such as ethnic conflicts, genocide and ecocide. Having made these introductory comments, in the first section, the author analyzes the consequences of the loss of humaneness in the modern society. Some of the consequences that result from an inhuman and impersonal economy, consumerist culture, and an unbalanced perception of development are the weakening of humanity and inter-community tensions; loss of self-assertion of communities; lack of affirmation of humanity; and marginalization of cultural minorities. The second section deals with those attitudes that would restore humanness in social living. This calls for taking a humane approach instead of giving a mere economic response; developing human and sensitive leadership; working for bettering the human condition of those involved, so as to ease tension among groups; leadership recognizing their past failures and learning to be humane with each other; tapping the resources of young people and use their abilities as human capital; and educating people to be peacemakers and culture-translators, in the process transforming peoples' attitudes. The third section considers the meaning of "being human" in the sense of "being humane." This implies that we leave space for each other as communities; we respect and befriend our opponents; we learn to change a grievance into a message; we develop our thinking power; we become not only creative, but also persuasive; we value together-

ness; we become more responsible; we move beyond party and partisan interests; we become sensitive towards minority communities; we develop a vision for the future; we promote collaboration and a natural sense of fairness; and above all we become spiritual and allow ourselves to be guided by the spiritual perspective. The conclusion states that when we learn to be human and express the attitude of humanness in our everyday interaction with others, we make a small contribution in bringing people together, build up humanity and strengthen the human element within the human family. Thus, being human calls us to be united and live in communion with every creature, especially with every other human person and human community.

P. Chinnaiah, in the third chapter entitled "Humanity Crisis in Multicultural Traditions," begins by stating the crisis humanity faces in the multicultural traditions of the world. In the "Introduction," the author clarifies the terms "humanity," "culture," "multicultural traditions," and "humanity crisis." Having clarified the meaning of the topic of this chapter by considering the meanings of the terms and phrases he has used at the title of this chapter, in the first section, the author elaborates on the situation of humanity crisis. Despite great material and technological progress in the world, large sections of humans live in poverty; there is discrimination of every kind prevalent in the world; constant fight among diverse groups with the aim of destroying each other is on the rise; and people live in isolation, anxiety and fear. The development in science and technology has only increased humanity crisis because every new scientific discovery and technological invention is used by the humans to destroy each other, devastate nature, and pollute the material world. Besides, politicians practice tribalism and glorify it as nationalism, which in turn, leads to antagonism and animosity among diverse cultural and religious groups **-** tearing down the political and social fabric of the nations of the world. All these have led to a warlike situation within a nation and among nations of the world, and have brought about the humanity crisis. The second section of the chapter unfolds the cause of humanity crisis. Human thought is the cause of humanity crisis. Thought, emerging from memory **-** by opposing or agreeing, competing or adjusting, condemning or justifying **-** brings divisions on every dimension of humanity, cultivates jealousy and tears down love among people,

thereby causes misery, confusion and sorrow. The third section presents meditation and love as the solution to humanity crisis. Meditation, by emptying all thoughts from one's mind, by destroying one's *ego*, and by leading one to self-discovery and enlightenment, helps one uncover the original facets of one's personality and the essence of Reality. Besides, meditation cutting loose one from traditions, ideas and conclusions, awakens the choiceless awareness, which in turn, releases one's spiritual energy and lets it flower into love. When, love, as the overflow of meditation, is directed towards the totality of humanity, it becomes the source of pace and happiness of all in the world. The conclusion speaks of the necessity of educating all in the art of meditation, which in turn, will lead to the overflow of love in the hearts and minds of every person. Thus, humanity crisis will disappear, when the effects of the art of meditation and the resulting overflow of love takes hold of every person in the world.

In the fourth chapter entitled "The Impact of Traditional Music on a Human," P.V.S. Lakshmi Srinivas unfolds the impact of traditional classical music on a human person. In the "Introduction" the author begins by stating that music is one of the fine arts and performing arts. Music is the language of emotion, which appeals through the medium of the ear. It is concerned with sounds, which are calculated to excite pleasant feelings in the human person. Then she briefly considers the different elements of Carnātic music, one of the Indian music systems, such as *nāda*, *śrutīes*, *swarās* and *rāgās*. Having made these introductory comments, in the first section of the chapter, the author briefly considers the physical impact of music on the human person. Practicing of or listening to classical music enhances the ability of the brain to organize, maintains joyous feelings, eases tension by "positively shocking" the brain, stimulates natural cadencies of the body, resembles the heartbeat and catalyses the creative process of the human mind. The second section highlights the psychological impact of music on the human person. As music crosses right to human emotions, it generates a sequence of different emotions and gives a different base to our thoughts, words and actions. Besides, it facilitates brain development and enhances spatial IQ in the human person by increasing the short and long-term memory. The third section of the chapter deals with the benefits of music for the human person. Music changes the psychology of a

human person by developing aptitudes, skills, performance, intelligence, and creative and social behavior. Besides, it improves the visual and verbal skills; and keeps an aging brain happy. Thus, music brings a positive effect on the psyche and enhances the quality of one's life. The conclusion reiterates the positive impact of music on the humans, by stating that the growing branch of medicine called the "Music Therapy" as a means to heal people's ailments and the popularity of diverse forms of music among people point to the value of music in human life.

In the fifth chapter entitled "On Achieving Peace and Harmony," K. Rama Krishna Rao considers achieving peace and harmony as the goal of the humans. Stating that reason alone cannot solve conflicts and bring peace, he recognizes the need for the working together of the rational and spiritual dimensions to bring true peace in human life. Since human mind is the source of conflict and a resource for restoring peace, the author suggests that meditation, as a mental discipline, serves as a means to turn the mind from a source of conflict into a resource for peace and harmony. Having classified mediation as mindful meditation and mindless meditation, the author points out that the former gains control over the mind by expanding it, while the latter achieves the same goal by emptying the mind. The net consequence is that one experiences the meditative state (*nididhyasana*), which opens the human person to a level of learning that is based on the spiritual nature of the human person, superior to rational level of learning. Thus, meditation brings a sense of unity in the person, which helps him/her move beyond the reason that divides and achieve the goal of peace and harmony within oneself and between the self and others. Having made these observations in the "Introduction," in the first section, the author considers the concept of peace. Peace, in the weak sense, means external peace, which is absence of conflict and hostilities. Peace, in the strong sense, refers to inner experience of peace and tranquility. Similarly, peace can be physical, mental and spiritual. The first is physical rest and relaxation; the second is stress-free state; and third is the inner experience of tranquility. Inner peace is achieved by wholesome and altruistic behavior. When a person achieves peace within, he radiates peace in the life of others, just as Mahatma Gandhi had done in his life. The second section analyzes how we may cultivate peace. There are three ways of making peace

in the secular world using reason - universal governance, maintaining balance of power or strategic equilibrium, and democratization of political power. We know from experience all these approaches cannot bring lasting peace. Permanent peace and harmony can be achieved only in the realm of the spiritual and altruism, by transcending selfish interests and seeing one's self and wellness in others. This spiritual path can be achieved through meditation, which is dealt with in the third section. Mindful meditation is practiced in the Buddhist spiritual approach and mindless meditation is practiced in the *Yoga* tradition. Both of these approaches ultimately lead one to experience inner peace and radiate that peace to others and to the society at large. The conclusion states that to achieve permanent peace and harmony we must promote spirituality, as perpetual peace is possible only in a spiritually driven world. When educators and leaders recognize this truth and practically implement it in educating our children, we will create many persons of peace, who in turn, would bring peace and harmony to the larger society of the multicultural world.

In the sixth chapter "Onto Perfection: "*Asato Ma Sadgamaya; Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya; Mrtorma'mrtam Gamaya*," S. R. Bhatt begins, in the first section of the chapter, by stating that human life as a prized product of cosmic process and the result of a remarkable psychophysical evolution. This evolutionary cosmic process is an ongoing movement, which can be directed in the right course or in the wrong direction by the free, rational and responsible human agent. At this stage, the human agent needs right knowledge, values and education guided by philosophical reflection, so that he can direct this ongoing evolution of the human person in the right path. Hence, there is the need to review and rethink the right mode of philosophizing, which is considered in the second section. Philosophizing, in Indian context, involves a systematic reflection on the nature of Reality and a way of life based on the Reality. Since Reality is a symbiosis of unity and multiplicity, genuine philosophical activity stems from lived experience and calls for debate, discussion, give and take, and mutual exchange in order to arrive at the truth. Though such an approach characterized the past, dogmatism vitiated the philosophical atmosphere later on. Hence, we need to revisit the past to capture the true spirit of philosophizing. This holistic and integral type of philosophizing would understand Reality in terms of

Organicism - Reality as unity in multiplicity based on the principles of interrelation and coordination, mutuality and cooperation, reciprocity and interdependence; understand our experiences as multifaceted and multi-layered; recognize different levels of cognition; and unfold the fact-value dichotomy. The third section highlights the multiple consequences that stem from this unitive and integral vision of Reality. Seen from this unitive perspective the universe is viewed as a corporate coexistence; the human existence is seen as finite-infinite and multidimensional; the value-schema of a society as founded on culture; tradition is visualized as transmitting culture; progress is considered as an evolution based on tradition being rooted in culture; relatedness of human existence, culture and nature; and the pursuit of integral excellence as the goal of human life and the cosmic process. Indian sages present the theory of *purus'arthas* as the cardinal means to achieve this integral vision of reality. Hence, in the fourth section, the author expounds the *purus'arthas* and the human person as a moral agent by analyzing the concept *purusa*. The fifth section looks into the ideal of spiritual globalization and the quality of life that would result from it. It calls for universalizability of ethical norms and universal adherence to them. When spiritual globalization becomes a reality the fundamental unity of the entire *cosmos* will be actualized. The section also analyses the mode of achieving this goal of spiritual globalization, the value-schema that should guide individual and social progress, adapting a holistic and integral approach in attaining social progress, and the value-based use of the full potential of science and technology to bring about genuine progress of the *cosmos*. In the conclusion, the author says that imperfect human being can achieve perfection by living his/her *purus'arthas*. When every individual recognizes that he is only an individual-in-*cosmos*, becomes more *cosmo*-centric than individual-centric, lives with every other in a harmonious corporate interrelationship, and is ready to be interdependent as one cosmic family, true perfection of humankind and the *cosmos* is achieved.

In the seventh chapter "Identity and Destiny of Man in a Multicultural World," Ganesh Prasad Das, in the "Introduction," states that the slogan that guides the spirit of the second decade of the twenty-first century is "think globally and act locally." Though the rich becomes richer and poor becomes poorer, the overall

situation of the society is that it gets more globalized. The consequences of the global worldview and networking are very significant. This chapter attempts to highlight some of the changes in perspective that have come about as the result this global worldview, networking and market place. The globalized perspective of life, social interaction and international relations bring about transformation in one's sociocultural norms, ancestral practices, customs, religious beliefs, food habits, dress patterns, personal grooming and racial identity. In the first section, the author points to some of the changes in affiliations that have come about from this globalized worldview and the growth in afflictions that have emerged, which in turn, makes people live in constant fear. The second section speaks of the changed perspective regarding the human person. The human person is no more seen as a spiritual and moral being; but is treated as a resource and a capital. His self-concept, traits, motivation, knowledge and skills are seen only as qualities that prove his competency and ability to perform as an efficient and effective capital. Besides, the human person is considered as an animal with a mind that can be causally determined and manipulated, in the process totally ignoring his spiritual nature. The dehumanization of the human person leads to complete surrender of the humans to technology and science; and the rejection of the value of philosophy and religion, which the third section takes for consideration. Over-emphasis of the role of technology and science on human society and denial of any value to philosophy and religion result in the cultural environment becoming secular and religion losing its hold on society, morality, politics and philosophy, leading people to show their back to holy places of worship and turning places of worship into other facilities. The fourth section attempts to remedy the secularized perception of the human person and the world, by recognizing man as both body and spirit. Hence, a holistic perspective of life in the multicultural world calls for not only using the values of technology and science, but also integrating into them values of philosophy and religion, both complementing each other. The conclusion states that neither science and technology, nor philosophy and religion should thrive at the cost of each other. The task of the philosopher and scientist is neither upgrading one and downgrading the other, nor reducing one by explaining away, eliminating or burning down the other. Instead, they must work together and build up an atmosphere of mutual

love, friendship and understanding among people, thereby bring about pace and amity in the social order.

## Part II: Multiculturalism and Society

Part II entitled *Multiculturalism and Society* looks into multiculturalism as related to the society. This part contains next six chapters - chapters eight to thirteen. These chapters highlight the consequences of multiculturalism on society. In a multicultural society the hegemony of majority culture manifests itself in political domination, nationalism, modern capitalism and codified socialism - bringing about discrimination, denial heterogeneity and imposition of the homogeneity - all leading to the alienation of minority cultural groups. India and Khasi tribe of Meghalaya are presented as case studies to indicate the hegemony of majority culture and its consequences in their respective societies. In India, the right-wing fundamentalist religious groups and the right-leaning government attempt to polarize the nation on religious lines. This, in turn, brings about growing intolerance and suppression of every free expression of truth, leading to alienation of the people of minority religious and cultural groups. Similarly, the influence of the majority culture on the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya has led to the disintegration of Khasi culture, customs and traditions. Hence, there is the need to bring social cohesion and national unity without hurting cultural diversity and unity as a nation. Spiritual humanism, dialogue among cultures and religions, and transformation of personal attitudes of the humans can serve the cause of cultural diversity and national unity. Similarly cultivation of emotional intelligence and the practical implementation of the truths contained in the Upanishadic sayings - that speak of the foundational divinity of every person in the society despite his/her cultural, religious, racial or linguistic differences - would lead to build better understanding and mutual respect among diverse people and establish a multicultural social order within the unity of the nation. Now, we proceed to give a brief sketch of the content of each chapter of part II.

In the eighth chapter, "Alienation and Solidarity: Dialectics of Culture," Aditi Dasgupta begins in the "Introduction" by stating that culture is dynamic, and it changes influenced by the sociopolitical and historical events, and the psychological mind-set of the indivi-

duals. Besides, the hegemony of culture creates feeling of alienation among the minority groups and superiority complex in the majority group. Thus, culture **-** instead of enriching material and spiritual life of the people **-** becomes an object of fear. This hegemony and chauvinism of culture manifests itself in the society in a number of ways. In this chapter, the author attempts to unfold a few manifestations of this cultural hegemony and their consequences on the society. The first section looks into political domination and the cultural alienation it causes in the social order. The dominating group treats the dominated group as ethnically lower and less civilized; and the education of the dominated group is organized to suit the good the dominating group. As a result, the people of the dominated group feel alienated culturally and ethnically. Besides, they do not develop their full potential as educational system does not help them. The second section considers nationalism as another form of cultural chauvinism. It is intolerant to minority cultures in a nation and interprets the character of a nation in terms of a particular religion and its practices, thereby closing up on the nation's multidimensional character. This type of nationalist spirit is linked with colonialism, casteism, racism and capitalism - which ultimately lead to cultural alienation. The third section deals with cultural hegemony of modern capitalism and codified socialism. Modern capitalism with its "commodity-culture" and "copy-paste culture," like a silent dictator, influences people to imitate a specific lifestyle according to the capitalist frame of wellbeing, making human life an extension of market and economy - having least concern for individual identity, cultural identity and human solidarity. Similarly, codified version of socialism has denied their members the freedom to uphold their ethnic rituals and cultural practices, which may have some religious overtones. In doing so, codified socialism has prevented their members to have link with their ethnic and cultural roots, which in turn, would give them personal solace and strength. Thus, these two ideologies not only deny the value of ethnicity and culture, but also lack a sense of humanity and the ability to recognize individual and group identities. The fourth section analyzes the intolerance of heterogeneity on the part of the majority cultural group. The heterogeneity within a local culture is often looked upon by the majority group as people outside that culture. The dominant group prefers homogeneity to heterogeneity. When this passive

reluctance turns into hostile actions, it would lead to discrimination of minority cultural groups. The conclusion states that being human in a multicultural society involves respecting each other's cultural identities. This calls for intellectual dynamism and flexibility to bring about better understanding among diverse groups, and to look for context-sensitive solutions to the problem of cultural diversity and ethnic identity.

John Mohan Razu, in chapter nine entitled "Essentializing Humanity amidst Plurality: India - a Case in Point," indicates the nexus between the fundamentalist political ideologies and conservative religious ideologies leading to animosities and conflicts between the majority and minority groups, which in turn, ushers in fear and insecurity. In leading democracies of the world, such as India and the United States of America, this trend is catching up and increasingly polarizing the societies and the nation-state as a whole, in the process gradually weakening the notion of humanity. This trend that damages humanity - humanness, becomes a serious concern for the academic community, as they need to maintain the essential nature of humanity in a multicultural and multi-religious setting. Hence, in the first section of this chapter, author attempts at a general consideration of the origins of religion and the rise of religious fundamentalism. Religion begins as a small-scale phenomenon, develops into an elaborate organized structure over the centuries, and having its own sects, denominations and cults. As religion develops, it also becomes more aggressive and fundamentalist as it believes that it alone is endowed with the absolute truth, and hence, salvation can be found only in this particular religion. This perspective of religion leads to scriptural literalism, majoritarianism, conservatism, dogmatism, ethnocentrism and authoritarianism. This kind of thinking in its extreme level would justify a political theocracy and a religious terrorist organization. The second section takes up the issue of religious fundamentalism in India. The reason for growth of fundamentalism in India is the prejudice and intolerance perpetuated by the right-wing extremist groups and the sympathy the right-wing ruling class shows to these groups. The right-wing authoritarianism has become so strong that any expression of one's point of view through speech or any other art form is attacked, not only verbally and psychologically, but also dealt with physical violence. No one from the right-wing is willing to

see the truth communicated in these statements or art expressions. Instead they attack the one who has communicated the truth, thereby shut it down, rather than take positive action based on them. The rise of religious fundamentalism in India has led to growing intolerance. The third section addresses the issue of growing intolerance in India. The spate of violence against the minority groups and intellectuals who challenge the *status quo* of the right-wing fundamentalist organizations points to the growing intolerance in India. There is a concerted effort, on the part of these groups, to polarize and communalize the country, which in turn, may assist the majority ruling coalition electorally. This polarization facilitates the growth of intolerance. The rise of intolerance leads to the loss of humanity - humaneness. People see each other as the "they," having separate identities; and not as the "we," having a common Indian identity. Besides, the loss of humanity and sense of belonging bring about the loss of the spirit of service, which in turn, further divides the people based on caste, ethnicity and region. The conclusion calls us to move beyond the inhuman and dehumanized world we live in, retrieve our essential nature as human persons, bring better understanding between people, and thereby work towards establishing an equitable society that caters for the needs of both the majority and the minority groups.

Gita Pyal, in the tenth chapter entitled "Sociocultural Changes in the Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya," attempts to understand the structure of matrilineal system and matrilocal residential pattern that are characteristic of the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya and the sociocultural changes that have been taking place among the people of this tribe. In the "Introduction" the author clarifies the meaning matrilineal and matrilocal system in general and introduces the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya. The first section of this chapter elaborates on different aspects of the matrilineal and matrilocal system of the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya, such as the concept of family and family structure; clan organization; matrilineal system of descent; rules pertaining to inheritance of property; courtship in Khasi matrilineal society; and matrilocal residential pattern. It also considers some of the problems of Khasi matrilineal system and the challenges faced by the Khasi matrilineal and matrilocal traditions. The second section unfolds the sociocultural changes that have come into the Khasi society in recent times and their implications. Traditional power

structure of Khasi family and clan is challenged by the Autonomous District Council and the self‑help groups. Education, modernization, urbanization and migration for professional achievements have changed the traditional tribal value system. This has, in turn, led to interracial marriages, formation of nuclear families, changes in matrilocal residential pattern and property rights, men affirming their rights, the increase in sexually deviant behaviors and gender based violence, and decline of interest in Khasi religion and ritual practices. Thus, there has come about an erosion of Khasi tribal values and the danger of disintegration of Khasi tribal life-style. The third section looks into the movement to revive the Khasi tribal culture and counter the changes that have come into it in recent times. The Seng Khasi Organization has spearheaded this revival movement and for over two centuries has played the role of the custodian of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya. The fourth section highlights the influence of multi-culturalism and globalization on the Khasi tribal culture. Globalization and its positive and negative effects have brought about a kind of division within the Khasi society ‑ between the educated youth who welcome globalization and the uneducated youth who resist globalization and pledge allegiance to the Khasi culture and tradition. The conclusion speaks of the two-fold task of the Khasi community in the context of the multicultural and globalized world. The first is to preserve Khasi traditions and culture from eroding. The second is to learn and assimilate good cultural traits from others for the holistic development of the Khasi people and the Khasi region.

T.K. Parthasarathy, in the eleventh chapter "Multiculturalism and Social cohesion," attempts to explore the difficult issue of effecting social cohesion in a multicultural society. He states, in the "Introduction" that India's ability to cope with its diversity and remain united as a democratic nation has been acknowledged by people of other nations as a source of inspiration. Having made this introductory comment, in the first section of the chapter, the author presents a general consideration of multiculturalism and social cohesion. Globalization and international migration of diverse cultural groups has made social cohesion a difficult goal to arrive at. To achieve this goal, everyone involved must realize that our identity as human persons is prior to any other identities we may

have. The second section presents India as a case study for multi-culturalism and social cohesion. In spite of India's multi-religious, multicultural, multicaste and multilingual facets, there is a sense of national unity and oneness among all the Indians. The basis for this is India's philosophy, religiosity and spirituality, which, though ancient, is applicable and practical even today. This Indian Spirit, guided by enlightened sages (*riṣis*), keeps India, to a great extend, socially cohesive despite its multicultural diversity. Section three looks into another element that facilitates the social cohesion in India - the similarities among the major religions practiced in India, particularly Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and other religions of India. The fourth section delves into the relationship between multi-culturalism and nation-states, particularly with reference to the European Union, the United States of America and India. The fifth section deals with the means to achieve the goal of social cohesion in a multicultural society. Spiritual humanism, intercultural dialogue and individual reformation are suggested as possible means that can facilitate greater social cohesion in a multicultural society. The con-clusion states that "learning to be human" is the greatest alternative to dogmatic religion. It calls for a continuous process of observation, evaluation and revision of perception of people of other cultures and religions. If we take this life-stance and live by it, we can truly find ways that are rationally and ethically feasible to bring about greater social cohesion in our multicultural communities, societies, nations and the world at large.

In the twelfth chapter entitled "Infusing '*Aham Brahmasmi*' in synchronizing '*Tat Tvam Asi*', P. George Victor attempts to bring to light the sad fact that the lofty ideals presented in the Indian scriptures regarding intercultural and intercaste relationships often remains theoretical statements rather than principles for practical living. In the introduction, he begins by stating that the theme of the seminar "being human in multicultural traditions" implies that inhuman practices have been occurring and divisive attitudes are prevailing in multicultural societies. In the age of globalization, different cultural groups continue to transport their cultures to other parts of the world, sustain their differences, keep their identities, promote their uniqueness and exclusiveness, and avoid genuine intercultural relationships. Even civilized peoples, societies and nations instigate individuals and groups to establish their presumed

righteousness and impose them on others, who are different from them. Thus, though cultural diversity is the common heritage of humanity, it can also be explosive and lead to violence, if proper integration of people of different cultures is not brought about. Having stated these facts in the introduction, the author moves on the consider India, as a nation of multicultural traditions in the first section. Elaborating the pluralistic nature of Indian society, particularly in relation to the caste (*varna*) system, he points to the two trends of thought and practice of caste system in India: the conservatives who strictly adhere to caste practices; and the liberals who break the strict caste code and bring about inter-mixing of castes. The latter group includes great religious leaders, such Shankara, Vivekananda and Sri Narayanaguru, who denounced any form of discrimination of people on the basis of caste differences. The third section of the chapter presents cultivation of emotional intelligence as a means to bring about better understanding among diverse cultures. Emotional intelligence recognizes the rational and emotional dimensions in the human person. It can help one to take into consideration the geographical, social and economic limitations of different cultures, and respect the people of other cultures as he/she respects his/her own culture and people. Emotional intelligence helps one to understand the intentions, attitudes, motivations and desires of the other groups and peoples because beyond the visible differences among races and groups, there is the foundational unity of the humans that come from sharing in one human nature. The fourth section highlights the Indian Spirit of being humane. The basis of this Spirit of India is the belief that every person in the depths of his being is divine and any discrimination based on caste would amount to discriminating the divine within man. This is the spirit that is contained in the scriptural sayings "I am *Brahman*" (*Aham Brahmasmi*) and "That art Thou" (*Tat Tvam asi*). Recognizing the divine in each other should make us humane in dealing with people different from us. In the conclusion, the author states that the ideals of unity of all peoples and the divinity that dwells within all should not remain only in the theoretical level, but must become practical guides to build a society that respects every culture both in the national and international levels.

M. Rajeshwara Rao, in the thirteenth chapter "*Upanishads*: Global Teachings," discusses the teachings of the *Upanishads* as

having a global and multicultural appeal. In a multicultural world, the philosophy of oneness between the *Brahman* and the *Atman* can open the way for greater understanding among diverse cultures and religions. Hence, in the first section, the author elaborates on the true nature of *Atman*, the inner Self of the human person; and clarifies the manner in which knowledge of *Atman* is attained. *Atman* is the underlying subject that persists and witnesses all the experiences of the waking state, dream state and the deep sleep state, and transcends all three states. Hence, body, senses, mind and consciousness are instruments of the Self. It is immortal, self-luminous, and self-proved. It is the ultimate subject that can never become the object of knowledge, and is necessarily presupposed by all knowledge. It is existence, knowledge and bliss. When one is freed from ignorance and attains true knowledge, then one experiences himself as *Atman*. Right knowledge is obtained with the practice of faith, purity, introspection and meditation. The second section highlights the reality of *Brahman*, the Ultimate Reality of the world. It is the origin and end of the world. *Brahman* is the material cause of the world and the world is its manifestation. One attains knowledge of *Brahman*, by evolving through the material, vital, mental and self-conscious planes (*koshas*) and arriving at the non-dual state of transcendental unity, in which the distinction between the knower, the known and the knowledge is obliterated. The third section analyzes the unity between *Brahman* and *Atman* by analyzing the Upanishadic *mahavakyas* "That art Thou" and "I am *Brahman*." The conclusion states that the unitive perspective of the *Upanishads* have a global and multicultural appeal, as it is capable of embracing the people of all cultures and religions into one fold. Since every human being is in a foundational relationship with *Brahman*, the Supreme Being and the Ultimate Reality, all are equal before God. This calls for better understanding and mutual respect among people of different cultures and religions. Thus, the unitive perspective of the *Upanishads* can lead to better understanding among the diverse peoples of the world.

## Part III: Multiculturalism and Philosophy

Having clarified the relationship of multiculturalism to the human person and the society in Part I and Part II, Part III entitled *Multiculturalism and Philosophy* clarifies multiculturalism as a

philosophical ideology and social practice, and its affinity to and difference from other philosophical perspectives. Multiculturalism is a philosophical perspective that advocates coexistence of diverse cultures, attempting to create a balance among races and languages. Advocates of communitarianism, liberalism and post-colonial perspectives favor multiculturalism. Anti-imigration policies of different nations-states, nationalistic thinking prevailing in many countries and groups that over-emphasize individual rights over rights of groups are opposed to multiculturalism. Hence, the need to uphold the values of multiculturalism, particularly through education, to make it withstand these oppositions and sustain itself safeguarding the rights of the minority cultural groups and standing strong against negative consequences of globalization by cultivating and practicing genuine concept of international development and bringing about a global ethics to guide the destiny of the people of the world. The notion of global ethics calls for accepting a world philosophy - that includes all good elements of every religion and culture - as a way of life and encouraging interreligious dialogue, leading each one to recognize that first and foremost he/she is the Citizen of the World. Philosophers of enlightenment recognized a world of diversity of cultures. Hence, besides standing for preservation of individual rights, they also spoke of cosmopolitanism - a philosophical perspective that recognizes the living together of many cultures and religions in peace and harmony. *Samkhya-Yoga* systems of Indian philosophy accept multiculturalism as they views *gunas - sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* - as objective, ultimate and irreducible elements that constitute the diversity of this universe. Thus, *gunas* form the metaphysical foundation of diversity in the world. Since diversity is nature's gift to humankind, it must be nurtured and cherished rather than ignored and denied. The above-stated ideas clearly imply that the notion and reality of middle class as an important element of the structure of the society must be accepted and given its rightful place. Now, we briefly unravel the contents of the six chapters - chapters fourteen to nineteen - that find their place in Part III.

In the fourteenth chapter entitled "Do We Need Multiculturalism?," Nesy Kuriakose begins by stating that in the twenty-first century, seclusion is not an option any more, as free flow of people and information has made the world a global village, which

in turn, has exposed us to ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Thus, there emerges the question of multiculturalism. In attempting to elaborate on the question of multiculturalism, in the first section, the author clarifies the nature of multiculturalism. Negatively multiculturalism means diversity as opposed to sameness and difference as opposed to unity. Positively, it is the co-existence of diverse cultures. It aims at promoting the fair and equal presence of all cultural groups in public and private institutional environment, besides creating a balance among races and languages. The second section attempts to raise the question of the justification of multiculturalism. Communitarianism, liberalism and post-colonial perspectives give arguments in favor of multiculturalism. Communitarianism justifies multiculturalism by acknowledging diverse cultural identities and languages are social goods and are presumed to be of equal worth. Liberalism by taking a stand against violation of rights of the minority groups justifies multiculturalism. Post-colonial liberal theories justify multiculturalism by upholding the rights of minority groups, who suffered from the historical injustices done to them by the majority group. The third section looks into the relationship between multiculturalism and liberal globalism. Liberal globalism through the process of globalization homogenizes cultural diversities. Multiculturalism emerged as a counter point to homogenization of cultural diversity by heterogenization. It involves allowing previously unknown cultures to appear in public, letting them demand for recognition and permitting them to maintain their difference. Other than this relationship, multiculturalism and liberalism are very different from each other. The fourth section elaborates on the response of liberalism to multiculturalism. Liberal response to multiculturalism comes from many sources: anti-imigration policies of different nations-states, nationalistic thinking prevailing in many countries, groups that over-emphasize individual rights over rights of groups and the like. These opposition from liberalism seems to threaten the possible continuance of multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a social practice. This leads to the consideration of the future of multiculturalism in the fifth section of this chapter. The ideology of multiculturalism is the most recent solution to the problems of minority groups that grew from listening to them and respecting their cultural practices. Therefore, it does not seek to homogenize diverse cultural groups, but to integrate

them into the society by maintaining their cultural diversity, and thereby make them loyal to the nation-state they have become part of. The purpose of multiculturalism is twofold: preventing frictions among different cultural groups; and use this diversity to bolster the economy of the nations of the world. Despite many opposing voices, multiculturalism has not failed yet; it must adapt to changing circumstances. It must recognize that today's world is multicultural and educate the young people on multicultural perspective through the educational system. If we take such an approach to multi-culturalism, it definitely has a future and would facilitate diverse people to live in peace and harmony for generations to come. The conclusion highlights the role of the teacher in multicultural education. Following Socrates, the teachers should be "midwives" and "gadflies." As midwives, the teachers must assist in giving birth to new and positive opinions in their students. As gadflies, the teachers must prick students out of their intellectual slumber and stimulate them to think. Thus, teachers by helping their students to approach different cultural and religious perspectives, with intellectual humility, thereby awaken them to a world of multi-cultural diversity.

In the fifteenth chapter, "A Peep into Global Ethics and International Development," Abha Singh states that technology has provided the means for growth at every stage of economic develop-ment, and globalization in particular. Globalization, with the aim of checking the imbalances created by capitalism, envisions developing trade and commerce as global phenomena - based on global move-ment of people and global free market, regulated by international organizations - that people living in the most underdeveloped terrain might get their fair share in world's resources. Though globalization has achieved a great deal of good for the world economy, it was instrumental in ushering in a number of problems as well. Hence, in the first section of this chapter, the author elaborates on some of the achievements and failures of globalization. Elaborating on this point, he highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages that have accompanied the efforts to actualize the globalization process. Some of the topics that are dealt with in this section are - the positive and negative consequences of globalization, one-sided notion of development propagated by the globalists, suppression of minority cultures and identities, rise of intolerance

and fundamentalism, and globalization as antithetical to global consciousness. The net results that emerge from these consequences of globalization are economic ruin, social disarray, political marginalization, ecological catastrophe, and moral collapse. Since globalization brings about a number of negative consequences on the individuals and the society, it is necessary to find solutions to these problems. The second section proposes the solution to the consequences of globalization. True solution to the problems brought about by globalization can be found in cultivating and practicing genuine concept of international development and bringing about a global ethics to guide the destiny of the people of the world. Development, in the international context, has to be a multidimensional proposition that is broad enough to cover the whole gamut of values that must guide the life and activity of the human person. Too specialized and narrow targets of development may result in dehumanizing the human being. Similarly, feeling of affinity with the other leads to self-development of each individual through the pooling of human energies for the betterment of all in the larger society, which in turn, would amalgamate the best elements within the conflicting ideologies, thereby furthers human progress and development. The goal of a global ethics consists in arriving at a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes. Without such fundamental consensus on an ethics, sooner or later every community will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship, and development will become a chimera. The conclusion presents cosmic/global consciousness that is found in the religious teachings of the world as that which can counter the global distress, supply the moral foundation for a better individual and global order, and provide a vision, which can lead men and women away from chaos and despair.

In the sixteenth chapter entitled "Intercultural Philosophy: Growing through Myriad Approaches to Oneness," J. K. K. Herndon presents S. Radhakrishnan's philosophical perspective that visualizes the whole world as a family that includes the diversities of religion and culture. Hence, he says that we must use the richness of diversity to build a world community of oneness and togetherness. He begins the "Introduction" with a prayer from the *Dhyānam Ślokās* that calls all to strive for peace together and moves on to speak of how ancient Gorkha and Limbuwan kingdoms resolved their long-

lasting strife and war through the treaty of peace symbolized by two containers of salt and water becoming one container of salt-water, when mixed together. In the next two sections, the author states that it is in this spirit we must consider the international problem of migration, particularly the movement of refugees throughout the world. Then, after briefly considering the secular nature of Indian polity, which gives every religion its rightful place in the society, he points to the fact of globalization that makes the world a global village. The spirit that should guide people and nations in this globalized setting is the spiritual solidarity that makes us recognize that we belong to each other and the world is a family. Philosophers, as spiritual guides, who pass on this international family spirit must be without borders. They should teach that our love for our country should not stop at our borders; our love of our country does not mean that we must be nationalists; the best way to bring about a united world is to embrace diversity; and reasoning of intellectualism should give way to direct experience of intuition. We must face the challenges - a shrinking world of global civilization places on us - by accepting the approaches of diverse religions and cultures and through them move towards oneness. This calls for accepting a world philosophy - that includes good elements of every religion and culture - as the way of life and encouraging interreligious dialogue. True peace cannot be brought about by war; it must be done by building bridges among diverse people. Hence, philosophers are called to be bridge-builders, leading the world towards unity and peace. The conclusion restates S. Radhakrishnan's belief that if we claim to be civilized, to love justice and to cherish mercy, we must affirm that we are first and foremost Citizens of the World.

In the seventeenth chapter entitled "Humanity and Diversity: Characteristics of the Modern World," Theavy Ser begins with a general consideration of diversity in the "Introduction." Diversity is multidimensional and it calls for exploring each other's differences in a positive and nurturing environment, so that people can move beyond tolerance, and embrace and celebrate the richness of each other's differences in the spirit of equity and mutual respect. Having made this preliminary comment, the author moves on to analyze diversity of humanity, in the first section of the chapter. Human persons are so diverse; and it is difficult to know the "who'" and "what" of a person's difference from the other. Since science cannot

arrive at absolute truth about a reality, it cannot understand the reality of humanity in its diversity. To understand human diversity, we must recognize - see and hear - the differences and enhance our capacity to deal creatively with diversity, by our genuine interaction and dialogue with other humans. The second section speaks of the diversity of the modern world characterized by the spirit of enlightenment. Philosophers of the enlightenment recognized a world of diversity of cultures. Though they gave importance to individualism, they also spoke of cosmopolitanism - a philosophical perspective that recognizes the living together of people of many cultures and religions in peace and harmony. The third section highlights the philosophy of enlightenment and it relation to the emergence of two forms of multiculturalism. The first form of multiculturalism is closely affiliated to the enlightenment philoso-phy. It is based on the idea that a society should not be dominated by just one cultural tradition, but must include an unlimited variety of cultures. The second type of multiculturalism is favored by the critics of the enlightenment philosophy. It is based on the idea that the threatening "monotony" of a universal and amorphous melting pot civilization be replaced by the multiplicity of coexisting subcultures. These subcultures reflect and continue the traditional diversity of races, traditions and mutually exclusive creeds. The "politics of identity" developed in the context of the latter form of multicultur-alism. The fourth section elaborates on the enlightenment notion of liberty and its relation to diversity. The notion of liberty and the actual practice of liberty in the context of the modern world have led to diverse ways of action. Since everyone is free, everyone would like to act differently from others. Hence, the notion of liberty, as lived and practiced in our everyday life indicates diversity as the characteristic element of the modern world. The conclusion points to the inevitable fact of diversity in the modern world. Humanity, the world and human free actions - all are diverse. Hence, recognizing our diversity and dealing with it in a positive and nurturing atmosphere would make diversity a great means to build a better world order characterized by peaceful and harmonious living.

Chenchulakshmi Kolla, in the eighteenth chapter "*Gunas* as Reflections of Multicultural identity: A *Samkhya-Yoga* Perspective," attempts to show that the *Samkhya-Yoga* theory of *gunas* best explains multiculturalism and multicultural identity in a globalized world. In

the "Introduction," the author briefly presents *Samkhya* and *Yoga* as related systems of Indian philosophy. *Samkhya* lays emphasis on knowledge, as the means of attaining the Supreme Reality, whereas *Yoga* gives its wholehearted practical support through meditation to achieve the goal of self-realization. Metaphysically these schools are dualistic and pluralistic. Having made the above introductory observations, in the first section, the author considers the historical unfolding of the notion of the *gunas* in the *Vedas*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and in the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* systems of Indian philosophy. The second section analyzes the *Samkhya-Yoga* theory of the *gunas*. The first subsection clarifies the notion of *gunas* as propounded by the *Samkhya-Yoga* system of Indian philosophy. According to these schools, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are responsible for all the experiences of the *purusa*. They are objective ultimate and the irreducible elements of experience. The *sattva* element makes objects intelligible, the *rajas* element enables objects to undergo changes, and *tamas* element enables the object to assume shape and resists its destruction through changes. Though the *gunas* possess contradictory character-istics, yet they act in perfect cooperation with each other to accomplish a single purpose. In the second subsection, the author elaborates on how this theory of *gunas* is found in modern science, ethics and *ayurveda*. Modern science believes that the universe is a system, whose total energy remains the same in quantity amid all the changing forms, in which it may exhibit itself. The *Samkhya-Yoga prakrti* with its three *gunas* and its theory of evolution of the gross objects of the world from the primordial *prakrti* are so designed as to be in conformity with the law of conservation of mass and energy. Modern ethical thinkers hold that ethical and non-ethical behaviors of the humans are outcomes of individual attributes, personal environment, social environment and institutional rules and laws. Similarly, *guna* theory holds that a person's behavior and his perception of values are based on individual attributes that emerge from the three *gunas*. The interplay of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* as inherent qualities in the person is the foundation of a person's behavior and value system. The notion of *guna* is also a significant concept in ayurvedic medicine, as a system to assess health conditions, prescribing right type of medicines and following the proper diet. The conclusion states that the *Samkhya-Yoga* considers that these three *gunas* are present in everyone and everything.

However, the only difference is that they are present in varying proportions and contexts. Every being is viewed as the net result of the joint effect of these three *gunas*. Therefore, it is clear that the *gunas* are nothing, but the reflections of multicultural identity, particularly relating to the humans as individuals and groups.

In the nineteenth chapter entitled "Philosophy of Being Middle Class," Patrick Mallick makes an attempt to destabilize the established Marxist doctrinaire view of two social classes, by speaking of the middle class as a mean between the Marxian extremes of the exploiting class and the exploited class. Considering the theme from the historical perspective, in the first section, the author considers the notion of the middle class in relation to classical political philosophies. In the early classical period status of the middle class was determined by the socio-economic condition - the ability to earn, spend, and deposit for future, as investors and consumers belonged to the middle class. However, over the period of time, the middle class lost its status as the investor class and became the consumer class, in the process becoming economically and politically powerless. Later in the Roman times, the middle class became the common people, who had no right to resist what the authoritarian regime had ordered. The second section deals with the middle class at the time of populist philosophies. Socialist philosophies, such as Guild socialism, Fabianism and Syndicalism were collectivistic in nature and so opposed private property. They were against the middle class. These populist philosophies once again brought low the status of the middle class. The third section elaborates on the status of the middle class at the time of decolonization. Decolonization has brought about political and economic autonomy of many former colonized nations, including India. This had led to the emergence of a new middle class different from the old middle class in India. Unlike the old middle class, the new middle class is an open and socializing group; not bound by ideologies; moved only by economic considerations; prefer their own interests over the interests of others; they enjoy the present without thinking too much about the future. Since they disregard communi-tarian and normative considerations, and centered on themselves, there can come about social degeneration and insecurity in the future. The fourth section deals with the challenges posed by the new Indian middle class. They present themselves as center of power and instead of representing the nation;

they represent themselves as the nation. In doing so, they pave the way for creating conflicting situations not only between the state and the civil society; but also within the civil society. The fifth section challenges the Marxian view that denies the middle class, and states that the middle class is a reality. The new middle class is more a consumer class, which at present a group that is sandwiched between and manipulated by both the unorganized service sector and the multinational corpora-tions. Because of these manipulations, the old and new middle classes tend to come together. The con-clusion reiterates the long history of the emergence of the middle class. In today's globalized economy and market, the new middle class is the largest pillar of the market-based utilitarianism. Hence, to preserve every society holistically, we must make a careful blend between the subjective humanitarianism proposed by the new middle class and the objective value of individuality based on material as well as spiritual prospects.

### Part IV: Multiculturalism and Religion

Part IV entitled *Multiculturalism and Religion* includes seven chapters - chapters twenty to twenty-six. This part presents religious values as enhancing and preserving values of multiculturalism, despite the potential for violence found in some doctrines of religions, such as the notion of *jihad* in Islam. Hindu religious notions - "the world is one family" and "being active in the world in view of holding together the society and world as a whole," the Buddhist practice of *silas* and the Islamic practice of the "five pillars" of Islam are capable of ushering in greater peace and harmony among people, contributing to the harmonious coexistence of people of diverse cultures, and enhancing the common good, progress and wellbeing of all. Likewise the religion of Truth and non-violence proposed by Gandhi, the rational religion of S. Radhakrishnan, and the universal religion of Swami Vivekananda are based on the Vedantic vision of Reality, which holds that Ultimate Reality is one that includes many. Hence, the goal of human person is to move beyond his *ego*-centric existence and embrace diversity of existence, particularly human existence, thereby realize one's identity with the Ultimate Reality. This unitive perspective of life, in its social aspect, find expression in the Vedantic vision, the "whole world is one family." This social

truth calls everyone to realize that he should not covet that belongs to others. For global business it means that they do business not for supernormal profit, but keeping in mind the need for providing standardization of subsistence level for the poor of the world. Thus, *Vedanta* provides a platform for unification of nations and a global ethics which would guide the business houses to do business according to global ethical standards and keeping in mind the sustainable development of the world as a whole. Similarly, Christian social and ethical teachings as propounded in the Bible includes sanctity of human life, economic security and fair and just judicial proceedings, which correspond to the overarching concerns of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, religions, in general, acknowledge multicultural values and call their adherents to live in cordial relationship with people of diverse cultures. Now, we delve into the contents of the seven chapters that form the Part IV.

Roshan Nisar, in the twentieth chapter, "Is Islam Really a Religion of Peace?" highlights the notion of violence found in the teachings of the *Quran* and Prophet Muhammad. In the "Introduction" the author confesses that he neither desires to condemn, nor label any religion or its adherents; but only asks all to be critical of their cherished beliefs and see that they are consonant with truth and correspond to reality. Having made these initial observations, in the first section, the author raises the question "Is the notion of violence inherent in Islam?" Though not all Muslims are violent or terrorists, it seems that the notion of violence is inherent in the Islam as a religion, an ideology, a philosophy and a theology. It is the precepts of Islam that define the Islamic faith and not the good or the bad actions of Muslims. A Muslim is one who confesses that *Allah* is the only God; Muhammad is the final Prophet; and the teachings *Quran*. Since all Muslims have to obey the teachings of *Allah*, His Prophet, and the *Quran*, they also must accept those texts in the *Quran*, in which there is a direct reference to violence. Thus, there seems to be an inherent connection between Islam and violence. The second section takes up the question "Why does not all Muslims practice violence if Islam propagates it?" In clarifying this point the author asks a counter question: "Why all Muslims are not pacifistic if Islam is a religion of peace?" For, there is a striking congruity between the diabolic acts of violence carried out by the terrorists and the open-

ended teachings of the *Quran* regarding violence. Thus, the fact that there are Muslims who are peaceful does not prove the fact that violence is not inherent in the teachings of *Quran* and Prophet Muhammad. The third section elaborates on the incongruity found in Prophet's revelations regarding violence. During the four stages of the development of Islam in Muhammad's life-time, he has received contradictory revelations regarding violence. For instance, the Meccan revelations are more tolerant, whereas the Medinian revelations are more violent in nature, asking to murder the Jews, Christians, and even the Muslims, if they do not take the path of violence. Thus, there has come about an explicit espousal of violence in *Quran*, to which the author turns his attention, in the fourth section. Islam divides people as Muslims and non-Muslims. In *Quran*, there are *Suras* that speak of destroying all non-Muslims and establishing the brotherhood of Islam. Similarly, the different sects of Islam are in constant war with each other believing that the Muslims of other sects are infidels. The conclusion reiterates the author's contention that violence is inherent in Islam and it is not a religion of peace. Islam needs no spokesperson at all; for it speaks quite eloquently and perspicuously for itself. Terrorists have not tarnished the face of Islam, but they simply bring to light and act upon the real face of Islam hidden in the teachings of the *Quran* and the Prophet. Thus, when we consider Islam as a religion and an ideology, it is difficult to accept that it is a religion of peace.

Veerasamy S. George Joseph, in the twenty-first chapter entitled "Hindu Scriptural and Other Religious Insights Enhancing Healthy Family Living through 'Multicultural and Inter-Religious Coexistence'," begins by presenting family as a social institution and the primary educator with an intergenerational link. Hence, it is capable of communicating values, such as oneness of humanity, love and selflessness to new generations, thereby make people to be more humane in a world that is multicultural and multireligious. Since the family is the bedrock of social and world order in a globalizing world, it is vital that we enhance healthy family living by facilitating multicultural and interreligious coexistence of families. Hence, in this chapter, the author attempts to elaborate on the goal of enhancing healthy family living, thereby bring about a deeper and fuller multicultural and multireligious family coexistence, in view of establishing a more humane social and world order by taking

recourse to Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic scriptural insights. There-fore, the first section of this chapter analyzes two Hindu scriptural insights - *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* and *lokasaṁgraha*. The concept of *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* consists in considering the entire world as one family. Hence, it involves the avoidance of all forms for discrimination. When one bears in mind the whole humanity as a family, then he would allow himself to be guided by values, attitudes and actions that normally prevail in a well-knit family. This, in turn, will help him not to disregard other people and cultures, thereby prevent him from being indifferent to other persons' sociocultural and religious sensibilities. Similarly, the concept of *lokasaṁgraha* propagates the notion of being active in the world in view of holding together the society and world as a whole. This path is clearly opposed to renunciation of involvement in the world. However, it proposes to renounce the personal desire to posses the fruits of the actions we do for the common good. Both of these concepts from the Hindu scriptures are capable of ushering in greater peace and harmony among peoples of the world. The second section considers the Buddhist notion of *silas* and their implications for the wellbeing of all. The practice of *silas* provides a wholesome foundation for personal and social growth, by contributing to harmonious and peaceful coexistence among community members and by promoting the common good of the society. Buddhists practice *silas* not to please a supreme being, but to lead a good and noble personal life; and to help maintain peace and harmony in society thereby facilitate the progress and wellbeing of all. The third section clarifies the five pillars of Islam and elaborates on their potential for common good. Islam motivates its adherents to live a personal spiritual life and to be active socially for creating a better world order. Doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong by the practice of the Five Pillars of Islam, a Muslim is prepared to live at ease with oneself, while playing a significant communitarian role in the society. The conclusion states the lasting value of the theological and anthropological intuitive insights found in the scriptures of various religions, which have moved reformers of society, such as Vivekananda, L. M. Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi to work tirelessly for the deeper wellbeing and greater common good of all.

In the twenty-second chapter entitled "Beyond Cultural Identity: Gandhian Perspective," B. Sambasiva Prasad attempts to

explore the Gandhi's perspective of multiculturalism and its relevance today. In the "Introduction," he clarifies the meaning of culture and multiculturalism. Then, in the first section, he proceeds to elaborate on Gandhian view of culture. Since truth and non-violence are central principles of Gandhian philosophy, for Gandhi, a culture to be genuine it must be guided by these two principles. Hence, Gandhi would reject any culture that attempts to suppress, supersede and dominate the other. All cultures are equally important. Hence, there must be mutual respect, acceptance and fellowship between different cultures. No culture could live in isolation and it has to mingle with other cultures and live in harmony. One has to love one's culture; but this does not mean that one should hate other cultures. Though cultures are empirically different from each other having their own peculiarities, there is some commonality among them, for all cultures are different expressions of the same Truth. The second section speaks of multi-culturalism and human dialectics. Gandhi believed that everyone must move beyond cultural and religious identities and embrace multiculturalism. To achieve this goal, one must control egoism and develop altruism. Human nature has conflicting beastly and divine qualities. This is the human dialectics. In this struggle, man must suppress his *ego* and develop the quality seeing himself in others. This will help him to move from egoism to altruism, which in turn, leads him to the state of Pure Consciousness, where all distinctions are removed and one sees the holistic Truth about Reality. When a person reaches this state of oneness, he moves beyond his own culture and recognizes the value of every culture and embraces multiculturalism. The conclusion states that people must go beyond cultural identity. All cultures must exist in friendly association. People should have the attitude of non-violence towards other cultures, by accepting and respecting them. This, in turn, will help them to know the Truth in and beyond all cultures; facilitate fellowship of cultures; and their mutual existence.

Tapati Chakravartty, in the twenty-third chapter "All Mankind is One: S. Radhakrishnan on Spiritual Reality" unfolds S. Radhakri-shnan's interpretation of Upanishadic teaching that the Ultimate Principle behind the multiplicity and diversity of the world is *Brahman* - the One Spiritual Reality. Thus, for Radhakrishnan, the Ultimate Reality is the unity of all things, which the author

elaborates in the first section of this chapter. Since Ultimate reality is a totality of things nothing is isolated from it. There is many in one and one in many. Hence, Radhakrishnan attempts at a logical synthesis of abstract pluralism and abstract monism. Our philosophical enquiry about reality begins with the explanations of the many things in the world. This enquiry automatically leads us to the Ultimate Source of all that we perceive. Hence, these two issues are logically linked. Thus, the Ultimate Reality is one that includes many. The second section elaborates on the unity in diversity that is found in the reality of the human person as a body-spirit complex. In the human person, beyond the body and the mind with its intellectual and volitional functions, there is the inner spirit/soul which underlies all the above and sustains them. Hence, there is the need to balance the diversity with the underlying One Spiritual Reality, both in the level of the universe and the human person, which the third section takes up for discussion. Neither the spiritual aspect, nor the empirical dimension should be over-emphasized. The harmonious synthesis the spiritual and empirical dimensions would pave the way for the Religion of the Spirit that moves beyond dogmas, rites and rituals, and embrace the essential spirituality of all religions. The reawakening of this spiritual view of reality will enable to apprehend the Spirit of Man (*Atman*) as identical with the Universal Spirit (*Brahman*), thereby help people to attain everlasting happiness, eliminating all ills of the world. The conclusion reiterates spirituality as an absolute value - which if allowed to be rightfully balanced with the material dimension of reality - will make every person aware of the fact that his Inner Spirit is different from his individual *ego*; will make qualities, such as good will, pure love and disinterestedness as ideals of human life; and thereby a person's reason for action becomes more rooted in "other-worldliness." In this way, the world would be better place for diverse cultural groups.

Lily Biswas, in the twenty-fourth chapter "Swami Vivekananda: The Voice of Eternal Oneness," begins by clarifying the meaning of the term "seer" in the Hindu perspective. Seers are those who have seen and heard the eternal truth, which they record in the *Vedas*. In this chapter, the author briefly examines the prophetic authenticity of such a seer, Swami Vivekananda, who vouched for the foundational teachings of the *Vedas* - the unity of all things in the universe - both from religious and scientific perspectives. Hence, the first

section of this chapter deals with the unity of all things from the religious and scientific perspectives. Swami Vivekananda's Advitic interpretation of the foundational truth of the *Vedas*, which is the basic tenet of the universal religion he proposes, is the essential unity of all things. This truth of religion is proved by the quantum theory. According to this theory subatomic particles function both as particles and waves. Therefore, the phenomenal reality can only be understood in terms of the probability of interconnections. Hence, the constituents of matter and the basic phenomena involving them are all interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. They cannot be understood as isolated entities, but only as integrated parts of the whole. Thus, quantum theory reveals the truth of Vivekananda's religion - the essential unity of the universe. The second section takes up the nature of physical individuality. In the web of inter-connections of integrated whole, individuality is the source all differences and disorientation. It is not a reality, but a delusion of the mind. In an ocean of matter, "you," "I" or "sun" is the names of little particles of matter. It is our mind that leads us to the perception of individuality; but in reality all is oneness. The third section considers the issue of quest for unity as the goal of both science and religion. Science presents the "morphic fields" as that which organize atoms, molecules, crystals, organelles, cells, tissues, organs, organisms, societies, ecosystems, planetary systems, solar systems and galaxies. These morphic fields are the basis for the wholeness that we observe in nature, which is more than the sum of the parts. This truth of science is the truth of Vivekananda's religion - through multiplicity and duality the ultimate unity is reached. The conclusion states that the universal principle, the "Consciousness *Per Se*" pervades this whole universe, integrates it to an unbroken whole and yet transcends it. The whole universe evolves from this Ultimate Con-sciousness, lives in it and returns into it. The end of all science is to find this unity, the one existing in many.

In the twenty-fifth chapter entitled "Global Ethics and International Development: Mission of *Vedanta* as Envisaged by Swami Vivekananda," Sandip Chatterjee and Sukla Chatterjee look into the core philosophy of religions, with particular reference to *Vedanta*, as envisaged by Swami Vivekananda, in order to derive the foundation of a global ethics for international development. In the "Introduction," the authors state that since market forces sway the

diversity of the globe adversely, we fail to find commonalities that unify the nations, thereby fail to adopt a holistic view for upholding the values of humanism and protecting this planet. In this context Vedantic vision "the world is one family" can provide a way forward. Having made these introductory comments, the authors, in the first section, consider the emergence and proliferation of market economy. Here, they unfold the chronological development of market economy from its beginnings up to the present, its proliferation through colonialism and neo-colonialism, and the concentration and centralization of capital, in our times, in a few multinational corporations. Besides, this section also looks into the way we can manage the darker side of globalization unleashed by the market economy. The greatest challenge of geopolitics today is managing the evils of globalization. This dangerous situation has compelled the global community to fall back on a global ethics and the constitution of international regulating agencies. These measures have some impact on the global market forces. However, they have not completely succeeded in regulating them, and have failed to arrest violations every now and then. The second section highlights Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of *Vedanta*, which considers the whole world as one family. The realization of this truth would call one not to covet that belongs to others. For global business, it would mean that business houses do business in this world not only with the motive of supernormal profit, but also to bring about the standardization of subsistence level that would benefit the poorer nations of the world. Thus, philosophy of *Vedanta*, when applied to global business would lead to sustenance of the civilization through humanism, which is the core of all religions. Thus, *Vedanta* could provide the platform for the unification of nations and a global ethics. The conclusion reiterates that the philosophy of religions can emerge the key to unify the diverse nations of the globe and put in place a global ethics not only for international business practices, but also for global development at large.

In the twenty-sixth chapter entitled "Being and Becoming Human in Multicultural Traditions: A Biblical Position on Human Rights," Rajesh investigates the manner in which the major ethical teachings of the Bible support the overarching concerns of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Before analyzing the Biblical view of on human rights, in the first section, the author discusses the

overarching concerns of the UDHR. Some of the overarching concerns of the UDHR are protecting the inherent dignity, freedom and equality of all human beings; providing economic security for all by ensuring that they have proper employment, they are given fair wages and they are not discriminated; and giving justice and protection through the law against arbitrary interference into their privacy, family, home and assault on one's honor and reputation. The second section proceeds to examine whether the above-mentioned overarching normative moral standards of the UDHR find support in the ethical framework of the Bible, with special reference to the Pentateuch and the Gospels. The ethical teachings of the Bible as propounded in the Pentateuch and the Gospels can be elaborated on three topics: the sanctity of human life, economic security, and fair and just judicial proceedings. Sanctity of human life is based on the Biblical belief that the human persons are made in the image and likeness of God. The sixth commandment "You shall not kill"; Jesus' interpretation of this commandment in his teaching about anger, hatred and violence in human relationships; and Jesus' teaching about love of God and neighbor - clearly point to the fact that sanctity of human life implies the equality of all human beings; and the dignity and respect the other deserves. For this reason, any discrimination of human beings, and denial of dignity and respect for the other based on socioeconomic and political criteria is an assault on God. The eighth commandment "You shall not steal"; the tenth commandment condemning all forms of covetousness; the Biblical teaching on caring for the alien, the widows and the orphans, and writing off the debts every seventh year - sabbatical year, and every fiftieth year - jubilee year, form the Biblical foundations of economic security for all. Biblical notion of fair and just judicial proceeding is founded on the ninth commandment "you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor," the teachings of Pentateuch on this issue, and Jesus' teaching on taking false oath, and being straightforward and honest in one's general conversations and witnessing in the court. The conclusion states that the discussion of the principles of human rights propagated by UDHR and the ethical teachings of the Bible clearly show that the biblical teaching regarding sanctity of life, economic security, and fair and just judicial proceedings endorse the overarching concerns expressed in the UDHR. Hence, the adherents of Christian faith, who follow the

Biblical teachings, must become ardent propagators of the concerns of UDHR on human rights. If all religions and cultures support the concerns of UDHR, it would provide cultural and religious legitimacy to the concerns of UDHR, which in turn, will help everyone to move towards "being and becoming human in multicultural traditions."

## Part V: Multiculturalism and Dialogue

Part V entitled *Multiculturalism and Dialogue*, consisting of four chapters - chapter twenty-seven to chapter thirty - visualizes genuine dialogue among cultures and religions as means to actualize the goal of multiculturalism in upholding the value of diverse cultures, while leading people of diverse of cultures to mutual respect and harmonious social living. In today's modern society, though interfaith and intercultural dialogue holds great possibilities for partners in dialogue and the society at large, yet to achieve these lofty goals, they must overcome the limits/constrains to dialogue, such as resistance from within cultures and religions for dialogue, making dialogue move from superficial level to the central aspects of the cultures and religions involved in dialogue, modernizing traditional values of cultures and religions for their better development in the globalized world, promoting mutual understanding among them, and the like. Besides, intercultural and interfaith dialogue must reconcile the tension between multiculturalism and cultural isolationism among partners of dialogue by creating an attitude of openness to enter into the dialogue process and by giving each cultural and religious group its rightful place in the dialogue process according its "specific weight" in the society. Likewise, dialogue to bear fruit, we must use the "soft power" of passing information, diplomacy, and right use of intelligence and intrigue that the policy-makers and political leadership may accept and implement the fruits of dialogue for the betterment of the society. Having given these general guidelines for interfaith and intercultural dialogue, Part V presents three models of interfaith dialogue - the Vedantic model, the model presented in "The Holy Science" (*Kaivalyadarsana*) and the Buddhist model, so as to facilitate genuine dialogue among cultures and religions. Now, let us give a brief sketch of the four chapters contained in Part V.

A.G. Kosichenko, in the twenty-seventh chapter entitled "Dialogue of Cultures and Religions in Multicultural Traditions of Modernity," begins, in the "Introduction," by stating the difficulties experienced in the European countries that are multicultural and multi-religious to unify conflicting cultural and religious values within the nation-states due to the collision of liberal values of the modern world with the diverse religious and cultural values. The author claims that dialogue of cultures and religions, if cultivated among various cultural and religious groups of the nation-state, can result in bringing together diverse cultures and religions and their people. Hence, in the first section of this chapter, the author formulates the problem of dialogue of cultures and religions in the context of the modern society having multicultural and multi-religious traditions. Some aspects of this problem are analyzing the possibilities and limits of dialogue between cultures and religions; promoting mutual understanding among cultures and religions; bringing social solidarity and consolidation of the society; making the dialogue move from superficial level to the central level of the cultures and religions involved in the dialogue; controlling the resistance comes from within cultures and religions for dialogue; modernizing the traditional values of cultures and religions for their better development in the globalized world; and providing equal opportunities for each culture and religion to develop its own traditional values. Having outlined the central aspects of the problem, the second section considers the possibilities and limits of dialogue among cultures. Intercultural dialogue must reconcile the tension between multiculturalism and cultural isolationism. This calls for preserving the unity of the society while maintaining the ethnic identities and confessional specifics of all groups without insisting on the absolute priority of any group. However, when we enter into intercultural dialogue, we must keep in mind the "specific weight" of and the priority given to a particular social group in a society. Similarly, intercultural dialogue must recognize the centrality of culture in all spheres of public life, society and the individual. The way of a productive intercultural dialogue begins with confrontation; the recognition of the need for better relationship leads to the starting of the dialogue; and as parties cooperate in the process of dialogue, there comes about a partnership. Intercultural dialogue is a process and not the outcome. Hence, it must be

multilateral and multidimensional. The third section briefly considers some recent national and international initiatives for the implementation of intercultural and inter-civilization dialogue - "Dialogue of Civilizations" World Public Forum; Alliance of Civilizations; and a few other notable initiatives. The fourth section speaks of the role dialogue of religions in intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogues. Here, the author points out how true dialogue among religions can foster and strengthen intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogues and effectively bring about harmonious living of people of different cultural backgrounds, particularly by giving the example of Kazakhstan, where the major religions - the Orthodox Christianity and Islam - play a very significant role in this regard. The fifth section considers the issue of dialogue of religions. Though often it is difficult in today's world, interreligious dialogue is so vital for the general health and wellbeing of the society. Without the dialogue of religions, there will only be confrontations and conflicts of religions that are behind cultures, civilizations, social communities, peoples and nations. To prevent this, it is necessary to fully contribute to the dialogue of religions. Therefore, the issue of dialogue of religions must be treated responsibly, both by religious leaders and politicians, and consider it as a strategic goal of global analytical and expert community. The sixth section explores the prospects of dialogue of cultures and religions in the modern world. The possibility of dialogue of religions bringing about genuine social transformation in the modern world is very slim because the policy makers - the political and economic elite - of today are insincere and insensitive to the need of the society. Their malicious intentions and lack of effectiveness in practical implementation of the policies prevent the transformation, otherwise would have brought about by the dialogue of religions. The conclusion states that political policy-makers and the scholars in humanities must follow the same logic and speak the same language. We must master the logic and language of the politicians and communicate to them in their language and according to their logic the results of the dialogue of religions, which in turn, would facilitate their practical implementa-tion. Besides, we must use the "soft power" of passing information, diplomacy, and right use of intelligence and intrigue, thereby force the politicians to reckon with the findings of humanities and accept

the possibilities the dialogue between cultures and religions proposes for the betterment of society and the world at large.

In the twenty-eighth chapter entitled "Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue," Dilipkumar Mohanta attempts to develop a Vedantic model of religious pluralism based on the teachings of the *Vedas*. According to the *Vedas* the Ultimate Reality, the Truth, is one and is experienced in different names and forms. Different schools of *Vedanta* system of philosophy develop this unitary message of the *Vedas*. The author claims that this Vedic-Vedantic model in understanding interreligious and interfaith relations would bring about autonomous existence of many religions; lead to not mere toleration of other religions, but their acceptance; uproot dogmatism, communalism and fanaticism concerning religions; prevent religions becoming forces of disruption, division and destruction; strengthen interreligious understanding; be instrumental in conflict resolution and peace-building; and produce sustainable communal harmony. Having made these observations in the "Introduction," he moves on, in the first section, to elaborate on the Vedantic model of religious pluralism. It consists in neither religious exclusivism, nor religious inclusivism; but in recognizing that every religion is an adequate path to the realization of the Ultimate Reality and makes religions complementary in achieving the final goal of the humans. According to this model, each religious tradition represents only one among many expressions of religious experience. The second section unfolds the Vedic foundations of Vedantic model of religious pluralism by expounding the truth "Reality is One" (*Ekam Sat*), as it is presented in the *Rg Veda*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Upanishads*. The third section highlights the importance of the pluralistic worldview regarding religions, as it stimulates receptivity and openness towards other traditions and makes us willing to recognize and respond to the truth present in these religious traditions. Besides, it brings about a true secular atmosphere, in which adherents of different religions can practice the precepts of their religions in true freedom. The conclusion points out that Vedantic model of religious pluralism is a precondition for interreligious dialogue, as it encourages respect among various religious traditions; keeps communication active; cause cooperative, constructive and positive interaction among people of different faiths; provides the opportunity to make a spiritual journey into the value-world of another

religious tradition; and allow the principle of "live and let live" in their religious practice - in the process lessening sectarian mindset and leading to conflict-free social and religious living.

In the twenty-ninth chapter entitled "*Kivalyadarsanam* of Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri: An Inspiration to Interfaith Dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism," K Gayathri Devi explores the possibility of greater understanding between Christianity and Hinduism as envisaged by Paramaguru Mahavatar Babaji, Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri and his disciple Paramahansa Yogananda. In the "Introduction," the author briefly mentions about these three sages and introduces the work *Kaivalyadarsanam* (The Holy Science) and later commentaries on this work. Having made these observations, the author analyzes the structure of this text in the first section of the chapter. The Holy Science (*Kaivalyadarsanam*) has four sections that are entitled the Gospel (*Veda*), the Goal (*Abhishtam*), the Procedure (*Sadhanam*) and the Revelation (*Vibhuti*) which describe the fundamental truths of creation, the purpose of life, the method of realizing the purpose of life and the revelations that are attained by the aspirants (*sadhakas*) respectively. The author points out that the purpose behind the composition of this work is to remove the barriers and to help in establishing the basic truth in all religions broadly, and especially to establish a fundamental harmony between the difficult Biblical book "The Revelation to John" and the *Samkhya* philosophy of India. The second section deals with the analysis of the content of the four parts of the text in the light of the Biblical book "The Revelation to John." The text helps the aspirant to know the gospel, its goal of self-realization, the procedure with the help of which the goal preached by the gospel can be achieved, and finally the revelation of the goal in attainment of the self-realization. The conclusion states that the whole text of "The Holy Science *Kaivalyadarsana*" proves to be an inspiration to the interfaith dialogue between the Christianity and Hinduism (*Sanatanadharma*) showing the oneness of the teachings of both the religions accurately on the basis of the science of *yoga*. It can pave the way of greater understanding not only between Christianity and Hinduism, but also between other religions, thereby lead to global peace, prosperity and betterment of humanity.

K. Bhima Kumar, in the thirtieth chapter "Interfaith Dialogue as a Means to Resolve Conflict: Some Preliminary Observations from

Buddhism," attempts to show how Buddhism, by using interfaith dialogue, reduces conflicts and violence, solve human problems and attain universal peace. Hence, to clarify the notion of interfaith dialogue in Buddhism, in the first section of this chapter, the author analyzes, in general, the nature and importance of interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue involves meeting of people among themselves and getting to know their religious traditions. It consists of discussion for mutual understanding held among differing religious bodies in mutual presence, speaking and listening, witnessing the commitments, the values, and the rituals of others. Each group remains true to its own beliefs, while respecting the right of others to practice their faith freely. Interfaith dialogue is important because it brings mutual understanding, builds deeper respect for others' religious practices, recognizes the equality of all religions and people of all faiths, and brings peaceful coexistence. The second section analyzes the Buddhist view of interfaith dialogue. Buddha believed that dialogue must begin with what the parties of the dialogue agree on, putting aside the topics of difference. Similarly, futile metaphysical and speculative topics should not be taken up for discussion; but those practical aspects that affect the everyday life of the people should be the topic of discussion. To have a fruitful dialogue one should have an open mind and should be ready for self-evaluation. The third section deals with the issue of solving conflicts and problems by using Buddhist method of dialogue. In order to solve conflicts Buddha recommended the practice four sublime feelings of universal love, compassion, sympathetic joy in others' success and equanimity in all vicissitudes of life, as the dialogue with the other progresses. Similarly, while dealing different kinds of problems at the level of dialogue, all the parties should identify the problems first, and then should proceed towards the solution either by addressing that problem directly; or by analyzing the problem thoroughly; or by putting counter questions; or setting aside the common trivial issues that create the problem for all the parties. The conclusion states that Buddhism always opens its door for all kinds of views for a meaningful dialogue. It does not dogmatically claim that its own standpoint as the only possible correct standpoint. Buddhism maintains a long history that throughout the world, wherever it travelled, it neither tried to

destroy the traditions, nor did it have a conflict with other cultures; but successfully coexisted with them in great harmony.

## Part VI: Multiculturalism and Education

Part VI entitled *Multiculturalism and Education*, consisting of the last five chapters of the volume - chapters thirty-one to thirty-five - propounds the need to bring the values of multiculturalism to the next generation of students through the educational systems and institutions in view of making them open-minded citizens of their nations and the world, in the process enhancing better integration of cultures and peoples in the societal, national and international levels. To achieve this goal multicultural education follows the principle of educational equity for all, regardless of cultural backgrounds; and strives to remove barriers to educational opportunities and academic success of students from different cultures and backgrounds. It calls for transformation in the school system, including policies, teachers' attitudes, instructional materials, assessment methods, counseling, and teaching styles. Besides, multicultural education fosters basic values, such as human rights, freedom, democracy, inculcation of intercultural sensitivity and solidarity between the majority and the minority groups, keeping in mind both the "ethnic" and the "national" character, so that while maintaining one's cultural identity, the minorities are helped to become effective citizen of their nations. Thus, multicultural education informs, ignites and inculcates mutual acceptance and respect for each other, thereby paves the way for a healthy, harmonious and happy living together of diverse people, where differences no more divide, but only unite. Finally, Part VI also presents the Indian educational system as an example of multicultural education that facilitates both the teachers and students to acquire values, such as justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion and charity, which in turn, would help them understand the multiethnic nature of India and foster positive interracial relationships and interactions. Now, we turn our attention to the contents of the five chapters included in Part VI.

S. Solomon Raju, in the thirty-first chapter "Global Perspective of Multicultural Education: Some Important Aspects," explains the need of multicultural education and highlights some of its important aspects. Multicultural education is based on the principle of

educational equity for all students, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. It strives to remove barriers to educational opportunities and academic success of students from different cultures and backgrounds. Hence, in the first section, the author looks into the nature and need for multicultural education. It requires critical thinking and imagination; commitment to a better tomorrow; and must include the wealth of all of our stories and peoples. Thus, multicultural education aims to improve the learning and success of all students, particularly students from cultural groups that have been historically underrepresented and suffered from lower educational achievement and attainment. Hence, it calls for transformation in the school system, including policies, teachers' attitudes, instructional materials, assessment methods, counseling, and teaching styles. The second section analyzes some important dimensions of multicultural education, such as its background, the classroom situation, the role of the teacher and the curriculum. The evolution of multicultural education begins with the Civil Right Movement in the United States, continues through the enactment of "Bilingual Education Act" and "No child Left Behind Act," and moves into the present and the future, helping minority groups to get integrated into the mainstream, while maintaining their cultural identities. Over the years, it has effectively helped students of diverse cultures by bringing about changes in the classroom situation, the role of the teacher and the curriculum. The third section deals with the measures taken and to be taken for professionally developing the teachers and approaches to teaching in order to make multicultural education productive. The conclusion states that by empowering multicultural education, we can promote civic good, increase self-esteem of non-mainstream students and provide good exposure to diversified students, which in turn, will protect minority group culture and promote equality and social justice. Hence, this is time for multicultural educators, policy makers, teaching community, organized bodies and peacemakers to focus on the global perspective on multicultural education, and introduce and implement it in schools to protect human values and to maintain harmonious relationship among the diverse peoples of this world.

In the thirty-second chapter entitled "Multicultural Education for a Changing World," Nireekshana K. Kancharla in the "Introduction" briefly states the origins of multicultural education in the 1960s

with the aim of fostering students' cultural identity and offer every student a high standard of education, thereby enhance the coexistence of children and adults of different cultural descent and environment in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. Then the author moves on to analyze present-day multicultural education in the first section. Multiculturalism has become a real problem that affects many nation-states in the world. Migration of people of different cultures into many nations of the world has increased in recent times. The availability of better opportunities in these countries; and the increase in the number of political asylum seekers and refugees because of poor economic conditions or hostilities, violence and unrest in their home countries have made these nations multi-cultural. The new arrivals bring their cultural and ethnic identities with them and seek their rightful place in the society. The western nations have taken two approaches regarding the education of diverse groups. Some nations have made the language of the host-country as the medium of education; whereas some other nations while teaching the language of the nation, also allowed vernacular languages to be used as the medium of education. The second section highlights the pathway of multicultural education for the changing world. Nations facing the issue of multiculturalism can either ignore the issue or analyze and investigate the problem of multiculturalism and find right solutions. Multicultural education must foster basic values, such as human rights, freedom, democracy and solidarity between the majority and the minority groups. Thus, it must keep in mind both the "ethnic" and the "national" character, so that while maintaining one's cultural identity, the minorities are helped to become effective citizen of the nation. This, in turn, will foster understanding among people of different cultural traditions and help to build up intrapersonal relationships among diverse people. The conclusion states that multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education, which holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education, based on social justice, educational equity, and respect for diverse perspectives. Hence, the task of multicultural education is to reduce the form, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination between in-groups and out-groups, thereby provide a more effective education for today's changing society.

In the thirty-third chapter entitled, "Multicultural Education: For 'Being Human and Shaping a Global Citizen' in a Diversified World," T. Uma Devi states in the "Introduction" that establishing a globalized world of diversity and a world community, and bringing about one's call to be a global citizen need a multicultural education that can empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. Having made these initial observations, in the first section of this chapter, the author elaborates on the nature, approaches and dimensions of multicultural education. Multicultural education promotes principles, such as inclusion, diversity, democracy, skill acquisition, inquiry, critical thought, value of perspectives, and self-reflection. It is an educational philosophy that focuses on celebrating cultural differences, and challenges all forms of discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, ability or sexual orientation. There are four approaches to multicultural education - contributions approach, additive approach, transformation approach and social action approach, which makes education more effective for the formation of global citizens. There are five dimensions of multicultural education - empowerment, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, knowledge construction and content integration. The second section highlights the role of intercultural sensitivity in multicultural education. The first subsection clarifies the notions of cultural sensitivity and intercultural learning, besides expounding the path of intercultural learning, which moves through the levels of ethnocentricity, awareness, understanding, acceptance and respect, appreciation and valuing, selective adaption and multiculturation. The second subsection deals with developmental model for intercultural sensitivity, which follows the path of intercultural learning and moves through diverse stages of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and integration of difference. The third subsection recounts the stages of intercultural sensitivity, which are basically the same as the six phases of the developmental model for intercultural sensitivity. The conclusion states that the potential of multicultural education to be the catalyst to bring diverse cultures together, by eliminating the problems of stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and bigotry.

In the thirty-fourth chapter "Role of Multicultural Education in Imparting Tolerance and Promoting Harmony," Tonia Grace Ganta,

K. Vijaya Rachel, Satya Rao Uppuleti and J. Ratna Grace in the "Introduction" briefly consider the multicultural and diverse nature of India and the value of multicultural education in imparting tolerance and promoting harmony among people of multicultural nations, such as India. Having made this initial observation, in the first section of this chapter, the authors proceed to analyze the need for multicultural teaching and learning. A pluralistic world facing analogous issues need to embrace the global perspective of multicultural education so as to bring about better understanding among diverse cultural and ethnic groups. Multicultural education achieves this goal by orienting the young minds towards the concept of cultural diversity in the context of the classroom and prepares them to live an integrated life in a multicultural society. Since multicultural education attempts to preserve the uniqueness of diverse cultures, while bringing people of all cultures together to build the nation, it is vital for multicultural world. The second section speaks of the benefits of multicultural education. Multicultural education recognizes cultural pluralism as an ideal and healthy state in any dynamic society. It aims to promote equity and respect among the existing cultural groups by developing more positive attitudes towards different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups. It bridges the gulf of ignorance and arrogance. Thus, multicultural education makes young minds to live without fear, hold their heads high, exchange knowledge freely, and relate rationally to people who are different from them. In doing so, multicultural education becomes an instrument of communicating to the students spirit of tolerance and harmony, which is considered in the third section of the chapter. Multicultural education engages students in activities that encourage cooperation, build consensus, make them reflective listeners and help them to become effective problem-solvers. Students are taught that all are equal and free, and so everyone should be treated with respect. Thus, by teaching students language of pace and mutual respect, multicultural education helps them to carry out positive interactions in daily situations in the microcosm of the classroom, thereby helps them to be instrumental in building up a just and equitable world order. The conclusion states that multicultural education is not only a device to teach tolerance and harmonious living among diverse cultural groups, but also a way to enhance the spirit of celebrating their

differences. Thus, multicultural education informs, ignites and inculcates mutual acceptance and respect for each other, thereby paves the way for a healthy, harmonious and happy living together of diverse people, where differences no more divide, but only unite.

In the thirty-fifth chapter entitled "Integrated Multicultural Education in Indian Society," Baiaphira G. Lyngskor attempts to examine the relevance of multicultural education in the pluralistic and democratic Indian society for promotion of national integration. In the "Introduction" the author begins by stating the appalling situations of conflict and violence found in Indian society, and presents the emerging backward castes and classes seeking their rightful place; the equally strong upper castes and classes attempting to retain their place of dominance, and the implications of global capitalism and market economy, as the reasons for these conditions. Having made these preliminary observations, in the first section, the author presents a general consideration of multicultural education. Multicultural education, as a philosophical concept is based on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality and human dignity; and helps students to take up their responsibility in an interdependent world. It affirms pluralism and values cultural diversity. It challenges all forms of discriminations and promotes the democratic principle of social justice. The second section highlights the approaches to multicultural education, principles that guide it and its different types. The diverse approaches, principles and models of education would facilitate to bring about better teaching-learning experience in the classroom and greater integration among students of diverse cultures. The third section takes up for discussion integrated multi-cultural education in India. Secondary level education in India is very significant, as it prepares the teachers who would handle the primary level education and prepares students for the higher university education. Besides, this section points to all the efforts of different committees and commission since Independence to bring about an integrated multicultural education in India. The conclusion suggests a number of recommendations that would facilitate both the teachers and students to acquire values, such as justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion and charity, which in turn, would help them understand the multiethnic nature of India and foster positive interracial relationships and interactions.

In the conclusion, Vensus A. George, the editor of this volume, shares the fruits of his reflections on the content of the essays contained in the volume, *Being Human in Multicultural Traditions*. The thirty-five essays presented in this volume unfold diverse aspects of multiculturalism and reflect on how we can become "human" and "humane" in our life among people of multicultural traditions in the local, societal, national and international levels. The essays not only present the problems posed and encountered by multiculturalism, but also propose solutions and possible ways of coping with them, taking into consideration diverse philosophical, religious and intercultural perspectives. They also highlight the importance of educating citizens of the nations of the world in an integrated and holistic manner, teaching them the values inherent both in the spiritual and secular realms, so that the people of the world may move beyond their narrow and self-centered mindset, accept the multicultural nature of the world they live in, cultivate attitudes that would help them not only to tolerate, but also to accept the people other cultures, foster mutual respect for each other, understand the richness contained in other cultures, and enter into a dialoging relationship with them. The editor's reading and reflection on the content of these essays, during the editorial work of this volume, has brought to the fore twelve themes, which he believes need to be highlighted and elaborated. The themes are the following: multiculturalism and multiple identities; restoring humaneness in multicultural societies; reviving the spiritual - solution to humanity crisis; multiculturalism and cultural chauvinism; multiculturalism and globalization; multiculturalism and social cohesion; religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue; integrated multicultural education; pathways for intercultural education; organicism - an integral approach to human and cosmic progress; spiritual globalization - means to embrace cultural diversities, and future of multiculturalism. Thus, in the conclusion to this volume, he elaborates on these themes, thereby gives expression to his reflection on the content of the essays contained in this volume.

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# Part I
# Multiculturalism and Human Person

# 1.

# Aporia of Tension and Value in Multiculturalism

C.D. SEBASTIAN

## Introduction

Multiculturalism is a notion that captures the imagination of the contemporary discourse in philosophy of culture and society in varied ways. We live in a multicultural society in terms of language, food habits, dressing, ethnic identities, races, religious affiliations, and so on. In multiculturalism, many cultures have their stakes, and it is said that "multiculturalism is the state of a society or the world containing many cultures that interact in some significant way with each other."[1] Besides having many cultures, the individual can seek to go beyond one's culture and all that is in it, and look for a wider commitment beyond one's parochial moorings. Peter Adler puts multiculturalism in this way: "It suggests a human being whose identifications and loyalties transcend the boundaries of nationalism and whose commitments are pinned to a larger vision of the global community."[2] In spite of one's existence in a multicultural *milieu*, one knowingly or unknowingly safeguards one's indigenous identity. In this sense, we could say that "multiculturalism is not by definition good or bad."[3] Hence, we cannot give a value judgment to the entire notion of multiculturalism; but we would uphold this as a value. However, there is a tension in the state of affairs of one's attempt to cope with the multicultural life. The tension arises, when one attempts to preserve one's indigenous identity by holding on to it and at the same tries to transcend one's parochialism - related to

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[1] Amy Gutmann: "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Political Ethics," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1993), p. 171.

[2] Peter S. Adler: "Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Cultural and Multicultural Man," *Topics in Cultural Learning*, ed. Richard Brislin, vol. 2 (Honolulu: East-West Centre, 1974), p. 23.

[3] Amy Gutmann: "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Political Ethics," p. 172.

indigenous identity - in order to embrace some values beyond one's own. This is a perplexity (aporia) of tension and value in multicultural predicament.

In elaborating the above-said issue, I consider the pluralistic nature of contemporary society and the self that encounters the pluralism in the first section. In the second section, I deal with multi-relatedness of the self, and the subsequent possibility of a divided self due to the multiple identities it has to cope and live with, which in turn, can give rise to a tension within. Besides, I also pinpoint the possible anxieties that do arise due to the reality of multiculturalism that was a dream in the twentieth century; but could become a challenge in the present century. In the third section, I suggest some possible new paradigms to consider multiculturalism as a value. In the conclusion, I point to the need for constant becoming rather than being fixed in our attitudes and outlooks to get ourselves integrated into a multicultural life-style. When we do not absolutize, but recognizes the relational, complementary and situational nature of our life and our identities, we can ease the aporia of tension involved in multiculturalism and experience its true value. Now, in the first section, we analyze the contemporary pluralistic society and the self, who experiences pluralism.

## Contemporary Pluralistic Society and Self

Pluralism is the hallmark of contemporary society and it can be applied to the self as well. In urban India, particularly in a city like Mumbai, we see a modern, industrial and mainly capitalist society, which is marked by drastic changes day by day. In such places, there is an enormous impetus to uphold the values of multiculturalism that one encounters. One's culture becomes a subculture in the multicultural environment. One has to be at home with an array of various subcultures with which she/he lives. Her/his experience is marked by the multiplicities of subcultures, and one could be attracted to the trappings of various subcultures. Thus, there is a plurality of the social-life-worlds, in which the individuals in modern societies typically live. The self is created in this multi-cultural push and pull - an experience of push and pull reality of composite, multicultural reality of identity. According to this push-

pull thesis,[4] either one's own indigenous culture pushes her/him out or a promise of a better life somewhere else pulls her/him to embrace a *self* of multicultural identity. Indian society is one that could be a good example of plurality of culture. In it, we have diverse living experience of different religions, languages, classes, castes, creeds, races and above all followers of different ways of life. Here, people from different individual cultural identities, coexist and live together. Thus, there is a coexistence of many subcultures in Indian scenario.

Amidst the life of multicultural encounters, the *identity* question remains. We have multiple identities, such as linguistic, religious, caste, regional, and so on. However, the ethnic identity is the most fundamental, when it comes to one's multicultural context. "Ethnic identity provides an individual with a sense of historical continuity to life, a continuity based on preconscious recognition of tradition-ally held patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that is the cornerstone of a sense of belonging."[5] *Identity* and *culture* are two of the fundamental building blocks of ethnicity.[6] Ethnic identity comes to the fore in a multicultural society due to migration of the subgroups and the reaction of other dominant group/s. In this regard A. Nandi and L. Platt write:

> Ethnic identity is a source of extensive discussion and debate within multicultural societies. Movements of people as a result of forced and economic migration bring into relief ethnic identity through consciousness of difference and awareness of others' reactions and ascriptions. Ethnic conflicts and genocides highlight the extreme consequences that can ensue from the construction of ethnic boundaries and from investment in identification with one's own 'group' while denying the value - or even humanity - of out-groupers. At an individual level, identification with a dominant or marginalized group has been shown to have

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[4] Cf. Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller: *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 19-22.

[5] A.A. Arce: "Cultural Aspects of Mental Health Care for Hispanic Americans," *Cross-Cultural Psychiatry*, ed. A. Gaw (Boston: PSG, 1982), pp. 137-138.

[6] Cf. Joane Nagel: "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," *Social Problems*, vol. 41, no. 1 (1994), p. 152.

consequences for self-esteem and can affect achievement and wellbeing in very tangible ways. Issues of group belonging and identification are, thus, highly significant for individuals and can have consequences for societies; but they also become more or less salient according to location and context.[7]

Let us not forget that it is "through the construction of identity and culture, individuals and groups attempt to address the problematics of ethnic boundaries and meaning." [8] Further "ethnicity is constructed out of the material of language, religion, culture, appearance, ancestry, [and] regionality."[9] Ethnic identity is, thus, seen as a major element in the identity demarcation.

Albeit we speak of pluralism of multiple identities, there is a problem with the very notion of identity. It becomes a fixed set of elements that make an identity what it is. Joan W. Scott writes about identity in this way: "Within the pluralist framework that seeks to contain and resolve the debate, identity is taken as the referential sign of a fixed set of customs, practices, and meanings, an enduring heritage, a readily identifiable sociological category, a set of shares traits and/or experiences."[10] The quandary consists in that while we speak of pluralism and diversity, we also speak of a fixed set of traits without any room for diversity, when we speak of identity. Thus, in diversity, there is a reference to "a plurality of identities." [11] In identities, there is an inbuilt individualism playing a role, which does not accommodate pluralism in itself. It pleads for diversity as the principle *mantra* in multiculturalism, where multiple identities find home, but within itself or within individual identity it abhors diversity. Thus, there is logic of individualism. Scott speaks of the logic of individualism in this way:

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[7] Alita Nandi and Lucinta Platt: "Developing Ethnic Identity Questions for Understanding Society," *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2012), p. 80.

[8] Joane Nagel: "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," p. 152.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

[10] Joan W. Scott: "Multiculturalism and Politics of Identity," *The Identity in Question*, vol. 61 (1992), p. 14.

[11] Cf. *Ibid.*

The logic of individualism has structured the approach to multiculturalism in many ways. The call for tolerance of differences is framed in terms of respect for individual characteristics and attitudes; group differences are conceived categorically and not relationally, as distinct entities rather than interconnected structures or systems created through repeated process of enunciation of difference.[12]

Thus, the logic of individualism celebrates distinctiveness and not interconnectedness.

There is still another problem with individuals speaking for the whole group. "Individuals, then, generalize their perceptions and claim to speak for a whole group, but the groups are also conceived as unitary and autonomous. This individualizing, personalizing conception has also been behind some of the recent identity politics of minorities."[13] When individual perceptions are considered to mark out the views and tenets of the group, it could be devastating as it might not delineate the entire stance of the whole group. When an identity is demarcated on the basis of such individual estimations, such identity could have the danger of lacking some sort of objectivity. This is a problem we come across, when we study multi-culturalism and the individual identities in such multicultural settings. However, we cannot deny the fact that multiculturalism is a verity. In the next section, we move on to analyze the multi-related and divided nature of the self, and the reality of tension that results from it.

### Multi-Related/Divided Nature of Self and Tension

In a multicultural set-up, the self has to acculturate itself - allow itself to go through the process of adjusting to different cultures.[14] One's levels of engagement with other cultures and the dominant

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[14] Cf. Jeanne L. Tsai, Yulia Centsova-Dutton and Ying Wong: "How and Why Researchers should Study Ethnic Identity: Acculturation and Cultural Orientation," *Asian American Psychology: The Science of Lives in Context*, eds. G.C.N. Hall and S. Okasaki (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2002), p. 41.

culture define the acculturation of the self. In their celebrated volume *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*, P. Berger, B. Berger and H. Kellner showed that a modern individual acquires the ability to juggle a plurality of relevances. It is a special trait of modern individual, which they called "multirelationality."[15] In connection with the term "multirelationality," it is said that the individual's "relations with both material objects and other persons become very complex. To keep up with this complexity necessitates a particular tension of consciousness characterized by a quick alertness to ever changing constellations of phenomena."[16] There is an *identity crisis* for the self when it is encountered with multi-relatedness of multiculturalism, as it has a *private self* and a *public self*, and it could lead to a "permanent identity crisis."[17] Since there is such a "divided self," we would submit that there is a tension.

Diversity is a facet of multiculturalism. Diversity could be seen in different realms altogether. It could be diversity in culture, language, religion, ethnicity and race. To quote Padilla on this point:

> Diversity means the existence of peoples from different cultures, who speak different languages, hold different religious beliefs, rituals and practices, celebrate different holidays, take pleasure in different forms of entertainment, interact with family and friends in different ways, and enjoy different types of food and food preparation. Diversity also implies that people, because of the color of their skin and physical appearance, are easily identifiable as different from the majority group.[18]

Diversity, thus, would demarcate the differences of many subgroups. While diversity is a value, it is a problem as well. "While we hear frequent accolades to the value of diversity, there is at the same

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[15] Cf. Peter L Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansford Kellner: *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 37.

[16] *Ibid*.

[17] Cf. *Ibid*., p. 78.

[18] Amado M. Padilla: "Social Cognition, Ethnic Identity, and Ethnic Specific Strategies for Coping with Threat due to Prejudice and Discrimination," *Motivational Aspects of Prejudice and Racism*, ed. C. Willis-Esqueda (New York: Springer, 2008), p. 7.

time much acrimony about diversity. Diversity has stirred up much resentment on issues such as affirmative action, racial profiling, bilingual education, and immigration policy."[19]

Thus, in the midst of diversity, identity problems are bound to come about. The issue of identity problem is one of Thomas Luckmann's key themes.[20] There is an identity crisis for an individual that is caused by the uncertainties of the personal and public sphere. In the public sphere, individuals have to be in tune with the society of many subcultures, where an "individual is forced to define himself as an anonymous performer, as a 'cog in the machine.'"[21] There is a serious psychological damage that can result from a failure to resolve an identity crisis due to the disparity between one's indigenous and ethnic origins, and the mainstream society and culture. There are a number of studies in this regard, and one of the first ones is *The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict* [22] and another important work is *Ethos and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity*.[23] The identity problem that surmises into a crisis is a reality, though the crisis may not be the one "that turned so specifically on how cultural categories determined experiences of identity."[24] In such crisis, one would posit the question whether "identities are constructed, fluid and multiple."[25]

Alongside the identity crisis of the individuals in multicultural predicament, and the tensions therein, there are also additional tensions and related anxieties in multiculturalism. Taking into

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[19] *Ibid*.

[20] Cf. Thomas Luckmann: "Personal Identity as an Evolutionary and Historical Problem," *Human Ethology: Claims and Limits of a New Discipline*, eds. Mario von Cranach, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 56-74.

[21] Peter. L. Berger: "Modernity and Pluralism," *New sociology Knowledge: The Life and Work of Peter L. Berger*, by Peter L. Berger and Michaela Pfadenhauer, trans. Miriam Geoghegan (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2013) p. 25.

[22] Cf. Everett V. Stonequist: *The Marginal Man: A Study of Personality and Culture Conflict* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961).

[23] Cf. A.L. Epstein: *Ethos and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1978).

[24] Gregory Jay: "Taking Multiculturalism Personally: *Ethnos* and *Ethos* in Classroom," *American Literary History*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1994), p. 619.

[25] Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper: "Beyond Identity," *Theory and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2000), p. 1.

account the recent problems due to multiculturalism, such as the Paris bombing and the like, one can conclude that multiculturalism has brought anxieties as well. In 2006, Gregg had commented that in the 21st century, multiculturalism has become a source of new anxieties. With reference to Canadian experience of multiculturalism, which is an amalgamation of many cultures and subcultures, Gregg states that multiculturalism that was a twentieth century dream, and now that has become "twenty-first-century conundrum."[26] According his study, "69 percent of the Canadians 'say immigrants should integrate and should become part of Canadian culture' rather than maintaining their own identity."[27] In this connection he predicts that in the years to come Canada's ability to accommodate and deal with diversity will become "a central issue as there is an atomization of Canadian society along with ethnic lines."[28] There is a growing indifference to multiculturalism, at least in Canada. If this is the case with Canada, we could also envisage such anxieties in other multicultural societies. Together with tensions and anxieties, there is a challenge in multiculturalism, which is "a constitutive challenge posed by multiculturalism to social justice."[29] According to Amy Cutmann:

> The challenge is that different cultures contain apparently different ethical standards that yield conflicting judgments concerning social justice. To take a striking example, some cultures defend polygamy, while others deem polygamy unjust and subject to governmental prohibition. In the light of an apparent conflict in judgment about the justice of an institution as important as family, a conflict associated with cultural difference.[30]

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[26] Cf. Alan Gregg: "Identity Crisis - Multiculturalism: A Twentieth-Century Dream Becomes a Twenty First Century Conundrum," *The Walrus,* vol. 5, no. 2 (2006), pp. 38-39.

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 40.

[28] *Ibid.,* p. 41.

[29] Amy Gutmann: "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Political Ethics," p. 172.

[30] *Ibid.*

Thus, in multiculturalism, if one upholds the individual identities of subcultures as *sacrosanct* over the whole, then it can have a fatal consequence in prescribing and discharging social justice. This is a challenge that one has to pay attention to, when one champions the cause of multiculturalism. Despite these difficulties that emerge from multiculturalism, we cannot say that multiculturalism is value-less. In the next section, we consider a few paradigms that would help us to see multiculturalism as a value.

### Multiculturalism as a Value: A Few Paradigms

There are anxieties and tensions in multicultural societies and among the individuals of indigenous identities living in such societies. Both ways, there could be tension. We need look for a new paradigm that will operate as a value to deal with the predicaments of multicultural reality. Multiculturalism is going to stay. We cannot think of and subscribe to a singularist culture at the expense of individual indigenous identities. I would abhor even a cultural nationalism that is in discourse these days in India with a tacit support from the extreme right ideology. For, nationalism draws on the identity of a citizen, which is preeminent. However, nationalism cannot be an identity claimed as superior by any single group. It has to include equality of all the equal rights of citizens. "Nationalism does not exist on one identity, it is all inclusive. National history of course has its moments of joy, it goes to the past and golden age and utopian age; but whatever national identities superseded existing identities, if it is inclusive it is generally much healthier, but if it pretends to be much exclusive then it could be a disaster."[31]

The self that encounters multiculturalism is an "I" that has to deal with multiple aspects of life. Will it create multiple individualities? Or will that "I" be in fusion.[32] These are the questions one asks

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[31] Romila Thapar: "Romila Thapar's Address at JNU on 7 March 2016," Available at: http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-efforts-are-being-made-to-obfuscate-the-definition-of-nationalism-romila-thapar-2186309. Accessed on 11 March 2016.

[32] Cf. Ina Ter Avest: "Plurality in Society Mirrored in Teacher's Multi-Voiced Self: Internalized Inequality," *Safe Spaces: Human Rights Education in Diverse Contexts*, ed. Cornelia Roux (Rotterdam and Boston: Sense Publishers, 2012), p. 243.

oneself, when dealing with multiculturalism and individual identities of indigenous cultures. In their *Modernity, Pluralism and the Crisis of Meaning: The Orientation of Modern Man*, P. Berger and Luckman[33] state that the modernization of consciousness causes the perceptions that one has to evaporate and one could be ready to revise or retract to the principles and opinions one held fast so far. Thus, one has to find out remedies to ease out the tension, which has been stated above. What are the remedies that could be seen as new paradigms? Those paradigms shall be considered as values.

The *first paradigm* could be the search for a dialogical self. The Dialogical Self Theory is a recent development, in which "self is considered as extended to significant others in environment, who populate the self as a dynamic multiplicity of *I*-positions between which dialogical or mono-logical relationship, may emerge."[34] The self has to locate its place in the wholeness of life in a dialogical manner. The *second paradigm* is this: We need to give an impetus to the multicultural and intercultural education; but it shall be not be at the expense of the other. A relevant study in this regard is *Intercultural and Multicultural Education: Enhancing Global Interconnectedness*, which is the collection of papers by different scholars illuminating a host of intercultural and multicultural view points and problem.[35] The challenge of our times is an intercommunity cooperation, wherein better human diversity is acknowledged and rights of all are respected. The *third paradigm* could be thought of as a liberating theory of culture. We need flexible, imaginative, and innovative approaches to culture and cultures. We need to envisage and involve *multiple* rather than *singular* identifications. In this regard, Murphy-Shigematsu and Willis say that liberating theory is all about process and dialogue, where self will be engaged in differences as relational and not absolute. To quote them:

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[33] Cf. Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann: *Modernity, Pluralism and the Crisis of Meaning: The Orientation of Modern Man* (Gutersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, 1995).

[34] Hubert J.M. Hermans: "Dialogical Self Theory and the Increasing Multiplicity of Positions in a Globalizing Society: An Introduction," *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, vol. 137, *Applications of Dialogical Self Theory*, ed. Hubert J.M. Hermans (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), p. 1.

[35] Cf. Carl A. Grant and Agostino Portera: *Intercultural and Multicultural Education: Enhancing Global Interconnectedness* (London: Routledge, 2010).

A liberating theory of culture and multiculturalism is a theory about process and dialogue, not about reified tribes, nationalist religions and communalist conformity. This processual approach versus a materialist (identity as property) approach is, therefore, something new in debate about multiculturalism. Culture is not just something that we have and are members of, but also something we make and shape. All identities are identifications and, thus, are situational. Differences are, thus, relational rather than absolute. Cultures are multi-relational rather than one-dimensional.[36]

If self were to be engaged in such a culture, assuming that culture is not the given, static, and monolithic, but it is something we make and shape. Gutmann says in this regard: "Cultural and political identities are neither given like hair color, nor chosen like high cuisine. People select, interpret, and evaluate stories, histories, and customs in attempts to make the best out of the various cultures given to them. They also interpret and evaluate the institutions, laws, practices, and procedures of the political community they inherit."[37] There is gradual evolution in its entire enterprise of multiculturalism. It is not given, but we gradually imbibe the spirit of interconnectedness of multiculturalism. Let us also note that multiculturalism can be seen as a specific aspect of broader movement of 'political correctness'.[38] This is because "most modern people are members of more than one culture, or capable of adopting multicultural identities."[39] That is why it has been opined that the last three decades notion of "multiculturalism is out and social cohesion is in."[40] Besides that "most modern people are multicultural, but not,

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[36] Stephen Murphey-Shigematsu and David Blake Willis: "Transcultural Society," *The Demographic Challenge: A Handbook about Japan*, eds. Florian Coulmas, et al. (Leiden and Boston: E.J. Brill, 2008), p. 297.

[37] Amy Gutmann: "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Political Ethics," p. 185.

[38] Cf. Martin E. Spencer: "Multiculturalism: Political Correctness, and the Politics of Identity," *Sociological Forum*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1994), p. 548.

[39] Amy Gutmann: "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Political Ethics," pp. 184-185.

[40] Stephen Castles: "Globalization, Ethnic Identity and the Integration Crisis," *Ethnicities*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2011), p. 23.

therefore, cosmopolitan or liberal in their beliefs about social justice."[41]

## Conclusion

There is always the element of constant *becoming*, rather than a fixed *being* in it. As the Buddhist Madhyamika position would say that everything is essence-less. Nothing has a fixed nature and essence of itself that is permanent. All is relational and complementary (*pratityasamutpanna*). Nothing is absolute. All identities are identifications, a labeling of things in our world of understanding. Thus, all identities, as Murphy-Shigematsu and Willis stated above, are *situational*. Knowing this verity, one can ease out the *aporia* of tension in multiculturalism by regarding it as a value to be cultivated and learned.

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[41] Amy Gutmann: "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in Political Ethics," p. 184.

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# Being Human amidst Multicultural Traditions

THOMAS MENAMPARAMPIL

## Introduction

Modern Economy, assisted by steadily advancing technology, has made great contributions to human growth. All developing societies have cultivated a mindset for increased production, expanding trade, and overtaking others in economic performance. We would be making a big mistake, if in our eagerness for immediate advantage, we forget the long term good of the society, by losing our hold on those skills, which help us to remain human. Though economic development is important, it should not be allowed to degrade the human person and weaken the humane dimension of society. Unfortunately strategies for development do not always focus on human beings and peoples, but instead on merchandise and the market. Often, when "economic miracles" occur, we fail to recognize that every step forward has been taken at a great human price. Helpless persons and communities have often fallen victims to the great strategies for the so-called "national development." If land is taken from people for the sake of "development," they have the right to ask whose development is being sought. Unfortunately, we speak more of the "needs of development" than the "needs of peoples and communities," and peoples' participation in the endeavor of development. We are in danger of falling victims to an insensitive sort of development at the expense of human beings and their environment. Development is calculated not in terms of human benefit, but only in relation to profits and sum-totals.

People become so excited about acquiring the latest gadgets and the most tempting consumer goods that all their life gets oriented to the processes of earning and owning, consuming and displaying their new acquisitions. Caught up in this consumerist culture, they leave no room being human: cultivating humane sentiment of

compassion of heart; find joy in genuine relationships; being helpful in mutual dealings; and maintain an intelligent and balanced world-view. As a result, they become heartless robots at the service of the economy. The "Frankensteins" of wealth-building in the globalized economy are hunting down those who have brought them into existence. This form of modernity devours its own children. This heartless and inhumane outlook has deteriorated the quality of human life in the society. Thus, we see degrading poverty in industrial areas, heartless child labor, slum squalor, street violence, women-trafficking, new types of diseases, lack of opportunity for education and skill acquisition, gross inequality and damage to environment. People have grown insensitive to each other, ignore their own cultural heritages and undermine other cultures. They grow equally insensitive to nature. Gradually they become blind to the fact that they are tearing apart nature's intricate patterns that sustain life and cosmic relationships, thereby imperil their existence together as human communities.

Similarly, great business enterprises tread on the interests of indigenous people, displace communities, damage local markets and destroy inherited values and traditional cultures. These inhumane activities in the name of development often bring a violent response from people. Once violence breaks out, it is not easy to bring it to a conclusion. Modern-day tragedies, such as ethnic conflicts, genocide and ecocide are interrelated. Usually society knows only one way to stop violence - use stronger violence to impose peace. Governments attempts to fight terrorism by counter-terrorism activities only to perpetuate violence instead of bringing true peace. However, the future belongs to those who harmonize opposites, bring communities together, and promote human values even in the midst of intense difficulties.

Having made these introductory comments, in the first section, we analyze the consequences of the loss of humaneness in the modern society. Some of the consequences that result from an inhuman and impersonal economy, consumerist culture, and an un-balanced perception of development are the weakening of humanity and intercommunity tensions; loss of self-assertion of communities; lack of affirmation of humanity; and marginalization of cultural minorities. The second section deals with those attitudes that would restore humanness in social living. This calls for taking a humane

approach instead of giving a mere economic response; developing human and sensitive leadership; working for bettering the human condition of those involved, so as to ease tension among groups; leadership recognizing their past failures and learning to be humane with each other; tapping the resources of young people and use their abilities as human capital; and educating people to be peacemakers and culture-translators, in the process transforming peoples' attitudes.

The third section considers the meaning of "being human" in the sense of "being humane." This implies that we leave space for each other as communities; we respect and befriend our opponents; we learn to change a grievance into a message; we develop our thinking power; we become not only creative, but also persuasive; we value togetherness; we become more responsible; we move beyond party and partisan interests; we become sensitive towards minority communities; we develop a vision for the future; we promote collaboration and a natural sense of fairness; and above all we become spiritual and allow ourselves to be guided by the spiritual perspective. The conclusion states that when we learn to be human and express the attitude of humanness in our everyday interaction with others, we make a small contribution in bringing people together, build up humanity and strengthen the human element within the human family. Thus, being human calls us to be united and live in communion with every creature, especially with every other human person and human communities. In the next section, we look into the consequences of the loss of humaneness in modern society.

## Consequences of the Loss of Humaneness in Modern Society

The loss of humanity in our present-day society - that results from an inhuman and impersonal economy, consumerist culture, and an unbalanced perception of development - brings about un-pleasant consequences, such as weakening of humanity and intercommunity tensions, loss of self-assertion of communities and affirmation of humanity and marginalization of cultural minorities. In this section, we briefly consider each of these consequences that stems from the loss of humaneness in social living.

*Weakening of Humanity and Intercommunity Tensions*

We must not forget the fact that we belong to a *cosmos* that exists as a "web of cooperative and symbiotic relationships." Thus, everything is connected to everything else. When we forget this truth we are heading for trouble. As neighboring communities work their way forward towards development, they often ignore this truth, which in turn, leads to tension among themselves. Similarly, tensions and conflicts can happen among neighboring countries, if they do not keep their expectations realistic. A partial understanding of immediate realities can lead to a *perceived clash of interests* at the first stage and real clashes at the second. Conflicts can also arise over claims to natural resources.

People are on the move today. Rapid commercial and industrial growth and the mobility of job-seekers have led to the enfeebling of family bonds and social relationships, which in the past has been nourished by the extended family, the local school, and neighborhood communities. The result has been the *erosion of cultures*, where human values are generated. This, in turn, leads to the breakup of families and communities, through which ethical perceptions are handed down. Besides, it has reduced the effectiveness of all traditional patterns of social formation and weakened the handing on of *social codes* that used to keep families and communities together. The erosion of social codes and values of communal life makes communities helpless, when conflicts break out within or between communities, and inhuman situations arise.

*Loss of Self-Assertion of Communities and Affirmation of Humanity*

Speaking of intercommunity tensions, we referred to differences over economic interests. What is even more important is to pay attention to the *ethnic and cultural dimensions* of the problem. Cultural groups all over the world, especially ethnic minorities, are making their voices heard, when they feel their interests are not attended to by the majority community. We find examples of such demand for their rights among the Basques in Spain, Welsh in the United Kingdom and Quebecois in Canada. Similarly, smaller nations representing smaller ethnic groups feel threatened by the larger ones in the neighborhood. Wrong handling of ethnic grievances has often

led to major conflicts, as it has happened between the Hutus and the Tutsis in Africa. We read of the uneasy relationships between the Dutch and the French speaking people in Belgium. Meanwhile Uzbeks have been moving away from Kyrgyzstan due to ethnic tensions. Something similar happened to the Armenians in Syria. Such incidents reveal the power of ethnicity and the centrality of culture in the political life of a nation and intercommunity relationships in a pluralistic society.

There are not many countries in the world that do not have to deal with violence related to ethnic and cultural differences. It is in such contexts that we must help each other to *remain human.* Where ethnicity and culture had been ignored for a long time, as it happened in Russia during the Soviet regime, self-assertion of minorities became much stronger as soon as the controlling forces weakened. The reason is easy to understand. Ethnicity defines for a community what it holds as most precious - its identity. For every community, their own identity and *culture* are unique. These constitute the *ground of their selfhood* and collective existence. Besides, they promote the values the community lives by. They help them in their *search to be truly human* and find a place in the wider human society. That is why anthropologists consider self-affirmation of communities as something healthy and even necessary. We should not look at this phenomenon negatively. It provides the energy that a community needs for its very survival and self-enhancement. It serves a psychosocial purpose ensuring solidarity within the community in times of danger and motivation for its continued existence.

Even weak cultures have survived, when related communities succeeded to preserve a fierce *sense of uniqueness* about their identity during the course of their history. A self-perception of being chosen and elect gave them the needed strength even in the most adverse circumstances to struggle on and survive, as it did in the case of the Jews, Armenians, Gypsies, Welsh, Irish, Poles, Tibetans, and others. Every community has a right to be proud of their collective self and their cultural heritage. People become restive, when they feel that their ethnic and cultural identity is threatened, their history is undervalued, and that their political and economic interests are ignored.

*Marginalization of Cultural Minorities*

Restlessness in communities is all the stronger if they happen to be *minority groups*, especially those at the borders of countries or margins of society. For instance, the tribals and *dalits* in India, African Americans and Native Indians in the United States of America - who have too little shared history with the mainland society and the dominant communities. The smaller ethnic groups in any nation are inclined to resent the indifference and unconcern of the dominant community to their problems. It is for that reason that the assertion of ethnicity and culture has become a discernible trend in every part of the world. For instance, we find this trend in Russia, France, Pakistan and Australia. Similarly the Scots, Welsh, Tyrolese, Basques, Catalans, French Canadians, Flemings, Tamils, Kurds and Baluchis claim their right from the majority community. This pheno-menon has been gathering strength in recent years, and has acquired the name "*Identity Politics*" on the world scene. Such self-affirmation can take a violent turn, when it is not given the scope for legitimate self-expression and when the concerned parties make up their mind to take their claims to extremes. We have examples of this in ex-Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Georgia, Indonesia, Chechnya, and Sri Lanka. It is often said that violence is the eloquence of the weak.

Border communities feel that they had not been a part of the events and processes that gave shape to the national identity and culture. Besides, their shared history with the majority community has been too brief and the common heritage too small to make them feel a sense of togetherness. As a result, they have developed a *weak sense of belonging* to the nation concerned or the society of which they are part. Marginal communities feel that they had too small a share in shaping the history of their society of which they have generally been victims. This emotional distance becomes even more, when there are memories of hostile relationships between them and the dominant communities in the past, and they sense a threat to their cultural identity. Tensions mount when border men express their sense of alienation further, *wanting to secede* from the control of the dominant cultural group and constitute a new state. Threat of secession in this case is an affirmation of difference. For instance, in Roman times, the Plebians wanted to withdraw from the Patricians.

In recent times, many communities have wanted to secede from a bigger political unit for reasons of cultural and historical differences, or economic and political deprivations. For example, the people of Aceh and Irian Jaya in Indonesia; people of Chechnya in Russia, the Baluchis in Pakistan, Muslims in South Thailand, Muslims of Mindanao in the Philippines, Kurds in Iraq, and Catalans in Spain. The Scots parted ways with England and South Sudan with the North. In some cases there is violence on the side of the protesters, and in other cases it is the State that takes the initiative in going hard on the minorities. Sometimes the secessionists take rigid positions. At other times, the representatives of the Government likewise remain inflexible. In the next section, we go on to speak about the restoration of humaneness in life of the people in the society.

## Restoration of Humanness in Sociocultural Life

In this section, we would analyze some attitudes that would restore humaneness in the sociocultural life of the people. Taking a humane approach instead of giving a mere economic response, developing human and sensitive leadership, working for bettering the human condition of those involved so as to ease tension among groups, leadership recognizing their past failures and learning to be humane with each other, tapping the resources of young people and use their abilities as human capital, and educating people to be peace-makers and culture-translators - would effectively restore humaneness in the sociocultural life of the people. In the following subsections, we will briefly consider each of these points and see how each can restore humanness in society.

### *A Humane Approach and Not an Economic Response: Solution to a Cultural Problem*

Even nation-states with long histories, such as the United Kingdom and France had gone through these stages in the shaping of their national identity. Therefore, collective self-questionings in the Northeast and Central parts of India need not be considered unusual in the development of a national consciousness. However, if we do not make place for the cultural dimension of these problems, we will

not be able to bring solutions to the anxieties that afflict these regions. Emotional integration of smaller ethnic groups and humbler communities calls for a strong sense of *human sensitivity* and cultural understanding on the part of leaders, who guide the destinies of the states. Economic packages alone are inadequate. Respect for the selfhood of the community and their concerns are far more important.

### *Leaders Ought to be Human and Sensitive*

If, in a community's perception, the threat to their identity, culture and interests persists, it does not emerge from anxiety too easily. A stormy and troublesome period is ahead. The horizon looks dark. However, if they are humanely treated and given space to grow, develop, and express themselves, they gradually learn to take their place side by side others; begin to recognize the cultural assets of other communities as complementary; respect their rights and interests; accept to live and work in collaboration with them; and join hands and walk together towards a common destiny. This period of transition is very sensitive. People can be led astray by *self-interested leaders*, who are inspired by ideologies that do not lead the nation and the people to the future. However, during this period of transition, if there are *intelligent* and *sensitive leaders* on either side, who adopt a human and humane approach to provide an inspiring and complementary vision, the communities concerned easily move forward with a great sense serenity and self-confidence. If, however, this fails to happen, neither flowering of culture, nor development of economy is possible. Many opportunities for the enhancement of the identity and culture of the community will pass them by without bearing any tangible results because people feel isolated from each other. In fact, isolation is stagnation for the community. People cannot grow to their full human potentiality in a situation, where there is no genuine relationship among the groups. With swords drawn, even survival is uncertain. Such a situation spells death to the "humane" elements in societies.

*Easing Tensions by Bringing about Better Human Conditions in Communities*

If the tribal communities feel that their *natural resources* are taken away from them without adequate compensation and having no real advantage for their communities, it would bring about communal tensions. Similarly, if *tribal land* is taken away by the business magnets or hastily turned into Special Economic Zones without having any advantage for the local population, resentment is bound to build up. The announcement of *dams* and other *mighty projects* with little consideration to the needs and difficulties of local communities sends a shiver through their spines. On the other hand, total isolation is not the answer for the concerned community. *Delaying projects* that can bring common economic benefits may put off development for everyone indefinitely. Closing doors to new economic initiatives, may leave one's community far behind. Thus, the pros and cons of a particular project may need to be studied and discussed with the local people; their points of view must be heard; and the guarantees given to local people for bringing about better human conditions in their communities must be honored. These measures would definitely ease tensions and help us to find the right solution to the problems of the people. For instance, total isolation did not help Afghanistan and Tibet in their earlier history. Similarly the isolation of Cuba and North Korea in our times has not truly helped these nations and their people. Only *intelligent openness* to wider realities and to ever widening opportunities can pave the way to prosperity. This is the law of economic development in any period of history in any part of the world.

Likewise, if fast changes in the demographic pattern of a region due to industrial immigration cause indigenous people's proportion fall significantly, there is bound to be a sense of alarm. Similarly, if the organized sector is developed mostly by capital and labor from outside the region, indigenous people become mere observers of the major economic drama as it develops. They keep wondering whom the regional economy is meant to benefit; who owns the economy; and whom it serves. On the other hand, a possibility of such an undesired situation developing could convince indigenous people of the need for going beyond their agricultural aptitudes, and developing the skills needed for free enterprise and creative economic

ventures. The leaders of businesses who develop a local area must take measures to educate the needed skills for the local population that they can also become actual participants, not mere spectators, in the developmental process of their community and region. Thus, bettering their human conditions would ease tension and would restore the humanness in the social life of the people.

*Leaders on Either Side Recognize Their Mistakes and Attempt to be Humane with the Each Other*

In social interactions and processes, things go wrong in many ways: when leaders adopt wrong policies; when they make a *wrong use of right policies*; when unfair things are done in the name of national security; when leaders of groups involved misinform and *misguide* the people for their self-interest, when they build on their communities' grievances and foment anger and hatred; when they exploit their own people to achieve their individual personal goals; and when the ideals they place before their followers are clearly unrealistic. Recent history shows how good things have been used for wrong purposes. For example, world powers have invoked human rights to *interfere in the destinies of sovereign nations*; and claimed to act in defense of democracy, when they wanted to take advantage of weaker ones. In the same way, dominant societies pretend to be safeguarding national integrity and security, while suppressing and silencing minorities within their national borders; and nation-states have invoked the sovereignty principle to *suppress human rights*. On the opposite side, the leaders who claim to be leading a movement to defend their community and culture have been taking advantage of their followers and compromising their interests for their own personal interests. Thus, right and wrong have been on both the sides in the social interactive process. If the leaders of either side recognize their failures, attempt to be humane in their attitude towards the other, and keep the interests of the people they represent ahead of their own self-interest, many of the problems between groups can be peacefully resolved.

Experience has shown how even liberal democracies can become illiberal and autocratic; be *intolerant of minorities*; capable of silencing weaker voices, do connive at and even provoke ethnic conflict; and have recourse to state-violence. It is also true that

people can place themselves under petty tyrants and self-interested political leaders for obtaining some personal benefits. Communities have been known in addition to have recourse to various strategies to establish their victimhood before stronger communities. They develop a *martyr-complex*; try to convince themselves and others of the criminal intent of everyone else; and show off publicly their own total helplessness. In all these situations, when individual and groups begin to look at things from others' point of view and move further on the way of being human, many issues that dog people can be amicably settled.

*Tapping Human Resources and Making Use of Human Capital*

A society sets itself to move in a new direction and to break new grounds with the assistance of their younger members. Thus, young people in a society are not just trouble-makers or rebels, who need to be disciplined and tamed. They constitute precious "human resources" to be tapped and valuable "human capital" to be used. Their perceptions and *insights are priceless*. The activities they initiate and movements they launch on natural instinct bring dynamism to a stagnating society. Their prophetic message hastily translated into action must not be rejected outright; but must be interpreted and guided. Their energy is to be used; their cooperation and commitment elicited. Popular movements, which young people have led, in modern times, have made the *communities to grow conscious of themselves*; to be aware of their strength; and became capable of taking their future in their own hands. Thus, political movements have brought life and direction to mute millions. As a result of such movements, in recent times, many ethnic groups have grown conscious of their collective identity; have recognized the worth and sturdiness of their heritage; have become aware that they count for something; and that they can exercise a legitimate influence on the wider society and shape their own destinies. These things have been positive.

However, one should not forget that if adults can fail, young adults can also err. It should cause no surprise that some movements led entirely by young adults should slightly stray, especially when guidance has been wanting. The old need the young to break new grounds and take their society forward. However, the young too

need the old to caution, *guide and lead events with maturity and wisdom* in the long term interest of the community and the wider society. Thus, utilizing the resources of the young people for the benefit of the communities can help us to overcome conflicting situations and arrive at peaceful and harmonious social living.

*Becoming Peacemakers and Culture-Translators*

It is in this context that we begin to realize that the unrealistic expectations of some groups may have led them too far in the view of others and brought the communities concerned into conflict with each other. We need men and women of peace. However, we are living in an era, when peacemakers are hard to find. Ideologies inspired by the concepts of Hegel, Marx, Darwin, Gramsci and others have given to young people another message: the *fighter is the hero* today. Fighting for justice, human rights, one's people, culture and nation provides the ideal for the young people of the day. Working for peace is not considered as a popular mission. What confuses the issue further is the fact that two persons or groups in collision can have *different understanding of justice* in a concrete situation. What happens when perceptions about justice collide, and when people who are fighting for perfectly good causes on behalf of their own people come into conflict? What happens when justice according to me fights against justice according to you? Can we adopt a creative form of dialogue, which I call *critical dialogue* with the opponents: listening, affirming, appreciating, questioning, and searching together? That is what being human means in the context of our everyday life and interactions. Dialogue itself is not without problems. In entering into a dialogue, we need to avoid giving prominence to less important things, questionable things, making odious comparisons based on ethnicity or culture, using political clout, being caught in stereotypes, and humiliating opponents. As people in dialogue, we need to be bridge-builders and culture-translators to enable minds and meanings to meet. Human persons should learn to be truly human and humane in their interactions with each other. Such a dialogical approach will pave the way for solving conflicts, bringing about peace among groups, and establishing harmonious social living among diverse communities.

**Meaning of "Being Human" in The Sense of "Being Humane"**

Having considered those elements that would restore human-ness in the social life of the people in the previous section, this section attempts to clarify the meaning of "being human" in the sense of "being humane." This implies that we leave space for each other as communities; we respect and befriend our opponents; we learn to change a grievance into a message; we develop our thinking power; we become not only creative, but also persuasive; we value togetherness; we become more responsible; we move beyond party and partisan interests; we become sensitive towards minority communities; we develop a vision for the future; we promote collaboration and a natural sense of fairness; and above all we become spiritual and allow ourselves to be guided by a spiritual perspective. We consider these points in detail in the following subsections.

*Being Human Means Leaving Space for Each Other as Communities*

History tells us that when communities emerge from isolation and backwardness, there is a period of uncertainty. They feel that their identities have to be defined and relationships with neigh-boring ethnic groups sorted out. Competing interests of other communities in the neighborhood can lead to tensions. Such tensions are built on perceptions of political, economic, psychological and cultural *exploitation of their group* by a stronger one. Some of these may be true and some exaggerated.

In a multicultural society, communities that may have had the advantage of *early education* or the learning of a specialized skill which has become a part of their heritage are quick in taking up financially rewarding jobs. For example, some are good in the cultivation of certain cash crops and grow rich; others have developed business skills and begin to prosper; and others have built up a knack for political maneuvering and capture power. These communities may be perceived as exploiting others, or may actually be doing so. Those who feel left behind, build up grievances. On the contrary, if the neighboring communities begin to consider these aptitudes and skills as complementary, which can contribute to the welfare of the whole community, the chances of conflict become

greatly reduced. However, the occurrence of such a scenario will greatly depend on leaders of the majority and minority communities.

Generally speaking it is true that *minority communities feel marginalized* in the economic competition with the majority community or a stronger ethnic group in the neighborhood. Their discontentment manifests itself in various forms of protests. In some cases, there may be truth in the allegations; but there are also times when minority leaders keep alive their discontent in order to retain the political loyalty to their communities. Occasionally there is a *third party* that fans these intercommunity tensions for their own political and economic interests. *Exaggerated self-affirmations* of one community can lead to similar exaggerations in others, setting in motion a chain-reaction with no end in view. However, if leaders and people of both communities give space to each other and try to understand the actual situations rationally, they would be able deal with the situations in a humane manner, in the process paving the way for greater peace and harmony.

*Being Human Means Respecting the Opponents and Befriending Them*

Heroes, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, approached knotty political problems with absolute respect for the persons who represented the other side. They had the ability to tap the good will buried in the deepest recesses of the opponents' inner being. They appealed to the humanity, *natural goodness,* in the heart of their enemies and *did not embitter them with denunciations*. They tried to befriend their foes. They made sure that their demands were fair; their assessment of the situation objective; and their statements were true. They avoided exaggerations, threats and any form of violence. While they claimed their own rights, they did not ignore the rights of their opponents.

We must become peacemakers like the above-mentioned leaders, so that we can be truly human to each other. True peacemakers must learn the way of being human toady. It calls for esteeming even the opponents; winning the opponents' sympathy and support by the *uprightness of their conduct* and truthfulness of their argument; transforming the hearts of the opponents by making valuable contributions to the common human and social heritage of the community; handling even the most sensitive problems with a

*human touch*; building up the confidence of the people; and cultivating the ability to identify and separate real issues from *ego-requirements*, rigid ideologies, and predetermined positions. Acquiring and living these attitudes in the context of inter-community interactions and relationships will help us to be truly human.

### *Being Human Means Changing a Grievance into a Message*

People gather around defenders and promoters of genuine human values and common interests. People of all cultures and interests learn to come together. While Samuel Huntington spoke of a "Clash of Civilizations," we would like to speak of a *Dialogue of Civilizations*, which consists in conversation between cultures and negotiation between interests. The culture of even the smallest community is something unique and deserves our respect. Persons with worthwhile messages are happy to meet with each other.

*People with a message* are different from *people with a grievance*. The former is a lamp, while the latter is a shade. One inspires, the other obscures. One looks forward, the other backward. The former is optimistic, confident and respectful, whereas the latter is pessimistic, unsure and aggressive. The first elicits good will; the second believes in confrontation and crushes out even the little good will the opponent has. One takes responsibility; the other disowns responsibility and shifts it to everyone else around. One is open to new possibilities; the other falls into the ditch he himself has made. People with a message are adults; they are human in the full sense.

The fact is that we all have grievances. We must recognize that while we have grievances against others, others have grievances against us too. As individuals and communities, we have hurt each other; we have *collective memories to be healed*. We must work on such healing, rather than harping on our grievances. When we have a genuine grievance, we must learn to transform it into a soul-capturing message, which will make everyone on both sides to pause, think and find a solution together. That will make all the difference in intracommunity relationship. This is what it means to be human.

*Being Human Means Developing One's Thinking Power*

People begin to think more comprehensively and profoundly, when they reach an impasse. Seeing the Kalinga war and the devastation and loss of life it brought about, emperor Asoka thought of conquering nations with a message of peace. After two ruinous World Wars, the western nations decided that they would cooperate rather than collide. The pains that we go through during conflicts hold out lessons to us. The Kurukshetra war wiped out entire races. All societies have gone through negative experiences; but those who reflected and learned regained strength. The Japanese were quick to learn that the wars that their army had lost, their economy could win; and it did. The Germans had a similar experience.

Arnold Toynbee, in his voluminous *Study of History*, argues that right through human experience, those who knew how to accept reality and learn to reorganize themselves for a fresh start, succeeded. He quotes the examples of Greece, Rome, England and Holland to argue that they made a breakthrough only when they made a choice to lay the foundation for their fortunes on the hard rock of realities, challenging situations, including the experience of a crushing defeat.

*Being Human Means Being Creative and Being Persuasive*

The skill of the leaders on either contending side lies in their ability to search for motivations that will bind their communities together for a common purpose. They must do this *not by force, but through persuasion.* The sheer need for emerging together from relatively underdeveloped condition is a good motivation. The present state of backwardness of a community or a country is not necessarily a setback because it can provide a good starting point for genuine progress. Francis Fukuyama holds that late modernizers have an advantage, as beginners bring with them values that provide the backbone of success. Some of these values are industriousness, sparing habits, accommodating and non-confrontational ways, readiness to work hard and take trouble, an eagerness to please and win collaboration and support, and willingness to take risk and be innovating. They do not grow complacent too early. They cannot afford to do so.

Innovative leadership searches for new ways of making diverse interests find a meeting point. The emergence of *European Union* and the economic success of *ASEAN* tell us how people can *hold their differences in abeyance* and seek to express them in new and *creative ways.* However, they must explore and discover the advantages in doing so. Recent economic trends show that even the weakest country or community can have something to *specialize in*. In doing so, they derive the maximum advantage, when they combine themselves with other people, who are different and have their different natural endowments. Thus, those qualities and aptitudes that distinguish us from others must be creatively used as a productive power rather than a divisive force. Creative and insightful people have evolved ways of transcending even major differences and made them productive for the common benefit. For instance, if India, China and Pakistan could show that this can be done, instead of wasting resources in conflict, these nations would bring about great prosperity on the people of their nations and their neighbors.

*Being Human Means Valuing Togetherness*

*Talents reveal themselves in clusters* seems to be a law of nature. There are a number of facts to illustrate the truth of the above-statement. There were a number of dramatists in London during Shakespeare's days. Explorers and adventurers crowded the Portuguese and Spanish court at a particular period of history. Florence, Venice and Milan had bunches of painters in the peak era of art. Turin was the home of a number of saints during the 19th century. Paris was crowded with social thinkers at some stage. There were many musicians in Berlin and Vienna. Vikramaditya had his nine jewels in his kingdom; and Akbar a host of scholars in his court. Likewise, modern business too has been coming up in clusters. The *Asian Tigers* would be a good example. The rise of *China and India* can give rise to another cluster of great performers around them. Interaction among creative leaders stimulates interest, provides the know-how, and encourages innovation. We could think of the information Industry picking up in certain cities of India. Bangalore has stimulated Hyderabad and Chennai. One learns from the other. Similarly, there can dawn an *age of energy and optimism*, accomplishment, expansion, growth and development for our communities.

Our young people can learn to bring something of their present political energies in the direction of social harmony and economic productivity.

Unfortunately violence and corruption also spring up in clusters. Certain regions become known for people, who produce commercially valuable goods and others for mobs that protests; some regions for persons who are creative, others for persons who are destructive. When the wrong choice is made what stares at your face in consequence is a situation of aggressive voices, mutual denunciations, civil disturbance, chaotic disorder and violence. These lead to growing inequality, injustice, poverty, lack of education, lack of shelter, epidemics, ethnic conflict and armed political dissent. Many lament the evils of this era. It is far better to *rejoice at the opportunity* we have for doing good, precisely in these challenging times, by valuing togetherness, learning to be humane to each other, and working together for the betterment of all.

### *Being Human Means Being Responsible*

A sense of responsibility seems to be the most needed value in public life today. For example, a community's eagerness for identity-affirmation should not lead it to collective self-centeredness. Everyone must have respect for the larger interests of the wider society. If the pursuit of self-interest becomes too important for a community, it would soon land in trouble with other communities and it would move on to the path of decline. That is what happened even to the mightiest empires in history, when they adopted a policy of *consistent confrontation* with neighbors. Unfortunately there are always some groups, who adopt this course, thereby being irresponsible towards themselves and others. Similarly, *exaggerated assertion of self-interest* can force a community to become a ghetto and close the minds of its members to new ideas, possibilities, creative organizational structures and technologies. This would render their outlook rigid and as a result, they become incapable of meeting the challenges of changing situations. Meanwhile, creative communities and countries would set aside closed-mindedness, accept emerging challenges, confront problems courageously with rising confidence, and develop in every aspect.

We have created and propagated certain myths. One of such myth is that the Government can and will do everything for us, as long as we just put the right amount of pressure. The Government itself has promoted this impression for political purposes, and later let people down. The reward has often been according to the measure of the pressure, and not according to the merit of the case. In this way, the leadership has made people understand that violence will be rewarded. However, we know that the Government alone cannot solve all the problems. The *civil society too has to play its role*. People themselves have to be responsible and do their part to find right solutions to the existing problems of the society. Instead of thinking that their fate depended on the leaders, they must believe that they can accomplish a great deal by their hard work, intelligent handling of hurdles and appropriately using the opportunities available to them. It is the duty of the leaders of the community to instill in the members of the community a sense of responsibility for themselves and the community. This will bring in the people commitment to work constructively, disciplined effort, a methodic approach to development, interest in probity in public life, concern for common good and mutually stimulating altruism. Albert Schweitzer, who spent the major portion of his life in interior Africa, believed that all "should sacrifice a portion of their own lives for others."

### *Being Human Means Being above Party and Partisan Interests*

Political parties will show a similar sense of responsibility when they do not allow their parties' interests to have precedence over the interests of the nation, the people of a region, and those belonging to a particular community. Playing cheap politics in the context of community-tensions is playing with national interests. Indigenous people feel disturbed, when they get the impression that major decisions regarding them are taken merely to suit the fortunes of the ruling group and not on the merit of the issue. It becomes most unconvincing, when leaders speak of national interests against the people of the region while sacrificing everything to the *election interests of the party* and the whims of the dominant society in the country. It is unfair to sacrifice the minority community's major interests for the sake of the *majority community's petty interests* or

*prejudices* in the name of the wellbeing of the nation. Ensuring national security is the sacred duty of every citizen; he/she does so by being non-partisan.

### Being Human Means Cultivating Sensitivity towards Minority Communities

Similarly, the use of the "*strong arm method*" *can be counter-productive*, when dealing with communities that set a great score by their honor. Young people among them can be provoked to accept the challenge and adopt a violent response. Yet, people in power find it hard to resist the temptation of indulging in a show of strength and issuing threats. History provides us with enough of examples of communities that chose to die to the last man than be humiliated. Those holding authority must cultivate sensitivity, when it comes to respecting the honor of the minority communities. Media sometimes show scant sensitivity, when they take the liberty of linking the name of a tribe/community with the words like "miscreants," "thugs," "rogues," and "anti-social elements." In all probability, they would not use these words to refer to the people of the majority community. We may have to search the inner psyche of communities to remove the anger that has accumulated over a period of time for the hurts and humiliations they have undergone from harsh words and deeds of the majority community. Blessed are those who have the ability to *heal the collective memories* of communities. They are truly prophetic personalities.

### Being Human Means Developing a Vision for the Future

The *Washington Post* some time ago spoke of India as having the fastest growing *middle class* in the world. As their purchasing power increases, they will constitute the biggest *market* on the planet. In the same way, the number of young people of working age too is growing faster in India than in any other country. They will constitute the *biggest workforce* in the world. If this mighty human power could be trained, motivated and guided, they would lead the world economy. There was a time when our best brains were fleeing the country to build their future. It was referred to as brain-drain. Today, the "*brain drain trend*" *is on the reverse*. Indians, who went to

make their fortune abroad, like doctors and engineers, are returning to make a bigger one at home. They are coming back with the advantage of additional experience. With fast improving medical skills and facilities, India is all set to become the biggest "healing centre" in the world, unlike China, which considered as the "factory of the world."

India is already recognized as the most important destination for outsourcing. These are some of the indicators that predict unlimited economic opportunities for young people with skills and determination. As a latecomer to development, India has a golden opportunity to adopt the most rewarding economic models, introduce the most remunerative working styles, and install the latest and the best model of infrastructure. It does not do any harm for one to be a part of this scene of unique adventure. E. F. Schumacher, speaking of communities that make a new start, says: "Suddenly, there is an outburst of daring, initiative, invention, constructive activity, not in one field alone, but in many fields at once. No one may be able to say where it came from." We know where it comes from. It comes from *thinking leaders*, prophets, poets, writers, who provide a stimulating philosophy for action, insisting on giving a positive response to problems and developing the human element in human beings. It depends on *dedicated young people*, who inspire their colleagues to help their communities to make the right choices at strategically important moments. In this way, they give a new direction to history. Then suddenly, the story of violence, corruption, agitations, *rasta-rokos*, *gheraos*, picketing, extortions, communal conflicts and ethnic tensions are forgotten. Thus, a new era of peace and prosperity is ushered in.

*Being Human Means Promoting Ideas of Collaboration, and Fostering a Natural Sense of Fairness*

Human beings have always been *interdependent*. Every community, nation and civilization has been borrowing techniques, institutions, concepts and habits continuously from other communities, nations and civilizations. The greater the interaction, the greater the stimulus for growth. Ideas and lifestyles that we consider our own, may have reached us from unknown sources, changing many hands and not rarely from our immediate neighbors with

whom we are at loggerheads. We all have borrowed from each other; and the smarter ones have borrowed more! We realize, more than ever before, that no culture or civilization is a perfect human product. Even the most advanced societies are feeling diffident about the absoluteness of the values of their civilization, and beginning to notice its limitations. Those who recognize this limitation, readily see the importance of fostering *not ideas of confrontation, but collaboration.* Those who propagated philosophies of contention and led movements of struggle against other classes, communities, and the established order are beginning to rethink their propositions. They see that every human struggle in history has been in the larger context of "collaboration." Those who reconcile and motivate others to collaborate, make the greatest contribution to human growth and social development.

Conflict is an aberration in human affairs. Collaboration is the law of natural human processes and collective self-enhancement. Can people be assisted to bring a *non-confrontational approach* to problems? Ancient epics were about daring conquests and empire-building. Modern epics have been about struggle for freedom, emancipation and equality. Time has come for us to move on to enacting and recording for future generations grand "*epics of reconciliation.*" Can we build up the "*creative minority*" that will take this initiative?

*Being Human Means Being Spiritual*

In human history, the rejection of the spiritual dimension always provoked an exaggerated reaction, which in turn, led to its restoration. The exaggerated return of the spiritual took different forms: the first, fundamentalism; and the second, strange beliefs in the weird - embracing the sensational, the curious, or the odd. It is a fact that no civilization ever prospered that ignored man's daily concerns, nor survived that was blind to his/her spiritual destiny. The spiritual element has brought the great civilizations of the past into existence, and its motivating and strengthening power cannot be ignored even today. Historians have traced out an "unpredictable element" in the development of civilizations. Some have referred to it as the "chance" that gives an unforeseen opportunity to communities and nations. For example, Adam Smith saw an "invisible

hand" in economy; and Mahatma Gandhi spoke of the "inner voice." Recently some thinkers have proposed the "chaos theory" presenting what appears like chaos, is a creative force transforming the entire old order and bringing into existence a new and happy state of affairs. Spiritually minded persons see a "deeper design" in everything leading history's processes to an Ultimate Reality. After the painful experiences of the present days, we need to hold on to hope that gives us confidence.

## Conclusion

Whenever - we say a kind word; perform a kind deed; whisper an assurance of forgiveness; bring together people who are alienated from one another; offer encouragement to the weak and a correction to the strong; call people to reflection and self-correction; try to ease tension and introduce one group to another; promote the virtues of compassion, kindness, generosity, fairness, and concern for others in ourselves and in others - we make a small contribution in bringing people together, build up humanity and *strengthen the human element within the human family.* We bring to concrete life-situations the message we heard long ago from holy men of old: "Hear this, everyone! Listen, all people everywhere, great and small alike, rich and poor together."[1] You hear a whisper: "Be united; Speak in harmony; Let your minds apprehend alike; Common be your prayer; Common be the end of you assembly; Common be your resolution; Common be your deliberations; Unified be your hearts; Common be your intentions; Perfect by your unity."[2] Thus, being human calls us to be united and live in communion with every creature, especially with other human persons and human communities.

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[1] "The Book of Psalms," *The New American Bible* (Nashville: Catholic Bible Press, 1986), 49:2

[2] *Rg Veda*, 10.191.24.

**3.**

# Humanity Crisis in Multicultural Traditions

P. CHINNAIAH

### Introduction

Since time immemorial, the human beings living in multicultural traditions have experienced crisis situations in their human existence. Humanity is the combination of all multiple and manifolds cultural traditions of human beings in the world. Multicultural traditions belong to humanity as a whole. The term "humanity" consists of the totality of human beings. The word "culture" means peoples' way of life and their design for living. The phrase "multicultural traditions" means manifold and multiple human ways of living that have begun in the past, continues through the present, and flows into the future. The phrase "humanity crisis" means the situation of humankind that is unpleasant, difficult, dangerous, unfavorable, disagreeable, shocking and harmful. Hence, "humanity crisis" implies social, political, educational, religious, environmental, psychological and all other problems the totality of humanity experiences. For instance, humanity has suffered and is suffering from sorrow, hatred, pride, greed, jealousy, violence, conflict and war. Similarly, humanity experiences the problem of poverty, starvation, unemployment, malnutrition, slavery, inequality and injustice in the context of multicultural traditions of the world. All these situations taken together constitute the "humanity crisis."

Having clarified the meaning of the topic of this chapter by clarifying the terms and phrases we have used at the title of this chapter, in the first section, we elaborate on the situation of humanity crisis. Despite great material and technological progress in the world, large sections of humans live in poverty; there is discrimination of every kind prevalent in the world; constant fight among diverse groups with the aim of destroying each other is on the rise; and people live in isolation, anxiety and fear. The development in science and technology has only increased humanity

crisis because every new scientific discovery and technological invention is used by the humans to destroy each other, devastate nature, and pollute the material world. Besides, politicians practice tribalism and glorify it as nationalism, which in turn, leads to antagonism and animosity among diverse cultural and religious groups **-** tearing down the political and social fabric of the nations of the world. All these have led to a warlike situation within a nation and among nations of the world, and have brought about the humanity crisis.

The second section of the chapter unfolds the cause of humanity crisis. Human thought is the cause of humanity crisis. Thought, emerging from memory **-** by opposing or agreeing, competing or adjusting, condemning or justifying **-** brings divisions on every dimension of humanity, cultivates jealousy and tears down love among people, thereby causes misery, confusion and sorrow. The third section presents meditation and love as the solution to humanity crisis. Meditation, by emptying all thoughts from one's mind, by destroying one's *ego*, and by leading one to self-discovery and enlightenment, helps one uncover the original facets of one's personality and the essence of Reality. Besides, meditation cutting loose one from traditions, ideas and conclusions, awakens the choiceless awareness, which in turn, releases one's spiritual energy and makes it flower into love. When, love as the overflow of meditation, is directed towards the totality of humanity, it becomes the source of pace and happiness of all in the world. The conclusion speaks of the necessity of educating all in the art of meditation, which in turn, will lead to the overflow of love in the hearts and minds of every person. Thus, humanity crisis will disappear, when the effects of the art of meditation and the resulting overflow of love takes hold of every person in the world. In the next section, we elaborate on the situation of humanity crisis.

## Situation of Humanity Crisis

The world we live in is in utter disorder. There are social injustices, racial conflicts, economic inequalities and nationalistic divisions. The modern humanity has made tremendous material and technological progress; yet, a great number of human beings suffer from poverty, starvation, exploitation, malnutrition, slavery and

corruption. Humanity is caught up in a constant battle of man against man. The older generations has not given the next generations a world that is wonderful. On the contrary, they have created a frightful and brutal world, in which everybody is fighting somebody: one group is against another; one ideology against another; and one set of beliefs confronting another set of beliefs. All civilized societies of the present-day world are experiencing a warlike situation. Human beings destroy each other through violence: the husband destroys his wife and the wife destroys her husband. Though they live together, each of their life is lived in isolation, with their own problems and anxieties. This isolation is violence. War is purely a human phenomenon.

Human beings have achieved incredible progress in the fields of science and technology. The technological progress has increased powers of the humans to destroy one another. Scientists are using technology to increase the devastating power of the weapons of war and to murder vast number people with one blow. Hence, it seems that the scientists are not going to save mankind. All the nations of the world are in full preparation for war; ready to kill each other in the name of religion, economics and national survival. Scientists facilitate this by helping to build up the military technology; and there is a competition among nations regarding military build-up. Similarly, billions of dollars are spent on illegal drug-trafficking. Drugs destroy human beings, both physically and mentally. Drug permissiveness has become respectable and accepted pattern of life in certain sections of the society.

Many politicians think in terms of tribalism. Tribalism has come to be glorified as nationalism. All sovereign states are accumulating armaments. They spend enormous sums of money to prepare for war and to kill people in the name of nationality. Nationalities create wars. People live in separate worlds. Ideological divisions among the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians and the communists have brought about incalculable harm, hatred and antagonism. Self-interest has become dominant in human life. It is increasing tremendously in the world. It is showing its various dimensions in many self-made problems. It is ridden with over-population; inflation; linguistic, communal and racial differences; inefficient governments; increasing terrorism; and piling up of armaments. The world is in disorder, injustice and division. The present world religions have

separated people and set man against man. There have been religious wars. The traditional religions have become superficial, forgetting their inner spirit, thereby have brought about great damage in the world. The present system of education is pregnant with many evils, and it breeds enmity and hatred among diverse people.

Human beings destroy forests and the wild animals. They wipe out nature by cutting down trees to build more houses and pollute the air with emissions from cars and industry. They devastate everything and spread ruin all over the world. Human beings have accepted violence and war as the way of life. Though they talk about peace, the way they live their daily life is warlike and conflict-filled. In the next section, we analyze human thought as the cause of humanity's crisis.

### Human Thought: Cause of Humanity Crisis

The root cause of humanity crisis is human thought. Thought is the remembrance of the past. It starts from experience, which becomes knowledge and stored up in the cells of the brain as memory. From this stored knowledge in memory, there emerges thought. Thought has been responsible for the division among religions. Thought is not independent. Thought, being a result of knowledge, opposes or agrees, competes or adjusts, condemns or justifies. Hence, thought is never free. Whatever thought does must inevitably breed danger and anxiety. Thought cannot solve any human problem, for thought itself is the problem. Thought has divided people of a nation into different communities and classes that are at war with each other. The achievements of the great painters, poets, and composers are the activity of thought. All relationships are based on thought. Inventions, technological achievements, commerce and arts are the activity of thought. Thought has separated man from man. It has brought anarchy and great sorrow. Thought inevitably breeds the feeling of ownership and possessiveness, which consciously or unconsciously cultivates jealously. Jealousy tears down love, as where jealousy is love cannot be present. Yet, many people take jealousy as an indication of love. Jealousy is the result of thought. It is a response of the emotional content of thought. Thought has created the technological world of

chaos, wars, national divisions and religious separations. Thought has brought about misery, confusion and sorrow. Thought is employed completely and objectively in the realm of technology. Since thought brings fear and pleasure, it causes pain. Thought has become the most psychologically dangerous instrument created by man.

Science, technology, robots, engineering techniques, medicines, developments, comforts and luxuries in the world are positive products of thought. Yet, each of these positive products is capable of bringing about negative elements in the society, such as divisions, conflicts, contradictions, violence and wars. The human thought is responsible for positive and negative things in the world. The human thought with unbiased awareness creates freedom and peace among the multicultural traditions of the world. Similarly, lack of proper awareness makes thought to create wars and destruction. Thus, human thought is responsible for all forms of cruelty, such as brutality shown in wars, killing, dropping of bombs and taking of hostages. In the next section, we turn our attention to the possibility of finding the right solution to humanity crisis.

## Meditation and Love: Soulution to Humanity Crisis

The solution of humanity crisis is to be found in meditation and love. In this section, we consider meditation and love as facilitating factors to find the solution to the humanity crisis, thereby establish a multicultural society of peace and harmony.

### *Meditation*

Meditation means awareness. It consists in being aware of what one is thinking, feeling and doing without any choice. Meditation is choiceless awareness. It is emptying the mind of all thought. Meditation is a state of mind that looks at everything in its totality and not just in parts, with complete attention. It ends all forms of measurement and comparison completely. Meditation is a form of self-discovery. Meditation is a great art, and one cannot possibly learn it from anybody. It is essential for the purgation of the mind. For, without the emptying of the mind, there can be no renewal.

Meditation brings about complete transformation of thought and its activities.

Meditation involves being aware of the body, senses, thoughts, objects, feelings, breathing, walking and daily life. It brings about true self-knowledge. It is the flowering of love, goodness, peace and understanding. It leads to true revolution in the individual. Meditation is not following any system. It is not concentration, repetition and imitation. Meditation demands an astonishingly alert and watchful mind. Meditation is the awareness of every thought and feeling. It consists in not saying something is right or wrong; but just to watch it moving and move with it. In that watchful moving one begins to understand the movement of thought and feeling; and out of this awareness one experiences inner silence.

Meditation leads to the peaks of enlightenment. Awareness is the way to enlightenment. Enlightenment is a kind of "peeling off" of the *ego*. It is comparable to an onion because it has no inner substance, only layers. Enlightenment is the process of becoming aware of the unconscious layers of one's personality and dropping off those layers. The layers are not the person. They are false facets. Due to veiling by these false facets, one cannot discover the original facets of one's personality. Enlightenment is discovery of the original facets - the essential reality. Meditation empties "I" - the *ego*. It is a state of no-mind. The mind is dialectical. The dialectics of the mind makes one move again and again towards the opposite in an infinite and endless process. One can get out of this endless process only by dropping out of it by becoming aware of the game the mind tricks one with. Meditation opens one to the vast expanse of immeasurable space. It helps one to see without distortion the fact of what you are and lets you know what you should become. It is the beginning of wisdom. Meditation is a never ending movement. It consists in observing with clarity the mess thought has made. It is an unceasing action that exists always. It is flowering of love for all. Thus, meditation demands attention. It is the attention that registers practical facts of living, such as going to office, working in an office and the like. Meditation is a movement in attention. Meditation is the flowering of understanding. It is movement in the ecstasy of truth. It is the emptying of the content of consciousness. It is the understanding of the hidden and open consciousness. Meditation is self-recollected awareness; a form of self-discovery. It is a cutting loose from

tradition, ideas and conclusions. It is a sense of being completely alone.

Meditation is awareness of the world and the movement of oneself. It helps us to see what exists without any distortion. It is a new awakening and a new flowering. Meditation is the inner light. It is always afresh. Meditation is like the light of a candle which has been put out and relit. The new light is not the old though the candle is the same. Meditation is getting out of one's mind, becoming an observer of the mind, witnessing everything that goes on in the mind - the desires, imaginations, thoughts and dreams. It is an experience of witness. Choiceless awareness of every thought and feeling is the beginning of meditation. It is the calming of the content of consciousness. Creation can take place only when thought is silent. As one grows in the practice of meditation, he becomes more silent, peaceful, more balanced, more centered, alert and conscious. In meditation, one experiences a sense of contentment flowing in him like a shadow. However, making this happen is not one's doing. Meditation leads to the experience of fragrance and light. Experiencing light makes one speak words with authority. These words may enlighten others; but that is not actual goal of the one who meditates. Being helpful to others is a byproduct of mediation. In meditation one learns the art of awareness, alertness and consciousness. Meditation is to be moment to moment.

Meditation can become a permanent factor in the one who meditates. It involves inner balancing, aloneness, purity and unclouded sky of being. Meditation is also a knack. Indifference to the mind is meditation. Meditation is the golden key to all the mysteries of life. Wisdom arises from meditation. Wisdom happens only when *ego* has disappeared. Thus, the death of *ego* is the birth of wisdom. It is nothing but cleaning the mirror of one's mind. Watching is the key to meditation. Meditation means emptying oneself of all that the society has put inside him, so that he can have a clean and clear vision of the truth. When a mirror is without any dust it reflects reality. Similarly, meditation reflects the true nature of the self. Thus, meditation is the ultimate experience of blissfulness.

Meditation is pure space, undisturbed by knowledge. It is the experience of timelessness. Meditation helps one to become nothingness and empty of self-centeredness. Love and goodness are the flowers of this emptiness. Meditation is the flowering of goodness. It

is the action of silence. It is absence of conflicts, ambitions, and egoistic activities. Meditation brings about complete and radical change of mind and heart. It releases in the totality of one's spiritual energy. It is dying to the known. It is freedom from thought. Meditation leads to a silent heart and a peaceful mind, which can make life lovable, livable and richer in every dimension. Meditation is seeing. It can be compared to a torch that guides the way in a dark room. It is insightfulness. Meditation is a real lotus; it blooms. It changes with the sun; it opens in the morning and in the night it closes. Meditation balances every movement of our life. Meditation is not something one does once; hence, it is not something that is done with, but continuous and ongoing. Meditation can be compared to breathing and circulation of blood, as it is continuous. Meditation leads us to experience emptiness; it makes us alert; and helps us to live our life consciously.

In meditation we experience the here-and-now. Meditation is the door to infinite power. Meditation is the way to the super-consciousness that provides every type of power. It is self-realization. Self-realization leads to the complete disappearance of the *ego*. Meditation is the emptying of consciousness of its content - the known and the "me." Meditation brings about freedom, clarity and integration. Meditation is the breaking of all bondage. Human bondage is in thought that resides in the mind. Meditation leads to freedom from thought and guides us to experience the ecstasy of truth. Meditation creates peace and harmony without violence and war in the world. Mediation is a way of enlightenment and an answer to humanity crisis. In the next section, let us explore love, which is the overflow of mediation.

*Love: Result of Meditation*

Love arises from a pure state of mind that comes about in a person as the result of meditation. Love is not desire, ambition, greed, passion, attachment, jealousy, ownership, possessiveness and violence. Love is the fragrance of being. Love is a radiation of soul. Love has value only because it gives one "one's ownness." It gives one space enough to be on his own. A person, who has experienced real love, is capable of owning himself; he is ready to be utterly alone; and yet capable of relating to others and grows with them in

togetherness. Love is the nourishment for the soul. If there is passion in love, it becomes hellish, causing unhappiness. If there is attachment in love, it imprisons us. If love is passionless, it is heavenly giving us peaceful living. Love without attachment is divine. Love is a very mysterious phenomenon. Cultivation of true love would help us to avoid suffering, hell and wheel of life and death (*samsara*), and choose bliss, heaven and liberation.

Thus, love is radiation and expression of the soul. It is a state of being; one is in love or he is not in love - he cannot be in between. A man is in love, when his being is silent, as love is the song of silence. Love is not addressed to anybody in particular; but it spreads the fragrance in all directions. Love makes no conditions: no "ifs" and no "buts." Love never says: "Fulfill these requirements, and then I will love you." Love is unconditional giving - on the part of the one who possess true love. Love is like breathing: when it happens you simply feel loving and loved. It does not matter, who comes close to one under the influence of love - a sinner or a saint - he begins feeling the vibrations of love and experiences peace and joy. Though love helps one to relate to others in a genuine way, love is not a relationship. A relationship involves a structure, whereas love is unstructured. Thus, love relates, but never becomes a structured relationship. As a matter of fact, relationship as a structured reality destroys love. Love helps one to be available totally for humanity, nature and universe. In this manner, as the overflow of meditation, love - when directed towards the totality of humanity - becomes the source of pace and happiness of all in the world.

## Conclusion

Practice of meditation and love, as its overflow, alone can solve all humanity crises in multicultural traditions of the world. It is important that educational systems of different nations introduce the practice of meditation into the academic curriculum of different stages of education. When every student is taught the art of meditation and practices it as a daily way of life, it will lead to the overflow of love in the heart and minds of every person. When the spiritual energy love releases in everyone becomes operative in a cumulative manner, it will produce amazing results in bringing peace and harmony to the world that is multicultural. Thus, hu-

manity crisis will disappear, when the effects of the art of meditation and resulting overflow of love takes hold of every person in the world.

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# 4.
# Impact of Traditional Music on a Human

P.V.S. Lakshmi Srinivas

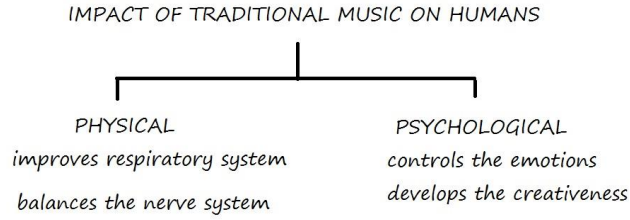## Introduction

*Chathuṣaṣṭi kaḷās* includes "ordinary arts" and "fine arts" (*lalitha kaḷās*). Fine arts also come under the "performing arts." Human culture and progress are promoted by the fine arts. They develop the sense of beauty. Study of fine arts brings the best in the human person and the society. Music is one of the fine arts. Music is the language of emotion. It appeals through the medium of the ear. It is concerned with sounds, which are calculated to excite pleasant feelings in us. "*Śiśurvēthi pasurvēthi vēthi gāna rasam phaṇihi.*" Music is of universal appeal and influence alike the scholar and the lay person, the old and the young and the man and the beast. Saranga Deva's *Sangeetha Ratnakaram* says:

*chaitanyam sarvabhōtānām vivrutham jagadātmanām*
*Nāda brahma tadānandam advitīya mupāsmahe.* [1]

The above verse (*sloka*) means: "Let the *nādabrahma*, which pervades the entire universe, which is of eternal joy and which is the prime cause of all life be worshipped." A musical sound is called *nāda*. The whole subject of music relates to *nāda*. *Nāda* gives rise to *śrutīes*, and those gives rise to *swarās*, which in turn, give rise to *rāgās*. *Rāgās* create emotions. Indian music follows the *rāga* system. Carnātic music, one of the Indian music systems, has large number of *rāgās*. *Rāga* is the pivotal concept of Indian traditional music. The whole structure of Indian music is built around the concept of *rāgā*. *Rāgās* and the compositions, which were composed in those *rāgās* by the composers are precious source to develop the human physical

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[1] Saranga Deva: *Sangeetha Ratnakaram*, 1-3-1.

and mental status. In the first and the second sections of this chapter, we unfold the physical and psychological impacts of music on the humans respectively. The third section points to the benefit of music for the human person. The following chart clearly points to the impact of traditional Indian music on the humans.

IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC ON HUMANS

PHYSICAL
improves respiratory system
balances the nerve system

PSYCHOLOGICAL
controls the emotions
develops the creativeness

## Physical Impact

*Nakāram prāṇānāmānam dhakāramanalam vidhuhu*
*Jāthaha Prāṇāgni samyogāthena nādhobidhēyathe.* [2]

The letter "*na*" is considered as "*prāṇa*," which means "breath"; and the letter "*dha*" is considered as "*agni*," which means "fire." These two letters mingle together and give rise to the term "*nāda*." According to ancient musicologists and other composers, the *nāda* is caused as follows. The *Ātma* desiring to speak or sing, stirs the mind; the mind strikes the fire abiding in the body; the fire strikes the wind; the wind abiding in the *brahmagrandhi* rising along the upward path, manifests the sound successively on the navel, the heart, the throat, the head and the mouth. Thus the *nāda* is produced by the conjunction of *prāṇa* and *anala* and this is referred by one of Trinity composers of Indian Carnatic classical music, Tyāgarāja in his compositions *Mōkṣamugaladā - Sāramathi Rāga, Śōbhillu Saptaswara - Jaganmōhini Rāga*. Thus, in the word "*nāda*," "*na*" denotes "breath" (*prāṇa*) and "*da*" denotes "fire" (*agni*).

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[2] Saranga Deva: *Sangeetha Ratnakaram*, 3-6.
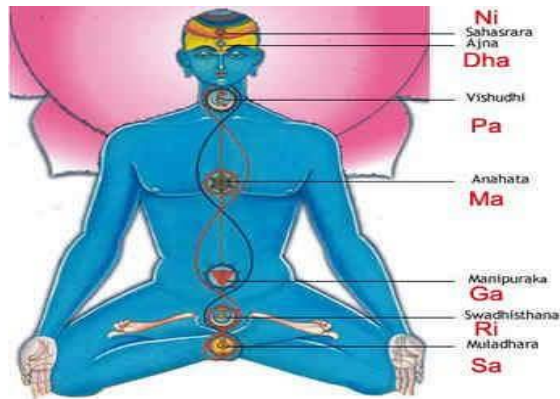
Practicing of $n\bar{a}da$ along with $swar\bar{a}s$ is also a type of regulation of breath ($pr\bar{a}ṇ\bar{a}y\bar{a}mam$), as it deals with breath control. Taking long and short breath in a regulated manner leads to control the stress in a human person. The right side of the brain is better developed with music. Practice with musical instruments can improve the hand-eye coordination. Playing musical instruments, just like playing sports, can develop motor skills of a human person.
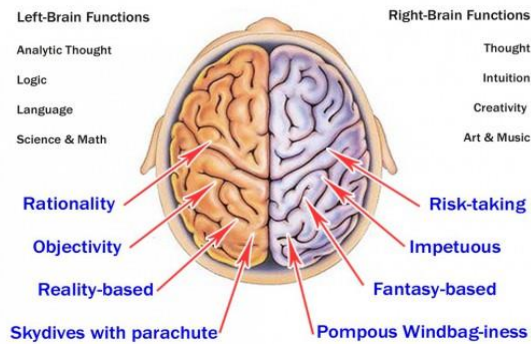


Classical music affects the brain's organization and abilities, through its rhythms and melodies. The rhythm raises the level of serotonin produced in the human brain. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter, involved in the transmission of nerve impulses that helps maintaining joyous feelings. When the brain produces serotonin, tension is eased. In fact depression is a consequence of the scare

production of this hormone. Serotonin is released, when the brain is "positively shocked." The rhythm of the music can also stimulate other natural cadencies of the body, resembling the heartbeat, or the Alfa-rhythm of the brain, and this effect is used to counter the development of clinical depression. The melody of the music is the "sparkle" that catalyses the creative process in human minds.

## Psychological Impact

The peculiarity of music is that while poetry and the literature must rely on the rational transport to inspire an emotion, since they are mediated from words, music omits this stage and points directly to stage of communicating emotions. Music does not pass through rationally to express its essence; it crosses right to our emotions. Listening to certain music, by generating a sequence of different emotions, can give a different base to one's thoughts, words, and actions. Depending on the listener and the music, this effect will last for as long as one wants it to last. The known effects of music on the brain are varied: music facilitates brain development in the humans and animals, and growth in plants. In the humans, music enhances spatial IQ, by increasing the short and long-term memory.

The rigorous order of the music from the baroque and classical periods causes the brain to experience more serotonin release, letting the body and mind perform better when listening to these logical compositions. This order includes specific patterns in rhythm and pitch, character contrast, repetitions, and alterations of the theme. Traditional music only can provide the right balance of rhythm and melody, thus not sorting the correct effect on a person's brain.[3]



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[3] Silvia Francesca Maglione: " Effect of Classical Music on the Brain," March 2nd (2006).

**Benefits of Music**



Practice of or listening to music changes the psychology of a human person. Music develops human aptitude, skill, performance, intelligence, creative and social behavior. It improves the visual and verbal skills. Music keeps an aging brain happy. Music can have positive effects on the psyche, mood and pain. It can truly enhance the quality of one's life.

**Conclussion**

Vocal or instrumental, music can be viewed as a form of language or speech, possessing subtle shades of meaning than the spoken word, and yet displaying much more emotive force. These seem to be something innate in human beings that give them the capacity to understand and respond to musical tones, rhythms, and patterns. Music is known to have many positive effects on its listeners. In fact, a growing branch in medicine called the "Music Therapy" is rapidly gaining popularity in recent years. Nowadays, music has become so wide spread in latest innovations and technology that permit easy access and acquisition.

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**5.**

# On Cultivating Peace and Harmony

K. RAMA KRISHNA RAO

### Introduction

What is it to be human? What is the distinctive feature of humans in relation to other species? Is it merely the Aristotelian reason - the ability to take rational decisions? Is there anything beyond reason to which humans have access that helps to bind them together in harmony and make them to live in peace? We need no special lens or sense to see the world now in turmoil and feel the hate and violence in the air. These are the issues that torment many a thinking persons in today's troubled world. Clearly, they are central to the theme of this conference. I wish to share with you some of my thoughts on peace and how we may cultivate it for personal happiness as well as social harmony.

Much of the violence we see around and hear about is identity related. One craves for identity when the self is threatened or lost. It manifests at two levels: the personal and the group. Identity formation involves binding within and separation from the other. Consequently, it leads to cooperation as well as competition; and hence is prone to constructive and cohesive as well as divisive and destructive activities. The problem, then, is one of minimizing the negative and maximizing the positive aspects. This essentially is an exercise of building unity in diversity. A variety of strategies may be conceived to achieve this. Those we are familiar with are mostly rational; and our faith is that reason would prevail and provide necessary solutions. The prohibitive costs of war and the enormous destructive potentialities available to state as well as non-state actors would make it rationally imperative that we denounce aggression, renounce violent forms of conflict resolution and adhere to the ethics of non-violence. Regrettably, this appears unlikely to happen by our dependence on reason alone as the savior. I will explore another avenue, which, I believe, holds greater promise even though less recognized at this time. It is the spiritual side of the humans, beyond their rational abilities.

Conflicts have their origin in the mind. Therefore, we may find their resolution in it. Mind may mean different things in different philosophical and religious traditions. Whatever the mind may mean, it is not merely at the root of identity. It is much more. Indeed it is the source of conflict and restlessness not only in the person and between persons, but also between persons and groups. At the same time, the mind also has the resources to resolve conflicts and restore peace to the person and the system of which she/he is a part. To put it in another way, mind is the seat of conflict as well as the field, where peace may prevail. Consequently, gaining control over the functions of the mind is the key for peace. It is in this context, we find meditational practices very relevant.

Meditation is a collective name to refer to a variety of practices that convert the mind from being a *source* of generating conflicts to a *resource* to resolve conflicts. Meditation is a mental discipline. It is basically a means of bringing about balance and harmony within the self and between self and others. There are various forms of meditation; but they all have the mind as the reference point. Again, identity is a mental construct. Hence, there is the fundamental connection between meditation and identity, between manifest conflicts and living peacefully in harmony with others. All forms of meditation fall into one of two broad categories, which may be designated as mindless meditation and mindful meditation. The latter is much in vogue, associated with a form of Buddhist meditation known as *Vipassana* and related forms, where attention is diffused and expanded. The former is the name I attach with other forms of meditation, which emphasize concentration and attentional focus - in one case, by making the mind empty and in another case making it full. In either case, the practice of meditation leads to gaining control over the mind so that it would not be the source of conflict, but a resource to achieve harmony. Thus, meditation is a way of annihilating the mind as a distracting impediment on the spiritual path.

Values are meant to govern conduct. Values may be rationally apprehended. Rational apprehension is insufficient to incorporate them into life. Values may be properly cultivated at a different level of learning. In the Indian tradition, it is known as *nididhyasana*, a meditative state in which the gap between knowing and being is bridged/obliterated. Controlling the mind, by emptying it, is a

necessary condition to realize the state of *nididhyasana*. Humans have the ability to achieve the state of *nididhyasana* not only because they are rational, but also because they are spiritual. It is the spiritual in us that binds, whereas the rational creates identities and divisions.

Having made the above introductory comments, in the first section, we consider the concept of peace. In the second section, we move on to analyze how we may cultivate peace. In the third section, we proceed to discuss the role of meditation in achieving peace. The conclusion states that to achieve permanent peace and harmony we must promote spirituality, as perpetual peace is possible only in a spiritually driven world. When educators and leaders recognize this truth and practically implement it by educating our children in the art of meditation, we will create many persons of peace, who in turn, would bring peace and harmony to the larger society. In the next section, we clarify the concept of peace.

## Concept of Peace

In the Indian tradition, peace is the most cherished goal of human endeavor. Many rituals conclude with the chanting of peace *mantra*: "Peace, peace and peace be unto all."[1] Like non-violence, peace may be weak or strong. In the weak sense, peace refers to the absence of external conflicts and hostilities. In its strong sense, peace is inner experience. It is personal and subjective feeling; it is a state of mind characterized by tranquility and stillness. *Yajur Veda* says: "May everything in the universe be at peace. Let peace pervade everywhere, at all times. May I experience that peace within my own heart." This passage refers to both the senses of the peace and how they are interrelated. It is a holistic conception of peace. According to Buddhist tradition, peace is the end of suffering achieved by the control of all cravings. Desires create an endless cycles of actions and reactions, births and deaths. In the cessation of such desires one finds peace. The Christian Gospel also preaches peace. Cultivating peace is the way to the Kingdom of God. Christian Fathers since the time of St. Augustine were pacifists. However, there has been a change and Christians now, except the Quakers, do not forbid wearing weapons and serving in wars.

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[1] *Shānti, shānti, shāntihi.*

Peace may be physical, psychological and spiritual. Physical peace refers to a state of rest and relaxation of the body. Mental peace is a stress-free state, and one's experience of stillness and tranquility. Spiritual peace involves a state of serenity, bliss and self-generated happiness (*ānanda*). These three aspects of peace are interrelated. Relaxed body helps to promote mental peace. Mental peace is a prelude to spiritual peace. We find this amply illustrated in *Yoga* literature. In this context, we may ask: What is the relation between experience of peace within oneself and the peace we find within a community and between communities, between one state and others? It goes without saying that peace in the society is conducive for peace in the person. However, how does the peace experience in the person promote societal peace? What is the relation between the two kinds of peace - external and the internal, if we may so label them? External peace is peace in the weak sense. It connotes absence of overt conflict. Internal peace involves actual experience of peace by the person. Internal peace is cultivated by wholesome conduct. A wholesome conduct is a behavior, in which the person is utterly detached and egoless. He is free from hatred and delusion. Such behavior presupposes good will and altruism.

The experience of a wholesome behavior implies wholesome interaction with others surrounding him. A wholesome conduct is ethically driven and guided. This involves establishing a reciprocal relationship between self and others. Such a relationship becomes reflexive and reflective in that the individual and the society mirror each other and reinforce each other. Thus, there is a nexus between individual and society; between inner and outer peace. This is not possible with mere exercise of reason. Reason is at the root of personal identities. Hence it is in a sense inconsistent with the notion of inherent unity among all humans. Therefore, reason may not be considered as a sufficient factor for promoting unity and harmony among people. Here comes spirituality as the binding factor. Spiritual in this context does not refer to the other worldly or a transcendent order. To be spiritual is to go beyond self. It involves reaching out to others, extending self to include others.

Again, peace is more than mental peace. The aforesaid nexus between individual and society, inasmuch as it involves egolessness and altruism, takes on a spiritual dimension. To be spiritual is to transcend the *ego*. Altruism is a spiritual virtue. In a spiritual state,

there is harmony between peace within and peace in the world. According to the Indian tradition, the peace within radiates and reaches outside. On this point the *Yoga Sutra* states that in the presence of one, who is non-violent, others become non-violent. Mahatma Gandhi's life is a contemporary example of this truth. Now, we take up the question of cultivating peace.

## Cultivating Peace

Secular ways of cultivating peace employ reason as the tool for making and keeping peace in the world. There are three kinds of theoretical attempts to rationally account for peace-making. One calls for "universal governance" or governance under one roof. Another involves balance of power or maintaining strategic equilibrium. The third is democratization of the political process. One or another of them may reduce chances of overt conflict for some period of time; but insufficient by themselves to ensure relatively permanent peace. This has been a historical fact. Universal governance by a single center of power is unlikely to take place in the existing sociopolitical scenario. However, collective efforts to make and keep peace, such as the League of Nations and the United Nations have had only a limited success. The balance of power alternative is what is currently in vogue. We know well how precarious peace is now. Moreover, though it has somewhat prevented global wars involving major powers, local wars continue to erupt in different parts of the world. Insofar as strategic advantages are not uniformly distributed, the very goal of achieving strategic balance tends to be elusive. Democratization has been an ongoing process. Even assuming that many nations choose a democratic form of governance, there is no intrinsic reason why they may not get into a conflict situation and engage in wars.

Permanent peace and harmony among people can be achieved only in the domain of the spiritual because they call for altruism. Whether it is the state or the individual, there is need to transcend selfish interests and see one's self and his wellness in others. This is possible only in a spiritual state. If peace is ultimately achieved in the domain of the spiritual, reason, regulations and treaties between groups and states do not ensure peace. It is the harnessing of the spiritual within that would result in manifest peace outside. This

takes us to the question of achieving the goal of peace, which we elaborate on in the next section.

## Role of Meditation in Achieving Peace

The best way known to realize the spiritual is the path of meditation. Meditation enables one to control his mental functions. Mind is the instrument that ties the person to the physical world. The *ego* and the inherent instincts make him seek sensory gratification and mundane pleasures. Therefore, the control of the mind is the precondition for spiritual growth. Control of the mind may be achieved either by emptying the mind of all its content that obstructs the spiritual path or by filling it full with harmless content that does not debilitate the person from pursuing the spiritual path. The former involves bringing the mind to a standstill state. In such a state, the mind is as good as nonexistent. The other option is to render the mind by proper training a resource for spiritual advancement rather than a source of physical participation in the world. One is the case of spiritual retreat. The other involves spiritual engagement of the mind. We label them as mindless meditation and mindful meditation.

Mindful Meditation as currently promoted in the West is a way of controlling stress and promoting wellness. It involves awareness of events from moment to moment. It also means remembering and continuously paying attention to what one experiences so that one may condition the mind to experience the wholesome and what is healthy, and to keep away from the unwholesome and debilitating experiences. In traditional Buddhism it is a means of self-actualization, becoming aware of one's authentic being. Practice of mindfulness is a mode of generating power to overcome delusions, false perceptions and distractions. It is a way of achieving a complete tranquil state, ultimately leading to *nirvana*. In the *Theravada* tradition, mindfulness has two components. It refers to preparation of the mind to gain wholesome insight and gaining the insight itself. Meditation in the *Yoga* tradition involves transcending the mind and its routine functions. The eight steps in Patanjali *Yoga* are progressive steps to control and transcend the mind. In a sense, it is emptying the mind of all its contents so that one may take the spiritual path and achieve self-realization. Thus, self-actualization in the Buddhist

*Theravada* tradition and self-realization in *Yoga* tradition are similar pursuits to reach the same goal.

### Conclusion

It is clear from the above that in order to achieve relatively permanent peace and harmony it is necessary to promote spirituality. A practical way to do this is to teach meditation to all our children as they grow up and encourage its practice throughout their lives. The change must begin with oneself; and it will change the world. There is a reflexive relationship between us and the world we live in. One may not change without the other. Perpetual peace is possible only in the spiritually driven world. As educators, we will do well to recognize this and act accordingly so that we may do our bit to promote universal brotherhood, peace within oneself, and harmony among people and states.

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**6.**

# Onto Perfection
### "Asato ma sadgamaya; Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya;
### Mrtorma'mrtam gamaya"

S.R. Bhatt

### Introduction

In first section of this chapter, we begin by stating that human life as a prized product of cosmic process and the result of a remarkable psychophysical evolution. This evolutionary cosmic process is an ongoing movement, which can be directed in the right course or in the wrong direction by the free, rational and responsible human agent. At this stage, the human agent needs right knowledge, values and education guided by philosophical reflection, so that he can direct this ongoing evolution of the human person in the right path. Hence, there is the need to review and rethink the right mode of philosophizing, which we consider in the second section. Philosophizing, in the Indian context, involves a systematic reflection on the nature of Reality and a way of life based on the Reality. Since Reality is a symbiosis of unity and multiplicity, genuine philosophical activity stems from lived experience and calls for debate, discussion, give and take, and mutual exchange in order to arrive at the truth. Though such an approach characterized the past, dogmatism vitiated the philosophical atmosphere later on. Hence, there is the need to revisit the past to capture the true spirit of philosophizing. This holistic and integral type of philosophizing would understand Reality in terms of Organicism - Reality as unity in multiplicity based on the principles of interrelation and coordination, mutuality and cooperation, reciprocity and interdependence; understand our experiences as multifaceted and multilayered; recognize different levels of cognition; and unfold the fact-value dichotomy.

The third section unfolds the multiple consequences that stem from this unitive and integral vision of Reality. Seen from this unitive perspective the universe is viewed as a corporate coexistence; the human existence is seen as finite-infinite and multidimensional; the value-schema of a society as founded on culture; tradition is

visualized as transmitting culture; progress is considered as an evolution based on tradition being rooted in culture; relatedness of human existence, culture and nature; and the pursuit of integral excellence as the goal of human life and the cosmic process. Indian sages present the theory of *purus'arthas* as the cardinal means to achieve this integral vision of reality. Hence, in the fourth section, we consider the *purus'arthas* and human person as the moral agent by analyzing the concept *purusa*.

In the fifth section, we look into the ideal of spiritual globalization and the quality of life that would result from it. It calls for universalizability of ethical norms and universal adherence to them. When spiritual globalization becomes a reality the fundamental unity of the entire *cosmos* will be actualized. We will also analyse the mode of achieving this goal of spiritual globalization, the value-schema that should guide individual and social progress, adapting a holistic and integral approach in attaining social progress, and the value-based use of the full potential of science and technology to bring about genuine progress of the *cosmos*. The conclusion states that an imperfect human being can achieve perfection by living his/her *purus'arthas*. When every individual recognizes that he is only an individual-in-*cosmos*, becomes more *cosmo*-centric than individual-centric, lives with every other in a harmonious corporate interrelationship, and is ready to be interdependent as one cosmic family, true perfection of humankind and the *cosmos* is achieved. Now, we move on to analyze the meaning and significance of human life.

## Meaning and Significance of Human Life

Human life is a prized possession; the best product of cosmic process emerged so far. It has been a remarkable psychophysical evolution through genetic endowment, ecological interaction and cultural transformation, through innate competence and overt performance. Reflective awareness and self-consciousness are its unique features. On the basis of his/her planned endeavor and successful behavior the human person has been able to achieve wonderful feats. A mechanistic understanding of human ontology and human evolution cannot do justice to the spontaneity, creativity and goal-oriented human pursuits. The reality is experienced as *telos-*

embedded; and human life, being its part and parcel, has to reflect this feature. Teleological approach alone can support a viewpoint that coordinates work and welfare, possession and enjoyment with a spirit of sacrifice, social progress and social justice, material well-being and spiritual enhancement. The cosmic process is an ongoing movement. It does not halt or wait. Nothing should be regarded as final, inevitable and conclusive at the present juncture. If it is turned in a wrong direction, it will keep on moving in that direction only. However, if it is routed in the right course, it can move in a desirable direction. It is for the free, rational, and responsible human agent to choose the correct path and provide a right track to the cosmic process. Here comes the role of knowledge, values and education under the guidance of philosophical reflection. For this purpose there is need for reviewing and rethinking of the required mode of philosophizing, to which we turn our attention in the next section.

## Nature of *Dars'ana*, Reality and Experience

Philosophizing in Indian context has been systematic reflection on *lived* human experiences of the Reality with a view to be profited from them. It is, thus, both a view of Reality and a way of life based on that. Reality is wide, varied and variegated. It is experienced as multifaceted and multilayered. Since Reality is multi-folded, we need multiple ways and approaches to comprehend Reality. The Indian seers emphasized that though reality is unitary in its *proto-form*, in its *assumed-form* it expresses itself in multiple forms.[1] Hence, there are multiple ways of expressing our experiences of multi-faceted reality.[2] In view of this rich diversity, there should not be any insistence on uniformity or unanimity in our ways of thinking and modes of living. There cannot be any regimentation in this respect. So it would be improper and unjust to insist that there can be only one particular mode of philosophizing that has to be universally acceptable. Genuine philosophical activity has to stem from con-cretely lived experiences that are culturally conditioned and there-fore democracy in ideas has to be the guiding point. There should always be a scope for healthy philosophical disagreement. The

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[1] *Ajayamano bahudha vijayate*

[2] *Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*

thoughtful and creative minds need not always agree or think along a fixed path. There is room for debate and discussion, mutual exchanges, give and take, to arrive at the truth. However, this enterprise has to be rational, logical and methodical, in order that it is reasonable and acceptable. In the past, this viewpoint was properly appreciated and practiced; but later on some sort of dogmatism vitiated the philosophical atmosphere. Hence, there is a need to revive this approach, in order to create fresh approaches, newer intuitions, novel insights and innovative ideas.

Reality is symbiosis of unity and multiplicity. The multiplicity originates from, is situated and embedded in, and is sustained by one all-inclusive Reality. It is an organic unity, a multiplicity-in-unity. It is not a unity brought into or superimposed on multiplicity. Multiplicity issues forth from unity and is accommodated in an orderly way in unity. For this reason, the world we live in is a *cosmos* and not a chaos. It is a universe and not a *multiverse*. It is a universe in the sense that it houses many in one as parts of an organic whole. The Sanskrit words "*jagat*" - the "mutative world" and "*vis'va*" - the "*cosmos*" are suggestive of this fact. This is how the ontological issue of "one" and "many" is to be approached. Both one and many are inevitable facts of our experience. In a satisfactory philosophical position both are to be recognized and accommodated in a holistic and integral system - in a synthesis - in which the two are not posed as opposites, but as complimentary. Such a position can be termed as "Organicism" *(S'arirakavada)* that fulfills this task by postulating a primordial unity that expresses itself in and through the multiplicity of diverse forms and functions. The analogy of living organism given to us in our experiences is best suited to explain the nature of Reality. A living organism is neither an assemblage of scattered and un-related multiple parts, nor is it a barren unity or an abstraction that is bereft of the multiplicity of its organs. It is a concrete unity that realizes itself in and through the multiplicity. Just as a part is not intelligible except through the whole of which it is a part, so also a whole is not conceivable without any reference to its constituent parts. In the same way, the organs are not intelligible except as inhering in an organism and the organism also is not conceivable without any reference to its organs. Thus, Organicism regards one and many as members of an organic whole each having a being of its own, but a being that implies a relation to the other. This is a holistic

and integral approach based on the principles of interrelation and coordination, mutuality and cooperation, reciprocity and interdependence.

In other systems of thought, one cannot speak of such a world of mutual appreciation, organic interrelation and interdependence. In absolutism, there is no manifoldness; but a solid singleness. In dualism, there is no mutuality; but only a rigid bifurcation. In pluralism, there is no interrelatedness; but monadic exclusiveness. So these systems cannot entertain the idea of mutual give and take, mutual appreciation, mutual caring and sharing - the core of Organicism. The chief value of Organicism is that it recognizes the inalienable individuality and the reality of manifoldness of finite spirits and matter, and assigns them a proper place, function and value in the unifying framework of an all-embracing unity without in any way destroying its wholeness. The unity differentiates itself into multiple finite entities without being exhausted by them, just like a whole which is not a mere summation of the parts. It is both immanent and transcendent. The multiplicity is not annihilated, but preserved and protected in the unity, derives its being, discharges its functions and realizes its value within the concrete unity. Both are necessary to each other and realize themselves in and through the other.

Like the Reality, our experiences are also multifaceted and multilayered. They have to be so in order to be genuine, veracious and comprehensive. The variety of experiences is in tune with multiplicity of reality. Ordinarily our experiences are sense-generated. We possess cognitive senses that provide us variety of experiences, both internal and external. The functioning of cognitive senses is both amusing and bewildering and, at times, beyond the ken of human understanding. It also undergoes expansion and contraction with the increase or decrease of cognitive capacity. It can be thwarted by impeding forces and augmented and reinforced by supplementing agents. The ever-increasing scientific and technological inventions and advancements have devised many apparatus that serve as aid to the enrichment of our experiences, particularly of the objects that are remote, subtle, or covered. There is constant and perhaps endless improvement in our cognizing capacity. Further, there is something called "supernormal perception" that opens up a new field of experience. It is a cognitive domain that is sometimes suspected. However, we cannot reject its veracity out-right. Availability of such

experiences to some gifted persons cannot be denied on the ground that they are not available to everyone and to our ordinary senses.

The evolved human consciousness is bi-faceted in so far as it is self-consciousness as well as object-consciousness. We know, we know that we know and we also know what we know is true and useful or not. On the basis of ratiocinative discrimination we form judgments. We make a distinction between fact and value. These two are distinct; but closely interrelated and interdependent. A fact is already in existence and value is to be brought into existence through our efforts. Experience of facts enables us to postulate value and engages us in the pursuit of its realization. When value is realized, it becomes fact. So fact-value dichotomy is only apparent and for practical purposes only. Consciousness of values and their planned and systematic realization is another unique feature of human being. In the next section, let us consider the consequences of the unitive vision of Reality.

## Consequences of the Unitive Vision of Reality

Multiple consequences stem from this unitive and integral vision of Reality. Seen from this unitive perspective the universe is viewed as a corporate coexistence; the human existence is seen as finite-infinite and multidimensional; the value-schema of a society as founded on culture; tradition is visualized as transmitting culture; progress is considered as an evolution based on tradition being rooted in culture; relatedness of human existence, culture and nature; and the pursuit of integral excellence as the goal of human life and the cosmic process. The following subsections unfold each of these consequences of the unitive vision of Reality.

### Universe: A Corporate Coexistence

The universe is an undivided whole. There is organic interde-pendence, cooperative partnership and supportive mutualism in community living. There is reciprocity between living beings and inanimate things. All living beings have to coexist in the universe; but it has to be a regulated coexistence just like a nest (*nida*) of a bird, wherein the young ones coexist in a regulated way. The bird-parents operate with the attitude of distributive justice and selfless sacrifice;

and the young ones also coexist in mutual cooperation and sharing. They do cry for food, but do not quarrel with one another. The parents see to it that their needs are satisfied, but they do not feed their greed. If little creatures can have such a harmonious living why can we who claim to be rational not do so? So the guiding principles of communitarian life are *sahavasa*, *sahakara* and *sahabhoga*. Entire cosmic existence is corporate coexistence. Therefore, human progress coincides with cosmic progress. There is inclusive pluralism with mutual cooperation and supportive partaking.

*Human Existence: A Finite-Infinite Reality*

Human being, like any other item of the *cosmos*, is a divine spark. He is finite-infinite. He is potentially infinite. The Vedic *rishi* describes him as "*amrtasya putra*." He is infinite conditioned as finite. Finitude is not his basic nature. He mistakes him to be finite. So he has to restore his divinity and experience infinitude. His real Self is Pure Consciousness and Bliss, which is infinitude and perfection. This perfection is not a matter of attainment, but a matter of realization. However, this realization will be only after attainment of ratiocinative knowledge of finitude. He has to know that he is not finite and imperfect before he can transcend his finitude.

In the worldly existence, human being is beset with ignorance and consequent bondage which is misery-mongering. He always feels that he is lacking something, missing something and wanting something. He hankers after worldly belongings, which are evanescent and ephemeral. He has an inkling of perfection. He cherishes to be eternal and immortal, but does not know what real immortality is. He mistakes mortal to be immortal and suffers when he realizes that what he took to be immortal has turned out to be mortal. Though the real self is perfection and infinitude he suffers from cognitive, conative and affective imperfections. In worldly existence he is body-mind complex animated by the principle of spirit/soul. The spirit is his real self. Body-mind complex is extraneous, adventitious and an imposition or covering. This makes him finite-infinite. This extraneous imposition has to be discarded. Then only real self can be experienced. Nevertheless, in order to experience the real self first, we have to know the empirical self, which exists in this mutative world (*jagata*) having his/her own existential network (*samsara*).

We have the experience that apart from the physical dimension, we possess vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual dimensions (*panchakos'ha*) that are all equally important. They are all interrelated and mutually supportive. They are distinct, but not separate. Hence, they cannot be reduced to any one of them. They may have existential hierarchy from gross to subtle; but they do not have value-based hierarchy as all are of equal value. Quality of life is to be attained in terms of catering to the legitimate needs of all these in a balanced and proportionate way. In fact, lop-sided development of any one or a few of them is harmful to the total human person and is detrimental to perfection whatever the degree of its realization is. The physical, vital, mental and intellectual belong to the empirical world and can be approached with the help of science. However, the spiritual dimension belongs to a different category. It is trans-empirical and beyond the ken of empirical sciences. There are two realms of human existence: the empirical - constituting the base; and trans-empirical - constituting the apex. Both are organically interrelated. Wise persons differentiate between the two; but do not ignore one for the sake of the other. There can be priority and posterity between them; or there can be simultaneity in their pursuits depending upon the situational requirements. Yet, there is no chasm or gulf between the two. The spiritual is trans-empirical; but it is not anti-empirical. Rather it is the fulfillment of the empirical. The empirical is a prerequisite and steppingstone for the trans-empirical. One cannot be realized without the other. There has to be a symbiosis of science and spirituality, the former seasoning and tempering the latter. This is the message of the *Isavasopanishad* of *Yajurveda*.

*Human Existence: A Multidimensional Reality*

Human existence, in worldly form, is multidimensional, multi-layered and multi-relational. It has individual, social and cosmic aspects. It is intimately related with nature, sub-human beings and human beings. Human identity, therefore, cannot be determined by any one of these facets. It is the totality and intricate unity of all these with subtle and fine inter-netting, interdependence and interaction of the three, which constitute human personality.

Added to this is the social dimension that is highly complex, complicated and subtle network of relations. Sociality is built into

human nature. No human existence is possible and conceivable without the society. Human beings themselves constitute society. Society provides the ground and sustenance for human existence, besides giving the basic structure and materials for human evolution. So, there is reciprocal interdependence. Human progress coincides with social progress; but there is no dichotomy/chasm between individual existence and social environment. All social organizations are means for collective progress. If a particular form of social organization is not fully conducive for this goal, there should be innovative changes and transformation.

### Values-Schema as Founded on Culture

Quest for value and its gradual, graded and methodical realization have been prominent concerns and aspirations of humankind in general and of Indian mind in particular. This involves a value-schema based on concrete social and historical realities. It also calls for symbiosis of being, knowing and doing. A value-schema is multi-layered and multifaceted, involving the mundane and trans-mundane, empirical and trans-empirical, physical, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. All these are distinguishable; but not separable. All these are to be pursued in simultaneity or in succession - depending on needs, requirements and situations. A value-schema has four phases: end, means, modalities and realiza-tion. Knowledge of the end, proper acquisition of the means, and skillful employment of the modalities, and judicious utilization of the result are prerequisites for a rational value-pursuit. This means adequate management of reality-situation, knowledge-field, action-program, and distribution-system. In Indian philosophical thought distinct and specific attention has been paid to their concerned theories of management keeping in view the unity and diversity of the nature of Reality and human existence.

### Tradition as Transmitting Culture

In Indian philosophical thought emphasis is laid on utilization of past experiences, including the experiences of others.[3] The past is

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[3] *A no bhadrah kranvantu vis'vatah*

handed down to the present in the form of tradition. In this sense tradition is rooted in culture. Tradition is a movement (*parampara*). It is embedded in the past, it lives through the present and it flows into the future. It is an accumulative process of acquiring and transmitting, adjusting and applying lived experiences and embodied values and norms cherished in a culture. It is continuity as well as change. In a good and healthy tradition, there has to be judicious discrimination as to what is to be retained and what is to be discarded as dated and outlived. It, thus, admits creative freedom and innovative changes. No culture can survive and thrive if its seminal ideas, key concepts, fundamental doctrines get fossilized and out-worn. Therefore, a constant reflective review of tradition is necessary; otherwise it becomes a dead weight and burden on individual and society.

### *Progress as Evolution Banking on Tradition and Rooted in Culture*

Change is the law of reality; but it has to be a change for the better, for more perfect, and for greater wellbeing. All change is not necessarily healthy and good. In order to be beneficial, change has to be in the form of evolution rather than revolution. It must be based on the solid foundations of the past, its experiences, concerns and commitments. However, this process of bringing forward from the past requires a judicious discrimination as to what should be accepted and what should be rejected from the tradition. A live tradition provides for freedom, is amenable to change and improvement. Tradition makes a person and society and, contrary wise, a person and society make a tradition. So, there is mutuality between the two. Similarly change and modernity do not mean breaking away from the past experiences. What is needed is a correct understanding of the nature and role of tradition.

Tradition is rooted in a culture. According to Indian thought, value-realization and civilized living imply constant and all-round development. Culture, in all its facets and dimensions, is a crucial constituent of human progress, both individual and social. Culture is a matter of being, a mode of living, a set of commonly shared values and belief patterns, practices and efforts. It is a complex whole comprising of knowledge, beliefs, conduct, morals, law, customs, artistic achievements, scientific innovations and technological pursuits, humanities and social sciences. It is an individual as well as social

affair. It is a total heritage borne by a society. It is crystallization of material, mental, intellectual and spiritual wealth generated and preserved by the society. It contributes to the discovery of meaning of life. Cultural life consists in pursuit and realization of values that enhance quality of life of human being and his society. Therefore, culture has to enrich, enlarge and encourage fullness of life, delight of mind and plenitude of peace. Culture is a living phenomenon coming from the past like a tradition. It is a crystallization of material and spiritual wealth created and preserved by a group of people and a society. There can be no genuine progress without cultural backing and cultural regeneration preceding and consolidating it. However, it is for humans to live up to them or falter and fail.

*Relatedness of Human Existence, Culture and Nature*

The Indian mind views that human existence, culture and nature are very intimately correlated. Human being is essentially "natural," in the sense that he/she is an inalienable part of nature; is born and brought up in the lap of nature; is sustained and nourished by nature; and ultimately reaches his/her culmination and consummation in and through nature. Nature environs human being and provides a basis for human evolution in excellence and perfection. However, in spite of all this, nature does not exhaust human being; nor does human being exhaust nature. The laws of nature condition him and he can cope up with nature and with the laws of its operation to some extent. He can liberate himself from nature with the help of nature only. With a firm base in nature, human being has the ability to rise above nature with the help of nature alone and to become a creator of culture. Human being is bound by nature and yet he/she can transcend the bonds of nature. He/she is not only aware of being natural, but also conscious of the capacity to overcome and go beyond nature. Even though dependent upon nature he/she can be liberated from nature with the help of nature itself. Thus, he/she has a paradoxical awareness of dependence on nature and possible freedom from nature. It is a prerogative of human being to acquire this self-awareness and shape his/her life and existence accordingly.

Nature is lawful and law-abiding. Therefore, human being can know and regulate lawful functioning of nature. Nevertheless,

human mind is prone to perversion and susceptible to wrong doing. It is unfortunate that perversity-prone human mind more often than not indulges in law-violation out of ignorance, weakness of will and habit of mind. This is one of the facets of freewill and *karma*. Nature is kind and benevolent. Initially it gives mild warning, but if no heed is paid it reacts violently. It is left to sweet will of human being to care for nature and enable nature to care for him or to be a sufferer of his misdeeds.

Both nature and culture environ human existence and inform his/her being. Both these are distinct, but not separate. Both are equally necessary. Culture is humanly transformed nature. Ideally speaking nature should be humanely transformed; but quite often it turns inhuman. Human existence is a part of nature and culture is nurtured nature. The human being tends to make it unnatural. This is the travesty of human rationality and freewill. In an ideal situation nature, human existence and culture should constitute a continuum and an organic unity. However, human egoism and selfishness come in the way.

Human being is a *tertim quid* between nature and culture. He possesses the capacity of innovative creativity. Culture is shaped and reshaped by creative human consciousness. In creative consciousness past experiences are relived and renewed. It is also previewing the future. Reenacting the past, enlivening the present and visualizing the future are tasks of a dynamic culture. Here the past, the present and the future coalesce into one. The present envelops the past and contains the seeds of the future. In this respect, the present occupies a pivotal place, as it is a symbiosis of the actual and the potential. A living culture renders the past contemporaneous and makes the contemporary as foundation of the future.

*Pursuit of Excellence as the Goal of Human Life and the Cosmic Process*

The pursuit of excellence, striving for betterment and attainment of quality of life have been perennial human concerns and aspirations. All human endeavors in diverse fields of culture and civilization have been directed towards realization of this goal. Freedom from imperfection and consequent suffering has been the chief motivating factors for all cognitive enterprises and technological advancements. Though every human being cherishes and strives for

these and posits them as goal of life, their realization requires planned corporate efforts. It cannot be a single individual enterprise. A single individual may work out a plan; but its execution has to be collective. Moreover, this goal implies attainment of excellence and the best possible quality of life not only for the individual, but also for the entire *cosmos*, since the two are interrelated, interdependent and constitute an organic whole. Therefore, it calls for collective efforts. This being so, one cannot attempt to realize a good quality of life keeping in view an isolated individual, society, nation or region. It has to be a global vision and a universal realization without any prejudice to any one section of the universe. Everyone has to participate and partake in the fruits of this venture, as it is a collective enterprise. Everyone should be able to contribute by manifestation of one's capabilities through a dynamic discovery of one's potentials, being assisted in this process by the society and natural surroundings. So, when we plan for social progress, our outlook should be global, though our performance has to be at the local level. Genuine social progress consists in the realization of universal wellbeing, in the sense of care and concern for all, a feeling of oneness with all, and an attitude of sharing and cooperating.

### *Purus'arthas*: Cardinal Means to Achieve the Integral Vision of Reality

In this section, we consider *purus'arthas* as the means provided by the Indian sages to actualize the unitive and integral vision of Reality by spelling out the different dimensions of the theory of *purus'arthas*. We will also elaborate on the human person as a moral agent, who organizes and lives his life according to the *purus'arthas*, by clarifying the concept of *purusa*.

#### *Theory of Purus'arthas*

The notions of "perfection," "peace," "harmony," "goodness" and "quality of life" have been projected and nourished in different cultural traditions of the world, so that everything true, good, beautiful and worth emulating in a culture and tradition, may be brought together and synthesized for pursuit of individual happiness, social progress, world peace and cosmic wellbeing. These are

the ideals cherished by the humankind at all times all over the world; but they have always been elusive from effective realization. In the context of present day quest for globalization and universal harmony in the strife-ridden and divided world, such a renewed attempt may help in generating conducive climate and congenial mindset through proper and adequate education and other media of mass communication. Thought motivates action and good thoughts will certainly ensue good deeds. It is pragmatic to live by ideals even though they may not be easily and fully realizable. These ideals are not to be seen as unachievable *utopia*, but as attainable through human endeavor. Ideals need to be projected and pursued. There have been seers, sages, saints and knowledgeable persons in every known historical age and in every region, who have on the basis of their subliminal intuitions given us noble ideas and ideals for universal welfare. It is prudent to go by their precepts and practices that have eternal relevance and utility. The system of *purus'arthas* is one of such ideals Indian sages have given. We briefly consider this ideal in this subsection.

Theory of *purus'arthas* has been cardinal to Indian way of life. It has been formulated keeping in view the structure of the universe and the constitution of human person. Whatever be its formulation, it is commonly accepted in Vedic, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh and all other traditions. Along with a theory of *karma*, it is a salient and distinguishing feature of Indian culture. This theory is based on two presuppositions. One is that the universe and the cosmic process are teleological, purposive and goal-oriented. There is a built-in *telos* in the *cosmos*. The other is that the human person is the highest *emergent* so far in the cosmic process. Though the humans are finite, they have the capacity to develop infinitely. There are immense potentialities inherent in humans, which can be manifested given suitable conditions. Human existence has meaning and significance; but this can be realized only through right knowledge, proper planning and skillful endeavor. Ideas of *karma* and *purus'arthas* have been put forth only in this context.

Human person is not only conscious, but also self-conscious. He/she has the painful realization that all is not well with the present existence. There is a constant feeling of imperfection and finitude. This is a hard fact of life which is undeniable. The human person inevitably feels that there is something missing, something lacking

and something wanting. This is not a cause for pessimism; but a call for enlightened activism. It stimulates and motivates a knowledgeable person to undertake planned and skillful performance. In the performance of *purus'arthas*, there are three steps: knowledge of the goal (*sadhya*); the adequate and conducive means (*sadhana*); and skillful employment of modalities (*itikartavyata*). The basis of choice of goal is its appropriateness (*aucitya*). It is appropriate, if it is conducive to individual and universal wellbeing (*artha* and not *anartha*), and it is realizable (not *asadhya*). The means has to be in accordance with the goal (*anukula*). It should be available and accessible (*upalabdha*). The modalities stand for proper knowledge and skillful employment of means (*upayakaus'ala*) to realize the goal. Since the modalities have to be composite, it is necessary to know the different steps and their priority and *posteriority (paurvaparya)*, while undertaking the performance.

There is a quadruple principle underlying the pursuit of *purus' arthas*: knowledge (*jnana*); will (*iccha*); effort (*kriya*); and result (*phala*). These four principles are to be properly harnessed in their symbiotic interrelationship. *Puru'sarthas* have to be collective and corporate enterprise. An isolated human individual never exits. He/she is a part and parcel of the total reality and has no existence apart from this totality. There is reciprocal dependence, supportive coexistence, judicious cooperation, and mutual caring and sharing. Though the individual is the agent, who performs the *purus'artha*s, his agency is possible only in a collectivity of other human persons. Therefore, the motives and intentions of every act should be the wellbeing of the collectivity. The *Gita* ideal of *lokasamgraha* is the guiding spirit of all theorizing about *purus'arthas*.

Traditionally four *purus'arthas* have been conceived in the Vedic tradition and they are by and large accepted in other traditions as well. They are *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. However, logically there is no fixity about it. What is important is that a human person should lead a planned life with proper knowledge and pursuit of proximate and ultimate goals of life. To achieve the above-mentioned end, there can be different patterns of theorizing; but the fourfold traditional schema seems to be universally desirable. In the fourfold schema *dharma* is the foundation and guiding principle; *artha* and *kama* are worldly goals for earthly well being (*preyas*); and *moksha* is beyond the two (*nihsreyas*). *Dharma*, *artha* and *kama* are to

be pursued in the empirical life. For this reason these three *purus'arthas* are put under one head of *trivarga*. *Moksha* is both this worldly (*jivanmukti*) and otherworldly (*videhamukti*). Therefore, it is distinguished as *apavarga*.

In Indian culture, we have *Dharmas'astra, Artha'sastra, Kamas' astra* and *Mokshas'astra* traditions, each one having enormous expository literature. It is worthwhile to be acquainted with them, even though one may not wholly adhere to them. Sometimes *purus'arthas* are discussed in the context of *karma* and sometimes separately as well. However, *karma* is the cornerstone of *purus'arthas.* Any delineation on traditional theories of *purus'arthas* must be based on the concerned literature only and there should not be any free lancing or kite flying about this.

Having elaborated on the theory of *purus'arthas*, we consider the human person as the moral agent, by briefly analyzing and clarifying the traditional Indian notion of *purusa*, in the next subsection.

## Concept of Purusa

Human person is the centre of all moral and legal reflections. Hence, all moral and legal considerations are meaningful and applicable only in the context of the humans. The behavior of inanimate objects and animals does not attract moral and legal evaluations. Even the behavior of an insane person or an infant is not an object of moral and legal pronouncements in the strict sense. This clearly implies that all moral and legal deliberations presuppose a particular view of human person, to whom alone moral and legal responsibility is attributable. There are certain properties possessed by the human person by virtue of which alone he/she becomes a proper and fit candidate for moral and legal evaluations. This is specifically the case in the moral context. In the *Purva Mimamsa* literature the term "*purusa*" is used for such a moral agent. "*Purusa*" means a moral agent, who is ratiocinative/discursive; who possesses freedom of will; and who has a teleological or purposive outlook. A *purusa* is a rational, free and responsible agent, whose behavior is goal-oriented. In order to highlight the full implications of this concept in a moral context, we may do well to dwell upon these properties of the human person, which are at the same time, both constitutive and regulative. They constitute the nature of the human person, even

though they do not fully manifest in the human person. There has to be purposive, planned, methodical and regulated enterprise to realize those potentialities. The word "*purusa*" etymologically means the "one who strives for enhancement."[4] Hence, they are the ideals to be pursued and strived at by the human person.

The primary requirement of a moral agent is the capacity to discriminate (*viveka*) between the good and the bad, the virtue and the vice. In fact, the very first aphorism of the *Jaiminisutras* begins with *dharma jijnasa* whose core is acquisition of this ratiocinative knowledge. The ignorance of law cannot be an excuse, but the awareness of law and the prevalence of the conditions conducive to such awareness is a necessary precondition. A law cannot be adhered to unless and until one knows what it is; what is the means; and what are the modalities to practice it. That is why moral and legal education should be an essential part of general education, which should be imparted through both formal and informal modes education.

The second requirement of a moral agent is the possession of freewill. Every act is not a moral act. Acts, such as eating and sleeping do not come under the purview of moral evaluations because these do not involve a choice between the good and the bad. Only voluntary acts, which are directed to bring about some desired fruits, [5] can be subjected to moral evaluations. Thus, the moral acts are the acts performed by a moral agent (*purusa*) to whom the responsibility of its performance can be attributed not only in terms of its creation, but also in terms of the owning up of the consequences. Thus, the theory of *apurva*, which seems to be a precursor of the theory of *karma*, has both the attributive and the retributive aspects. This attribution of responsibility and the retribution of the consequences *(phala)* presuppose freedom of will in the agent and availability of alternatives in the given situation. *Karma* performed as *yajna* has distributive aspect as well, since *yajna* is a collective enterprise for universal wellbeing and *karmaphala* is necessarily to be distributed as *prasada*.

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[4] *Purati agre gacchati iti purusah* - S'abdakalpadruma
[5] *Phaleccha janitakirya*

## Spiritual Globalization and Quality of Life

In this section, we look into the ideal of spiritual globalization and the quality of life that would result from it. It calls for universalizability of ethical norms and universal adherence to them. When spiritual globalization becomes a reality the fundamental unity of the entire *cosmos* will be actualized. We will also analyse the mode of achieving this goal of spiritual globalization, the value-schema that should guide individual and social progress, adapting a holistic and integral approach in attaining social progress, and the value-based use of the full potential of science and technology to bring about genuine progress of the *cosmos*.

### *Nature of Spiritual Globalization*

Quality of life in its perfect and highest form is the *summum bonum* of human existence and globalization is its corollary since its realization requires propagation, profession and practice of global ethics. The principle of "universalizability of ethical norms" and adherence to them without exception, stem from this very consideration. However, globalization is not to be understood in materialistic terms - in the sense of liberalization of trade and commerce. Globalization is also a spiritual ideal. It consists in inculcating the attitude of seeing self-sameness everywhere leading to global unity. It is the realization of fundamental unity of the entire *cosmos*, not just the wholeness of human beings or other living beings. It is a mode of cosmic coexistence with a spirit of mutual support, mutual sacrifice, mutual caring and sharing. It is an enlightened conduct and a life of contentment like the life lived by a *bodhisattva* or *jivanmukta*, who is constantly engaged in universal wellbeing; who is happy in the happiness of others and feels miserable in the miseries of others; who always thinks of the good of others and acts for their welfare. The seers and sages, spiritual and religious leaders, all over the world have enjoined this mode of living. The moral codes prescribed in all the cultural and religious traditions in all ages and places aim at the cultivation of this mindset of universal affinity and self-sameness. We possess vast literature in this regard; but human nature is such that it has to be constantly reminded about this and persuasively

goaded to practice this. This accounts for the need and relevance of the present endeavor.

Spiritual Globalization is not monopolistic patenting and bulldozing of multiplicity in overt or covert form. It consists in accommodating and harmonizing multiplicity within the organic unity of the entire *cosmos*. It stands for coordination rather than uniformity of thought and action. It envisages no antagonism or incompatibility between one part and the other. Like one organ and the others in an organism, all are perceived as interconnected, interrelated and interdependent elements of one and the same whole, constituting a single field, *continuum* and unity. The analogy of a living organism highlights the true nature of spiritual globalization. It explains the "multiplicity-in-unity" - not "unity-in-multiplicity" - many situated in One, not as separated, segregated and scattered elements, but in mutual openness and reciprocity, supplementing and complementing one another. Here conflicts and disorders may not be unnatural; but their resolutions and harmony may also not be unrealizable. Having clarified the nature of spiritual globalization, we delve into the mode of achieving it, in the next subsection.

*Mode of Achieving Spiritual Globalization*

Spiritual Globalization, thus, is not only a viewpoint, but also a course of action, a policy instrument and a world-wide movement for a new world order, based on enlightened principles of conduct. It aims at enhancing the "Quality of Life" not only for human beings, but also for the entire *cosmos*. This calls for newer formulations of global ethical norms, which will regulate the entire gamut of human conduct of human persons among themselves, and human beings and rest of the *cosmos*, both animate beings and inanimate things. This is the precursor of the emergence of a global society, in which the entire world can be experienced as one single family. This is possible through the realization of selfsameness and cultivation of the spirit of sacrifice. Besides, this necessitates a trans-valuation of values, a paradigm shift in values, a changed mindset, an enlarged vision of *cosmo*-centricity, an enlightened view and a way of life - which involves a proper training of body and mind by illuminating knowledge and liberating wisdom. It calls for a total transformation

of matter and mind, and the realization of spiritual oneness. It is widening of the self as a totality, from "I" to "We," from one self to total self, and from individual to *cosmos*. In achieving this goal, there should be no deprivation and exploitation; no sorrows and sufferings that are unmitigated; and no injustice and discrimination unabated. This is the realization of heaven on earth, to use figurative language. The *cosmos* is full of splendors and can provide sustenance to all its inhabitants; but we have to ensure that this is done in a just, fair and an equitable manner.

However, this is possible only through the postulation of a new value-schema other than the one we are presently pursuing. It is the restoration and reformulation of the classical value-schema that we have forgotten. It calls for the practice of a new ethics that tends all and cares for all. This has been the cherished desire of the enlightened mind. It is not a *utopian* dream; but an ideal realizable in actual practice through proper and adequate education. In the next subsection, we look into this value-schema that should guide the individual and social progress.

*Value-Schema for Individual and Social Progress*

Quest for perfection and realization of values of life that reflect meaning and purpose of our existence have been perennial human concerns. Any consideration of such a value-schema should be based on concrete social and historical realities, and the past experiences of the concerned individual and society. Values are not just to be known and posited; but they must be actualizable and must be lived in action. This calls for a symbiosis of knowing, doing and being. There can be no realization without skillful means. This implies cataloguing the resources; preserving and enhancing the existing ones; and generating new ones without depleting the existing ones. Skillful employment of means implies judicious use of the resources without depriving the present and the future generations. It further implies proper management of action and the fruits of action with equitable and just distribution. Thus, there is the need to arrive at a holistic and integral approach to the attainment of individual and social progress, to which we turn our attention, in the next subsection.

*Holistic and Integral Approach to Progress*

A meaningful planning for progress has to be an all-round, graded and gradual realization with balance and proportion. Economic progress is basic to human progress. However, economic aspect is only one of the multiple aspects and cannot claim our exclusive attention. Human development is not to be confined to economic development, for mere economic development cannot be equated with human development. Further, in order to ensure just and equitable partaking in the fruits of economic progress, it should be *dharmic* in nature regulated by "business ethics." Even though pragmatism and utilitarianism are the guiding principles of economics, they should be seasoned and tempered by the welfare of all. Unbridled economic growth gives rise to moral crisis, which in turn, would create new problems that may seriously imperil society and its health. Such progress may appear to enhance the individual and the society; but it may not be conducive to the total wellbeing of all. There has to be a value-orientation of economic development in tune with human wellbeing and cosmic welfare. Economy has only an instrumental worth and it should only be a means. Hence, it should not be taken as an end in itself. Thus, when economic development is guided by morality, it will not only enhance one's material capacity, but also enhance every human person's moral capacity. In this manner, morality will not remain confined to precepts, but will get translated into practice.

*Science, Technology and Social Progress*

Like economy, science and technology are important components of human culture. Science directs technological innovations and technology accelerates progress of science. Thus, science and technology are interdependent. Both are needed and are essential to human existence and social progress. However, they are not value-neutral. They should serve the ultimate human good, which is the cosmic good. Like economy, science and technology are only means to progress. They are instrumental, means to the end of progress; not end in themselves. Therefore, they should be humane and humanizing and should be harnessed for social progress and cosmic wellbeing. They should not be allowed to *technolize* human being;

rather they should be humanized. In this respect a clear distinction should be drawn between humanism and humanitarianism. Humanism is anthropocentric and is vitiated by human fallen-ness, whereas humanitarianism is *cosmo*-centric. Only by spiritual orientation of science and technology, they can become humanitarian. Such an orientation can come from traditional culture. At present there is a see-saw between traditional culture and science and technology instead of a thaw. There is a need for greater harmony.

## Conclusion

Though the human person is imperfect at present, he/she can realize perfection through his/her *purus'arthas*. It is the *summum bonum* of existence. Human individual is only a *pinda* in the *Bramanda*, an individual-in-*cosmos*. So our concept of perfection should not be individual-centric; but *cosmo*-centric. This requires a harmonious corporate living in interrelationship (*samghajivana*) and interdependence as one cosmic family (*kutumba*).

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# Identity and Destiny of Man in a Multicultural World

GANESH PRASAD DAS

### Introduction

In the midst of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the vision of man knows no bounds. "Think globally and act locally" happens to be his slogan. Visionaries and slogan-mongers are on the increase. Visions of makers of destiny extend up to 2020, 2036 or even 2050. Visions and slogans are afloat in plenty, but there is hardly any visible change in the plight of the laity. Millionaires become multimillionaires and toilers commit suicide. This is one of the valley views of things in this part of the globe. However, when one tries to catch a peak view of the entire field, one finds that many vital things are in disarray, many things are ill-conceived, many simple things, instead of being made simpler are made more complex. Trade and commerce between countries over sea and sky routes are multi-folded. Space is not very significant; time is the most significant and precious. This is so because of matter - hardware, and more than that, software. Production of ideas and trading of information are the main occupations of countries all over the globe. Production is conceived by the tradition as consisting of four factors: land, labor, capital and organization. Multinational corporations possess capital and organization. They outsource land and labor by using capital and organization. Out of these last two, if you have one, you can get the other. You can easily get organization if you have capital. If you do not have capital and you have an organization, you can fetch capital from nowhere, as it were. It happens as in the case of non-banking organizations. Goods are produced in one country, managed in another and marketed all over the world. Carrying and forwarding goods and providing logistic support for them is a global network that cuts across geographical, social, religious and cultural divides.

Having made these introductory observations, the chapter attempts to highlight some of the changes in perspective that have

come about as the result this global worldview, networking and market place. The globalized perspective of life, social interaction and international relations brings about transformation in one's sociocultural norms, ancestral practices, customs, religious beliefs, food habits, dress patterns, personal grooming and racial identity. In the first section, we indicate some of the changes in affiliations that have come about from this globalized worldview and the growth in afflictions that have emerged, which in turn, makes people live in constant fear. The second section speaks of the changed perspective of the human person. The human person is no more seen as a spiritual and moral being; but is treated as a resource and a capital. His self-concept, traits, motivation, knowledge and skills are seen only as qualities that prove his competency and ability to perform as an efficient and effective capital. Besides, the human person is considered as an animal with a mind that can be causally determined and manipulated, in the process totally ignoring his spiritual nature.

The dehumanization of the human person leads to complete surrender of the humans to technology and science; and the rejection of the value of philosophy and religion, which the third section takes for consideration. Over-emphasis of the role of technology and science on human society and denial of any value to philosophy and religion result in the cultural environment becoming secular and religion losing its hold on society, morality, politics and philosophy, leading to people showing their back to holy places of worship and turning places of worship into other facilities. The fourth section attempts to remedy the secularized perception of the human person and the world, by recognizing man as both body and spirit. Hence, a holistic perspective of life in the multicultural world calls for not only using the values of technology and science, but also integrating into them values of philosophy and religion, both complementing each other. The conclusion states that neither science and technology, nor philosophy and religious should thrive at the cost of each other. The task of the philosopher and scientist is neither upgrading one and downgrading the other, nor reducing one by explaining away, eliminating or burning down the other. Instead, work together and build up an atmosphere of mutual love, friendship and under-standing among peoples, thereby bring about pace and amity in the social order. In the next section, we consider the "changes in affiliations and growth in afflictions."

## Changes in Affiliations and Growth in Afflictions

The globalized perspective of life, social interaction and international relations brings about transformation in one's sociocultural norms, ancestral practices, customs, religious beliefs, food habits, dress patterns, personal grooming and racial identity. Thus goes a report as to how the racial identity changes:

> "I am an African American," says Duana Fullwiley, "but in parts of Africa, I am a white." To do fieldwork as a medical anthropologist in Senegal, she says, "I take a plane to France, a seven-to eight-hour ride. My race changes as I cross the Atlantic. There, I say, "*Je suis noire*," and they say, "Oh, okay - *métisse* - you are mixed." Then I fly another six to seven hours to Senegal, and I am a white. In the space of a day, I can change from African American, to *métisse,* to *tubaab* [Wolof for "white/European"]. This is not a joke, or something to laugh at, or to take lightly. It is the kind of social recognition that even two-year-olds, who can barely speak understand. "*Tubaab*," they say when they greet me.[1]

When affiliations change, afflictions grow. Day in and day out, reports of clash, rape, murder, loot, terrorist attack and human bombing are "breaking news" items. People live on and, as it is said, "Life goes on as usual." However, people live with perpetual fear. According to Antony Flew, people are whom we meet. When two friends meet one another, what do they talk about? They talk about all sorts of problems that haunt them deep. Can there be reflective thinking in such a troubled time? This question is all the more relevant, when we find the sorry state of academic philosophy throughout the world today. Radhakrishnan writes in the very opening lines of his *Indian Philosophy*, volume 1: "For thinking minds to blossom, for arts and sciences to flourish, the first condition necessary is a settled society providing security and leisure."[2] G. T. W. Patrick writes in 1925, after the First World War: "So many people were so uncertain about so many things." Chester Rowell

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[1] "Race in a Genetic World," *John Harvard's Journal*, May-June (2008).

[2] S. Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1977).

observes: "Time of unsettlement is the time to think because we know what to think. The times of certainty are also the times of stagnation."[3] In the next section, we consider the change in perspective regarding the human person.

## Changed View of the Human Person

Human beings are treated as resources and as capital. Managers of business houses are strategists of human capital. Arvind Bhatt, the General Manager of Sterling Biocon, wrote in 2010 about Human Capital Strategy that the "pillars of strength, drivers of growth and bloodline of energy of a company are all and all only human elements." *Testing a right man for the right place is like testing a metal*. The competency of a man, in this conception, is like an iceberg. The visible portion of the iceberg consists of skills and knowledge. The invisible, but accessible portion consists of five types: self-concept - self-image and self-confidence; traits - physical, *consistent* response to situation; motives - the *driving thought*; Knowledge - nothing, but information; and skill - the ability to perform a task, both mental and physical. Of these five, the last three are reckoned as *values* of man.

The *Hitopadesa* states that acts of the human person, such as food, sleep, fear and mating are similar to those of animals. The attribute that distinguishes the humans from the animals is right conduct (*dharma*). Without *dharma*, the humans are not different from and superior to animals. The following statement clarifies this point: "*Aahaara-nidraa-bhaya-maithunam cha samaanam_etat_pashubhir_naraa naam/Dharmo hi teshaam adhiko vishesho dharmena heenaah pashubhih samaanaah//*" Canakya, the ancient Indian sage, has an identical statement, in which he uses the term "knowledge" (*vidya*) instead of "right conduct" (*dharma*). Both the terms are appropriate, since without being aware of right conduct, proper way to use the knowledge is a mere collection of facts. At this juncture, we could refer to the much discussed distinction between two varieties of knowledge, which Gilbert Ryle pointed out: "know that" and "know how." "Know that" is propositional knowledge - knowing that something is the case. "Know how" is the skill knowledge - knowing the way a

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[3] Chester Rowell: *Introduction to Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935).

task is performed. This classification is incomplete as it leaves out a vital variety, "know ought" - knowing that one action is preferable to another.

The Indian tradition underlines the primacy of the moral trait as distinctive of the human person. It is said in an adage that those, who are not learned, are not austere and charitable. They do not have moral character, virtues and are not religiously minded. They are seen as a burden on the earth we live in because they are animals in the form of human beings. To quote the adage: "*Yeshaam na vidya na tapo na daanam gyaanam na sheelam na guno na dharmhh/ Te mrutya-loke bhuvi bhaarbhootaa manushya rupena mrugaascharanti//*" It is interesting to note that Arvind Bhatt appeals to this very adage to distinguish the competent from the incompetent human capital. This is because he assumes that the human being is a sort of animal with a mind that can be causally determined and manipulated. The other assumption that underlies Indian cultural perspective about human being is that he is intended to become perfect by pursuing the path of morality. The Bhattan cultural perspective sees the beast in all its facets and he sees nothing other than the beast in the human being. He forgets that the secret of the true human living, the heart of ethical truth, lies in the disciplined use of senses and mind. There is in every one of us a Caliban nature - a savage and deformed slave in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* - that waits to pull us down. The cleansing process of culture and morality keeps the monster out of sight. To turn the metal analogy of Bhatt on its head, passing through the fiery furnace of culture, aboriginal nature is purified of dross, the pure hard ore of human nature comes out. To quote a few lines from James Seth's *Ethical Principles*, published one hundred twenty years back, as this is akin to the Indian point of view, especially the view of the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Nature is to be disciplined, not annihilated. And if nature has to be moralized, it is not in itself immoral; it does not even necessarily conflict with morality. It is only because it is part of a higher nature in us that it is not itself the guide."[4]

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[4] James Seth: *Ethical Principles*, 14th edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), p. 238. *sadrisham cheshtate svasyaaha prakritejnyaanavaanapi/ prakritim yaanti bhootaani nigraha kim karishyati// Bhagavad Gita*, 3.33. Sri Krsna here addresses a critical point. According to him, even the most well-read and educated person will find it difficult to practice *karmayoga*. It is because inbuilt tendencies and urges inside us compel us to act against our will. These tendencies comprise our

## Surrender to Technology and Science - Rejection of Philosophy and Religion

Physical sciences promote sensate culture. Today, the totality of human life is sustained by machines and gadgets, the boom of technology - the prominent among which are information technology (IT) machines. For any problem facing a human being, there is thought to be an IT solution. From malfunctioning of the mid-day meal programs to mining theft, the CCTV cameras, biometric machines, computers, smart phones and smart cards can give a solution. IT systems are logical systems. Logical systems are *a priori* and axiomatic-deductive systems. They are put on reality, like a grid, to organize it. The solution that results from these systems is not a description of facts; but a regimentation of facts. The biological explanation of facts results in a causal system and a mathematical-logical explanation is an axiomatic system. Sciences take recourse to either or both of the methods of explanation.

Enthused by the successful prediction of empirical-verifiable-phenomena, the scientist extends this method to explain the whole of nature and declares boastfully that there is no God, no soul, and that unverified beliefs are blind and nonsensical. Sciences proclaim that they alone are the gateway to knowledge; philosophy is a false gateway and as such it is dispensable. What had happened in England, France and elsewhere during the past quarter century, is happening here at present. Observing the closure of philosophy departments in England, Julia Kristeva says: "In the redistribution of modern discourses, it is philosophy that comes out as necessarily losing." Claudy Lefort tells that in France, philosophy is "on its way to losing its credit altogether" as "an enterprise both chimerical and defunct."

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lower nature. The lower nature is also called *prakriti* here, which is different from *para prakrti*, which is higher nature. Therefore, Sri Krsna says that mere restraint of actions will not result in eradication of desires, since the *vasana*s will continue to generate more and more thoughts. Hence, the direct suppression of thoughts is impossible. Many people try to repress thoughts and desires in the hope of progressing spiritually, but like a spring that is pushed down, that strategy backfires very easily. Ludwig Wittgenstein suggests in a different context that the spring has to be melted in order to release its tension.

Speaking to Google's Zeitgeist Conference in Hertfordshire, Stephen Hawking, the English theoretical physicist, who suffers from motor neuron disease and communicates through a speech-generating device, said that fundamental questions about the nature of the universe could not be resolved without hard *data*, such as that currently being derived from the Large Hadron Collider and space research. "Most of us do not worry about these questions most of the time. But almost all of us must sometimes wonder: Why are we here? Where do we come from? Traditionally, these are questions for philosophy, but philosophy is dead," he said. "Philosophers have not kept up with modern developments in science; particularly physics." The same popular science book writer, who told that technology makes philosophy dead, told BBC recently that technology of artificial intelligence (AI) is deadening and it might spell the death of the human race. It would take off on its own, and redesign itself at an ever increasing rate. "Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, could not compete, and would be superseded." There is the other cry that science is dead and that we have killed it. Francis Bacon proclaimed that the truths of nature lay hid in nature. He called upon the scientists to interrogate nature and wrest answers out of it. He raised the motto: "Knowledge is power." According to him, knowledge consists in recognizing the causal relation among things and their properties. This constitutes the presuppositional structure of our scientific age. The interrogation of nature results in the rapacious exploitation of nature and dooms the initial seemingly innocent spirit of discovery. Thus, the awful need is not the scientific spirit, but the philosophic spirit, which can sustain the globe and maintain those who live on it.

In his essay "Is Science Superstitious?" Russell says: "Modern life is built on science in two respects. On the one hand, we all depend on scientific inventions and discoveries for our daily bread and for our comfort and amusements. On the other hand, certain habits of mind, connected with a scientific outlook, have spread gradually during the past three centuries."[5] He also observes that science is partly agreeable and partly disagreeable. "It is agreeable through the power, which it gives us of manipulating our environ-

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[5] Bertrand Russell: *Let the People Think* (Bombay: Blackie & Son Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984), pp. 52-62.

ment, and to a small but important minority it is agreeable because it affords intellectual satisfaction. It is disagreeable because, however we may seek to disguise the fact, it assumes a determinism which admits theoretically, the power of predicting human actions; in this respect it seems to lessen human power."[6] One would agree with Russell that the so-called "practical man" is one, who recognizes only material needs of his sense organs and who realizes that man must have food for the body organism alone. However, this practical man is not aware of the necessity of food for the mind and the spirit. What if all the appetites of all his senses are satiated? According to Russell, "if all men were well off, if poverty and disease had been reduced to their lowest possible point, there would still remain much to be done to produce a valuable society; and even in the existing world the goods of the mind are at least as important as the goods of the body."[7] Shankara asked twelve centuries back: "Wife, wealth, son, grandson, and the like; house, relations, even if all these are there, fate is certain, of what consequence is one's life if his mind is not devoted to the feet of *Guru*? Ascertain, what use is any possession, person or object? Of what use, of what use, of what use indeed?"[8]

Science crosses it sharpest sword with religion. At one time, science was the handmaid of religion. However, the cultural environment became secular at the dawn of the twentieth century and religion lost its hold on society, morality, politics, and philosophy. In the multicultural society, people are showing their backs to the once holy places of worship - temples, mosques, Churches and synagogues. Things have gone to such a pass that Churches are sold in Europe and America has converted into facility centers. We find the following report in the *Wall Street Journal*:

> Every piece of social *data* suggests that those who favor faith and superstition over fact-based evidence will become the minority in this country by or before the end of this century. In fact, the number of Americans, who do not

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[6] *Ibid*.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 89.

[8] "*Kalatram dhanam putra poutraadi sarvam; gruham bhaandavaa sarva mettadhi jaatam; Manasche na lagnam guro ranghri padme; tatah kim, tatah kim, tatah kim, tatah kim?*"

believe in a deity doubled in the last decade of the previous century according to both the census of 2004 and the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) of 2008; with religious non-belief in the U.S. rising from 8.2 percent in 1990 to 14.2 percent in 2001. In 2013, that number is now above 16 percent. Further, the younger U.S. population is becoming more secular. You can see this with U.S. missions being consolidated and missionaries struggling to find people to teach. The leadership of the Church is still using a 1950's playbook view of the Church.[9]

Similarly, there was an advertisement put out by Yell Business. It reads: "Hindu Temples (Places of Worship) on Sale."[10]

### Human Person - Body and Spirit: Need for Technology and Science; Philosophy and Religion

The human person, caught up in multiculturalism, has become frenzy and is in turmoil. The multicultural man has become a no-cultural-man. He is a man without a face, very much like the man with an email ID without his/her photo uploaded. He/she is a netizen with alpha-numeric identity. Ganeswar Misra contributed a paper entitled "Metaphysical Models and Conflicting Cultural Patterns" to the volume *Indian Philosophy Today* edited by Professor Nanda Kishore Devaraja.[11] In this paper, Misra seeks to show that there are two opposing metaphysical worldviews: the one of pure thought and the other of pure action. There is a sense, in which the concepts "pure thought" and "pure action" apply only to God as He thinks of doing something and the thing is done. In the context of the human person, the concepts of pure thought and pure action have to be understood differently. According to Misra, a thought is pure, "if a self-conscious being performs it in his own private sphere of self-

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[9] http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/1/12/1357344/-Empty-Churches-Go-On-Sale-in-Europe-as-Christian-Faith-Declines.

[10] https://www.yell.com/ucs/UcsSearchAction.do?keywords=hindu+temples&location=Sale& rambleSeed=1187021149.

[11] Cf. Ganeswar Misra: "Metaphysical Models and Conflicting Cultural Patterns," *Indian Philosophy Today*, ed. Nanda Kishore Devaraja (Delhi: The Macmillan Company of India Limited, 1975), pp. 155-168.

consciousness"; and an action is pure "if it happens to the body, uncontrolled by the mind, in a public world of physical objects in accordance with purely mechanical laws."

A life of pure thought can be taken in this context, as a life of self-knowledge, life by self-realization and life for self-liberation. This is popularly known as the spiritual culture. It belongs to the East; to be more specific it belongs to India. The spiritual culture intends to insure moral life for human individuals and the human society at large. Establishment of peace, non-violence and amity; and removal of strife, war, exploitation and subjugation are the ideals of this cultural model. However, transcendentalism, seclusion, lack of initiative for ambitious developmental work are some of its un-desirable facets. A life of pure action can be taken as a life of relentless activity and persistent labor with clock-like regulation and accuracy. Man is, as it were, a mini-machine fitted as a component to a big machine called the society and the world. This is popularly known as the mechanical culture. It belongs to the West. The outcome of this model would be fulfillment of some of human wants. However, it would lead to escalation of those wants and the resultant frustration due to their non-satisfaction. Further, there are certain higher-order aspirations, which would be ignored leading to incomplete growth of the human being. Both the patterns appear to have certain worthy features and yet both suffer from grave logical errors.

Misra contends that there is a third model, which absorbs the worthy features of the opposing models and avoids the errors they are infected with. The human being is neither only a spirit, nor only a mechanical gadget. The human being is a person. He is not simply a mind, nor simply a body; but he is a mind-body-integration. If the man is conceived in this model, then a culture of humanism would flourish, which in turn, usher in human amity, unity, equity, brother-hood, peaceful coexistence; bring about international understanding; lead to freedom from dogmas, confusions and hidden agenda; and purged of racial, religious and color discriminations. Misra observes:

> The philosophy which points out the logical errors in the philosophical pictures of the past is the critical and analytical philosophy of the modern age ... Clarity is the aim of this modern philosophy; logical analysis is its

method; clearing away of the misunderstanding is the result which it achieves ... Helping to see the baselessness of clashing cultures is the role of modern philosophy as it has brought man to his original home and the man at his own home is engaged in a constructive program of work...[12]

In my article "*Sat-Chit-Ananda*" published in *The Humanist Vision*, after discussion with my mentor Ganeswar Misra, I maintained that the philosophical paradigm of *Advaita Vedanta*, namely, "*sarvam khalu idam Brahman*" ("*jiva* is not-different from *Brahma*"), is supported by some logical arguments. These are *a priori* and, as such, do not imply anything either in favor of an ascetical life away from society, or an agreeable life within a so-ciety.[13] S. N. Dasgupta and S. Radhakrishnan try to link the Advaitic metaphysics with lived life of man in this way. I maintained there that both of these two have fallen prey to misconceptions. People might be affected by the philosophical doctrine in either way. However, the doctrine by itself does not lend support to none of the stances. A. J. Ayer, Misra's mentor, says: "[T]hey mistakenly look to the moral philosopher for guidance."[14] The other paradigm, the mechanistic paradigm, may be a paradigm proposed by Spinoza, which supports a rational religion, though not religion understood in the traditional sense. Misra appears to have been allured by P. F. Strawson's thesis that the concept of a person is a primitive one; and it cannot be reduced either to mind or to body. He, then, draws the thesis of humanism from it. There are at least two difficulties here. Notwithstanding Strawson's view, the conception of a person also is both social and legal. An institution and a corporate body are regarded as persons. Moreover, the western version of humanism is nebulous.

## Conclusion

Austria-born revolutionary philosopher of the twentieth century, Ludwig Wittgenstein - a student of Russell and Professor of Philoso-

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[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Cf. Ganesh Presad Das: "*Sat-Chit-Ananda*," *The Humanist Vision*, ed. B. Kar (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2000), pp. 61-67.

[14] A. J. Ayer: "Freedom and Necessity," *Philosophical Essays*, ed. A .J. Ayer (London: Macmillan, 1963), p. 246.

phy at Cambridge University - was tormented by the conflicts between philosophy and physical science, mental science, religion and ethics. He found a solution, rather the dissolution of the conflict in his *Philosophical Investigations*. According to him, language is the bearing point of the whole of human thought in science, philosophy, art, culture, religion and the rest. They are all language games expressing forms of life. Man uses language to do various things, not just one thing - not science alone, nor religion alone. Language games are various and varied; so also are forms of life. One does not thrive at the cost of any other. All forms of life and all forms of use of language are honorable. The task of the philosopher is not to upgrade and downgrade another; reduce one to another; and explain away, eliminate, or burn down any one. If we take a clue from this, then there would be mutual love and friendship among peoples; peace and amity in the society. There would be ample space for understanding one another; there would be tolerance for the other. What is required is an open and liberal mind free from prejudices and bias for any belief, creed, affiliation or doctrine. Philosophical learning can alone inculcate and insure this.

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# Part II
# Multiculturalism and Society

8.

# Alienation and Solidarity: Dialectics of Culture

ADITI DASGUPTA

## Introduction

The term "intercultural dialogue" reminds me of the film *Trikal* made by Shyam Benegal. In the backdrop of pre-liberation Goa, the film shows with much sincerity and sensitivity the dialectics of different family members of a Portuguese family regarding their material and cultural survival. The film sends the message that culture is not something static; it is not immune to social and political changes; and it is something dynamic in nature. The film points to the fact that culture develops influenced by the chemistry of political, social and historical events; and through the psychological chemistry of individual minds. Besides, it shows that cultural hegemony creates the feeling of alienation not only in the minds of the people of "lower culture," but also in the dominant group because they continuously suffer from some kind of superiority complex. They lose their autonomy because they are afraid that they would adopt something from what they consider "lower culture"; and suffer from the fear that any time their "higher culture" may fall from the pedestal they have placed it. Thus, culture that is meant to enrich our material and spiritual existence in various ways loses that capacity and becomes an object of fetish and fear. It engages mankind from different cultural origins in worthless battle, which threatens the entire human civilization.

Thus, culture - instead of enriching material and spiritual life of the people - becomes an object of fear. This hegemony and Chauvinism of culture manifests itself in the society in a number of ways. In this chapter, we attempt to unfold a few manifestations of this cultural hegemony and their consequences on the society. The first section looks into political domination and the cultural alienation it causes in the social order. The dominating group treats the dominated group as ethnically lower and less civilized; and the

education of the dominated group is organized to suit the good the dominating group. As a result, the people of the dominated group feel alienated culturally and ethnically. Besides, they do not develop their full potential as educational system does not help them. The second section considers nationalism as another form of cultural chauvinism. It is intolerant to minority cultures in a nation and interprets the character of a nation in terms of a particular religion and its practices, thereby closing up on the nation's multidimensional character. This type of nationalist spirit is linked with colonialism, casteism, racism and capitalism - which ultimately lead to cultural alienation.

The third section deals with cultural hegemony of modern capitalism and codified socialism. Modern capitalism with its "commodity-culture" and "copy-paste culture," like a silent dictator, influences people to imitate a specific life-style according to the capitalist frame of wellbeing, making human life an extension of market and economy - having least concern for individual identity, cultural identity and human solidarity. Similarly, codified version of socialism has denied their members the freedom to uphold their ethnic rituals and cultural practices, which may have some religious overtones. In doing so, codified socialism has prevented their members to have link with their ethnic and cultural roots, which in turn, would give them personal solace and strength. Thus, these two ideologies not only deny the value of ethnicity and culture, but also lack a sense of humanity and the ability to recognize individual and group identity.

The fourth section analyzes the intolerance of heterogeneity on the part of the majority cultural group. The heterogeneity within a local culture is often looked upon by the majority group as people outside that culture. The dominant group prefers homogeneity to heterogeneity. When this passive reluctance turns into hostile actions, it would lead to discrimination of minority cultural groups. The conclusion states that being human in a multicultural society involves respecting each other's cultural identities. This calls for intellectual dynamism and flexibility to bring about better understanding among diverse groups, and to look for context-sensitive solutions to the problem of cultural diversity and ethnic identity. In the next section, we look into the political domination and its consequence, the cultural alienation.

## Political Domination and Cultural Alienation

Cultural chauvinism is multidimensional. One of the oldest forms cultural hegemony is political domination. Political domination has also various dimensions. The political domination of an imperialist country over its colonies uses cultural domination as a tool that serves its purpose sometimes better than the coercive measures. By influencing the education system and the social mind, the colonizers try to gather support in favor of the justifiability of their domination over the people of those colonies. All aspects of the ethnicity of those dominated nations are projected as something below the civilized level. In this respect, we can place the treatment of their colonies by Spain, Portugal, and Britain in the same category. For instance, Rabindranath Tagore's analysis of the cultural domination of the British Raj over India is lucid and clear. He shows that the education policy of each and every nation should fulfill three conditions. First, the subjects of education have to learn the goal of their life along with the way by which they can attain it. Second, education should have a link with the native land and national heritage. Third, it should be related to the contemporary historical development. Having no connection with our own cultural tradition and contemporary history, we can never learn what we want to be and how we can reach our goal. However, all the above-said conditions were absent in the educational policy of the British government, since their goal of education of Indian people was not to help the people of India to achieve their maximum potential, but to transform the people of India into human machines that would support the British ruling system. Thus, the Government's educational system did not have any interest in the actual goal of education; it had no relation with the national culture or sentiment in spite of its apparent modern model; and it had hardly any relation to the changing history of contemporary India.[1]

Rabindranath narrates the identity crisis of a young Indian student in the institutions of English educational system in his essay "My Boyhood" and other childhood memoirs. It is natural that the individual identity is always challenged in such colonial educational

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[1] Cf. Rabindranath Tagore: "The Aim and Education [*Lakshya O Siksha*]," *Siksha* (Calcutta: Visvs Bharati, 1973), pp. 130-136.

system. The child, as a colonial subject, suffers from the problem of alienation in spite of living within his own community. We must note that Rabindranath focuses mainly on psychological and cultural alienation. It is an issue to be debated whether the economic cause behind cultural hegemony drew his attention or not. However, we cannot deny the fact that cultural chauvinism and hegemony often have some link with the question of economic security. The lack of economic security often leads a nation to its venture for new colonies and results in colonial domination along with cultural domination. In this case, we may say that the overt cultural chauvinism has a covert material goal. It cannot be explained merely as a psychological attitude of a particular nation or individual. The contention is, to a large extent, true in case of the development of British Raj in India. However, the elite Indians largely accepted British educational policy and tried their best to incorporate themselves into the British administrative and educational system. Nevertheless, the cultural ethnocentrism of the British ruling class often deprived the Indians of their proper recognition, rewards and higher posts. These, in turn, created some kind of reflective alienation among those Indians. Some began to protest by rejecting their jobs. Some others took bold measures against the autocrats, who were within that system. Aurobindo Ghosh represents the first group, while Pramodaranjan Ray represents the second.

The elite class Indians, despite their utmost effort to incorporate themselves with the positive elements of western civilization, was treated as the representative of an "inferior culture." The middle class Indians faced the problem of being colonial subjects by way of submission or resistance. The middle class was suffering from the dialectics between the ancient tradition and the concept of modernity as interpreted by the colonial rulers. The colonial rulers were neither concerned about the ancient cultural heritage of their colonies, nor were they interested in treating their colonial subjects with the philosophy of true modernity - that stressed the significance of humanity, individuality, liberty and critical thinking. For, they knew very well that these modern concepts would challenge the very foundation of their own colonial government. The easy way to dominate the subject was to create a sense of cultural inferiority among them. It was easy because the renaissance was first started in Europe and the west made itself free from the cultural degeneration long before the

orient. The oriental society, suffering from medieval religious and feudal vices, generally lacked that initiative and courage by which they could rediscover the value of their oriental cultural heritage and reject the negative elements. As a result, we see that sometimes they surrendered themselves to the cultural hegemony of colonial rulers and at other times they rejected both the positive and negative elements of western culture, with utter hatred for the colonial rulers. The master-subject, self-other relationship between the East and the West became a great barrier to intercultural dialogue, since such relationship often ignored the most important factor of human solidarity and humane relationship. In his works, *Gora* and *Ghare Baire* [*In Home* and *Outer World*], Rabindranath has clearly expounded on the middle class instability.[2]

It is important to note that the western academic community was against the imperial philosophy and its praxis in the colonies of the British Empire. Many members of the British and western academia came forward for searching out the ancient oriental treasures. The foundation of Indian Museum, the Asiatic Society, the excavation in Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Ajanta, Illora, Bodh-Gaya - all were done by the initiatives of such truly cultured persons. Thus, it is clear that the cultural hegemony has a deep link with vested political and economic interest. Next section deals with the threat of nationalism.

## Threat of Nationalism

Cultural chauvinism with vested interest often appears in the name of nationalism. Nationalism not only shows intolerance to other cultures, but also tries to interpret the character of a nation in terms of a particular religion and its practices. In so doing, that nation is oblivious to its multidimensional character. When the cultural hegemony of colonial rulers over their subjects rejects the possibility of cross-cultural dialogues, the latter kind of chauvinism within a particular nation tries to supersede its inner sub-cultural heterogeneity by any means. Rabindranath was concerned about this kind of nationalist spirit and linked it with colonialism, casteism,

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[2] Cf. Himani Banerjee: "Marx's and Tagore's Ideas on Human Alienation," *Marxism: With and Beyond Marx*, eds. Amiya Kumar Bagchi and Amita Chatterjee (New Delhi: Routledge, 2014), p. 46.

racism and capitalism.[3] It is true that one of the earliest ingredients of Indian nationalism was religion and mainly *brahminical* Hinduism. However, it has been proved repeatedly that Indian culture is not revolving around the same; but rather on the working class and downtrodden people, whose enormous contribution to Indian history and culture was often ignored. Vivekananda, realizing this truth, introduced his practical *Vedanta* and predicted the *Sudra* revolution. Rabindranath wrote his famous poem "*Ora Kaj Kore*" [They Are Working].The cultural history of India is not merely the history of some kings and *Brahmins*; it is a history of common mass of people following different religions and having diverse languages, food habits and practices. It is a matter of regret that the culture of nationalism, emerged in colonial India, is practiced till date. It often ignores the very spirit of Indian culture - its diversity. The most vulnerable victims of this form of nationalist extremism are the economically backward poorer classes, who lack the individual power to resist the socially rich and the strong. The Rohit Vemulla case, the JNU case and very recently Jadavpur University case attest this contention. Nationalistic culture is devoid of humanity and tolerance; it tries to make itself popular in easy ways. It sometimes indulges to snatch goods from a poor trader and set fire on it - as for example in *Ghare Baire* in the name of Boycott Movement; and other times it instigates people to kill an innocent person, on the accusation that he has stored or consumed a particular forbidden food. The next section considers the cultural hegemony of modern capitalism and codified socialism.

**Cultural Hegemony of Modern Capitalism and Codifed Socialism**

Culture has two main strands - each with multiple dimensions. One strand is related to a complex chemistry of history, geography, and the like. It develops in a slow and gradual process and it is difficult to express it in a single word or phrase. The second strand of culture is a product of some purposive political, social or economic goal which, develops relatively faster. Like a commodity, it creates some fetish among people. The original creators lose their control on this dimension of culture, when it begins to spread among people.

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[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

When Rabindranath was worried about nationalism, he was actually thinking about the second strand of culture, which misguided the people about the true sense of nationalism (*swadeshi*). It indulged in the cheap exhibition of patriotism and love for culture by means of insulting an English lady teacher or beating a poor man for selling foreign goods. The second strand of culture often shows an inhuman face and has a very weak link with the literary sense of the very term "culture." It often deceives people by its apparently popular face. In the next two subsections, I am going to explain this point more lucidly with current and historical examples from two types of societies - the capitalist and the socialist.

### *"Commodity-Culture"*[4] *of Capitalism*

The capitalist economic domination is now showing us another face of popular culture after globalization. Such popular culture may be called the "copy-paste culture,"[5] which insists all of us to follow a pragmatic model of "good life." Like a silent dictator, it orders us to accept the culture of commodity fetishism. It engages us in a rat race to paste ourselves to the existing capitalist frame of wellbeing and insists us to develop an outlook that sees everything in terms of individual self-interest. We often forget about the basic values of life, present in all traditional cultures. It appears to be in favor of global village and global brotherhood. However, in fact, the aim of this brotherhood is not humanity - humane solidarity - but the extension of market. The capitalist economy, by its very nature, can staple itself to basic human interest only in so far as such interest does not challenge the capitalist interest. The popular culture of twenty-first century is actually a commodity culture that uses humanitarian feelings and sentiments to fulfill its own purpose. It has no inhibition in shaking its hand even with feudal, fundamental and racist sentiment when required. Fundamentalism and racism too, as we observe with utter anxiety, are now using modern technological achievements to fulfill their inhuman purposes. The call for liking

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[4] 20th century popular culture is often called "commodity culture."

[5] Cf. Aditi Dasgupta: "Copy-Paste Culture," *Truth? On Enquiry and Knowledge*, Academic Magazine, no. 2 (Kolkatta: Department of Philosophy, Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, 2011).

and sharing religious icons, presentation of the "real facts" related to supernatural power and the horrifying videos of the massacres done by Islamic States in social media are enough to attest this contention. This culture, with its apparent modern and global cover, actually has no sincere relationship with "modernity" or "humanity" in proper sense of these terms.

This popular culture often casts a shadow on true cultural identity. It influences people to imitate a particular life style, which is guided by a pragmatic philosophy having least concern for humanity and human solidarity. Thus, it establishes itself as a foe to cultural and human identity. Human identity, I think, goes beyond cultural barriers. This "going beyond" cultural barriers does not entail losing that particular identity. Instead, this "going beyond" always demands the recognition of one's own cultural identity, since the ultimate goal of such "going beyond" is human solidarity and no solidarity is possible without the recognition of cultural identity.

### *Codification of Socialism and Its Insensitivity to Ethnicity*

Apart from the insensitivity shown by capitalist popular culture to traditional human values, there is another dimension of culture-insensitivity manifested by the socialist camp, which deprives people of their very human right to maintain their own ethnicity. This kind of insensitivity may be developed due to partial interpretation - which, in fact, is a misinterpretation - and wrong application of a broader philosophy. Codified version of socialism attempts to do this. The official model of scientific socialism - the post-Lenin Soviet model of Socialism - often invites controversies regarding various cultural and religious issues and practices having enormous sentimental effect on mass cult. The humanist face of Marxist ethics has often been forgotten due to its extreme materialist interpretation. This interpretation has neglected the philosophy of dialectics, which shows the importance of consciousness - human subject - and his freedom, and the enormous positive role of culture and even religion in human life. Influenced by the codified version of socialism, a fraction of Indian Marxists showed intolerance to the human right to follow one's own ethnic tradition.

The term "ethnicity" is related to the term "ethnic," which means a social group having common cultural or national tradition.[6] However, the term is not limited by national and cultural identity. Identity by birth or descent too may be denoted by the term "ethnic" - as used by the Jews to refer to their Jewish identity. The term "ethnic" is applied also to some characteristics or influences created by the tradition of a group of people or their culture.[7] Here, by the term "ethnic practice" I refer to those positive communal practices a particular ethnic group, irrespective of sex or age, has adopted. I do not favor the negative and discriminating practices within a group, such as clitoridictomy or shaving the hair of a widow as the issue of the present discussion. The next paragraph will focus on the concept of positive ethnic practice, which has an enormous contribution in living a humane life.

The ethnic practices are originated mainly from some material facts of life, but often they have a tendency to project them as medium to satisfy some supernatural entity. Ethnic practices often have some religious link, even though it is often replaced by cultural or territorial identity. The ethnic practice in Bengal of worshipping the *Satya Peer* - a combination of *Satyanarayana* and the Muslim person with divine identity - seems to attest this point. These ethnic practices may bear some naïve idealist or mystique belief. However, these beliefs play a very marginal role in social exploitation, since the central point of such idealism or mysticism is to link human being with one another by virtue of their very humanity, which may have a spiritual face. However, in view of explaining the nature of the "spiritual face," we need not link it necessarily to any supranatural origin. By making ourselves free from narrow personal interest and developing a fellow feeling, we can help ourselves for an unending ascendance of our consciousness. Positive ethnic practices indulge one to live a communal life with a belief in the core goodness in him and in others. Our own ethnic identity often protects us from alienation. Recognition of one's own ethnic identity often helps one to be responsible for oneself and others. It may develop a kind of respect in him for other ethnic identities.

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[6] Cf. *DK illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1993), p. 273.

[7] Cf. *Ibid*.

Yet, it is a matter of regret that this positive role of ethnicity has often been overlooked by codified socialism. It was more concerned with the idealist link of ethnic practices than with their enormous role in maintaining social solidarity and sanity. It is true that Idealism often plays an exploitative role through religion; but the codified version of socialism overlooks the point that religion is not any narcotic/opium applied on people from outside forces to make them subordinate. Marx explained religion as an expression of real misery and presented Marxian ideology as a protest to that misery. It is a stage of human development, which must be negated for a better stage. Even religion, in Marxian sense of the term, has some positive role in a particular stage of human development. We have seen that many mass movements occurred under the leadership of religious leaders, such as Moses, Shri Chaitanya, Kabir and so on. The religious or idealist link of ethnic practices cannot provide a satisfactory ground for the rejection of their positive role. It is a matter of regret that many leftist workers have been criticized and punished for observing their traditional and cultural practices. The women folk in the party have emotionally suffered after being ordered to reject the icon of personal god, where they could find their solace and strength. This inhumanity in the *praxis* of Indian socialism has been narrated by Manikuntala Sen, the eminent Marxist worker, in her autobiographical writing *Sediner Katha*.[8] The Indian Marxists, influenced by this mechanistic determinism, have neglected the human subject and his or her freedom of consciousness, which may be expressed in various ways. When a person feels good and can relate him/her to other subjects by some harmless activity, there is no reason to prevent him/her from that action. This prevention goes against his/her freedom and against the very Marxian spirit. The practice of some harmless cultural or religious rituals, which helps to link oneself to his/her ethnic identity, makes one feel better and helps one to relate to others. To criticize this practice by the Marxists become irrelevant, the positive role of ethnicity comes much closer to the true Marxist spirit of humanism.

It is true that in his early writings, from 1848 to 1853, Marx had shown some kind of intolerance and even some sense of rejection to

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[8] Cf. Manikuntala Sen: *The stories of That Time* [*Sediner Katha*] (Kolkata: Nabaptra Prakashan, 1982).

the ethnic peculiarity of India and China. It is said that he was preoccupied by some kind of western ethnocentrism, which saw the capitalist penetration in Asia as a mission to modernize the most barbarian nations and it is for this reason Marx welcomed British aggression of India.[9] In 1853, influenced by Hegel, Marx focused on Indian culture and society with some kind of superiority complex and declared that Indian society is a passive and static society lacking any historical development and its economically autonomous villages and the communal way of living were something despotic, which stifle an individual and prevent the development of private property.[10] However, the sincere and cautious critic gradually changed his view. The anti-British *Sepoy* Mutiny showed that Indians too, can change their history. Their ethnic identity is not anything passive or static. Marx praised this mutiny and ultimately vehemently criticized the British tyranny. Marx has left enough scope for reassessing our ethnic practices as a superstructure the base of which may be the "Asiatic mode of production."[11] I hope that our multidimensional ethnic identity will not only get due recognition, but also will be able to establish itself as a serious issue of debate in Marxist *praxis*. This insensitivity leads to intolerance of the cultural heterogeneity, to which we turn to in the next section.

## Intolerance of Heterogenity

Let us concentrate on the inner world insensitivity. The heterogeneity within a local culture is often looked upon by the majority group as people outside that culture. The dominant group prefers homogeneity to heterogeneity. Whether the reluctance to accept heterogeneity is intentional or not - is a separate topic for debate. When this passive reluctance turns into active and hostile measures to marginalize an individual or a group of individuals - whose

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[9] Cf. Kevin B. Anderson: "Not Just Capital and Class: Marx on Non-Western Societies, Nationalism and Ethnicity," *Envisioning a Post-Capitalist Order: A Collaborative Project*, Available at: www.postcapitalistproject.org/node/39. Search: 5.1.2015.

[10] Cf. *Ibid*.

[11] Marx revisited the Asiatic Mode of Production and discussed about the different historical tradition of Asia in *Grundrisse* and in *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*.

culture, food habits and thought patterns are, to some extent, different from the rest belonging to the same culture - we have to call it discrimination. The discriminating behavior may or may not be emerged from some prejudice. Within a cultural territory, when a group of people of a particular region become intolerant to the cultural practices of the people of a different region without knowing them properly, we may say that the discriminating behavior is followed from some kind of prejudice. This unfair behavior against humanity is always a subject of criticism. However, the situation gets worse and even life-threatening when the larger group, conscious of the nature and cause of difference, exploits and tortures a person belonging to a different subculture within the same cultural back drop with a vested interest. In our traditional extended family system, the bride has to leave her paternal house to cohabit with her husband and in-laws. According to our ancient tradition, the bride is expected to adjust herself with the new family. In most of the cases, the members of her new family are not thoughtful of her life, food habits, life-style and cultural sentiment, when she was at her parents' house. If we accept multidimensional heterogeneity within a culture and if we believe that recognition of cultural identity is one of the primary conditions of human right, we have to accept the fact that in every extended family, and even in a nuclear family, the human right of a woman is violated to some extent. The human right of a male may also be violated; but the cause and dimension of such violation is, to some extent, different from this issue of human right violation. The violation of human right, in case of a bride, varies in degrees - from discrimination due to prejudice to bride burning with vested economic interest.

The above discussion has presented only some glimpses of the multidimensional issues of recognition of human subjectivity, human right and human solidarity. I have discussed the issues with the examples from the backdrop of Bengal and India due to my familiarity with Bengali and the broader Indian society. However, I believe that it is an open arena, where every individual with his/her greater or sub-cultural back drop may share experiences and ideas that can open new avenues of discussions.

Let us give an overview on the issue. Recognition of cultural identity increases the self esteem of an individual. Cultural identity need not be necessarily one dimensional. An individual may find his

identity as a combination of multiple cultural traits. Cultural identity has a socio-psychological underpinning. For example, the Goa born Portuguese cannot reject the influence of either the Portuguese culture or the Konkani culture. Culture is not any fixed and static thing. It is a dynamic process, which goes on with the social, political, economic and territorial history of the world. Cultural chemistry and progress, in the traditional sense of the term, is comparatively a slow and gradual process, which is always related to human cause. However, man-made popular culture often has no such basic humane concern, but it flourishes on a fast track. Such culture ultimately threatens human right and humanity.

**Conclusion**

Our desire to be human, in the sense of "humane," in multi-cultural tradition demands two things: firstly, the recognition and respect for one's cultural identity from others; and secondly, one has to recognize and respect the cultural identity of others. Here a question may arise: "Is recognition of cultural identity sufficient for treating the 'others' with proper respect?" Do we need to interpret the "other" culture? The post modern pluralists discourage us from this venture with their theory of fragmentation and the thesis of incommensurability. According to them, in order to give proper recognition to individuals of different backgrounds, we have to keep ourselves away from any kind of interpretation, since every interpretation has a tendency to make some generalization using its own perspective. It always fails to properly interpret the condition of the individual or group of individuals, who is/are always, treated as "they." What we see is that the theory of utter fragmentation, which ultimately leads us to reject any cultural "class" and sucks the very spirit of our discussion about cultural class identity related to human right.

Unless we understand different cultures, it is difficult to respect humanity or to reach human solidarity. I have already said that culture is a dynamic process of chemical reaction among various factors. Some cultural traits may be blurred and new traits may appear with the changing history of human civilization. These new cultural traits, in their turn, engage a small group of people to fight for recognition and the dimension of ethnicity changes. There is the

need for ethnic or cultural identity to be viewed not as any static issue, but as a context-sensitive issue of continuous revision and evaluation. Our mixed heritage and globalization has blurred the cultural, social and economic boundaries. [12] It often helps us to understand the dynamic demand for cultural recognition. However, it gives rise to another problem. In his book *Our Culture and Their Culture*, Amartya Sen has shown that what we purely think as "ours" has its origin from "theirs" and what we think to be "their" is indebted to us.[13] It seems that identifying one's own identity is also a problematic issue apart from the problem of recognition and interpretation of one's identity. However, I think that such a problematic is not so powerful as to push us towards intellectual perplexity. Our sincere concern for the human cause and utmost intellectual effort to make our mother earth a *sacrosanct* turf for all mankind will certainly supply us context-sensitive solutions having deep link with eternal humanity. Our philosophical wisdom, as propounded by Stephen Stich, has the power to touch that eternal humanity crossing the barriers of heterogeneity. However, Stich strongly demands that the "philosophical wisdom" must be supplemented with "philosophical humility," which promises due space for each and every particularity in human existence.[14] I agree with him and regret the fact that philosophers have been misguided by the Socratic-Platonic scheme of thought, where the thought or belief structure of a particular class - the stronger or elite, I think - has been projected as the only normal model. The issue of "being human" demands intellectual dynamism and flexibility. It is not a subject of any frozen perspective.

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[12] Cf. Aditi Dasgupta: *Family: Maladies and Melodies* (Kolkata: Baulmon Prakashan, 2015), p. 65.

[13] Cf. Amartya Sen: *Our Culture and Their Culture* (Kolkata: Nandan, West Bengal Film Society, 1996), p. 14.

[14] Cf. Stephen Stich: "Intellectual Humility and Cultural Diversity in Psychological Project," *A Talk Delivered at Darshan Bhavan on February 16* (Kolkata: Department of Philosophy, Jadavpur University, 2016).

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# Essentializing Humanity amidst Plurality: India - a Case in Point

JOHN MOHAN RAZU

## Introduction

The world we live is gripped with fear and insecurity. The events such as 9/11, Mumbai terror attacks and other acts of violence that happen in and around India does prompts us to probe into complex and yet intricate relationships between religion and politics adding fuel to intolerance and insecurity. This, in turn, intensifies conflict and animosity amongst communities that makes many to think: Whether religion triggered politics responsible for the promotion of intolerance? Whether political ideologies backed by fundamentalist religious tenets, such as religious fundamentalism and ultraconservatism, subscribe to polarization and divisiveness in the society? The combination of conservative political ideologies couched with religious fundamentalism seems to have captured India, the largest democracy in the world. Similar trend is seen in the United States of America, another large democracy, where conservative party's candidate Donald Trump wave seemed to have caught up that the nation has elected him as the President. So, religion is used increasingly to polarize the nation-states and societies, and made to play a vital role in political arenas. In such a situation notion of humanity is gradually waning. Why and what are factors that contributes to the current fiasco should be the main concern particularly for the academia, as they need to maintain the essential nature of humanity - humaneness, in the multicultural and multi-religious setting.

Hence, in the first section of this chapter, we attempt at a general consideration of the origins of religion and the rise of religious fundamentalism. Religion begins as a small-scale phenomenon, develops into an elaborate organized structure over the centuries, and having its own sects, denominations and cults. As religion develops, it also becomes more aggressive and fundamen-

talist as it believes that it alone is endowed with absolute truth, and hence, salvation can be found only this particular religion. This perspective of religion leads to scriptural literalism, majoritarianism, conservatism, dogmatism, ethnocentrism and authoritarianism. This kind of thinking in its extreme level would justify a political theocracy and a religious terrorist organization.

The second section takes up the issue of religious fundamentalism in India. The reason for the growth of fundamentalism in India is the prejudice and intolerance perpetuated by the rightwing extremist groups and the sympathy the rightwing ruling class shows to these groups. The rightwing authoritarianism has become so strong that any expression of one's point of view through speech or any other art form is attacked, not only verbally or psychologically, but also dealt with physical violence. No one from the rightwing is willing to see the truth communicated in these statements or art expressions. Instead they attack the one who has communicated the truth, thereby shut it down, rather than take positive action based on them. The rise of religious fundamentalism in India has led to growing intolerance.

The third section addresses the issue of growing intolerance in India. The spate of violence against the minority groups and intellectuals who challenge the *status quo* of the rightwing fundamentalist organizations points to the growing intolerance in India. There is a concerted effort, on the part of these groups, to polarize and communalize the country, which in turn, may assist the majority ruling coalition electorally. This polarization facilitates the growth of intolerance. The rise of intolerance leads to the loss of humanity - humaneness. People see each other as the "they," having separate identities; and not as the "we," having a common Indian identity. Besides, loss of humanity and the sense of belonging bring about the loss of the spirit of service, which in turn, further divides the people based on caste, ethnicity and region.

The conclusion calls us to move beyond the inhuman and dehumanized world we live in, retrieve our essential nature as human persons, bring better understanding between peoples, and thereby work towards establishing an equitable society that caters for the needs of both the majority and the minority groups. In the next section, we attempt at a general consideration of religion and religious fundamentalism.

**Religion and Religious Fundamentalism: A General Consideration**

If we flip through the world history, we find many instances of heinous atrocities of war and terrorism perpetuated in the name of religion. One wonders how religion could orchestrate such acts of extreme intolerance that are antithetical to its basic tenets. If this is the case, how could religion become a force promoting greater understanding and mutual respect across cultures, faiths, communities, fellow human being and nations? To address these questions requires a clear and precise conception of what constitutes "religion." There have been many conceptual and theoretical understanding of "religion." Out of which, some merit elucidation. The following quote takes us back to the origins of religion.

> The earliest forms of religion were shamanistic. These are small-scale, personalized forms of religion that are directly experiential in nature (... involve "doing" something that is experienced, usually associated with trance states triggered by dancing and journeys in a spirit world), lack any formal theology (especially beliefs in gods that have absolute power over the fate of men), and are mainly associated with hunter-gatherer societies. Doctrinal, or world, religions are believed to have emerged later. These typically involve the existence of one or more gods, something more like a theology, formal ritual space (e.g. temples), ritual specialists (e.g. priests), and an emphasis on ritual practices.[1]

Thus, religion started as a small-scale phenomenon. Over the centuries it has grown substantially, developing its own organized structure. However, "religion is not a single coherent entity, but only a loose assemblage of patterns of thinking and behavior that has been conceptually very differently over time and across different language groups and cultural traditions."[2] Based on it, we have diverse sects, denominations and cults. "In short, religion is a

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[1] R.I.M. Dunbar: "The Origin of Religion as a Small-Scale Phenomenon," *Religion, Intolerance, and Conflict: A Scientific and Conceptual Investigation,* eds. Steve Clarke et al. (Oxford: OUP, 2013), p. 53.

[2] Harvey Whitehouse: "Religion, Cohesion, and Hostility," *Religion, Intolerance, and Conflict: A Scientific and Conceptual Investigation,* eds. Steve Clarke et al., p. 36.

slippery category that changes over time and is used for different purposes in varied contexts."[3] As rightly pointed out, whether it is Semitic religions or others, they have shown their aggressive character in different points in the history of different countries of the world.

In recent times we have been witnessing all forms of aggression inflicted by the fanatical religious groups against those who they do not agree. Religious fundamentalism is on the rise. Who is to be blamed? "So, it is not that religion *per se* is responsible for our attitudes towards others, whether rational or fanatical, tolerant or judgmental. Instead, we must carve up the ill-defined category of religion and use the dissected parts as our units of explanation."[4] Nonetheless, religion in its fundamentals resonate the values of love, peace, humanity, mutuality, inclusivity and togetherness. However, religious fundamentalism pitches one against the other in the name creedal, confessional, doctrinal and sectarian differentials associated with "boundary setting" elucidating moral, behavioral and con-ceptual rigidity. Religious fundamentalism takes deep roots and manifests in intolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty leading to conservatism, dogmatism, ethnocentrism and authoritarianism. Therefore, religious fundamentalism and rightwing authoritarianism are positively correlated with one another and are consistently associated with high levels of intolerance and prejudice towards other cultural and religious groups.[5] According to Altemeyer and Hunsberger, religious fundamentalism believes that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity. This essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be vigorously fought. This truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practice of the past. Those who believe and practice this fundamental truth have a special relationship with the deity.[6]

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Cf. Russell Powell and Steve Clarke: "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance: Views from Across the Disciplines," *Religion, Intolerance, and Conflict: A Scientific and Conceptual Investigation,* eds. Steve Clarke et al., p. 15.

[6] Cf. *Ibid.*

Religious fundamentalism is intensely associated with an unwillingness to extend civil liberties and constitutional rights to minorities and others with different religious backgrounds other than the majority. The connection between religious fundamentalism and intolerance is due to a particular group's claim that its religion is exclusively endowed with absolute truth; and hence, salvation is possible only in this particular religion. Thus, the members of this group employ scriptural literalism and majoritarianism; perceive human social world as part of a larger cosmic battle between good and evil; and retain a general distrust of human nature. All these factors lead to them to recognize the need for authoritarian social institutions. All these elements are found in a religious terrorist rhetoric and its justification.[7] To quote Russell Powell and Steve Clarke on this point:

> Many fundamentalists claim to possess knowledge of the absolute truth concerning mattes of morality, and they perceive dissenting perspectives as threats to eternal salvation. Fundamentalist churches are more likely to encourage ethnic and religious inclined to support and defer to the prejudices from the pulpit, and they are inclined towards political theocracy ... Individuals are inclined to support and defer to the divinely sanctioned right to rule of theocratic leaders that impose and enforce legal regimes grounded to exclusive revelatory doctrine ... The cultural isolation and high internal homogeneity of fundamentalist groups can exacerbate pre-existing dispositions toward intolerance. Finally, religious fundamentalism (RF) is associated with increased levels of aggression, especially toward values-violators ... Thus, it seems that the pro-social effects of religiosity are overridden when a religious person is a fundamentalist who is confronted with an individual who threatens his or her core values.[8]

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[7] Cf. *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

In the next section, we consider the rise of religious fundamentalism in India. We also analyze some of the reasons that led to its rise.

## Religious Fundamentalism in India

Religious fundamentalism is at its peak in India. A careful examination of the factors - that have propelled a spate of violent incidences thus far occurred - explains the levels of prejudice and intolerance perpetuated by the rightwing extremists, and the failure of those in authority to address those show the authoritarian component that manifest religious fundamentalism. As long as the ruling regime's silence or occasional and halfhearted assurances continue, we cannot expect the growing levels of intolerance to subside; rather it would extend signals to go on in an aggressive manner. The ultra-rightist band wagon that continues to get the tacit support from the party in power - rightwing authoritarianism have been considered as bigots because of their mindset that negates fundamental political and civil rights to minorities and others. This is how the bigots have understood religion they subscribe to, rather than following its content that transcends prejudice and intolerance. In Christianity we find an example of such prejudice, despite the fact it teaches equality of all. Russell Powell and Steve Clarke comment on this point as follows:

> Most major world religions include norms of tolerance, forgiveness, and equality ... These norms are motivating when internalized is shown by the negative correlation between Christian Orthodoxy and some types of prejudice ... For example, there are Biblical passages denigrating ... and condoning the subordination of women. It should not be surprising, therefore, that the religion-intolerance link may hinge on the specific prejudice under investigation.[9]

The battle, in Indian society in recent times, is pitched one against another: the "tolerance of the intolerant" or the "intolerance of the tolerant." It has been pitched on these lines and the battled is

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

waged to establish the supremacy of one over the other. These two statements are to be nuanced by situating a few narratives and cases in order to acquire better clarity. Bollywood icon Aamir Khan's comments on "rising intolerance" sharply divided polity sparking heated debates. Responding to his wife Kiran's question "whether they should leave the country, as she feared for her child" Aamir Khan had commented on the "growing disquiet in India." Many persons have expressed their opinion regarding Aamir Khan's words on twitter and face book. Let us consider a few such comments.

Sameep Parekh wrote: "Hello Mr. Perfectionist ... the fact that you can condemn India on such a large platform and not get thrown out of the country reveals volume about our tolerance level. I challenge you to try speaking this in any country where you feel safe. We the youth of this country are working out ass-off to get our lives and economy back on the development track; we will not allow few of you to hold it back." Sumedha Saravadaman said: "Only those who never considered India their own country would speak of leaving it, based on a completely fabricated intolerance story. Get lost Mr. Khan." Dil Bahadur added: "I think you should be in Syria or Pakistan or any Arab country to know what is intolerance ... What is intolerance ... you have been accepted, loved and applauded and now you are saying we are intolerant ... I did not know you were so stupid."

The harshest attacks of Khan came from within the film fraternity. Actor Anupam Kher tweeted: "Did you tell Kiran that you have lived through worse times in this country and but you never thought of moving out." Film maker, Ashoke Pandid said: "Now that Aamir Khan also feels we are an intolerant nation. Let us now go all out and prove once for all that we are really intolerant." Director Ram Gopal Varma tweeted: "India is the most tolerant country in the world. Such statements send a wrong signal." Answering questions from the media and the audience at NFDC's Film Bazaar at the 48th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) at Panaji, A. R. Rahman, the Oscar-winning composer, while sharing his concerns about growing intolerance in India said: "I had gone through something similar a couple of months ago. Nothing should be violent. We are all ultra-civilized people and we should show the world that we are the best civilization." Actor, Rishi Kapoor, said to Aamir Khan and his wife:

"When things are going wrong and the system need correction, repair it, mend it. Don't run away from it. That's Heroism."

After the Bollywood superstar joined the debate on "rising intolerance" during an awards ceremony for journalists, the Hindu Mahasabha reacted saying: "He should go to Pakistan for the benefit of India." The Hindu Mahasabha's national secretary, Munna Kumar Sharma, said: "A case of treason should be filed against Khan and other traitors like Shah Rukh Khan, who too has made such statements before." As they gathered in Meerut at the party office to discuss Aamir's statement, Munna Kumar Sharma suggested the actor should go in for conversion (*ghar wapsi*), especially in light of the fact that both his present wife and former one (Reena Dutta) have been Hindus. If Khan does not move to Pakistan, he should indulge in *ghar wapsi* to free himself from the crimes of "love jihad," for having two Hindu women as his wives.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu said: "Some people are misleading and some people are misled ... Some are propagating wrong things; some are coming under wrong propaganda. My suggestion is that the situation in India is better than any other country. People of India are tolerant." Congress Vice-President, Rahul Gandhi, tweeted that the Centre should try and figure out why people were feeling insecure. "Instead of branding all those who question the government and Modiji as unpatriotic, antinational or motivated, the government would do better to reach out to people to understand what's happening, what's disturbing them." Kiran Raju, Union Minister, said: "The record shows that the number of incidents of communal violence in the country have come down, since NDA came to power. Just to make a blatant statement that during NDA rule, the country has become intolerant; it unnecessarily tarnishes the image of the country." Digvijaya Singh, one of the Congress General Secretaries opined: "It's sad Aamir Khan, who is an icon among film actors not only in India, but across the world is feeling the same thing (rising intolerance) ... His wife is Hindu, she has also felt it, that with this kind of uncultured and intolerant atmosphere, it looks like those who are fighting against this will have to leave the country. This is a serious issue." Union Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani: "Aamir Khan is a brand ambassador for tourism - *Incredible India* - and that what's incredible ... is that he can be a brand ambassador for our Govern-

ment and he can be on a platform in front of the Information and Broadcasting Minister and speak his mind shows that free speech thrives ... I am a living example of Modi's intolerance; he forgave me though I publicly attacked him."

Aamir Khan's comment on "rising intolerance" has generated heated debates across the spectrum. The saffron party linked his statement to a "deep political conspiracy" of Congress to malign the country, while others said that he was speaking the truth. Wadding into the debate on "intolerance" particularly on Aamir Khan's utterance AIMIM chief Assadudin Owaisi said that Muslims will not leave India under any circumstances as they are Indians "not only by birth, but by choice." All the comments and opinions different persons expressed on Aamir Khan's comment on "rising intolerance" fall within the gamut of these two clusters: firstly, tolerance of the intolerant; and secondly, intolerance of the tolerant. Both the statements convey messages that we are tolerating although we are intolerant; and since we are tolerant we are tolerating the intolerance. Aamir Khan, as an ambassador of *Incredible India*, a Government's campaign to promote tourism, Khan was at the centre of a debate a day after he expressed "alarm and despondency" over the rise of incidents of intolerance in the country. He made this statement before a galaxy of the VVIP and Union Ministers particularly from Information and Broadcasting Ministry. He was bold and forthright that must have put the ruling BJP government to shame. He said whatever he wanted to say.

Since it was an open statement from an icon and celebrity known world over for his creative acting and critical inquiry, the spokespersons of BJP and others came down heavily on him, while others belonging to different political parties and other streams tried to defend him. The base question that emerges is: "Is India tolerant to the intolerant?" Those who subscribe to ultra-right parties, such as the BJP and political fundamentalist ideologies say that India is tolerant and, thus, tolerates to intolerances. They argue their case as follows. Since freedom of expression has not been negated in India and those who want to say can express their opinions freely, India is tolerant. Substantiating their standpoints, they say that though Hindus are the majority group in India, Hindus continue to tolerate others, such as Muslims, Christians and other religious groups. They are treated on par with the majority Hindus. Therefore, India is

tolerant to the core as compared to many other countries. To prove their point that India is tolerant, they cite the example of Bollywood being dominated by the Muslims.

A question that arises here is: "What wrong did Aamir Khan commit by sharing a concern of his wife Kiran Rao about their son in the context of rising intolerance in the country?" At the Ramnath Goenka Awards function of *The Indian Express* Group, joining the debate on "Rising Intolerance," Aamir Khan shared the concern expressed by his wife in a private conversation as an example of many other people's concern in this country. Aamir Khan being a serious person and a creative artist openly shared what his wife said. He added: "You feel why this is happening, you feel low. That sense does exist." Then he cited a number of instances that happened in the last six to seven months. Why should there was a huge hue and cry over Aamir Khan's utterance. He has all the freedom to give his opinion. He never backed out rather he firmly endorsed it. If we take the sociopolitical climate of our country in recent times what we see is the total degradation of civility in our society. For instance, Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje apologised to the artist after an art installation called the Bovine Divine was taken down in rage. The Jawahar Kala Kendra in Jaipur displayed the installation - a plastic cow suspended from a balloon - in an open area. The artist Siddharth Karwal was trying to draw attention to the plight of cows eating plastic waste. However pro-cow activists - a new power group in India - misunderstood, took offence, called the police who took the installation down. Is that tolerance of intolerance or the intolerant ruling the roost?[10]

Our country has reached a point, where political parties tend to extend patronage to those groups that echo their sentiments and ideology. These are the groups and people who decide and determine our cultural, political and social discourse and way of life. For everything - whether it is a writing, a statement, an art, a cartoon, an opinion, a song and any other - there will be several groups of people who take offence. What happened in Jaipur shows the growing intolerance that the cow on a balloon was offensive because it was a cow and cows are holier than the holy at the moment.[11]

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[10] Cf. Ranjona Banerji: "The Cult of Intolerance," *Deccan Chronicle*, 25th November (2015), p. 8.

[11] Cf. *Ibid*.

Incidences that portray intolerance in small and bigger ways are on the rise throughout the country today. There are high voltage points of the frenzy atmosphere we live in. These perverse mindsets do not look for reason and logic, but are endowed with outrage that blurs common sense and rationality. Yet, only "cow politics" or something else that is linked to their majoritarian political agenda. Intolerance is in its zenith in our country and so counter-discourse are not only thwarted, but also thrashed, which apparently reduces the freedom of expression. Obviously, it does imply that we are unable to combat the forces that want to take us to a closed society.[12] So, the ideology of *Hindutva* and the political program of RSS-BJP are to make our society a "closed society," in tune with the *Hinduraj*. The level of fanaticism manifested is clear from the fact that the plastic cow was later brought back out of storage and worshipped. It is an irony that the idea of the artist in naming his installation "The Bovine Dine" has become completely a topsy-turvy in the end.[13] In the same state of Rajasthan, a renowned sculptor Amish Kapok also on the receiving ends of intolerance. Two days after his appointment to a cultural panel set up by the Rajasthan government, he was removed because he made some scathing, uncomplimentary comments about Prime Minister Modi.[14]

The *Hindutva* forces are disturbed by the recent happenings, such as returning of their awards, open statements on the rising intolerance by the celebrities and icons. The crux of the matter is not whether he/she a Muslim, a Hindu, a Christian, belongs to Congress party or some other party; but who has done the killings or who has done the threatening. Take for example, Aamir Khan's candid statement that disquiet and unease are on the rise. Instead of looking into the statement uttered by analyzing whether there is truth in it or not, the Government at the Centre and its allies in the State Governments pay no heed to it. India is still tolerant and their tolerance cannot be taken for granted. In sum, the word "tolerance" is to be nuanced as against "intolerance." Those who talk of "tolerance" bring in patriotism and nationalism into the argument and, thus, zero down their argument to Pakistan, sedition or antinational. They want make sure that certain sections of the society should vote for

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[12] Cf. *Ibid*.
[13] Cf. *Ibid*.
[14] Cf. *Ibid*.

them. What have said above points to growing intolerance in the Indian society, to which we turn in the next section.

## Growing Intolerance in India

We have been witnessing several incidences of intolerance in India. The list keeps ascending. In the year 2015, some of the intolerant happenings posit the deep-seated religious fanaticism and hatred against those who subscribe their adherence to other religions. The following list reflects diverse dimensions of intolerance perpetuated by those considered as bigots:

On August 30, 2015, Kannada scholar M. M. Kalburgi was shot dead by unidentified assailants. Rationalists Narendra Debholkar and Govind Pansare also were killed in Maharashtra during the past two years. On September 25, 2015, Abdul Malik, an unemployed youth, was arrested after he repeatedly stabbed a policeman outside a mosque in Yavatmal district of Maharashtra. The policeman survived. A local maulana had allegedly instigated Malik to stab the cop to protest the State Government's beef ban. The state's counter-terrorism agency is now looking for the maulana. On September 28, 2015, a man was lynched by a 200-strong mob at Dadri, in Uttar Pradesh, for allegedly slaughtering and eating a calf. All ten people named in the FIR were arrested. Six of them reportedly related to local BJP leader Sanjay Rana. On October 8, 2015, Kashmiri trucked Zahid Bhat attacked with petrol bombs by Hindu groups following rumors that he killed cattle. He succumbed to injuries nine days later. Protests broke out throughout the State. On October 20, 2015, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front chairman Yasin malik, who planned to stage a protest, was taken into preventive detention with four others. The Public Safety Act slapped against five of the seven people arrested. On October 9, 2015, an independent MLA, Sheikh Abdul Rashid assaulted by BJP MLAs in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly for hosting a beef party. On October 19, 2015, Hindu Sena members blackened his face with ink in Delhi during a news conference. On October 9,

2015, six person on motorcycles hacked to death Bajrang Dal member Prashant Poojar in Moodabidri in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka. He had been involved in raids on illegal slaughterhouses. Eight persons were arrested in connection with the murder. On October 12, 2015 Shiv Sena workers doused in ink former BJP leader Sudheendra Kulkarni, who organized the release of a book by former Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri in Mumbai. Case registered against half a dozen unidentified persons. A few days earlier, threats from the Shiv Sena organizers had called off a concern featuring Pakistani ghazal singer Ghulam Ali. On October 12, 2015, a torn-up copy of the *Guru Granth Sahib* was found in Faridot district of Punjab. In the following days, six other similar incidents took place in the state. Police arrested two brothers and took 52 people into preventive detention. On October 16, 2015, a mob in Himachal Pradesh's Nahan district lynched Noman Akhtar, an alleged cattle smuggler. On October 17, 2015, an Australian couple was allegedly harassed in Bengaluru over a shin tattoo of the goddess Yelamma. Police threatened to skin Matt Keith, 21, who wore the tattoo. He was forced to write a letter of apology. On October 18, 2015, Shiv Sena members stormed the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai to protest the talks with Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shahryar Khan. They were arrested. In response, the International Cricket Council pulled Pakistani umpire Aleem Dar from the ongoing India-South Africa ODI series. Commentators Wasim Akram and Shoab Akhtar pulled out from the fifth ODI amid security worries. On October 20, 2015, a *dalit* couple, their toddler and an infant were set afire in Faridabad in Haryana allegedly by upper-caste Rajputs. The children died and the mother was critically injured. The father's hands were burnt.[15]

The above chain of events occurred in the year 2015 prompts us to ask a question: "Is India tolerant?" Some answer this question

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[15] Cf. "Intolerant India," *The Week*, November (2015), p. 35.

saying: "India is tolerant"; others say: "India is intolerant"; yet other say: "India has never been tolerant." However, many tend to say with certainty that India, in recent times, has become intolerant. We have seen the ways in which intolerance manifest. So, we need to clarify what we mean by "tolerance." Powell and Clarke construe tolerance as "the willingness to accept or even defend the rights of others; to engage in behavior that we ourselves eschew." [16] "An attitude of tolerance is only possible when some action or practice is objectionable to us, but we have overriding reasons to allow that action or practice to take place." [17] India, in recent times, clearly witnessing pragmatic intolerance as a means to more intolerant end that emanates from ideological expressions premised on political project. Ideological warfare is clearly unfolding between fundamentalism and secularism, majoritarianism and minoritarianism, ultra-rightism and liberalism, and sectarian values and all-encompassing values. So, tolerance must be maintained and furthered in religious and political establishments. However, the ultimate by all means will have to be realized through penultimate means. What is happening, now, is the ultra-rightist ideology of RSS-BJP is all out to polarize and communalize the society, so that the Indian society could very well be divided on the basis of the self and the other, the "we" and the "they." The other will have to be like the self, get converted to the self, or assimilate to the self. The other - failing to do any one of the three above alternatives - will have to face the consequences.

We live in volatile ideological terrains. Ideological intolerance has to be contested by all means *via* ideological tolerance. In reality, the pragmatic putting forth of ideological tolerance before different sections of the society, make it viable, practical and realizable would be difficult, as against an aggressive ideology of intolerance, which believes in polarization. Nevertheless, ideology of tolerance believes in the injunction of love, peace, fairness, human dignity, equality, besides bringing about justice in the social, economic, cultural, gender and political spheres. "Is India tolerant?" is an empirical

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[16] Harvey Whitehouse: "Religion, Cohesion, and Hostility," *Religion, Intolerance, and Conflict: A Scientific and Conceptual Investigation,* eds. Steve Clarke et al., p. 37.

[17] *Ibid.*

question. The empirical answers prove that the ideal of tolerance should serve and continue to serve to counteract our pan-human and pan-Indian aspirations against the ideology of polarization, divisiveness, and majoritarian inclinations. Though we should not stereotype India as tolerant always, we will have to acknowledge the fact that India is gradually moving towards intolerance. The state seems to be a silent spectator to the recent happenings that does not reflect the attitude and atmosphere of tolerance. Paradoxically, Prime Minister Modi talks about tolerance on British soil. The signals and trends that we are in, now, show the disturbing picture. It is alarming. It is incredible to see India becoming intolerant. Indians are tolerant, but how long is the question. More than 80 per cent of Indians want the freedom to practice their own religion. Only a minuscule wants *ghar wapsi*. The beauty of India is multiplicity and plurality of races, religions, cultures, communities and ethnicities. The duty of the Government at the Centre is to protect and promote tolerance. India is a country of great civilizations, cultures and religions. The politics of polarization will by all means disintegrate one India that enjoys unity amidst plurality and diversity.

An ideology entrenched in extremities is bound to affect the larger unit of humanity. Humanity is not about maintaining a cordial relationship between one another in the society, but it is about building bond amongst communities comprised of larger units that make up society with sustaining and sustainable values. Humanity is much more than showing passion or empathy to each other at times of need, but treating others as co-humans, acknowledging their dignity, and placing them in the highest esteem in all facets of life. "Humanity" is not just a word symbolising the human compassion and civilization, but it goes beyond the horizons of human nature. It is all about total commitment to keep intact the humanity, without trivializing and tinkering it by human nature. It is all about combining minds and hearts in all human endeavours. However, humanity is scarce and hardly seen in our day-to-day existence. Inhumanity has grown in different form. It has become the central point of our existence. What Mahatma Gandhi said and lived is worth remembering and practicing now. For instance, Gandhi wrote in *Young India* in 1924: "I want to identify myself with everything that lives." Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha also revealed and practiced love and care to all irrespective of what and who they

were. Purely because of these reasons, even now, they are considered as tallest symbols of humanity. Currently, the whole world is filled with greed, acquisition, distrust, envy, consumerism, ill-will and high-tech life. Attitude of service is waning away. Everyone, caught up in this consumerist world, has forgotten the saying: "Serving humanity is serving God."

Humanity is endowed with the resources, means and collective will to live and lead a quality life on this planet. In this connection, Mahatma Gandhi, seeing the appalling conditions of the poor and luxurious living of the rich, said that the nature has provided plenty and everyone could live well if one lives "not according to his greed, but according to his need." The gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" keep widening within nations and between nations. About 22,000 children die every day of poverty and thousands of mal-nourished children we have in India. Again, the micro-macro scenarios portray depressing accounts day-by-day. United Nations Organization, in its reports, keeps publishing country-wise crimes against humanity. They include all forms of inhumanity perpetuated against humanity - genocide; discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, caste and a host of other forms. Some of these other forms perpetrated against humanity are bonded labor, systematic practice of summary executions, disappearance, torture or any kind inhuman acts, whether it is mental or physical, racial or gender-based. Intoler-ance is most pronounced, when it comes to matters concerning identity - not just religious identity alone, but every kind of strongly believed identity such as caste, ethnicity and region. Rising intoler-ance inevitably reveals its violent nature. As intolerance grows, liberal thoughts, pluralism and scientific temper suffer. Society will automatically be polarized.

The term "plural" means many - different or dissimilar. Plural-ism is the coexistence of many cultures, where culture - includes racial, religious or cultural groups - and is manifested in customary behaviors, cultural assumptions and values. Pluralism is the practice of giving equal attention to the people of many different back-grounds in a particular setting. Pluralism is a multifaceted concept that needs to be nurtured and promoted. The face of India is tolerance which is embedded in realizing common humanity. Common humanity is the ultimate vision, where communities and societies mutually respect each other and acknowledge each other's

distinct identities and differences. Only in diversity and plurality common-humanity can come to reality and, thus, is promoted and practiced.

## Conclusion

Essentializing humanity should become one of the major preoccupations of our endeavor. We live in an inhuman and a dehumanized world. Hence, retrieving and essentializing humanity warrants that we move on in a world, where marginalization and oppression in all forms and shades exist. The world we live in is increasingly becoming plural and multicultural. In such a rapidly changing world - where xenophobia, ethnic conflicts, racism, casteism, summary killings, human rights violations and numerous other crimes are perpetrated in covert and overt forms - being and becoming human is more important now than ever. Apart from others, agencies, including the institutions of governance and academia should strive in reiterating the concept of "being humane" and, thus, essentialize humanity in all forms and facets of existence.

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# Sociocultural Changes in the Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya

GITA PYAL

### Introduction

Worldwide, a large number of communities follow the patrilineal system, in which the lineage is traced through the father. Though matrilineal system has existed side by side, it was very low profile. Certain communities in southern and northeastern India follow the matrilineal System. Northeastern India is a mosaic of different linguistic, ethnic and cultural groups. The sociocultural practices, property rights, gender relations and the tribal worldview evolved around the power structures. Some village councils were republican, some were democratic, some others were authoritarian and yet others were of various types of oligarchies. These different forms have been the part and parcel of traditional power structures in northeastern India. The Khasi tribes have a unique culture. The Khasi tribe of Meghalaya in the northeastern region is one such group. In this tribe, the descent is traced through the mother. Hence, the residential pattern is matrilocal, where the husband comes to the wife's house after marriage. Here, the property is inherited by the youngest daughter, who is responsible for looking after the parents. The maternal uncle plays the important role in the family decision-making process. These are the chief characteristics of a Khasi matrilineal system.

Having clarified the meaning matrilineal and matrilocal system in general and introducing the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya, in the first section of this chapter, we elaborate on different aspects of the matrilineal and matrilocal system of the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya, such as the concept of family and family structure; clan organization; matrilineal system of descent; rules pertaining to inheritance of property; courtship in Khasi matrilineal society; and matrilocal residential pattern. We also consider some of the problems of Khasi matrilineal system and the challenges faced by the Khasi matrilineal

and matrilocal traditions. The second section unfolds the socio-cultural changes that have come into the Khasi society in recent times and their implications. Traditional power structure of Khasi family and clan is challenged by the Autonomous District Council and the self-help groups. Education, modernization, urbanization and migration for professional achievements have changed the traditional tribal value system. This has, in turn, led to interracial marriages, formation of nuclear families, changes in matrilocal residential pattern and property rights, men affirming their rights, the increase in sexually deviant behaviors and gender based violence, and decline of interest in Khasi religion and ritual practices. Thus, there has come about an erosion of Khasi tribal values and the danger of disintegration of Khasi tribal lifestyle.

The third section looks into the movement to revive the Khasi tribal culture and counter the changes that have come into it in recent times. The Seng Khasi Organization has spearheaded this revival movement and for over two centuries has played the role of the custodian of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya. The fourth section highlights the influence of multiculturalism and globalization on the Khasi tribal culture. Globalization and its positive and negative effects have brought about a kind of division within the Khasi society - between the educated youth who welcome globalization and the uneducated youth, who resist globalization and pledge allegiance to the Khasi culture and tradition. The conclusion speaks of the two-fold task of the Khasi community in the context of the multicultural and globalized world. The first is to preserve their traditions and culture from eroding. The second is to learn and assimilate good cultural traits from others for the holistic development of the Khasi people and the Khasi region. In the next section, we consider the matrilineal and matrilocal system.

## Matrilineal and Matrilocal System of the Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya

The Khasi hills felt the gentle breeze of changes with the arrival of the British and the missionaries in the early nineteenth century. The missionaries facilitated the Khasi cultural dynamics and structural integration. The missionary activities brought many

changes in local people's life. The missionaries helped the tribal people to develop a sense of tribal identity, form local leadership, provide more freedom to women, enhance their lifestyles, bring greater social organization, and deepen their religious spirit. In this section, we elaborate on different aspects of the matrilineal and matrilocal system of the Kashi tribe of Meghalaya.

### Khasi Concept of Family and Family Structure

In the Khasi society, the Khasis have survived as a community due to complex family structures and relationships which binds the families, the clans and the tribe together into a socially cohesive whole. The Khasi families have been bonded together by the household religion. The family (*ka Iing*) functions as a family council (*durbar*), where maternal uncles (*kni*), grandparents, parents (*ki kmie ki kpa*) and older members of the family deliberate about marriages, deaths, family rituals, property and other family affairs. However, the clan played a significant role in the family life of the Khasi people. It was the overall social unit that governed the social relations of Khasis. The clan also determined the Khasis power structure, their belief and ritual practices, in conformity with the rule of common ritual activity of the family.[1]

### Khasi Clan Organization

The Khasi matrilineal families are an endogamous tribe, who are divided into exogamous clans that are further divided into exogamous matrilocal families, tracing their descent from female ancestors. The clan (*kur*) is an exogamous unit. Marriage within the clan is a taboo and considered as pollution. However, the clan is not an indivisible unit. It can be divided further, when the clan becomes too big for its members to know each other and to come together for any social event. Similarly, when a group of the members of a clan is geographically scattered and begin calling themselves by a new name, this smaller group becomes a sub-clan (*jait*), and the new name serves as a common surname for the members of that sub-clan.

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[1] With the changing times the separation of rituals of clan have become the source of much conflict among the Khasi people.

Although exact genealogical relationship could not be ascertained in intra and inter sub-clan relations, the members observe exogamous rules with one another. For instance, the Nongbri, Nongkynrih and Shadap are three different sub-clans within the clan. These three different sub-clans observe exogamous rules with one another and marriage among them being strictly forbidden.

*Descent among the Khasi Tribes*

The Khasis have a matrilineal system of descent. In the Khasi matrilineal principle, the Khasis reckon descent through the female line, in which the mother-child bond is the strongest kin tie. The children take the name of their mother; they are members of their mother's lineage and clan; and they live in their mother's social group. In the Khasi matrilineal society, the role of the father is reduced to that of the procreator and bread winner of the family only. For, the social recognition of the child is centered on the mother. In conformity with this principle, the Khasi household is matrilocal in nature. The basic residential unit comprises the mother, her children, and her husband.

To have a clear perception of the nature of Khasi social organization, it becomes necessary to have a clear understanding of the general rule of matrilineal descent. The Khasis, one of the oldest inhabitants of the northeastern India, belong to the Austro-Asiatic family of the human race. Speaking of the Khasis, it is difficult to state an exact date of the settlement of this Khasi tribe in the Khasi hills. However, it is believed that they have migrated into the present home either from the plains or from the Brahmaputra Valley or *Kamakhya* during the tenth and thirteenth century A. D. The Khasi tribes live in Khasi and Jaintia Hill districts of Meghalaya, its northern slope up to Brahmaputra valley and the southern slope rolling to the Surma valley. The Khasi is a broad term, which includes the Pnar in the Jaintia Hill; the Lyngam and Maram in the West; and the Bhoi and the Khynriam in the East.

There is no denying the fact that traditions go long way in shaping the culture of the society. A society grows through its social, political and moral traditions that constitute the core of the culture. In the Khasi matrilineal tradition, the mother is the custodian of family's religious rites and property. She is succeeded by her

youngest daughter, who becomes the keeper of the property and the organizer of the family, family's religious rites and social practices. In case the youngest female of the family dies without any female issue, she is succeeded by her next elder sister who would perform the same role. The residential house of the youngest daughter is the ancestral property inherited from generation to generation.

*Khasi Rules Regarding Property Inheritance*

In matters pertaining to inheritance of property, the Khasis follow the female line. However, some families do give men shares of the ancestral property; but the daughters usually get the bigger share because they have to continue the family lineage and run the households. The Khasi conception of property falls under two major categories: the first, the ancestral property includes land, houses, paddy fields, cash, ornaments, domestic animals, and the like that have been passed down in the family from generation to generation; and the second, the self-acquired property which is earned during a person's life time. Though, the youngest daughter gets the major share, she is not the heiress of the ancestral property; but is the custodian and steward of both movable and immovable property of the ancestors. Hence, it may be noted that every individual member of the clan has a right over this ancestral property and it is the duty of the youngest daughter to take care not only of her parents, un-married brothers and sisters, but also married aunts and uncles, and any member of the extended family. In the customary laws, the role of woman is confined to motherhood, housekeeping, custodianship of family property and helper in the agricultural field.

Thus, a mother, or after her death, her daughter before they leave the parental home after marriage, cannot dispose of the land by herself without the approval and consent of the uncles and brothers constituting the family council (*durbar kur*) of the clan. In case of disposing an undivided land belonging to the extended family, the mother has to get the approval of a branch of the clan. However, in the case of land held by the family, a mother with an uncle or a brother living in her house, or alone failing both, can apportion it among her children. In case of her death, her sons may act on her behalf consulting the sisters, who are still in the parental home. It follows that the youngest female of the family (*ka khadduh*) by herself

cannot dispose of the property. If the women consider that the *durbar kur* is unreasonable in their refusal to dispose of a property, they can convene a general council (*durbar*) of all the adult males of the clan, or of the branch of the clan, or the family as the case may be. Women also can attend and give their views when consulted, but the responsibility for decision lies with the men alone. When the mother is no longer alive, *ka khadduh* is assisted by her elder sister. It is a fact of Khasi custom and culture that women do not take part in the *durbars* of the village, *raid* or *elaka*.

Thus, the society, culture, religion, politics and economic setup of the Khasi tribe is based on matrilineal and matrilocal system. The Khasis are divided into exogamous matrilineal clan whose members are descended from a common ancestress. The clan consists of the one common ancestress forming an exogamous group. The Khasi family is a socioeconomic and religious unit.

*Courtship in Khasi Matrilineal Society*

In the Khasi matrilineal society, at the night of the marriage, a ceremony of the whole process right from courtship is reenacted as if the man and the women meet for the first time and agree to enter into marriage. For this purpose, marriage spokesmen (*ki ksiang*), the one representing the groom and the other representing the bride are employed. Traditionally, marriage spokesmen are elderly men not belonging to the two of their own clans entering into marriage. There are reasons why the Khasis authorize spokesmen not belonging to their own clan to represent them in important matter as executing a marriage covenant. The first reason is that all the conditions of marriage have been thoroughly discussed and settled by the maternal uncles of the clans and the actual marriage covenant was already concluded in their private and informal deliberation at the engagement; and the marriage is only a formalizing ceremony before the society. The second reason is that all Khasi clans are considered honorable and equal in status and dignity. This equality is not based on the economic or social positions of the clans, but on the fact that each clan is an independent religious institution backed up by the spirits of its departed members and by justice (*ka Hok*). Moreover, a man cannot act as *ki ksiang* for the nephew in the marriage covenant because it would imply that he is offering him for auction, sale, or

mortgage as a slave to the other clan. The third reason for employing marriage spokesmen is that the clan is consanguineous and stands as a neuter gender. Hence, the intra-clan relationships are considered pure and holy. Maternal uncle cannot act as marriage spokesman on behalf of his niece because that is considered immodest. A man can neither speak anything, nor do anything that refers to the sexuality of his sister or niece.

As far as possible the Khasis avoid involvement in matters referring to the sexuality of their female clan members in public. Even in the private affairs of the marriage proposal and engagement, only elderly uncles, mother and father of a girl take part in the discussion. All other younger and other unmarried uncles and brothers do not bother anything. So marriage spokesmen (*ki ksiang*) fulfill the purpose of safeguarding the clan's internal modesty and maintain equality in the external affairs.

*Matrilocal Residential Pattern of Khasi Tribe*

The Khasis, generally, follow the residential pattern known as matrilocal residence, where the husband resides with his wife's matrilineal kin. Some couples settle down together in a new residence in and around his wife's maternal place. In the Khasi family the mother is regarded as the custodian of family rites and religious performances, besides performing the task of keeping the family property, which cannot be disposed without the consent of the senior male members. The mother's residential house is inherited by the youngest daughter, but there are some variations. In traditional Pnar custom, all the persons born in the family continue to stay in the family throughout their life time and jointly enjoy the property of the household. In some areas, all children equally inherit the ancestral property. Among the Khasis, the property which has been acquired by a man before his marriage is considered to belong to his mother or theoretically to his clan. The wife and children would inherit the post marriage acquired property. The youngest daughter obtains the largest share of the property on the death of her mother. If there is no daughter, the acquired property would equally be distributed among the sons. Among the Bhois, the sons succeed to all property whether acquired or ancestral. The Lyngam Law of In-heritance is the same as the Khasis. Thus, the women are considered

the mistress of the household and the sole custodian of wealth. The father is provider, master and guide of the family. Traditionally it is the maternal uncle, who has the authority and control over the property in a matrilineal Khasi society. However the woman has rights over the house and property sanctioned by customs and religious traditions.

*Problems of Khasi Matrilineal System*

In the Khasi matrilineal system, man without a clan is a non-entity. At the same time, a person born of a Khasi father and a non-Khasi mother cannot belong to his father's clan as this would go against the Khasi rule of matrilineal descent. To solve the problem of Khasi kinship incorporated these persons into Khasi society by permitting them to take up their mother's personal name as their clan name. Thus, the Kharrani clan had their mother's personal name as their clan name. To distinguish the indigenous clans from these adopted clans, the adopted clans are known under the general title, the Dkhar clan. Many of them use the prefix "Khar" before their acquired or adopted name. The names "Kharkhongor," "Kharba-mon," "Kharbuli" and "Kharujon" are some examples of the adopted clan names.

The position of women in the matrilineal societies is more comfortable than in the patrilineal societies. In this connection, it is important to analyze the structure of the role, power and function of women in Khasi society. Traditionally, in the Khasi society the position of both men and women was ascribed rather than achieved and was based on customary beliefs and practices. The power structure of the Khasi society is gradually shifting the focus from maternal males to paternal males. Value system in Khasi society is based on its religious beliefs and practices. The matrilineal system too exists surrounding this value system rooted in religion. As far as the Khasis are concerned, religion and worship were matrilineal family affair performed by the matrilineal male usually the eldest of the maternal uncles (*u kni*) at the youngest daughter's residence (*Khadduh*). Presently Christianity offers an alternative organized belief system that has a patriarchal bias. It conflicts with and con-tradicts the matrilineal beliefs. It is a known fact that in the Christian preaching the father, not the maternal uncle, figures prominently.

Among the Christians the presence of maternal uncles and maternal males bring honor to the occasion, yet it is the father who is preferred. During marriage, it is the father who gives away the bride publicly and the maternal uncle does it only in his absence.

*Challenges to Khasi Matrilineal and Matrilocal Traditions*

As the youth are being drawn towards dominant Indian cultures, they become increasingly aware of the predominance of the patrilineal system. With business and commercialism expanding, a working Khasi man can become more independent and use his money as leverage within the family. More recently, male rights groups have begun using Christianity as a catalyst for change. Men feel their responsibilities end with procreation. They have no say over their own children. If the woman decides to divorce, the man leaves the house empty handed, with no land and property. Therefore, they end up drinking, deserting their wives and dying young. Men have begun campaigning for equal rights, and even for a complete reversal of the system from women to men. The success of women has angered a minority of men, who have now formed male rights groups and are campaigning for equality. Men have formed groups to challenge the matrilineal system. They are inspired by the patriarchal culture of mainland India and the West. They demand full authority to the father and change to a patrilineal system so children will have the father's name. They demand that inheritance should be equally distributed among sons and daughters, with the eldest son responsible for looking after the parents instead of the youngest daughter. The above-mentioned problems and challenges of the matrilineal and matrilocal system have led to disintegration of the matrilineal descent groups. Besides, the socio-economic changes brought about by contact with other cultures have also contributed to this change. However, the process and direction of change are different. In the next section, we elaborate on these sociocultural changes and their implications for Khasi society.

## Sociocultural Changes and Their Implications for Khasi Society

In a typical Khasi household family responsibilities are entrusted to men and are shared between the maternal uncle and

father. The father earns for his own wife and children; but in matters of clans and the family, such as management of ancestral property, performance of religious duties and the arrangement of marriages, it is the maternal uncle who makes the decisions in consultations with other members of the family. There is three fold division of family responsibility: the first, the uncle attends to the business affairs that come before the family; the second, the mother looks after the hearth and home; and the third, the father provides all that is necessary for the maintenance of his wife and children. The impact of modernization and influence of other cultures has eroded the maternal uncle's authority. The role and control of maternal uncles on their sisters and children are also becoming thin and shaken due to the lack of proximity and spatial mobility of the people.

The traditional power structure in the Khasi society is changing under the impact of the Autonomous District Council and the emergence of middle class and self-help groups. Because of these changes the traditional authorities are finding it hard to hold on to their traditional domain. Besides, women are now taking more interest in politics. In the ultimate analysis, due to these changes, conflicts are emerging in the Khasi society. Some of these conflicts relate to ownership of property, authority in the family and clan structure, natal and conjugal loyalties, nuclear family and matrilineal descent groups, and family lineage. All these conflicts exert pressure on the society. Education, modernization, urbanization, employment opportunities in non-agricultural sectors and shift from subsistence economy to market economy has undermined the traditional matrilineal structure.

The term "modernization" implies a widespread change and transformation of the societies. The main factors of modernization are education, urbanization, industrialization, and mass communication. The process of education and the impact of the western education brought new educated middle class who played a vital role in the Khasi matrilineal society, in the process there has come about a cultural revivalism. Diverse cultural interactions and different ways of life have been brought about by urbanization. Changes have also been occurring due to inter-marriages. It is also found that the children of Khasi families, especially in the urban areas, are using both their father's and mother's clan name or using their father's clan name. Role of urbanization has also brought changes into the Khasi

matrilineal setup. The spread of urbanization has given rise to more chances of intermingling of people of different communities and thus has led to the adaptation of different cultural traits among them. This process has also altered their perception of matrilineal culture among the Khasi people in Meghalaya.

Education has become an asset in the Khasi society. The parents consider it essential to educate their children so that they can also achieve their goals in this modern society. Though education has helped the overall developmental process, it has also altered the perception of men. Thus, there has come about among most of the male members the desire to form a separate household after marriage. In the past, Khasi society has had interaction with other neighboring cultures. Since Independence, the Khasi locality has been increasingly open to the larger society, having growing exposure and interaction with patriarchal society and cultures. Besides, many Khasis have gone out of their homes to other part of the country for the purpose of education and employment. When they return they bring different norms and value of other cultures, particularly patriarchal norms and values, along with them and give shape to a different cultural setup.

Today, the Khasi males desire to form a neo-local family rather than staying with the girl's parents. Even girls prefer to set up a neo-local family. This is because the husband, with whom she has to spend her whole life, feels insecure staying with his in-laws, and the change becomes inevitable. Mutual understanding on this issue - between husband and wife, and between mother and daughter - has given rise to the formation of more neo-local families. Even with regards to inheritance and property ownership, there is a marked change as people prefer to divide the property among all children, both their daughters and sons.

The changes that have occurred in the Khasi society are according to the locations, and are different in towns and villages. In rural areas, the most drastic changes that have occurred are the changes in the residential pattern, thereby changing a core element of Khasi matrilineal system. Due to financial and other reasons many males prefer to stay away from their ancestral families with their wife and children. As a result, many Khasi families are now living in single households after marriage. In urban areas, among many families, the chances of having large ancestral property is less

compared to the rural areas. Hence, the parents cannot divide the property among all the daughters because of small holdings. This small holding they have in terms of land or other goods, generally goes to the youngest daughter or the one who stays back with her parents. The other daughters stay with their husbands, away from their parents. Besides, the changes also have occurred due to the influence of urbanization. Even people from the rural areas prefer to have smaller families because of developmental process, the expansion of urban area, and the interaction between the Khasis and other surrounding groups. All these factors have contributed to the changes that have come about in the Khasi matrilineal society.

The Khasis are monogamous. Khasis social organization does not favor other forms of marriage. Therefore, deviation from this norm is quite rare in the Khasi matrilineal society. Women and men are permitted considerable freedom in the choice of mates. Since Khasi clans are exogamous, marital partners cannot be from the same clan. Divorce is frequent and easily obtainable. In the present day the Khasis divorce through the Indian legal system. Inter-marriages are becoming acceptable in the Khasi society. Due to the mixing of people of different communities, the Khasi men or women especially in the elite society, have no hesitation in marrying non-Khasi men or women. They think that non-Khasi women or men were more respectable, affectionate and caring.

The worst of the negative traits of modernity in the Khasi society is the abuse of women and children through various sexually deviant behaviors. Gender based violence in the matrilineal system of the Khasis has been on the increase. A study of the crime, for instance murder, rape, and the like, in Meghalaya reveals that the society is facing tremendous value crisis. It is important to know that gender relations are historically built; but are changeable in course of the daily events and during the periodic moments of crises transformation. Newspapers report often about fathers abusing daughters and stepchildren. Cases of rape and women committing suicide are new trends in the matrilineal society. The reasons for this new trend of attack on the women may be due to "detribalization" of the Khasi society. As a result, the values of Khasi tribal culture - such as simplicity, self-reliance, homogeneity, cooperation, distinctiveness and honesty - are replaced by conflict, hostility and frustration. The male members of the Khasi community feel ethnically disturbed.

In the Khasi matrilineal society, women's participation in the political process has been limited. There are a number of reasons including traditional restraints, religious and cultural limitation, feudal and family status, illiteracy and lack of awareness. Therefore, gender inequality as seen in the Khasi society is a violation of human rights. It is necessary to look into both ascribed and achieved statuses of Khasi women in order to have an in-depth knowledge of their complex gender issues. In the Khasi matrilineal society, there are some structural contradictions. We mention a few of them.

Firstly, Khasi matrilineal system has been put under strain by rapid change in all spheres of life. The effect on the family structures, especially the extended family and the family as a corporate descent group is increasingly becoming non-functional and to a large extent has disintegrated. Secondly, due to urbanization many Khasis have migrated to town and cities in search of education, jobs or a better way of life. Hence, the functions of the family as a family unit are no longer feasible and practical. Thirdly, the controlling authority vested on the maternal uncles (*kni*) has become ineffective. Changes in the residential patterns from matrilocal to neo-local have created new phenomenon of independent households, where the father and mother bear the sole responsibilities for their children. Fourthly, new occupations and education have created a new elites and new socioeconomic classes. This has an effect on the family as division based on social and economic status. Fifthly, the change from subsistence economy to market economy has led to privatization of resources and individualism, which in turn, have made people more self-centered. Hence, the influence of the family on its members has become nominal, and not affecting them in their real life situations. Sixthly, the practices of household religion have become ineffective and very few Khasis observe all rituals. Seventhly, the patrilineal societies and interreligious marriage have weakened the Khasi concept of family, especially the matrilineal descent groups. Eighthly, the cross-cultural influence of patrilineal societies tends to orient the present generation to the conjugal and nuclear family. The nuclear family has emerged as a more important family unit in terms of residence, economic cooperation, responsibility, welfare, socialization and moral wellbeing.

There is a move to revive the Khasi tribal culture and counter the changes that have come into it in recent times. In the next section, we briefly consider the revival movement of Khasi tribal culture.

## Revival of Khasi Tribal Culture

Many authors today, irrespective of religious faith, have written books on the various angles and views of the Khasi tradition especially in its relation to the cultural heritage of the people. The Seng Khasi Organization is a movement in Meghalaya that contributes to the revival of traditional tribal culture, language and literature. Seng Khasi has created awareness among the people to respect and uphold their traditions. They also adapt to the winds of change of the present including pursuing higher education and participation in wider economic and welfare activities.

Seng Khasi is a religious sociocultural organization of the indigenous Khasis belonging to the Niam Khasi/Khasi Religion. Protection, preservation and promotion of the customs and tradition of the Khasis are the main aim of the organization. Religion and culture among the Khasis are but two faces of the same coin. This also distinguishes them perhaps as a race different from any other races in the world. The movement was established on November 23, 1899, by sixteen prominent and patriotic leaders of the Khasi society under the leadership of U Babu Jeebon Roy, till date the day is celebrated every year as *Seng Kut Snem*. The origin of the Seng Khasi started from the emergence of the British colonial rule in the Khasi, Jaintia Hills and the attempts of the religious conversions by Christian missionaries among the Khasi-Pnars. The influence of political, religious groups and cultural impact upon the people of the land of Ri Hynniewtrep had caused much concern to the intellectuals and leaders of the Khasi community. It was at this juncture that visionaries, like U Babu Jeebon Roy of the clan prompted to form the Seng Khasi Organization. This religious organization was able to initially unite the people in bringing about an awareness of the traditional usages in the social sphere, under the ancient tenet of self-realization and God-consciousness (*Tip briew Tip blei*), to know the matrilineal and patrilineal lineage (*Tipkur Tipkha*) and to earn righteousness (*Kamai ia Ka Hok*). These basic spiritual and moral

principles have helped strengthened the Seng Khasi movement along the passage of time.

*Shad Suk Mynsiem* also called *Shad Phur*, is the dance of the joyous heart and soul. This dance was banned by the British since it involved the usage of weapons. However, the Seng Khasi movement has revived and revolutionized many festivals, which were earlier confined to villages. Over the years the *Shad Phur* has been transformed into *Shad Suk Mynsiem* celebrated on a common platform as a spring festival. It is celebrated during spring time, when nature rejuvenates itself and human beings are filled with the hope of a rich harvest. It is a thanksgiving festival to God Almighty for the blessings showered in the year gone by and prayers are offered for a good year ahead. Today, there is ample evidence of its growing popularity and large scale participation of the people. In Meghalaya, the Seng Khasi Movement day is observed every year which marks the tribal uprising movement that took place in 1899. However, this was not the first uprising in the region. The early part of the 19th century saw uprising for Khasi nation (*Ri Hynniewtrep*) under the local rulers. Over last two centuries, Seng Khasi has played the role of a custodian of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the people in the region.

Even people, who do not generally profess or practice the indigenous religion, have begun to acknowledge and rediscover Khasi ethics and faith. Some Christian scholars have made attempts to revive the indigenous culture. However, sadly, there are some who still think that those who follow traditional cultures belong to the dark ages. This has resulted in divisions and discriminations in the Khasi society. They also oppose Christian Khasis marrying a person from a different faith even though he/she may be a Khasi. This is actually diminishing the number of Khasis in the community.

A reason that Seng Khasi has survived, despite a lot of criticism, is the innate and growing sense of ownership of the Seng Khasi Organization today. Its contribution to the Khasi language and literature is significant. It offers opportunities for authors to write books on different aspects of the Khasi faith, especially in its relation to the cultural heritage of the people. Awareness has been created among the people to respect and uphold their traditions while adapting to the winds of change taking place in the present, including pursuing higher education and participation in wider economic and welfare activities. However, there is no doubt that

*Shad Suk Mynsiem* will last in its richness and glamour for all times to come and Seng Khasi would withstand with courage and dedication against all undermining forces. In the next section, the attention will go to the impact of multiculturalism on the Khasi tribal culture.

### Multiculturalism and Khasi Tribal Culture

Globalization has affected every individual in one way or another. Consumerism has changed the society we live in. These changes affect people's identities and cultural values, whether it is between generations or intrapersonal level. New values conflict with existing values. The multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multi-religious society, like India, could survive because of dialogue and exchange of ideas. Ethnic origins, religions and languages are the major sources of cultural diversity. India is a country incredible for its diversity and culture. India's natural resources that attracted people to come into this country at different times, from different direction, forming the great diversity of cultures that India is. An important source of diversity among the people of India is the cultural identity of particular communities and regions. Though each community or regional group has a distinctive identity and *ethos*, it is part of an extended and dynamic network. Often interaction, exchange and integration characterize intercommunity relations. The sharing of space, regional *ethos* and cultural traits cut across religions and sectarian differences, binding the local people together. Acculturation results when groups of individuals come into continuous contact with changes in the cultural patterns. Most of the people have their unique dress patterns, languages, forms of worship, occupations, food habits and kinship pattern. Most Indian communities have a mixed ancestry and it is impossible to separate our roots. Indian roots derive from a mixed ancestry that includes the Proto-Australoid, Caucasian, Negroid and Mongoloid. Every community recalls its migration in the folklore of its people, history and collective memory. All these received the regional *ethos* of the area that they settled in, and contributed to its local traditions. Indian culture has enriched itself by adopting elements from diverse sources. Language is an important source of diversity. Language is a major vehicle for social and cultural interaction.

The effect of globalization is also seen in the Khasi community. For instance, the young people's choice of profession and migrating to other places has affected some foundational communal practices. The establishment of Information Technology Centers of India in places, such as Hyderabad and Bangalore, has brought trained Khasi Information Technology professionals to these centers for employment and eventual settling down outside Khasi land, including marrying persons who are non-Khasis. Thus, in the Khasi community, particularly the urban youngsters, both girls and boys, are alike highly influenced by western culture. They are exposed to a growing variety of entertainment, consumer product and lifestyle ideal than their parents. Incursion of foreign media through satellite channels has affected their thinking, attitudes and cultures of the Khasi community. As a result, the Khasis are more amenable to inflows of modern western fashions and thoughts which they are quick to adapt. This can be easily seen in the manner the Khasi youth readily absorb the latest western vogues in fashion, music and lifestyle that is generally life altering. Their attraction for and choice of these products of globalization can gradually lead them to lose their sense of Khasi identity. This kind of rebellion against traditional Khasi customs and norms creates tensions within the family.

Globalization has a number of positive elements as it has attempted to converge nations of the world and turned them into a global village. These positive elements of globalization has only benefitted the educated Khasi locals of the state, who are in pace with their more advanced counterparts in other parts of the world. However, the uneducated and financially deprived weaker sections of people are at the losing end. They are making special effort to build alternative measures to sustain and preserve their cultural identity. Thus, globalization and its positive and negative effects have brought about a kind of division within the Khasi society - between the educated youth who welcome globalization and the uneducated youth, who resist globalization and pledge allegiance to the Khasi culture and tradition.

## Conclusion

The growth of Christianity in the Khasi region was a challenge to Khasi cultural norms. It was assumed that there was a complete

change in attitude towards culture on the part of those who adopted the Christian faith. It also affected the Khasi cultural dynamics and structural integration. There is no doubt that the missionary activities brought a lot of changes in the areas of the formation of local development of a sense of tribal identity, formation of local leadership and more freedom to women, changes in the life styles, social organization, and in the spheres of religion. The missionaries brought revolutionary changes in the mind of the people. Matrilineal system among the Khasis is in a process of transition due to many factors. Changes have emerged due to Khasi people's continuous mixing with members of patriarchal societies around them and finding mates from these societies. Thus, the norms and attitudes of the minority matrilineal society are on fast transition. Modernization, the increasing rate of urbanization, intermingling of different communities, the changes in the residential system and the alteration property inheritance system are the factors for the shifts in the society. The Khasi renaissance, however, faces certain challenges. The indigenous religion and faith need a deeper introspection and understanding of its philosophy. The performance of rites and rituals should be practiced in their right perspective of spirituality. They cannot be divorced from culture, which is an integral part of the religious practices.

Globalization is the expansion and strengthening of connection and movement of people, goods, capitals, ideas and culture between or among countries to create a multicultural global villages and identities. Ideas and practices can be exchanged and appreciated between people of all nations across the globe. Acculturation results, when groups of individuals come into continuous contact with changes in the cultural patterns. The sharing of space, regional *ethos* and cultural traits cut across religions and sectarian differences, and bind the local people together. Multicultural exposure of the Khasis has helped them to understand, appreciate and assimilate other sociocultural practices into their own cultural *milieu*. The Khasi community, thus, has a two-fold task. The first is to preserve their traditions and culture from eroding. The second is to learn and assimilate good cultural traits from others for the holistic development of the Khasi people and the Khasi region.

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# Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion

T.K. PARTHASARATHY

### Introduction

A recent news-item appeared in *The Hindu* on India's pluralist society states: "It [India] is an inspiration for conflict-prone countries of the West Asian region," quoting Ahmed Badreddin Hassoun, the Grand Mufti of Syria, who argued for greater dialogue between India and the Arab world. The Grand Mufti, said in a lecture at the Centre for West Asian Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University as follows: "Despite poverty and economic hardship, India has an important message for our region, as it shows that people can live despite differences and diversity ... India needs to be experienced by us as the lesson from Indian diversity is relevant for our world." India's diversity has been the source of inspiration to many outsiders, who have written about their perceptions of India's culture. These writings pose a complex and often conflicting picture of the culture of India. In fact, India is a multicultural nation. Despite its diversity, it is a united country. Cultural diversity brings about new social and political challenges often triggered by fear and intolerance among different faiths shaking the very cohesive base of any society. According to me, the above notion about our nation - its "unity in diversity" **-** is very relevant, when multiculturalism and its relation to social cohesion is discussed

Having made the above introductory comments, in the first section of the chapter, we attempt at a general consideration of multiculturalism and social cohesion. Globalization and international migration of diverse cultural groups has made social cohesion a difficult goal to arrive at. To achieve this goal, everyone involved must realize that our identity as human persons is prior to any other identities we may have. The second section presents India as a case study for multiculturalism and social cohesion. In spite of India's multi-religious, multicultural, multi-caste and multilingual facets, there is a sense of national unity and oneness among all the Indians. The basis for this is India's philosophy, religiosity and spirituality,

which, though ancient, is applicable and practical even today. This Indian Spirit, guided by enlightened sages (*riṣis*), keeps India, to a great extend, socially cohesive despite its multicultural diversity. Section three looks into another element that facilitates the social cohesion in India - the similarities among the major religions practiced in India, particularly Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and other religions of India.

The fourth section delves into the relationship between multiculturalism and nation-states, particularly with reference to the European Union, the United States of America and India. The fifth section deals with the means to achieve the goal of social cohesion in a multicultural society. Spiritual humanism, intercultural dialogue and individual reformation are suggested as possible means that can facilitate greater social cohesion in a multicultural society. The conclusion states that "learning to be human" is the greatest alternative to dogmatic religion. It calls for a continuous process of observation, evaluation and revision of perception of people of other cultures and religions. If we take this life-stance and live by it, we can truly find ways that are rationally and ethically feasible to bring about greater social cohesion in our multicultural communities, societies, nations and the world at large. Now, we enter into a general discussion on the theme "multiculturalism and social cohesion."

### Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: A General Analysis

One of the challenges in modern democratic era is how to preserve the individual cultural identity in a multicultural scenario and how to accept the other culture/cultures mentally for a harmonious and cohesive existence. When we do not have complete and full acceptance of each other in a multicultural society, then it results in unrest. The famous French philosopher, Simon de Beauvour, once said: "The fact that we are human beings is infinitely more important than all peculiarities that distinguish human beings from one another." If the realization that "we are human first and then only our other identities" is brought to the fore in our every action - nothing would prevent true cohesion taking among different groups in society.

The international migration of people lies at the core of the ongoing process of globalization. Thanks to the advancement in technology and communication, the world is shrinking with expanding globalization. In this globalized context, migration of population has become a common phenomenon. Similarly, the international movement of diverse group of people is also triggered by civil wars, militant turbulences and terrorist activities, as refugees from the victimized lands look for other green pasturelands, where they can find better living. The result is the coming together of people of different nations and cultures to live in one place. The noted Scottish journalist Neal Ascherson observes in his non-fiction, *Black Sea*: "The subjects of history, once the settled farmers and citizens, have now become the migrants, the refugees, the asylum seekers and the urban homeless." His study reveals that the fateful encounters between Europe and Asia on the shores of the legendary sea have linked the peoples of many countries together for centuries. Their component parts came together over the millennia to shape unique communities, languages, religions, and trade. Having considered multiculturalism and social cohesion generally, we move on to analyze how this issue unfolds in India in the next section.

## Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion in India

India - the seventh largest country by area and the second in terms of population with over 1.25 billion people - is noted for its multiethnic paradigm with a clean trail of democracy in the world for more than half a century. The Constitution of India states, in its preamble, that India is a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic and has a form of government, traditionally described as "quasi-federal" with strong individual states and a stronger center, has grown increasingly federal since the late 1990s as a result of political, economic, and social changes. The Indian culture is often labeled as an amalgamation of several cultures, spans across the Indian subcontinent and has been influenced by a history that is several millennia old. Many elements of India's diverse cultures, such as Indian religions, Indian philosophy and Indian cuisine, have had a profound impact across the world.

The modern Indian civilization has been nourished and developed by multiracial contributions. From times immemorial,

diverse races migrated into India by way of land and sea routes and get themselves settled here. In the course of time they have absolutely absorbed into India's mainstream. With regard to the religions of India, there is no end of its range. India is the place of reunion of many religions and languages of the world. Here, the Hindus, the Sikh, the Christians, the Muslims, the Jews, the Buddhists, the Jains and the Parsis live abreast of each other. Besides this, the aborigines living in the jungles or in the hill areas of the Northeastern States have various ancient religious customs, which they meticulously follow even today. Apart from this, the people India are composed of several racial elements and speak a range of languages. Official accounts confirm that more than two hundred languages are present in the different regions of this country.

Even though social cohesion is not fully achieved in India, I have chosen it as an ideal example for social cohesion. I should admit that there are clashes here and there, every now and then. Despite this limitation, India - with its multicultural base - still remains one of the free and stable democracies in this world, surrounded by unstable governments on all sides making us stand astonished. In other countries, classification of classes is based on economic status; but in India, we have one more condemnable classification - based on caste. Though caste can always play a crucial role in social strati-fication, it can also be made a convenient tool by any vested interest to create instability in the nation. This curse is not only found in Hinduism; but also found in other indigenous religions, such as Buddhism and Jainism; and also in the "accepted" religions, such as Christianity and Islam. Caste distinctions present the major difficulty in maintaining India's "unity in diversity." Edmund Burke the renowned 18th Century British Parliamentarian in one of his articles wrote: "In that country [India] the laws of religion, the laws of the land, and the laws of the honor, are all united and consolidated in one and bind a man eternally to the rules of what is called his caste. When thinking of India it is hard NOT to think of caste."

In spite of these multi-religious, multicultural, multi-caste and multilingual facets of India, there is a sense of national unity and oneness among all the Indians. It is this spirit of patriotism that binds us together as one nation. The message of "unity in diversity" is running undercurrent in the national fabric. This is a nation of differences and these differences are only the source of our strength.

How has it become possible to maintain a sort of cohesion in this multicultural country? The basis for this is the fact that India is a land of philosophy, religiosity and spirituality. For Indians, spirituality is basically tuning the mind to look at one's self; to reflect about others as different from the gross physical body, the subtle mental body; and be beyond the limitations of space, time and causation. Indian religious disposition is the most ancient one and yet it is modern. We can proudly say as it suits the conditions of the present world and also is practical even today. The dynamic nature of the philosophical concepts based on a firm foundation of religious faiths makes it one of the most sagacious and vibrant perceptions in the world. Our land is considered an exalted source for an incessant stream of rich philosophical thoughts flowing for centuries. It is also an edifice of noble sages (*ṛiṣis*), who have taught us the ethical and moral life to aim at a perpetual goal in our life. The true leaders of our societies have never been either generals or kings; but only *ṛiṣis*, who continue to guide the destiny of the people, giving them the spiritual leadership they need.

Having clarified multiculturalism and social cohesion in relation to India as a nation, we elaborate on the similarities between major religions of India, a facilitating factor for social cohesion, in the next section.

### Similarities between Indian Religions and Their Practices

Generally in India, the intercommunity and interfaith dialogues have been bearing fruit. The reason for this is that the spirit of all religions **-** the indigenous, the imported and the accepted **-** has penetrated deeply into India's unique culture. Despite periodic outbreaks of violence among religions, by and large there is amity and good will among religions. In the next two subsections, we consider the similarities between Hinduism and Islam, and Hinduism and Christianity.

#### *Hinduism and Islam*

We find many common cultural interactions between two major communities and religions **-** Hinduism and Islam **-** in India. One significant reason is the fact that the overwhelmingly large

proportions of Muslims and Christians have had a Hindu-past and the vestige of the same is carried on with them. The influence of Hindu culture on Islam is more pronounced on communities, such as Bohras, Memons and the like. Even in the names, like "Premji," we could observe this. "Pichai" is a common Tamil Muslim name in Tamil Nadu, which is also a popular Hindu name. We find sir names "Chowdary," "Patel Parkar" and "Munshi" are shared by both Hindus and Muslims. Islam is non-idolatry religion; but many of them worship Saibaba as their Hindu counterparts do. Further the practice of flocking to pilgrimages to personal tombs and worshiping there is found among Muslims, as the Hindus have the culture of visiting temples.

Even though the origin for Sufism is fixed to Iran, the Indian Sufism has been influenced by the Hindu practices of *Yoga*, *Pranayama* and the like. Similarly, the Hindu concept of *Sanyasa* had a great influence on Sufism, resulting in the appearance of many Muslim Babas, who attract disciples form both religions. Even in dress style, particularly in the saree and dothi wearing styles, there are many common points between Muslim and Hindu communities. The wearing of bangles, bracelets, ear and nose rings are all common in both communities. Even the Moghul emperors patronized Indian dances and we have many off-shoot styles like Kathak, which is an admixture of Hindu and Muslim cultures. Even in the caste system Islam is not spared from Hindu influence.

### *Hinduism and Christianity*

Likewise, we find similarities between Hinduism and Christianity. Many Christians still preserve the surnames of their pre-conversion days. In many cases they also have Hindu first names. This makes them completely identical with the Hindus, at least externally. The reason could partly lie in the fact that many converts, particularly the Protestants, belong to the upper echelons of Hindu society. It is their philosophical pursuit that was the prime reason for the conversion. There are many religious preachers with the epithet "Sastri," which is a Sanskrit word meaning a "knowledgeable scholar." When we consider the segments of Indian social life, the Christians preserve their Indian roots in the manner of conducting their marriages and even in celebrating the festivals

especially Christmas. Their dress habits also resemble those of the Hindus on these occasions.

Conversion to Christianity has not erased the caste system from the Christians. Christians still privately continue to refer to themselves by their caste affiliations, such as "Nadars," "Reddys," "Prabhoos," and the like. Caste considerations are the predominant aspect in match making. Both share many beliefs and sentiments in common which are mostly superstitious. The Sanskrit words like "*Vedas*" and "*Agamas*," "*Upavasa*" are all freely used by Christian folks and the ladies apply *tilak* (marks) on their foreheads. Many Christian weddings are solemnized with the tying up of *mangalasutra* on the bride's necks, which is the Hindu way of solemnizing marriages. It is a common sight to find Hindus attending to Churches and Christians worshipping Hindu gods, and both Hindus and Christians flocking to Durgha with individual prayers to redress their grievances.

I hail from Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, which has two holy spots that are pilgrim centers of international repute - one Islamic and the other Christian shrine. They attract Hindu, Muslim and Christian pilgrims from many parts of South India, symbolizing peaceful coexistence among all religions. They are the Nagoor Durgha and Shrine Velankanni Church which are flocked by all irrespective of religious affiliations. Buddhism and Jainism were, in their early stage, anti-Vedic in outlook and contents, but in course of time they were mostly amalgamated into the greater fold of Hindu religion sinking the differences. In the next section, we look into different perceptions on the issue of the relationship between multiculturalism and the nation-states.

## Multiculturalism and Nation-States

In many nations of the world, multiculturalism has become a politically sensitive issue as it is closely associated with "identity politics," "the politics of difference," and "the politics of recognition." It is also a matter of economic interests, besides political power. Unlike India, many European countries face unprecedented demographic changes due to the influx of migrants from countries, like Syria, and intercultural understanding becomes a challenging problem. In fact, a section of prominent leaders in Europe have

voiced doubts about the success of multiculturalism in their countries. Former British Prime Minister David Cameron said in Munich Security Conference: "Under the doctrine of state multi-culturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and the mainstream. We have failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We have even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run counter to our values." Cameron's view has been endorsed by German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the former French President, Sarkozy, echoing the same opinion in different platforms.

The European Union and the United States of America **-** though situated in each side of the Atlantic Ocean and have diverse ethnic groups and cultures - deal with the issue of the nation's attitude towards multiculturalism in a quiet different manner. The three European nations - Britain, Germany and France - speak of taking into account minorities' culture and contribution. To quote: "We have been too concerned about the identity of the person, who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him" - was their main concern about the immigration and refugees front. These European countries, now, consider immigration as endangering their societies. The reason is that they have reduced multiculturalism to immigration and encourage xenophobic views. They want to focus on a narrow interpretation of national identity, based on the "one nation, one people" idea of the society that does not exist anymore thanks to multiculturalism. On the other side of the Atlantic, in the United States of America, the image given to multiculturalism is different. When President Obama was elected for the second term in office in 2012, he opened a path for undocumented residents. The deportation of undocumented immigrants, who are under thirty years old and lived in the United States for at least five years, has come to an end in June 2012. This is a major step in the recent political history as the Obama administration responded to years of requests from immigrants with an announcement that it would stop deportations and begin granting work permits for eligible students, under the Dream Act. In the unforgettable statement Obama said that "these young people pledge allegiance to our flag. They are Americans in their hearts, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper."

Political observers view that our societies are multicultural, but minorities are diverse and different. One of the major differences appears in the self-understanding of our societies. The United States sees itself as a country of immigrants, even if many Americans are strongly opposed to immigration, several countries in the European Union increasingly regard immigration as endangering their society and, thus, fostering narrow-minded views on multiculturalism. However, we should not confuse multiculturalism with the inflow of immigrants only, since the diversity of our societies is not brought only by migrants. Multiculturalism also consists in recognizing the capacities of cultures and identities to dialogue and to evolve. Multiculturalism is a key feature in any liberal democracy. It entails actively supporting and maintaining diversity, an equal emphasis on rights and responsibilities, and a focus on democratic values of participation, inclusion, fairness, and justice. All citizens have the same basic rights to practice and maintain their cultural heritage, traditions and language within the law and free from discrimination. In turn, the minorities are expected to be loyal to the country. Since they live in the state and reap the benefit of the state, they must obey its laws, and to become self-reliant citizens, who contribute to the social and economic life of our nation.

Compared with the widespread incidence of unrest that has characterized many countries around the world, Indian society has remained peaceful, harmonious and remarkably resilient. However, in the eyes of the world, it is quite unfortunately projected otherwise. Terrorism, driven by religious extremism, has become the most powerful hazard to the nation's security. Attacks and counter attacks make us weak. The Media, controlled by powerful barons, is not very responsible in voicing its opinion with neutrality; but in most cases, it is only its views that are thrust on the public. The recent campus unrest in our country has rocked the entire set-up. In these cases, the casualty is not only the heads of the educational Institutes, who might be excellent academicians and whose knowledge we are deprived of in the process, but also the future of the students. Loss of interest in the goals of education is the main reason for campus unrest. It is the duty of the government is to ensure, on priority basis, the peaceful atmosphere in the educational institutions, which is the base for social cohesion. In the next section, we delve into the means to achieve social cohesion in a multicultural society.

**Means to Achieve Social Cohesion in a Multicultural Society**

Multiculturalism and social cohesion should be about all citizens and for all citizens. A holistic view of social cohesion should consider and incorporate not only cultural and linguistic diversity, but also other types of diversity within all communities. Any attempt to bring social cohesion in a multicultural society must include the country in its entirety and no section of the society should feel that it is sidelined or neglected. To achieve this difficult goal we could use spiritual humanism, intercultural dialogue and individual reformation as means. In this section of the chapter, we explore these three themes in detail.

*Spiritual Humanism*

Here the effective gadget is only "humanism" on the part of both, the governments and the governed. "Humanism" at any point of time cannot be one-sided, but must be mutual. We often come across the brutal crimes committed by terrorists in Syria, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Somalia and many other places with regard to other believers or minority groups. Is there any place for humanism or meaning for dialogue with these blind followers, who misinterpret the religious tenets? In the wake of the horrific attacks in Paris on Friday, November 13, 2015, the entire world of "humanists" shared the shock and grief felt by the victims and said: "Under attack were not only the citizens of France, but all people in the world, who value human dignity and modern secular society." The same is the voice of the world when Brussels airport was attacked recently.

Human life is very precious. It is a core value. The wanton killing in any terrorist act is a tragic reminder of the need to embrace basic human rights. We are often helpless faced with these terrorist acts. We can only pray that wisdom will ultimately dawn on the terrorists, and they would understand human life and its value. Swami Vivekananda says: "The message of *Vedanta* has two rhythms - "All this is verily *Brahman*" (*sarvam khalvidam Brahma*) and "That art Thou" (*Tat Tvam asi*). The entire universe is divine, which also includes our self. All of this is *Brahman*. The second *mahavakya* is explained as "not only is the 'I', That, but the 'You' is also That.'" We are that ultimate 'I' and 'Thou' in all. The consciousness in the other

is also the divine. If this be so, where is difference between two individual whether he is in same religion or same caste?" According to *Vedanta*, all move toward God-realization, consciously or unconsciously, and all will reach the goal eventually. Essentially there is only one religion - the religion of God-consciousness. There is one salvation - communion with God. The way to salvation is one - the way of purity and holiness. It is not the literal and meticulous observance of ceremonials, but the depth of spirituality that counts most. The depth of a person's God-consciousness is measured by his spiritual transformation. *Vedanta's* contributions to world religious thought is said to be the following: uphold spiritual democracy, promote spiritual humanism, and provide a basis for world unity. The *Upanishad* says "*ajaya mano bahuta vijayate*," which means the "Supreme *Brahman* assumes many forms for the welfare of the seekers." Spiritual humanism is the major contribution of *Vedanta* and secular humanism without a spiritual basis soon degenerates into enlightened form of self-interest. It seeks to make our life rich and meaningful without defining life's goal and purpose. It embraces the whole of humanity, irrespective of race, culture, country, religion or social affiliation. To the Spiritual humanist the world is the family of Mother Earth and there is no room for any differences.

*Intercultural Dialogue*

India is a large country. Different regions have variations in climate. The spoken language of one state is quite different from that of another. They wear different types of garments. They celebrate different festivals and perform varied religious rites. People belonging to diverse cultures belong to different religious faiths. In spite of these diversities, Indians feel a sense of unity and oneness among them. In fact we can say India, the land of unity in diversity, as "multiculturalism - thy name is India." Thus, cultural pluralism is the backbone of this nation, which is its strength too. The element of humanism is running undercurrent in all these with the intercultural dialogue: "My God is your God and your God is my God" and not "My God is your God and your God is no God." The intercultural dialogue need not necessarily has to involve a discussion of each other's religious beliefs, where we may not be able to have an agreement; but it can also be a mental acceptance and cognitive

recognition of other's culture, for which the required strong base is the "human element." Thiruvalluvar, the celebrated Tamil poet and philosopher whose contribution to world literature is the *Thirukkural*, a work on ethics says in one of his couplets: "*Arampolum koormai-yarenum maram polvar makkat panpilāthavar*."[1] Theo-centric approaches are dangerous as nuclear, chemical and other weapons of war. The "human approach" to any culture should be not choosing out of the best, but accepting all as they are for social amicability and peaceful coexistence.

Thus, intercultural dialogue is a process that comprises a transparent and respectful exchange of interaction between individuals and groups. Its aim is to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives. The different domains, such as the sense of belonging, sense of inclusion, sense of participation, sense of recognition and sense of pluralism are ensured in the process. For a nation like India, where "diversity" is the core of its paradigm, interaction is a basic necessity without which social cohesion can only be a *utopia*. The responsibility of achieving this goal lies on individuals. *Vedanta* defines the ideal society as not an aggregate of atomic individuals, but the spiritual community of *jivas* providing an opportunity for the gradual realization of each self as an *Atman* and not a mere object. Whether in the East or in the West, all theories agree on the need to remove egoism and self-centeredness. Vedantic wisdom reveals that God invites humanity to share in its spiritual hospitality and see him in all beings and in all sects. When one approaches the other with this clear idea in mind and with bias towards none the intercultural dialogue fructifies and result is achieved. Mahatma Gandhi puts it beautifully: "You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."

*Individual Reformation*

Here, I would like to bring in the thoughts of Indian Social philosopher *par excellence* and the propounder of *Visishtadvaita* philosophy, Sri Ramanuja, whose thousandth anniversary is going to be celebrated next year. According to Ramanuja, man's attitude to

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[1] "Though sharp their wit as file, as blocks they must remain whose souls are void of 'courtesy humane'."

God is the only parameter to his character and not his caste or wealth. This he showed in every inch of his activity, thereby remained a true teacher (*acharya*), who proved that individual reformation can only be the cause for social upliftment. The religion of Ramanuja expounds that all human beings are equal. Only the bodies have differences, but all souls are equal in nature. The words "religions" and "castes" are all for the bodies only and not for the souls. Hence, there cannot be any disparity on the basis of caste and religion. All souls are associated with the body of God is the very basis of *Visishtadvaita* philosophy. God loves those who love him.

When everyone looks at others as belonging to God, then there cannot be any bitterness in the society, which in turn, will pave way for perfect form of social justice. Look at every life, everybody, every soul, and God is in all of them. This is the teaching of Ramanuja's Vaishnavism. The means to arrive at self-realization is the way of devotion to God (*bhakthi*). "A true Vaishnavite is one who is not just a worshipper of *Vishnu* alone, but who really sympathizes on the grief of others" was Ramanuja's message to his followers. If this is the real character and definition of a Vaishnavite nothing should prevent us from calling ourselves Vaishnavites whatever be our religious faiths!

## Conclusion

Humanism is a response to the widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion. The world's major religions claim to be based on revelations fixed for all time, and many seek to impose their worldviews on all humanity. Humanism recognizes that reliable knowledge of the world and us arises through a continuing process of observation, evaluation and revision. Humanism is a life-stance aiming at the maximum possible fulfillment through the cultivation of ethical and creative living, and offers an ethical and rational means of addressing the challenges of our times. Humanism can be a way of life for everyone everywhere. Let me conclude by quoting this passage from the *Atharva Veda*:

We are the birds of the same nest,
We may wear different skins,
We may speak different tongues,

We may believe in different religions,
We may belong to different cultures,
Yet, we share the same home, Earth
Born on the same planet,
Covered by the same skies,
Gazing at the same stars,
Breathing the same air,
We must learn to progress together,
Or, miserably perish together,
For, a person can live individually,
But, can only survive collectively. [2]

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[2] A quotation from the *Atharva Veda*.

**12.**

# Infusing *"Aham Brahmasmi"* in Synchronizing *"Tat Tvam Asi "*

P. GEORGE VICTOR

## Introduction

The theme "Being Human in Multicultural Traditions" implies that there have been inhuman practices occurring and divisive attitudes prevailing in our times. Civilized peoples, societies and nations on this globe - in the name of religion or tradition - have instigated some individuals, groups, sects or castes to establish their presumed righteousness and impose it on others different from them, which in turn, have led to violence and conflict. In the long history of mankind, cultures and civilizations have evolved in different patterns at different places. Besides, visible physical and anthropological features of a group have been used to identify it as a particular race or tribe. Broadly speaking, the European continent has white people; the African continent has black people; the North-East Asia has Mangoloid people, who have a fair complexion; and the South Asians, especially Indians, have a brown complexion.

Each of these groups has evolved certain modalities, practices and convictions, which in due course has become a culture. When they migrate and encounter other groups, they attempt to protect their fundamental identity because they want to maintain their hegemony and exclusive value system. As a result, segregation among different cultural and religious groups has become an element of culture. For instance, the Jewish people in Europe and in Africa have been ill-treated and segregated even in the 19th century. In England, India, Sri Lanka, China and Europe, different religious beliefs have led to discrimination among people, resulting in violence and mass killing. Until the abolition of slavery, the Blacks have been ill-treated mercilessly in America. Every race or community continues to transport their cultures to other parts of the world, sustain their differences, keep their identities, promote their uniqueness and exclusiveness, and avoid genuine interpersonal

relationships.[1] Though cultural diversity is the common heritage of humanity, it can also be explosive and lead to violence, if proper integration of people of different cultures is brought about.

Having stated these facts in the introduction, we consider India, as a nation of multicultural traditions in the first section. When we speak about the pluralistic nature of Indian society, particularly in relation to the caste (*varna*) system, we notice two trends of thought and practice of caste system in India: the conservatives who strictly adhere to caste practices; and the liberals who break the strict caste code and bring about inter-mixing of castes. The latter group includes great religious leaders, such as Shankara, Vivekananda and Sri Narayanaguru, who denounced any form of discrimination of people on the basis of caste differences. The second section presents cultivation of emotional intelligence as a means to bring about better understanding among diverse cultures. Emotional intelligence recognizes the rational and emotional dimensions in the human person. It can help one to take into consideration the geographical, social and economic limitations of different cultures, and respect the people of other cultures as he/she respects his/her own culture and people. Emotional intelligence helps one to understand the intentions, attitudes, motivations and desires of the other groups and people because beyond the visible differences among races and groups, there is the foundational unity of the humans that come from sharing in one human nature.

The third section highlights the Indian Spirit of being humane. The basis of this Spirit of India is the belief that every person in the depths of his being is divine and any discrimination based on caste would amount to discriminating the divine within man. This is the spirit that is contained in the scriptural sayings "I am *Brahman*" (*Aham Brahmasmi*) and "That art Thou" (*Tat Tvam asi*). Recognizing the divine in each other should make us humane in dealing with people different from us. The conclusion states that the ideals of unity of all peoples and the divinity that dwells within all should not remain only in the theoretical level, but must become practical guides to build a society that respects every culture, both in the national and international levels.

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[1] The UNESCO has adopted in 2001 the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity that upholds cultural diversity as a "common heritage of humanity."

Since India provides a wonderful example of multicultural coexistence of people of different religions, races, and castes, in the first section, we elaborate on the multicultural nature of India, as a nation.

## India: A Nation of Multicultural Traditions

Multiculturalism is not an unknown principle of life in India. India has been the destination of many races. It houses all groups of populations and ethnic races of the globe - from Negroloid to Mongoloid, and Australoid to Caucasoid. Many races and religious groups have come to India, and have maintained their identities. Thus, India has become not only the museum of races, but also the mixture-bowl of humanity due to the positive attitude the people of India have shown towards foreigners who came to India. In tune with the color difference, the *varna* system evolved in India and being recorded in the classical scriptures of Hinduism. Similar to the segregation maintained by different colored people, races and communities elsewhere in the world, in India also castes have also maintained their identity in the same ethnic lines. Thus, in India, the segregation of people is not only limited to different colors and races, but also extended to caste identity. Thus, despite people's good will, there have been wars and clashes based on cultural and caste differences in India.

Doubts and fears exist in people's minds regarding the mixture of castes (*varna-sankara*). For instance, *Bhagavad Gita* speaks of Arjuna expressing his anguish over the mixture of caste, *varna-samkara* [2] in the context of Kurukshetra-war. He is concerned about the fact that if the majority of males in a family or caste die in the war, women may have to get married to males of other families or castes. Actually "*varna*" means color. *Bhagavad Gita* enumerates four castes (*varnas*) based on color, and prescribes duties to be performed by people of each *varna*. *Manusmrithi* describes how different castes have emerged out of the mixture of the four *varnas*. Thus, caste differences are a fact in the Indian society. The caste system, which segregates people based on caste, prohibits inter-dinning, intermixing and inter-

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[2] Cf. *Bhagavad Gita*. 1: 40, 41. Cf. also P. George Victor: *Social Philosophy of Vedanta* (Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi & Company, 1991), p. 59.

personal relationships. These taboos between castes have been prevalent throughout India. Because of the rigidity of the caste system, inter-caste marriages are rare.

However, we find in India people who maintain allegiance to caste system and those who defy it. Thus, in India, there is people/race/group/caste/community, which adheres to caste system, which has led to caste antagonism, occurrence of clashes between different castes, and hatred among castes has increased. However, we find many people, who trespass and cross the boundaries fixed by their people/race/group/caste/community or sect, and willingly mixed with others. The *Puranas* contain many stories of men and women, who get married to the people of other caste. For instance, the famous sage Vasishta, a *Brahmin*, was married to Arundathi, a woman from Madiga *dalit* community. The following quote bears witness to this truth.

> Mother Urvasi is prostitute, his wife Madiga
> He became *Brahmin* on earth, Vasishta by
> Penance twice-born, if argued where caste is
> Listen man, well-wisher of the world! [3]

*Upanishads* also have recorded the mixture of races and castes. *Upanishads* also speak of the claim of the *Sudras* and gypsies for *Brahman*-knowledge. There are also recorded stories of holy couple belonging to different *varnas*. For instance, Rama, Krishna and Siva are of black complexion, while their spouses are of different color. In recent times, Narayanaguru, a sage from Kerala, said that if a man and woman of different people/race/group/caste/ community or sect begot children, these children should be considered as members of this people/race/group/caste/ community or sect. To quote him: "Ask

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[3] "*talli uravasi lanja, tana yali madiga*
  *tanu brahmanu dayye dhara vasishta*
  *tapamu cheta dvijudu tarkimpa kulamedi*
  *viswa dhabhi rama vinura vema*! "
P. George Victor: *Selected Verses of Vemana*, Telugu Verses Translated into English, Unpublished Monograph (Visakhapatnam: Department of Philosophy, Andhra University, 2007), p. 8.

not, speak not, and think not of caste." [4] Today, in any region of India, light skinned and dark skinned people are found among the *Brahmins*, the *Sudras*, the *dalits* or in every caste and community. This points to the mixture of races and castes that have taken place among diverse groups in India. Thus, just as India is a museum of races, so also there is no caste in India that is pure in color.

In the gamut of mythology and mysticism, Indian sages have proposed principles and precepts, such as "That art Thou" (*Tat Tvam asi*) that inspire and initiate a rational understanding of human existence. Though the roots of Indian thought have never bloomed, the precept of man's sacred identity with God - "I am God" (*Aham Brahmasmi*) has endured and provoked the modern men to apply it practically, which in turn, make India win and march ahead by evolving harmonious values of life in the new age to come. The more the information we receive the less the conservative stand we hold. The advancement in science and technology with reference to man and the *cosmos*, can remove the conservative outlook and cultural backwardness. It can liberate the human person from the bundle of beliefs, irrationalities and ideologies. By realizing the short span of time one lives on earth, man has to move in the world as a tourist before he leaves. In the next section, we analyze the cultivation of emotional intelligence as a means to bring about better under-standing among cultures.

## Cultivation of Emotional Intelligence: Means to Better Understanding among Cultures

Diverse cultures and civilizations have survived and dis-appeared in the West and the East. Often cultures have encouraged fundamentalism; showed religious fervor; acted upon sectarian hegemony; and manifested sectarian exclusiveness - resulting in violation of human rights. Underlying the differences among cultures, there are the universal concepts acceptable to all and the emotions inculcated and expressed by all humans as individual persons. In moments of crises and catastrophes, pleasures and joys, people share with each other their emotions. These situations invite

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[4] P. George Victor: *Social Justice: New Hopes for a Changing India* (Hyderabad: Institute of Human Development Studies, 1993), p. 40.

the humans to share in each other's sufferings and to help those who are affected. Hence, it is important that every human person develops what is known as emotional intelligence to get rid of divergences of cultures and the discriminations associated with them.

Emotional intelligence recognizes that persons as individuals are free. Each person acts and chooses according to his/her own will, provided their freedom of choice is accepted in the society. Social acceptance of one's freedom to choose is vital for the individual to act freely. This is because though the human person has the gift of freedom, the family, community and society impose upon him/her certain standards, conventions, prescriptions and social sanctions. However, he/she always wants to be independent, share his/her own destiny and hopes to live as he/she likes. As intelligent beings, who have an affective dimension, the human persons must make every effort to understand the emotions, habits, attitudes, believes and practices the people of other cultures entertain. When people from developed countries and communities encounter people of under-developed nations and the backward tribes of different cultures, who continue to be primitive in the lifestyles the attitude required of the former is sympathy and not condemnation. Emotional intelligence is the ability to encounter and understand people of different cultures despite their differences.

Even though the kind of facilities and comfort level a particular group or race enjoys may not be available to another group in the same country. Emotional intelligence can help one take into consideration the geographical, social and economic limitations of different cultures, and respect the people of other cultures and he/she respects his/her own culture and people. One has to understand the intentions, attitudes, motivations and desires of the other groups and people because beyond the visible differences among races and groups, there is the foundational unit of the humans that come from sharing in one human nature. History cannot be repeated, evolution cannot be stopped; and the past cannot be rebuilt. Yet, cultivating emotional intelligence can help us to be humane, and bring better understanding among different cultures and peoples.

## Being Humane: Indian Spirit

India is the homeland of historical religions, like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Besides, India is also the birth place of Hinduism, which is not a historical religion founded by one historical figure. Hinduism is a composite culture of different religious sects, wherein a number of deities, holy texts, and rituals have been accepted and practiced. This kind of pluralistic spirit helped Indians to accept and accommodate the Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Parsees into Indian society and culture. Hence, the Muslims, Christians, Jews and Parsees, who live in India are very much Indian. Even though Indians who accepted these religions have a different religious belief system, they have Indianized and they follow the religious traditions they have inherited as Indians.[5] Thus, being humane and being hospitable to people who immigrate into the country is at the heart of the Indian Spirit.

The uniqueness of India is that different communities and castes existed, both in the villages and in the cities for centuries together. People adhered to their beliefs and superstitions; and maintained the segregation. Contrary to the general scenario of the society, the ancient scriptures pronounced the unity of human beings. According to *Bhagavad Gita*, one, who delights in the welfare of all beings (*sarva-buta-hite ratah*), attains liberation (*Brahma-nirvana*). It teaches equal-minded judgment (*sama-buddhi*) towards friends and foes; and points out that the man - who is friendly and compassionate to every being (*sarva-butanam maitrah karuna*) and who does not have hatred towards any being - is dear to God. It praises those who see with equity (*sama-darsinaha*) a learned and humble *brahamana*, a cow, an elephant, even a dog or dog-eater (*svapake*). [6] The point here is that though often not practiced, these lofty precepts are recorded and proclaimed.

Prior to the age of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the thinkers of the *Upanisads* proclaimed not only the divinity in man, but also the universality of the world. Two of the great sayings (*mahavakyas*) of the *Upanishads*, which have been interpreted in many ways in the

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[5] Cf. S. S. Barlingay: "Murty's Concept of the Indian Spirit," *The Philosophy of K. Satchidananda Murty*, eds. Sibajivan Bhattacharyya and Ashok Vohra (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1995), p. 229.

[6] Cf. P. George Victor: *Social Philosophy of Vedanta*, pp. 76, 77.

Vedantic tradition - uphold the Indian spirit. The highest truth of the Upanishads "I am Brahman" (*Aham Brahmasmi*), which advocates that one should not be a servant to gods, is certainly an example of the recognition of human dignity by the *Upanisads*. Similarly, the other *mahavakya* "That art Thou" (*Tat Tvam asi*) implies that there is nothing superior to man. Thus, according to the latter *mahavakya* the essence of man is the same as the Ultimate Reality, that transcends this world. These Upanisadic passages assert the presence of God in man. Sandilya says that in the heart of every person is present the Eternal Spirit (*Atman*). Thus, the human person is conceived as the son of immortality. These conceptions show that the human person, in his fundamental essence, is not a passing entity that is today and no more tomorrow, or he is at the mercy of super-human power. The human person is not subject to anybody; he cannot be destroyed by anybody. He is independent and eternal - a glorious being.

In the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, Yajnavalkya explains to Usasti Cakrayana that *Brahman* dwells in all things. Other *Upanishads* also assert that *Brahman* is the source of all things. Thus, inanimate things and animate beings have a common source and basis; and hence they are not to be discriminated. The question one being inferior to the other does not arise at all.[7] Thus, the *Upanishads* contain reflections upon our practical attitude. The dominant theme of the *Upanishads* is the ultimate oneness of all things. We find also the emphasis on social service, compassion, virtue and welfare.[8] Therefore, the Upnishadic *mahavakyas* "*Aham Brahmasmi*" and "*Tat Tvam asi*" mean that "the individual soul is the Supreme Soul"; "all is One"; and "What is outside there is inside us." According to these two *makavakyas* our corporeal body - made up of material elements we see around us - is the seat of the divine. The body is the temple of God. Hence, it is to be respected; no person has the right to injure one's own body, others' body and any type of body.

Based upon the spirit of the *Upanishads*, Shankara proposes the *Advaita* (non-dual) *Vedanta*. According to this philosophical and mystical system of thought, the individual Self (*Atman*) is identified with Supreme Self (*Brahman*). The author of the work, *Sankara Dig Vijaya*, narrates an encounter happened between an untouchable and

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[7] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[8] Cf. James Hastings, ed.: *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* vol. 6 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921), p. 227.

Shankara. The untouchable questioned him saying that if the Universal Spirit, *Brahman*, dwells in all human beings equally, how a priest (*Brahmin*) is differentiated from an outcast (*Sudra*)? Shankara responded by saying that a person - who sees the whole world as *Atman* only, and whose mind is established in that conviction - is worthy of worship, irrespective of the fact whether he is a *Brahmin* or an outcast by birth. [9] In the modern age, Swami Vivekananda proclaimed: "The caste system is opposed to the religion of *Vedanta*. We must give up the idea of privilege ... the idea that one man is superior to another has no meaning in the *Vedanta*." [10] Such comments are true and are innumerable. They are found in many texts of various great men and scholars. The question is: "How many of Indians read these texts?" and "How many adherents of Hinduism apply them in their lives?

## Conclusion

Thus, those who examine the Indian society and wanted speak for human rights in India recognize the neglect of the Indian Spirit, over different periods of Indian history. In his historical presidential address, delivered on the eve of the 73rd session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay in December 1969, Babu Jagjivan Ram lamented about the negligence of Indian Spirit as follows:

> The humanistic trends in Indian thought which regard man as a part of divinity ... something sacred, are parts of heritage ... unfortunately, the humanistic and liberal strands of Indian thought never got integrated into the social structure, were never practiced in daily life. The West lived up to it. The concept of that man is born with certain inalienable rights forms the very foundation of western democratic society. And the West progressed. Indian

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[9] Cf. Madhava Vidyaraya: *Sankara Dig Vijaya*, trans. Sri Swami Tapasyananda, 5th impression (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1920), Canto 6, 20-32, p. 60.

[10] P. George Victor: *Life and Teachings of Adi Sankaracarya* (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 2002), p. 157.

society reared on built in cumulative inequalities and disregard for man languished.[11]

Though the sayings of the sages seem to be simple concepts, yet they, in actual practice, do not help us to recognize the claims and rights of the other. In the evolution, man was not aware of metaphysics; he did not know who was responsible for his emergence; and he never conceived the present age of information technology. On the onward march of civilization, those religious values, which once made the brutish man to evolve as better human being may cease one day to give place for scientific understanding of the human person and the universe.

In the changing scenario of fast communication and developed access to material comforts, humanity is marching ahead and mixing with new people, associating with new communities and come into contact with strange and new ways of life. As a thinking being - when man comes in contact with new people/races/groups/castes/ communities or sects - he becomes aware of new cultural habits, lifestyles, norms and emotions. The human person must remember that he is both rational and emotional; he is a social animal and an ideal being. Therefore, the important task of the human being is not merely to talk about morals of the religions; not merely to glorify the verses of the holy texts; but to inculcate the values of human rights and to advance the explorations of science and technology. Give a place to reason and glorify man as a person, so that he can truly live the Indian Spirit of being humane.

Without inflicting hardship on others and infringing the rights of others, if someone attaches to his caste rules, principles of life and the rituals of community, the civilized people should allow him. For instance, if a *Brahmin* wants to follow his hereditary custom of studying the *Veda* or wearing a sacred thread, let him follow the privilege of fulfilling them. Every caste or each group, similarly, has the same right of following their traditional professions as per their choice. Similarly, if a *Harijan* wants to continue beef eating, let him have that culture, as long as he is not forcing others to eat beef. Except a few nations, the whole people of Europe, Africa and

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[11] D.P. Sarma: *Jagjivan Ram: The Man and the Times* (New Delhi: Indian Book Company, 1974), pp. 136-137.

America have been beef-eaters; then why should anyone stop them? Wearing the sacred thread is a part of a *Brahmin's* heritage and beef eating is practice of the *Harijans*. In the national level or in the international arena, the spirit of each culture should be respected.

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13.

# *Upanishads:* Global Teachings

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### Introduction

*Upanisads* have very important place in the Vedic literature. The word "*upanishad*" has three parts. *upa+ni+sad*. "*upa*" and "*ni*" are prefixes: the former means "near" and the latter means "fully." "*Sad*" means "to sit." Thus, the term "*upanishad*" means "to sit fully with *Brahman*." Having clarified the etymology of the word "*upanishad*," we briefly consider the philosophy of the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* do not represent a systematic philosophy. They represent teachings of the sages, who have experienced or have become *Brahman*, the Ultimate Reality. The *Upanishads* believed that the knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*.[1] The purpose of the *Upanishads* is not attaining mere intellectual satisfaction, but finding practical solution to the ultimate problems of life. It is best expressed in the dialogue between Yama and Nachiketas in the *Katha Upanishad*. Nachiketas, a *brahmana* boy questions Yama - the God of Death, as to what happens to one's self after death. Does one exist or does he not, then?

Yama tries to dissuade the boy from seeking an answer to a question, which even Gods find difficult to understand. Instead he offers a wide array of earthly comforts: long life, wealth, gold, elephants, horses, land, beautiful women, and the like. Nachiketas turns them down saying that all these are transient and only serve to wear out the senses of men. When one has seen the death, how could anybody enjoy these things of sense? Having understood the transience of objects of sense and the implicit suffering contained in them, who would wish for a longer life? As all phenomena are transient in nature, worldly life ultimately leads to disappointment and suffering. Death puts an end to all our hopes and ridicules our achievements in life. To be born again is only to go through the same grind. The end of suffering is not to be born at all and to become

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[1] *Brahma vid Brahmaiva bhavati*.

immortal. This, according to the *Upanishads*, can be achieved when we know the true nature of *Atman*, our true inner Self.

Having said the above introductory remarks, in the first section of the chapter, we analyze the true nature of the *Atman*, the true inner Self of the human person and clarify the manner in which knowledge of *Atman* is attained. *Atman* is the underlying subject that persists and witnesses the all the experiences of the waking state, dream state and the deep sleep state, and transcends all three states. Hence, body, senses, mind and consciousness are instruments of the Self. It is immortal, self-luminous, and self-proved. It is the ultimate subject, never can become object of knowledge, and is necessarily presupposed by all knowledge. It is existence, knowledge and bliss. When one is freed from ignorance and attains true knowledge, then one experiences himself as *Atman*. Right knowledge is obtained with the practice of faith, purity, introspection and meditation.

The second section highlights the reality of *Brahman*, the Ultimate Reality of the world. It is the origin and end of the world. *Brahman* is the material cause of the world and the world is its manifestation. One attains knowledge of *Brahman*, by evolving through the material, vital, mental and self-conscious planes (*koshas*) and arriving at the non-dual state of transcendental unity, in which the distinction between the knower, the known and the knowledge is obliterated. The third section analyzes the unity between *Brahman* and *Atman* by analyzing the Upanishadic *mahavakyas* "That art Thou" and "I am *Brahman*."

The conclusion states that the unitive perspective of the *Upanishads* have a global and multicultural appeal, as it is capable of embracing the people of all cultures and religions into one fold. Since every human being is in a foundational relationship with *Brahman*, the Supreme Being and the Ultimate Reality, all are equal before God. This calls for better understanding and mutual respect among people of different cultures and religions. Thus, the unitive perspective of the *Upanishads* can lead to better understanding among the diverse people of the world. Now, we clarify the nature and attainment of *Atman*.

## Nature and Attainment of *Atman*

In this section, we make an attempt to elaborate on the nature of *Atman*, the true inner Self of the human person. We also clarify the way we can attain true knowledge of the Self.

### *Nature of Atman*

We find a clear exposition of the doctrine of the Self (*Atman*) and the practical path leading to it in the dialogue between the sage Prajaapathi and Indra in the *Chaandogya Upanishad*. Indra, the king of gods and Virochana, the king of demons both approached Prajaapathi to learn the doctrine of the *Atman*. Prajaapathi first teaches them that the Self is unborn, uncreated, eternal, cannot be destroyed and beyond suffering. Then he identifies the Self with the body. While Virochana returns home satisfied, Indra is not convinced. How can the immortal Self be the body, which is prone to change, decay and destruction? He approaches Prajaapathi again and tells him of his confusion. Prajaapathi next identifies the Self with the subject of the dream state. Indra is again not convinced. How could the subject of the dream state be the eternal Self? Though devoid of defects of the body, it still experiences emotions in dreams - it is happy, sad, terrified and conscious of pain. The Self, being eternal, cannot be subject to such limitations. Again he goes back to Prajaapathi and tells him his doubts. Prajaapathi now tells him that the enjoyer of the deep sleep state is the Self. But Indra is unconvinced by this too, for in deep sleep, there is no conscious awareness. We neither feel anything, nor know anything, nor will anything. So what good is there in such a state?

When he approaches Prajaapathi again, the sage well pleased with his discriminatory powers, says that the body and the subject of the dream state are not the Self though they exist for the Self. The Self is not an abstract principle of the deep sleep state too. Yet, it is something, which persists through these three states or else we would not have the unity of experience through the three states. The body, the senses, the mind, the presentation *continuum*, the consciousness - are all mere instruments and objects of the Self. Though the Self is the ground for the waking, dream and deep sleep states, it transcends them all. The Self is immortal, self-luminous and self-

proved. It is the Ultimate Subject, which can never become an object and is necessarily presupposed by all knowledge. It is *Satchitananda*. The term "*satchitananda*" consists of three words: "*sat*" - existence, "*chit*" - knowledge and "*ananda*" - bliss.

The following text taken from the *Brhadaaranyaka Upanishad* is the famous dialogue between the greatest of Indian sages, Yaagnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi regarding the nature of the *Atman*. Yaagnavalkya had two wives - Maitreyi and Katyaayani. While Maitreyi was a discourser of knowledge of *Brahaman* (*Brahma vidhya*), Katyaayani possessed only such knowledge as women have. When Yaagnavalkya wished to move on to the forest dweller (*vanaprastha*) stage:

> "Maitreyi," said Yaagnavalkya, "I'm getting away from this state of householder. So let me make a settlement for you and that Kaatyaayani." "My Lord," said Maitreyi, "even if the riches of the world were mine, would it make me immortal? "No," said Yaagnavalkya, "your life will only be like the life of people with plenty of wealth. But there's no hope of immortality through wealth." Then Maitreyi said, "What shall I do with that by which I do not become immortal? Please, venerable sir, explain to me whatever you know of immortality." Then Yaagnavalkya said, "You were always dear to me Maitreyi, but now you've become dearer. So as you wish I shall explain it to you. But as I expound, seek to meditate on it." Then he said, "Verily, not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear, but for the sake of the self is the husband dear. Verily not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear, but for the sake of the self is the wife dear. Verily not for the sake of the sons? wealth? cattle? *brahmana*? *kshatriya*? worlds? Gods? *Veda*? beings? all? Is each dear, but for the sake of the self is each dear. Verily Maitreyi, the self is to be seen, to be heard, to be reflected on, to be meditated upon; when verily the self is seen, heard, reflected on and known, then all else is known." "Brahmanahood deserts him; who knows Brahmanahood in anything else than the self? Kshatriyahood deserts him; who knows Kshatriyahood in anything else than the self? The worlds desert him? The Gods desert him?

The *Vedas* desert him? The beings desert him? All desert him who knows all in anything else than the self. This Braahmanahood, this Kshatriyahood, these worlds, these Gods, these *Vedas*, all these beings, these all are the Self." "As from a fire kindled with damp fuel different kinds of smoke issues forth, so verily from this great being has been breathed forth the *Rg Veda,* the *Yajur Veda,* the *Sama Veda,* the hymns of the *Atharvan* and *Angirasas,* legend, ancient lore, sciences, sacred teachings, verses, aphorisms, explanations, commentaries, sacrifices, oblation, food, drink, this world and the other and all beings." "As a mass of salt is altogether a mass of taste, without inside or outside, so is the self altogether a mass of intelligence, without inside or outside. Having arisen out of these elements, it vanishes again in them. When it has departed there's no more separate or particular consciousness." Then Maitreyi said, "Here indeed, venerable sir, you've caused me to reach utter bewilderment. I do not at all understand this Self." Yaagnavalkya replied, "I do not say anything bewildering. The Self verily is imperishable and of indestructible nature." "For where there's duality, there one sees another, one smells another, one tastes another, one speaks to another, one hears another, one thinks of another, one touches and knows another. But when everything has become one's own Self, by what and whom should one see, by what and whom should one smell, taste, speak, hear, think, touch and know? By what should we know him by whom all this is known? Indeed by what would one know the knower? The Self is to be described as not this, not this (*neti, neti*). He is incomprehensible, indestructible, unattached, unfettered. He does not suffer. Thus you have the instruction expounded to you, O Maitreyi. Such verily is life eternal."[2]

Having said this Yaagnavalkya went away into the forest.

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[2] A quote from *Brhadaaranyaka Upanishad.*

*Attainment of the Knowledge of Atman*

According to the *Upanishads*, the reason that we are not aware of our true nature as the eternal *Atman* is our state of ignorance (*avidya*). When ignorance is removed with right knowledge, the Self shines forth in its true nature. In fact, acquisition of spiritual knowledge is the supreme purpose of human existence. Human beings are superior to other forms of life only because they can sufficiently discriminate between the real and the unreal, between the ephemeral and the eternal, and between darkness and light. A man who does not strive to make good of this opportunity and remains lost in materialism may be compared to a man, who has committed suicide. The third verse of *Ishavasya Upanishad*, therefore, declares:

> The immutable soul is the real nature of man, and not his mortal frame. Because the soul endures from one life to the next, whereas the body changes every moment and perishes with death. But the materialistic people, enveloped with ignorance, vanity or pride, deny the very existence of the soul. They say - 'Only that exists which can be perceived with the senses. There is nothing beyond; there is no yonder world after death. Verily, man is but an agglomeration of the elements, born of the lust of his parents. We are born with our physical birth, and cease to exist after our death. Indeed, there is no connection between actions and their fruits. There no vice or virtue. So eat, drink and be merry.' Denying their own true essence, these deluded men have killed their own souls in this very life.[3]

Right knowledge is not mere bookish knowledge. In fact the *Upanishads* equate even the sacred *Veda* with lower knowledge, while knowledge of the Self (*atmajnaanam*) is the highest knowledge. This knowledge is more intuitive than intellectual. It is the knowledge of the subject, which can never be known like an object. Right knowledge is obtained with the practice of faith, purity, introspection and meditation.

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[3] A quote from *Ishavasya Upanishad*.

Taking recourse to spirituality to attain this ultimate knowledge of *Atman* does not mean that one can forget his worldly duties. The *Upanishads* stress repeatedly that "faith without works is dead." The second verse of the *Ishavasya Upanishad* highlights this point clearly. To quote:

> Seek not the Truth by abandoning this world; Or by renouncing all your bounden duties. This is indeed not the path of salvation. Rather, desire ye to live a full life of a hundred years. Actively engaged in the selfless perform-ance of your duties and enjoined actions at all times. Verily, this is the only way enjoined for man's salvation. And not the opposite. All actions bear fruit - good or bad. And these fruits taint his soul, causing him to be reborn! But the fruits of actions - good or otherwise, do not taint that wise man, who performs his duties selflessly, as an offering to God. Just as a lotus leaf is not tainted by water, even though touching it. But he, who through ignorance, shirks away from his duties. Merely deludes himself by thinking- 'I am performing any action!' Aye! No man can desist from action for even a single moment.

### Nature and Attainment of *Brahman*

According to Shankara, the sole purpose of the *Upanishads* is to prove the reality of *Brahman* and the phenomenal and unreal nature of the universe of names and forms (*nama-rupa*), and establish the absolute oneness of the embodied Soul/Self (*Atman*) and *Brahman*. For Shankara, the "*Brahman* is the only Truth; the world is unreal, and there is ultimately no difference between *Brahman* and *Atman*, the inner Self in the individual."[4] The *Upanishads* are very clear that *Brahman* is the origin and the end of the world. It is the material cause of the world and the world is a manifestation of *Brahman*. *Brahman* made the world out of itself. The *Brahmasukta* of *Atharveda - Paippalada Shakha* states:

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[4] *Brahma Satyam Jagat mithya, Jivo brahmaivya naparah Brahman; Sarvam Khalvi-dam Brahma.*

(It is) The Supreme Being (Who) first spread out the mighty powers collected in Him. (It is) The Supreme Being (Who) first spread out the heavenly lights everywhere. Verily, The Supreme Being was born as first Lord of all that exists. Who, then is fit to be this Supreme Being's rival. These Heaven and Earth are Supreme Being. The seven currents are the Supreme Being. All the Adityas are Supreme Being. (Verily) All the divine beings contemplate upon the Supreme Being. [5]

Likewise, the *Chaandogya Upanishad* states: "In the beginning the world was just Being, one only, without a second. Then it thought to itself 'would that I were many. Let me procreate myself'." The same *Upanishad* says again: "All this is verily *Brahman*. *Brahman* is that from which everything proceeds; and that in which everything breathes and that in which everything is finally dissolved. A theory of evolution is presented in the doctrine of the five sheaths (*pancha kosha*) in the *Taiitriya Upanishad*. The lowest level is the plane of matter (*annamaya kosha*). Matter is devoid (*jada*) of consciousness and must evolve to life. So the second stage is the plane of life (*praanamaya kosha*). Vegetables are an example of this *kosha*. From life evolves perceptual consciousness and, thus, we have the mental plane (*manomaya kosha*). This state is still instinctive consciousness and can be related to that of animals. From instinctive consciousness evolves consciousness, which is self-conscious and rational. This is the plane of self-conscious reason (*vijnaanamaya koshas*). This is the base for moral life and that which distinguishes man from animal. This is also the plane, where the empirical trinity of knower, known and knowledge exist. When the trinity of the knower, known and knowledge become fused in a transcendental unity, we have the highest state of evolution, the state of non-dual bliss (*anandamaya kosha*).

This evolution does not mean the original *Brahman* is lost. The evolution only means that the unreality of the world of names and forms has passed away and we experience the Ultimate *Brahman* in its essence. The *Ishavasya Upanishad* reminds us that *Brahman* is the essence of existence:

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[5] *Atharveda*, 8. 9. 1-2.

All sentient and insentient objects in this ever changing Universe are ephemeral and pass away with time. But the Lord Who is imminent in everything, and controls it in multifarious ways, is Eternal and Imperishable. Seek to realize this Eternal Truth and do not get entangled in this world. Enjoy the bounties of Nature, but with a sense of renunciation. Do not hanker too much after riches and do not get obsessed with them. To whom does all this belong? Certainly not to any man, for we do not bring anything with us, nor do we take anything along. But He, the Underlying Reality, owns all this, and we are mere guardians of His Divine riches.[6]

### Relationship between *Atman* and *Brahman*

When the whole world is the manifestation of *Brahman*, even the *Atman* must be *Brahman*. The great statements (*mahavakyas*) of the *Upanishads* proclaim: "That art Thou" (*Tat Tvam asi*) and "I am *Brahman*" (*Aham Brahmasmi*). Both identify *Brahman* to one's own Self (*Atman*). Now, the important question is the exact nature of this relationship between *Brahman* and *Atman*. This is the focal point of difference between the various schools of *Vedanta*. Are they one and the same? The *Advaita Vedanta* takes stand of unity between the both, and gives a full-fledged non-dualistic absolutism. However, if the *Atman* is eternal and unchanging, what about the changes experienced in the world? According to *Advaita Vedanta*, the changes in the world are unreal (*mithya*) and an illusion (*maaya*).[7] The following text taken from the *Chaandogya Upanishad*. This text contains the famous dialogue between the sage Uddhaalaka Aruni

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[6] A quote from *Ishavasya Upanishad*.

[7] Is *Brahman* and *Atman* related in the way of part to whole or quality to object? This is the theory of the *Visishtadvaita Vedanta*, which teaches qualified non-dualism - the world and the Selves are qualities of *Brahman*. The dualistic interpretation of the *Upanishads* is presented by *Dvaita Vedanta*, according to which God, Selves and matter are totally distinct and independent realities. All the other five schools of Indian philosophy - *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya*, *Vaishesika* and *Purva Mimaamsaa* - propound a dualistic view of the universe.

and his son Shvetaketu, where the relationship between *Brahman* and *Atman* is taught.

> "Bring a fruit from that nyagrodha tree there, Shvetaketu."
> "Here it is, sir."
> "Break it open."
> "It is open, sir."
> "What do you see there?."
> "These fine seeds, sir."
> "Break open a seed."
> "It is open, sir."
> "What do you see now?."
> "Nothing, sir."[8]

Then Uddhaalaka said to him, "Verily my dear son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive, verily my dear, from that the great nyagrodha tree exists. Believe me, dear." "That which is the finest essence - that this whole world has as its Self. That is *Atman*. That is Reality. That art Thou (*Tat Tvam asi*), Shvetaketu."

## Conclusion

We conclude with a beautiful litany from the *Brahmasukta* of *Atharvaveda* (*Paippalada Shakha*), which shows the ultimate unity of all in *Brahman*, the Supreme Being, the Ultimate Reality.

> The Supreme Being is the fishermen,
> The Supreme Being is the servants,
> The Supreme Being indeed is these gamblers.
> Man as well as woman originate from the Supreme Being
> Women are God and so are men.[9]
>
> The Supreme Being is in the highlands,
> The Supreme Being is in the lowlands,
> (Indeed) the Supreme Being envelops from all directions.
> Trees, mountains and in shrubs or creepers,

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[8] A quote from *Chaandogya Upanishad*
[9] Atharveda, 8. 9. 10.

(Verily) The Supreme Being abides in these all.
The Earth and the Heavens
The Supreme Being abides in both.[10]

These Heaven and Earth are Supreme Being,
The seven currents are The Supreme Being
All the Adityas are Supreme Being
(Verily) All the divine beings contemplate upon the
Supreme Being.[11]

The Brahamanas speak of (the glories of) the Supreme
Being (during the day)
(But) The Supreme Being verily is present (also) in the
night.
From The Supreme Being is born the {light} (of the Sun that
brightens the day),
By the Supreme Being does fire shine with great splendor
(at night).[12]

The Supreme Being abides in food producing plants
And it is He who causes the rains (which give life to these
plants) to descend. (Indeed)
The Supreme Being is inner animating Soul of all this.
As long as the sun shines bright.[13]

The Supreme Being is the priest who recites the chants
during the ritual,
The Supreme Being is (also) the ritual
As well as the chants being recited with great precision.
From the Supreme Being arises the priest who pours the
oblation into the fire
{Within} the Supreme Being {is present} the oblation.[14]

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[10] *Ibid.,* 8.9.11.
[11] *Ibid.,* 8.9.3.
[12] *Ibid.,* 8.9.4.
[13] *Ibid.,* 8.9.5.
[14] *Ibid.,* 8.9.6.

The Supreme Being is the fire altar, brimming with clarified butter,
The Supreme Being are the bulls possessing the beneficent seed,
The Supreme Being are the cows, that yield the oblation going into the ritual fire,
The Supreme Being is he who, seated in the divine chariot, attains the well performed magnificent ritual.[15]

By the (will of the) Supreme Being the inert (thing) moves (and thus becomes dynamic)
By the (will of the) Supreme Being does the body unite (with life).
By the (will of) Supreme Being does the outward breath return to the man with great trembling.[16]

This unitive perspective of the Upanishads has a global and multicultural appeal. It embraces people of all cultures and religions into one fold. Since every human being is in a foundational relationship with Brahman, the Supreme Being and the Ultimate Reality, all are equal before God. This calls for better understanding and mutual respect among people of different cultures and religions. Thus, the unitive perspective of the Upanishads can lead to better understanding among the diverse people of the world.

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[15] *Ibid.*, 8.9.7.
[16] *Ibid.*, 8.9.8.

# Part III
# Multiculturalism and Philosophy

**14.**

# Do We Need Multiculturalism?

Nesy Kuriakose

### Introduction

In the post-cold war world, global politics has become multi-polar and multi-civilizational. In the twenty-first century, seclusion is not an option anymore. Further, immigration cannot be prevented; the masses already present cannot be ignored; and their rights cannot be restricted. The flow of people - due to migration, and surge in the passing of information due to the globalized internet - continue to accelerate. As a result, we find ourselves exposed to an ever-broader variety of opinions, languages, behaviors, and attire in our daily routines. Now, the most important distinctions among nations are not ideological, political or economic, but cultural. Cultural groups can be ethnic, religious, linguistic or cultural minorities and their membership in any specific group is involuntary. One does not "choose" to be a member of the minority community because one is simply born into that cultural group and various cultural ways of life are a part of one's being a member of that group. Our world contains millions of people populated throughout hundreds of culturally diverse cities. The result: some of us seem impervious to this diversity; others find core identities challenged, and may even react with anger, fear or violence; yet others experience it as a source of exhilaration, as a testament to life's endless and beautiful variety. The condition of the contemporary world, within which the social and cultural multiplicity of the human being has become explicit and visible both in the streets and through the media, makes the phenomenon of diversity ubiquitous and necessarily open to discursive, ethnographic, anthropological, historical, and semiotic analysis, among many other possible approaches. Thus, arise the question of multiculturalism.

In our attempt to elaborate on the question of multiculturalism, in the first section, we clarify the nature of multiculturalism. Negatively multiculturalism means diversity as opposed to sameness and difference as opposed to unity. Positively, it is the coexistence of

diverse cultures. It aims at promoting the fair and equal presence of all cultural groups in public and private institutional environment, besides creating a balance between races and languages. The second section attempts to raise the question of the justification of multiculturalism. Communitarianism, liberalism and post-colonial perspectives give arguments in favor of multiculturalism. Communitarianism justifies multiculturalism by acknowledging diverse cultural identities and languages as social goods and is presumed to be of equal worth. Liberalism by taking a stand against violation of rights of the minority groups justifies multiculturalism. Post-colonial liberal theories justify multiculturalism by upholding the rights of minority groups, who suffered from the historical injustices done to them by the majority group.

The third section looks into the relationship between multiculturalism and liberal globalism. Liberal globalism through the process of globalization homogenizes cultural diversities. Multiculturalism emerged as a counter point to homogenization of cultural diversity by heterogenization. It involves allowing previously unknown cultures to appear in public, letting them demand for recognition and permitting them to maintain their difference. Other than this relationship, multiculturalism and liberalism are very different from each other. The fourth section elaborates on the response of liberalism to multiculturalism. Liberal response to multiculturalism comes from many sources: anti-imigration policies of different nations-states, nationalistic thinking prevailing in many countries, groups that over-emphasize individual rights over rights of groups and the like. These opposition from liberalism seems to threaten the possible continuance of multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a social practice.

This leads us to consider the future of multiculturalism in the fifth section of this chapter. The ideology of multiculturalism is the most recent solution to the problems of minority groups that grew from listening to them and respecting their cultural practices. Therefore, it does not seek to homogenize diverse cultural groups, but to integrate them into society by maintaining their cultural diversity, thereby make them loyal to the nation-state they have become part of. The purpose multiculturalism twofold: preventing of frictions among different cultural groups; and use this diversity to bolster the economy of the nations of the world. Despite many

opposing voices, multiculturalism has not failed yet; it must adapt to changing circumstances. It must recognize that today's world is multicultural and educate the young people on multicultural perspective through our educational and school system. If we take such an approach to multiculturalism, it definitely has a future and would facilitate diverse people to live in peace and harmony for generations to come. The conclusion highlights the role of the teacher in multicultural education. Following Socrates the teachers should be "midwives" and "gadflies." As midwives, the teachers must assist in giving birth to new and positive opinions in their students. As gadflies, the teachers must prick students out of their intellectual slumber and stimulate them to think. Thus, teachers by helping their students to approach different cultural and religious perspectives, with intellectual humility, thereby awaken them to a world of multicultural diversity. Now, in the first section, we analyze the meaning of multiculturalism, by clarifying its nature.

## Nature of Multiculturalism

Diversity and multiculturalism are fundamental issues of our time. In today's world, multiculturalism has evolved into more than just an idea - it is a reality. There is a lot of uncertainty seen in unfolding the precise meaning of the term "multiculturalism." The most widely accepted definition is expressed in negative terms: in this sense, it means diversity as opposed to sameness and difference as opposed to unity. Expressed positively, multiculturalism is the coexistence of diverse cultures, where culture includes besides cultural groups, both racial and religious groups, and is manifested in customary behaviors, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles. Thus, multiculturalism is a cultural and political platform for various principles, concepts and guidelines. It aims at promoting the fair and equal presence of all cultural groups in public and private institutional environment, besides creating a balance between races and languages. For substantial elements of the social order, multiculturalism provides the political framework for social equality and cultural differences. It offers strategic guiding principles to rethink, redefine and resolve racial and ethnic differences. It considers all ethnic and cultural groups as equal. Multiculturalism claims that every individual has

the right to associate and identify with the culture of his or her choice, and yet fully benefit from the opportunities of economic and social equality. Multiculturalism believes that no cultural entity has the right to be privileged over another. Since each cultural group enriches the society, all of them should be respected and supported. Having clarified the nature of multiculturalism, the next section attempts to raise the question of the justification of multi-culturalism.

## Justificatifying Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is justified on different grounds. Firstly, communitarianism justifies multiculturalism. Unlike liberalism - which gives primacy to individual rights and liberties over community life and collective goods - communitarianism rejects the idea that the individual is prior to the community. According to the communitarian perspective, the value of social goods cannot be reduced to their contribution to individual wellbeing. Following Charles Taylor's view that "social goods as irreducibly social," communitarians embrace ontological holism, which says that diverse cultural identities and languages are irreducibly social goods and are presumed to be of equal worth. Since, multiculturalism recognizes equal worth of diverse cultures, and calls for replacing the traditional liberal regime of identical liberties and opportunities for all citizens with a scheme of special rights for minority cultural groups, communitarianism would justify multiculturalism.

Secondly, liberalism itself offers room for multiculturalism. The liberal values of autonomy and equality provide the context to fashion a person's life and to develop individual self-respect and respect for the cultural group of which he/she is a part. Besides, liberalism holds that individuals should be held responsible for inequalities resulting from their own choices, but not for inequalities deriving from un-chosen circumstances. Since inequality stemming from membership in a minority culture is un-chosen, members of minority groups can reasonably demand that members of the majority culture share in bearing the costs of accommodation. Liberal theorists of multiculturalism contend that anti-discrimination laws fall short of treating members of minority groups as equals. This is because states cannot be neutral with respect to culture. In culturally diverse societies, we can easily find patterns of state support for

some cultural groups over others. While states may prohibit racial discrimination and avoid official establishment of religion, they cannot avoid establishing one language for public schooling and other state services, language being a paradigmatic marker of culture. Thus, in liberalistic perspective also we can find justification for multiculturalism.

Thirdly, post-colonial philosophers and writers would support multicultural perspective. According to them, it is crucial to reckon with history, rectify the failures of past and allow special consideration towards the people who have been victims of the historical mistakes the states have made. For instance, the denial of equal sovereign status of indigenous groups, the dispossession of their lands, and the destruction of their cultural practices are cases for tribal sovereignty along with premises about the value of tribal culture and membership. The historical injustices perpetrated against them call into question the legitimacy of the state's authority over aboriginal peoples and provides a *prima facie* case for special rights and protections for indigenous groups, including the right of self-government. Further, a postcolonial perspective also seeks to develop models of constitutional and political dialogue that recognize culturally distinct ways of speaking and acting. Liberal theory cannot provide an impartial framework governing relations between different cultural communities. Instead a more open inclusive model of intercultural relationships, in which a liberal society's constitutional and legal values serve as the initial starting point. Thus, the post-colonial liberal perspective also would justify multiculturalism. Having provided reasons for the justification of multiculturalism, in the next section, we clarify the relationship between multiculturalism and liberal globalism.

### Multiculturalism and Liberal Globalism

Our clarification of the nature of multiculturalism and its justification points to the truth that it shares blurred boundaries with the concepts upheld by liberal perspective of globalism. When we attempt to distinguish multiculturalism from globalism and the globalization process, we find that the most remarkable delimiting factor is the result itself. While globalism and globalization process homogenizes, multiculturalism recognizes and emphasizes the

differences. Globalism and globalization process strengthened population movement for economic purposes and achieved the planet-encompassing information flow system, whereby previously unknown cultures are known now; and thereby created a situation of the clash of all strong cultural identities, which in turn, resulted in temporariness, impermanence, instantaneity, difference and cultural pluralism. Here is a paradox involved. The aim was homogenization people of cultural diversity for economic reasons; but the knowledge gained this way contributed to the upsurge of anti-globalism and anti-globalization. One of the greatest achievements globalism and globalization process is the emergence of multiculturalism. The objective of multiculturalism is the cognition of cultural diversity and providing each culture equal recognition and proper respect. Multiculturalism does not want cultures to merge, lose their identity and become average, rather it mixes with the concept of globalism. As a result, global-ism and globalization process not only homogenizes cultural diver-sities, but also paradoxically heterogenizes them. The heterogenizing process is not an imminent element of globalization, but rather occurs as a response to it. This heterogenization consists in allowing previously unknown cultures to appear in the public, letting them demand for recognition, and permitting them to maintain their differences. The heterogenizing element of globalism and globaliza-tion process is multiculturalism. Thus, multi-culturalism emerged as a counterpoint to homogenization of cultural diversity by globalism and globalization process. Another reason for the formation of multicultural perspective is the fear of homo-genization of diversity of cultures and the dangers associated with such homogenization of diversity.

However, the relationship between multiculturalism liberal globalism is very different. According to Charles Taylor, the idea of liberalism aims at the political empowerment of the dominant culture. It inherently suppresses other cultures considered less significant. Thus, liberalism is not a possible meeting point for all cultures; but it is a political expression of a dominant culture; and hence it is incompatible with other less important cultures. In contrast, multiculturalism proclaims equivalence of different cultures; makes no distinction between small or insignificant among them; and most importantly, it does not indicate one as a dominant culture. Thus, multiculturalism views the primary loyalty of all

citizens to the society as crucial; and it tolerates and supports secondary loyalties to other specific cultural or religious legacies, as part of the citizen's package. Fleras and Elliott highlight another important distinguishing factor between liberalism and multi-culturalism. According to them, liberalism is individualist, while multiculturalism primarily requires loyalty to society that clearly comes from the aim of preventing intercultural conflicts. Individua-listic liberalism is especially devastating for cultures other than the majority and dominant culture. Having clarified multicultural and global liberal perspectives, in the next section, we expound the response of liberalism to multiculturalism.

## Response of Liberalism to Multiculturalism

According to Raz, so far liberalism responded with three kinds of answers to problems arising from social differences. The first liberal response is tolerance. It consists in not treating minorities differently until they get into conflict with the majority culture. This implies that the minorities are restricted in the use of public spaces and the media. Besides, their activities had to be financed from their own resources. The second liberal response moves beyond tolerance and provides limited rights to minority cultural groups. Here, the individual rights are given to the minority cultural groups based on ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation, without discrimi-nation. This allowance goes way beyond tolerance and gives some control over particular rights of the minorities. Members of the minority can no longer be excluded from schools, living environ-ment, workplace, and the like. The third liberal approach is multiculturalism that can be applied in states, where numerous solid cultural communities live together and they are able to survive and even seek it. The political community, the state, if multicultural, consists of different communities and is owned by none. The relative size of various communities will bring about disputes over resources and the allocation of public spaces. However, no community should be allowed to see the state as its own, or think that others depend on its patience. Multiculturalism proclaims that all communities are equal and should be given the same respect, because the state is owned by both of the communities and none can expropriate it. Consequently, the same rights have to be granted to them. The last

response would amount to accepting multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a social doctrine.

If multiculturalism is viewed as a political philosophy and a social doctrine, it would take into account diversity and cultural differences, and define itself as an alternative to total assimilation of diversity by the dominant group. However, presently the possibility of multiculturalism being recognized as a social philosophy and a social doctrine is very slim. For, there is a big move from many countries to prevent further immigration and the nationalistic thinking is on the increase in many of these countries. This trend does not usher in good prospect for minority groups and for multiculturalism. Recently, former British Prime Minister David Cameron challenged *the doctrine of state multiculturalism*, which he claims to have been misguidedly introduced by the previous British government. In his address to the 47th Munich Security Conference, after taking the utmost care to repeatedly stress the differences between the peacefully practiced faith of Islam and the political ideology of Islamic extremism, Cameron proceeded to conclude that the "hands-off" and "passive" tolerance contained within the ideal of multiculturalism, in fact, seeds tensions between groups by allowing them to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. He demanded that the Islamic population in Britain begin to adopt British values - a position he named *muscular liberalism*.

Liberal ideas of toleration, freedom of conscience and freedom of association challenge multiculturalism's concern for diverse groups and protecting the rights of the groups. If we take these ideas seriously and accept both, ontological and ethical individualism, then we are led to defend the individual's right to form and leave associations, and not any special protections for groups. There are no group rights, only individual rights. By granting cultural groups special protections and rights, the state oversteps its role, which is to secure civility, and risks undermining individual rights of association. The major limitation of this *laissez-faire* approach is that groups that do not themselves value toleration and freedom of association - including the right to dissociate or exit a group - may practice internal discrimination against group members, and the state would have little authority to interfere in such associations. This benign neglect approach would permit the abuse of vulnerable members of groups, tolerating "communities, which bring up children un-

schooled and illiterate; which enforce arranged marriages; which deny conventional medical care to their members - including children; and which inflict cruel and unusual punishment.

Political and feminist philosopher Susan Moller Okin argues against cultural group rights to minority groups that demands them because in most cases such rights have great potential to harm women in the groups. She argues that due to the established power structure in the traditional cultural groups, there is disparity between the sexes. The more powerful male members are in a position to determine and articulate the group's beliefs, practices and interests, and the women's views are often silenced. The advocates of group rights pay little attention to the public-private distinction. This is highly problematic, as most traditional cultures heavily control the lives of women in the private sphere. Thus, the sphere of personal, sexual and reproductive life functions fall within the private shphere and will be controled by cultural practices and rule. The laws of marriage, divorce, child custody, division and control of family property, and inheritance are written by men - to the exclusion of women. Hence, they affect the lives of women and girls disproportionately, since far more of women's time and energy are focused on preserving such practices of the private sphere. Since the women are confined to being the bearers of such cultural production in the private sphere, they are much limited in their ability to participate in the public sphere that is mostly controlled by men. In short, most cultures are patriarchal, but those demand group rights are especially so, as most of the "issues" surrounding cultural group rights turns out to be the control of women in the name of preserving the tradition. Therefore, according to Okin, what should be happening is not the promotion of group rights, but rather the global promotion of more *individual* rights for women and girls for their protection, in case their cultural practices are abusive to them.

Liberal response to multiculturalism comes from many sources: anti-imigration policies of different nations-states, nationalistic thinking prevailing in many countries, groups that over-emphasize individual rights over rights of groups and the like. These opposition from liberalism seems to threaten the possible continuance of multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a social practice. In the next section, we take up this issue by considering the future of multiculturalism.

## Future of Multiculturalism

Clearly the concept of multiculturalism is unable to deal with these voices that go against it. At the same time, in the twenty-first century, seclusion is not an option anymore. Globalization, set in motion by liberalist ideology, would continue to have its effects on the world scene: further immigration cannot be totally prevented; the people of diverse cultures already present in different nations cannot be ignored; and their rights cannot be restricted. The ideology of multiculturalism is the most recent solution to the problems of minority groups that grew from listening to them and respecting their cultural practices. Therefore, it does not seek to homogenize diverse cultural groups, but to integrate them into the society by maintaining their cultural diversity, thereby make them loyal to the nation-state they have become part of. The purpose multiculturalism twofold: preventing of frictions among different cultural groups; and use this diversity to bolster the economy of the nations of the world.

Hence, multiculturalism has not failed yet, but it must adapt to the changing circumstances. Some possibilities are open for consideration: The position of cosmopolitanism put forward by Anthony Appiah seems to be an alternative to Cameron's call for mono-culturalism or *muscular liberalism*. Anthony Appiah's version of cosmopolitanism is exactly about balancing universality and difference. According to him, many people who believe rightly in universality want wrongly to impose their vision of the world on others. They think not just that there are universal truths, but that they already know what they are. They do not think they have anything to learn from others. Therefore, they do not converse; they try to convert. Appiah's position envisages a universality among people and their cultures that involves not a homogenization, but a diversity shared and understood *via* tolerant dialogue and understanding. In real life situations, social integration may be better achieved in a way modeled on Appiah's cosmopolitanism - by attempting to mutually *understand* one another's values and practices, so as to *bridge* the differences in cultures, rather than to remove them. The real risk of multiculturalism, then, would be neglecting to acknowledge the fact that we are multicultural.

According to Carol J. Nicholson of Rider University, the debate over epistemological and political issues has tended to obscure the

educational benefits of multiculturalism. For him, multicultural education is a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity and human dignity. It affirms our need to prepare students for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice. Schools are ideal sites for multicultural education. The main reason for this is that they have within them congregations of diverse students - some schools more than others, but all of them are diverse to some extent. A school is not a private place, like our homes. A school is a civic and public place, where diverse people congregate. It is a place, where people who come from numerous private worlds and social positions are brought together on common ground. Hence, schools are places, where multiple social perspectives and personal values are brought into face-to-face contact around matters that "are relevant to the problems of living together," as Dewey puts it. These mutual and collective concerns are neither mine, nor yours; but ours.

Schools can nurture the essential qualities needed for the hard work of living together freely, but cooperatively and with justice, equality and dignity. Three actions facilitate this cooperative living. The first, increase the variety and frequency of interaction among students, who are different from one another. Classrooms often do this naturally; but these and other opportunities can be deepened and others created. The second, orchestrate these contacts so that competent public talk - deliberation about common problems - is fostered. This is a talk about two kinds of problems: those that arise inevitably from the friction of interaction itself - Dewey's "problems of living together"; and those grounded in the academic controversies that are at the core of each subject area in the school curriculum. The third, clarify the distinction between deliberation and bull sessions and between open - inclusive - deliberation and closed - exclusionary - deliberation. Thus, expect, teach and model competent and inclusive deliberation. Concentrate not only on the open expression of honest viewpoints, but also encourage the receptive practice of listening. If we take such an approach to

multiculturalism, it definitely has a future and would facilitate diverse people to live in peace and harmony for generations to come.

## Conclusion

The challenge of different points of view has been a stimulus to thought at least since the origins of western philosophy in ancient Greece. It is not an exaggeration to say that without cross-cultural interaction, borrowing and debate, there would be no liberal arts and sciences today. Multiculturalism is relevant for teaching of philosophy in the present day. Undergraduate students today are often self-absorbed, arrogantly opinionated and intellectually lazy. Followers of Socrates recognize that one of the main functions of philosophical education is the "un-fixation of belief," with apologies to C. S. Peirce. In Peirce's well-known essay, "The Fixation of Belief," he defends the method of scientific inquiry as opposed to the alternative ways of forming beliefs - tenacity, authority, and *a priori* thought. For philosophy teachers the challenge is not so much to improve students' methods of arriving at their opinions as to get them to loosen their intellectual grip on the opinions they have fixed upon, so that they can see other points of view as legitimate. The paragon of the teacher of philosophy, of course, is Plato's Socrates, and the best teachers emulate him in two respects - as midwives and as gadflies. In his role as midwife, Socrates assists in giving birth to the opinions of others, which, after critical scrutiny, invariably turn out to be mere "wind eggs." In his role as gadfly, Socrates pricks people out of their dogmatic slumber and stimulates them to think. A multicultural approach to teaching philosophy is a very effective way to wake students up to different points of view and give them a sense of intellectual humility. It is this intellectual humility that makes William James describe pragmatism, as "just a new word for an old way of thinking and teaching." A multicultural curriculum works very well in fulfilling the traditional goals of education in philosophy. It can assist the teacher as Socratic "midwife" and "gadfly" in delivering students of their narrow and uncritical opinions and awakening them to a world of intellectual diversity.

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**15.**

# A Peep into Global Ethics and International Development

ABHA SINGH

## Introduction

Globalization is essentially a product of technological advancement. One way of looking at globalization is to look at the history of social and economic revolutions and the emergence of the state in relation to technological advancements and transformations. Nevertheless, technology provided the means for growth at different stages of economic development: the horse or bullock cart is the basis of industrial society; the steam engine is the basis of capitalism; and, the last but not the least, electricity, nuclear energy and electronics compose the spectrum of advancement of capitalism towards the post-capitalist/post-industrial society, wherein computer chips, micro technology of electronics and automations define the present phase and distinguishes itself as the information society. The above-said three stages are generally characterized as industrial, technological and financing phases of capitalism. Globalization aims at checking the imbalances created by capitalism. The idea is to develop trade and commerce in a way that people living even in the most underdeveloped terrain may get their fair share in world's resources. It succeeded through rapid transmission of messages and symbols, through cyber space and internet. Later, globalization included trade, commerce, banking and other fields, as they are necessary over and above a particular country because globalization means global banking, global trade, global commerce, and global migration of population. All these require certain rules, institutions and infrastructure that go beyond a particular nation-state. For this purpose, we have organizations, such as the WTO, the GATT, the UNO and the UNO funded organizations. With these institutional mechanisms, global reality is regulated and managed. Globalization also has structural prerequisites and imperatives. One such imperative is the "movement of people" and having a "free market."

Though globalization has achieved a great deal of good for the world economy, it was instrumental in ushering in a number of problems as well. Hence, in the first section of this chapter, we elaborate on some of the achievements and failures of globalization, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages that accompanied the efforts to actualize the globalization process. Some of the topics we consider in this section are - the positive and negative consequences of globalization, one-sided notion of development propagated by the globalists, suppression of minority cultures and identities, rise of intolerance and fundamentalism, and globalization as antithetical to global consciousness. The net result that emerges from these consequences of globalization is economic ruin, social disarray, political marginalization, ecological catastrophe, and moral collapse. Since globalization brings about a number of negative consequences on the individuals and the society, it is necessary to find solutions to these problems.

In the second section, we propose to talk about the solution to the consequences of globalization. True solution to the problems brought about by globalization can be found in cultivating and practicing genuine concept of international development and bringing about a global ethics to guide the destiny of the people of the world. Development, in the international context, has to be a multidimensional proposition - broad enough to cover the whole gamut of values that must guide the life and activity of the human person. Too specialized and narrow targets of development may result in dehumanizing the human being. Similarly, feeling of affinity with the other leads to self-development of each individual through the pooling of human energies for the betterment of all in the larger society. This, in turn, would amalgamate the best elements within the conflicting ideologies, and would further human progress and development. A global ethics consists in arriving at a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes. Without such fundamental consensus on an ethics, sooner or later every community will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship, and development will become a chimera.

The conclusion presents cosmic/global consciousness that is found in the religious teachings of the world as that which can counter the global distress, supply the moral foundation for a better individual and global order, and provide a vision, which can lead

men and women away from chaos and despair. In the next section, we speak about the achievements and failures of globalization.

## Globalization: Its Achievements and Failures

Here, we highlight some of the advantages and disadvantages that accompanied the efforts to actualize the globalization process. Some of the topics we deal with in this section are - the positive and negative consequences of globalization, one-sided notion of development propagated by the globalists, suppression of minority cultures and identities, rise of intolerance and fundamentalism and globalization as antithetical to global consciousness. We briefly clarify each of these topics in the following subsections.

### *Positive and Negative Consequences of Globalization*

Globalization has had some positive impacts. It facilitated the transfer of technology, the escalation of productivity in specific sectors, and the improvement of the living standard of certain category of people, especially in developing countries. Despite these positive impacts, globalization also marginalizes and brings distress on the vulnerable and disadvantage regions and their people. The reason for this imbalance is the fact that the humans tend to be more caring for those close to home - the people of their own country. This unilateral disregard for the vulnerable community globally, ushered in by globalization, has come at a high cost because the costs are generally deferred and the future generations are forced to bear it. People prefer to embrace short-term benefits and ignore the long-term costs. This, in turn, leads them to act irrationally and engage in damaging activities that would affect their future. They are completely oblivious of the fact that local actions and policies do have global consequences, and that they should not turn a blind eye to these long-term consequences. Speaking of the adverse effects of globalization G. Sen says that it makes livelihood and entitlements insecure for many; creates and/or reinforces socioeconomic inequalities, such as gender, race, caste and class; marginalizes the labor and resource needs for human reproduction, thereby "marginalizing" women and their work; despoils the environment; forges imbalances among different human needs by privileging the

acquisition of material wealth over human and spiritual values, resulting in violence, alienation and despair; and generates conflicts and violence.[1] Taking an over-all view of globalization, considering its positive and negative consequences, we find that today we possess sufficient economic, cultural, and spiritual resources to introduce a better global order. However, old and new, ethnic, national, social, economic and religious tensions threaten the peaceful building of a better world. Though there has come about greater technological progress than never before, yet we see that worldwide poverty, hunger, death of children, unemployment, misery, and the destruction of nature have not diminished, but rather have increased. Many people are threatened with economic ruin, social disarray, political marginalization, ecological catastrophe and moral collapse.

*One-Sided Notion of Development*

In the last decade, there have been several discussions on the implications of globalization. One such discussion is on the positive and negative factors that globalization brings about on developmental processes, particularly in developing and under-developed countries. Globalization focuses mainly on economic development and ignores development in other spheres. This one-sided notion of development propagated by defenders of globalization, has affected the overall development of the society. Development is defined as a "composite reality." It is not only economic, but also cultural, philosophical, morals, *ethos* and values. In these developments, local cultures and identities are recognized as the valid elements of any design of humankind. For this reason, the *Copenhegen Summit on Social Development*, held in 1995, foresaw the kind of change that is taking place in the world today and, accordingly opined that the world is leading towards massive mobility of humankind, human resources, ideas and consciousness. To quote on this point: "Today the expansion of commercial television culture has reached such proportions that a poet and philosopher like Vaclav Havel, President of Czech Republic, has gone to the extent of dubbing it as a 'general

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[1] Cf. G. Sen: "Globalization, Justice and Equity: A Gender Perspective," *Development*, vol. 40, no. 2, p. 129.

threat to mankind' on par with the North-South divide, the depletion of the earth's resources and the rise of fanaticism."[2]

*Suppression of Minority Cultures and Identities*

People are apprehensive that globalization will affect local cultures, local identities, the philosophical heritage and the very diversities that constitute the cultural matrix of humankind. Gurmeet Kanwal express this concern as follows: "The world's rapid transition to globalization, spurred by the international integration of the production of goods and services, free flow of people, information and capital, giant leaps in communications and the diffusion of power to non-state actors, is bound to have an impact on the future of nation-states. However, the impact need not be entirely negative."[3] It would not be an exaggeration to state that disrespect to the "other culture" acts as a hindrance to globalization. European colonialism, which embodied a fundamental intolerance, had a belief that the role of European nations was to bring "civilized values" to the natives of the colonies that they had acquired. One does not come across any instance, wherein the European nations seriously attempting to make their colonies suitable for democracy, except where there was racial affinity, with white settler majorities, as in the United States of America, Australia and Canada.

In the post colonial era, the West took some strides towards globalization; but not without some riders. Accordingly, today, the underlying assumption of globalization is that the whole world is moving in the same direction and towards the same destination. The implication is that the whole world is becoming and should become more like the West. At the time of colonization democracy was not suitable for anyone else except the whites; but now everyone is required to adopt it, with all its western-style accoutrements. In short, globalization has brought with it a new kind of western hubris - present in Europe in a relatively benign form; and manifested in the United States in the belligerent manner, befitting a superpower. It

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[2] D. Padgaonkar: "Culture and Commerce," *The Times of India*, New Delhi Edition, November 17 (2002).

[3] Gurmeet Kanwal: "Imagined Homelands," *The Times of India*, Patna Edition, February 23 (2007).

calls the rest of the world to adopt western values and arrangements. In a nutshell, the heart of globalization is a new kind of intolerance in the West towards other cultures, traditions and values. The idea that each culture possesses its own specific wisdom and characteristics, its own novelty and uniqueness, born of its own individual struggle over thousands of years to cope with nature and circumstances, has been drowned out by the hue and cry that the world is now one; that the western model - the neoliberal markets, democracy, and the rest - is the template for all. The new attitude is driven by many factors. The emergence of an increasingly globalized market has engendered a belief that we are all consumers now; all have basically a similar identity. In this kind of reductionist thinking, the distance between buying habits and cultural/political mores is close to zero.

## Rise of Intolerance and Fundamentalism

Though we live in a world that has become a global village, where there is every external form of closeness with the other; yet we have become much more intolerant of the other, unless the other conforms to our way of thinking. It is the western condition of globalization, and it is the paradox of intimacy and intolerance, which suggests that the western reaction to the remorseless rise of the non-West will be far from benign. All it does is to narrow down the process of globalization. It gives rise to different forms of fundamentalism; even there will be fundamentalism of benign kinds, like consumer fundamentalism, environmental fundamentalism, industrial fundamentalism and the like. In this way, one finds that globalization creates turmoil at the top.

## Globalization: Antithetical to Global Consciousness

It should be realized that the stated process of globalization is completely antithetical to the concept of global consciousness. The basic thrust of globalization is derived from a belief that a large part of the world is only a market for goods and services, ideas and styles of living originating in a few countries that have acquired the necessary prowess through twists of recent history and their internal energy. The way modern communication and educational systems are organized help in this process. The bulk of societies that are

being conditioned by a few "conditioners" appear on the surface to go along with this process, while their internal structures automatically get busy creating a strong immunological response. The affected societies get sick because of their unduly strong immunelogical apparatus, which in turn, creates international problems and incidents. The fact that such immunologically induced pathologies are widespread in the current world which can be seen in a large number of examples within our own country, leaving aside what is happening to the old Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Mexico and much of Africa. I do not accept the idea that there is a built in personality trait of all science and technology that make the appearance of such pathological conditions inevitable. Technologies, even the most sophisticated technologies, can be configured in many different ways according to the dominant urges of society, particularly the modern technologies with their flexibility, scale invariance and neutrality towards decentralization.

Since globalization brings about a number of negative consequences on the individuals and the society, it is necessary to find solutions to these problems. In the second section, we propose to talk about the solution to the consequences of globalization.

## Solution to the Consequences of Globalization

Now, the questions we need to ask are the following. "What is the way out?" "How can we get rid of the negative side effects of globalization and lead the whole world towards progress and development?" True solution to the problems brought about by globalization can be found in cultivating and practicing genuine concept of international development and bringing about a global ethics to guide the destiny of the people of the world. We clarify both of these notions in the following sections.

### Concept of International Development

We need to understand the concept of development seen in the international context of globalization. A simple answer to this question - "What is development?" - would be "the realization of human potential leading to the enhancement of the individual personality and the society as a whole." Now, the realization of

human potential is a continuous process. Therefore, development is also a continuous process. Hence, there cannot be an ideal of total realization due to logical and natural factors. Thus, we cannot think of a stage, even in *utopian* terms, where we have the state of perfect development. Human development ought to be measurable both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Development should bring to the individuals results that can enrich their lives. Development must lead to removal of social disadvantages of the people. The valid method to identify development in a society is to identify the upliftment of the conditions of downtrodden masses of the society. When we have clarity regarding the social goals and make concerted efforts through social action to achieve these goals, there can come about development, which can be assessed objectively.

It is true that development cannot be achieved by philosophizing about it. However, it is also true that in the absence of clarity regarding the aims and ideals guiding economic, social, scientific and cultural development, none should expect harmonious development of all members of international society. Development should not be understood as the enhancement of any one nation or one section of people. Similarly, development in education should not only mean furtherance in the facilities of higher education, but also it should include proper and optimum utilization of the existing facilities available on the intra-country and inter-country levels. Thus, development should get linked with the legitimate aspirations of the masses. True developmental programs should bring about the absence of those regressive elements that benumb human initiative for betterment and hinder the growth of the humans as responsible persons. Development should not mean only the economic or the scientific development. Too much obsession with economic development may result in the destruction of those values, which distinguish man from other creatures in nature. Similarly belief in pure scientific development, and the attempts to have a society based only on scientific premises would create a monstrous world, which in turn, would eradicate all those checks and values that have characterized civilized human societies for ages. Development, in the international context, has to be a multidimensional proposition that is broad enough to cover the whole gamut of values that must guide the life and activity of the human person. Too specialized and narrow targets of development may result in dehumanizing the human

being. Human development has to reflect the emotional, the intellectual, the economic and the religious requirements of man within the social reality. It should be seen that no one aspect is allowed to submerge the other aspects within it and make them functionless.[4]

When we look into the history of nations of the world, we find the presence of constant interactions among nations, and groups within every nation. Such interactions can be understood under the two broad divisions: those which prove to be beneficial to the individuals and groups; and those which jeopardize individual and group interests. All those elements that strengthen the relation of affinity amongst individuals - irrespective of their racial, geographical and religious backgrounds - have to be utilized to help in the growth of dynamism, order and equality. The bonds of affinity will repel the forces, which create disorder and chaos, and make the societies grow healthy. The feeling of affinity would dispel the feeling of antagonism, opposition and difference, and thus, become the source of a continuous dialogue between warring social groups, and provide a non-violent solution to ideological, religious and economic contradictions and conflicts in human society. The philosophy of affinity would reflect the peak achievements of human mind, both in religion and science. The ethics of affinity would focus on the self-development of each individual through the pooling of human energies for the equal betterment of the individual and society. The ethics of affinity would affirm positively the significance of the knowledge given by science and its utilization for the progress of individual and society. The ethics of affinity would not explain away the discordance in the ideas and behavior of persons, but would recognize the need to amalgamate the best elements within the conflicting ideologies to further human progress.[5]

Accepting the defects one finds in the manner he lives and transcending the narrow grooves of tradition, would lead him to a balanced world. Thus, enlarging one's vision of human life, for the common benefit of the entire society, has to be brought about by allowing one's life to be guided by the values rooted in the genuine aspirations of mankind down the ages. These values neither should

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[4] Cf. B. V. Kishan: "Affinity, Action, Realization and Development: Presidential Address (Sectional)," *Indian Philosophical Congress*, 57th Session (1977).

[5] Cf. *Ibid*.

necessarily be oriented towards the scientific worldview, nor should they be in alignment with the religious worldview. When a person is open to the combination of many view-points - scientific, moral, religious and cultural - the human personality will become capable of allowing the basic value of affinity between persons and among mankind to produce a set of other values to safeguard it. There ought to be a substitution of affinity in the place of contradiction. Ethics of affinity would be ethics of peace. While taking the contradictions to their logical conclusions, there would be high level of probability of war and strife in societies, as both affinity and contradiction may have the equal chance of expression. Therefore, both are equally real. If both have to be viewed in terms of total human good, the reliance on affinity as a value would produce solitary environment for the growth of human understanding than relying on contradictions and antagonism of progress. Stress on affinity leads to social cohesion, while emphasis on contradictions lead to social chaos and class antagonism.[6]

*Concept of Global Ethics*

Today, humanity is badly in need of a global ethics. By global ethics, we do not mean a global ideology that amounts to a single unified religion beyond all existing religions, which would dominate all other religions of the world. A global ethics consists in arriving at a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes. Without such fundamental consensus on an ethics, sooner or later every community will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship, and development will become a chimera. A cursory glance on the development of human history also supports this idea. In the days of yore, people lived in small groups, separated by large distances from each other. In still earlier times, thousands of years ago, the isolation must have been greater. Anyway, we think it is inevitable that the ways of living, dressing, eating, communing with each other and coping with the environment would have been developed independently by most of these groups. Languages people used had to be different, also the nature of their philosophi-

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[6] Cf. *Ibid.*

zing. In this backdrop it is not surprising that the world came to have so much social and cultural diversity. Yet, it is amazing that the deep philosophical questions asked by various groups have so much commonality. Such a simple understanding of the human past, much before the dawn of the discipline of history, if embedded in our subconscious, can, in principle, lead to an easy accommodation with the other. In fact, it should lead to a celebration of the fact that there are relative others. It is, in the recognition and celebration of the other, the self is also preserved and savored. We need to learn this art of how to enjoy and be comfortable in the middle of diversity without foregoing the being of our own self.

## Conclusion

Much of what has been said above is incorporated in the idea of cosmic consciousness or global consciousness. Such a consciousness does not deny the right to feel that one is on top. However, it does imply that this viewpoint recognizes everyone else's right to feel so. One may concede that it is difficult. However, a transaction in this direction is not only desirable, but also necessary for a sustainable human existence. In some sense, this consciousness encompasses the ultimate in democracy. It might make us worthy of all the capabilities and powers, which science and technology have brought us and will continue bringing in the future. Such a consciousness already exists within the religious teachings of the world, which can counter the global distress. Even though this global ethics provides no direct solution for all the immense problems of the world, it does supply the moral foundation for a better individual and global order - a vision, which can lead women and men away from despair and world away from chaos.[7]

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[7] Cf. "A Global Ethics: The Universal Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religion," The *World's Religions after September 11*, ed. Arvind Sharma, vol. 2, appendix 9, pp. 261-262.

**16.**

# Intercultural Philosophy:
# Growing through Myriad  Approaches to
# Oneness

J. K. K. HERNDON

### Introduction

The world has become a physical unity in our time, but not a psychological unity. World unity can only be founded on a sense of world community, and this sense can only develop from interchange of the treasures of mind and imagination between the peoples, and a true understanding of the value of their different cultural and artistic traditions.[1]

The *Gītā Dhyānam* offers a refreshing set of prayers consistent with the goals of unity as outlined by our present study. Section two of the *Dhyānam Ślokās*, for example, is often chanted - within a scholastic setting - in unison as an invocatory prayer - simultaneously, by both the *guru* and the disciples alike - in order to help calm the mind and alertly attune the intellect to properly receive the subtleties of the ensuing philosophical dialogue and scriptural study. The text reads as follows: "*Om*. May He protect us both. May He cause us to enjoy. May we strive together. May our study become brilliant. May we not become disputatious." We would do well to whisper the intention of this brief prayer in our daily lives - not only within the present academic settings, but also at the start of each new day within the overall school of life.

In this chapter, we attempt to present S. Rathakrishnana's philosophical perspective that visualizes the whole world as a family that includes the diversity of religions and cultures. Having begun with a prayer from the *Dhyānam Ślokās* that calls all to strive for peace together, we moves on to speak of how ancient Gorkha and

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[1]S. Radhakrishnan: "Inaugural Address," *First Conference of UNESCO* (France: Sorbonne University of Paris, November, 1946).

Limbuwan kingdoms resolved their long-lasting strife and war through the treaty of peace symbolized by two containers of salt and water becoming one container of salt-water, when mixed together. In the next two sections, we state that it is in this spirit we must consider the international problem of migration, particularly the movement of refugees throughout the world. Then, after briefly considering the secular nature of Indian polity, which gives every religion its rightful place in the society, we point to the fact of globalization that makes the world a global village. The spirit that should guide people and nations in this globalized setting is the spiritual solidarity that makes us recognize we belong to each other and the world is a family.

Philosophers, as spiritual guides, who pass on this international family spirit must be without borders. They should teach that our love for our country should not stop at our borders; our love of our country does not mean that we must be nationalists; the best way to bring about a united world is to embrace diversity; and reasoning of intellectualism should give way to direct experience of intuition. We must face the challenges - a shrinking world of global civilization places on us - by accepting the approaches of diverse religions and cultures and through them move towards oneness. This calls for accepting a world philosophy - that includes good elements of every religion and culture - as the way of life and encouraging inter-religious dialogue. True peace cannot be brought about by war; it is incapable of leading the world towards unity and peace. The conclusion restates S. Radhakrishnan's belief that if we claim to be peacemakers, we must bring peace by building bridges among diverse people. Hence, philosophers are called to build bridges among people; invite them to be civilized; lead them to love justice and cherish mercy; and affirm that they are first and foremost Citizens of the World.

### Gorkha-Limbuwan Kingdoms Treaty of 1774 C.E.

We must recreate and re-enact a vision of the world based on the elements of reverence, order, and human dignity, without which no society can be held together ...  To do this, we need a recovery of spiritual awareness, a new and

transforming contact with the inner springs of life, a sense of value.[2]

In the relatively recent history of *Bharat*, the noble kingdoms of Gorkha and Limbu, scattered throughout the Himalayas, now within the modern-day Nepal, were at war between the years 1771 to 1774 C.E. Largely, this ongoing feud had to do with each kingdom encroaching upon the territory and resources of the other. As populations began to mingle and cross-cultural misunderstandings multiplied at an ever-alarming pace, the bloody battles ensued. Such a narrative is commonplace and completely understandable, given our own multicultural clashes and confrontations today.  Eventually, an agreement of concord was struck.

Radhakrishnan recounts the tale of the Limbu Treaty of 1774 C.E., during which the Gorkha Bhardars swore an oath to the Limbu ministers, promising that their king (*raja*) would never again seek to confiscate their self-autonomous lands, nor harm their people in any way. What is striking about this particular treaty is that a profound objective lesson was employed during the oath, which is still remembered right up to our very own day. Two large identical copper cauldrons, each filled to the brim - one with salt, the other with water - were brought before the leaders of both contending parties. "How can we both occupy the same land peacefully?" they exclaimed - it's impossible! But, sure as the sun rose the following morning, the entire volume of salt had mingled entirely with the entire volume of water filling only one container harmoniously. To quote: "You, the Gorham, are like water … and we, the Mirant Limbo people, are like salt. You Gorham people want us to melt in you, but you will not remain as before. When we mix or amalgamate with you, then you Gorham will be more exalted than before…  Let this be our agreement, decreed Gorham King: I want to have you as the members of my own family."[3]

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[2]S. Radhakrishnan: "Time for Work, Not Feud," *Television Broadcast to the Nation, on His Laying down of the Office of the President of India*, May 12th (1967).

[3] S. Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, eds.: *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*  (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 149-151.

### Salt and Water: Europe and Steady Influx of Refugees

Society, all civilization, has been one persistent effort to live in harmony with other beings ... We go on trying until the whole world becomes our own family - our kingdom.[4]

So, what is the magic recipe for mixing the contents of two identical buckets - one filled with water, and the other filled with salt - to comfortably fit within the volume of just one single bucket? In his own day, Jesus often reminded his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth." When the Master spoke of his devotees as the salt of the earth, he had in mind that future generations should not only merge and fit into society in peace and harmony, but also that they might add flavor and even strive to sweeten their respective communities. Moreover, they should do so readily and even eagerly - neither begrudgingly nor reluctantly. Every householder in India knows how a flavorful mix of spices (*macula*) within even the most hum-drum standards of daily cuisine adds a noticeable and appreciable taste and a distinctive flavor. Likewise, our modern-day pockets of otherwise bland and homogeneous populations are gradually feeling the mix and the rub!

### Current Worldwide Migration of Refugees: Globalization and March of Civilization

It is impossible for any nation to stand still and stiff within its closed gates, while humanity is marching on. The world is no more a miscellaneous collection of odd and dislocated spots where we could live alone. It has become a small neighborhood where we would neither live alone, nor be left alone. We cannot return to the walled cities of the middle ages. The flood of modern ideas is pouring in on us from every side, and will take no denial.[5]

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[4]S. Radhakrishnan: "My Search for Truth," *Religion in Transition*, ed. Vergilius Firm (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1937), p. 5.

[5]S. Rathakrishnan: *The Foundations of Civilizations: Ideas and Ideals*, ed. Sarvepalli Gopal (New Delhi: Orient, 2009), p. 15.

Long-gone are the parochial pockets of partition within our shrinking global village - those isolated, insular enclaves of xenophobia we have come to crave. Moreover, it is important to realize that our contemporary, turbulent period in history is not the first time that Europe has faced an influx of new immigrants, and the accompanying new *ideas* which are, inevitably, introduced simulta-neously. Following an extended era of dark ages, Italy gradually flickered a bright spark of hope. The Renaissance in Europe was marked by a striking cross-fertilization of ideas within and among the various arts and sciences; the mingling cultures embarked upon an intercultural adventure in creativity, due in large part to the mixing of disparate populations. Commerce, communication and a rich exchange of ideas - each experienced a renaissance in both scope and influence. A revived interest in the classics was also kindled, as "the Greek spirit of intellectual adventure and exploration" spread throughout Europe. In their turn, humanism, the reformation, the establishment of universities, and the discovery of the New World - each sprang from the optimistic temper of the age.

In many respects, the European Renaissance anticipated the Indian Renaissance of the early 20th century. In subsequent eras, dynamic elements such as jingoism and multiculturalism would later thrust themselves upon the global stage of ideas. Radhakrishnan himself had correctly assessed: "The cosmopolitanism of the eighteenth century and the nationalism of the nineteenth century are combined in our ideal of a world-commonwealth."[6] May we not shrink from this notion of true internationalism as the march of time quickens afoot. As a champion for Indian independence, Radhakrishnan was indeed a staunch advocate of both the *neo-Advaita* renaissance and the newfound political landscape of *secularism*.

## India: A "Secular" State

Secularism does not mean the neglect of religion ... It is not indifference to religion, but respect for all faiths - respect for everything which a human being holds sacred.[7]

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[6]S. Radhakrishnan: *The Hindu View of Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1927), p. 42.

[7]S. Radhakrishnan: *Faith Renewed*, ed. Sarvepalli Gopal (New Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 2009), p. 32.

Radhakrishnan's universal vision played a significant role in steering his own burgeoning Indian Republic in the direction of becoming truly *secular*. At the time, many observers on the international scene found it to be quite paradoxical, indeed, that the most notably spiritual, mystical, and religious land in history, would wholeheartedly endorse the creation of a staunchly *secular* state. Surprising! Yet, perhaps counter-intuitively, we can nowadays recognize how the distinguishing hallmarks of the young nation's equal respect for all faiths and extravagant hospitality have stood as the signature characteristics of the subcontinent for millennia. In his typical style of reinterpreting language afresh, Radhakrishnan defines *secularism* as "hospitality to every kind of faith."[8]

India's daring preference for developing along the lines of a secular state - instead of a staunchly Hindu state, which at the time constituted a clear majority - underscored her unflinching courage and commitment to demonstrating respect, tolerance and good will towards her fellow citizens from amongst a wide variety of living faiths and practices. Secularism, in this respect, did not intend to demonstrate a disregard for the importance of religion, but rather, it underscored religion's supreme importance in the life of the nation. In this line of reasoning, argues Radhakrishnan: "Secularism… does not mean irreligion or atheism or even stress on material comforts… It lays stress on the universality of spiritual values."[9] In light of this observation, we can appreciate how India has continued to extend its heritage and hospitality to accommodate both salt and water, even up to modern times. *Jai Hind!*

### Globalization: Scientific and Technological Factors

Distances have so shrunk in the modern world that not only people but ideas travel fast. The great religions of the world are interconnected.[10]

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[8] S. Radhakrishnan: "My Search for Truth," *Religion in Transition*, ed. Vergilius Firm, p. 38.

[9] S. Radhakrishnan: *Faith Renewed*, ed. Sarvepalli Gopal, p. 74.

[10] S. Radhakrishnan: *The Brahma Sūtra: The Philosophy of Spiritual Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1959), p. 10.

Technology is shrinking our world down to a single global village. "Today, the world has become a much smaller place," notes Radhakrishnan, "thanks to the adventures and miracles of science."[11] In today's environment, we have inherited a world of increased global connectivity and worldwide institutions in all spheres of influence. Intercultural contact between previously separate and even isolated communities and civilizations is now an everyday experience. A century ago, when Radhakrishnan began to write, these modern luxuries and conveniences were only in their embryonic stages. In many respects, he prophesied this bold upstart. He said: "The world is becoming increasingly interconnected, and cultures and civilizations are mingling… Our task is not to displace one way of life by another, but to share the treasures of which each is the guardian."[12]

What a tangled web we weave! "Science has produced the necessary means for easy transport of men and communication of thought. Intellectually, the world is bound together in a web of common ideas and reciprocal knowledge."[13] Sound familiar? The ancient Biblical prophet Daniel predicted, more than two-and-a-half millennia ago, that knowledge would increase exponentially  - information doubling, and that individuals would travel to and fro across the earth  -  intercontinental air travel  -  in relative ease and comfort.[14]  These two features are inseparably linked. This hitherto unimaginable prediction successfully came to pass around the turn of the twentieth century, just at the time the young Radhakrishnan was entering the prime of his life. The Silk Road, the Roman roads, bridges and railways connect not only people, but also ideas, as we have come to appreciate this from history. Radhakrishnan was writing about globalization as early as the mid-twentieth century. In this respect, his bold and even upstart ideas appeared to be quite prophetic, indeed!

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[11] S. Radhakrishnan: *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 42.

[12] S. Radhakrishnan: *East and West: Some Reflections* (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1956), p. 120.

[13] S. Radhakrishnan: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought: Anthology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 411.

[14] Cf. "The Book of Daniel," *The New American Bible*,  Chapter 2.

Besides, Radhakrishnan's notion of a "web of common ideas and reciprocal knowledge"[15] is a concept we who live in the post-modern philosophical environment can easily understand. However, we must point out that in proposing this concept in his time, he was putting forth a concept that was well ahead of his time! He clearly understood, already in his time, the post-modern philosophical mindset of intersubjectivity and the tangled web of ideas that comprise our present-day culture would ultimately shape our civilization. Radhakrishnan reports that our world community is inter-connected not only economically and politically, but also spiritually. Scientifically, globalization had enabled the intentional development of a worldwide commonwealth of spirituality and the formation of a free fellowship of world religions.

According to Radhakrishnan, the Jet-Set *Guru*, whether we are ready or not, whether we like it or not "the world has become one ... East and West have come together, and they can never part again."[16] In hindsight, it is becoming clear how the advent of transoceanic air travel logistically enabled Radhakrishnan to be a true intercomtinental bridge-builder. Such a possibility was unimaginable just a generation earlier. Thanks to technology, Radhakrishnan quite literally served as a bridge of understanding between many of great cultures. Therefore, for him, "the interpenetration of peoples and cultures is not a *utopian* ideal, but a practical reality."[17]

Nowadays, we take for granted the relative ease and convenience of global air travel. However, we must remember that the peak period of Radhakrishnan's academic prowess conveniently and cosmically coincided with the advent of intercontinental air travel. In fact, he held two chairs in two different continents simultaneously - both in Kolkata and Oxford. This is an amazing feat in itself, even by today's standards. Surely, he must have been among the very first professors in history to simultaneously hold multiple chairs of philosophy at top universities spanning two completely different continents! Clearly, this global-minded visionary was quite at home in his native India and abroad.

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[15] S. Radhakrishnan: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought: Anthology*, p. 411.

[16] S. Radhakrishnan: "My Search for Truth," *Religion in Transition*, ed. Vergilius Firm, p. 149.

[17] S. Radhakrishnan: *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 42.

**Spiritual Solidarity: "I Belong to You!"**

The world is my family.[18]

Recently, while attending a weeklong course in meditation, the *guru* sensed that our group might not yet have established the desired level of *unity* that he had hoped for us. As a result, our spiritual progress in the course, even at that early stage, was at a perceptible standstill. So, the instructor paused his formal instructtion, in order that we might have the opportunity to become better acquainted with our fellow participants. Of course, there was a noticeable uneasiness among our crowd, as each of us was awkwardly expecting to exchange a customary handshake and an obligatory "nice to meet you." Instead, to our pleasant surprise, our mentor encouraged us to greet one another with the endearing words "I belong to you!" Needless to say, after about our third or fourth such greeting, the import of this startling philosophical fact began to dawn upon each of us with full force.

Embarrassing as it might be to admit, this simple yet powerful truth of *spiritual solidarity* was the single most valuable lesson the present researcher had learned all week! The practical application of this philosophical insight is clear. Many well-intended religious individuals in today's world are, in fact, on-course for spiritual advancement. Each of us, from among a myriad of different religious backgrounds, deeply desiring to grow in spirit, and making gallant efforts in the right direction. Each in his/her own little world - independently seeking to advance - would perhaps prefer not to be bothered with the mundane niceties of becoming better acquainted with our fellow pilgrims. After all, for a majority of practitioners, it is much more comfortable to simply remain an anonymous wallflower in the course of life, until we realize that our own spiritual development and further progress *depends* on such deep personal interaction with the other. Spiritual solidarity is a gradual process of mutual acquaintance - of one individual with another, one faith with another - which in turn, leads to greater familiarity, respect, understanding, appreciation and cooperation. Though inherently a

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[18] A quotation from *Mahā Upaniṣad.*

selfless act, we quickly discover that pursuing spiritual solidarity can be intensely self-serving and world-serving! In the rewarding pursuit of nurturing spiritual solidarity, each precious person deserves a place in the winning circle! "In the world today," echoes Radhakrishnan, "we have pledged ourselves to international co-operation and peace. There is no isolation any more - geographical, political, economic or cultural. The spirit of cooperativeness is to be carried beyond the nation, to the community of nations."[19]

In today's globalized environment, *bona fide* spiritual solidarity must become a living reality. Otherwise, all prospects for *our own* spiritual progress will remain stunted and stagnant. Whether it is intercontinental air travel, the internet, an increasingly entangled economic infrastructure, or today's pluralistic educational and work environment, it seems we are increasingly forced to get to know each other. So, let us get on with the introductions and become better acquainted - after all, "You belong to me!" For Radhakrishnan, "every creed is an adventure of faith, an approach to experience."[20] We belong to each other; there is much to learn and experience from each other.

## Philosophers: Without Borders

The love of one's country is a splendid thing. But why should love stop at the border?[21]

I love my country too much to be a nationalist.[22]

Regardless of our country of origin or personal religious affiliation, we are beginning to realize that there exists an inherent *spirituality* within each individual. Recognition of this universal *unity of spirit* has the capacity to raise the human family to new levels of harmony, dignity, and mutual-respect. A famous *Sufi* teaching confirms that "the soul of Oneness is the soul of man - the soul of all-

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[19] S. Radhakrishnan and Poolla Tirupati Raju, eds.: *The Concept of Man: A Study in Comparative Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960), p. 24.

[20] S. Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1927), p. 652.

[21] A quote from Pablo Casals.

[22] A quote from Albert Camus.

inclusive sympathy, of unity and of non-separateness." A Native American saying of the mighty Sioux nation maintains that "there can never be peace between nations until it is first known that true peace is within the souls of men." The Buddha himself taught: "Blessed is the teaching of truth; blessed is the harmony of the community; blessed is the union of those who live in peace." The Judeo-Christian tradition echoes: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity."[23]

### Embracing Unity in Diversity, or the Other Way Round?

Nothing human is alien to us. We are no more members of this or that particular group, but belong to humanity as a whole. We have the primary patriotism, which is the love of humanity.[24]

*Unity in diversity* has become a common and oft-repeated battle cry within inter-religious and cross-cultural circles. While the sentiment is, indeed, quite noble and well-meaning, we unfortunately appear to have placed the cart before the horse, philosophically-speaking. Logically, according to Radhakrishnan's *Advaita* gospel, the underlying ground of *Reality* is Oneness, rather than multiplicity. In this light, perhaps the best slogan might well be celebrating *Diversity in Unity*.

When we speak of concentric circles of identity in the context of history of philosophy and the perception of individual self, we find the influence of existential thinking in Radhakrishnan's thought. As existentialism was present within philosophical circles throughout the formative years of Radhakrishnan's career, the question of identity - exploring an expanding sense of self and investigating the concept of man - echoed throughout much of Radhakrishnan's writings. He says: "India happens to be the laboratory, where different cultures, different religions, different races, have met together ... If we are able to succeed in the task of integrating them all, the world platform ... may be able to succeed in the endeavor of building up a

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[23] "The Book of Psalms," *The New American Bible*, 113: 1.

[24] S. Radhakrishnan: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought: Anthology*, p. 52.

world community, while preserving variety."[25]  As our concentric circles of identification expand to transcend and encompass a wider evolution of consciousness, our collective history of philosophy may yet inevitably blossom into a more inclusive and expanded sense of the individual self. The progressive growth of one's consciousness is shown in the following table.

| Gross Ego | Walking State | Exclusiveism/Radical Fundamentalism | Anihilation/Dominatin Extreme Absolutism |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subtle Ego | Dream State | Inclusiveism/Charitable Inclusion | Assimilatin/Accommodation Extravagant Hospitality |
| Causal Ego | Formless Sleep | Pluralism/Nobal Toleration | Integration/Synthesis Enduring Acceptance |
| Non-dual Ego | Oneness (*turīya*) | Sublime Transcendence | Oneness/Unification Esceptional Harmony |

Unity in a society does not come from conformity; true unity can only come from granting equality and validity to the infinite diversity of all individuals. The universe is infinitely diverse; every being has their own way of exploring the idea of infinite creation, and all these ways are each equally valuable. When a society encourages the unique expression of each individual, the society is strongest and most unified. When you grant equality and validity to everyone, you are granting equality and validity to all aspects of creation. The consequence is that the entire creation supports you in everything you do as well!

### Trend: Direct Experience Trumps Dogma

Ideals, faith, morality, and cultivating things of the spirit ... These balance and give meaning to both individuals and societies. When spiritual beliefs are eroded away, cultural decline is inevitable."[26]

According to Radhakrishnan, right from the very beginning of the twentieth century, we notice a global shift towards mysticism and experience - *higher intuition*, and a turning away from doctrinal

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[25] S. Radhakrishnan: "My Search for Truth," *Religion in Transition*, ed. Vergilius Firm, pp. 40-41.

[26] S. Radhakrishnan: *East and West: Some Reflections*, p. 17.

creeds and dogmas - *intellectualism*. For better or for worse, this most certainly appears to be the general trend. Radhakrishnan would, in fact, argue in favor of such a development. While *intellectualism* tends to separate and compartmentalize, *higher intuition* demonstrates a more comprehensive and synthetic spirit. "The half-religious and the irreligious fight about dogmas," says Radhakrishnan, "and not the truly religious ... The more religious we grow, the more tolerant of diversity we become."[27]

## Global Civilization: A Shrinking World

> Today, the world has become a much smaller place, thanks to the adventures and miracles of science. Foreign nations have become out next-door neighbors. Mingling of populations is bringing about an interchange of thought. We are slowly realizing that the world is a single cooperative group.[28]

Our planet has become one global commonwealth with a single citizenship. Former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan once remarked: "Arguing against globalization is like arguing against the law of gravity." In his own *Search for Truth*, Radhakrishnan likewise anticipated this notion. He says: "The world has become one, *whether you like it or not*; East and West have come together, and they can never part again."[29] It is amazing to see how many protesters come out for global summit meetings, in which a growingly inter-connected fellowship of nations come together to discuss matters of economics, politics and the like. The question naturally arises as to whether there would be such adamant protests and uproar over matters of inter-spiritual harmony and interfaith cooperation? "As men approach Me," declares the holy Lord Krishna, "so do I accept them; [individuals] *on all sides* follow My path..." [30] Apparently, the holy Lord appreciates a healthy inter-

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[27] S. Radhakrishnan.: *The Hindu View of Life*, pp. 43-44.

[28] *Ibid*., p. 42.

[29]S. Radhakrishnan: "My Search for Truth,"  *Religion in Transition*, ed. Vergilius Firm, p. 149.

[30] S. Radhakrishnan: *The Bhagavadgītā* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. , 1948), 4.11.

mingling of ideals and approaches. In an equally ancient era, the captain of the Lord's hosts had an encounter with Joshua on the eve of the battle of Jericho. Joshua, the commander of the children of Israel, who was about to lay siege upon a significant and well-fortified foe, was eager to interact and inquire of this other-worldly figure. Laying down his sword and bowing low to the ground, General Joshua's immediate question to the pre-incarnate Christ was: "Whose side are you on? Are You with us, or are You with our enemies?" After an extended pause, no doubt, the clarion answer resounded from the lips of the holy Lord: "Neither!"

The nature of culture is such that it seeks to naturally spread and expand, much as we have discovered examining closely the etymology behind the root for *Brahman*, which likewise implies exponential growth and expansion. In all actuality, however, *Brahman* is always exactly the same size - infinite! After all, it is simply our own view of *Brahman* that is ever-expanding; the Absolute is always more than we can imagine, and ever beyond our greatest thoughts. The Holy Bible echoes this important point when St. Paul indicates: "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has in entered into the mind of men…"  Likewise, the prayer of Jabez, in which the child of God implores "enlarge my territory," is not speaking strictly about additional acreage, real estate or increased land acquisition; rather, he is interested in developing a wider worldview and an expanded sphere of identity and influence. Within our shrinking world, our global village is quickly becoming interconnected in all ways. In this world of increased global connectivity and worldwide institutions, intercultural contact between previously separate and even isolated communities and civilizations is on the rise. So, when confronted with new individuals and new ideas, what should be our response?

### Spectrum of Response:  Facing New and Challenging Ideas

Above all, one must learn to be loyal to the spirit of loyalty in other people… world-loyalty is the essence of religion. It is the deepest truth and the widest charity ... Religious life becomes a cooperative enterprise, Binding together differ-

ent traditions and perspectives, to the end of attaining a clearer vision of the perfect Reality."[31]

New and challenging ideas present opportunities to grow and expand. After all, "consideration for others is a quality of a cultivated mind ... the product of the good breeding of the mind."[32]  Speaking of his native homeland, President Radhakrishnan reminds his readers that India "has been a country where all religions are welcomed, not merely tolerated, and they are appreciated by the practitioners of other religions."[33] Yet, there is always a wide spectrum of response. The gamut of one's responses to different races, cultures and creeds range from extermination - genocide to subordination; imperialism to identification  -  to acceptance and eventually harmonization and unification.[34]   In this respect, integration is both the goal and the means for progress and development - both individually and collectively.

In his own day, Radhakrishnan was a notable exponent of Indian culture. He was well known on an international scale, and as his name and fame rose, so too did that of his burgeoning nation's culture. As an ambassador, Radhakrishnan represented more than simply his country's political interests; he nobly and faithfully represented his country's outstanding ideals. For him, new ideas from around the globe represented a *complement* rather than a challenge to one's faith. Radhakrishnan frequently recalled how he has visited and even spoken at a number of various holy sites throughout the world "without any compromise of my intellectual conscience, or injury to my spiritual convictions."[35]  We would do well to follow in his footsteps.

What is one's response to new ideas? Do new ideas present a threat and challenge, or an opportunity? It is seen to be a competition, or a compliment? It might just be an opportunity to deepen/broaden our own religious understanding. In this respect, one should demonstrate tolerance, respect and even come to value

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[31] S. Radhakrishnan: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought: Anthology*, p. 338.

[32] *Ibid*., 315.

[33]  S. Radhakrishnan:  *Our Heritage*  (Mumbai: Hind Pocket Books Pvt. Ltd., 1973), p. 9.

[34] Cf. S. Radhakrishnan: *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 68.

[35] S. Radhakrishnan:  *Our Heritage*, p. 9.

and appreciate other faiths and cultures. In ancient times within India, when different cultures moved into the neighborhood, the indigenous tradition was usually augmented and expanded, not challenged, threatened or exterminated. It assimilated the best of the newcomers' tradition. As noted earlier, the spirit of generous hospitality and extravagant cordiality were the order of the day. The outsiders were neither tolerated begrudgingly, nor accepted half-heartedly, but celebrated and even enthusiastically welcomed.

### Expanding through Various Approaches to Oneness

> Let us have concord with our own people, and concord with people who are strangers to us ... create between us and the strangers a unity of hearts. May we unite in our minds, unite in our purposes, and not fight against the divine spirit within us ...[36]

Within Radhakrishnan's vision of *concordant evolution*, the comparative method in philosophical endeavors serves to heighten our consciousness, rather than demonstrate superiority. In fact, it may be surprising to some to see how the myriad ways of oneness actually represent progressive stages of one's development and maturation in consciousness: beginning from an orientation of exclusivity one develops through inclusivity towards a perspective of pluralism, which invariably blossoms into full-blown integration.[37] Concord is Meritorious! Thus, Radhakrishnan's comparative approach highlights, this fourfold model - exclusivity, inclusivity, pluralism and integration. This approach actually represents the progressive, stair-step stages of successive development within one's own overall consciousness. The following table shows the possibilities of growing through the myriad approaches to oneness and the intercultural reactions to identity and new ideas.

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[36] A quotation from *Atharva Veda*, 7.52. 1, 2.

[37] Troy Wilson Organ: *Radhakrishnan and the Ways of Oneness East and West* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1989), pp. 45-48.

| 1-C-3 | Annihilation | Extermination | Death to the Enemy I will eliminate you. |
| 1-C-3 | Domination | Subjection | I will establish supremacy over you by force. |
| 1-D-1 | Assimilation | Absorption | I will submume you by incorporation. |
| 1-D-2 | Accommodation | Toleration | I am obliged to endure you and be hospitable. |
| 3-D-2 | Integration | Consolidation | Salad Bowl Elements remain identifiable |
| 3-C-5 | Synthesis | Amalgamation | Soup Bowl - Elements are combined & blended |
| 4-C-5 | Polarization | Paradox | You and I are two sides of the same coin. |
| 4-C-2 | Harmonization | Unification | There is no *you* and *me* - we are one (one-duality) |

## World Philosophy: A Way of Life

The world, which has found itself as a single body, is feeling for its soul. Prepare for the truth of the world's yet unborn soul by a free interchange of ideas, and the development of a philosophy which will combine the best of European humanism and Asiatic religion - a philosophy profounder and more living than either… the development of a *world perspective* in philosophy.[38]

Whole-person-centered philosophy combines the best of the East and the Rest. In the mathematics of world philosophy and the comparative approach, we soon discover that one plus one always equals more than two! One beautiful aspect of the Rabbinic methodology of *midrashim* is to juxtapose two disparate scriptural texts, and then observe what additional spiritual truths emerge,

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[38]S. Radhakrishnan: "The Religion of the Spirit and the World's Need: Fragments of a Confession," *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1952), p. 19.

which were hitherto unseen without their close comparison. The same can be seen in human relationships, wherein two individuals who are truly unified exert much more influence than two independent singles. For Radhakrishnan, considering the best from among both the East and the West generates a philosophical platform that is "profounder and more living" than the two separate cultures of thought by themselves. Integration connotes more of a corporate or communal way to perfection. In Radhakrishnan's system, this ultimate state of unification is our collective and *utopian* goal of realizing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. *Religion in a Changing World* illustrates this dignified ideal in a most practical and straightforward manner. Such a broadening realization of Oneness ultimately answers the ancient quandary: "Where do we go from here?" As the various applied fields of philosophy suggest, wisdom in action is indeed the crowning pinnacle of the philosophical pursuit. The wide arc of Radhakrishnan's entire life - from researcher, to diplomat, to President of the new Republic of India - aptly demonstrates this noble embodiment of wisdom and the overall philosophical endeavor.

Our oneness with the whole universe is the primary fact of our latent, divine secret within. According to Radhakrishnan, the all-pervasive Spirit permeates all true and living religious forms globally. Accordingly, the religion of the spirit is a dynamic fellowship of complementary, not competing faiths; a tapestry or patchwork quilt of all varieties of beautifully interwoven traditions; not a syncretism, but a solidarity of equals; not the forging of an entirely new faith, but a fellowship of diverse creeds. In today's world, Radhakrishnan's idealistic dream constitutes a genuine experience of startling unity amidst stark diversity. Our collective, universal consciousness is permeated by underlying assumptions, beliefs, and structures of thought. Carl Jung delves into our collective unconscious, and Joseph Campbell tells of myths and archetypes that permeate the perennial within our collective memory. Radhakrishnan, moreover, tells of the underlying unity of the religion of the spirit - in essence, the *Religion behind all religions*, which he believes undergirds the religious fabric of our entire civilization.

Within the comparative approach, we must inquire what is the relationship of the religions, one to another, especially in the context of competing truth claims? Ultimately, syncretism is not the goal; a

one-world religion is not what is intended. Instead, a living and vital fellowship of faiths  -  a dynamic solidarity of complementary cultures  -  is precisely what Radhakrishnan envisions within his philosophical framework. What, indeed, is the purpose of inter-religious dialogue within the context of the relative pluralism we see all around? Can we find some semblance of unity amidst such stark diversity? Radhakrishnan reminds us that mutual understanding, resonance and enrichment are the mutual goals within the comparative methodology. We must strive to understand a faith tradition so thoroughly and completely, and faithfully articulate it as well as any member of that specific tradition. Only then can one begin to understand another faith group in the most objective and fair-minded manner possible.

Reexamining and rereading of one's own religious texts by carefully considering the tradition of another is a valuable enterprise. Even the most finely-honed theological systems represent, at best, our closest approximations to *Absolute Truth*. As such, we require the revitalizing rub of our fellow pilgrims to cheer us on to grander vistas that await our discovery beyond the horizon. Certain religious accents within a certain religious tradition  -  in terms of specific doctrines, creeds or rites  -  can be understood as meaningful points of *emphasis* that have been cherished historically by a vast multitude of individuals. From the individual micro level, we would do well to briefly take a glimpse at the macro level  -   the big picture, within the comparative approach. As a tradition, Christianity itself, as we have it today, has undergone a seasoning and reshaping in its central core identification, as a result of interaction and dialogue with neighboring cultures and philosophical influences; she has been seasoned by a strange admixture of Greek Hellenism, neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and other elements considered foreign to her originally Semitic underpinnings. For better or worse, the tradition we experience today is itself a result of inter-religious dialogue at the macro level.

Radhakrishnan reminds us that reimagining our own traditions and teachings from another vantage point helps us to better conceptualize and even reframe our own precious truths in a new light. Comparative religion, if properly approached, cannot help but produce a more vibrant strain of thought, through a reflective re-reading of our tradition in light of the emphases of other world

religions and ideologies. No one group can claim to have exhausted the full meaning of a point of theological truth; we can certainly stand to benefit from each other in this cross-fertilization of ideas known as the comparative approach.

## Implications for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Comparative Religion

Mutual understanding is not possible without mutual respect and sympathy born of it… No cultural or religious imperialist, who has the settled conviction that he alone has all the light and others are groping in darkness, can be a safe guide in comparative studies.[39]

The realms of inter-religious dialogue and comparative religion are to be found among the hinterland between mere tolerance and full acceptance. Tolerance, though a definite milestone to be applauded in today's global community, will simply not suffice in the long run. As the world becomes a smaller place in today's global and information society, philosophically speaking, there exists the greater likelihood of stepping on each other's toes. Misunderstanding among the world religions has dire consequences. We have seen this historically, and we are seeing it today as well. Yet, a shrinking and information-rich world also holds the potential for the golden possibility of mutual understanding.

As people travel more widely and interact within various cultures and inter-religious environments, greater thoughtfulness and consideration will inevitably prevail. This is the ideal laboratory, in which we should lift the veil of ignorance, and move from tolerance to understanding. Within this realm of understanding, the goal of both inter-religious dialogue and comparative religion is to discover common ground by celebrating parallels and identify differences by appreciating distinctions. There is simply no room for intolerance or persecution in our fragile world today. We should be equally as certain that the expectation of full acceptance is a pipe-dream at best, and championship of one's religious philosophies - by forced conversion - can nearly bring us full-circle to the ugliness of

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[39] S. Radhakrishnan: *The Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 673.

persecution and intolerance we are striving to avoid. This should never be the goal of the philosopher - the seeker of truth. Ultimately, the approach of debate and dialectic speak to acceptance and championing. Dialogue, philosophically, seeks nothing more than greater understanding. This is the goal of inter-religious dialogue and comparative religion, and this is the goal of my research.

One of the founding Church Fathers within the Christian tradition once asked: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" In this line of questioning, this astute second-century C.E. thinker was inquiring as to why we should consider other schools of thought, once we are satisfied that we have established the truthfulness of our own tradition. In many ways, this two-millennia-old question is equally viable today. The fact is, as we survey the spiritual land-scape, our natural curiosity is aroused. We can surely understand and appreciate our own traditions better when we properly give a thoughtful examination of other cultures and worldviews. Deeper insight into one's own tradition naturally springs from profitable communication and mutual understanding among the traditions of others.

The Philosophy of Spirit, otherwise known as the *World Philosophy*, speaks to the universal experience of spirituality to be found among all world religions. One may question as to whether Radhakrishnan was true to his own Hindu tradition in reaching out to the West, or whether he capitulated too much. One may even question as to whether this approach is ultimately effective. However, one thing is certain that his overall approach bears the mark of nobility and excellence, and his life most certainly spoke volumes as to both his personal conviction and genuine sincerity

## Today's Philosophers: Bridge-Builders

Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.[40]

Genuine peace in the twenty-first century will not be forced by military might, neither cajoled by political intrigue, nor imposed by economic sanction. This is true, in large part, because the current

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[40] A quote from the Preamble of the UNESCO Constitution.

conflicts in which we find ourselves embroiled are primarily conflicts of *ideas*. So what is the role of the philosopher today? Is there any practical purpose to the study of philosophy within the international arena? In the twenty-first century, many globally-minded individuals have begun to suspect that lasting peace will not come through military, political and economic solutions alone. We simply cannot drop bombs; neither proffer enough speeches, nor sanction the daylights out of our neighbors enough to achieve any resemblance of stability. In the current century, the victory of true peace will not be brought about by military strategists, politicians or economists, but by philosophers!  Only thinking individuals, in honest dialogue and cooperation with one another can become true agents of peace. Within the overall framework of his philosophy, Radhakrishnan urges this approach of genuine dialogue not only as a noble approach for general goodwill among nations, but also for the sheer survival of our human race! He says: "It is ... survival or suicide ... a time for decision, not despair ... the choice is either extinction, or human brotherhood."[41] This idealistic philosophical orientation of Radhakrishnan would suggest, along with the opening salvo of the Preamble to the Charter of UNESCO that all violence and war begins within the minds of individuals. If this is the case, then, it would also follow that the defenses of peace should likewise be constructed within the mind. By reorienting our worldview, we might collectively be able to reverse the onset of fear, hatred and suspicion.

Successive advances towards perfection represent the hallmark of the religion of the spirit. For Radhakrishnan, the crowning achievement of the philosophical endeavor is wisdom-in-action. One's subjective mastery gradually begins to grow and expand as the notion of objective victimization successively wanes. This is the progressive movement towards Being. In order to advance in this process, the religion of the spirit provides a universal platform for global harmony/unity. Within such an understanding, the practical bearing of philosophy on life must become our central interest.

We have come to explore within Radhakrishnan's writings how the *Dharma* is a way of life. The essential goal is how we live, not

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[41] S. Radhakrishnan and Poolla Tirupati Raju, eds.: *The Concept of Man: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*, p. 26.

what we believe. Moreover, what counts is not so much what we do, but ultimately, who we are. According to the idealistic philosophy represented by Radhakrishnan's writings, the ideals we cherish gradually develop into our character, and eventually blossom organically and materialize. Our world gradually begins to reflect the core values esteemed by our collective culture. If it is true that our ideals eventually harden into culture and our ideas gradually crystallize into civilization, then thought-leaders have the distinct responsibility to properly guide us towards ennobling ideals and dignifying ideas. In such a context, global harmony ensures a sustainable future. Collectively, we should expand the way we think; we not only survive, but thrive as a civilization. Ultimately, it is in the minds of individuals that the defenses of peace must be constructed. We must begin to think differently if we are to change the world.

## Conclusion

> If we claim to be civilized, if we love justice, if we cherish mercy, if we are not ashamed to own the reality of the inward light, we must affirm that we are first and foremost Citizens of the World.[42]

Before taking office as President of India, Radhakrishnan served two terms of office as the nation's Vice-President in the early 1950s. This was an important time in the burgeoning nation's earliest stages of development. True to her grand heritage as a broker for peace, India played a major role as mediator in bringing the Korean War to an end and generally helped to reduce Soviet-American Cold War tensions. Radhakrishnan's words at that time of great tensions also hold true for our own current period of transition. He says:

> Out of the anguish of our times is being born a new unity of all mankind in which the free spirit of man can find peace and safety. It is in our power to end the fears which afflict humanity, and save the world from the disaster that impends. Only we should be [individuals] of a universal

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[42] S. Radhakrishnan: *East and West: Some Reflections*, p. 115.

cast of mind, capable of interpreting peoples to one another and developing faith that is the only antidote to fear. The threat to our civilization can be met only on the deeper levels of consciousness. If we fail to overcome the discord between power and spirit, we will be destroyed by the forces which we had the knowledge to create but not the wisdom to control.[43]

Radhakrishnan was a truly broad-minded thinker, a person well ahead of his time. We would do well to hearken unto his call towards deepening levels of consciousness and heightening echelons of spirit. For, "the basic issue is no longer the victory of this or that nation, this or that group, this or that religion or ideology. It is the survival or suicide of man. It is a time for decision, not despair. The choice is either extinction, or human brotherhood."[44]

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[43] S. Radhakrishnan: *Occasional Speeches and Writings (Second Series): February 1956 - February 1957* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, 1957), pp. 374-375.

[44] S. Radhakrishnan and Poolla Tirupati Raju, eds.: *The Concept of Man: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*, p. 26.

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# Humanity and Diversity: Characteristic of the Modern World

THEAVY SER

### Introduction

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It calls for understanding the uniqueness of each individual and recognizing individual difference. We can speak of diversity in relation to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious believes, political affiliations and other ideologies. Diversity implies exploring these differences in a safe, positive and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich qualities found in each individual. Diversity is created by individuals and groups based on a broad spectrum of demographic and philosophical differences. We need to support and protect diversity by valuing individuals and groups free from prejudice, and by fostering a climate of equity and mutual respect.

Having made this preliminary comment, we analyze diversity of humanity, in the first section of the chapter. Human persons are so diverse; and it is difficult to know the "who'" and "what" of a person's difference from the other. Since science cannot arrive at absolute truth about a reality, it cannot understand the reality of humanity in its diversity. To understand human diversity, we must recognize **-** see and hear **-** the differences and enhance our capacity to deal creatively with diversity, by our genuine interaction and dialogue with other humans. The second section speaks of the diversity of the modern world characterized by the spirit of enlightenment. Philosophers of the enlightenment recognized a world of diversity of cultures. Though they gave importance to individualism, they also spoke of cosmopolitanism **-** a philosophical

perspective that recognizes the living together of people of many cultures and religions together in peace and harmony.

The third section highlights the philosophy of enlightenment and it relation to the emergence of two forms of multiculturalism. The first form of multiculturalism is closely affiliated to the enlightenment philosophy. It is based on the idea that a society should not be dominated by just one cultural tradition, but by an unlimited variety of cultures. The second type of multiculturalism is favored by the critics of the enlightenment philosophy. It is based on the idea that the threatening "monotony" of a universal and amorphous melting pot civilization be replaced by the multiplicity of coexisting subcultures. These subcultures reflect and continue the traditional diversity of races, traditions and mutually exclusive creeds. The "politics of identity" developed in the context of the latter form of multiculturalism.

The fourth section elaborates on the enlightenment notion of liberty and its relation to diversity. The notion of liberty and the actual practice of liberty in the context of the modern world have led to diverse ways of action. Since everyone is free, everyone would like to act differently from others. Hence, the notion of liberty, as lived and practiced in our everyday life indicates diversity as the characteristic element of the modern world. The conclusion points to the inevitable fact of diversity in the modern world. Humanity, the world and human free actions - all are diverse. Hence, recognizing our diversity and dealing with it in a positive and nurturing atmosphere would make diversity a great means to build a better world order characterized by peaceful and harmonious living. Now, in the first section, we begin analyzing the diversity of humanity.

## Diversity of Humanity

The term "diversity," particularly when it is seen in relation to humanity, means more than just acknowledging and tolerating difference that exists between human individuals or their groups. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve: firstly, appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment; secondly, practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own; thirdly, understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being, but also ways of

knowing; fourthly, recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some, while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others; and fifthly, building alliances across differences, so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

It is impossible to give a precise explanation of how a person gets to be the way he/she is. Even the measuring the position of every atom in one's body would not tell anything about "whom" and "what" a person is except giving us some external measures regarding a person's height and weight. We humans are particularly interested in people's minds. We raise questions, such as "What is one's personality like?" and "Whether a person has a good sense of humor?" The scientific premise of reducibility and emergence says that all these elements of a person are part of his mind, and they must exist at the atomic level in some form. However, even if we know how these things are represented, which we do not, the complexity would be more than a human person could understand. Scientific enterprise is never about finding the entire, precise and absolute truth about something, as it is often not possible through scientific methodology. However, science attempts to give some level of analysis and explanation, in which we can discover an approximation of the truth that we *can* understand. Hence, science cannot fully understand the reality of humanity in its diversity.

What interests people regarding the humans is the fact about their similarities and differences. We can know the similarities and difference between the humans by making a social comparison of people in a particular society. Besides, evolutionary psychology offers helpful explanations. We know that humans are genetically diverse. Now the question is: "Does genetic diversity matter?" We cannot answer this question unless we pick out a specific thing that matters and have some way to measure that trait. For example, height certainly matters if you want to be a basketball player, and height is easy to measure. The quality of creativity is also important in many things we do; and the tools we have to measure the quality of creativity are very crude and indirect, as for instance, the number of books an author has published. Hence, in order to get to "step 1" in a scientific understanding of human diversity, we have to come up with ways in which human differences are seen and heard.

To the extent that people's differences *are not* recognized and truly heard/seen by a group - in their own terms - those differences will manifest as problems, sources of conflict, obstacles in the path and reasons not to participate. This is a big part of what I call *co-stupidity*, which has nothing to do with the intelligence of the individuals involved, and everything to do with how they function together. The positive flip side of this principle would be this: to the extent that people's differences *are* recognized and truly heard/seen, they become contributions to the co-evolution of new insights, solutions, activities, experiences, possibilities and relationships that enrich the group, and move it ahead to a fuller realization of the best that it could be. This is a big part of what I call *co-intelligence*.

A relevant inquiry has been posed by Trudy and Peter Johnson-Lenz, who coined the term "groupware." According to them we can use our diversity creatively by attempting to know the motivation behind the different thing one does. A lot of "diversity work" is motivated by the following. Firstly, attempts to preserve the *status quo* by including minority voices that will quiet their own kind. Secondly, a desire to be fair as long as things do not get too out of hand. Thirdly, distaste for exclusion or repression. Fourthly, recognition that real democracy demands involvement of all stakeholders. All these approaches have their role, but they fall tragically short of what is possible and needed to really have breakthroughs in our relationships, in our groups, and in our social and environmental issues, so we can co-create environments, whether they are big or small, that we all really love living in.

However, the approaches that most excite me are those that are motivated by the recognition that there is collective power and wisdom locked inside our divided diversity, which is released when we create deep dialogues and synergies among our diverse perspectives. So I see that our challenge is not so much a matter of *addressing the issue of diversity*, as such, but rather as a matter of *enhancing our capacity to deal creatively with diversity*, helping ourselves collectively to tap into the incredible richness that awaits us there. This is an issue that confronts us moment-to-moment, whenever we enter into interactions with each other; and so it needs to be addressed constantly, from square one to the finish line - at least if we wish to turn the problems we have between us into opportunities. This is not easy; but I believe that this realm holds the greatest potential for

breakthroughs. A tremendous amount of wisdom, knowhow and methodology exists on this subject already, albeit not as well integrated as we might like. So we all have adventures to undertake, to help develop it and weave it together. In the next section, we clarify the diversity of the modern world.

## Diversity of Modern World

When we speak of the "modern world" we mean the way people in Europe began looking at the world after the seventeenth-century "enlightenment." This movement actually began in Athens and gained momentum throughout the "classical" civilization. However, it did not develop into a truly modern worldview - a point of view that presents a perspective different from the way people thought about things until the time of enlightenment. With the fall of Rome, the "classical" outlook largely died and was not resurrected until the renaissance period. The term "renaissance" means "rebirth" and refers precisely to the rebirth of the classical civilization. It was at this point that the modern worldview began to take shape. Even during the renaissance period, people still largely held to the traditional worldview. The real modern worldview did not begin until the so-called "enlightenment" of the mid-seventeenth century. As a conscious modern individual, a naive identification with "his own" culture and its peculiar traditions is not an honest possibility anymore. It would amount to an act of deliberate narrow-minded-ness. An educated person cannot but question the premises of his/her culture of origin. Only an ignorant or a highly conceited person will assume that one's own culture of origin is always preferable to all others. Open-mindedness and awareness of cultural diversity are inescapable for a thoughtful citizen of the twentieth century. Thus, the necessity of making independent and individual choices is an inevitable part of living in the modern world of diversity.

The term "modern world" also stands for both *cosmopolitanism* and *individualism*, inescapable philosophical positions the eighteenth-century philosophers of enlightenment envisioned. For the thinkers of this period, no culture exists in isolation anymore. Hence, no cultural tradition can shield its convictions and practices from the corroding influences of other traditions and alternative ways of life.

To one degree or another all cultures and individuals have been drawn into the maelstrom that constitutes the world civilization. In fact, today every civilization is influenced by the assimilating dynamics of capitalism and the global market. Even though all cultures and individuals may not be aware of the facts about this modern worldview, they cannot be blind to these historical megatrends that indicate that older worldviews are not as valid as they were considered earlier, and they need to be updated in the light of the new thinking of the period of enlightenment. In the next section, we highlight the philosophy of enlightenment and it relation to the philosophy of multiculturalism.

### Philosophy of Enlightenment and Multiculturalism

Philosophy of the enlightenment period stressed concepts of individualism and moral autonomy of the individual - the idea of informed self-determination. According this worldview, no adult human person can honestly avoid making those choices himself/herself, which, in former ages, were made by cultural traditions and institutions within which an individual happened to live.[1] Thus, philosophy of enlightenment believed *the absolute nature of human knowledge* and *defied the tradition and the pre-established thoughts of the past*. Great significance is given to the power of reason and rationality. Anything that cannot be understood by rational knowledge and the current status of sciences was considered meaningless and superstitious. Philosophy has come to mean only rational thinking and has become very popular among the intellectuals. However, the general concern of this period is the practical use of knowledge to bring about better life for the people. Two fundamental characteristics of the philosophy of enlightenment are: the first, faith in human rationality and the rejection of tradition and pre-established institutions and thoughts; and the second, search for practical and useful knowledge as a means to have power and

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[1] Jean Paul Sartre expressed the moral autonomy of the individual by stating that "man is condemned to be free." For him, this autonomy frees the human person automatically from the cultural and religious constrains that had put in place by the authorities of various cultural and religious groups.

control over nature. [2] In the light of this conflict between the enlightenment ideals and the glorification of difference, there has come about two kinds of multiculturalism. We briefly consider each of them in the next two subsections.

### *Multiculturalism Affiliated to Enlightenment Philosophy*

The first type is the multiculturalism closely affiliated to the enlightenment philosophy. It is based on the idea that a society should not be dominated by just one cultural tradition, but by an unlimited variety of cultures. Understood in this sense, for instance, the United States of America would not be considered as a Christian nation, inhabited predominantly by Caucasians of Western-European descent, and wedded exclusively to the Greek and Judeo-Christian traditions. Instead, it must be visualized as a nation that is the home of the people from diversity of races, creeds, nations and cultural origins. A fully emancipated modern society would be one into which there is a free flow of contributions from all possible sources, and in which individuals are free to choose whatever they find personally meaningful for them. The future would not be one of assimilation to one existing and predominant monoculture, but a fluid mixture of cultural forms from which something new might emerge in the never ending flux of historical transformations.

### *Multiculturalism Opposed to Enlightenment Philosophy*

The second type of multiculturalism is favored by the critics of the enlightenment philosophy. It is based on the idea that the threatening "monotony" of a universal and amorphous melting pot civilization be replaced by the multiplicity of coexisting subcultures. These subcultures reflect and continue the traditional diversity of

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[2] John Locke is considered as the founder of the enlightenment philosophy. However, unlike Europe in England, both the characteristics of enlightenment period - the defiance of the tradition and the search for the knowledge as the practical, useful power to control nature - were not so emphatically visible due to British nationality and the social conditions in England. Thus, we have the division between philosophy of enlightenment in France and Germany, and in England. In France and Germany it was called rationalism and idealism, while in Britain it was called empiricism.

races, traditions and mutually exclusive creeds. Individuals would not be adrift in the cultural anarchy of modern mass societies, but rather located inside and shaped by communities that oblige them to live their lives in traditionally prescribed ways. It will be a standard practice, for example, that parents and community leaders will lean on their offspring to make them marry "one of their own kinds," lest their original culture be watered down and eventually dissolved by the ubiquitous temptations of individual liberty and the relentless currents internationalist assimilation. Advocates of this kind of multiculturalism want not only to stop the historical trend toward ever more inclusive assimilation, but also they tend to overlook that the cultures they try to preserve are themselves products of past assimilations. Their necessarily purist attachment to one preferred culture makes them blind, it seems, to the Heraclitean insight that ultimately no one can step into the same river twice.

It is in the context of this second type of multiculturalism the "politics of identity" has developed. One of the assumed advantages of maintaining unassimilated subcultures within a larger society is the possibility of providing "identities" for the members of such groups. Individuals are said to know "who they are" and maintain their specific identity, if they are part of a cultural or racial subgroup that develops and maintains a distinct community life apart from the rest of society. Individuals at large, by contrast, are often described not as unencumbered or autonomous persons happily in charge of their own destinies, but rather as uprooted and lost souls who have lost all guidelines and motivations in the vast anonymity of modern mass societies. Without the authorities and limiting structures of traditional communities most modern individuals simply do not know "who they are" and "what their lives are about." While a few existentialist thinkers, like Sartre, might have found it enticing to endure the *angst* and radical void of a modern existence, the vast majority of people would feel more at home in the womb of some nourishing community and tradition. For people who live within these comforting communities, the troubling question "who they are" would most likely not even arise.[3]

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[3] Approximately for the last twenty years, it has been very fashionable to bash the enlightenment philosophy and its ideals. The enlightenment thinking has been badmouthed by those politicians and warlords who promote the "Balkani-zation" of much of the contemporary world. Besides, it has been routinely put

Having looked into the philosophy of enlightenment and the two forms multiculturalism that emerged in relation to it, we elaborate on the notion of liberty and its relation to diversity, in the next section.

## Liberty and Diversity

"Liberty" is another word for "freedom." Liberty provides an essential commitment for development and growth. However, the most important aspect is not having liberty, but its proper use. Thus, the proper use of liberty is at the heart of what one can achieve with the help of liberty. In the modern world, a lot of freedom is given to every group of people, such as women, children, workers and lower classes. However, as things stand today, wherever we turn our attention, we see that liberty is amply misused. In fact, the modern worldview that there can be no growth without liberty is very true. Nevertheless, we must realize that giving complete liberty to those who do not know how to use it appropriately would be dangerous to the general wellbeing of the society. Hence, complete liberty should be given only to those responsible classes of people, who are sufficiently disciplined and educated to use the freedom given to them in a proper manner. Just as a monkey handling a razor is likely to cut its cheek, so also a person who does not know how to use freedom can harm himself and others by misusing liberty. Since, the

down by the ideologues of difference in academia. Specific criticisms of the enlightenment as a movement are, to be sure, justified and important. It is true that the followers of enlightenment thinking have demonstrated hypocrisy in following the ideology they believe in, even though the mainstream academics are often reluctant to acknowledge. This hypocrisy is seen in every nation that follows the enlightenment spirit in guiding their national politics. For instance, the United States, being a trailblazing embodiment of enlightenment ideas, announced in its Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal. Yet the newly formed federation proceeded to legalize slavery. Similarly, France, the very cradle of enlightenment thinking, proudly published its list of universal human rights as part of the Revolution of 1789. Yet, as a nation, they saw nothing wrong in building up a harsh colonial empire violating human rights of the colonial populations. Likewise, great enlightenment thinkers, such as Hume and Kant were not beyond making appallingly racist remarks that can in no way be reconciled with their philosophical doctrines. To the extent these practices and attitudes prevailed in western countries the claims of the enlightenment could not but be perceived by many as a mere sham.

right use of liberty calls for delicate and sophisticated handling, it must find its place only in the hands of the few well‑educated and well‑meaning people.

People of the modern world have ready access to many rights. Besides, they think that the society will support them as they press their demands. They also seem to think that the society will put right any disadvantage that comes from their misuse of freedom. Health, education and welfare systems exist to provide what people find it difficult to provide for themselves. Hence, they feel that they have the right to claim what the state should give them. They feel that they are at liberty to fail, and yet be looked after. Often the phrase "it is a free country" means: firstly, one is free not to exert oneself; and secondly, the rest of society is obligated to help. This amounts to saying that "I am free to fail, while the society is not free to ignore my suffering." Thus, the modern worldview has created liberties for individuals. However, by not emphasizing individuals' obligations enough, it has deprived the wider society's liberties and heaped obligations on it. Hence, when granting liberties to people, the society must take care that they are instructed to use their freedom appropriately so that they not only contribute to their wellbeing, but also to that of the society.

St. Paul, in his Letter to the Galatians, says that liberty has been granted as a gift from God.[4] Thus, according to St. Paul, since liberty is a God‑given gift, it must not be used to entangle oneself with the yoke of bondage. Here, firstly, Paul asserts that our freedom is grounded in the life and work of the person of Jesus Christ. Christ has set us free. This is not something we have done as Christians. It is only something we have received as Christians. Freedom is grounded in truth. St. John records in his gospel the words of Jesus: "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free."[5] The truth is that Jesus was God's only begotten Son. He came into the world to reveal the perfect love of God for humankind. He died for a broken world in atonement for its sin. All who believe in him will not perish, but have everlasting life. St. Paul follows this assertion of freedom in Christ with a negative assertion. Freedom does not come from the law, and it certainly does not come from circumcision. As

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[4] Cf. "The Letter to the Galatians," *The New American Bible*, 5: 1.
[5] "The Gospel according to John," *The New American Bible*, 8: 32.

we have already learned there were Christians in the Galatians community, who were trying to make circumcision a prerequisite for salvation. They were demanding that Gentiles become Jews before they could become Christians. Paul rightly saw that pathway led to futility. No one could obey the whole law. What the law did was that it pointed out our sin; it did not free us from sin. Hence, for St. Paul, the stain of human sin was so deep that only a radical cleaning could undo it. Only the blood of Jesus Christ could wash away our sin and bring us true and everlasting freedom. Only faith in Jesus Christ can set us free.

A word that could rightly be used to describe the circumcision party of the first century Christianity in Galatia is legalism. *Legalism is the tendency to add more and more requirements to simple faith in Jesus Christ*. I believe that Jesus Christ would have brought a life-changing faith to the poor, the peasants, and even the children of Israel if it was to be so encumbered with complexities. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is simple enough for an illiterate peasant or an innocent child to embrace. That is why I welcome the decisions for Christ that children make. Of course, they do not understand the intricacies of the mystery of the Trinity, the complexities of the process of the canonization of the Bible, or the points of debate on baptism. Jesus welcomed the children. He gave health to the lepers. He gave eternal life to the Roman pagans, who had never read the Law of Moses. So, we should share the simple Gospel with everyone and let them freely accept or reject it.

Liberty is essential to human dignity. We have been freely created by a free God, who freely calls us to faith in Jesus Christ, and he awaits our free response. Freedom is integral to human existence. Yet, freedom has been hijacked by literary terrorists. The word has been abused and mistreated that it is in need of major rehabilitation. In the modern world, liberty has come to mean "*the freedom to do whatever you want to do*." Teenagers yearn to disobey the rules their parents set for them. "I cannot wait to be free from their rules," they say. Drivers want to be free to drive in any speed they want to drive. The say: "As long as I do not hurt anybody, what is the big deal?" People want moral freedom to create their own individual code of conduct completely divorced from thousands of years of community standards. United States of America, as a nation, has done more for the cause of political freedom than any country in the history of the

world. At the same time, they have also contributed to deformation of the word "liberty." The notion of liberty has become so individualistic, that the communal good is almost forgotten. "I will do what I want and you do what you want" - this is how many people consider the ideal of freedom in today's modern world.

Wherever liberty is given, it is being misused by one and all. This is because when liberty is in the hands of people like those, common in Cambodia, dishonest and in-disciplined, it is bound to bring disaster. To understand the validity of the statement that, liberty must be given only when we are disciplined and know "how" and "how far" to use this gift. To see the extent to which liberty is misused, we will take and study a few examples from our daily lives. The home and the society are the two main spheres, where all of us have interest. At the home front, the women and the children have the liberty to work, play, go where they want and wear any style of dress they like. This large spectrum of freedom has led to an utter confusion in the family, where everyone does what he/she wants as, each one is at liberty to do as he/she wants. Similarly, if husband and wife use their freedom without taking into consideration the needs of the family at large, it would have multiple effects on the family. Work gets dislocated, as both the partners want the other to take the first step forward. Seeing this, the children take the cue and learn the same indiscipline and misbehavior. Likewise, at the level of the society, if everyone wishes to do "what" and "how" he/she wants, it leaves the social fabric without any cohesion and civic boundaries. Thus, the concept of liberty has taken a beating.

Thus, the notion of liberty and the actual practice of liberty in the context of the modern world have led to diverse ways of action. Since everyone is free, everyone would like to act different from others. Hence, the notion of liberty is also diverse. For this reason, we can say that diversity as the characteristic element of the modern world.

## Conclusion

Diversity is an essential characteristic of the modern world. We find diversity among the humans. They are ever different from each other in ever so many ways. Thus, humanity, by its very nature, is diverse. The modern worldview as presented by the philosophers of

enlightenment upholds the essential nature of the modern world as constituted of diverse peoples and cultures. Even the notion of liberty presupposes diverse ways of acting and divergent behaviors by different persons as free agents. Thus, diversity is the way the modern world is. Hence, it is important to understand our differences, learn to use our differences creatively for the betterment of all. We must use our freedom in such a way that we do not in-frinch the rights of others by over-emphasizing our individual liberty. Therefore, recognizing our diversity and dealing with it in a positive and nurturing atmosphere would make diversity a great means to build a better world order characterized by peaceful and harmonious living.

*World Vision Combodia, Phnom Penh, Combodia*

**18.**

# *Gunas* as Reflections of Multicultural Identity: A *Samkhya-Yoga* Perspective

CHENCHULAKSHMI KOLLA

## Introduction

*Samkhya* and *Yoga* are the most prominent and the oldest systems of Indian philosophy. The basic doctrines of *Samkhya* and *Yoga* are almost similar. *Samkhya* represents the theory and *Yoga* represents the practical aspects. These two are interconnected and treated as a single system, *Samkhya-Yoga*. *Samkhya* is a system of perfect knowledge. It is dualistic realism because it advocates *prakrti* and *purusa* as two ultimate realities. *Samkhya* is also pluralistic because of it advocates that *purusa* is not one, but many. It accepts perception, inference and testimony as three sources of valid knowledge. *Samkhya* lays emphasis on knowledge, which is regarded as the only means for attaining the Supreme Reality, whereas *Yoga* gives its wholehearted support to achieve this goal through meditation. The former is specially busy with the theoretical investigation, while the latter deals with the practical side. The two systems are nothing but the concave and convex side of the same sphere. There is no knowledge equal to that of *Samkhya* and no strength is there equal to that of *Yoga*. However, the difference between *Samkhya* and *Yoga* lies in the fact that the former is regarded as atheistic and the later theistic. Hence, *Samkhya* is sometimes known as *Nirisvara-Samkhya* and *Yoga* is known as *Sesvara-Samkhya*. *Samkhya-Yoga* upholds *Satkaryavada* and is for *Prakrti-parinamavada*. Like other major systems of Indian philosophy, *Samkhya-Yoga* regards ignorance as the root cause of bondage, and accepts the possibility of liberation.

Having made the above introductory observations, in the first section, we consider historical unfolding of the notion of the *gunas* in the *Vedas*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and in the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* systems of Indian philosophy. The second section analyzes the *Samkhya-Yoga* theory of the *gunas*. In the first subsection, we attempt to clarify the notion of

*gunas* as propounded by the *Samkhya-Yoga* system of Indian philosophy. According to this school, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are responsible for all the experiences of the *purusa*. They are objective ultimate and the irreducible elements of experience. The *sattva* element makes objects intelligible, the *rajas* element enables objects to undergo changes, and *tamas* element enables the object to assume shape and resists its destruction through changes. Though the *gunas* possess contradictory characteristics, yet they act in perfect cooperation with each other to accomplish a single purpose.

In the second subsection, we elaborate on how this theory of *gunas* is found in modern science, ethics and *ayurveda*. Modern science believes that the universe is a system, whose total energy remains the same in quantity amid all the changing forms, in which it may exhibit itself. The *Samkhya-Yoga prakrti* with its three *gunas* and its theory of evolution of the gross objects of the world from the primordial *prakrti* are so designed as to be in conformity with the law of conservation of mass and energy. Modern ethical thinkers hold that ethical or non-ethical behavior of the humans is an outcome of individual attributes, personal environment, social environment and institutional rules and laws. Similarly, *guna* theory holds a person's behavior and his perception of values are based on individual attributes that are founded on the three *gunas*. The interplay of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* as inherent qualities in the person is the foundation of a person's behavior and value system. The notion of *guna* is also a significant concept in ayurvedic medicine, as a system to assess health conditions, prescribing right type of medicines and following the proper diet. The conclusion states that the *Samkhya-Yoga* considers these three *gunas* are present in everyone and everything. The only difference is that they are present in varying proportions and contexts. Every being is viewed as the net result of the joint effect of these three *gunas*. Therefore, it is clear that the *gunas* are nothing, but the reflections of multicultural identity, particularly relating to humans as individuals and groups. In the next section, we unfold the historical development of the notion of *guna.*

## Notion of *Guna*: Historical Background

The term "*guna*" appears in many ancient and medieval era Indian texts. Depending on the context, it means: a string, thread,

rope and sinew. It means a "chord" in music and a "vowel" in phonology, arts and literature.[1] In stereological literature, "*guna*" means virtue, merit and excellence in *dharma*. In *Sastras*, *Sutras*, Epics, food and analytical literature "*guna*" means a quality, peculiarity, tendency, attribute, property and species.[2] Students of classical *Yoga* are well aware of the importance of the three *gunas* in Yogic thought and practice.

However, few are aware of their Vedic background and the deeper understanding that a Vedic perspective brings to the notion of *gunas*. The three *gunas* reflect the three worlds of Vedic thought. Earth is the realm of *tamas*, which stands for darkness and physical matter. Atmosphere is the realm of *rajas* in Vedic thought. It is the realm of action and change symbolized by the storm with its process of lightning, thunder and rain. It also indicates energy and subtle matter on all levels. Heaven is the realm *sattva*, and it stands for harmony and light. It indicates light as a universal principle, which is the causal and original form behind the gross and subtle elements - forms of matter and energy. In the Vedic view these three forms of light (*jyoti*) are the three forms of the higher Self (*purusa*) that is also defined in terms of light. Thus, according to the *Vedas*, light is consciousness and not simply a material force. In this sense, *sattva* as light is also mind; *rajas* as energy is also the vital force; and *tamas* as matter is also our bodily expression, the most significant of which is speech.

*Bhagavad Gita* discusses *guna* as referring to the three *gunas* - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* - as innate nature of an individual.[3] *Sattva-guna* is one driven by what is pure, true, compassionate, without craving, doing the right because it is right, the positive and the good. *Tamoguna* is one driven by what is impure, dark, destructive, aimed to hurt another, contemptuous, negative and vicious. *Rajoguna* is one that is *ego*-driven, out of personal passion, active, ostentatious,

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[1] Cf. "*Guna*," *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by Monier Williams. Cf. also Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya: *Samkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*; *The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, ed. Karl H. Potter, vol. 4 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp. 65-66.

[2] Cf. Klaus Klostermaier: "Time in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*," *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 205-210.

[3] *Trividha bhavati sraddha dehinam sa svabhavaja/ sattviki rajasi caiva tamas cetitam srunu// Bhagavad Gita*, 17. 2.

seeking the approval of others.[4] *Bhagavad Gita* illustrates various items and actions by their three *gunas*. For example, three types of charity are discussed, and they make charity as *sattvic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic*. Similarly, food, relationships, knowledge and actions are detailed in terms of the three *gunas*. For instance, action that is virtuous, thought through, free from any attachment, and without craving for results is considered *sattvic*; action that is driven purely by craving for pleasure, selfishness and much effort is *rajasic*; and action that is undertaken because of delusion, disregarding consequences, without considering loss and injury to others and self, is called *tamasic*.[5]

In *Nyaya* - the logical system of Indian philosophy, we find an extensive debate on what *guna* means, and whether it is innate, subjective or describable. Early scholars of this school identified seventeen *gunas*, which later scholars expanded to twenty-four. The most commonly accepted list is: color, taste, smell, touch, number, contact, disjunction, farness, nearness, dimension, separateness, knowledge, pleasure, frustration, desire, hatred, effort, weight, fluidity, viscosity, dispositional tendency, merit, demerit, and sound.[6] Nyaya School considers quality (*guna*) as non-perceptible, a conceptual theme that is not found in western philosophy on "quality," where it is presumed to be perceptible. It is also not found in some parallel schools of Indian philosophy. Repeatability means that the white in one object is same as white in another object, and white means the same thing. *Nyayyayikas* hold that "whiteness" is a *guna* of "white," but that is different from "whiteness" of an object or a living being. To them, "white" has many hues and the 'whiteness' is subjective.[7]

In the *Vaisesika* system of Indian philosophy, which is closely related to *Nyaya*, *guna* is considered as one of the categories (*padartha*) of relations. It states that awareness, understanding and judg-

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[4] Gideon Arulmani et al., eds: *Handbook of Career Development: International Perspectives* (Springer: Springer Science & Business Media, 2014), pp. 139-143.

[5] *Kamyanam karmanam nyasam sanyasam kavayo viduh/ Sarvakarmaphalatyagam prahustyangam vicakshanah// Bhagavad Gita*, 18. 2.

[6] Cf. Karl H. Potter, ed.: *Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology*; *The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, ed. Karl H. Potter, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp.112-132.

[7] Cf. *Ibid*.

ments of a person and anything in the world are relational. In the next section, we explore the notion of *gunas* in *Samkhya-Yoga*.

## Notion of *Gunas* in *Samkhya-Yoga*

In the first subsection, we clarify the notion of *gunas* as propounded by the *Samkhya-Yoga* system of Indian philosophy. In the second subsection, we elaborate on how *Samkhya-Yoga* theory of *gunas* is found in modern science, ethics and *ayurveda*.

### *Samkhya-Yoga Theory of Gunas*

The principal schools of Indian thought explain the production, constitution and destruction of the universe from their own point of view. The explanation given by *Samkhya-Yoga* is significant. This system explains the universe in view of cosmic evolution based on the principle of conservation, transformation and dissipation of energy, where in the doctrine of *gunas* play an important role. According to *Samkhya*, "*prakrti*" is the name given to *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas gunas* [8] in a state of equilibrium. The *guna* theory is the most distinguishing characteristic of the *Samkhya* system. According to this theory, all mental and material objects of this phenomenal world are combinations in different proportions of the three ultimate realities, which are technically known as the *gunas*.

The conception of these *gunas* arose in the minds of these thinkers as a result of their analysis of phenomenal consciousness and its objects. Our worldly experience discloses that everything in the universe possesses three aspects. The world presents the features of brightness and illumination; activity and change; and inertia and enveloping nature. These features of brightness, activity and inertness are derived because of the presence of the principles of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in *prakrti*.[9] They are the constitutive elements of *prakrti*. They are not parts of *prakrti*, but identical with it, since the *Samkhya* holds that *prakrti* is opposite of anything constituted of

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[8] In Sanskrit, the term "*guna*" has three meanings: quality, rope and not primary.

[9] *Sattvam laghu prakasakam istam upastambhakam calam ca rajah/ Guru varanakam eva tamah pradipavac carthato vrttih// Samkhya Karika*, 13.

parts.[10] The *gunas* are subsidiary and secondary to *prakrti*, and serve the purpose of the *purusa* by intertwining like the three strands of a rope and binding *purusa* to the world.[11] Thus, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are responsible for all the experiences of the *purusa*. They are objective ultimate and the irreducible elements of experience. The *sattva* element makes objects intelligible, the *rajas* element enables objects to undergo changes, *tamas* enables the object to assume shape and resists its destruction through changes.

The *gunas* are not the so-called qualities of the *Vaisesika* system because they themselves possess the characteristics of lightness, movement and heaviness.[12] This is because one quality cannot be the *substratum* for another.[13] So, these *gunas* are substances (*dravyas*) since the qualities of lightness, activity and inertness subsist in them. All objects of the world, both physical and mental, are the results of the different permutations and combinations of these three ultimate realities. In the mental sphere, the element of *sattva* predominates; in the realm of activity *rajas guna* dominates; and in the sphere of the physical universe, *tamoguna* becomes the dominating element.

We experience the influence of the *gunas* not only in the cognitive aspect, but also in the psychological/emotional aspect. From the point of cognition, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are known as bright, mobile and inert, whereas in the emotional dimension, they appear as pleasure, pain and delusion.[14] The coexistence of these three constituents is observed even in everyday experience. This is explained by the simile of lady (*stri*), warrior (*ksatra*) and cloud (*megha*). A woman as a wife may be beautiful, young and endowed with all the qualities of head and heart that are requisite in an ideal wife. These constitute the *sattva* element in her. Due to the influence of *Sattva* in her, she makes her husband happy. She also possesses the emotion of jealousy, which make her cause despair in her husband. Jealousy is because of *rajas guna* and despair is due to *tamas guna*. She feels jealousy and causes despair because of the elements of *rajas* and *tamas* in her. Therefore, a lovely woman is not merely an

[10] Cf. *Ibid.*, 12.

[11] Cf. *Samkhya Pravacana Bhasya,* 1. 61. Cf. also *Samkhya Tattva Kaumudi*, 12.

[12] Cf. *Samkhya Pravacana Bhasya,* 1. 61.

[13] Cf. *Samkhya Pravacana Vrttisara*, 1. 61.

[14] Cf. *Samkhya Pravacana Bhasya.* 1.127. *Priti-aprati-visada-'tmakah, prakasa-pravrtti-niyamarthah/ Samkhya Karika*, 12.

assemblage of ideas in some minds, as held by the idealistic philoso-phers. Nor is she absolutely different from thoughts or feelings, as is ordinarily held by the realistic philosophers. Similarly, a brave warrior affords pleasure to his ford, afflicts the enemy, and deludes them who begin to retreat quickly. Likewise, the cloud that brings rain brings pleasure to the husbandman, afflicts the traveler, and deludes the woman who is separated from her husband at a great distance. Thus, the correspondence between the inner world and the outer world has been satisfactorily explained by the *Samkhya* philosophers on the hypothesis that they represent two allied lines of development from a common source **-** the *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* *gunas*.[15]

Hence, the same object becomes the source of pleasure, pain and delusion to different persons having different bend of mind. The *prakrti* possess these *gunas* as its constituents, as it is the ultimate cause. This is so because "the properties of the effect exist even in the cause"[16] is the doctrine of *Samkhya*. Thus, it is evident that from the psychical side that the *gunas* give rise to pleasurable, painful and delusive cognitions. The *gunas* are related to one another in a peculiar manner. They mutually subjugate, support, produce and cooperate.[17] Dominance of *sativa*, *rajas* and *tames* results in the dominance of virtue, vice and ignorance respectively, as it is observed in the case of gods, men and beasts, which abound in *sativa*, *rajas* and *tames* respectively.[18] Each *guna* suppresses the other two, to become manifest with its own characteristics or to perform its specific function with the support of each other.[19]

Though the *gunas* possess contradictory characteristics, yet they act in perfect cooperation with each other to accomplish a single purpose. For instance, though different from each other, all the three *gunas* work together in the process of the emancipation of *purusa*, just as a wick and oil though opposed to fire by nature, cooperate with each other when they come in contact with fire, for the single

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[15] Cf. *Jayamangala*, 12.

[16] *Avivekya dih siddhah traigunat tadviparyaya-'bhibhavat/ Karana-gunana-tmakatvat karyasya 'vyaktam api siddham//* *Samkhya Karika*, 14.

[17] *Anyonya-bhibhava-'sraya janana mithuna-vrttayasyas ca gunah//* *Samkhya Karika*, 12.

[18] Cf. *Jayamangala*, 12.

[19] Cf. *Samkhya Tattva Kaumudi*, 12.

purpose of giving light; and the wind, bile and phlegm, though possessing contradictory properties, cooperate for the single purpose of sustaining the body.[20] When the *prakrti*, the primordial cause, evolves into the gross objects of the world through a series of intermediary changes, it merely changes from its subtle to gross state. There is neither a destruction of *prakrti*, nor an increase and a decrease in it in terms of quantity and energy. It merely changes from one state to another leading to increase in its grossness. Similarly, at the time of dissolution (*pralaya*), when all the gross objects of the world merge into the primordial *prakrti* through the intermediary stages, there is no destruction of the gross bodies; they merely lapse into their state of subtlety from their state of grossness. It is on this principle that the *Samkhya-Yoga* assumption of *prakrti* as the ultimate-material cause is based. It is for this reason that the *Samkhya-Yoga* accepts the doctrine of *satkaryavada* and *parinamavada*.[21] In the next subsection, analyze how this theory of *gunas* is found in modern science, ethics and *ayurveda*.

### *Samkhya-Yoga Notion of Gunas as Found in Modern Science, Ethics and Ayurveda*

In the following three subsections, we briefly consider the relationship of *Samkhya-Yoga* notion of *gunas* to modern science, ethics and *ayurveda*.

### *Samkhya-Yoga* Notion of *Gunas* in Modern Science

According to the naturalists, the total energy of any body or system of bodies is a quantity which can neither be increased, nor diminished by any mutual action of these bodies. However, it may be transformed into any one of the forms of which energy is susceptible to become. The universe is such a system, whose total energy remains the same in quantity amid all the changing forms, in which it may exhibit itself. This law of nature is known as the law of conservation of energy or as conservation of mass.

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[20] Cf. *Samkhya Karika*, 13.

[21] *Asad-akaranad upadana-grahanat, sarvasambhava-'bhavat/ Saktasya sakya-karanat karana-bhavac ca satkaryam// Samkhya Karika*, 9.

    *Samkhya-Yoga* also maintains a similar view in line with the doctrine of *satkaryavada* and its corollary *parinamavada*. The *Samkhya-Yoga prakrti* with its three *gunas* and its theory of evolution of the gross objects of the world from the primordial *prakrti* are so designed as to be in conformity with the law of conservation of mass and energy.[22] It follows that the sum of effects exists in the sum of causes. Ultimately, these causes are nothing, but the *gunas*. The doctrine of conservation of mass and energy is much more reflected in a passage of the *Yoga Bhasya*.[23] It also means that the *dharmas* constitute various modes of the *gunas*. In a time series, they are called the future, the present and the past. Accordingly, they are in a potential state, in an actualized state, or in a state of absorption into the primary cause (*prakrti*). These *dharmas* come into being and pass out of existence. Hence, the *gunas* are neither increased nor diminished. Some of them are manifested and some others are un-manifested. It is a self-evident truth that the totality of mass, energy and illumination always remain constant, when the manifested and the un-manifested *gunas* are taken into account.

    The philosophy of *gunas* is very deep. *Gunas* are infra-atomic *quanta* of reals, rather forces than substances.[24] The electron of modem scientists also bears some affinity with the *gunas* of *Samkhya*. The *gunas* and the electrons are infra-atomic. The electrons constitute a unit negative charge having inertia. The *gunas* also constitute mass charged with energy. However, the significant difference between electrons and *gunas* lies in the fact that the electrons are capable of isolation as in cathode rays, whereas the *gunas* can never be detached. Thus, above discussion reveals not only realist and positivist ideas found in *Samkhya-Yoga* system, but also the psychological and scientific approach found in it, particularly in its doctrine of *gunas*.

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[22] *Tam yajnam barhisi prauksan purusam jatamagratah tena devah ayajanta sadhyah rsayah ca ye// Rg.Veda*, 10.90.7. Cf. also K.K. Bhatnagar: "The Origin of the Universe: Science and the *Vedas*," *Prabuddha Bharata*, vol. 96, July (1991), p. 289. Cf. also Hari Sankar Prasad: "Time and Change in *Samkhya-Yoga*," *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 12 (1984), pp. 41, 42.

[23] Cf. *Yoga Bhasya*, 2.19.

[24] Cf. *Yukti Dipika*, p. 57/12.

*Samkhya-Yoga* Notion of *Gunas* in Ethics

*Samkhya-Yoga* notion of *guna* is one of the four important elements in the framework of ethical theories in Indian philosophy. Bommer[25] suggests that ethical or non-ethical behavior is an outcome of individual attributes, personal environment, social environment and institutional rules and laws. The g*una* theory, elaborated by *Samkhya-Yoga* system, is the ancient Indian theory based on individual attributes, while the theories of *dharma* and *ashramas* dependent on the personal and social environment, and the institutional framework. According to Crawford, *guna* theory represents a hierarchical theory of values, where the relative order of hierarchy is suggested to vary within each individual along with the relative proportion of each *guna*. The interplay of three *gunas* affects an individual's values. In Hindu worldview, these values affect individual's actions, as well as the happiness and serenity experienced by the individual.[26] The *gunas* are not considered as static. *Bhagavad Gita* states that they are dynamic and changeable with knowledge, introspection and understanding of *sva-dharma*. Realizing one's *sva-dharma* and Self, is emphasized in Indian ethical theories. The highest state of existence and bliss, in *Advaita* School, for example, is Self-realization (*moksa*). [27] *Guna* theory's perspective on values constituting human personality has uniqueness, yet it is congruent with other ethical theories.

*Samkhya-Yoga* Notion of *Gunas* in *Ayurveda*

In the terminology of *ayurveda*, the traditional Indian medicine, *Samkhya-Yoga* notion of *guna* can refer to one of twenty fundamental properties, which any substance can exhibit. They are

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[25] Cf. Michael Bommer: "A Behavioral Model of Ethical and Unethical Decision Making," *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 265-280.

[26] Cf. N. Pani: "Hinduism," *Handbook of Economics and Ethics*, eds. Jan Peil and Irene Van Staveren (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2009), pp. 216-221. Cf. also Nalin K. Shastree et al., eds.: *Value Management in Professions* (New Delhi: Concept Publishers, 2006), pp. 21-30.

[27] Cf. Klaus Klostermaier: "*Mokṣa* and Critical Theory," *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 61-71. Cf. also Karl H. Potter: *Advaita Vedanta upto Sankara and His Pupils*; *The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, ed. Karl H. Potter, vol. 3 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp. 210-215.

arranged in ten pairs of antonyms: heavy or light, cold or hot, unctuous or dry, dull or sharp, stable or mobile, soft or hard, slimy or non-slimy, smooth or coarse, minute or gross, and viscous or liquid.[28] The notion of g*una* is also a concept in ayurvedic medicine, as a system to assess health conditions, prescribing right type of medicines and following the proper diet. For this reason *triguna* and *tridosha* are considered to be related in the traditions of *ayurveda*.

## Conclusion

For the modern mind, the simplest way to understand the *gunas*, particularly as propounded by the *Samkhya-Yoga* school of Indian philosophy, is to consider them as matter (*tamas*), energy (*rajas)* and light (*sattva)*, the main factors of our physical universe. The three *gunas* are also the three aspects of our being. The visible lights *agni*, *vayu* and *surya* are manifestations of the invisible divine light of consciousness that illumines all things, including visible light and darkness. The three *gunas* exist within us and make our everyday life and activities possible. *Gunas* are imperceptible. According to the sage Kapila, though we can experience the effects of *gunas*, we cannot perceive them because in their potential state they remain imperceptible.[29] *Gunas* are always in a state of flux.[30] Their varying permutations and combinations give rise to all states of collocations, which are manifested in the world of objects.[31]

The three great lights of *Agni*, *vayu* and *surya* energize the three worlds of earth, atmosphere and heaven as the spirit within them. The first is *agni* (fire) energizes the earth. Fire is hidden in our bodies, in plants, in the rocks, and in the very core of the earth itself. The powers of *vayu* (wind), which creates lightning and makes it circulate through the atmosphere. *Surya* (sun) represents the cosmic light of the stars that pervades the great space beyond this world - the heaven. These three lights are interrelated. These three lights also reflect the three *gunas*. *Agni* is the *tamasic* form of light as the fire is

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[28] Cf. Ananda S Chopra: "*Ayurveda,*" *Medicine across Cultures: History and Practice of Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, ed. Helaine Selin (Springer: Springer Science & Business Media, 2013), pp. 75-83. Cf. also *Sushruta Samhita*, p. 76.

[29] Cf. *Yukti Dipika*, p. 72/22.

[30] Cf. *Yoga Bhasya*, 2.15.

[31] *Sarvamidam gananam sannivesavisesamatramiti paramarthato*. Ibid., 4.13.

hidden in darkness. *Vayu* is the *rajasic* form of light as in its active and energetic mode it functions as lightning or electrical force. *Surya* is the *sattvic* form of light that is pure illumination (*prakasa*).

The science of the three *gunas* connects not only with *prakrti*, but also with the *purusa*. The *gunas* are not simply the powers of *prakrti*; they reflect the nature and presence of the *purusa* as well. The *purusa* is three-fold in its human manifestation as speech, breath and mind, just as *prakrti* is three-fold as earth, atmosphere and heaven - as matter, energy and light. The *agni*, as the power of speech, is the means to purify and control the physical body, physical matter, and master the *tamas guna*. Through it we can control our internal organs and the gross elements. The *Yoga* of speech involves chanting, singing, internal repetition of *mantras* and meditation on *mantras*. Through it we gain control of the subconscious mind. The *vayu*, as the power of the breath, is the means to purify and control the vital body, the realm of energy, and master the *rajas guna*. Through it we can control our motor organs and the five motor actions (*pranas*). The *Yoga* of the breath involves *pranayama*. Through it we gain control of our emotions. The s*urya*, as the power of thought, is the means to purify and control the mental body, the realm of light, and master the *sattva guna*. Through it we can control our sense organs and the subtle elements. The *Yoga* of the mind is meditation. Through it we can control the rational mind and direct it towards knowledge of the higher Self.

The *Samkhya-Yoga* school of Indian philosophy considers that these three *gunas* are present in everyone and everything. However, the only difference is that they are present in varying proportions and contexts. Every being, particularly the human, is viewed as the net result of the joint effect of these three *gunas*. Therefore, the above discussion reveals that the *gunas* are nothing, but the reflections of multicultural identity.

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# 19.
# Philosophy of Being Middle Class

PRATICK MALLICK

### Introduction

The philosophy of class system was first methodologically traced in the ideas of collective ideologies. However, the class system itself is as old as the ancient times. The philosophy of class system can be analyzed in two ways: firstly, in terms of essence; and secondly, with reference to existence. There is already a dispute about the temporal superiority between the two. In general, it has been theorized that in every society there are two classes - the exploiters and the exploited. However, when we carefully deconstruct the psychology of the socio-economic anthropology of the society, we find that there is the golden mean - the middle class - both in essence and existence. This golden mean is placed somewhere between two extreme classes. This would imply that every society is divided not into two classes, but into three classes. Though, at present, authors discuss about the emergence of the middle class at the wake of industrial revolution - its interests particularly in terms of economy and finance, and its culture as abrogated from the mass culture - if we want to know the emergence of the philosophy of the middle class, we would have to go as back as to the age of Plato. Thus, from Plato's time up to this present age of globalization, there has been the steady progress in the notion of the middle class. Incidentally, it should be kept in mind that there is a deep liaison between the values of globalization and the ethics of the middle class. So far, the society has been explained in terms of Marxist notion of two classes: *capitalists* - the exploiters; and the *proletariat* - the exploited.

In this chapter, we make an attempt to challenge this established Marxist doctrinaire view of two social classes. The name "middle class" suggests it is mean between Marxist notion of the exploiters and the exploited. Therefore, the society in this age of globalization is broadly trifurcated into the upper class, the middle class and the lower class - the upper and the lower classes would be comparable to

the Marxian capitalists and the *proletariat*. In the first section, we move on to analyze the notion of the middle class in the classical political philosophies. In the early classical period status of the middle class was determined by the socio-economic condition - the ability to earn, spend, and deposit for future, as investors and consumers belonged to the middle class. However, over the period of time, the middle class lost its status as the investor class and became the consumer class, in the process becoming economically and politically powerless. Later in the Roman times, the middle class became the common people, who had no right to resist what the authoritarian regime had ordered. The second section deals with the middle class at the time of populist philosophies. Socialist philosophies, such as Guild socialism, Fabianism and Syndicalism were collectivistic in nature and so opposed private property. They were against the middle class. These populist philosophies once again brought low the status of the middle class.

The third section elaborates on the status of the middle class at the time of decolonization. Decolonization has brought about political and economic autonomy of many former colonized nations, including India. This had led to the emergence of a new middle class different from the old middle class in India. Unlike the old middle class, the new middle class is an open and socializing group; not bound by ideologies; moved only by economic considerations; prefer their own interests over the interests of others; they enjoy the present without thinking too much about the future. Since they disregard communitarian and normative considerations, and centered on themselves, there can come about social degeneration and insecurity in the future. The fourth section deals with the challenges posed by the new Indian middle class. They present themselves as center of power; and instead of representing the nation they represent themselves as the nation. In doing so they pave the way for conflicting situation not only between the state and the civil society; but also within the civil society.

The fifth section challenges the Marxian view that denies the middle class, and states the middle class is a reality. The new middle class is more a consumer class, which at present a group that is sandwiched between and manipulated by both the unorganized service sector and the multinational corporations. Because of these manipulations, the old and new middle classes tend to come

together. The conclusion reiterates the long history of the emergence of the middle class. In today's globalized economy and market, the new middle class is the largest pillar of the market-based utilitarianism. Hence, to preserve every society holistically, we must make a careful blend between the subjective humanitarianism proposed by the new middle class and the objective value of individuality based on material as well as spiritual prospects. Now, we consider the middle class in relation to classical political philosophies.

## Classical Political Philosophies and Middle Class

Ancient philosophy of Eastern Europe, particularly that of Greece, was initially based on the then endemic democracy of quantitative type. It was a pluralist type of democracy based on atomized individualism. Its basic drawback is the lack of proper education. As a result, the decision making was in the hands of the people who are totally not prepared for it, that it amounted to the degeneration of the quality of public administration.[1] The victim who suffered under such incompetent administration is the educated and the wise persons like Socrates, who had to pay price of his life for expressing his opinion in the context of the then prevalent Athenian laws regarding freedom of speech.[2] However, Socrates was keen to veer from the then conventional approach to natural and moral philosophy to regulate individual human behavior. He justified his ethical approach in his first *Eudemonic Ethics*.[3] Plato, the disciple of Socrates, decided to write in a new pattern of society pointing out that demerit of the social system could be easily overcome. The way he went on in his *Republic* indicates that he had already determined the *end*, and to that effect, he arranged necessary *means*. Plato thought that a society, in which the common people with the *least level* of institutional education, would not be allowed

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[1] Cf. J. Waldron: "Recommitment and Disagreement," *Constitutionalism: Philosophical Foundations*, ed. L. Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 281-283.

[2] Cf. A. W. Saxonhouse: *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[3] Cf. G. Lasts: *Socrates Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 10-12.

any kind of political involvement. By means of occupation-based stratification, Plato tried to ensure that politics was an activity to be exercised by those who would have enough knowledge and erudition to do so. Hence, those who can only produce merchandises and stockpile private property will not have any political role to play.

In defining the middle class, some basic parameters have to be observed. The primary thing is the socio-economic condition: the extent to which people are able to earn, spend, and deposit for the future determines them whether or not to be clubbed as the middle class. In Plato's time, the investors and consumers were more or less the same people - the *appetitive* class itself. At present, those who invest are superior to those who consume. While the former are the elite, the latter are the middle class. In Plato's *Republic*, it was not the case. However, the stern side of his philosophy seems to reflect on the appetitive class and not on the pressure group. The creation of the measure of rule by the philosopher-king was to be for the appetitive class. This is a gross degeneration of philosophy and detachment from reality; Plato himself realized that this would be a big failure. So, he thought of another alternative trying to implicate the *rule of law*. Philosophically, it tries to denote that in *Republic* there was obviously no *rule of law*; that is, those who were in power were not supposed to sacrifice their individualities, save the question of marriage and property, to the cause of the *appetitive class*. It was the failure of the philosopher-kings to ensure a political arrangement for the *third class* - appetitive class, and what became manifest was that it became *a system of the powerful and by the powerful for the powerless*. To overcome this demerit, Plato suggested for a non-living object of sovereignty. It is essential to gauge the innate object of Platonic philosophy. In his *Apology*, he depicted how Socrates struggled to achieve *individual freedom*. There, Socrates refused to accept the semi-divine authority of Oracle.[4]

Later, Aristotle was found imitating the conviction of Plato in the faculty of a non-living sovereign. The innate philosophy here is the disappearance of individual freedom that is considered much later in the approach of *Humanism*. Middle class is a class that had

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[4] Cf. M. Schofield: *Plato: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

been at that time externally controlled by the authoritarian rule, against which two forms of government were suggested by Aristotle - polity and democracy. By means of features and name, *polity* is different from *democracy* only on the grounds of *selective behavioral multivariate*. This got justified in terms of the emergence of the scholastic method of rediscovering Aristotle in various logical deeds. The Aristotelian method of *positivism* led to serious challenges to the Augustinian Christianity.[5] Augustine wanted to establish society as *providentially preordained* and decided by the divine authority, to the extent of considering men as mere functionaries, having no will to direct their own lives. Against this, the Aristotelian thought came up as if to maintain the order of the politically active men. It did not want political activism by default; it only wanted men to be self-dependent and that was possible only by means of being rational and positivists. The method of empiricism needed no scriptural modification to the tune of ensuring the order of the society. Obviously, this helped in garnering the *secular* exercise of politics - the *faculty* of self-determination of the people. Though it failed to evade controversy, yet it has to be accepted that with this, political awareness found its way-out. It was not quantitative, but qualitative. While Plato did not allow common people even the right to resist and protest, changes became overdue with passage of time and involvement of religiosity in administration.[6] Even slowly, it became the cause of dispute among people. The concept of communalism found its way of progress since the days of medieval philosophy. Therefore, to attain support of the people, it became necessary to make appropriate political arrangements with them.

Europe, particularly Italy, witnessed development of political theory in terms of some the practice of rhetoric almost since thirteenth century. This led to orient the form of teaching in a new and expansive way of mobilization, which heralded people to be more determined mentally towards becoming non-compliant with the *authoritarianism*. The way the rhetoric got established on the question of dictator-being, we find particularly Latini in this regard making a hybrid form of dictator having features from Plato to

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[5] Cf. Q. Skinner: *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought.*; vol. 1, *The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapters, 2-5.

[6] Cf. *Ibid*.

Cicero.[7] Latini adopted Cicero's *rhetoric* coupled with Aristotle's *moral* philosophy. The way Cicero tried to intervene in the traditional ethics of philosophy of middle class was based on his idea of "*vir virtutis*" that would make a man manly that he can be successful in overcoming all the obstacles by means of freedom and powers they gain in due course. Obviously, this is the way the medieval Italian philosophy put efforts to justify the concept of blind allegiance of the Platonic era became obsolete. We also should note that Machiavelli in his contribution to *quattrocentist* philosophy made serious re-actions to the degeneration of society and polity. In his case, too, the main target by which it could get rid of the political mess was the middle class; that is conspicuous by the features mentioned by him in comparison with Podestà of the *trecento*. The way John of Viterbo raised question about the personality was repeated by Machiavelli to denote that the authority of a sovereign should rest on his totalitarian tendency rather than accessibility.[8] In this way, they tried keenly to revisit Plato.

Machiavelli's *Discourses* as opposite to his *Prince* somehow became a balance, leaning towards allowing people to improve *politically*. The way he used ideas of *war* and *virtù* to overcome corruption can be considered as a day-dream because it is not perceived which party Machiavelli belonged to or was supporting. As a spectator, it is queer for him to witness corruption among people outside the corridors of power. This seems to be a kind of imposition of controlling the common people. For the sake of argument, even if it is accepted that the common people are corrupt, it becomes a natural inference that those who become corrupt have the necessity to do so; that is, they have the ability to take decision and resources at behest of their reach. This is, therefore, not possible for those who live from hand to mouth. Thus, Machiavelli failed to maintain the characteristics of the middle class by adopting the reference to Caesar Borgia over again, and to refer to Borgia, he used the word "men" in his book *The Prince*. This is quite peculiar and becomes indicative of *politics of forgetting* at the behest of a tough king on the throne. However, the way he emphasized fortune as the instrument of gain and loss in human affairs gives warning that he

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[7] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[8] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

was all by himself an unbeliever in divine interferences. Thus, he is said to be modern as compared to the medieval philosophy based on theology. One point in his tendency is clear that he never allowed people the *right to resist* as if whatever done by the philosopher-kings would be unchallenged not in the Platonic sense of their superiority, but in that the system is anti-democratic. The next section deals with the middle class in relation to populist philosophies.

## Populist Philosophies and Middle Class

Away from the classical philosophies, the industrial revolution affected the entire society. As it gave better opportunity to some to make profits for the first time according to a certain pattern, it provided those to be exploited reasons to safeguard their own interests. Thus, the socio-economic culture of manufacturing merchandises automatically created a situation, in which the relations of production became the cornerstone of the theories in favor of the latter's interests. In different European societies, they got different names. In England, there were *Guild Socialism* and *Fabianism*; in France, however, there was *Syndicalism* as opposed to *Fabianism*. All these were basically different types of collectivism. Among these, *Fabianism* was directly related to the middle class. Some are of the opinion that the Fabians were socialists; but actually, they were *left-leaning*. They did not support private ownership of land to the utter disappointment of the common masses. They wanted the ownership of the major means of production not only to be shifted to the society, but also gradually obliterating all possible means of capitalism in consecutive strokes. In other words, they were Fabians in the sense they never believed bringing changes in one stroke. They were in favor of continuous progress towards their goal and they became the most active when the opposition would be in highest degree of crisis. It also grew in England; and it is said that it had wiped away the middle class there.

In the normal course of history, the age determination with the help of any particular year or event is next to impossible. It was just the reverse in case of England. Modern era began in England with the foundation of the Tudor dynasty and the enthronement of Henry VII, in 1485. It is important to remember that this also marked the beginning of the middle class social revolution. Henry VII

contributed a lot to the generation of this new class by destroying the military and political power of the nobles, landed gentry, and generating a new social class of landowners from among the upper middle class. Yet, it created a new kind of problems in the sense that the newly created class of landowners started grabbing up the public land and claimed as their own. In many cases, they did not hesitate to take over the land of the peasants.[9] As a result, this also generated a new class - the class of the destitute, which became potential support base for any collective ideological organization in future.

It is important to gauge how the collectivism was affected by the activities and ideas of leadership from the middle class. As already mentioned, *Syndicalism* took place in France. They are said to be the French version of *Guild Socialism*. What is important is that Syndicalists were against *Fabianism* on ground of leadership. They declared that their leaders would come from their community itself. They did not allow any intellectual leadership from a community that had no direct experience of the perils. The Syndicalists candidly opposed the middle class leadership to the interests of the syndicates. They distrusted the middle class socialism. According to them, all other wings of socialism had emanated from the intellect of the middle class theorists. Philosophically, it points to the unique generation of this class quite distinguished from the pure classes.

Apart from these, we should consider the evolution of the modernization theories as well. This is also a part of modern philosophy. Barrington Moore once uttered with emphasis that there would be no democracy without the *bourgeoisie*. Around the same period, the philosophy of the middle class was put forward, in terms of democracy, by Seymour Lipset and Samuel P. Huntington. Now, the definition of democracy has changed over the time. The existence of some democratic practices twenty years back is now not only considered undemocratic, but also defined in such a way that the essence of present-day democracy speaks of something super-individuality. The ideas of individuality has transformed into an active world citizen beyond the geo-political limitation of the legal perception of citizenship. It remains incomplete, unless it is mentioned that this approach was somewhat detailed by David Held

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[9] Cf. A. L. Morton: *A People's History of England* (New York: Obscure Press, 2006).

in his definition of cosmopolitanism. It is he, who craved for cosmopolitan democracy at the global level.[10] In the next section, we analyze the emergence of the new middle class in India during the period of decolonization.

## Decolonization and Middle Class

Around the mid-twentieth century, a good number of non-European, particularly Asian, colonies of the West became independent. At the same time, there was on vogue cold war that required mobilization of such newly independent countries by both the rivals. Most of the countries became successful in maintaining their decisional sovereignty by not joining any of the rivals of the cold war. Domestically, this decision required establishing an economic blend between capitalism and socialism in terms of private and public ownership respectively of the major means of production. India, too, was not an exception. However, it had to maintain a closed economy in order to prevent unwanted external interferences to influence the economy. Truly, it heralded a new kind of orientation towards generating a new class out of the necessity of management of such public enterprises, managing the markets and creation of the consumers therein. In fact, it led to the growth of specialist bureaucracy. For the first time, electoral manifestos required candidates reflecting on issues related to public enterprises because they became the cornerstones of not only individual finance of the people engaged in jobs there, but also their political lives. This gave the employees to organize themselves occupationally, which in turn, led to the growth of pressure groups. Since interest/pressure groups are directly affiliated to certain political parties, this new economic development in the secondary sector promoted a new horizon of mass politics.

This environment led to some misgivings, such as corruption and mal-administration, which brought about protests movements by people of different walks of life in the society, giving shape to the *demand polity*. At this juncture, if a regime tries to quell them and implicates the *command polity*, then the political condition overall

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[10] Cf. S. L. Verma: *Advanced Political Theory: Analysis and Technologies* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2012), p. 307.

gets worse. The conflicts between leaders and the common people were interfered with other developments, which in due course became the indispensable instruments of providing philosophical support to both classes. In both the cases, the system itself becomes a tool of convenience.[11] Thus, "it becomes a matter of convenience, an arrangement of mutual advantage all around with fairly predictable outcomes. The population at large gets divided between those who suspend reason willingly as a matter of convenience, and those who accept the illusion until reality forces them to wake up." [12]

At present, middle class is prefixed with the term "new" as compared to the "old" Indian middle class. The philosophical differences between these two classes are varied. The old middle class was a closed community based on very high education from the famous schools, colleges and universities, limited circle of friendship, handling very high rank posts including power corridors of administration, culture of club-hopping, sophisticated behavior and, balanced approach to politics.[13] Thus, they considered themselves always detached from the mainstream population. It can be rather said that they used to consider themselves as the determinants of the satisfactions of the mainstream population. The new Indian middle class is an open community and a socializing group. Its size is continuously expanding. It does not depend on ideological aloofness; for in this group, people consider themselves only in terms of their economic conditions and financial credibility. Most of them acquire professional qualifications, which would require them to remain active continuously until death. They prefer their interests and do not want to sacrifice themselves for others. Hence, they are concerned with only themselves and no one else. Such paradigmatic shift in individual behavior truly ushered in the age of pataphysics. Their life is highly yielding in terms of material gains, but they lack permanence. Though their life is good present, their future is uncertain. As a result, life is hectic, in-disciplined, careless and free from scruples. They and their employees have become machines and

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[11]Cf. A. Bhaduri:. *The Face You Were Afraid to See: Essays on the Indian Economy* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 2009), pp. 5-6.

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] Cf. G. Das: *India Unbound: From Independence to the Global Information Age* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 2012), p. 280.

have failed to be human persons to each other. As a result, they experience the highest level of frustration, which they have no alternative means to overcome. Therefore, they live enjoying the present and not thinking too much about their future.

The problem arises, when large sections of people come from this socio-economic background. Political parties have to deal with all people; so they are not concerned too much about this group. For instance, a son of a farmer, who has become an engineer, takes loan from the bank and tries to set up service sector employment opportunities on his family's farming land. Thus, the reliable sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, get slipped into uncertainty. This uncertainty is not only on the individual level, but also on the national level. This is because damaging an important sector as agricultural sector can have effects on supply of crops, price rise and inflation, social degeneration, a new kind of market and entrepreneurs surviving on that social degeneration, nuclear families, shedding of communitarian value and normative considerations. All this happens in favor of the survival of the "I," "me" and "mine," a universe expressing egoism. This egoism is the main driver of the new Indian middle class. The next section elaborates on the challenges posed by the new Indian middle class.

## Challenges Posed by New Indian Middle Class

The philosophy of new Indian middle class is grossly different from the old Indian middle class on various levels. Even on normal observation, it would not be difficult tell that new middle class is not an extension of old middle class, but a completely a new class. It is opposed to the old middle class. It treats itself as power, instead of being the source of power. Satish Deshpande, speaking about the new middle class says that instead of representing the Indian nation, they themselves try to become the nation.[14] While the old Indian middle class considered sovereignty as *sacrosanct* and subordinated to the state despite having the sense of being the source of power. In contrast, the new Indian middle class foster the thinking that they themselves are the state; and the latter should make necessary

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[14] Cf. Satish Deshpande: *Contemporary India: A Sociological View* (New Delhi: Viking, 2003).

changes according to the former's desire. Therefore, the sense of democracy as a system of the people and for the people is extended to the degree of 'by the people' on the basis of continuous assessment. Thus, this is major transformation over the past, while assessment in this regard is done every five years. Though institutionally, still the system of election is on vogue, but on a daily basis the activities of the regimes are monitored critically. This is as good as the system of five years' planning in an age of stock-market-based globalization. This attitude of individuals is directly related to human rights movements or other new social movements as termed by some people.

The contradictory perceptions are no more between state and civil society; but within the civil society itself. It is no more involved with the state because the movements are basically not against state itself; but against either certain regimes, or men who are in different public positions from within the civil society itself. Thus, the move-menters fail to distinguish one's caliber as a public official and as an atomized number from the civil society. However, it has to be remembered that when some persons from civil society sit on some public chairs, they are still from the society itself, though, in fact, they are the pillars of government. For instance, if a man becomes a teacher and at the time of invigilation if he reminisces bad experiences in his studentship at the hands of his teacher and in visualizing capacity of being a student if he feels angry with his teacher, and out of that feeling if he spares his students from copying and taking to illegal advances, it would be injustice to the society and the system at large. So, "in principle, coercion belongs to the state while civil society is where freedom is rooted and human emancipation according to these arguments consists in the autonomy of civil society, its expansion and enrichment, its liberation from the state."[15] The dilution of rigid state versus civil society seems to be highly untenable now. Gudavarthy shows that there are so many intra-movement conflicts. As a result, civil society is a platform of heterogeneous actions and reactions more or less tied up in an identical supposition that civil society is a society at large, which

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[15] E. M. Wood: "Unruly Categories: A Critique of Nancy Fraser's Dual Systems Theory," *Adding Insult to Injury*, ed. K. Olson (London: Verso, 2008), p. 74.

begets its political aspirations and philosophy of policy-making. [16] The next section challenges Marxian two class theory and establishes the reality of the middle class and its challenges in the globalized scenario.

### Middle Class and Marxism: A Discourse with New Entrants

We mentioned earlier that the middle class stands somewhere between the upper class and the lower class. However, Marxism holds the view that the majority is continuously exploited by the capitalists, and so it views the society in terms of two classes: the exploiters and the exploited. According to Marxist ideology, violent revolution is the means adopted by the exploited class to overthrow the exploiters. In contrast, the technique inherent in the emergence of middle class is not revolutionary, but evolutionary, constitutional and peaceful. In Marxism, there is no concept of *peripheral* socio-economic community between the two extremes. The innate feature of something *peripheral* is that both the extremes try to overpower it, not always in the sense of exploitation. In this age of service-oriented economy, everything is understood in terms of service. In developing countries, cycles are also repaired at home; the mechanics come to the residence of the cycle-owners at the pre-declared time and charges extra on account of home-service. Now, as an unorganized labor system, there are no structured charges for the services. As a result, they can charge at will and in accordance with various subjective criteria. Therefore, the middle class gets manipulated at the hands of the service-industry. However, in a globalized economy, as the profit-making of the industrialists is on the increase in a continuous scale of ascendency keeping pace with the *laisseze-faire free market liberalization*, the middle class, which is the *non-investor consumer class*, becomes vulnerable to the *price fluctuation*. Thus, middle class gets sandwiched by both the upper class - the entrepreneur class, and the lower class - the *blue collar* service providers in the unorganized service sector.

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[16] Cf. A. Gudavarthy: *Politics of Post-Civil Society: Contemporary History of Political Movements in India* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 2013), pp. 48-49.

Interestingly enough, those who are on the edge of the so-called *old* middle class are oriented to joining the new middle class; their process is slowly and gradually to plagiarize the potentials of the *old* middle class. This is how they partake into the qualification of becoming members of *new middle class*, which is a conglomeration of both the *old* fellows and the new entrants. In this case, it should be kept into consideration that philosophically in case of the old middle class, individuals used to grow up in that particular environment. Their pattern of prosperity depended largely on the community of the enlightened. However, so far as the new entrants are concerned, the families of theirs follow the growth scale of the individuals. Therefore, the trajectories of the old and new middle classes are just opposite to each other.

## Conclusion

Thus, the origin of middle class has a long history. The innate concept of today's middle class can be well traced as back as to the philosophy of Socrates and Plato. However, some experts agree to discuss the studies of this class vis-à-vis the issues of capitalism. "The real momentum in the rise of the middle classes and in their formation came with the age of Enlightenment on the one hand and in the course of the Industrial Revolution." [17] Joseph Schumpeter is famous for the use of the word "entrepreneur" in the contemporary senses of steady evolutionary growth of capitalism. It generates money flow which is at present in the form of finance capitalism. This creates generation of one's financial capacity to the extent of huge growth without any cultural tradition or attitude to fall back on.[18] Though Schumpeter wrote it long back, and still it remains significant. However, the new Indian middle class has no metaphysical philosophy at all. It is just like a mechanized form of continuous functioning and broadening the process of input-output model in terms of cybernetic responsiveness. At present, across the world the new middle class is continuously expanding at the behest of

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[17] I. Ahmad, and H. Reifeld: *Middle Class Values in India and Western Europe* (New Delhi: Social Sciences Press, 2001), p. 1.

[18] Cf. J. A. Schumpeter: *The Theory of Economic Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949).

globalization. Still, the tendency to maintain *status quo* resides in every society and community, which is basically resistant to much entropy. Thus, the challenge of globalization is that it is very difficult to set aside as it is oriented to satisfying the utilitarian approach of individuals to life. The new middle class is the largest pillar of the market-based utilitarianism. Therefore, the best policy to preserve every society is to make a careful blend between subjective humanitarianism and objective individuality based on material prospects.

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**Part IV
Multiculturalism and Religion**

**20.**

# Is Islam Really a Religion of Peace?

ROSHAN NISAR

## Introduction

Before I delve into elaborating the theme of this chapter, I would like to state affirmatively that my purpose here is not to hurt any religious sentiment or label any community. However, my objective here is to disembowel those arguments that are either cloaked in the ostentatious garb of fallacious reasoning or swaddled in the smooth linen of unconscionable mendacity. By so doing, I intend to lay bare facts with clarity. We live in an age that goads us to sacrifice truth on the altar of political correctness and by succumbing to such prodding; we actually end up composing our own elegy. Hence, it is imperative that we, having purged our minds of prejudice and having enshrined our hearts in objectivity, ought to be willing to gauge our cherished beliefs against the nonchalant and disinterested dictates of facts, truth and reality. We must be humble enough or at least sincere enough to abdicate our beliefs, when we are proved wrong. I opine that a man ought to have no personal stake in any of the beliefs that he holds except in the rational assurance that all the beliefs that he does hold are consonant with truth and correspondent to reality. I am convinced that this is of paramount necessity because ideologies have germane consequences. After all, the manner in which we conduct our lives is but the logical outworking of the worldviews we subscribe to.

Having made the above initial observations, in the first section, we raise the question "Is the notion of violence inherent in Islam?" Though not all Muslims are violent or terrorists, it seems that the notion of violence is inherent in the Islam as a religion, an ideology, a philosophy and a theology. It is the precepts of Islam that define the Islamic faith and not the good or the bad actions of Muslims. A Muslim is one who confesses that *Allah* is only God; Muhammad is the final Prophet and the teachings *Quran*. Since all Muslims have to obey the teachings of *Allah*, His Prophet, and the *Quran*, they also must accept those texts in the *Quran*, in which there is a direct

reference to violence. Thus, there seems to be an inherent connection between Islam and violence.

The second section takes up the question "Why does not all Muslims practice violence if Islam propagates it?" In clarifying this point we ask a counter question: "Why all Muslims are not pacifistic if Islam is a religion of peace?" For, there is a striking congruity between the diabolic acts of violence carried out by the terrorists and the open-ended teachings of the *Quran* regarding violence. Thus, the fact that there are Muslims who are peaceful does not prove the fact that violence is not inherent in the teachings of *Quran* and Prophet Muhammad. The third section elaborates on the incongruity found in Prophet's revelations regarding violence. During the four stages of the development of Islam in Muhammad's life-time, he has received contradictory revelations regarding violence. For instance, the Meccan revelations are more tolerant, whereas the Medinian revelations are more violent in nature, asking to murder the Jews, Christians, and even the Muslims, if they do not take the path of violence. Thus, we find an explicit espousal of violence in *Quran*, to which we turn out attention, in the fourth section. Islam divides people as Muslims and non-Muslims. In *Quran*, there are *Suras* that speak of destroying all non-Muslims and establishing the brotherhood of Islam. Similarly, the different sects of Islam are in constant war with each other believing that the Muslims of other sects are infidels.

The conclusion reiterates our contention that violence is inherent in Islam and it is not a religion of peace. Islam needs no spokesperson at all; for it speaks quite eloquently and perspicuously for itself. Terrorists have not tarnished the face of Islam, but they simply bring to light and act upon the real face of Islam hidden in the teachings of the *Quran* and the Prophet. Thus, when we consider Islam as a religion and an ideology, it is difficult to accept that it is a religion of peace. Now, we move on to consider the notion of violence inherent in Islam.

### Is the Notion of Violence Inherent in Islam?

I do not have an iota of doubt that many Muslims practice their faith peacefully. However, when an Islamic advocate adduces examples so as to ratify his standpoint, we ought to ask ourselves

what the objective point of reference, for assaying an ideology, is. Should an ideology be appraised by the relative and subjective interpretation of an individual, a group of individuals or by the absolute and objective truth claims that it makes for itself? Rather than betraying the incompatibility, if any actually exists, between terrorism and Islam and divulge the error that certain Muslims commit, when they use their own religious texts as their motivation for unleashing heinous acts of terrorism, the issue is completely sidestepped by merely discounting Islamic terrorists as not being true Muslims at all. This is an opposite example of the *No True Scotsman*, which is a logical fallacy by which a person eschews being identified with a reprehensible deed by asserting that no true member of the class, he is a part of, would ever do such a thing. When one quotes a text in isolation of its context, one runs the risk of committing the *cherry picking fallacy*, which consists in the act of pointing to a part of a case that seems to confirm a particular position, while ignoring its significant portion, which may contradict that position. After all, a text, bereft of its context, can end up as a basis for pretext. In order to avoid this occurrence, I have adopted the indispensable method of exegesis, while dealing with the verses of the *Quran*.[1] I shall reflect on the historical context, so that we may be aware of the origins, references and reasons. Similarly, I shall consider the literary context, so we may understand semantic aspects. Since it is alleged that Islam is misrepresented and that the *Quran* is misquoted and misinterpreted by Islamophobes, especially Jews and Christian missionaries, I shall establish as my pedestal the well transcribed citations and their interpretations by those very Islamic scholars and historians, who were instrumental in documenting the *Hadith*[2] and the *Sira*.[3] Hence, I cannot possibly be accused of misconstruction as the interpretations, stated here, are not mine but actually theirs and obviously, no Muslim can find fault with his own Islamic texts that comprise the *Quran,* the *Hadith* and the *Sira*. The *Ahadith*[4] are of utmost importance to the Muslim, as

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[1] *Quran* is a collection of citations that Muhammad claimed were revealed to him by God (*Allah*), through the angel Gabriel.

[2] A collection of narrations of the life and deeds of Muhammad.

[3] The recorded biography of Muhammad,

[4] The plural of *Hadith*.

they are the basis for the *Sunnah* [5] from which the *Sharia* [6] is derived. It is enjoined upon every Muslim to emulate the *Sunnah*. Ye have, indeed, in the Messenger of *Allah* a beautiful pattern of conduct for any one whose hope is in *Allah* and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of *Allah*.[7]

I certainly do not subscribe to the notion that all Muslims are terrorists. Whoever does so would be guilty of committing the *fallacy of hasty generalization*. I believe that benevolent and vile people exist everywhere irrespective of their religion, class or nationality. In fact, this chapter is not so much about Muslims; but it is about Islam as a religion, a philosophy, an ideology and a theology. The reason for this approach is that there exists an apparent dichotomy in the Muslim world as some Muslims take recourse to violence and bloodshed, while others refrain from the same. The violent class indicts the peaceful class of duplicity, disobedience and pusillanimity; and the peaceful class reassures non-Muslims that Islam is a religion of peace and arraigns the violent group of not merely transgressing, but perverting Islamic doctrine. The non-Muslims are utterly puzzled at the vortex of these discrepant versions of Islam. They fail to realize that an objective analysis of the Islamic texts is all that it takes to free themselves from this confusion, instead of getting caught up in their own subjective opinions regarding this issue. It is important to note that it is the precepts of Islam and not the good or the bad actions of Muslims that define the Islamic faith. From the Islamic vantage point, there is neither a moderate Muslim nor a radical Muslim because Muslim is one who confesses the *shahada* "there is no God but God and Muhammad is the final messenger,"[8] and submits his will to *Allah* and follows the *Sunnah*. He does not even have a choice, but to surrender himself in unwavering obedience to *Allah's* commands that are mentioned in the *Quran* and meticulously imitate the *Sunnah*, which is portrayed in the *Hadith* and the *Sira*. It is not fitting for a believer, whether man or woman, to have any option about the decisions of *Allah* and his messenger, the Prophet, when a matter has been decided by them. If anyone disobeys *Allah* and his messenger,

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[5] The perfect example of Muhammad.

[6] The Islamic law.

[7] Cf. *Quran*, 33:21.

[8] "*La ilaha ilallah muhammadun rasulallah*."

he is clearly on a wrong path.[9] Since all Muslims have to obey the teachings of *Allah* and His Prophet, they also must accept those texts in the *Quran*, in which there is a direct reference to violence. Thus, there seems to be an inherent connection between Islam and violence. The next section unfolds the question "Why not all Muslims adhere to violence, if Islam propagates it?"

### Why Do not All Muslims Resort to Violence If Islam Propagates It?

Apart from a theological reason, the following lines will divulge profound insight into the argument concerning "why all Muslims do not resort to violence if Islam propagates it." A confluence of three criteria - belief, knowledge and obedience - in the mind of an individual is required for an ideology to translate into action. These individuals can be classified into three categories. The first group consists of people who are overwhelmingly zealous of the ideology they believe in, but quite appallingly, their knowledge of their faith is so limited. For example, the many pious Muslims, who are exceedingly ardent about their religion; but are painfully ignorant not only the contents of the Islamic texts, but also the tenets of Islam. To the second group belong those Muslims, the firmness of whose belief in their religion is in accord with the profundity of the knowledge of their faith. Yet, their obedience to it is in severe discord with the first two parameters. For instance, those Muslims, who focus only on those teachings of the *Quran* that they find appealing and turn a blind eye to the rest. Their moral discretion takes precedence to their obedience. The third group includes Muslims, in whose spirits we find a coalescence of belief, knowledge and obedience. For example, in one of the most unsettlingly sinister videos - the viewing of which would cause any decent and rational human being to burn with indignation - released by an Islamic terror outfit, a girl is seen hollering hysterically as her captors, with bestial callousness, rip her clothes off while chanting "God is greater" (*Allah Hu Akbar*). The girl, in a vain bid to conceal her nakedness with her hands, weeps inconsolably and implores them to stop; but they yank her by her hair, slap her and ravage her. One of her captors then,

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[9] Cf. *Quran*, 33: 36.

with psychopathic disdain and a sadistic sense of fulfillment, cites this verse (*aayat*): "And all married women (are forbidden) unto you save those (captives) whom your right hands possess."[10]

To censure these terrorists for quoting the *Quran* out of context and twisting Islam to justify their own insatiable desire for violence, let us look at the context of this prescriptive verse in light of the *Hadith*. It reads as follows:

> The Apostle of *Allah* (may peace be upon him) sent a military expedition to Awtas on the occasion of the battle of Hunain. They met their enemy and fought with them. They defeated them and took them captives. Some of the companions of the Apostle of *Allah* (may peace be upon him) were reluctant to have intercourse with the female captives in the presence of their husbands who were unbelievers. So *Allah*, the Exalted, sent down the Qur'anic verse (*Sura* 4: 24): 'And all married women (are forbidden) unto you save those (captives) whom your right hands possess.' [11]

If the Islamic polemicist, avid to indulge in intellectually emaciated casuistry, asks us to think why all Muslims are not violent if Islam is a religion of violence, then should he not also be alacritous to ponder, by using that very yardstick, why all Muslims are not pacifistic if Islam is a religion of peace? Let him unravel why striking congruity exists between the diabolic acts of terrorists and most open-ended commands of the *Quran* regarding violence. The claim that Islam means "peace" is inaccurate from the perspectives of not only Arabic language, but also from the perspective of the *Quran*. Both the words "Islam" and "Muslim" are derived from the same Arabic root verb "*istaslama*" which means "to submit" or "to surrender." Hence, "Islam" means "submission" and "Muslims" are "those who submit themselves to *Allah*." The *Quran* says: "The desert Arabs say, 'We believe.' Say, 'Ye have no faith'; but ye (only) say, 'We have submitted our wills to *Allah*,' For not yet has faith entered your hearts. But if ye obey *Allah* and His Messenger, He will not belittle

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[10] Cf. *Ibid.*, 4: 24.
[11] *Hadith*, no. 2150.

aught of your deeds: for *Allah* is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."[12] Thus, the fact that there are Muslims who are paceful does not prove the fact that violence is not inherent in the teachings of *Quran* and Prophet Muhammad. The next section elaborates on the incongruity of Prophet's revelations regarding violence.

### Incongruity of Prophet's Revelations Regarding Violence

Islam began in 610 AD in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. The emotive words about the "intolerance" of the Meccans and the "persecution" of the Prophet - as a byproduct of "intolerance" - are indeed quite poignant except that it is not factual in light of either history or the Islamic texts. The people of Mecca were quite tolerant of religions as they were polytheists. Hence, the introduction of a new god or religion hardly made any difference to them. It is only after Prophet Muhammad spoke against the religion and culture of the Meccans, they were intolerant towards Muhammad and the religion he had proposed. Ibn Ishaq's *Sirat Rasulallah*, the most authentic *Sira*, says:

> When the apostle openly displayed *Islam* as *Allah* ordered him, his people did not withdraw or turn against him, so far as I have heard, until he spoke disparagingly of their gods. When he did that, they took great offence and resolved unanimously to treat him as an enemy. We [the Meccans] have never seen the like of what we have endured from this man [Muhammad]. He has derided our traditional values, abused our forefathers, reviled our religion, caused division among us, and insulted our gods. We have endured a great deal from him.[13]

Since *Quran* 2: 256 and *Quran* 109: 2-6 have been quoted to bolster the claim that Islam promotes tolerance, while *Quran 4:75* has been quoted to buttress the claim that Islam advocates fighting only in self-defense, let us look at them exegetically, so that we may understand their context and see what bearing they have in the

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[12] *Quran*, 49: 14

[13] *al-Tabari,* vol. 6, p.101

*Quran* today. When we study the *Hadith* and the *Sira*, we find that there are four stages of the development of Islam in the life time of Prophet Muhammad. The first stage includes the inception of Islam and *Hijra*-emigration from Mecca to Medina - from 610 to 622 A.D. When Muhammad, secured by the affluence of his first wife Khadija, lived under the aegis of his very influential and powerful uncle, Abu Talib - the leader of the Banu Hashim, a clan of the Quraysh tribe of Mecca - he received, as he alleged, eighty-six of the one hundred fourteen *Suras* of the *Quran.* These *Suras* - known as Meccan *Suras* - though have begun in a spirit of seemingly apparent tolerance, became increasingly more contemptuous of the beliefs of the Meccans. *Sura* 109:2-6 belongs to the earlier part of this period. In this *Sura*, Muhammad proclaimed himself as the final and the greatest of all the prophets of the God of Jews and Christians. He claimed that their scriptures had prophesies about him. The revelations he claimed to have received at this point referred, very respectfully, to Jews and Christians as the "People of the Book" (*Ahl Al-Kitab*). When Muhammad, divested of security by the deaths of Khadija and his chief protector Abu Talib, suffered the backlash of his disparagement of the Meccans, he sought an alliance with the Arabs of Yathrib to fight for him. When the leaders of Mecca learnt of this they sought to seize him. When alerted, Muhammad fled to the city of Yathrib, which was later renamed as the "City of the Prophet" (*Madinat Al-Nabi*) and much later as Medina.

The second stage is the introduction of Islam as a religion of tolerance. Yathrib was populated with Christians, a very large number of Jews and several pagan tribes all of whom utterly out-numbered Muhammad and his miniscule coterie of Muslim immigrants. He continued, as he alleged, to receive revelations from *Allah* and interestingly, their tone, unlike the contemptuous one of those he had allegedly received during the latter period at Mecca when Abu Talib was alive, was quite congenial. He cited *Sura* 2:256 at this juncture. The Jews rejected his claims of prophet-hood because firstly, he was not a Jew and secondly, his knowledge of the *Torah* - the Jewish scriptures and also the first five books of the Old Testament of the Bible - was garbled and incomplete. The Christians perceived many inconsistencies in the revelations of Muhammad, as they were contradicting historically established facts and were based on a gross misunderstanding of basic Christian theology. Hence,

they rejected Islam and the claims of Muhammad. However, the pagan tribes embraced Islam.

The third stage is an outcry against oppression and a call for self-defense of Islam. When the adherents of Islam grew into a considerable number, Muhammad claimed that *Allah* revealed *Quran 4:75* to him. He spurred them on to fight in self-defense and in the cause of the "oppressed" who were being browbeaten by the "intolerant" Meccans. When some of these neophytes evinced their dislike to fight he announced that he had received the following revelations: "Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But *Allah* knoweth, and ye know not."[14] Again he said: "Be not weary and faint-hearted, crying for peace, when ye should be uppermost: for *Allah* is with you."[15]

The fourth stage is the period of Islamic hegemony and consequent subjugation and annihilation of non-Muslims. There was an irrepressible outbreak of utter shock and considerable uproar among the converts of Islam when Muhammad cited alleged revelations that completely contravened the previous ones. These revelations addressed the Jews and Christians - who were earlier referred to, respectfully, as the People of the Book - as apes and pigs; non-Muslims were addressed as the vilest of animals. Muslims were required to abominate non-Muslims, strike terror into their hearts, fight them until they confess the *Shahada*, decapitate them in the event that they refuse to embrace Islam despite compulsion and kill Muslims who abdicate Islam. The Muslims, who overcome by shame and pangs of conscience, were reluctant to rape non-Muslim women in the presence of their captured, non-Muslim husbands, were told that *Allah* decreed it for them. These "revelations" came to Muhammad only after several pagan tribes embraced Islam because of which it became a predominant religion.

Now, we quote some of the *Quranic* revelations Muhammad received at this stage, which are directly against the Jews and Christians.

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[14] *Quran*, 2: 216.
[15] *Ibid*., 47: 35.

Say (O Muhammad (SAW) to the people of the Scripture): Shall I inform you of something worse than that, regarding the recompense from *Allah*: those (Jews) who incurred the Curse of *Allah* and His Wrath, those of whom (some) He transformed into monkeys and swines.[16]

O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely *Allah* does not guide the unjust people.[17]

Fight against those who (1) believe not in *Allah*, (2) nor in the Last Day, (3) nor forbid that which has been forbidden by *Allah* and His Messenger (4) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.[18]

I will expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula and will not leave any but Muslim.[19]

*Allah's* apostle said, "The Hour will not be established until you fight with the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say, "O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him.[20]

One wonders why the above verses *Quran* attempts to destroy the Jews and Christians if "Islam is a religion of peace." It is the above verses that make the Islamic organizations, such as HAMAS, engage in anti-Semitism and make Palestine to fires missiles into Israeli cities, killing innocent civilians? The verses, mentioned above, tell us the reason why all these happen. Don't they?

Similarly, there are direct Quranic revelations given to Muhammad, which today's terrorist groups use to justify their

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[16] *Ibid.*, 5:60.

[17] *Ibid.*, 5: 51.

[18] *Ibid.*, 9: 29.

[19] *Hadith*, no. 4366.

[20] *Ibid.*, no. 177.

ideology and violence they inflict on those who do not believe in Islam. For instance, groups, such as the ISIS inflict the punishment prescribed in the *Quran* to those who fail to follow their ideology.

> Surely the vilest of animals in *Allah's* sight are those who disbelieve, then they would not believe.[21]

> I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them.[22]

> So is it other than the religion of *Allah* they desire, while to Him have submitted [all] those within the heavens and earth, willingly or by compulsion?[23]

> They wish that you should disbelieve as they disbelieve, and then you would be equal; therefore, take not to yourselves friends of them, until they emigrate in the way of *Allah*; then, if they turn their backs, take them, and slay them wherever you find them; take not to yourselves any one of them as friend or helper.[24]

> The Prophet said: If somebody (a Muslim) discards his religion, kill him.[25]

Some of the above revelations Muhammad received created a pandemonium among the followers of Muhammad, who called him a fabricator and abjured faith both in him and in Islam. He then received, allegedly, yet another opportune revelation that assuaged the tumult that had prevailed among these early Muslims. He claimed that *Allah* sent down a revelation of the doctrine known as "the abrogator and the abrogated" (*Al-Nasik wal-Mansukh*). This doctrine of abrogation teaches that, in the event of a contradiction between two verses, the one that was revealed later rescinds the one

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[21] *Quran*, 8.55.
[22] *Ibid.*, 8: 12.
[23] *Ibid.*, 3: 83.
[24] *Ibid.*, 4: 89.
[25] *Hadith,* no. 260.

that was revealed earlier. Thus, the violent *Medinian Suras* that were revealed when Islam became a dominant religion and the faith of the majority nullify the seemingly tolerant and peaceful ones that were revealed at Mecca and at the early stage at Medina when Muhammad barely had a few hundred followers and Islam was an insignificant religion practiced by the minority. To quote the *Quranic* verse on this point: "And when we change a Verse [of the *Quran*, i.e. cancel (abrogate) its order] in place of another, and *Allah* knows the best of what He sends down, they (the disbelievers) say: "You (O Muhammad SAW) are but a Muftari! (forger, liar). Nay, but most of them know not." [26] The next section looks into Islam's explicit espousal of violence.

### Islam's Explicit Espousal of Violence

In the light of the above-quoted passages from the Islamic scriptures, it is preposterous for Islamic proponents to even quote *Sura* 2: 256 and *Sura* 109: 2-6. They stand recanted by later *Medinian Suras* that call all Muslims to fight non-Muslims until they convert to Islam or subjugate them under the suzerainty of Islam or kill them if they reject the first two options. Hence, the claim that the *Quran* teaches universal brotherhood, kindness and equality of all human beings - whether Muslims or non-Muslims - may aptly be termed as a byproduct of "divinely inspired balderdash." What the *Quran* actually teaches is the following. Firstly, the believers (Muslims) are a single Brotherhood.[27] Secondly, Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of *Allah*, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves.[28] Thirdly, "Ye" - the Muslims are the best of peoples.[29] Fourthly, "They" - the non-Muslims are the worst of creatures.[30]

The argument that *jihad* cannot possibly imply offensive warfare, in the cause of *Allah*, merely because etymologically, it stems from the word "*jahada*" which means "strive" or "struggle" is as ludicrous as stating that the word "nice" which means "pleasing,"

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[26] *Quran*, 16: 101.

[27] Cf. *Ibid.*, 49:10

[28] Cf. *Ibid.*, 48: 29.

[29] Cf. *Ibid.*, 3: 110.

[30] Cf. *Ibid.*, 98: 6.

"agreeable," or "delightful" cannot possibly bear a positive connotation because etymologically it stems from the Latin root "*nescius*" which means "ignorant" or "unaware." The Islamic proponent seems to have a problem deciphering the difference between *semantics* - literal meaning and *pragmatics* - intended meaning. There is an utter fiasco, on his part, to realize that the conceptual/denotative meaning of a word can be quite different from its own associative/connotative meaning. For example, the sentence "I have ten *pins*" the word "pins" refers to small, slender and pointed pieces of metal. On the other hand, in the sentence "He is on *pins* and needles" the world "pins" refers to a state of nervous anticipation.

When the most deplorable evils such as rape, torture and murder are themselves nestled in the very bosom of Islam, through divine sanction, I wonder what other "evil inclinations" the Islamic apologist claims that *jihad* is a fight against. Rather than be wooed by his rosy exposition of *jihad*, let us turn to the *Quran* and the *Hadith*, the second most authentic text after *Quran*, for its rightful definition and state clearly how they describe the concept of *jihad*.

> And fight them until there is no more *Fitnah* (disbelief and polytheism: i.e. worshipping others besides *Allah*) and the religion (worship) will all be for *Allah* Alone [in the whole of the world].[31]

> The Messenger of *Allah* said: I have been commanded to fight against people till they testify that here is no god but *Allah*, that Muhammad is the messenger of *Allah* ... and if they do it, their blood and property are guaranteed protection on my behalf.[32]

Muhammad's alleged revelations about Paradise as a place of gardens and vineyards filled with gorgeous virgins with whom Muslims could have sex perennially, titillated the baser instincts of his proselytes whose irrational enthusiasm was piqued by the belief that they would acquire rewards and war booty if alive or enter paradise if killed in *jihad*. We quote a few texts to affirm this fact.

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[31] *Ibid.*, 8: 39.
[32] *Hadith*, no. 33.

They will have gardens and vineyards, maidens with pears-shaped breasts who are of equal age (to their spouses).[33]

Wherein both will be those (maidens) restraining their glances upon their husbands, whom noman or jinn *yatmith-hunna* (has opened their hymens with sexual intercourse) before them.[34]

The smallest reward for the people of Paradise is an abode where there are 80,000 servants and 72 wives...[35]

*Allah* guarantees that He will admit the *Mujahid* in His cause into Paradise if he is killed, otherwise He will return him to his home safely with rewards and war booty.[36]

Frenzied mobs of Muslims, convinced that they were actually rendering a service to *Allah*, waged *jihad* with non-Muslims and set themselves on a killing spree. Their acts are indelibly etched in the annals of history: Raids on Meccan caravans (623A.D.); Battle of Badr (624A.D.); Battle of the trench (627A.D.); Massacre of the Qurayza Jews (627A.D.); decimation of Khaybar Jews (628 A.D.); surprise attack - a breach of a truce signed in 628A.D. - on Mecca and its ex-propriation (630A.D.); and the count continues till date. The *Ahadith* and the *Sira* are replete with umpteen chronicles, one of which is as follows: "Then a man drew his sword and cut off his son's foot so that he fell down and Umayya (the boy's father) let out a cry such as I have never heard ... They hewed them to pieces with their swords until they were dead."

Is *Sura 5:32* really a divine teaching of the *Quran*? Has it been quoted exactly as it is mentioned in the *Quran* or has something, amply vital, been omitted? One could not have asked for a better example of the *cherry picking fallacy* than this. Let us look at it, in its entirety, as it is mentioned in the *Quran:*

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[33] *Quran*, 78: 32-33.
[34] *Ibid.*, 55: 56.
[35] *Hadith*, no. 2562.
[36] *Hadith*, no. 6.

> On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them our messengers with clear signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.[37]

The underlined parts spill the beans. Since when exactly did Muslims become the Children of Israel? The indefinite pronoun "anyone," in this context, implies anyone of the children of Israel. This *aayat* is not a divine teaching of the *Quran* but a mere recounting of an edict of the Jewish Talmud that was given to Jews - the children of Israel - way before Muhammad was even born. Do not be veered by the word "we." It does not denote a plurality of persons; but rather it is an instance of majestic/royal plural (*pluralis majestatis*) that refers to God. This alleged revelation, reminding Muslims of the Jewish precept that was given to the Jews and accusing them of rejecting the prophets of the past, prepares grounds for the punishment that believers (Muslims) should accord to the infidels (Jews). That punishment is vividly and graphically elaborated in the very succeeding verse which the Islamic polemicist did not unearth. It is highly ironic that this verse has been used to advocate the antithesis of what it actually advocates. This *Sura* is responsible for most of the sanguinary killings perpetrated in the name of Islam. While the word "murder," in this *aayat*, is well defined, the word "mischief" has been left open to the subjective interpretation of individual Muslims, down through the ages, some of whom categorized even a questioning of the integrity of the alleged revelations of Muhammad as mischief and administered, to those "mischief makers," the punishment recommended in the subsequent verse which is as follows:

> The recompense of those who wage war against *Allah* and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be

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[37] *Quran*, 5: 32.

cut off on the opposite sides, or be exiled from the land. That is their disgrace in this world, and a great torment is theirs in the Hereafter.[38]

Thus, this *Sura*, far from condemning murder, incites profound antagonism against Jews. Did the Islamic apologist inadvertently omit the first part of *aayat* 32 and the whole of *aayat* 33 or did he do it because he is exercising "lying by omission" (*Kitman*)? Islam divides the world into two parts: first, the House of Islam - filled with Muslims (*Dar Al Islam*); and the second, the House of war - filled with infidels (*Dar Al Harb*). Do not be swayed by the dictionary definition of "infidel." According to Islam, every non-Muslim is an infidel and any non-Muslim land is *Dar Al Harb*. The doctrines of "saying something that is not true" (*Taqiyya*) and "lying by omission (*Kitman*) endow Muslims with divine sanction of legal dispensation and permit them to lie to the extent of not only gain saying their faith in Islam, but also indulging in blasphemous acts only so long as they do not mean that in their hearts. These doctrines permit a Muslim to do so, when the greater purpose is: to preserve himself when he suffers persecution at the hands of the infidels in *Dar Al Harb*; to defeat the infidel in war in *Dar Al Harb*; to deceive the infidel, in *Dar Al Harb*, so the cause of Islam may be advanced; to appease his spouse; and to reconcile estranged members of the Muslim brotherhood.

Had the Muslim apologist studied the *Ahadith* diligently he would have known why Muslims kill fellow Muslims and bomb mosques. Let us take a look at the following narrative:

The Messenger of *Allah* (Peace be upon him) said: "What befell the children of Isra'il will befall my *Ummah* (the Muslim community), step by step ... do that. Indeed the children of Isra'il split into seventy-two sects, and my Ummah will split into seventy-three sects. All of them are in the Fire except one sect." He said: "And which is it O Messenger of *Allah*?" He said: What I am upon and my Companions." [39]

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[38] *Ibid.*, 5: 33.
[39] *Hadith*, no. 2641.

Since the inception of Islam, there has been a ramification of sects, such as Sunnis, Shias, Wahhabis, Sufis, Ahamadiyyas, Bahais, and others. The number long crossed seventy-three and Muslim religious leaders, in a desperate endeavor to prove Muhammad's prediction right, began classifying those sects that crossed the number seventy-three as sub-sects of the seventy-three sects. Each sect believes that it is the one that will go to Paradise (*Jannah*) and that the rest will abide in the fire of hell. The members of some of these sects, considering the rest to be infidels, kill them and obliterate their places of worship. As though this mayhem were not enough, ISIS, for instance, labels those Muslims - who either denounce ISIS or do not uphold ISIS ideology - as "hypocrites" and butcher them.

So, firstly, "believers" are commanded to kill "infidels" until there is no more *Fitnah* and the whole world is *Dar Al Islam*. Secondly, these "believers" consider that Muslims who belong to other sects are destined to hell, and slaughter one another until mankind exterminates itself and death has the last laugh. Is the act of burning people alive really un-Islamic? Let us have a look at the most authentic *Sira* so that we may find the answer. When he (Muhammad) asked him (Kinana) about the rest he refused to produce it, so the apostle gave orders to al-Zubayr bin al-Awwam, "Torture him until you extract what he has. So he kindled a fire with flint and steel on his chest until he was nearly dead." I wonder, out of sheer curiosity, whether the Muslim polemicist would abrogate his earlier statement that "no sane human being would do such a thing and definitely not a true Muslim." Now, the above revelation has come to him. In the light of this revealed statement, it is hard to say that Islam is a religion of peace.

## Conclusion

Although many people continue to embrace Islam, kudos to those who convince them that it is a religion of peace! The main contributing factor for its phenomenal growth is the relatively higher birth rate among the Muslims of the world. The prophet (SAW) said: "Marry women who are loving and very prolific, for I shall outnumber the peoples by you." [40] Truth is not a natural corollary of

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[40] *Ibid*., 2045.

belief. Scores of people, quite despairingly, place their belief in a proposition without even investigating its veracity. Professing that an ideology is true merely because myriad people believe it is a fallacy known as *argumentum ad numeram*. The truth of a proposition is independent of both personal opinion and the number of people that subscribe to it. I egg anyone - who may dissent with me on my critique - to disinter an error, if there is one. In the event that he finds none at all, I urge him to introspect and ferret out the reason that restrains him from embracing the truth. Disconsolately, I have known people with procrustean hearts, whose partisan minds would rather remain ensconced in the womb of ignorance than take birth into the realm of cognizance. I concur that violent criminals do not speak for Islam. As a matter of fact, Islam needs no spokesperson at all; for it speaks quite eloquently and perspicuously for itself. Have terrorists besmirched the countenance of Islam or have they simply raised the *Hijab* that concealed the real visage of Islam? Is Islam really a religion of peace? The answer is quite patent. Isn't it?

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# Hindu Scriptural and Other Religious Insights Enhancing Healthy Family Living through "Multicultural and Interreligious Coexistence"

VEERASAMY S. GEORGE JOSEPH

## Introduction

Families are the bedrock of any civil society. Strong family-bond produces healthy individuals. Weak family-ties weaken the very survival of social institutions and, thus, even the foundation of a nation. Till today, reading through human history, we find "the family/families" being the effective institution for promoting the concept of oneness of humanity that is increasingly becoming multicultural and interreligious throughout the globe.[1] Family is the world in microcosm, the primary educator of each new generation and an intergenerational link. Parents as the primary agents; and teachers, as the co-agents, play the vital role of promoting peace, unity, love, selflessness, affirmation and values of positive living in any given society. It must be recognized that a society that respects the autonomy, integrity, solemnity and sacredness of every individual paves a better and healthier way of building people. Every nation that works toward enriching the diversity/multiplicity of cultures and a dialogue - whether it is interfaith or intercultural - is surer to succeed among the gamut of nations in this globe. Celebrating this multiculturality - diversity of cultures - makes the world a humane and civilized place to live in. Such an attitude and disposition ensures the future, safety and security of humanity.

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[1] Volume 18 of *Satya Nilayam*: *Chennai Journal of Intercultural Philosophy* has been fully dedicated to theme "Family in a Multicultural Society." Articles in this volume deal with the multifarious theme of multiculturalism that are relevant to family living and family making. Cf. "Family in a Multicultural Society," *Satya Nilayam*: *Chennai Journal of Intercultural Philosophy*, vol. 18 (2010), pp. 1-94.

Practicing multiculturalism represents a wide variety of perspectives, while providing greater depth of coverage. The internationalization of multicultural principles is aided through discussion of emotional reactions in multicultural scenarios; values and assumptions; and power, privilege, and contextual factors that impact multicultural practice.[2] Since the family is the bedrock of social and world order in a globalizing world, it is vital that we enhance healthy family living by facilitating multicultural and inter-religious coexistence of families.

Hence, in this chapter, we attempt elaborate on the goal of enhancing healthy family living, thereby bring about deeper and fuller multicultural and multi-religious family coexistence, in view of establishing a more humane social and world order by taking recourse to Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic scriptural insights. Therefore, in the first section, we analyze two Hindu scriptural insights - *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* and *lokasaṃgraha*. The concept of *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* consists in considering the entire world as one family. Hence, it involves the avoidance of all forms for discrimination. When one bears in mind the whole humanity as a family, then he would allow himself to be guided by values, attitudes and actions that normally prevail in a well-knit family. This, in turn, will help him not to disregard other people and cultures and prevent being indifferent to other persons' sociocultural and religious sensibilities. Similarly, the concept of *lokasaṃgraha* propagates the notion of being active in the world in view of holding together the society and world as a whole. This path is clearly opposed to renunciation of involvement in the world. However, it proposes to renounce the personal desire to posses the fruits of the actions we do for the common good. Both of these concepts from the Hindu scriptures are capable of ushering in greater peace and harmony among peoples of the world.

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[2] Cf. Timothy B. Smith, ed.: *Practicing Multiculturalism: Affirming Diversity* (Brigham: Brigham Young University, 2004). In this book, the unique content includes chapters devoted to: spiritual and religious diversity, including Islam; activism and organizational multicultural competence; classism; an overview of the multicultural movement in mental health including past achievements and current controversies; children's issues in a family context; international students and immigrants; and an ecological/contextual approach to assessment and treatment.

The second section considers the Buddhist notion of *silas* and their implications for the wellbeing of all. The practice of *silas* provides a wholesome foundation for personal and social growth, by contributing to harmonious and peaceful coexistence among community members and by promoting the common good of the society. Buddhists practice *silas* not to please a supreme being, but to lead a good and noble personal life; and to help maintain peace and harmony in society, thereby facilitate the progress and wellbeing of all. The third section clarifies the five pillars of Islam and elaborates on their potential for common good. Islam motivates its adherents to live a personal spiritual life and to be active socially for creating a better world order. Doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong by the practice of the five pillars of Islam, a Muslim is prepared to live at ease with oneself, while playing a significant communitarian role in the society. The conclusion states the lasting value of the theological and anthropological intuitive insights found in the scriptures of various religions, which have moved reformers of society, such as Vivekananda, L. M. Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi to work tirelessly for the deeper wellbeing and greater common good of all. Now, we proceed to consider Hindu scriptural insights in the first section.

## Hindu Scriptural Insights of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* and Lokasam˙*Graha*

In India, the family - either as a micro-cosmic nuclear unit or as a unit of extended family-ties - remains the fundamental socio-cultural tool for carrying forward the finer dimensions of multi-cultural and multi-religious traditions, and for promoting a harmonious and mutually coexisting human community. Of course, such stable living in India has a large reach and influence over the South Asian countries in particular. Religious *ethos* are "experienced, lived and passed on" through families. All that affects the society are prone to affect the families and vice versa. Paradigm shifts - regarding the way we perceive child rearing practices, attitudes adopted in accompanying the adolescents, forming matured adults taking into account childhood and adolescence, and pair-making/mate-selecting in view of family living - have a great say over the quality of human living over the years. Educational content

and methodology - should include philosophy of education, training in work habits, economic sharing, and attitudes towards various changing fashions shape the kind of society we envisage - keeping the present in mind and projecting the future that emerges. Planning the size of the families and regulated interventions and innovations in our families leave their marks on the type of human environment we wish to create for ourselves. Religion is a catalyst of change, preservation and fulfillment. Ambivalence of religious beliefs and attitudes not only affect families, but also they either shape them differently or break them definitely. Religions thrive, when families thrive. Religions die if families perish. Religions brighten up with renewal of families values. On the contrary, if religions are used as a political tool to promote certain religious ideologies and political agenda, ultimately it is the families that bear its burn, as it happens in some countries of the Middle East.

In the Hindu scriptures, the term "*saṃpradāya*" [3] stands for "tradition." It means "the good things" (*saṃ*) that are preserved and handed down to posterity (*pradāya*). *Saṃpradāya* is that which a community savored as good for centuries and cherished as human values (*purṣārthas*),[4] not only as life-giving, but also life-promoting for generations of human beings. Hence there is a great and urgent need to preserve the multicultural and multi-religious dimensions of our Indian society by inculcating, both in truth and in practice, the

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[3] The Sanskrit term "*saṃpradāya*" means "*saṃ-prada*" - "to give completely up" and "to hand down by tradition." As a term it is used to mean an institution-alized order or tradition, marked by a *guru*-pupil lineage (*paramparā*). Cf. John Bowker: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, Online Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). http://oxfordindex.oup.com/ browse?pageSize= 10&sort=titlesort&type_0=overview&t1=AHU03250. Accessed on 25th February, 2016.

[4] Prashant - speaking to 'dhārmika-saṁvādaḥ' - says that the Indian *vaidika dharma* talks of four basic pursuits (*purṣārthas*) - *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma* and *mokṣa*. *Artha* includes securities and basic necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health, family and so on. *Kāma* stands for pleasures that go above and beyond our basic needs. *Dharma* literally means that which supports, upholds and maintains the order of the universe (*rta*). *Mokṣa* is the pursuit of freedom through knowledge of the Self (*Ātman*). While the average individual in today's world chronicles his pursuits in the order mentioned above. In Indian tradition, *dharma* precedes the rest because it is only through *dhārmika* ways the other three pursuits are to be fulfilled.

Mahopaniṣadic insight of *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*,[5] and *Bagavad Gita* concept of *lokasamgraha*.[6] In the next two subsections, we clarify these two concepts by analyzing scriptural texts from *Mahopanishad* and *Bhagavad Gita*.

## Notion of Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam

The Mahopaniṣadic statement reads as follows: "Only mean-minded persons discriminate saying, one is a relative; the other is a stranger, for those who live magnanimously, the entire world constitutes but a family."[7] This Upanishadic statement speaks not only about peace and harmony among societies in the world (*vasudha + eva* = world + indeed), but also points to the truth that the world has to live with the help of values, attitudes and behaviors that prevail in a naturally and culturally well-knit family (*kuṭumbakam*). The following verses also explicitly points to the fact that the family life is guided by an Unknown Source (*Brahman*). This is the reason why the Hindus - as a social, religious, cultural and even as a political group - are convinced that any power in this world - big or small - cannot have its way by disregarding other persons and their cultures; and by being indifferent to the other persons' sociocultural and religious sensibilities.

Later in the third century B. C. the *Pañcarātra Agamas*[8] and in twelfth century A. D. the *Hetōpadeśa*[9] repeat this same Upanishadic experience with emphasis in their own social, cultural, political, and historical contexts. Present Prime Minister of India, Sri Narendra Modi - as a torch-bearer and relay-racer of the Vedic tradition - began his historic speech in the sixty-ninth United Nations General Assembly on September 27, 2014 with a tribute to India's ancient civilizational traditions. He said to a packed Assembly hall of delegates that India's perennial philosophy of life was, is, and will be *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* - considering the whole world as one family. This philosophy of life has guided India (*Bhārat*) since Vedic times.

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[5] Cf. *Mahopaniṣad*, 6. 72.

[6] Cf. *Bhagavad Gīta*, 3. 20, 25.

[7] "*Ayaṁ bandhurayam neti gaṇanā laghucetasām; Udāra caritānām tu vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam.*" *Mahopaniṣad*, 6. 72.

[8] Cf. *Pañcarātra Agamas*, 5.3.37.

[9] Cf. *Hetōpadeśa*, 1.3.71.

With the same the breath, Narendra Modi made a strong pitch for nations to "fulfill promise to reform the United Nations Security Council by 2015," and called for a greater role for the G-4 coalition including India, Brazil, Germany and Japan, one that would help all countries move beyond thinking of policy as a "zero-sum game."[10]

*Notion of Lokasaṃgraha*

Having reflected on the Upanishadic insight of the *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*, belonging to the Vedic age, we move on to reflect on the concept of *lokasaṃgraha*, the lasting insight of the *Bhagavad Gita*, a revered Hindu Scripture and a portion of the epic *Mahābhārata*. *Gīta* has seven references to the concept of *lokasaṃgraha* either explicitly - by the actual usage of the term "*lokasaṃgraha*," or implicitly by the closely related concepts, such as *sarvabhūtahita ratah*. We quote two *ślokas*, where the term "*lokasaṃgraha*" explicitly occurs:

> It is by actions that individuals like Janaka achieved perfection. I (Krishna) would advise you to act with the (clear) objective of *lokasaṃgraha*.[11]

> The unlearned people act with attachment to their actions. Unlike them, O Arjuna, you should act without attachment, with the desire for *lokasaṃgraha*.[12]

*Bhagavad Gīta* is a conversation between two warriors (*kṣatriyas*) - Arjuna and Krishna at the battlefield. The starting point of the texts is the resignation of Arjuna from the battle citing short-sighted and narrow perspective of safeguarding lives and interests of the people of his own caste (*svajana*). However, the texts culminate in the enlightened Arjuna, taking a boarder view of the situation, decides to engage in the battle for the common good of all and for holding

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[10] Cf. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address to the 69th General Assembly," September 27 (2014). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPEB-6eRssA.

[11] "*Karmanai 'va hi samsiddham, asthita janakadayah Janaka; Lokasaṃgraham eva 'pi, sampasyan kartum arhasi.*" *Bhagavad Gīta*, 3. 20.

[12] "*Saktah karmany avidvamso yatha kurvanti bharata; Kuryaa vidvams tatha 'saktas cikirsur lokasaṃgraha.*" *Bhagavad Gīta*, 3. 25.

together the society and the world as a whole (*loka+saṁ+graha*). Whatever happens in the middle, during the conversation, needs to be viewed as something that facilitated Arjuna to move from his resignation not to wage the war to his decision to engage in the battle for a greater cause and for good of everyone. Thus, *lokasaṁgraha* means holding together the society and the world as a whole. According to *Bagavad Gīta*, *lokasaṁgraha* is the goal for which one must always act.

Thus, *Bagavad Gīta* maintains its insistence on being active in the world in view of holding together the society and the world as a whole. Any interpretation of the *Gīta*, which does injustice to this intrinsic directionality of the text, has little chance of being close to the intended original message of *lokasaṁgraha*. It is a truly unique text advocating a middle ground between the rampant self-indulgent ritualism on the one hand and the escapist path of renunciation from the world on the other. This path advocates selfless action for the betterment of the world as the essential factor of any and every way to God. The path of *lokasaṁgraha* is clearly opposed to renunciation of involvement in the world, while it incorporates the renunciation of the fruit of action (*niṣkāmakarma*). Thus, one's active involvement in the society and the world for their betterment must be done without any personal desire to possess the fruits of the action.[13]

Having looked into the Hindu scriptural notions of *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* and *lokasaṁgraha*, and their positive impact on the society and the world at large, analyze the Buddhist notion of the *silas* and their implications for the wellbeing of all, in the next section.

### Buddhists *Silas* and Their Implications for the Wellbeing of All

The Pali term "*sila*" means "morality" or "state of normality." Thus, *silas* are practical principles for a good life and for the cultivation of virtues. Buddhist morality aims at the individual enlightenment (*nibbana/nirvāṇa*) that leads to overall societal wellbeing.[14] Practicing *sila*s is to train in preserving one's true nature. It calls for

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[13] Cf. Satya P. Agarwal: *The Social Message of Gita*: *Symbolized as Lokasaṁgraha* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995). This book delves deeply into this subject.

[14] Cf. Edward J. Thomas, ed.: *Early Buddhist Scriptures* (London: Majestic Books, 1935), pp. 97-112.

not allowing one's nature to be affected and overpowered by negative forces. Thus, the underlying philosophy behind this moral orientation is intricately connected to the societal wellbeing. Buddhist moral precepts are based on the *dhamma*, and they reflect eternal values, such as compassion, respect, self-restraint, honesty, and wisdom. These are values that are cherished by all civilizations, and their significance is universally recognized. Moral precepts that are based on such values and directed toward their realization will always be relevant to human society, no matter to what extent it has developed.

The practice of the five moral precepts is essential for guiding one's life according to the *silas*. Observance of the five precepts constitutes the minimum moral obligation of a practicing lay Buddhist. These five precepts enjoin against: killing living beings; taking what is not given - not stealing; sexual misconduct; false speech; and the use of intoxicating drink and drugs. In Buddhist scriptures the five precepts are formulated as follows:

> I observe the precept of abstaining from the destruction of life.
> I observe the precept of abstaining from taking that which is not given.
> I observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct.
> I observe the precept of abstaining from falsehood.
> I observe the precept of abstaining from intoxicants that cloud the mind and cause carelessness.[15]

In this manner, the practice of *silas* contributes to harmonious and peaceful coexistence among community members and consequently helps promoting the common good through social growth and development. It provides a wholesome foundation for personal and social growth. Buddhists, without recourse to please a supreme being, practice the *silas* for their own good and the good of

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[15] "*Panatipataveramanisikkhapadamsamadiyami*"

"*Adinnadanaveramanisikkhapadamsamadiyami*"

"*Kamesumicchacaraveramanisikkhapadamsamadiyami*";

"*Musavadaveramanisikkhapadamsamadiyami*";

"*Suramerayamajjapamadatthanaveramanisikkhapadamsamadiyami*."

Available at: http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma2/5precepts.html.

society. As individuals, one needs to train in morality to lead a good and noble life. On the social level, we need to help maintain peace and harmony in society and facilitate the progress of the wellbeing of all. In the next section, we look into Islamic scriptural insights and their potential for common good.

## Islamic Scripural Insights and Their Potential to Promote Common Good

The term "Islam" is used exclusively for the way of life based on the sacred book known as *The Qur'ān* - the word of God[16] and *Sunnah* - the proven practices of the Prophet. Islam motivates its adherents to flourish spiritually and be active socially in order to create a better world based on balance and harmony. Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong[17] has been the cornerstone of Muslim social life. Islam teaches people to help one another, live a life of virtue and piety, and not to commit sin and transgression.[18] Islam's five pillars - the testimony of faith; prayer; giving support to the needy (*zakat*); fasting during the month of Ramadan; and the pilgrimage to Makkah, once in a lifetime, for those who are able - uniquely prepare a believer to be at ease with one's self in this world, while playing a significant communitarian role in the society. Thus, social activism is embedded in the Muslim psyche.

## Conclusion

Like any ideals, religious and cultural claims could be contested in the social lab of real living situation of millions of Indians themselves. However, such contestations and even criticisms do not in any way minimize and dilute the universal and lasting signific-ance the sacred scriptures have attested to such theological and anthropological intuitive insights, advocating not only the common good of the whole humanity, but also the rest of the universe - multiverse. The contemporary societal reformers starting with Vivekananda, L. M. Tilak up to Mahatma Gandhi have drawn much

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16 *The Qur'ān*, Part I & II (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1990). This volume has been used in identifying the verses of *The Qur'ān*.
17 Cf. *Ibid.*, 3: 110.
18 Cf. *Ibid.*, 5: 2.

inspiration from these scriptural insights and have tirelessly worked for the deeper wellbeing and greater common good of all.

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**22.**

# Beyond Cultural Identity: Gandhian Perspective

B. Sambasiva Prasad

## Introduction

E.B. Tylor defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." The Cambridge English Dictionary states that culture is "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group or people at a particular time." Thus, culture - considered as a noun - stands for a set of customs, traditions and values of a society or community, such as an ethnic group or a nation. Culture is individualistic. It explains the laws, morals, customs, religion, and the like of a particular group or sect. Multiculturalism is different from a particular culture, as it promotes a mosaic of different cultures. It is a recent trend that values the peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among different cultural groups inhabiting the same territory.

In this chapter, I propose to discuss Gandhian view of multiculturalism and expound its relevance to our present day world and society. In the first section, I proceed to elaborate on Gandhian view of culture. Since truth and non-violence are central principles of Gandhian philosophy, for Gandhi, a culture to be genuine it must be guided by these two principles. Hence, Gandhi would reject any culture that attempts to suppress, supersede and dominate the other. All cultures are equally important. Hence, there must be mutual respect, acceptance and fellowship between different cultures. No culture could live in isolation and it has to mingle with other cultures and live in harmony. One has to love one's culture; but this does not mean that one should hate other cultures. Though cultures are empirically different from each other having their own peculiarities, there is some commonality among them, for all cultures are different expressions of the same Truth. The second section speaks of multiculturalism and human dialectics. Gandhi believed that

everyone must move beyond cultural and religious identities, and embrace multiculturalism. To achieve this goal, one must control egoism and develop altruism. Human nature has conflicting beastly and divine qualities. This is the human dialectics. In this struggle, man must suppress his *ego* and develop the quality seeing himself in others. This will help him to move from egoism to altruism, which in turn, leads him to the state of Pure Consciousness, where all distinctions are removed and one sees the holistic truth about reality. When a person is at this stage, he recognizes the value of every culture and embraces multiculturalism. The conclusion states that people must go beyond cultural identity. All cultures must exist in friendly association. People should have the attitude of non-violence towards other cultures, by accepting and respecting them. This, in turn, will help them to know the truth about other cultures; facilitate the fellowship of cultures; and their mutual existence. We clarify Gandhian view of culture, in the next section.

## Gandhian View of Culture

The whole of Gandhian philosophy and its practices are oven around the principles of truth (*satya*) and non-violence (*ahimsa*). These two constitute the basic values of his philosophy. Gandhi did not demarcate between political, social, religious, educational, economic and cultural life of man. For him, they are integrally connected. According to him, they have to reflect the values of truth and non-violence. Consequently, Gandhi does not approve a culture if it is untrue and violent. Hence, Gandhi would reject any culture that attempts to suppress, supersede and dominate the other. According to him, there must be harmony and fellowship among different cultures. Gandhi believes that no culture is either superior or inferior to the other. All are equally important and significant. Everyone has to learn from other cultures, apart from his own.

Gandhi's conception of culture, appears to me, has many resemblances with his religious views. For Gandhi, religion begins as one, but in the course of its development it grows into many. Just as the tree has single trunk, but gives rise to many branches, so also religion is one, but it has given rise to many sects and practices. No religion is either superior or inferior to the other. All are equally right. Gandhi was deeply influenced by the Jaina theory of *svadvada*,

which is the theory of probability **-** the doctrine of "may be." Following the theory of *syadvada*, the Jainas say that all our judgments are necessarily relative, conditional and limited. The theory of *syadvada*, though epistemological in nature, is linked to ethics. Its intention is not to hurt the feelings of others because rejecting other's views goes against the principle of non-violence. Therefore, the Jainas claim that every judgment is relatively true. Gandhi applies the Jaina theory of *syadvada* to his understanding of religion. He observes: "I very much like this doctrine of manyness of reality. It is this doctrine that has taught me to judge a Musalman from his own stand point and a Christian from his own."[1]

Gandhi's approach to culture is not fundamentally different from the way he views religion. For him, just as every religion is true from its own view point, so also every culture is true and good from its standpoint. Therefore, there must be mutual respect, acceptance and fellowship between different cultures. Gandhi, though loves Indian culture the most, he was not averse to any other western cultures. He did not want his house to be walled in on all sides and his windows to be stuffed. He wanted the cultures of all the lands to be blown about his house as freely as possible. However, he refused to be blown off his feet by any because he did not like to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.[2] According to Gandhi, a nation's culture does not exist in huge tomes, which the moth can eat; but, it "resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people."[3]

Like religion, culture is one, but in the course of development it has resulted into different sects and divisions. These divisions led to mindless conflicts among them. What is the root cause of these conflicts? K. Ramakrishna Rao, a noted Gandhian scholar, rightly points out that identity is the root cause of all conflicts. He says: "Identity violence is a special kind of group violence. It is perpetuated by one group against another. The victim as well as the victimizing person is a surrogate of the group and he has no identity of his own except that of the group. Thus, the individual becomes

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[1] *Young India*, January 21, 1926, p. 3.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, June 01, 1921, p. 170.

[3] D.G. Tendulkar: *Mahatma: Life of M. K. Gandhi*, vol.5 (Delhi: The Publication Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1952), p. 10.

amorphous and lost in the group." [4] Consequently, if an individual is identified with his/her own culture, he/she loses his individuality. One should not live in cultural isolation. A proper understanding of other cultures would broaden one's understanding of one's own culture. On this point, Gandhi writes:

> No culture can live, if it attempts to be exclusive in existence today in India. Whether the Aryans were indigenous to India or were unwelcome intruders, does not interest me much. What does interest me is the fact that my remote ancestors blended with one another with the utmost freedom and we of the present generation are a result of that blend. [5]

Thus, Gandhi opined that no culture could live in isolation. It has to mingle with other cultures and live in harmony. One has to love one's culture; but this does not mean that one should hate other cultures.

Gandhi is not only an empirical realist, but also a transcendental idealist. He accepts the empirical reality of different cultures and their distinctions. Thus, no two cultures are identical in their language, habits and *habitats*. However, there is some commonality between them. They are the different expressions of the same Truth. In this respect, Gandhi is a transcendental idealist. He is both an *Advaitin* and a *Visistadvaitin*. He is an *Advaitin* in the sense that he perceived the non-dual underlying truth in the divergent cultures. He is also a *Visistadvaitin* in the sense that he does accept the non-dual qualified differences among diverse cultural traditions. In the next section, we analyze the theme "multiculturalism and human dialectics.

### Multiculturalism and Human Dialectics

Gandhi wanted to surpass the religious and cultural identity, and reach the stage of multiculturalism. This requires controlling egoism and developing altruism. In this context, it is apt to

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[4] K .R. Rao: *Gandhi and Applied Spirituality* (New Delhi: ICPR & Matrix Publications, 2011), p. 61.

[5] *Harijan*, May 09, 1926, p.100.

understand Gandhian view of human nature. According to Gandhi, human being is a complex of devil and divine. There are both beastly and divine qualities in a human being. While his devilish or beastly qualities pulls him down, leading to selfishness, egoism and violence; his divine qualities pulls him up leading to altruism and *ahimsa*. Thus, there is a conflict between the beastly and divine qualities in man. This is a process of dialectics. This process involves conflict in between actual and ideal. In actuality, the human person is devilish and selfish, but he has to raise himself to the ideal state of divinity. This requires the suppression of the *ego* and developing the quality of seeing himself in others. Man has to seek happiness in the happiness of others. This is altruism. This requires that the self of the person is reduced to zero and that person gets rid of selfish characteristics. To rise to the level of altruism from egoism, man has to surpass the stage of consciousness, where there exists subject-object distinction, and rise to the stage of Pure Consciousness, where such subject-object division disappears. The stage of Pure Consciousness is called "*Purusa*" in *Samkhya* system; "Emptiness" (*Nirvana*) in Buddhism; and "*Brahman*" in *Advaita Vedanta*. To reach to the stage of pure consciousness - Truth, one has to choose the path of non-violence (*ahimsa*). A person who reaches this stage of Pure Consciousness never makes divisions and distinctions, but is able to grasp the holistic truth. Multiculturalism, which aims at the harmonious existence of different cultures, requires man to acquire this state of Pure Consciousness. As long as he is under sub-consciousness and ordinary consciousness level, he is in the midst of divisions and distinctions, and lives in isolation with egoistic tendencies. Therefore, a raise to the level of Pure Consciousness should be the objective of human life. Thus, multiculturalism pre-supposes the right understanding of human nature. When one controls his beastly qualities and develops divine qualities, divisions and distinctions among traditional cultures disappear and multi-culturalism emerges.

## Conclusion

Gandhi does not want fusion of religions or cultures. On the contrary, he wanted different cultures to exist with friendly association. He wanted people to go beyond cultural identity.

According to him, people not only have to love their culture, but also learn to tolerate other cultures. Probably the word "toleration" may not be an appropriate word because it may presuppose the inferiority or superiority of one culture over the other. Therefore, the correct word that Gandhi suggests is "*ahimsa*" or non-violence. One should practice non-violence and understand and respect other cultures apart from his own. That leads to fellowship of cultures and their mutual existence. This requires reducing oneself to zero and learn to look others in oneself and oneself in others. The philosophy of truth and non-violence that constitutes the centrality of Gandhian conception of culture is of great relevance not only to the present-day society, but to all future generations to come.

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23.

# All Mankind Is One:
# S. Radhakrishnan on Spiritual Reality

Tapati Chakravartty

## Introduction

Philosophical problems are numerous and varied. S. Radha-krishnan thinks that the main problem and function of Philosophy is to inquire and find an explanation of the universe as a whole, which is logically conceivable. Since the explaining Principle has to provide a basis for everything real, it must be the Supreme Being that is "Real" in the ultimate sense of the term. This Supreme Reality alone can give a satisfactory explanation to all questions regarding the "how" and "why" of the world and life. Influenced by the Vedantic tradition, Radhakrishnan views this Ultimate Reality (*Brahman*) to be monistic and idealistic in nature. However, his view of the Supreme Reality is different from that of Shankara, who maintains the unitary nature of the Ultimate Reality at the cost of plurality. For, Radhakrishnan Ultimate Reality is a totality of things.

In the first section of this chapter, we unfold the Ultimate Reality as one, which is the totality of all things. There is many in one and one in many. Hence, Radhakrishnan attempts at a logical synthesis of abstract pluralism and abstract monism. Our philosophical enquiry about reality begins with the explanations of the many things in the world. This enquiry automatically leads us to the Ultimate Source of all that we perceive. Hence, these two issues are logically linked. Thus, the Ultimate Reality is one that includes many. The second section elaborates on the unity in diversity that is found in the reality of the human person as a body-spirit complex. In the human person, beyond the body and the mind with its intellectual and volitional functions, there is the inner spirit/soul which underlies all the above and sustains them.

Hence, there is the need to balance the diversity with the underlying One Spiritual Reality, both in the level of the universe and the human person, which the third section takes up for

discussion. Neither the spiritual aspect, nor the empirical dimension should be over-emphasized. The harmonious synthesis the spiritual and empirical dimensions would pave the way for religion of the spirit that moves beyond dogmas, rites and rituals, and embrace the essential spirituality of all religions. The reawakening of this spiritual view of reality will enable to apprehend the spirit of man as identical with the Universal Spirit, thereby help people to attain everlasting happiness, eliminating all ills of the world. The conclusion reiterates spirituality as an absolute value - which if allowed to be rightfully balanced with the material dimension of reality - will make every person aware of the fact that his inner spirit is different from his individual *ego*; will make qualities, such as good will, pure love and disinterestedness as ideals of human life; and thereby a person's reason for action becomes more rooted in "other-worldliness." In this way, the world would be better place for diverse cultural groups. In the next section, we elaborate on the Ultimate Reality as a totality of things.

## Ultimate Reality: A Totality of Things

Since Ultimate Reality is a totality, nothing is isolated from anything. There is one in many and many in one. One passes into the other. We analyze anything into its parts for understanding its constitution. However, this analytic knowledge is only provisional, and not final. It provides for knowledge in its different parts; it is a pluralist view apart from the basic unity. True science is not particularism, but universalism. Particularism is the distortion of the monistic reality. Viewing a thing in complete isolation from the other is erroneous. Abstract particularism, abstract pluralism and abstract monism are false. Unity is qualified by difference and difference by unity. Even a human person cannot be separated into parts. He would cease to exist, if his organs are isolated from one another.[1] Thus, Reality is a totality. Radhakrishnan clarifies this point as follows:

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[1] Cf. A.G. Sertillanges: *The Intellectual Life: Its Spirit, Conditions, Methods*, trans. Mary Ryan (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University America Press, 1987).

We can understand this correlativity of one and many by calling to our concentrated attention that when numerically one and many are recognized by most of the philosophers to be contrary to each other commonly held by those who are influenced by the ultimacy of mathematics who, following Pythagoreans, hold that, number is the ultimate category and that everything can be numbered and that to being as such number can be ascribed how is it that where all things are reduced to one when they are traced back to one ... The question is that somehow we have to treat both the categories on one and many as presupposing each other. The one cannot be declared to be illusory because the many are real, and again that the many cannot be acknowledged to be false or delusive because there are philosphers of both types. For Russell, the many are real, and he categorically denies the category of unity in his understanding of the structure of Reality or the world.[2]

Thus, it is clear that Radhakrishnan does neither agree with Russell's abstract pluralism, nor accepts Shankara's abstract monism. When experience testifies the reality of both the many and the one, pluralism and monism, how can one claim that since many are real and the one is unreal; and since one is real, the many are only delusion of the mind (*maya*). This inconsistency is the characteristic feature of pluralistic and monistic philosophies. Radhakrishanan prefers a logical synthesis of these two worldviews in his understanding of the reality.

In mechanical scheme of thinking plurality is the dominant category. The pluralist cannot question the existence many things in the world that are externally related to each other. However, it is a matter of common experience that thought demands some form of unity because the process of thinking itself is an attempt to unify our diverse experiences. Without the category of unity we cannot think at all. In our thought process, we attempt to bring together the many materials of our sensation to unity. According to Kant, knowledge ultimately is possible simply because there is an organizing and

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[2] S. Radhakrishnan: *Religion in a Changing World* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967), p. 75.

synthesizing principle in man which weaves the sensations into a chord of unity. For Kant, this unity is logical; and only logical unity is what he can accept. He flatly denies the logical unity of some principles which we call our self. For, epistemologically the unity of self cannot be questioned, simply because it cannot be demonstrated. For him, it belongs to the region of unknown and unknowable. Likewise, the pluralistic philosophers of the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* acknowledge the plurality of the empirical universe and arrange them in categories guided and directed by the thought process. In this task they take care that they limit their categorization of reality into the barest minimum, so that there would unity among the categories. Hence, one cannot deny the unity behind the multiplicity of things as there is empirical evidence to support it. Similarly, nature also compels us to accept the many objects of the world.

In fact, the philosophical inquiry starts with the explanation of the many things in the world. Man's perennial urge is to know what is the ultimate source of all that we perceive or experience. Heidegger asks "Why is there being?" and "Why are there things in the world?" Radhakrishnan leans heavily on the *Vedanta* in conceiving the nature of the Ultimate Reality. The seers of the *Upanishads* discuss the nature of the Ultimate Principle, in which things of this world have their origin, their continued sustenance and to which they return. *Upanishads* are preoccupied with this ultimate question and so no enquirer can set this question aside. Man's intellectual thirst for knowledge cannot be repressed. Bradley, the absolute idealist, initially maintained that the objects of world are appearances and the Absolute alone is real. However, later in his philosophical carrier, he was forced to declare that appearances are that which form the content of the Absolute. The Absolute lives in the appearances. Hence, many cannot be declared as false and as a mere deception of the senses. Adviatic view of Shankara is also erroneous because he says that nothing except the Absolute (*Brahman*) is real; and all things are product of deceptive illusions. Thus, for S. Radhakrishnan, the Reality is a unity of one and many. In the next section, we analyze the unity and diversity found in the human person as a body-spirit complex.

## Human Person: A Body-Spirit Complex

Man is a body-spirit complex. The mind of man belongs to the bodily sphere, and is prominent on the surface; but behind the body and the mind is the spirit, the essence of man. Therefore, S. Radhakrishnan refers to the Spirit as the highest reality immanent in man. The *Upanishads* teach that higher than the intellect (*buddhi*) is the spirit/soul (*Atman*) - the integrative and harmonizing category within man. Hence, Radhakrishnan accepts the Upanishadic truth that Spirit in man is the Ultimate Reality and the highest category. The Spirit in man is also the reality underlying all existence. Speaking of the nature of the Spirit, he says:

> If we are asked to define what the spirit in man is, it would be difficult to give a definite answer. We know it, but we cannot explain it. It is felt everywhere though seen nowhere. It is not physical body or the vital organism, the mind or the will, but something which underlies them all and sustains them. It is the basis and background of our being, the universality that cannot be reduced to this or that formula.[3]

## Need for a Balanced View of Reality

Thus, Radhakrishnan observes that the traditional balanced view of reality is disturbed in modern times. At present, the empirical side of reality is over-emphasized. Over-emphasis of either the spiritual aspect or the empirical aspect would amount to an one-sided view. Radhakrishnan says: "While the tendency to emphasise the inward spirit as all that counts and treat life as an indifferent illusion is onesided, to ignore spiritual life and confuse with the physical or the vital is equally one-sided."[4]

This onesided attitude makes them lay emphasis on real and material aspect of life at the cost of spiritual dimension and *vice versa*, causing imbalance in thougt and life. Religions, many in number,

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[3] S. Radhakrishnan: *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936), pp. 493-494.

[4] S. Radhakrishnan: *An Idealist View of Life* (Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2009), p. 64.

instead of uniting people, set one against the other. This lack of unity leads to confusion and conflict. Radhakrishnan's anxiety is to bring man back to the main stream of synthetic thought of religion and reason, idealism and realism. He believes that man cannot live forever in an unbalanced state of spiritual homelessness and unbelief. To quote him on this point: "Man cannot continue for long to live in a state of disequilibrium or deprivation ... To live without a faith is impossible. The spiritual homelessness of modern man cannot last long ... We must win back our lost security."[5] To achieve this goal "we need a Philosophy (Idealistic), a direction, and a hope if the present state of indecision is not to lead us to chaos ... We must present struggling and aspiring humanity with a rational faith, which does not mock the free spirit of man by arbitary dogmas or hesitating negations, a new vision of God in whose name we can launch a crusade against the strange cults which are now competing for mastery over the souls of man."[6]

Therefore, Radhakrishnan insists on reawakening of this spiritual view - which alone is able to apprehend the Spirit in man as identical with the Universal Spirit, and the Religion of the Spirit to realize the everlasting happiness, eliminating all ills of the world. Negatively, the Religion of the Spirit implies not being bound merely to a religion of dogmas, rituals and rites. Positively, the Religion of the Spirit implies the essential spirituality of religions which makes us non-different. Radhakrishnan asserts: "All religions are founded on the personal experience of the seers, who become directly aware of an Infinite spiritual presence beyond and within the range of the world of change and succession. The personal experience of union with Absolute Reality or God has been common and continuous feature of all faiths of mankind."[7] Radhakrishnan knows that the modern man understands by religion only the religon of rites and rituals and forgotten the real meaning of the Religion of Spirit. To quote him on this point:

> Our age has largely ceased to understand the meaning of religion. It is still in despeate need of that which religion alone can give. The recognition of a Transcendent Supreme,

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[5] S. Radhakrishnan: *Recovery of Faith* (London: Orient Paperbacks, 1984), p. 42.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

the freedom of the human individual as a manifestation of the Supreme and the unity of mankind as the Goal of history are the foundation of the major religions. The Religion of the Spirit asserts these fundamental truths. It does not regard dogmas and rites as anything more than a necessarily inadequate symbolism.[8]

## Conclusion

Spirituality is the absolute value. Therefore, Radhakrishnan is of the view that spiritual orientation is the greatest need of the hour. Nether politics, nor economics that lay stress on relative values can usher in an era of peace, happiness, friendliness and fellow-feeling all over the world. Only embracing sprituality can truly bring harmonious and peaceful living among diverse peoples of the nations. According to Radhakrishnan, civilization is a matter of values; and it is the Spirit that is the fountain source of all values. What we find all over the world is selfishness and barbarism instead of civilization. Until we learn to disinguish between material and spiritual values, we cannot hope to be liberated from the trammels of wild behavior that is rampant world over. Radhakrishnan asserts:

If there is one doctrine more than another which is characteristic of Hindu thought, it is the belief that there is an interior depth to human soul, which, in its essence, is uncreated and deathless and absolutely real. The Spirit in man is different from the individual *ego*, it is that which animates exercises the individual, the vast background of his being in which all individual lie. It is the core of all being, the inner thread by being stung on which the world exists ... If good will, pure love, and disinterestedness are our ideals, then our ethics must be rooted in other-worldliness. This is the great classical tradition of spiritual wisdom.[9]

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[9] S. Radhakrishnan: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought: Anthology*, pp. 83-84.

Thus, S. Radhakrishan is a firm believer in the Spiritual Reality, according to which the humankind is one. Hence anchored in the reality of the Spirit, he advocates what he calls the "Religion of the Spirit" which is the highest form of religion.

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**24.**

# Swami Vivekananda:
# The Voice of Eternal Oneness

LILY BISWAS

## Introduction

In the Hindu perspective, the term "seer" is a person to whom the eternal truth is manifested irrespective of time and space. The hymns of *Vedas* were not considered to be composed by any human being; but they were seen and heard by the seers. Though Vedic age came to an end long back, yet many of the Vedic hymns are still chanted in traditional Hindu rituals. Have the seers lost their significance these days? Let us try to find an answer to this question. In this chapter, we briefly examine the prophetic authenticity of such a seer, Swami Vivekananda, who vouched for the foundational teachings of the *Vedas* - the unity of all things in the universe - both from religious and scientific perspective.

Hence, the first section of this chapter deals with the unity of all things from the religious and scientific perspectives. Swami Vivekananda's Advitic interpretation of the foundational truth of the *Vedas*, which is the basic tenet of the universal religion he proposes, is the essential unity of all things. This truth of religion is proved by the quantum theory. According to this theory subatomic particles function both as particles and waves. Therefore, the phenomenal reality can only be understood in terms of the probability of interconnections. Hence, the constituents of matter and the basic phenomena involving them are all interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. They cannot be understood as isolated entities, but only as integrated parts of the whole. Thus, quantum theory reveals the truth of Vivekananda's religion - the essential unity of the universe. The second section takes up the nature of physical individuality. In the web of interconnections of integrated whole, individuality is the source all differences and disorientation. It is not a reality, but a delusion of the mind. In an ocean of matter, "you," "I" or "sun" is the names of little particles of matter. It is our mind

that leads us to the perception of individuality; but in reality all is oneness.

The third section considers the issue of quest for unity as the goal of both science and religion. Science presents the "morphic fields" as that which organize atoms, molecules, crystals, organelles, cells, tissues, organs, organisms, societies, ecosystems, planetary systems, solar systems and galaxies. These morphic fields are the basis for the wholeness that we observe in nature, which is more than the sum of the parts. This truth of science is the truth of Vivekananda's religion - through multiplicity and duality, that the ultimate unity is reached. The conclusion states that the universal principle, the "Consciousness *Per Se*" pervades this whole universe, integrates it to an unbroken whole and yet transcends it. The whole universe evolves from this consciousness, lives in it and returns into it. The end of all science is to find this unity, the one existing in many. Now, we begin the analysis of the oneness of things from the scientific and religious perspectives.

### Unity of All Things: Religious and Scientific Perspectives

History stands witness to the fact that in the very recent past, Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu monk, reinterpreted some great truths of the *Vedas*, which in his words "are simple because they are of universal application." These universal principles, uttered by a man of profound spiritual wisdom, were eventually acknowledged and verified by classical physicists in unequivocal terms because the basic goal of religion and science is the quest for knowledge that identifies infinite in the finite. The concept of experiencing all phenomena and things as the manifestation of that basic oneness is the key concept of religion. Swami Vivekananda, who carried the eternal message of truth to the West, declared that the essence of that knowledge is meant, the ultimate fact beyond, if one may be allowed to say so, even consciousness. That is what is meant by knowledge, and what we see in the universe as the essential unity of things. If modern science is proving anything again and again, it is this, that we are one - mentally, spiritually, and physically.

This unity of things in the universe is perceived by science too. From the perspective of the quantum theory, the classical deter-ministic laws of nature have been modified. Contrary to the classical

view of solid material objects, quantum theory interprets the phenomena as wave-like patterns of probabilities. The probabilities are not of "things," but probabilities of interconnections. Subatomic particles have dual characteristics, as they are both particles and waves. Phenomenal reality can only be understood in terms of the probability of interconnections. Thus, quantum theory reveals the essential unity of the universe. The world cannot be deconstructed into independently isolated "building blocks." Rather, a dynamic interplay exists between the various parts of the whole. The basic oneness of the universe is not only the central characteristic of the mystical experience, but is also one of the most important revelations of modern physics. The constituents of matter and the basic phenomena involving them are all interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. They cannot be understood as isolated entities, but only as integrated parts of the whole. This raises the question of the nature of the physical individuality, to which we turn, in the next section.

## Nature of Physical Individuality

From what we have said above, it seems that we are on the verge of losing our individuality, without which we cannot think of our existence. What about the status of individuality in this web of interconnections and in this integrated whole? "Individuality," according to *Vedanta*, is the root cause of all differences and dis-orientation. The essence of *Vedanta* remains in the identification of infinite within the confines of the finite, which ultimately removes the distinction between individual and universal existences. According to Swami Vivekananda, there is no individuality in this universe. He said that the whole universe is an ocean of matter, and "you" is the name of a little particle, "I" is another, and the "sun" is the third. Thus, it follows that we appear to be physically separate from each other by our limited existence, which strictly speaking cannot be logically accepted either from the spiritual point of view or scientifically. For Swami Vivekananda, science has proved that physical individuality is a delusion; that really one's body is one little continuously changing body in an unbroken ocean of matter; and *Advaita* (unity) is the necessary conclusion with one's other counterpart, the soul.

So far the physical existence of the individual is appraised from scientific cognition. However, are we able to separate ourselves mentally from each other? Thinking is a function of the mind. To think is to create. Whenever we think, we draw different elements around us from the ethereal field and give shape to thought forms. These thought forms exist and their length of existence depends on the thinker's energy state and affect others depending upon the similarity of inclination of mind. Swami Vivekananda answered with a simple illustration from physical science. When I am doing a certain action, my mind may be said to be in a certain state of vibration; all minds which are in similar circumstances will have the tendency to be affected by my mind. If there are different musical instruments tuned alike in one room, all of you may have noticed that when one is struck, the others have the tendency to vibrate so as to give the same note. So all minds that have the same tension, so to say, will be equally affected by the same thought. The next section considers the theme of quest for unity of the universe as the goal of both science and religion.

**Quest for Unity of The Universe: Goal of Science and Religion**

Surprisingly the integrity and oneness of both physical and mental worlds has been propounded by a biologist, Rupert Sheldrake. According to him, there is a field within and around a "morphic unit" which organizes its characteristic structure and pattern of activity, which can be termed as a "morphic field." "Morphic fields" organize atoms, molecules, crystals, organelles, cells, tissues, organs, organisms, societies, ecosystems, planetary systems, solar systems and galaxies. In other words, they organize systems at all levels of complexity, and are the basis for the wholeness that we observe in nature, which is more than the sum of the parts. The same realization of oneness of existence inspired Swami Vivekananda to expose the holistic vision of life. He said in ultimate analysis, the whole universe, mental and material will be fused into one. It is the finding of unity towards which we are going.

However, what is the goal of science in the quest for oneness of the universe? Swami Vivekananda who could perfectly assimilate the essence of science and religion declared that physics would stop when it would be able to fulfill its services in discovering one energy

of which all others are but manifestations. The science of religion become perfect, when it would discover Him, who is the one life in a universe of death; the One, who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations. Thus, is it, through multiplicity and duality, that the ultimate unity is reached. Religion can go no farther. This is the goal of all science.

## Conclusion

To attain the ultimate unity is the essence of *Vedanta* and the dream of Swami Vivekananda, who like Vedic seers foretold about the universal principle that could form the new thought loom "woven throughout the universe." It can be termed as "Consciousness *Per Se*," which pervades this whole universe, integrates it to an unbroken whole and yet transcends it. The whole universe evolves from this consciousness, lives in it and returns into it. The attainment of this consciousness is the beginning of spiritualization of our material world, which is nothing but the annihilation of all multiplicity and duality. According to Swami Vivekananda, the end and aim of all science is to find the unity, the One out of which the manifold is being manufactured; that One existing as many.

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# Global Ethics and International Development: Mission of the *Vedanta* as Envisaged by Swami Vivekananda

SANDIP CHATTERJEE & SUKLA CHATTERJEE

## Introduction

Theories of "Malthusian Catastrophe," "Struggle for Existence" and "Invisible Hand" helped market economy to gain wide popularity and emerge as a strong instrument for global development during last couple of centuries. Market forces, armed with capital and technology, invaded the globe. They ignored the metaphysical world; adversely affected the environment, religion, culture and humanity; and made competition and profit their core. The diversity of the globe ‐ in its nature, cultural and religious practices, ethics and values ‐ got swayed by the market forces. As a result, global ethics in general and business ethics in particular have drawn attention of the global community to save the planet and its civilization from a cruel destruction. Various global forums have rightly addressed the core issues, such as protection of human rights, safeguarding global environment, initiating philanthropic mission by way of corporate social responsibility, proliferation of humanity mission and the like. Such endeavors lack holistic views and often created more confusion in this world of wide diversity, making the efforts less effective.

The idea of mutual aid - supported by Kropotkin, Allee, Emerson and others - opposed the propagators of the market economy. The idea of mutual aid emphasized mutual struggle and mutual aid for driving natural selection and argued that cooperation is more successful in battling a biotic environment. Essentially, it has challenged the idea of market expansion due to depletion of resources leading to struggle for existence. Moreover, market forces seldom searched for any subsistence levels rather it has increased the requirements for existence. This prompted market to expand from local to regional and further to international boundary leading to

globalization to meet higher level of requirements. In fact, contrary to its aim of international development through transnational co-operation, it has harmed local environment, health and quality of life, religion and culture. Thus, three fundamental questions arise: the first, "What is the nature and quantification of subsistence?"; the second, "How to standardize the idea of subsistence across varied groups, regions and nations?"; and the third, "Is there any common thread to unify diverse global culture and practice?" The mutual aids group addresses the first question partially. Various global authorities and forums have attempted to standardize and regulate global ethical practices. In this effort, they often ignore local cultures and practices. As a result, they seldom look for any commonality that can thread diverse global traits.

A holistic view for upholding the values of humanism and protecting this planet could not be adopted because of its wide diversity and our failure to find commonalities that would unify the nations. However, in this context, way back in 1893, Swami Vive-kananda, elucidated the mission of *Vedanta* to unite the nations for the greater cause of global humanity in the Parliament of Religions. He upheld that the philosophy of all religions is humanism. He emphasized the Vedantic mission "the world is one family" (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*). This philosophy advocates not only about peace and harmony among global societies, but also spreads the truth that the nations have to live like a family. This idea entails the core global ethics for development of humanity because it believes that any power **-** big or small **-** cannot have its own way disregarding others. This chapter looks into the core philosophy of religions, with particular reference to *Vedanta*, as envisaged by Swami Vivekananda, in order to derive the foundation of a global ethics for international development.

Having made the above introductory comments, we, in the first section, consider we emergence and proliferation of market economy. Here, we unfold the chronological development of market economy from its beginnings up to the present, its proliferation through colonialism and neo-colonialism, and the concentration and centralization of capital, in our times, in a few multinational corporations. Besides, we also look into the way we can manage the darker side of globalization unleashed by the market economy. The greatest challenge of geopolitics today is managing the evils of

globalization. This dangerous situation has compelled the global community to fall back on global ethics and the constitution of international regulating agencies. These measures have some impact on the global market forces. However, they have not completely succeeded in regulating them, and have failed to arrest violations every now and then.

The second section highlights Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of *Vedanta*, which considered the whole world as one family. The realization of this truth would call one not to covet that belongs to others. For global business, it would mean that business houses do business in this world not only with the motive of supernormal profit, but also to bring about the standardization of subsistence level that would benefit the poorer nations of the world. Thus, philosophy of *Vedanta*, when applied to global business would lead to sustenance of the civilization through humanism, which is the core of all religions. Thus, *Vedanta* could provide the platform for the unification of nations and a global ethics. The conclusion reiterates that the philosophy of religions can emerge the key to unify the diverse nations of the globe and put in place a global ethics not only for international business practices, but also for global development at large. In the next section, we elaborate on the emergence and proliferation of market economy.

## Emergence and Proliferation of Market Economy

In this section, we attempt to unfold the chronological development of market economy from its beginnings up to the present, its proliferation through colonialism and neo-colonialism, and the concentration and centralization of capital, in our times, in a few multinational corporations. Besides, we also look into the way we can manage the darker side of globalization unleashed by the market economy.

### *Development of Market Economy*

The popular and multidisciplinary idea of the struggle for existence propagated that competition/battle for resources is essential for survival. Geometric population growth as opposed to arithmetic growth of food production prompted Malthus to con-

ceptualize "Malthusian catastrophe," a prediction of a forced return to subsistence level conditions once population growth outpace food production. Charles Darwin and Wallace, using Malthus's idea, formulated the theory of "natural selection and survival of the fittest." Among the alternative theories, the idea of "mutual aid," proposed by Kropotkin, emphasized mutual struggle for deriving natural selection and mutual cooperation for battling biotic environment. Kropotkin also argued that Wallace and Darwin saw the struggle for existence because of their coastal location and over-populated areas of study. Later on, classical economists, such as Smith and Ricardo, came out with the famous theory of "Invisible Hand," advocating *Laissez-fair* for competition and efficiency of market. Population explosion and resources crunch on the one hand and competition on the other, prompted market to expand beyond the regional limits. As colonialism spread across the globe, it carried with it the flag of market economy. However, market forces, focusing on competition and profit as their core, paid least attention to other facets of life, such as the environment, religion, culture and humanity. Thus, proliferation of the market during colonialism carried industrialization in the peripheries at the cost of diluting of innate strength of the nations, education, culture, religion and ethics of the masses. In the course of time, the forces of life, such as humanity, environment, religion, culture and the externalities of market itself created anti-forces, thereby made colonialism a failure. However, the movement of the market forces gave birth to neo-colonialism that culminated in today's centralized capital.

The vigor of market economy continued in neo-colonialism through geopolitical practice of using capital, business globalization and cultural imperialism to influence nations in want of capital and technology for their development. As a consequence, though multinational corporations the principal market force continued to exploit the natural resources and people of the former colonies, obliterating innate strength of the nations, education, culture, religion and ethics of the masses. The process of capital accumulation, economies of scale, growth of credit markets and dominance of the corporation in business organization, resulted in the concentration and centralization of capital into fewer and fewer hands. This, in turn, assumed monopoly of power and established a system of swindling and cheating by means of corporation juggling,

stock jobbing and speculation and the like. This calls for managing the darker side of globalization, to which we turn in the next sub-section.

*Managing Darker Side of Globalization*

Now, globalization is blamed for international terrorism, nuclear proliferation, pandemic disease, imbalance of precarious global financial system, erosion of religious spirit, cultural ideology and the weakening of international institutions. The greatest challenge of geopolitics today is managing the evils of globalization. This dangerous situation has compelled the global community to fall back on ethics to sustain and regulate global market forces. Formulation of a global business ethics, giving attention to human rights, and taking measures to protect global environment are some measures adopted by global community with the unidirectional motive of sustaining the market forces. The newly conceived term "global ethics" encompasses a wide range of issues that have emanated from market aberrations, such as war on terror, rogue states, child labor, torture, medical tourism, scarce resources, trafficking, migration, climate change, global trade, global pandemics and humanitarian intervention. Ethical dilemmas that emerge from global diversity are also dealt in global ethics. In order to ensure ethical practices in international business, global codes and standards have been developed by International Organizations which include, Caux Principles, Global Reporting Initiative, Global Sullivan Principles, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility, such as Benchmarks, UN Global Compact, and the like.

However, the impacts are insignificant as compared to the challenges posed by the darker side of globalization. This is because the nature and qualifications of the notion of "subsistence" is not taken into consideration by market forces. In a market oriented approach, subsistence level is completely ignored because the core of its philosophy is competition and survival of the fittest. The mutual aid approach considers cooperation for survival as a group. Thus, subsistence in market approach can essentially be zero to infinity, while in mutual aid approach subsistence level depends on level of cooperation, mutual aid, and on the efficiency of distribution system. Secondly, in market approach as profit maximization is the core

principle, benchmarking of the perception of subsistence is ignored because of the diverse interests of varied groups, regions and nations. Finally, market approach has not looked into any common thread to unify diverse global culture and practice because it helps to enjoy the supernormal profit. Hence, the global codes and standards for ethical practices developed by International Organizations have had only partial influence. They have not completely succeeded in regulating the market forces and have failed to arrest violations every now and then.

Contrast to market economy, philosophy of *Vendanta* preaches that the world is one family and invites all to live their lives guided by this spirit. In the next section, we delve into this philosophy and its implications for the globalized world characterized by market economy.

### *Vedanta* Philosophy of Oneness and Market Economy

अयं निजः परो वेति, गणना लघुचेतसाम्।
उदारचरितानां तु, वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥

Ayam nijah paro vati, gananaa laghuchetasam, Udaaracharitanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam.

The above-quoted Sanskrit *sloka* can be translated as follows: "'This is mine, 'that is not mine' - this attitude is of the mean-minded ones; for the noble-minded ones, the entire universe is one family." The philosophy *Vedanta* preaches the idea that the whole world is one family, a cohesive group of people living together on the foundations of mutual love and trust. This social philosophy is emanating from a spiritual understanding that the whole of humanity is the manifestation of one truth and one life energy. This philosophy is not only about peace and harmony among the global societies, but also about the truth that the nations have to live like a family. It signifies that any power in the world, big or small, cannot have its own way, disregarding others. This Vedantic concept - which Swami Vivekananda proposed as the guiding principle for international relations among the nations in every aspect - is based on the belief expressed in the following Sanskrit *sloka*:

ईषावास्यमिदं सर्वं, यत्किंच जगत्याम् जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भूंजीथाः, मा गृध्रः कस्यस्विद्धनम्।

*Ishavasyam-idam-sarvam, Yat-kincha-jagatyam-jagat,*
*Tena-tyak-tena-bhunji-thah, Ma-gridhah-kasyasa-viddhanam*

The meaning of the above-quoted Sanskrit *sloka* can be described as follows. The whole circle of nature is fully pervaded by God; whatever is in the universe is under existence and control of almighty God. Renounce all that is injustice and enjoy all that is pure delight. Do not covet/grab unjustly the wealth of any creature existing. It means, O men, always enjoy your all justified wealth, which is yours in accordance with your practice of righteousness. Here is a great teaching for everyone that no one should be greedy. God is everywhere and He alone sees our all actions and justifies our fruits as well. So we should be confident on our deeds and satisfied with our achievement of fruits whatever is justified by the supreme Judge/Lord/God. He is our supporter and He is providing us all sustenance through nature what we need. Sometimes we try to snatch the wealth of others as dacoits do and start to think our rights of others' money which is not earned by us. We think only to fulfill our needs/desires, but we do not think to make our proper efforts. *Veda-Mantra* says not to covet the wealth of any others, but always think to have as what you have done.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the above-expressed belief can form the core of global ethics for development of humanity. This is also the core of Vedantic mission preached by him: there is a fundamental unity of all life and we as humans are called to serve every other human in God's name; and the moment we violate this fundamental truth, we violate ethics. For him, this idea of performing the pious *karma* of serving humanity is that all religions - as different paths to reach the same goal - have preached and continue to preach, as this is the best we can offer to God and human civilization. He envisaged two dreams of global history: the first, a universal political empire; and the second, a universal religious empire. This ideal never came true because the plans of the greatest conquerors were frustrated by the splitting up of their territories before they could conquer only a little part of the earth. Similarly, every religion was split into sects before it was barely out of its

cradle. However, it was his wishful thinking that again a background of unity will come by the fusion of all the existing religions into one grand philosophy. Recognizing equality and importance of all religions, Vivekananda elucidated the urgency of unification of the nations of the globe for a greater cause of humanity at the Parliament of Religions way back in 1893. The perspective of his idea has still relevance in today's global order for a platform of global ethics.

In a perfectly competitive market, there are constant returns based on product exhaustion theorem. We know that firms enjoy normal profit and the returns to each of the factors of production remains the value of its marginal product. This signifies that if all factors of production are paid according to their contribution, the value of the product is exhausted. Super normal profit arises in international business by extortions of factors of production: exploitation of labor; ignoring the cost on protection of environment pollution; and compromising the quality of raw materials; and the like. Hence, for the same product with uniform price, we find differences in wages and labor conditions, care for environment, and standards of raw material and formulae, across the nations. Here, the intervention of global ethics is urgently required to save the civilization from destruction.

While international companies making supernormal profits by extortions, they spend some insignificant part of the extortions on philanthropic mission for development of global humanity. Therefore, many of the companies figure among the top ten violators of global ethics also figure among the top ten spenders for global humanity mission. Is it not an exemplary ethical dilemma? Moreover, the spending on global humanity mission helps international business to expand its market, centralize its capital and amass more supernormal profit. In this backdrop, benchmarking of global ethics is an urgent requirement. Suppose the companies operating in a country have a choice to make profit or supernormal profit and spend on corporate social responsibility or not. Schematically, ethical issue in the above situation may be elaborated further with the help of the following chart.

*Issue of Ethics*

| Market\Philanthropy | Spends on CSR | Does not Spend on CSR |
|---|---|---|
| Normal Profit | A | B |
| Supernormal Profit | C | D |

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility, A B C D are companies

In the above example, the normal profit earners, company A follows ethical practices and company B is not at least harmful for the human civilization. However, among the supernormal profit earner companies, C is more harmful and threat to human civilization than D as it has made CSR an instrument for expansion of international business and centralization of capital for further amassing wealth and profit through exploitation and extortion.

Thus, the mission of *Vedanta* says that one can always enjoy his all justified wealth which belongs to him in accordance with his practice of righteousness. The product exhaustion theorem elucidates the same principle of distribution in perfect global order and perfect market conditions respectively. Thus, philosophy of *Vedanta* equally emphasizes *karma* for sustenance of this civilization. The subsistence level and standardization of subsistence level is also aptly discussed. It elucidates that any work is done for the sake of amassing wealth through supernormal profit or for name and fame is immoral. However, the work done for the sake of doing work (*niskamakarma*) is worship through serving humanity. Sustenance of the civilization through humanism, the core of all religions, provides the platform for the unification of nations and global ethics.

## Conclusion

So far the international organizations, United Nations Code of Conduct on Transnational Corporations, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, International Labor Organization (ILO) Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, OECD Anti-Corruption Convention, Apparel Industry Partnership (AIP), and the like have attempted to put in place a global ethics for international business. The impact remained insignificant due to lack of holistic view on the one hand and a

common platform to unify diverse nations on the other. Hence, it has created more an ethical dilemma than addressing the basic issues of subsistence and its standardization across diversity.

However, the philosophy of religions can emerge as the key to unify the diverse nations of the globe and put in place a global ethics not only for international business practices, but also for global development at large. Firstly, in addition to multiplicity of organizations dealing in the violation of ethical issues, a common organization of global ethics may be evolved with the representatives of nations with a core religious philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, signifying no power in the world, big or small have its own way, disregarding others. Secondly, returns to each factors of production, including negative factors, like pollution, are to be ensured equal across the nations, regions and groups. This will in a way quantify and standardize subsistence and promote cooperation among the diverse global civilization. Thirdly, the corporate culture must renounce all that is injustice. They should not covet/grab unjustly the wealth of any existing creature. If these practices are inculcated among the business houses, they will realize that evil to any member of the global family will affect the business house at large. Fourthly, global nations are to stand in unity and work vigorously against the organizations that undertake global humanity missions for the sole goal of international businesses. These organizations are the real threat to human civilization. Finally, the examples of organizations having normal profit yet doing some philanthropic mission are to be helped in carrying the beacon light of global humanism.

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# Being and Becoming Human in Multicultural Traditions: A Biblical Position on Human Rights

Rajesh

### Introduction

The modern concept of human rights is encapsulated in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (UDHR), which was accepted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December, 1948. The UDHR has traversed successfully for more than sixty five years, transforming societies, influencing judiciary and legal systems all over the world. The UDHR has responded to the aspirations of different sections of the society, especially in the context of intense and widespread human rights violations. Thus, the modern human rights corpus attempts to make human life more dignified and respected. The fundamental principal underneath the human rights is equal dignity of all human beings irrespective of diverse backgrounds. Human rights are concerned with the existential needs of all the human beings, which include socio-economic and political rights. Thus, respecting and implementing concerns of human rights make individual, communities, societies, and nations to move towards "Being and Becoming Human in Multicultural Traditions."

Human rights need not be held in absolute terms, but need to be reviewed for cultural legitimacy. As cultural factors play an important role in shaping value systems of the society and provide moral reasons for action or inaction on certain issues. Therefore, study of cultural legitimacy of human rights is significant because culture plays an important role in human rights violations and upholding the human rights. Cultural legitimacy of international human rights is essential because people should comprehend the human rights and its content as product of their own value systems and not imposed by external cultures or political regimes. Culture is

predominantly occupied with religion, which is an expression of human quest for transcendence, and plays a significant role in human affairs. Thus, religion becomes a noteworthy component of human culture. Unfortunately, religion was and is misused by vested interests to break human solidarity. Predominantly, religion is used to divide and dehumanize the humanity. Devastating wars, crusades and genocides were carried out in the name of religion. However, religion can become life affirming force, when its power is channelized to humanize the world and to build the human family into one bonding.

In this chapter, we investigate the manner in which the major ethical teachings of the Bible support the overarching concerns of UDHR. Before analyzing the Biblical view on human rights, in the first section, we discuss the overarching concerns of the UDHR. Some of the overarching concerns of the UDHR are protecting the inherent dignity, freedom and equality of all human beings; providing economic security for all by ensuring that they have proper employment, they are given fair wages and they are not discriminated; and giving justice and protection through the law against arbitrary interference into their privacy, family, home and assault on one's honor and reputation.

The second section examines whether the above-mentioned overarching normative moral standards of the UDHR find support in the ethical framework of the Bible, with special reference to the Pentateuch and the Gospels. Ethical teachings of the Bible as propounded in the Pentateuch and the Gospels can be elaborated on three topics: the sanctity of human life, economic security, and fair and just judicial proceedings. Sanctity of human life is based on the Biblical belief that the human persons are made in the image and likeness of God. The sixth commandment "You shall not kill"; Jesus' interpretation of this commandment in his teaching about anger, hatred and violence in human relationships; and Jesus' teaching about love of God and neighbor - clearly point to the fact that sanctity of human life implies the equality of all human beings; and the dignity and respect the other deserves. For this reason, any discrimination of human beings, and denial of dignity and respect for the other based on socio-economic and political criteria is an assault on God. The eighth commandment "You shall not steal"; the tenth commandment condemning all forms of covetousness; the

Biblical teaching on caring for the alien, the widows and the orphan, and writing off the debts every seventh year - sabbatical year, and every fiftieth year - jubilee year, form the Biblical foundations of economic security for all. Biblical notion of fair and just judicial proceeding is founded on the ninth commandment "you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor," the teachings of Penta-teuch on this issue, and Jesus' teaching on taking false oath, and being straightforward and honest in one's general conversations and witnessing in the court.

The conclusion states that the discussion of the principles of human rights propagated by UDHR and ethical teachings of the Bible clearly show that the biblical teaching regarding sanctity of life, economic security, and fair and just judicial proceedings endorse the overarching concerns expressed in the UDHR. Hence, the adherents of Christian faith who follow the Biblical teachings must become ardent propagators of the concerns of UDHR on human rights. If all religions and cultures support the concerns of UDHR, it would provide cultural and religious legitimacy to the concerns of UDHR, which in turn, will help everyone to move towards "Being and Becoming Human in Multicultural Traditions." In the next section, we consider the overarching concerns of the UDHR.

## Overarching Concerns of UDHR

The preamble of the UDHR explicitly underlines that all human beings are bestowed with equal, inalienable, inherent dignity, and this moral principle guides the entire corpus of UDHR. Tore Lindholm attempts to ground human rights on the premise mentioned in the article one of the UDHR, which says that every human being is entitled to freedom and equal dignity. For Lindholm, freedom and equal dignity are the universal axioms which ground the UDHR. It states that all human beings are endowed with reason and conscience, and hence responsible for one another, as members of one family. UDHR intends to safeguard not only the survival of human life, but also to protect it by providing a life of dignity and freedom. Thus, the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings is one of the overarching normative premises of the UDHR.

The second overarching concern of UDHR is economic security for all without dehumanization of weaker sections of the society.

Everyone has the right to own property. Hence, no one can be arbitrarily deprived of property. UDHR intends to provide social security to everyone and safeguard the socio-economic and cultural rights of every member of the society, so that no one will be deprived of human dignity and development of human personality. UDHR aims at providing everyone with livelihood, by ensuring employment in a conducive atmosphere and with fair wages without any discrimination. Consequently, everyone along with his or her family can live a life worthy of human dignity, and with social protection.

The third overarching concern of UDHR is justice and protection through law. UDHR emphasizes that all human beings as individuals have a right to recognition before law, with equal protection. In addition, article twelve emphasize on protection of law against arbitrary interference in anyone's privacy, family, home, and assault on one's honor and reputation.

In the next section, we proceed to examine whether the above-mentioned overarching normative moral standards of the UDHR find support in the ethical framework of the Bible, with special reference to the Pentateuch and the Gospels.

## Ethical Framework of the Bible

The Bible comprises of two major parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Pentateuch, the early Jewish text, comprises of the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Pentateuch deals with the origin and development of Israel as a nation and lays down the ethical foundation of the people of Israel. According to John Bright, the narratives and allied legal codes of Old Testament are placed between 20 B.C. to 6 B.C. The "Ten Commandments" is commonly known as the "Decalogue," a Greek term that means "ten words." It holds an important place in the ethical discourse of the Old Testament; and it is mainly found in "The Book of Exodus" and "The Book of Deuteronomy." The Decalogue does not mention the details of legislation, but presents the summary of the legal codes in very simple terms. The New Testament, consisting of the four Gospels and other books, bears witness to the life and ministry of Jesus and presents the history of the early Church of first century A.D. In the following subsections, we discuss some of the dominant biblical

ethical values of the Bible - sanctity of human life, economic security, and fair and just judicial proceedings.

*Sanctity of Human Life*

The legal codes presented in the Pentateuch are based on a theological understanding of human being. Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch, defines clearly the status of human being in the following verse: "God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them."[1] "Image of God" refers to the "sanctity of human life" as a significant inherent value of the human beings, which implies that, like God, human beings are endowed with reason and freedom and are called to be responsible towards fellow humans and God. It also implies that humankind is one family, as it is the handiwork of God; and human beings have a capacity to make self-critical decisions and be responsible for those decisions. The term "image" connotes status. However, the term "likeness" refers to the fact that human beings reflect God. In the ancient near eastern tradition, the king was considered as the image of God and vested with divine dignity and authority. All humans are made in the image of God implies the equality of all human beings. For this reason, any discrimination of humanity or denial of dignity based on socio-economic and political criteria is an assault on God. The premise that human beings are images of God provides ethical framework for legal codes in the Pentateuch.

The sacredness of human life envisaged in the notion of "human beings as the images of God" is reiterated in the sixth commandment of the Decalogue: "You shall not kill."[2] The term "kill" comes from the root Hebrew word "*rsh*," and it means "saly" or "strike" involving violence and physical force. In the Old Testament, the term "*rsh*" appears thirty-eight times and in all these usages it refers to intentional murder. The sixth commandment of the Decalogue prohibits murder because human beings are made in the image of God. Therefore murdering a human being is considered as an assault on God. Therefore, the crime of murder not just affects the victim and his family, but primarily God. The Pentateuch places human

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[1] "The Book of Genesis," *The New American Bible*, 1: 27.
[2] "The Book of Exodus," *The New American Bible*, 20: 13.

beings on high esteem and dignity, and human life cannot be traded for monetary benefits. The punishment for intentional murder, in the Old Testament, is death.

In his "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus affirms the Old Testament teaching on the sanctity of human life. Jesus' teaching - on anger, hatred, and violence in human relationships - adds to the Old Testament concept of sanctity of life, the notions of human dignity and respect for others. To quote Jesus on this point:

> You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, '*Raqa*' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, "You fool," will be liable to fiery Gehenna.[3]

Prohibition of anger in the above-mentioned verses is a universal dimension, which includes any human being. Anger may not always culminate in murder or physical assault. Yet, in his teaching, Jesus aims at obedience from the heart leading to change in one's external behavior. According to Jesus, anger harbored in the heart and mind reflects in behavior and attitude, which may lead to violence and assault. Harboring anger is not just a matter of fleeting emotions and feelings, but a product of conscious decision of individual persons and community. Many a times, a harbored grudge and anger leads to marginalization and discrimination of individuals and communities those results in oppression, social injustice and violence.

Therefore, Jesus mandates his followers to come out of vicious cycle of anger and be reconciled with fellow human beings, which is a prerequisite for having the right type of relationship with God. Jesus says: "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift."[4] In the above mentioned verse, the words, "leave," "be reconciled" and "offer" are grammatically in

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[3] "The Gospel According to Mathew," *The New American Bible*, 5: 21-22.
[4] *Ibid.*, 5: 23-24.

imperative tense. Hence, the above-mentioned verses command a person to be a peacemaker by coming out of the vicious cycle of anger and grudge against his fellow human being. For Jesus, love for fellow human beings is the pivot around which all human transactions should revolve because that is the only way one can show his love for God. To quote Jesus on this point:

> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind. This is the great and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.[5]

In the above verses, Jesus clarifies that commandment to love God is greatest, but to love one's neighbor is also equally the greatest commandment. It implies that one cannot love and please God without loving one's fellow human being. Thus, love of God and love of humankind are held together and one without the other is not possible. Hence, one has to relate to fellow human beings according to worth and dignity bestowed on them by virtue of being created as the image of God. Commandments to love God and to love human beings are intertwined; one cannot obey former neglecting the latter and vice versa. In addition, Jesus makes it clear that obeying the two intertwined commandments would fulfill all the ethical requirements of the Old Testament.

### Economic Security

Property entails human beings having freedom from depending on other human beings for their livelihood. Having property means not being left defenseless against the capriciousness of overlords, nature, and fate. When one has property that can support him, he is less likely to be subordinated and reduced to servitude. However, one must see that the property he possesses should make him independent qualitatively; but it should not make others dependent and push others into servitude. For this reason, the eighth com-mandment of the Decalogue points to the seriousness of economic

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[5] *Ibid.*, 22: 37-39.

crime, such as theft, and intends to safeguard one's property as the source of livelihood and guard it from being used as a means of enslavement and servitude.

The eighth commandment reads as follows: "You shall not steal."[6] The act of stealing consists in secretly seizing someone's property. The legal codes in "The Book of Exodus" mentions that anyone who steals livestock or other goods must compensate with double the amount of items he had stolen. Similarly, four-fold restitution is demanded for slaughtering or selling someone's oxen or sheep. The very existence of this command implies that, everyone has the right to own the property and enjoy the property. Therefore, stealing is an assault on human dignity because one is robbed off his/her rights. Stealing implies depriving a person from enjoying the produce, which he/she might have earned by hard work. Therefore, stealing involves coveting others' goods.

The tenth commandment of the Decalogue censures covetousness. It consists in possessing someone's belonging illegally. The tenth commandment reads as follows: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him."[7] The Hebrew root word "*hmd*" is translated into English with the verb "to covet," and it points to the malicious intentions of the heart. Thus, the tenth commandment prohibits the intention of the heart to desire for and possesses that which belongs to others. According to Jewish scholars, the Hebrew word "*hmd*" not only connotes mere desire to possess neighbor's property, but a physical attempt to possess what is desired. The verb "to covet" refers to obsessive desire for any property belonging to other person, who is in covenant relationship with Yahweh. The act of coveting leads one to break all the norms of justice, particularly when the coveting is done by those who are in positions of power and authority. Hence, the tenth commandment is especially addressed to the powerful, who have the power and resources to seize the property of the weak and the vulnerable. The concern of the tenth commandment is to safeguard the property rights of everyone. Everyone has a claim over the property he/she has rightfully obtained. No one has the right to

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[6] "The Book of Exodus," *The New American Bible*, 20: 15.

[7] *Ibid.*, 20: 17.

deprive the other of the property belongs to the other justly. For instance, an employer, who does not pay just wages to the workers would be considered as sinning against the tenth commandment.

Similarly, other forms of stealing, such as deception, trickery, oppression, false measures and balances in business transaction, selling of inferior quality of goods, and land grabbing are manifestations of covetousness and would be against the tenth commandment. "The Book of Deuteronomy" reinforces the protection of property and livelihood, when it says: "You shall not remove your neighbor's landmarks erected by your forefathers in the heritage you receive in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you to occupy."[8] In this verse the term "landmark" means "the parameters for the ownership of land." The demand of this verse not to remove the landmark established by the tradition is especially addressed to those powerful persons, who are tempted to grab the land of the weak by manipulating the land marks, thereby endangering livelihood of the defenseless.

Furthermore, the protection of the weak and vulnerable sections of the society is one of the significant concerns in "The Book of Exodus," which provides a special instruction to protect the interest of orphans, widows and foreigners who are domiciled in the land of Israel. The following scripture portion highlights the above-mentioned concerns:

> You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphans. If ever your wound them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry. My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your own wives will be widows and your children orphans.[9]

The aliens, widows and orphans in a society are socio-economically and politically powerless. They are voiceless, as they have no one to defend their case. Hence, these sections of the society are vulnerable to different kinds of exploitations, such as physical and sexual violence, forced labor, unjust wages, unjust prosecution and

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[8] "The Book of Deuteronomy," *The New American Bible*, 19: 14.

[9] "The Book of Exodus," *The New American Bible*, 22: 20-23.

convictions. Seen in this context, the above mentioned text from "The Book of Exodus" presents Yahweh, the God of Israel, speaking in second person singular, addresses directly to everyone to uphold the concerns of these vulnerable groups. Similarly, "The Book of Deuteronomy" gives significance to providing justice to all vulnerable sections of the society. To quote: "You shall not violate the rights of the alien or of the orphan, nor take the clothing of a widow as a pledge. For, remember, you were once slaves in Egypt, and the Lord, your God, ransomed you from there; that is why I command you to observe this rule."[10] This text declares the importance of protecting the justice due to the weaker sections of the society.

"The Book of Deuteronomy," besides being concerned about providing justice due to the weaker sections of the society, is also intends to guarantee basic needs the people of these groups. To quote:

> When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf there, you shall not go back to get it; let it be for the alien, the orphan or the widow, the Lord, your God, may bless you in all your undertakings. When you knock down the fruits of the olive trees, you shall not go over the branches a second time; let what remains be there for the alien, the orphan and the widow. When you pick up your grapes, you shall not go over the vineyard a second time; let what remains be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. For, remember that you were once slaves in Egypt; that is why I command you to observe this rule. [11]

The above text stipulates that aliens, orphans and widows have the gleaning rights. They are free to glean all the agricultural products for their survival because these groups do not own any land. Therefore, they may not have adequate economic resources for their survival. This law is further reinforced in "The Book of Leviticus." The motivational clause for people of Israel to care for the vulnerable sections of the society is to remember their days of slavery in Egypt and how they were delivered by Yahweh. Furthermore, economi-

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[10] "The Book of Deuteronomy," *The New American Bible*, 24: 17-18.

[11] *Ibid.*, 24: 19-22.

cally helpless people become prone to exploitation by greedy moneylenders, and struggle to survive due to lack of basic needs. In order to protect economically helpless people, "The Book of Exodus" stipulates the following laws regarding lending money to the poor:

> If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors among my people, you shall not act like an extortioner toward him by demanding interest from him. If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset; for this cloak of his is the only covering he has for his body. What else has he to sleep in? If he cries out to me, I will hear him; for I am compassionate.[12]

This text reveals that "The Book of Exodus" prohibits one to take advantage of other's misery, by exacting interest. Beside, the pledged objects should not be kept back from the debtor, if those objects are source of survival for him. Thus, from the above text we can infer that, in God's plan, upholding the sanctity of human life and preserving human life by providing those things necessary for its survival precede all the commercial interests. The reason for this is that those things that are necessary for the humans to preserve and sustain life, such as food, clothing, shelter and the like, are fundamental rights of human beings.

Moreover, "The Book of Deuteronomy" mandates that all debts need to be cancelled in every seventh year, called the sabbatical year. To quote:

> At the end of every seven-year period you shall have a relaxation of debts, which shall be observed as follows. Every creditor shall relax his claim on what he has loaned his neighbor; he must not press his neighbor, his kinsman, because a relaxation in honor of the Lord, your God, has been proclaimed. You may press a foreigner, but you shall relax the claim on your kinsman for what is yours. Nay, more! Since the Lord, your God, will bless you abundantly

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[12] "The Book of Exodus," *The New American Bible*, 22: 24-26.

in the land he will give you to occupy as your heritage, there should be no one of you in need.[13]

All the creditors are mandated to write off the debts. Therefore, during the sabbatical year all the pledged things will be returned back to the debtor, leading to freedom from all the obligations of the loans. The similar concern of freedom from financial bondage and writing off debts is celebrated in every fiftieth year, which is called the "jubilee.year"

Similarly, Jesus does not question people owing properties on which their livelihood depends and gives them freedom from servitude. However, he does challenge the people who amassed wealth and property over and above their need. Jesus considered that attachment to riches is deceitful and darkens our inner eye. Hence, Jesus warns against covetousness and amassing wealth. He also spoke of the vanity of wealth. He advises to set priorities, where obedience to God is center of human life rather than the wealth. To quote Jesus: "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."[14] Jesus clearly set to challenge the person who wants to amass wealth for his personal comforts without taking into account the needs of other human beings and the welfare of the community. Jesus clearly points out that the person who amasses wealth for himself cannot please God, unless wealth is shared to meet the needs of the poor. Jesus demonstrates that one cannot have right relationship with God unless one is ready to love fellow human beings in need by sharing property. Therefore, it clear that covetousness for property and love of God cannot go hand in hand. This shows that Jesus was concerned about the dehumanized sections of the society that are deprived of property and livelihood. Jesus condemned the elite and the wealthy as they amassed wealth without any concern for the poor and the needy. Jesus does not question ownership of property that is used for one's survival, but Jesus categorically questions covetousness that leads to amassing of wealth in the context of the poor struggling to survive. Jesus confronts those who trust and worship wealth rather

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[13] "The Book of Deuteronomy," *The New American Bible*, 15: 1-4.

[14] "The Gospel According to Luke," *The New American Bible,*12: 15.

than God. Jesus challenges all those who marginalize and dehumanize the poor to amass the wealth.

*Fair and Just Judicial Proceedings*

The ninth commandment of the Decalogue underlines the significance of integrity in human transactions, especially in the administration of justice. The ninth commandment reads: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."[15] The word "witness" in the above-mentioned commandment is used in the context of judicial proceedings. The noun "neighbor" refers to any human being irrespective of his/her social status. In the Old Testament, the false testimony was considered as a serious offence. The person, who gives false testimony, should be punished with the same punishment, as the innocent victim would have suffered because of the false testimony. The major concern of the ninth commandment is to see that no one is unjustly punished by manipulation of legal proceedings especially by false testimony. Generally, in biblical context, justice aims at the total wellbeing of a human being by providing a fair and equal treatment. In the Bible, this is reflected in various human transactions, especially that of the judiciary. The broader implication of this commandment is providing fair legal proceedings and equal access to transparent legal system.

Similarly, "The Book of Exodus" lays a significant emphasize in administration of justice through a proper and fair judicial process. So it presents this law regarding "not giving false witness" as Yahweh directly addressing the people of Israel in the second person singular. The text reads as follows:

> You shall not repeat a false report. Do not join the wicked in putting your hand, as an unjust witness, upon anyone. Neither shall you allege the example of the many as an excuse for doing wrong, not shall you, when testifying in a lawsuit, side with the many in perverting justice. You shall not favor a poor man in his lawsuit.[16]

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[15] "The Book of Exodus," *The New American Bible*, 20: 16.

[16] *Ibid.*, 23: 1.

The above-mentioned text addresses the issue of false witness, which maligns the name of innocent person, leading to unjust condemnation. Often, the evidences acquired through the false witnesses, tilt the case against the innocent in question, and let the culprit go scot-free. The false witnesses act on behalf of rich and powerful persons out of greed for money or because of pressure placed on them by the powerful. In this context, above-mentioned verses particularly warn against taking unjust side along with the majority of the people or the person represented by the majority of the people. It is a warning even to judges that they may not be influenced by the powerful or multitudes of people, thereby tilt justice condemning the innocent. Similarly, to ensure the fair administration of justice and to prevent subversion of justice, "The Book of Deuteronomy" mandates the presence of multiple witnesses in a given case. To quote the text: "One witness alone shall not take the stand against a man in regard to any crime or any offence of which he may be guilty; a judicial fact shall be established only on the testimony of two or three witnesses."[17]Likewise, "The Book of Exodus" warn judges against taking bribes in order to condemn the poor person, who is innocent.

> You shall not deny one of your needy fellow men his rights in his law suit. You shall keep away from anything dishonest. The innocent and the just you shall not put to death, nor shall you acquit the guilty. Never take a bribe, for a bribe blinds even the most clear-sighted and twists the words even of the just. You shall not oppress an alien; you well know how it feels to be an alien, since you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.[18]

Similarly, Jesus points to the need for truth and integrity in human transactions. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus interpreting the Old Testament law regarding swearing and oaths calls for being truthful and integral in one's speech. To quote Jesus on this point:

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[17] "The Book of Deuteronomy," *The New American Bible*, 19: 15.
[18] "The Book of Exodus," *The New American Bible*, 23: 6-9.

Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow'. But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes', and your 'No' means 'No'. Anything more is from the evil one.[19]

Does Jesus condemn oath or the lying structures around the process of oath taking? This question becomes significant in the political order of the state, even in the court of law because oaths are part of functioning of governments. An oath can be used to cover the lie hidden in the heart, and pervert justice in human transactions. Hence, it is clear, in the above text, that Jesus is addressing an act of oath taking process to cover falsehood, where oath becomes an instrument of hiding the truth under the cover of oath. Oaths, in themselves are not wrong or inhere anything evil, but can be abused for selfish intentions. Jesus aims at speaking the truth in taking oath. He wants to dismantle the lying structures inherent in oaths and oath taking. For, when the instrument of oath is abused, it causes greater danger to individuals, community and society. Jesus clearly mandates for integrity of speech. The entire speech of the person in all the times should be oath laden. If the integrity of a person established, then there will no need of oaths at all. In Old Testament, oaths were given to protect the truth. However, when oaths are abused, they make a joke of the truth.

Thus, Jesus aims at truth in all human transactions, whether under oath or not under oath. However, Jesus wants communities to be free of falsehood, and help individuals to live their life with integrity. This mandate to speak in truth has significant implication to judicial proceedings. Justice is often perverted by false witnesses, and consequently the innocents are condemned. The broader ranges of application of the above-mentioned command of Jesus are transparency, honesty, and impartiality in all the human transactions, especially in the domain of judicial proceedings. Jesus mandates for

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[19] "The Gospel According to Mathew," *The New American Bible*, 5: 33-37.

speaking truth in all dimensions of life, and this mandate of Jesus carries forward the intention and concern of the ninth command-ment, and concern of justice expressed in Pentateuch as a whole. From the above-mentioned discussions, we can state that Jesus intends to build a community based on true and just human transactions.

## Conclusion

The above mentioned discourse on human rights and the Bible demonstrate that the major ethical teachings of the Bible clearly endorse overarching concerns expressed in the UDHR. Hence, the adherents of Christian faith, who follow the Biblical teaching, must participate actively in promoting concerns expressed in UDHR. Moreover, the individuals and communities belonging to diverse cultures and religious traditions can provide cultural legitimacy to UDHR and move towards "Being and Becoming Human in Multi-cultural Traditions." For further discussion and research, we end this chapter with the following questions: Can there be a mutually enriching relationship between social and ethical values of religions and moral standards presents in UDHR to work towards 'Being and Becoming Human in Multicultural Traditions? Can the moral standards of UDHR become converging and diverging point for social and ethical values of religions, so that moral standards presents in UDHR become a common ground for religions to work together for humane world?

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**Part V**
**Multiculturalism and Dialogue**

**27.**

# Dialogue of Cultures and Religions in Multicultural Traditions of Modernity

A.G. KOSICHENKO

## Introduciton

In the past few years, some European politicians have criticized the policy of multiculturalism. It is generally recognized that their criticism is "not justified." If politics of multiculturalism attempts to bring about the integration of Muslim immigrants in the European cultural, social and political space, it is necessary to agree with these politicians. As a political project, multiculturalism is really not justified in itself. However, this does not negate the fact of multiculturalism in all modern states. As the people of these multicultural states are multiethnic and multi-religious, they have a variety of cultural and religious traditions and have different value systems. Thus, globalization has raised the level of multiculturalism by bringing into contact a variety of cultural traditions, values and ideals. At the same time, globalization has virtually destroyed the national traditions by unifying diverse cultural traditions. Religions are also subjected to such attempts of unification; but religions resist these attempts. Liberal values prevailing in the modern world collide with diverse cultural and religious values. This confrontation and contradiction of multiple values is not easy to eliminate. Hence, it is important that we find the right means to bring about better understanding among various cultural groups. Dialogue of cultures and religions, if cultivated among people of various cultural and religious groups of the nation-state, can result in bringing together diverse cultures and religions and their people.

Hence, in the first section of this chapter, we formulate the problem of dialogue of cultures and religions in the context of the modern society having multicultural and multi-religious traditions. Some aspect of this problem are analyzing the possibilities and limits of dialogue between cultures and religions; promoting mutual understanding among cultures and religions; bringing social soli-

darity and consolidation of the society; making the dialogue move from superficial level to the central level of the cultures and religions involved in the dialogue; controlling the resistance comes from within cultures and religions for dialogue; modernizing the traditional values of cultures and religions for their better development in the globalized world; and providing equal opportunities for each culture and religion to develop its own traditional values.

Having outlined the central aspects of the problem, the second section considers the possibilities and limits of dialogue between cultures. Intercultural dialogue must reconcile the tension between multiculturalism and cultural isolationism. This calls for preserving the unity of the society while maintaining the ethnic identities and confessional specifics of all groups without insisting on the absolute priority of any group. However, when we enter into intercultural dialogue, we must keep in mind the "specific weight" of and the priority given to a particular social group in a society. Similarly, intercultural dialogue must recognize the centrality of culture in all spheres of public life, society and the individual. The way of a productive intercultural dialogue begins with confrontation; the recognition of the need for better relationship leads to the starting of the dialogue; and as parties cooperate in the process of dialogue, there comes about a partnership. Intercultural dialogue is a process and not the outcome. Hence it must be multilateral and multi-dimensional.

The third section briefly considers some recent national and international initiatives for the implementation of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue - "Dialogue of Civilizations" World Public Forum; Alliance of Civilizations; and a few other notable initiatives.

The fourth section speaks of the role dialogue of religions in intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogues. Here, we point out how true dialogue among religions can foster and strengthen intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogues and effectively bring about harmonious living of people of different cultural backgrounds, particularly by giving the example of Kazakhstan, where the major religions - the Orthodox Christianity and Islam - play a very significant role in this regard.

The fifth section considers the issue of dialogue of religions. Though often it is difficult in today's world, interreligious dialogue is

so vital for the general health and wellbeing of the society. Without dialogue of religions, there will only be confrontations; clashes; conflict of religions that are behind cultures and civilizations; social communities; and peoples and nations. Since this cannot be allowed, it is necessary to fully contribute to the dialogue of religions. Therefore, the issue of dialogue of religions must be treated responsibly, both by religious leaders and politicians, and consider it as a strategic goal of global analytical and expert community.

The sixth section explores the prospects of dialogue of cultures and religions in the modern world. The possibility of dialogue of religions bringing about genuine social transformation in the modern world is very slim because the policy makers - the political and economic elite - of today are very insincere and insensitive to the need of the society. Their malicious intentions and lack of effectiveness in practical implementation of the policies prevent the transformation, otherwise would have brought about by the dialogue of religions.

The conclusion states that political policy-makers and the scholars in humanities must follow the same logic and speak the same language. We must master the logic and language of the politicians and communicate to them in their language and according to their logic the results of the dialogue of religions, which in turn, would facilitate their practical implementation. Besides, we must use the "soft power" of passing information, diplomacy, and right use of intelligence and intrigue, thereby force the politicians to reckon with the findings of humanities and accept the possibilities the dialogue between cultures and religions proposes for the betterment of society and world at large. Now, we formulate the problem of dialogue of cultures and religions in the first section.

**Formulation of the Problem Dialogue of Cultures and Religions**

In the context of the modern society having multicultural traditions, we have to analyze the possibilities and limits of dialogue between cultures and religions. It must be recognized that since the context is very controversial, it is not conducive to productive dialogue. However, there is no alternative way than intercultural and interreligious dialogue to save the modern society and the world. In recent years, the problems of intercultural, inter-civiliza-

tional and interreligious dialogue has become very popular and comprehensive. This is not surprising because dialogue is considered as the constructive alternative to the various forms of confrontation. In the actual practice, in our times, it can lead to an ideological reflection of reality. It is often said and it is largely true that dialogue between cultures, religions and civilizations is the only one way and even the exclusive form, in which humanity may evolve in the future.

Multicultural traditions promote mutual understanding of cultures and religions, making them more tolerant. They provide an opportunity to better understand each other. However, often these features are difficult to implement. Different cultures coexisting in a multicultural society come into contact with each other and are available for each other; but often, these contacts are external and superficial. National cultures still remain the property of the national group. These cultures are not perceived by other ethnic communities as having common values. This is because culture accumulates the experience of the previous life of the *ethnos*, concentrates its spiritual aspirations, and reflects on its meaning for a particular ethnic group. Therefore, culture is group-specific and it belongs to a particular ethnic group, and not to people other ethnic groups. Hence, though the dialogue of cultures in a multiethnic and multi-confessional society is important, desirable and has a great positive value; yet, it has its limits.

Multiculturalism neither automatically leads to any social solidarity, nor brings about instantly the consolidation of society. It only provides opportunities for solidarity and consolidation of the society, but whether these opportunities are realized depends on many circumstances. To actualize solidarity and consolidation of the society, and to maintain harmony among multiethnic groups within the society, we must foster dialogue between ethnic, religious and other sociocultural groups. In the dialogue of cultures, parties do not have to lose their cultural identity. Besides, it is not necessary to achieve a unified social space. We must remember that consolidation does not mean unification and loss of identity of each group. In fact, true consolidation calls for taking into account the interests of all groups.

Multiculturalism is often superficial and hence it does not penetrate to the base of cultures and religions. For example, when a

religion is partly ready to start a dialogue, the dialogue process is restrained by its own belief systems and dogmas. Therefore, dialogue between religions is limited to the peripheral areas, such as joint activities in social programs, education, and cultural activities. However, the central areas of religions, such as religious truths, dogmas, religious practices and rituals are carefully kept out of the content of dialogue because a critical discussion on the dogmatic foundations of religions can lead to confrontations among religions. When a nation's culture resists globalism, it is prone to isolation. Here, we are faced with a paradox: while globalization attempts to bring together cultures, the cultures resist the unification efforts of globalization in order to protect their identities and turn in on themselves. Therefore, the role of globalization in relation to the dialogue of cultures is twofold: firstly, globalization brings the culture together; and secondly it contributes to their isolation. This interesting aspect must be studied in a separate article.

Traditional values are important to people of different cultural groups. Often we find that people of many culturally distinct regions of the modern world tend to rely on their traditional values to find a stable base for their development as a cultural group. For, they believe that sticking to the values of their cultures would give them the stability they need for true progress. However, these attempts have revealed that the traditional values poorly amenable to updating. They were relevant and adequate for the earlier eras; not necessarily appropriate to the present time. So, in order to actualize their significance of traditional values for the modern society, these traditional values must be modernized, and filled with new and relevant content, even though it is difficult.

Another significant aspect of the problem we just outline is that not all cultures and systems of values have equal opportunity for self-preservation and development. Cultures have economically developed and they have replicated themselves around the world, when they belong to a powerful state and a reliable defender as its ruler. Cultures of weak states have not come to be known in the world, despite their long history, quality and richness.

Having outlined the central aspects of the problem of dialogue between cultures and religions in multicultural societies, we carry out a more detailed analysis of the possibilities and limits of dialogue among cultures in the second section.

## Possibilities and Limits of Dialogue among Cultures

The test of time has shown that in a more globalizing world multiculturalism is here to stay. However, social and cultural isolationism is still present, despite the fact that a culture stops growing and begins to stagnate, when there takes place an insulation of culture, whether it is forced or voluntary. When values of a particular culture are threatened, there brews ethnic and group protests, which develops into protest demonstrations in the sociopolitical plane. It is an extremely undesirable situation. Therefore, it is necessary to know what constitutes multiculturalism. Multiculturalism does not mean assimilation of many cultures and bringing about one culture integrating the value of all cultures. Multiculturalism calls each particular culture to self-reflect in relation to every other culture present in the society, so that there can come about better understanding and harmonious living. Cultural self-realization of each culture in a multiethnic society can happen only when we bring about mutual enrichment of each ethnic culture. For a multiethnic and multi-confessional society to preserve its unity, it should be able to maintain the ethnic identities and confessional specifics of all the groups, without insisting on the absolute priority of any particular group.

However, if any prioritizing of cultures is required for the wellbeing of the society, it must be done by taking into consideration the views of all the cultural and religious groups present in the society. Let us take the example of Kazakhstan: here we find a few ethnic and social groups that exert greater influence than other groups. For instance, the *comprador bourgeoisie* or the tip - the oligarchy, a very small social group having its own clearly defined cultural and other preferences. Because of the greater capacity of this group, its impact on society is very noticeable. Therefore, when we enter into intercultural dialogue, we must keep in mind the "specific weight" of and the priority given to a particular social group in a society.

Intercultural dialogue is not just a dialogue of different cultural forms. It is rather the interest of the society, which the culture - through cultural phenomena and the language of traditional cultures - representatively broadcasts. It contains much more content than the actual cultural characteristics of ethnic and social groups found in

the society. Culture is neither something abstract and sublime, nor is it distant from and irrelevant to the interest of the society. Culture is part and parcel of every aspect of social and political developments in a society. Let us take, for example, the sphere of economy: it is not something far from culture; but it is entirely based on culture. The economy of the society cannot be envisaged outside its cultural foundations. For, a society has a distinctive cultural identity of production - rural or urban cultures will be the basis of agricultural production and industrial production respectively. In this manner, culture has a significant bearing on every other area of public life.

The above fact is explained by the nature of culture. Culture manifests people's soul, their vision, and meaning of life. Culture justifies its ways of life. Culture contains the vital impulse of the people. Culture is very comprehensive and manifests itself in everyday practice. Thus, culture is not an appendage to the more important areas of the state and society, such as economics and politics; but it is the most important of all spheres of public life, society and the individual. Culture ultimately maintains all other forms of life. The significance of culture consists in the fact that the state and its people, society, ethnic groups and religious communities are what they are because of their culture. Thus, culture is the basis of identity.

The decision on the dialogue of cultures in a multicultural setting is based on the common interest of the society, the total content of which is present in the cultures of ethnic and social groups. Though this is a good basis for intercultural dialogue, we must remember that intercultural dialogue can take place in conditions of actual absence of a common content for the parties. Thus, the dialogue does not imply unanimity of views on the discussion in the dialogue. It is necessary to start a dialogue, to identify their positions, wait to hear the position of the other side of the conversation, and commensurate with its position. The dialogue may imply giving unprincipled concessions, making progress, or getting to know the problematic of the position of the other.

Generally, genuine dialogue calls for taking a critical look at the position of the other and clarifying our own position, which in turn, may lead to rapprochement of positions. Cooperation on both sides is necessary for such a rapprochement. We must realize that dialogue happens in its developmental stages: it begins at the stage of con-

frontation between the parties. From confrontation through aware-
ness of the need for dialogue - a dialogue takes place. As parties
continue to cooperate there comes about a partnership. This is the
way of productive dialogue.

Often the question is raised about the subject of inter-civiliza-
tional and intercultural dialogue. Similarly, question is also raised as
to "who should conduct such a dialogue?" This question is im-
portant because largely the success of the dialogue depends on who
will lead the dialogue. Who should conduct the dialogue? The state?
Civil Society? Social and religious leaders? Scientists? Simple people?
Civilization, culture and religion cannot hold a dialogue - for
someone must represent them. In our opinion, the best scenario is
that the dialogue is conducted on many levels: in the above-said and
many other levels. It is important to collect, concentrate and focus on
the development of dialogue. Dialogue results should be sum-
marized and made available to all interested parties. Dialogue must
be a process, not the outcome. The processes of dialogue in the
modern world must be multilateral and multidimensional.

The dialogue of cultures and civilizations, have had their
achievements and problems. Even if today civilizational and inter-
cultural dialogue does not show the whole palette of its capabilities,
its undeniable achievement is the following: dialogue weakens the
inter-civilizational tensions in those cases where it is present; it helps
to understand the nature and specifics of other civilizations and
different value systems; Dialogue breaks down stereotypes of domi-
nation of one civilization or culture over another; creates awareness
of the value of all civilization models, which in itself contributes to
the growth of tolerance and self-consciousness of representatives of
different civilizations. In the next section, we briefly consider some
of the present-day national and international initiatives regarding
dialogue of cultures.

## Current National and International Initiatives

In recent times, there have come about a few national and
international initiatives for the implementation of intercultural and
inter-civilizational dialogue. To mention some of them: "Dialogue of
Civilizations" World Public Forum, Alliance of Civilizations and a

few other notable initiatives. We briefly note some of these initiatives.

### *"Dialogue of Civilizations" World Public Forum*

The forum was founded in 2002 by representatives of Greece, India and Russia. It had twelve meetings in Rhodes. The numbers of participants in each meeting were about a thousand people, belonging to the different strata of the society: scientists, community and religious leaders, former heads of state, representatives of NGOs, journalists, diplomats, artists, and the like. Meetings were prominent world events. The final document was accepted adopted at the end of the forum in 2009. The Rhodes Declaration, in particular, said:

> As participants in the previous six conferences "Dialogue of Civilizations" on the Greek island of Rhodes, we are convinced that all civilizations, nations, peoples and religions have much more in common than differences. Therefore, a dialogue will prevail over confrontation. We are convinced that the current global crisis has arisen in particular because many people on whom decisions depend, forget to work for the common good of their responsibility. We urge leading politicians, businessmen, culture and education, as well as representatives of different faiths to work together to ensure social stability, which is the responsibility of all mankind. We express our commitment to the spirit of Rhodes, the spirit of equality of all people and mutual respect, which should be reflected in the good-neighborly relations on the local level, as well as in international relations and cooperation.[1]

### *Alliance of Civilizations*

This initiative is supported by the United Nations in 2005. From its creation, Spain and Turkey were at the Prime Ministerial level,

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[1] The Rhodes Declaration. Available at: http://www.wpfdc.org/ru/news/news/203-rhodes-forum-2009.

part of this initiative. Two meetings took place - in Spain in 2008 and in Turkey in 2009. To further the activities of the forum was to wear a working character. The ratio in the world for this initiative is ambiguous, because the United States did not approve it. However, the forum is efficient enough.

*Some Other Notable Initiatives*

Other notable initiatives in the field of inter-civilizational and intercultural dialogue were: Bahreys' Dialogue of Civilizations; the International Organization "Mediterranean house"; International Association "Peace through Culture - Europe" Platform "Dialogue Eurasia"; the UN; and UNESCO sites. In particular, the United Nations adopted in 2001 a special document - "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations," which clearly set forth the content of this dialogue:

> Dialogue between civilizations - is the process of going within civilizations and at their junction, which is based on universal participation and collective desire to learn, uncover and examine assumptions, unfold shared meaning and core values and reduce the different approaches into a single unit by means of dialogue ... Dialogue among civilizations - a process aimed at achieving the following objectives: to strengthen mutual understanding and respect through interaction among civilizations; identification and promotion of common ground among civilizations in order to address common challenges threatening shared values, universal human rights and achievements of human society in various fields; promoting a better understanding of common ethical standards and universal human values; ensuring a higher degree of respect for cultural diversity and cultural heritage.[2]

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[2] Formulation of the problems of inter-civilizational and intercultural dialogue in this document is almost perfect. In many ways, it has clearly formulated its goals and other organizations and associations that initiate this dialogue.

In the next section, we analyze how dialogue of religions plays a significant role in facilitating genuine dialogue of cultures and civilizations.

## Dialogue of Religions: Its Content and Relationship with Dialogue of Cultures and Civilizations

Before we enter into inter-civilizational and intercultural dialogue, it is important to remember the fact that the basis of traditional cultures is religions. Therefore, when we talk about the dialogue of cultures, we must keep in mind that such a dialogue must be rooted on the religious foundations of cultures. For this reason, dialogue of cultures becomes dialogue of religions. The same applies to civilizations: since civilizations emerge from cultures and religions are at the heart of cultures, any inter-civilizational dialogue must be viewed through the prism of religions. Hence, religions play a significant role in the dialogue of cultures and civilizations. However, modern western civilizations are not rooted on religion as they claim to keep "equidistance" from all religions. Modern western society, focusing itself on unbridled material consumption and having accepted the ideals of enlightenment, has rejected the spiritual principles of not only Christianity, but also every other religion, while acknowledging the concept of human rights as the absolute creator of reality. This implies that there can be hardly any dialogue, for instance, between the Islamic world and modern western civilization, for the reason that the value fields of this dialogue is heterogeneous.

Despite the complexity of the dialogue in such conditions, there are real opportunities. Since the modern western world has become almost non-religious, we recognize the precarious nature of the foundations of international relations - the principles of force and aggression. Acknowledging this dangerous situation, the world leaders take into consideration the phenomenon of religion, while formulating the principles that guide international relations. As a matter of fact, the most sagacious political leaders of the world have turned to religion in reducing aggression in world politics. Such attempts, for instance, include the initiatives of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N.A. Nazarbayev, who organized in the capital of Kazakhstan five Congresses of Leaders of the World and

Traditional Religions, in the years 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2015. These Congresses have taken a number of important outcome documents, contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of religion in the modern world.

For example, the "Address of Participants of the III Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions" that took place in Astana, on July 02, 2009, called for constant support and to promote the efforts of religious leaders and organizations towards genuine inter-religious dialogue, and to consider the actual problems of humanity in order to develop appropriate ways to solve them, recognizing thereby the positive role that can and should a religion play in the society. This vector of development of international relations is justified today. It is necessary to move forward and come closer to the vision of the real possibilities of religion in reducing threats of today and the realization of these opportunities.

If we specifically talk about the Kazakh model of inter-religious harmony, it is a complex inter-religious configuration, placed in the sociopolitical context of state and social development of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Despite the absolute legal equality of all confessions in Kazakhstan, really in the center of this configuration are the largest religions in Kazakhstan - the Orthodox Christianity and Islam. Essentially, these two religions through their interactions provide interreligious stability to the country. On the basis of this stability, relationship among all religions is built in Kazakhstan. The variety of confessions, the specificity of their functioning, and the ethnic composition of their adherents, age and educational levels of the believers - all combine to form a kind, only found in Kazakhstan, inherent in the system of inter-religious relations.

According to the Law of Kazakhstan, "On Religious Activity and Religious Associations (2011)," religious associations are separated from the state, which being secular, does not interfere in the internal affairs of religious organizations, but takes into account the religious factor in the internal and foreign policy. In the inter-action of all these elements of state-religion-relations, there comes about a common religious space of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which creates and maintains interreligious harmony in Kazakhstan. The interaction of religions is not a static, given once and for all: it is rather a dynamic system that is constantly changing, and reproduce under changing conditions of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

As mentioned above, religion may do much for fruitful inter-civilizational and intercultural dialogue. Firstly, since religions are at the heart of culture and civilization, and an appeal to the basics of the subject allows you to see more clearly the dialogue. Secondly, religions have enormous creative potential that mankind has absolutely no use for reducing the level of modern challenges. However, in the way of active involvement of religions in dialogue on a secular level, there is a tangible and objective obstacle. Secular structure oriented to the liberal world order and belongs to religion as a source of problems and contradictions that reduces the opportunity to gain the consent on certain contemporary issues. It is not a misconception to say that religion is at the core of liberal values. The modern world has forgotten about the origin of the rights and freedoms of the modern person in religion. Religion is just able to make the dialogue of cultures and civilizations more productive and deepen it. How can religion deepen this dialogue?

After all, it would seem, keeping a dialogue of religions, we make additional differences related to the specifics of a particular religion. At the first glance, it seems that a neutral, non-religious culture is easier to negotiate with a different culture, and religion only aggravates contradictions. This is not true. Yes, all religions are different, but the faithful of all religions believe in God. God unites religions, cultures and civilizations. When a civilization loses its connection with God, away from God, as is the case today, civilization disintegrates. Therefore, summit of religious leaders - in which these problems are actively discussed - is very important for a better understanding of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue. In the next section, we specifically turn our attention to interreligious dialogue.

### Dialogue of Religions: Interreligious Dialogue

The subject-matter of interreligious dialogue is the general principles of the functioning of religion in society. It consists in bringing together the religions in matters of education, training, socialization, charity work, and the like. Interreligious dialogue aims at developing a common religious view of the actual processes taking place in the country and in the world. Dialogue of religions happening in the public space gives a joint certificate of deep

religious truths and the possible influences of these truths in the life of society and the state. One of the major issues relating to inter-religious dialogue is the question of the principles on the basis of which it should take place. Generally there are three principles. They are: tolerance and mutual respect; equality in dialogue; and political neutrality of the participants in the dialogue. Since this takes place in a slow pace, it is impossible to assess the immediate effect, regularity and consistency of interreligious dialogue. These principles are clear enough, and there is no need for any particular comments. It is undeniable that the interreligious dialogue brings about the following possibilities: it contributes to peace between peoples and religions; stabilizes the society; allows religions to know each other; and contributes to the moral quality of society.

Dialogue between religions is a process. You cannot expect results from it at any time and on any problems. Its most valuable result is the friendly and mutually respectful relations among religions. You cannot demand from the religions a "united front" in connection with some current political events or processes. One obvious exception to it, for example, is terrorism, particularly in case of the religions of Kazakhstan. Though religions develop their own belief systems, these belief systems are inherent in the social conception. These are the "Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church," "Materials from Second Vatican Council Documents," "Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Muslims" or "Platform of Muslims of Kazakhstan."

There is, of course, the overall vision of the religions on social, economic and political problems, and where there is a shared vision, religions can act together. However, often positions of different religions on many social issues still differ. Interreligious dialogue has its own structure. Its elements can be distinguished. It can be carried out in the sphere of culture and morality. Besides, religions interact with science, new technologies, secularism and to the principles of the new world order. It should be noted that in the structure of interreligious dialogue contains two types of relationships to religions: the ratio between the religions are directly and attitude of each religion and the state; and has through the state - their relations. The second type of relationship in practice is quite common.

Interreligious dialogue takes place at various levels: the first, the dialogue between the leaders of religions; the second, the dialogue

between believers of religions; and the third, the "dialogue" between the forms of socially significant activities of different religions. Let us pay attention to the second level of interreligious dialogue - a dialogue between believers of different religions. This dialogue is specific; it seems to be invisible. You could even say that it is not. However, it is this level of dialogue, in the end, is at the center of interreligious dialogue. At the first glance, the believers of different religions interact weakly with each other. One or another religious organization lives its own religious life; the faithful who belong to a particular religious community adhere to their religion; and very little they are interested in other religions.

Yet, in practice this is not the case. The existence of other religions forces to respond to them. Believers of different religions, not even in contact directly with each other, conduct correspondence faith-dialogue; not competing as to whose faith is better, but knowing that there are a number of people who profess a different faith. These believers are a group of people - the congregation of different religions - are very close to each other, as interreligious ideals of a variety of religions have much in common. Between flocks, conceptually speaking, there is no contradiction, but there is agreement, based on faith in God. This is the very possibility of dialogue between religions, and there is hope for its productivity. There have been and are certain contradictions between believers of different religions. These differences exist not among true believers of these religions; but among radical movements of different religions.

By itself, belief in God brings believers of different religions together. Although the concept of God and the way to reach him differ greatly in various religions, yet, the true faith in God is the undisputed common foundation, which provides spiritual harmony of believers. Faith is an internal condition of the possibility of consolidation. Speaking more strictly, God himself is the original spiritual condition of consolidation, as all the people in it are brothers and sisters. The essence of every religion is the faith in God. The more believers are different religions understand this essential truth about religions, they get united; only formal adherence to the rules of faith, without proper understanding the essence of religions separates the believer of different religions.

It should be emphasized that the consolidation of spiritual values of different religions involves the preservation of their identity and specificity. Differences in the spiritual realm are the condition of authentic communal spirituality of society. Formal unity is destructive to society because it is imposed on the character; and in it the personality of believers is not accepted. A person giving external and formal consent to this is not true unity, as deep down he is opposed to it; it is not his choice and not his spirituality. When there is consolidation in the spiritual realm, there is a consensus in the general principles and in general content, while maintaining the diversity of the specific content of the spiritual traditions. The differences in this area are good as it contributes to the stability and spirituality of the society as a whole. Interactions in these deeper levels are facilitated by interreligious dialogue.

We find a number of common contexts in today's world that are unfavorable and not conducive to interreligious dialogue. We mention a few of them in this section. Firstly, improper representations of the religions of the world and their faith lead to geopolitical confrontation and terrorism. Understood in this sense religion is considered as inert, outdated ideology, that hinders the progress of humanity and contrary to the dominant liberal values. Secondly, narrowing of the possibilities of religion, under the dominance of force in dealing with the problems in the world today. Thirdly, an increase in the volume and depth of the contradictions between western secular civilization and preserving the religious civilization of the Islamic world. Fourthly, belief that a religion is exclusive and it has the absolute truth. It greatly prevents genuine interreligious dialogue, by making dialogue possible only in the peripheral issues of religion, as entering into deeper truths of religions will lead to confrontation. Fifthly, the radicalization of certain religious associations, primarily Islamic ones, which in some cases, makes interreligious dialogue impossible.

Summing up the review of the opportunities and limits of interreligious dialogue in the modern world, we emphasize that, despite the considerable difficulties in implementing this dialogue of religions in today's realities, there is virtually no alternative other than interreligious dialogue to bring peace and harmony among religions of the world. Without dialogue of religions, there will only be confrontations; clashes; conflict of religions that are behind

cultures and civilizations; social communities; and peoples and nations. This cannot be allowed. Therefore, it is necessary to fully contribute to the dialogue of religions. Hence, the issue of dialogue of religions must be treated responsibly, both by religious leaders and politicians, and consider it as a strategic goal of global analytical and expert community. In the next section, we consider the prospects of the effectiveness of the dialogue of cultures and religions in transforming the modern world.

## Prospects of Dialogue of Cultures and Religions in the Modern World

So far, in this chapter, we have said a great deal about the importance of dialogue between cultures and religions in the modern world. Despite its importance, why does not the dialogue between cultures and religions lead to improvement in global politcs and mitigation of world's problems? Why does not it contribute to the generations of people a more equitable economic system and impartial distribution of wealth? Why does not the dialogue of cultures and religions effective in a practical way? Probably the reasons for the failure of dialogue of cultures and religions to bring about a better social order and a fair economic system are the following.

In the first place, this is probably because the parties enter into a dialogue, in the name of false generality, with some cunning intent, and to smooth out the contradictions. If the dialogue of cultures and religions were entered into for this reason, the result in real life situations in the context of politics, economics and culture would be nothing. For, the whole dialogue process is entered into with malicious intentions. Secondly, during the dialogue process, the results are not communicated to the relevant persons and institutions so that they may be practically implemented. As a result, the policies arrived at during dialogue are not allowed to go to the level of methods and forms, so that the policies can be embodied in level of concrete and practical actions.

Thus, the implementation of policies is far from humanity, morality and spirituality. Politicians take the advice and recommendations from the scientists, who are experts in the humanities. However, only if the recommendations of scientists are - quickly,

efficiently and in terms of policies - applied to the real-world circumstances, they would bring about the desired effect. For this purpose, the political leaders need a mechanism to promote and implement the recommendations of scientists, cultural studies, religious studies and scholars of general humanities. Since this is lacking in the political system, the dialogue of religions and cultures, in very rare cases has resulted in real practical implementation of suggested policies and proposals. Therefore, in the implementation of the result of the dialogue of cultures and religions the political and economic elite of today are insensitive. Hence, the prospects of dialogue of cultures and religions bringing about positive transformation in the modern world are very slim.

## Conclusion

The dialogue of cultures and religions can have a real influence on modern politics and the economy, only if we learn to formulate the proposals that result from dialogue in a form accessible perception of politicians and economists. When the result of dialogue is formulated, it must be done in such a way that it would be understandable and convincing to political policy makers. However, very often the result of the dialogue is formulated by scientists is in the language of science, culture or religion. Politicians have their own language. Scientist and politicians exist in two parallel worlds, weakly interconnected. If we want to be heard, we must learn how to "speak" in the language of politics. Then our recommendations can be accepted by politicians. Modern politics has its own logic. It just seems that politicians do not act systemically; they are not logical; and they are even arbitrary.

In fact, they are subject to their own special logic. Therefore, it is necessary to master this logic, so that we can communicate to the politicians in their own language, according to the laws of their logic. Thus, the efforts to bring together political policy-makers and scholars in the humanities, would lead to proper implementation of the results of the dialogue of cultures and religions. The concept of "soft power" has become fashionable today. Probably we must use this "soft power" of passing on of information, diplomacy, and the right use of intelligence and intrigue, instead of bruit force to achieve the desired effects. Thus, the use of such "soft power" would force

the politicians to reckon with the findings of humanities and accept the possibilities of dialogue between cultures and religions propose for the betterment of society and world at large.

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# Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue

DILIPKUMAR MOHANTA

## Introduction

I propose to develop a philosophical model of religious pluralism based on the teaching of the *Vedas*, which *does not confine* itself to the recognition and toleration of multiple other religions, but also *accepts* other religions as sufficient alternatives. It is based on the teaching of *Rg Veda*: "Truth is One; wise people call it in different names."[1] This seems to be a lesson to the world today for sustainable communal harmony, interreligious understanding, conflict-resolution and peace-building. Being open-ended, this model is based on a direct experience of "otherness"; it proposes to internalize our religious position by considering as our own the context of others' positions. It provides room for the possibility of alternative world views and claims that no institutional religion has the monopoly of "holiness, purity and charity." It does not permit the view that only "norms, values, and rules followed by the majority are legitimate and legal." The language of this model of pluralism is not just one of mere "difference and multiplicity," but one of "engagement, involvement and participation." It speaks in the dialect of "exchange, dialogue and debate." It neither excludes, nor underrates the other; rather it advocates conversation with the "other" in an environment of mutual respect and universal acceptance.

The reason for accepting and following pluralism in living and working together is that we want to establish distributive justice and good of all. Unless we admit the logic of pluralism and educate ourselves in pluralistic values, there is no possibility of getting rid of dogmatism, communalism and fanaticism concerning religion. Besides, accepting pluralistic values would lessen cases of inter-religious conflicts, and terrorists misusing religious sentiments as

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[1] "*Ekaü sadviprà vahudhà vadanti*." *Rg Veda*, 1.164.46.

means to propagate their goals in today's world. Interreligious dialogue has a significant role today as we are living in a time, when religion has become a powerful force for disruption, division and destruction. We need to acquire intellectual insight into the foundation of other persuasions with honest and impartial understanding of other faith communities. Thus, any attempt for a meaningful interfaith dialogue presupposes the logic of religious pluralism.

Having made the above introductory observations, in the first section, we elaborate on the Vedantic model of religious pluralism. It consists in neither religious exclusivism, nor religious inclusivism; but in recognizing that every religion is an adequate path to the realization of the Ultimate Reality and makes religions complementary in achieving the final goal of the humans. According to this model, each religious tradition represents only one among many expressions of religious experience.

The second section unfolds the Vedic foundations of Vedantic model of religious pluralism by expounding the Vedic truth "Reality is One" (*Ekam Sat*), as it is presented in the *Ṛg Veda*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Upanishads*. The third section highlights the importance of the pluralistic worldview regarding religions, as it stimulates receptivity and openness towards other traditions and makes us willing to recognize and respond to the truth present in these religious traditions. Besides, it brings about a true secular atmosphere, in which adherents of different religions can practice the precepts of their religions in true freedom.

The conclusion points out that Vedantic model of religious pluralism is a precondition for interreligious dialogue, as it encourages respect among various different religious traditions; keeps communication active; cause cooperative, constructive and positive interaction among people of different faith; provides the opportunity to make a spiritual journey into the value-world of another religious tradition; and allow the principle of "live and let live" in their religious practice - in the process lessening sectarian mindset and leading to conflict-free social and religious living. In the first section, we analyze the Vedantic model of religious pluralism.

## Vedantic Model of Religious Pluralism

Philosophical model of religious pluralism in the light of Vedic

religion was sometimes referred to by the inappropriate term "Hinduism." It is true that India is a land of pluralism - in dress, food, language, religion, geography and views. Even today people of India at large are religiously one of the most tolerant among peoples of the world. It is because of the basic fiber of the Vedic-Upanisadic-Sramanic religious culture. The logic of pluralism admits more than one adequate ways to reach the same Reality. The harmony of religions in India's context *does not mean relativism*. Each path by itself is adequate for the realization of Reality. Let us briefly discuss what the philosophical study of religious pluralism stands for. Religious pluralism is based on the following distinguishing marks. First, the ultimate reality is one; but it can be known by many different names. God has many names and we are to recognize the difference among institutional religions as true. The acceptance of difference does not necessarily mean that they are mutually exclusive. Second, each and every religion is an adequate path for the realization of the Ultimate Reality. Third, all religions of the world are true because they all lead to the realization of the Ultimate Reality.[2]

In my humble opinion, when various religions make different truth-claims apparently in the absolute sense, they are, in fact, not making rival claims. This is because a particular belief statement becomes meaningful only within the context of that "religious form of life." The ultimate divine reality is sought in various ways and

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[2] Keith Ward speaks of different versions of religious pluralism, such as hard pluralism, soft pluralism and revisionist pluralism. The hard form of religious pluralism, according to Keith Ward, holds that all traditions are equally true ways of achieving or approaching God which is completely unknowable postulate of religious life. However, there is an inherent incoherence in this view, as it stresses on equal validity, equal authenticity and complete un-knowability. The soft form of religious pluralism holds that the Real can manifest in different religious traditions, through which different human being can respond appropriately. The revisionist view emphasizes on the need of revision of the scriptural revelation in relation to the development of natural sciences and critical thinking. Hick tries to develop a critical understanding of the problem of religious pluralism in line of the soft version with a strong foundation on Kantian epistemology. There is a world in itself and the world as experienced by us. The second one is partially created by us. The apparent dichotomy between realizing personal God and impersonal Absolute is resolved by Hick with Kantian categories of noumenon and phenomenon. Cf. Keith Ward: "Truth and Diversity of Religion," *Religious Studies* (Cambridge), vol. 26, no. 2 (1990), p. 16. Cf. also John Hick: *God Has Many Names* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1983), p. 83

called by various names in various religions. This is another philosophical ground of pluralistic understanding of religion we can derive from the Vedantic model of pluralism. Religious pluralism is different from both religious exclusivism and religious inclusivism. Religious exclusivism *does not accept* that religions other than one's own can be true. Religious inclusivism - though does not deny that other religions are true - *does deny* that other religions are of equal status with one's own religion. It considers other religious as subordinate to or "off-shoot" of one's own religion. Thus, both exclusivist and inclusivist attitudes are positive hindrances to interreligious understanding. Faith in religious exclusivism is a necessary condition for cultivating aggressiveness, fundamentalism and fanaticism among the believers. Terrorists, who use the name of any religion, do not believe in any such pluralistic ideals. They, on the contrary, believe in religious exclusivism; they are trained as blind believers of a "closed dogma."

The Vedantic model of religious pluralism, being open-ended, rests upon the direct experience of "otherness" and proposes to internalize our religious position by considering other's religious beliefs as similar to our own. In terms of expressions of religious experience, it proposes to relativize one's own religion by situating it within the broader infinite context of religious multiplicity. It provides room for the possibility of alternative worldviews. The logic for such a pluralistic theory cannot allow us to say "if you are not with me, then you are against me." It conveys the message that "if you are speaking differently, you are only suggesting an alternative way and you are not my enemy." Instead of phenomenal level identity in expression, it speaks of resemblances. So, "I-other" relationship may be reshaped as not mutually exclusive, but as mutually complementary. It can provide a solid philosophical foundation, on which the highest common aspirations of mankind and human unity can be built up. If we are to move creatively into the world, we need to learn the oneness of mankind. Instead of the anarchy of foolish competition leading to self-destruction, we need to realize the meaning of oneness in our selfhood. In this manner, Vedantic model of religious pluralism recognizes and proclaims respect for peoples' rights to diversity of culture; encourages self-criticism and self-determination; and increases one's range of choices. So, the practice of passive tolerance to others' faith is not

enough for initiating either an intra-religious or interreligious understanding through dialogue.

In pluralistic understanding, when I speak of the "other," I speak "with the other" and not "about the other." We can have spiritual journey from the lower self to the higher self by serving others, we move from an "unripe *ego*" to a "ripe *ego*." In the former case, there is an inherent concept of "tolerance," but in the latter it is the fact of "acceptance." The notion of tolerance contains a sense of difference and superiority. "I tolerate you because I am greater than you are; I could punish you, but because of my superiority and greatness, I do not punish you" is the sense expressed in the ordinary and non-stipulated use of the term "tolerance." However, the fact of "acceptance" expresses the essential identity, a sense of love and the so-called difference from the "other" is only a superimposition. Therefore, in Vedantic understanding of pluralism, the "Ontology of Self as Universal" is the basis of the philosophy of action, which teaches to work without any selfish care for the consequences. It is not teleological in usual sense. Thus, Vedantic model of religion teaches the essential unity of mankind in ad-ventitious diversity. This inspires us to argue that each religious tradition is representing *only one among many* expressions of religious experience. These differences are colored by the various socio-*cultural milieus*. Apparent differences among religions do not contribute to real conflict and contradiction. Just as different rivers fall into the same ocean and lose their identity, so also everything enters the *Atman*, the Truth in realization. To use Keith Ward's characterization, it is the "soft form of religious pluralism."[3]

### Vedic Foundation of Vedantic Model of Religious Pluralism

Vedantic model of pluralism is based on the spirit of the *Rg Veda*'s teaching: "The Real is one, though wise people name it differently." In the phenomenal level, there are many ways of

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[3] "*Øivamahimnahstotra*" (Verses devoted to the greatness of øiva). The verse no. 7 beautifully narrates the main tuning of pluralism with an analogy: "Thou art only goal of human beings, who can according to the variety of their tastes prefer various ways, some straight, some crooked, just as the ocean is the goal of all waters." "*Rucānàü vaicitratkutila nànà pathajuùàü/Nçõàmeko gamyastvamasi payasàmarõava iva.*"

expressing the same reality of the level of realization. There is no question of superiority or inferiority among religions. The *Bhagavad Gita* supports the Vedantic model of religious pluralism.[4] Sankara's philosophy of non-dualism advocates a fundamental unity of everything that exists despite the apparent differences found in this universe. This also, in my opinion, strengthens the *Rg* Vedic framework for defending religious pluralism. According to Sankara, the Ultimate Reality (*Brahman*) can be realized in two forms: one as having the limiting adjunct constituted by the multiplicity of the world, which is the modification of names and forms; and the other as emptied of all conditioning elements.[5] The first is the Truth in relation to the world. It is endowed with attributes, such as the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world. The second is devoid of any attributes. This is to be taken as representing the *Rg* Vedic dictum of the "Reality is One" (*Ekam Sat*) at the realization-level of the highest order.

The significance of this Vedantic philosophical frame-work, according to me, is that though there is only one Truth/Reality for religions in super-sensuous mystical experience, in interpretational level we may see that Reality clothed in many forms, such as *Siva*, *Allah*, Father of Jesus and so on. Now, as I understand, when a Muslim speaks of *Allah* and a Hindu speaks of 'limitless transcendental consciousness of *Brahman*', they are not referring to two parts of Reality, but to two ways in which "the limitless Reality has been thought and experienced." The God who speaks to mankind in the Holy *Qur'an* is the part of another history of Divine-human relationship.[6] Human projection colors our image of Ultimate Divine Reality, which is in English called "God." As religious-cultural traditions are having diverge geographical, climatic and economic circumstances, so also there are different paths of Truth/God-realiza-

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[4] "*Ye yathā màṃ prapadyante staṃ tataiva bhajāmyaham*," "As men approach me, so do I accept them: men on all sides follow my path." S. Radhakrishnan, trans.: *The Bhagvad Gità* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, India, 1993) 4: 11, p. 158. "*Yadà-yadà hi dharmasya glànir bhavati bhàrata/ Abhyutthàm adharmasya tadà'tmànaü sçjàmyaham//*; "Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bhàrata (Arjuna), then I send forth (create incarnate) myself." Cf. *Ibid.*, 4: 7.

[5] "*Dvi rūpamm hi brahma avagamyate; nàma-rūpa-vikāra-bheda-upādhi vi÷iùtam.*" Øaïkara: *Commentary on Brahmasūtra*, 1.1.11

[6] Cf. John Hick, *God Has Many Names*, p. 83.

tion. However, all these different interpretations convey that there is a genuine unity of Truth (*Ekam Sat*).

The *Vedanta* philosophy, in our interpretation, holds that it is not only wrong, but also incompatible with true religious spirit to accept one's own religion as the only true and to denounce religions other than one's own as being untrue.[7] All people believe in the Truth. If we accept the thesis that it can be known in various ways keeping parity with the *Rg* Vedic model, then we must admit "openness and flexibility" in our understanding and behaviors. This is emphasized in another *Rg* Vedic dictum as: "Let noble thoughts come to us from various directions."[8] This Vedic-model encourages questioning and emphasizes on open-ended understanding of the Truth. In the *Kathopanisad*, we see that Naciketa is questioning his father about the propriety of donating the cows neither capable of giving milk, nor of any utility. Unless we doubt and raise questions, there cannot be any progress in research. Therefore, the role of opposition is very important in Indian philosophical discourse.

This philosophical model has immense influence in cultural life of India in general. Peaceful coexistence of various views and ways of life, including religious ones, seems to be an experiment on the logic of alternatives in India's soil. It rests on pluralistic values and prepares the ground for a sound democracy, which needs a holistic education of tolerance and acceptance of others as alternatives and complementary. Such a pluralistic philosophical model is relevant for a time, when fundamentalists - in the name of religion - reject reason and propagate religious exclusivism and intolerance; and bolster group identity instead of well-developed community spirit.

### Importance of Vedantic Model of Religious Pluralism

The logic of Vedantic Pluralism is an open recognition that different faith communities live in proximity and face common issues and problems. In this new dimension, it does not aim at achieving agreement, but on achieving relationship based on the bond of love, compassion and empathy. The Vedantic approach

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[7] "*Nànyaninda prakartavyà kadacidapi sadhakaiþ, ekaü brahmavàdvitāyaü sarvatra kathitaü mayà upàdhibhàvabhedena nànàtvaü bhajate sati. Ekaü pūjayate yastu sarvà-narccayatisma saþ.*" *Varadà-tantra*, part 5, section 6.

[8] "*À no bhadrà kratavo viśvataþ.*" *Rg Veda*, 1.89.10

stands for something, which lies in a common orientation to diversity and not in its abolition. We are to accept all religions and sects as they are, with all their differences. Interreligious conflicts arise, when we refuse to accept plurality of our temperaments; and when we try to hold the position that ours is the only true religion and other religions are either false or inferior in status.

Thus, Vedantic model of religious pluralism is important "for its receptivity and openness towards other traditions, and its willingness to recognize and respond to the presence of truth in these."[9] We cannot deny, in our hermeneutic reading of the texts of Hinduism, that there is "tremendous pluralism" within it. At the background of many religious conflicts, there are religious leaders, who are inherently politicians, with "their narrow views and ignorance of other religions spread dogmatism and fanaticism." [10] Development in communication is becoming helpful to know other religions and this may help us to appreciate good points in other religions independent of the "influence of religious leaders." This way of understanding may provide a philosophical attitude of critical openness towards the West and a unique cultural identity that claims to "reconcile opposites," such as India and the West, religion and science. Pluralistic approach can provide us a wider range of alternatives, a practical model for maintenance of "social harmony and communal peace, particularly in a multi-religious society."[11] It welcomes opportunities

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[9] Anantanand Rambachan: "Swami Vivekananda: A Hindu Model of Inter-religious Dialogue," *Interreligious Dialogue: Voices from a New Frontier*, eds. M. Darrol Bryant and Frank Flinn (New York: A New Era Book, Paragon House, 1989), p. 10. This also clear from the fact that how Vivekananda has condemned the religious fanaticism in strong words. To quote him: "They are very sincere, these fanatics, the most sincere of human beings; but they are quite as irresponsible as other lunatics in the world. This disease of fanaticism is one of the most dangerous of all diseases. All the wickedness of human nature is roused by it." Swami Vivekananda: *A Study of Religion*, 11th edition (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 1995), p. 62.

[10] Swami Bhajanananda: *Prabuddha-Bharata*, vol. 3, no. 49, July (2011).

[11] Because of organized religions' political and economic interests a long history of bloodshed has been experienced by the human race. Political and economic interests of power-elites are properly served in the guise of religion. Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-tradition are respectful to all religions and celebrate the festivals of major world religions. To quote Vivekananda: "That for all devilry that religion is blamed with, religion is not at all in fault: no religion ever persecuted men, no religion ever burnt witches, no religion ever did any of these

of "self-expression and self-realization." This kind of religious pluralism can serve as a solid foundation of true secularism, where one practices one's religion; and where one does not prevent others to practice their faith. This sense of religious pluralism though encourages sects, it does not allow sectarianism. It inspires us to work for a religious cosmopolitanism.[12]

## Conclusion

Vedantic model of religious pluralism is a precondition for interreligious dialogue. A dialogue, unlike a debate, works by reflecting on understanding others' concerns; and creates an atmosphere of harmony and peace. It is the way to keep our communication active. Naturally, the attitudes of disrespect and defeating are absent in a dialogue. As interreligious dialogue is primarily cooperative, constructive and positive interaction among the people of different faiths, it is imperative to admit the logic of religious pluralism. Humility, empathy, recognition of common sharable grounds in spite of admitting differences are some of the conditions admitted for any meaningful dialogue. Interreligious dialogue demands that we look into the blind spots of our traditions through the eyes of another. It demands that we are secure enough in "where we have come from" and risk-venturing by moving towards "where we have never been." Genuine dialogue requires a commitment to our personal "ism" that is strong enough to allow us to suspend belief and step beyond the "ism" to meet "what is" in the other.[13] All these are prerequisites for genuine dialogue.

The Vedantic model of religious pluralism admits all these and therefore, it is a positive condition for interreligious dialogue. It presupposes "others" as having different alternative identity, with-

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things. What then incited people to do these things? Politics, but never religion; and if such politics takes the name of religion whose fault is that?" Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 4 (Kolkatta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), p. 125. Hereafter: CW.

[12] Cf. Swami Bhajanananda: *Harmony of Religion* (Kolkata: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2008), p. 42.

[13] Cf. Rami Mark Shapiro: "Moving the Fence: One Rabbi's View of Inter-religious Dialogue," *Interreligious Dialogue: Voices from a New Frontier*, eds. M. Darrol Bryant and Frank Flinn, p. 32.

out any sense of exclusivity. It does not allow any space for disapproving others' beliefs. It is rooted in the spirit of non-approving any hatred for others simply because their faith is not ours. On the contrary, it increases the scope for mutual under-standing and trust. In the context of religion, it gives an individual opportunity to travel spiritually towards the value-world of another tradition, which can enrich each other with new insight and wisdom. The very spirit of "acceptance" of others by moving beyond the limited sense of the word "toleration" is one of the core features of religious pluralism; and it helps to develop an approach for interreligious dialogue and human understanding. The Vedantic model of pluralism centers on the Truth. No one, including the agnostic and the so-called atheist, can doubt the veracity of Truth. For, it can claim a stronger logic for multiple alternative forms of life. It has also the implication of transcending various commonly known worldviews in the context of religion and culture. It strengthens the application of the principle of "live and let live."[14]

Like Buddhism and Jainism, Vedantic understanding of plural-ism does not regard the existence of other religions as a hindrance to worldly progress and peace. This type of pluralistic understanding and dialogue indicates a new way in the history of humankind's religious life.[15] It would initiate, slowly but steadily, a common spiritual journey into the depth level of our spiritual being-hood. We cannot deny that inquisitiveness, catholicity of mind and "the implicit conviction that 'truth' has ulterior expressions in form of alternative discourses."[16] However, it is indicative and not exhaust-

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[14] Vivekananda puts the spirit of Vedantic religion called Hinduism in the following words: "I am proud of a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true." CW, vol. 1, p. 3.

[15] Importance of the Vedantic model of religious pluralism has been beautifully expressed by Swami Vivekananda at the end of his address at the Parliament of Religions in 1893. To quote him: "If the World's Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world, it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not exclusive possessions of any Church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character." Swami Vivekananda: *The World's Parliament of Religions*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Parliament Publishing Company, 1893), p. 1582

[16] A. K. Mohanty: *Comparative Religion* (Bhuvaneswar: SAP publication, Utkal University, 2006), p. 296.

tive.[17] It is always imperative for interreligious understanding and peace in a multi-religious society that the followers of each religion should have the opportunity to know fundamentals of other religions. Plurality of religion would, then, be rendered as a thing of beauty on the basis of common sharable grounds instead of differences. There is no question of dominance by any particular religion and differences are to be overcome through constant discussion with mutual respect. We are to work for collective good and to give up the belief that our faith is more genuine and true than that of others. We are to cultivate the belief that my religion is only *one among many*.

In the present world, since religion has become a powerful force for "disruption, division and destruction," this way of understanding among religions through dialogue is significant. Rereading of modern Indian philosophy of religion, especially Swami Vivekananda's concept of Universal Religion may be appealing here. He recognizes sects; but condemns sectarianism. The concluding paragraph of his opening address on September 11, 1893 at Chicago's the World Parliament of Religions makes it crystal clear that Swami Vivekananda separates sect from sectarianism. To quote him:

> Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often with human blood, destroyed civilizations, and sent whole nations, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come: I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be death-knell of all fanaticism, of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.[18]

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[17] Cf. Ki- Young Rhi: "A Korean Buddhist View on Interreligious Dialogue: Won-Hyo's Ideal on Peace and Union," *Interreligious Dialogue: Voices from a New Frontier,* eds. M. Darrol Bryant and Frank Flinn, pp. 119-126.

[18] CW, vol. 1, p. 4.

## 29.

# *Kaivalyadarsanam* of Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri: An Inspiration to Interfaith Dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism

K. GAYATHRI DEVI

### Introduction

"The East and the West must establish a golden middle path of activity and spirituality combined. India has much to learn from the West in material development; and in return, India can teach the universal methods by which the West will be able to base its religious beliefs on the unshakable foundations of yogic science." Inspired and ordained by these words of Paramaguru Mahavatar Babaji, *Kaivalyadarsanam*, also called "The Holy Science" the text in Sanskrit *sutras* with the explanation in English was composed by Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri in 1894, who was the *guru* of Paramahansa Yogananda. The whole text may be said to be an inspiration to the interfaith dialogue, as each and every aphorism (*sutra*) has been explained uniquely with a reference to the parallel Biblical sentences in the golden realms of comparative religion. Later, Paramahansa Yogananda, the chief disciple of Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri, following the lines of his *guru*, composed his commentaries in English on the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Bible during the second quarter of the 20th century to bring out the oneness of the teachings of the two great religions vividly, as his life's mission.

In the present chapter, I would like to introduce the text and focus on some of the significant aspects of the science of *yoga*. In the first section, I clarify the structure of the text. In the second section, I move on to analyze the four parts of the content of the text and make comparative analysis in the light of the Biblical book of "The Revelation to St. John." In the conclusion I state the possibility of greater understanding between Christianity and Hinduism because of "The Holy Science." The model of interfaith dialogue presented in "The Holy Science" calls for studying the scriptures of diverse

religions in comparative light and seeing the unity behind them. Now, in the first section, let us clarify the structure of the text of "The Holy Science."

## *Kaivalyadarsanam*: Structure of the Text

The Holy Science (*Kaivalyadarsanam*) has four sections that are entitled the Gospel (*Veda*), the Goal (*Abhishtam*), the Procedure (*Sadhanam*) and the Revelation (*Vibhuti*) which describe the fundamental truths of creation, the purpose of life, the method of realizing the purpose of life and the revelations that are attained by the aspirants (*sadhakas*) respectively. This text resembles in content with the popular text of Patanjali *Yogasutras*, throwing light on the *yama-niyamas*, the role of *guru*, the revelation, the goal of human life, and the like. However, what makes *Kaivalyadarsanam* different from the *Yogasutras* is its comparison of the content with the Biblical concepts and the clear explanation *Yugas* with a new outlook. The author clearly expresses that the purpose behind the composition of his work is to remove the barriers and to help in establishing the basic truth in all religions broadly, especially to establish a fundamental harmony between the difficult Biblical book "The Revelation to John" and the *Samkhya* philosophy of India. The next section, analyzes the scriptural text.

## *Kaivalyadarsanam*: Analysis of the Text

The first chapter is entitled "The Gospel" (*Veda*). In it, the author discusses the nature of God, the *Prakrti*, and man in the lines of *Samkhya* philosophy of ancient India. Here, he defines God as the eternal father; God is the only real substance, *Sat*, and is all in all in the universe. All knowledge and love, all power and joy originates from Him only. He causes creation to emerge. Among His manifestations of the four ideas - the Word, Time, Space and the Atom: the Word is vibration called "*AUM*" or "Amen" that presents the other three, is inseparable from and nothing, but God Himself. To quote the verse from *Kaivalyadarsanam*: "These things saith the Amen, the

faithful and true witness, the faithful of the creation of God."[1] Then, it is compared with the Bible verse: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. ... All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. ... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."[2] Again the Bible says: "And in the midst of the throne and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind."[3]

Explaining the verses from both the scriptures the Swami says that God is not comprehensible by the imperfect organs that are mere properties of the eternal substance, God; but it is possible for man to know God only when he becomes divine by overcoming the creation of darkness (*maya*). "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."[4] Here, *Abhasa Chaitanya* is compared, which is the reflection of God in the creation. "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders."[5] Here, the twenty four principles of *Samkhya* philosophy are compared. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh in the world."[6] "Verily verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[7] The baptism is the second birth of man and is called *bhakthiyoga* without which man can never comprehend the real internal world, the kingdom of God. Man gradually comprehends the true character of this creation of darkness (*maya*) as mere play of ideas of the Supreme Nature on His own Self, the only Real Substance. This true comprehension is called *Aparokshajnana*.

The second chapter deals with the Goal (*Abhishtam*) of the Gospel (*Veda*). Here, the Swami discusses the purpose of human life as the liberation, which is described as the stabilization of *Purusha*, which is the soul, in its real Self.

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[1] "*Nityam purnam anadyanantam bramha param, tadevaikamevadvaitam sat.*" *Kaivalyadarsanam*, 1.

[2] "The Revelation to John," *The New American Bible*, 3: 14. Cf. also "The Gospel According to St. John," *The New American Bible*, 1: 1-3, 14.

[3] "The Revelation to John," *The New American Bible*, 4: 6.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1: 4, 5, 11.

[5] *Ibid.*, 4: 4

[6] "The Gospel according to John," *The New American Bible*, 1: 9.

[7] *Ibid.*, 3: 3.

In the third chapter, we elaborate on the Procedure (*Sadhanam)* that helps the aspirant to attain the goal of the gospel. The Procedure consists of the "eight fold path" of Patanjali. However, it is presented from a different perspective. In it, the *yama-niyamas* are enlightened with the deep knowledge of natural living scientifically that includes vegetarian food, good company and dwelling place with proper ventilation, and the like. He says that the natural living calms down the passions and is very much conducive to the spiritual life. He also explains the procedure of meditation (*Samyama*) and its techniques for progress of *Sadhana* accurately.

The fourth chapter is entitled "The Revelation" (*Vibhuti*). In it, the Swami discusses the achievements of a spiritual aspirant (*sadhaka*). By the practice of *yama-niyamas*, he gets purified and becomes fit for the spiritual *sadhana*. By his faith and love for God, he gets a spiritual preceptor (*guru*). By his *sadhana* under *guru's* guidance, he will be able to hear "*Aum*" sound, which checks the decay of the material body. In course of time, he also gets *asthasiddhis* and becomes victorious over the power of *maya* and ultimately achieves Self Realization. The author quotes from the Bible: "And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the son of man ... And he had in his right hand seven stars."[8] The Swami interprets as follows. The seven golden candlesticks are the seven shining places in the body, known as the brain; the *sahasrara* **-** the *medulla oblongata* and the *ajnachakra*; the five spinal centers **-** cervical**-***visuddha*; dorsal**-***anahata*; lumbar**-***manipura*; sacral**-***swadhisthana* and coccygeal**-***Muladhara*, where the spirit becomes manifested. Through these seven centers or churches, the *ego* or son of man passes toward the divinity. This is the state of baptism or *bhaktiyoga*. In this state the devotee being victorious over the powers of darkness and ignorance, becomes one with God. This unification with God is called *Kaivalya*. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."[9] This is nothing, but the realization of the Almighty, the ultimate goal of humanity.

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[8] "The Revelation to John," *The New American Bible*, 1: 12, 16, 20; 2: 1

[9] *Ibid.*, 3: 21.

## Conclusion

Thus, the whole text of "The Holy Science /*Kaivalyadarsana*" proves to be an inspiration to the interfaith dialogue between the Christianity and Hinduism (*Sanatanadharma*) showing the oneness of the teachings of both the religions accurately on the basis of the science of *yoga*. It paves the way to global peace, prosperity, non-violence, brotherhood and other noble things in the world for the betterment of humanity.

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30.

# Interfaith Dialogue as a Means to Resolve Conflict: Some Preliminary Observations from Buddhism

K. BHIMA KUMAR

Speak or act with a peaceful mind and happiness follows like a never departing shadow.[1]

## Introduction

In the present world, peace has become a distant dream for the human race both at personal and global levels. Every one desires to dominate everything around them. In this process, the humans have become the most violent beings. Nothing perhaps is so important and indispensable as the achievement and maintenance of peace and harmony in the modern world. Peace in today's world implies much more than a mere absence of war and violence. When we think of violence, discrimination and exclusion, the challenges may seem to be insoluble. However, these challenges are fundamentally inter-connected. Their root cause is people's ignorance and misunder-standing regarding other cultures based on mistrust and lack of communication. In order to eradicate these evils, we need to change the mindsets, attitudes and behavior of the people. This calls for a value-based transformation of human behavior that can be attained through interfaith dialogue. In this chapter, we make an attempt to show how Buddhism by using dialogue can solve the conflicts and violence in the present modern world. Buddhist doctrine is compatible with a congenial and peaceful global order. In general, Buddhist literature, doctrines and philosophy address the causes of conflict and ways to resolve conflict for attaining world peace. In the Pali literature, especially in *Tripitakas*, we can find enough instances to show the Buddhist reflection on dialogue in order to solve the human problems and attaining universal peace.

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[1] A quote from the Buddha's *Dhammapada.*

Hence, to clarify the notion of interfaith dialogue in Buddhism, in the first section of this chapter, we analyze, in general, the nature and importance of interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue involves meeting of people among themselves and getting to know their religious traditions. It consists of discussion for mutual understanding held among differing religious bodies in mutual presence, speaking and listening, witnessing the commitments, the values, and the rituals of others. Each group remains true to its own beliefs, while respecting the rights of others to practice their faith freely. Interfaith dialogue is important because it brings mutual understanding, builds deeper respect for others' religious practices, recognizes the equality of all religions and people of all faiths, and brings peaceful coexistence. The second section analyzes the Buddhist view of interfaith dialogue. Buddha believed that dialogue must begin with what the parties of the dialogue agree on, putting aside the topics of difference. Similarly futile metaphysical and speculative topics should not be taken for discussion; but those practical aspects that affect the everyday life of the people should be the topic of discussion. To have a fruitful dialogue one should have open mind and should be ready for self-evaluation.

The third section deals with the issue of solving conflicts and problems by using Buddhist method of dialogue. In order to solve conflicts Buddha recommended the practice four sublime feelings of universal love, compassion, sympathetic joy in other's success and equanimity in all vicissitudes of life, as the dialogue with the other progresses. Similarly, while dealing different kinds of problems at the level of dialogue, all the parties should identify the problems first, and then should proceed towards the solution either by addressing that problem directly; or by analyzing the problem thoroughly; or by putting counter questions; or setting aside the common trivial issues that create the problem for all the parties. The conclusion states that Buddhism always opens its door for all kinds of views for a meaningful dialogue. It does not dogmatically claim its own standpoint as the only possible correct standpoint. Buddhism maintains a long history that throughout the world, wherever it travelled, it neither tried to destroy the traditions nor did it have a conflict with other cultures; but successfully coexisted with them in great harmony. Now in the next section, we consider the nature and importance of interfaith dialogue.

## Nature and Importance of Interfaith Dialogue

In this section, we analyze the nature and importance of interfaith dialogue in general, in order to prepare the way for understanding the Buddhist notion of interfaith dialogue.

### *Nature of Interfaith Dialogue*

The word "dialogue" is a combination of the two Greek words: "*dia*" and "*logos*." The former word means "through" and the later term means "word" or "meaning." "Engaging in dialogue" means "engage in making meaning through the spoken or written word." Hence, interfaith dialogue involves "meeting of people among themselves and getting to know their religious traditions." Formally, it consists of discussion for mutual understanding held among differing religious bodies in mutual presence, speaking and listening, witnessing the commitments, the values, and the rituals of others.

Thus, interfaith dialogue is about people of different faiths coming to a mutual understanding and respect that allows them to live and cooperate with each other in spite of their differences. Interfaith dialogue aims to cooperate and maintain a positive interaction between people of different religious traditions at both individual and institutional levels. Each group remains true to its own beliefs, while respecting the right of the others to practice their faith freely. The success of interfaith dialogue rests on human interaction and maintaining a consistent relation with other groups or cultures. It may take place at different levels: individual and community. It does not happen merely at academic level; but having direct interaction in spheres of life, where tensions between them are the most tangible. Religion has played a pivotal role in the history of humankind. With slanted interpretations of religious scripture and histories which are partial and subjective, there has come about hostility and extremism that continues to affect the society all the time. When the religious beliefs fail to provide a diverse religious education for the issues pertinent to integration and peaceful coexistence, interfaith dialogue among them has the poten-tial to fill this gap. In the modern day context, the approach of non-violent idiom can be translated into interfaith dialogue. In a globalized world, interfaith dialogue has been utilized as the contemporary measure to not only resolve

disputes, but also to increase tolerance and prevent conflicts. Given the fact that religious idiom is often misused for political gain by extremist groups, interfaith dialogue has occupied an essential tool to tackle the religion based violence.

*Importance of Interfaith Dialogue*

Interfaith dialogue increases our understanding of the beliefs and practices of other religions. This increased understanding can lead to peace and coexistence in the pluralistic culture of the twenty-first century. Interfaith dialogue basically aims to achieve two kinds of knowledge: the first, knowledge about one's own identity, religion and culture; and the second, knowledge about others. Both of these are necessary and crucial in interfaith dialogue to enhance deeper respect, understanding, unity and peace.

Many nations of the world and their societies are facing common challenges, such as conflicts among religions and resulting violence that affect their daily living. History reveals the fact that conflicts between religions has been one of the major causes of violence, particularly when religion is misused for political ends. Interfaith dialogue helps to eliminate such misuse of religion. This, in turn, will ease all tensions and differences and build an attitude of openness and respect, thereby help to find solutions to these tensions and to create an atmosphere that is peaceful.

Finding a common basis for addressing the challenges, while respecting the differences that exist between different cultures and religions is the path of interfaith dialogue. Since, the world is becoming more globalized, there is possibility of different communities getting to know each other. This faster and closer contact between cultures and religions provides the right environment for interfaith dialogue. If interfaith dialogue concentrates more on common values rather than dogmatic discourses of different religions, it would facilitate to love the people of other religions as our neighbor and to visualize each person as morally equal to the other. In the next section, we analyze the Buddhist view on interfaith dialogue.

**Buddhist View of Interfaith Dialogue**

Buddha had given importance to dialogue in order to resolve

conflicts and violence. For him, one should always proceed towards the fruitful dialogue that leads to peace. No political, social and religious thought should be given high importance neglecting the ultimate goal of the humanity and peace. Besides, peace can never be achieved without having dialogue with people of other cultures who are different from us. Buddha realized the importance of dialogue to settle the differences by sharing the ideas. Considering the necessity of dialogue with the recluses of other faiths for the welfare of the entire humanity Buddha is of the view that as for those things, on which we do not agree, let us leave them alone. As to those things on which we agree, let the wise put questions about them, ask for reasons as to them, talk them over, with or to their teacher, with or to their fellow disciples.

From this view of Buddha, it is evident that he was not in favor of having dialogue just for the sake of exhibiting the knowledge, but for the sake of resolving the conflicts and violence. On the futile metaphysical questions raised by Potthapada and on being asked the reason why Buddha did not expound those, he says that they are not conducive to the goal; are not conducive to the *Dhamma*; and are not basic to the holy life. Hence, according to the Buddha, the intention of the dialogue is to address the real human problems rather than to speculate on imaginary metaphysical problems. He further says that one either should keep noble silence or should have dialogue on the *Dhamma*. Thus, for Buddha, any kind of successful mutual dialogue can only be possible and successful, if every group participating in the dialogue and involved in the conflict cultivate respect for and confidence in the other groups and their faiths.

Once, Siha Senapati, an officer of Visali and a follower of Jainism, had a dialogue with Buddha. This interaction, the qualities of Buddha and his philosophy influenced Siha Senapati so much that he decided to take refuge in Buddha and embrace Buddhism. However, Buddha counseled him not to take hastily decision and said: "Make a thorough examination of the matter Siha. Investigation is profitable to well-known men like you." Then Siha was pleased by Buddha and said: "Had I been won over as a disciple by some other sect, they would have paraded through the whole of Visali with banners, shouting: Siha, the general, has joined our discipleship. But the exalted one merely advises me thus examine the matter." By saying, the Siha Senapati again affirmed his wish to become a lay

disciple of Buddha. Buddha accepted him as a lay disciple by acknowledging his determination with a lesson: "Your family, Siha, for many a day has been a will-spring to the Niganthas (follower of Jainism), wherefore deem it right to give alms to those who approach you." This incident clearly points to Buddha's open-minded attitude towards other religions and his readiness for dialogue.

Thus, for Buddha, a successful dialogue requires an open mind on the part of all the involved parties and they must be ready for self-evaluation. An individual or a group having prejudiced mindset can never contribute in a constructive way to the dialogue process. Buddha always kept opened the door of his teachings for any kind of evaluation. He illustrates the six attributes of his *Dhamma*: preached by the blessed one is the *Dhamma* (*svakkhato*); realizable in this world (*sanditthiko*); brings immediate result (*akaliko*); invites everyone to come and see (*ehipassiko*); one that is onward-leading (*opanayiko*); and to be understood individually by the wise ones (*paccattam veditabbo vinnuhi*). The same Buddhist attitude of respecting others' faith and honoring the opposite views continued even after the time of Buddha by his followers.

## Solving Conflicts and Problems through Dialogue

According to Buddha, the best way to solve conflicts and problems that arise in an individual life, between individuals in a group and between groups - whether they are cultural or religious - is dialogue. Hence, he sees dialogue as the greatest means to find solutions to conflicts and problems. In the next two subsections, we analyze how conflicts and problems can be solved through dialogue.

### *Solving Conflicts through Dialogue*

The central theory of Buddhism is the theory of dependent origination (*pratityasamutpadavada*). It establishes the basic fact that the existence and survival of all living and non-living things are dependent on several other causes and conditions. For Buddhists, if we do not recognize the significance of causes and conditions, we need to be concerned not only about our survival and protection, but of the protection and progress of every aspect of this *cosmos* because every minute thing in this world is connected with us and

contributing to our own development. Following this principle Buddhism emphasizes the great need for the harmonious coexistence of the every aspect of the life. Buddhist *Sangha* is the best example, which resolves its problem in the light of this philosophy. One of the rules of the *Sangha* is that their activities have to be carried out through the process of dialogue and all the members of the *Sangha* should take decisions unanimously. The mistakes committed by the accused ought not to be decided by any one person, but by the whole *Sangha* after putting the matter before all the members.

Buddha always emphasizes the most relevant and necessary issues of the individual, group and society. He strictly warned his disciples not to focus on questions, which are of no importance in order to treat the human problems. The following example illustrates this point. Once a person named Mulunkyaputta, while on meditation, was distracted from his practice by philosophical dilemmas. He realized that Buddha never answered metaphysical questions, such as nature of universe and the self, and the existence of the *tathagata* after death. Distracted by these questions, he visited Buddha on an evening and threatened him saying that if the Blessed One declared the answers of these metaphysical questions, he will continue to lead the holy life under him. If not, he will leave the order and return to his former life. Buddha asked him: "Did I ever tell you to lead the holy life under me by the promise to answer these questions?" "No, Venerable Sir," Malunkyaputta Says.

Again Buddha asks him: "Did you ever tell me that you would only lead the holy life under me if I answered these questions?" Malunkyaputta replies again: "No, Venerable Sir." Then Buddha replied to him by telling a parable why he is silent on metaphysical questions. The parable is about a man injured by a poisonous arrow. A surgeon was sent to treat him, and the man refuses to let him remove the arrow until he knows which caste his assailant belongs to, his name, his color, what material it is made of, and the like. This is simply ridiculous. By enquiring about the unnecessary questions at that particular time, he may end up his life. Similarly, if any one decides not to lead the holy life under the Buddha until he answers these speculative questions, the answers will remain undeclared and the person will die.

In order to overcome conflicts and to achieve supreme knowledge, Buddha recommended cultivating of the feelings of four

sublime states (*Brahmaviharas*): the first, the *Metta*, which consists in extending unlimited universal love and good will to all living beings without any kind of discrimination, just as a mother loves her only child; the second, the *Karuna*, which is compassion for all living beings who are suffering and are in trouble and affliction; the third, the *Mudita*, which is the sympathetic joy one feels when he experiences the success, welfare and happiness of others; and the fourth, the *Upekkha*, which is the practice of equanimity in all vicissitudes of life. Every Buddhist is expected to follow these principles in the context of his/her practical life. The faithful practice of these four sublime states will help one to resolve conflict in every sphere of his life and achieve supreme knowledge.

### *Solving Contemporary Problems through Dialogue*

Buddha believed that there is no fixed and absolute solution of all the problems. Hence, we cannot solve all problems by the same formula. Therefore, Buddha proposed the methodology of understandings problems and finding their solutions taking into consideration the time, place and situation of the problem. As the time, place and situation of the problem becomes different, so will the solution be different. Hence, Buddha propose a methodology, in which there are four ways of treating the questions if they appears before anyone: the first, some questions should be answered directly (*ekamsabyakaraniyo*); the second, some questions should be answered by analyzing them (*vibhajjabyakaraniyo*); the third, some questions should be answered by posing counter-questions (*patipucchabyakaraniyo*); and the fourth, some questions should be put aside and not answered (*thapaniyo*). While dealing different kind of problems at the level of dialogue, all the parties should identify the problems first, and then should proceed towards the solution either by addressing that problem directly; or by analyzing the problem thoroughly; or by putting counter questions; or setting aside the common trivial issues that create the problem for all the parties.

Buddha sets the guidelines to handle the contemporary problems of the world. This is because each problem has its own complexity and enormity. Therefore, each problem requires a particular kind of examination. According to the Buddha, the first step towards solution to the conflict requires a dignified way of

linguistic expression from the side of the entire group involved in the dialogue process. For Buddha, a true monk is a person, who controls his tongue, and is moderate and sweet in speech. Knowing the fact about a problem and still speaking wrong words may spoil the entire dialogue process. Buddha always directed the *Sangha* to establish dialogue with the critiques, without having any sort of anger towards them. However, he wanted that *Sangha* should unravel the false notions of the critics and place the facts before them in all clarity. Buddha said to his Monks that when an outsider speaks in dispraise of him, the doctrine and the order, you should unravel what is false and point it out as wrong, so that the critic may know what is the truth and come out of his falsehood.

Buddha speaks of six causes of the conflict among the members of the community: the first, anger and ill-will; the second, harshness and mercilessness; the third, envy and grudge; the fourth, craftiness and deceitfulness; the fifth, evil desires and wrong views; and the sixth, obstinacy and stubbornness. Similarly, Buddha suggests seven ways of resolving a conflict (*adhikaranasamatha*) within any community. Out of seven, three are worth mentioning in the present context of Buddhist notion of dialogue. The first is *Sammukha vinaya*, which is a procedure requiring the presence of a group of monks and the accused party. It consists in not disputing whether something is *dhamma* or not *dhamma*, discipline or not discipline; but in thrashing out among the assembled monks by genuine interaction and dialogue on the issue in question. Budha believed that such genuine dialogue would lead to the settlement of the issue.

The second way of settling the dispute is explained in the fifth guideline known as *yebhuyyasika*. It consists in taking into consideration "decision of majority." According to Buddha, if the monks are not able to settle a legal question in a particular residence of monks, they must go to a residence where there are more monks, assemble all of them and thrash out what belongs to *dhamma* and thereby settle the legal question. The third guideline is *tinavattharako*, which is covering up as with grass. For Buddha, if monks are striving, quarrelling, disputing, much is perpetrated and spoken that is not worthy of a recluse. Hence, all monks should gather together in a complete order. Having gathered together, an experienced monk from one of the factions of monks, rise from his seat, arrange his upper robe over one shoulder, joined his palms in salutation, and

confess his own sins and those of other monks and ask their sins to be covered up with grass. An experienced monk from the other faction of the monks also does the same act. Thus, *tinavattharako*, involves settling conflicts by covering up as with grass, i.e., recognizing what went wrong on both sides of a dispute, acknowledging the mistakes, forgiving each other and moving on.

## Conclusion

Buddhism has evolved historically and philosophically into a balance of power based on conflict resolution and equilibrating threats of war through the cultivation of compassion. As rightly pointed in Buddhist philosophy that there is no effect without cause and removing the cause is the solution itself. Buddhists try to solve the problem from its roots and examine where actually the problem lies? What is the factor, which is responsible for social, political and religious problems? Buddhism replies that it is the human mind, which has the capacity to make this earth as heaven as well as hell.

Thus, the Buddhists give more attention on purifying the mind, cleansing it from evil propensities. The *Abhidhamma* philosophy classify fifty-one mental factors out of which twenty-five are positive and they promote the wellbeing of human beings and freedom from the inner compulsions that lead to suffering. On the other hand, twenty-six mental afflictive factors disturb the mind, creating frustration and restlessness. In *Dhammapada* the first verse begins with the statement "Mind is the fore-runner of all conditions. Mind is chief: and they are mind made. If, with an impure mind, one speaks or acts, then pain follows one even as the wheel, the hoof of the ox." It is evident that whoever participates in the dialogue with pure mind can be the most benefited by the outcomes of the dialogue.

Buddhism always opens its door for all kinds of views for a meaningful dialogue. Buddhism dogmatically never claims that its own standpoint as the only possible correct standpoint. It maintains a long history that throughout the world, wherever it travelled, it neither tried to destroy the traditions, nor did it have a conflict with other cultures; but successfully coexited with them in great harmony.

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# Part VI
# Multiculturalism and Education

**31.**

# Global Perspective of Multicultural Education: Some Important Aspects

M. SOLOMON RAJU

### Introduction

Multicultural education is a field of study based on the idea that students from diverse backgrounds should have equal opportunities to education. It draws on insights from a number of different fields, including ethnic studies and women studies. Besides, it reinterprets the content from related academic disciplines. It is an educational philosophy that focuses on celebrating cultural differences, while recognizing the importance of challenging all forms of discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, ability or sexual orientation. According to James Banks,[1] the balancing forces in citizenship education must be transformed in the twenty-first century because of the deepening racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity in nation-states around the world. Citizens in a diverse democratic society should be able to maintain attachments to their cultural communities and participate effectively in the shared national culture. Unity without diversity results in cultural repression and hegemony. Diversity without unity leads to balkanization and the fracturing of the nation-state. Diversity and unity should coexist in a delicate balance in democratic multicultural nation-states.[2] Here, we see the significance of unity in diversity to maintain harmonious relations among humans in the world.

In this chapter, I would like to explain the need of multicultural education and to give some of its important aspects. Multicultural

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[1] James Banks is a lifetime leader in multicultural education. He was the former president of both the National Council for the Social Studies and the American Educational Research Association.

[2] J. A. Banks: "Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals," *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, eds. J. A. Banks and C.A.M. Banks (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997).

education is based on the principle of educational equity for all students, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. It strives to remove barriers to educational opportunities and success for students from different cultures. Hence, in the first section, I look into the nature and need for multicultural education. It requires critical thinking and imagination; commitment to a better tomorrow; and must include the wealth of all of our stories and peoples. Thus, multicultural education aims to improve the learning and success of all students, particularly students from cultural groups that have been historically underrepresented and suffered from lower educational achievement and attainment. Hence, it calls for transformation in the school system, including policies, teachers' attitudes, instructional materials, assessment methods, counseling, and teaching styles.

The second section analyzes some important dimensions of multicultural education, such as its background, the classroom situation, the role of the teacher and the curriculum. The evolution of multicultural education begins with the Civil Right Movement in the United States, continues through the enactment of "Bilingual Education Act" and "No Child Left Behind Act," and moves into the present and the future, helping minority groups to get integrated into the mainstream, while maintaining their cultural identities. Over the years, it has helped effectively students of diverse cultures by bringing about changes in the classroom situation, the role of the teacher and the curriculum.

The third section deals with the measures taken and to be taken for professionally in developing the teachers and approaches to teaching to make multicultural education productive. The conclusion states that by empowering multicultural education, we can promote civic good, increase self-esteem of non-mainstream students and provide good exposure to diversified students, which in turn, will protect minority group culture and promote equality and social justice. Hence, this is time for multicultural educators, policy makers, teaching community, organized bodies and peacemakers to focus on the global perspective on multicultural education, and introduce and implement it in schools to protect human values and to maintain harmonious relationship among the diverse peoples of this earth. In the next section, we briefly consider the nature and need for multicultural education.

## Nature and Need for Multicultural Education

Multicultural education refers to any form of education or teaching that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds. It requires deep and critical thinking, imagination, and commitment to another tomorrow, inclusive of the wealth of all of our stories and peoples. Problems are different, as cultures and their customs and traditions are different. Globally we have racial feelings, color discriminations, difference in status of rich and poor and caste feelings. It is another aspect of the continuous human journey toward justice and pushes us toward the fulfillment of the promises of democracy. It gives us new questions to ask and directions to follow in order to uncover human possibilities in the new millennium.

In view of an increasingly multicultural society and student population, multicultural educators reflect the need to address the systemic, curricular, and pedagogical impediments to the learning of traditionally marginalized students of different countries. Multicultural educators also should recognize that an increasingly multicultural nation and a shrinking and contentious planet at the edge of the twenty-first century demands a people, who are critical thinkers and able to deal with the complexities of multicultural differences. Thus, it requires research and learning about the multiple perspectives involved in any historical or contemporary experience in order to understand the rich meaning therein. In this way, multicultural education aims to improve the learning and success of all students, particularly students from cultural groups that have been historically underrepresented or that suffer from lower educational achievement and attainment. Multicultural education should span beyond autonomy, by exposing students to global uniqueness, fostering deepened understanding, and providing access to varied practices, ideas, and ways of life. It is a process of societal transformation and reconstruction of society for peaceful life that it shows unity in diversity.

Multicultural education is also attributed to the reform movement behind the transformation of schools. Transformation, in this context, requires all variables of the school to be changed, including policies, teachers' attitudes, instructional materials, assessment methods, counseling, and teaching styles. Multicultural educa-

tion is also concerned with the contribution of students towards effective social action. It, therefore, necessitates students from all backgrounds to acquire "democratic skills and knowledge" in order to become effective citizens in a democratic society. In this process, the experience of oppressed groups is valued and a commitment to mutual respect and tolerance is developed.

## Some Important Aspects of Multicultural Education

In this section, we analyze some important dimensions of multicultural education. In the first subsection we clarify the background of multicultural education. In the next two subsections, we spell out aspects of multicultural education, such as the classroom situation, the role of the teacher and the curriculum.

### *Background*

Multicultural education evolved out of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Although it began with the African-American community, the movement soon expanded to include other cultural groups, who were subject to discrimination. In recent years, as student populations have grown more diverse, multicultural approaches to education are increasingly being used in public schools. In 1968, the implementation of the "Bilingual Education Act" was prompted by limited English-speaking minorities, especially Spanish-speaking citizens, who denounced the idea of assimilation into the western way of thinking in fear of losing their personal connectedness to their heritage and cultural ideals. They hoped that that their lives and histories will be included in the curriculum of schools, colleges, and universities. In recent times, multicultural educators sought to transform the Euro-centric perspective and incorporate multiple perspectives into the curriculum. After 36 years, the "Bilingual Education Act" was dissolved and in 2002, the needs of English language learners were picked up by the "No Child Left Behind Act."

During the 1980's, educators developed a new approach to the field of multicultural education, examining schools as social systems and promoting the idea of educational equality. In the 1990's, educators expanded the study of multicultural education to consider

"larger societal and global dimensions of power, privilege, and economics." The shifting student populations of the 20th century have given multicultural education a new perspective to see the classroom as a community of diversity amongst its learners and not one of assimilation to a dominant culture. The continued advancement of ideas to improve multicultural education is allowing students and teachers to strive for improving exposure to all cultural differences, while never seeking an end to the progress. The numbers of minority students continue to increase in education that a multicultural approach is no longer looked at simply as educating the minority, as they will soon be the majority. As multicultural education moves rapidly into the mainstream of twenty-first century education, one must not forget the initial intentions of this model.

*Classroom Situation and Role of the Teacher*

For practical strategies of multicultural education into the classroom, Andrew Miller offers several suggestions. They pertain to organizing the classroom situation and the role of the teacher in the classroom. In this section, we consider a few of them.

Firstly, the teacher should get to know the students; learn about their backgrounds and cultures; and build personal level relationships.

Secondly, the teacher should use art as a starting point in discussions of cultural and racial issues.

Thirdly, the students should be helped to create collective classroom slang dictionaries.

Fourthly, the teacher should find places in the current curriculum to embed multicultural lessons, ideas, and materials. To be more effective in this regard, it must be a continuous process and not merely limited to one or the other occasion, such as the celebration of Black History Month or a small aside in a textbook.

Fifthly, controversies should be allowed in the classroom situation. Opening the classroom for respectful discussions about race, culture, and other differences would facilitate students to better understand their differences.

Sixthly, the teacher should find allies in the administration who will support his/her work.

Seventhly, the teacher should attempt at content integration. It deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures in their teaching.

Eighthly, the knowledge construction also must be encouraged among students. It consists in the teachers facilitating students to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed.

Ninthly, the teachers should assist the students in prejudice reduction. This dimension focuses on the characteristics of students' racial attitudes and how they can be modified by teaching methods and materials.

Tenthly, the teacher should empower the school culture. This is done by examining the grouping and labeling practices, sports participation, disproportionality in achievement, and the interaction of the staff and the students across ethnic and racial lines to create a school culture that empowers students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups.

Finally, the teacher must use equity pedagogy by modifying his/her teaching to enhance the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender groups and social classes.

At the classroom level, for example, teachers may modify or incorporate lessons to reflect the cultural diversity of the students in a particular class. In many cases, "culture" is defined in the broadest possible sense, encompassing race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, and "exceptionality" - a term applied to students with specialized needs or disabilities. It encourages students to bring aspects of their cultures into the classroom and, thus, allows teachers to support the child's intellectual, social and emotional growth. Multicultural education encompasses many important dimensions. Practicing educators can use these dimensions to help schools to promote diversity.

The myth of school neutrality comes from a poor understanding of the philosophy of positivism. Rather than neutrality, schools should plan and teach cooperation, mutual respect, the dignity of individuals and related democratic values. Schools, particularly integrated schools, provide a rich site, where students can meet one another, learn to work together, and be deliberative about decision making. In addition to democratic values, deliberative strategies and

teaching decision-making provide core procedures for multicultural education. For schools and teachers, curriculum is important to run the school in a systematic way, to which we turn in the next section.

## *Curriculum*

The term "curriculum" refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. In dictionaries, the term "curriculum" is often defined as the courses offered by a school, but it is rarely used in such a general sense in schools. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, "curriculum" typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards/learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students, the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning. An individual teacher's curriculum, for example, would be the specific learning standards, lessons, assignments, and materials used to organize and teach a particular course.

When the terms "curriculum" and "curricula" are used in educational contexts without qualification, specific examples, or additional explanation, it may be difficult to determine precisely what the terms are referring to - mainly because they could be applied to either all or only some of the component parts of a school's academic program or courses. In many cases, teachers develop their own curricula, often refining and improving them over years, although it is also common for teachers to adapt lessons and syllabi created by other teachers, use curriculum templates and guides to structure their lessons and courses, or purchase pre-packaged curricula from individuals and companies. In some cases, schools do the purchase.

Critics of multicultural education may express concern about some texts and learning materials used in schools. For example, overemphasizing culturally diverse content, while giving insufficient attention to important topics or historical events. Proponents of multicultural education may argue that learning should address multiple cultural viewpoints, and that students from different cultural backgrounds should see their cultural groups represented in

the lessons and content taught in public schools. Therefore, multi-cultural classrooms promote decision-making and critical thinking while moving toward pluralism.

The following are a few representative ways, in which multi-cultural education may play out in schools. Texts and learning materials may include multiple cultural perspectives and references. For example, a lesson on colonialism in North America might address different cultural perspectives, such as those of the European settlers, indigenous Americans, and African slaves. Teachers and other educators may learn about the cultural backgrounds of students in a school, and then intentionally incorporate learning experiences and content relevant to their personal cultural perspectives and heritage. Students may also be encouraged to learn about the cultural backgrounds of other students in a class, and students from different cultures may be given opportunities to discuss and share their cultural experiences. Both educators and students might analyze their own cultural assumptions, and then discuss how learning materials, teaching practices, or school policies reflect cultural bias, and how they could be changed to eliminate the bias. Students are expected to learn and be able to do at particular ages and grade level.

In addition, there are now educational programs, such as ethnic and gender studies that focus on specific cultural groups, school learning experiences and social-justice programs. These may encourage students to investigate and address cultural bias in their school or community. Learning assessment is also important. The next section looks into professional development required for multicultural education.

## Professional Development for Multicultural Education

Furthering education and knowledge in a teacher's subject area - such as learning new scientific theories, expanding knowledge of different historical periods, and learning how to teach a subject - could help the teacher to use the contents and concepts of the curriculum more effectively. The following are some of the effective means through with the above goal can be achieved by teachers.

Firstly, training or mentoring in special teaching techniques that can be used in many different subject areas.

Secondly, the use of literacy strategies and techniques for improving reading and writing skills.

Thirdly, earning certification in a particular educational approaches or programs, which are related to multicultural education.

Fourthly, conducting action research to gain a better understanding of what is working or not working in a school's academic program, and then using the findings to improve educational quality and results.

Fifthly, developing technical, quantitative, and analytical skills that can be used to analyze student-performance *data*, and then use the findings to make modifications to academic programs and teaching techniques.

Sixthly, learning new technological skills, such as how to use interactive whiteboards or course-management systems in ways that can improve teaching effectiveness and student performance.

Seventhly, improving fundamental teaching techniques, such as how to manage a classroom effectively or frame questions in ways that elicit deeper thinking and more substantive answers from students.

Eighthly, working with colleagues, such as in professional learning communities, to develop teaching skills collaboratively or create new interdisciplinary courses that are taught by teams. Developing specialized skills to better teach and support certain populations of students, such as students with learning disabilities or students who are not proficient in English.

Ninthly, acquiring leadership skills, such as developing and coordinating school-improvement initiatives, which are useful for multicultural education. Tenthly, acquiring knowledge for mentoring in global perspective.

## Conclusion

According to changes that take place in our society, new concepts, approaches and new techniques are to be adopted. It is  need of the hour is to bring awareness and implementation of multicultural education in schools. For, school is the place, where we can lay foundation among students community. Hence, the educators must examine the structures of education that impede learning and empower students and families from diverse racial, ethnic, and

gender groups. The aim is to create schools that encourage the full development of all students globally for transformation of the society. Multicultural educators seek to substantially reform schools to give diverse students an equal chance in school, in the job market, and in contributing to building healthy communities. It supports the idea that students and their backgrounds and experiences should be the center of their education and that learning should occur in a familiar context that attends to multiple ways of thinking.

By empowering multicultural education that we can promote civic good, increase self-esteem of non-mainstream students and provide good exposure on diversified students. This, in turn, will protect minority group culture and promote equality and social justice. Hence, this is time for multicultural educators, policy makers, teaching community, organized bodies and peacemakers to focus on the global perspective on multicultural education, and introduce and implement it in schools to protect human values and to maintain harmonious relationship among the diverse peoples of this earth.

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**32.**

# Multicultural Education for
# a Changing World

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### Introduction

Multicultural education is not a novel idea. Its roots date back to the time of the Civil Rights Movements initiated by various historically oppressed groups in the United States, who challenged discriminatory practices and conducts of public institutions during the 1960s. Following these historical movements and their associated consequences, a common and widely accepted understanding of multicultural education emerged: one that addresses the rapidly changing demographic composition of classrooms by promoting democracy and equal chances for an increasingly diverse student body. According to Wolfgang Mitter, multicultural education is an interpersonal relationship and a network of educational processes - including their foundations and results - characterized by the coexistence of children and adults of different cultural descent and environment. [1] The aim of multicultural education is to foster students' cultural identity and offer every student a high standard of education. A meeting between different cultures is a meeting also between different world pictures.

In the first section of this chapter, we appraise the present-day multicultural education. Multiculturalism has become a real problem that affects many nation-states in world. Migration of people of different cultures into many nations of the world has increased in recent times. The availability of better opportunities in these countries; and the increase in the number of political asylum seekers and refugees because of poor economic conditions or hostilities, violence and unrest in their home countries have made these nations

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[1] Cf. Wolfgang Mitter and Swift J.: "Education for All," *International Yearbook of Education*, vol. 36 (1984), p. 32.

multicultural. The new arrivals bring their cultural and ethnic identities with them and seek their rightful place in the society. The western nation has taken two approaches regarding the education of diverse groups. Some nations have made the language of the host-country as the medium of education; whereas some other nations while teaching the language of the nation, also allowed vernacular languages to be used as the medium of education.

The second section highlights the pathway of multicultural education for the changing world. Nations facing the issue of multi-culturalism can either ignore the issue or analyze and investigate the problem of multiculturalism, and find right solutions. Multicultural education must foster basic values, such as human rights, freedom, democracy and solidarity between the majority and the minority groups. Thus, it must keep in mind both the "ethnic" and the "national" character, so that while maintaining one's cultural identity, the minorities are helped to become effective citizen of the nation. This, in turn, will foster understanding among people of different cultural traditions and help to build up intrapersonal relationships among diverse people.

The conclusion states that multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education, which holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education, based on social justice, educational equity, and respect for diverse perspectives. Hence, the task of multicultural education is to reduce the form, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination between in-groups and out-groups, thereby provide a more effective education for today's changing society. In the next section, we give an appraisal of present-day multicultural education.

## Multicultural Education Today: An Appraisal

Ethnic groups living as minorities in countries/nation-states, whose dominating group has certain cultural privileges - such as the monopolized status of language or religion - are becoming aware of their identity. Consequently, they seek cultural autonomy, which is to be largely founded on autonomous educational and social institutions. The articulation of the demands of the minorities depend on various factors, such as possession of a close territory; educational

standard in terms of "high culture" as manifested by written language; codified customs and rules; and the combination of several factors, including language, religion and awareness of their history. The claim for cultural autonomy minorities calls for expanding political their competencies, providing educational possibilities in the vernacular languages and getting them involved legislative and administrative responsibilities. The accomplishment of this goal will come about only when the cause of the minorities is supported by the local and national political administration.

As a result of economic development in highly industrialized countries in the northern Europe and America, "new" minorities have flocked to those countries, which in the past were conceived to be essentially mono-cultural entities, characterized by mono-cultural structures. Within these groups of minorities one has to make distinctions among them based on the purpose of their coming and the duration of their stay in the new country, and their political status. This distinction especially pertains to immigrants seeking a new home country who, as a rule, gain full civic rights within a comparatively short waiting period according to existing legal provisions. Migrants - whose stay is considered temporary by the host country and in many cases also by their home country - are given the status of "foreigners" with temporary residence. The struggle for multiculturalism assumes a specific shape in Asian and African countries following colonization and national liberation. The complexity of these processes crystallizes into two essential tasks: the first, to overcome cultural alienation resulting from western schooling; and the second, to reconcile "ethnic" and "national" coherence within the boundaries of these nations, which had been arbitrary drawn by the former colonial masters. The various and often controversial approaches to coping with these problems are clearly indicated by how languages are used as media of identification in education and administration.

The problem has been even more complicated by the vast and increasing number of refugees seeking political asylum and/or wanting to escape from the economic misery, which dominates everyday life in their countries. This issue has recently caused controversial and emphatic debates in a number of countries. Efforts to classify these refugees as "political" or "economic" necessarily miss the underlying purpose because the motives overlap in most

cases. Besides, these controversies hide the deeper reasons of contemporary migration: the existence of hostility, violence, war or even genocide of citizens in their home countries. The arrivals often forced to form close communities, as their chances of returning to their home countries become remote. The impact of all these configurations is reinforced by the linkage of the actual processes within an intellectual movement, which is based on conceptual models.

In this context, it is worth mentioning Antony D. Smith's isolation of a broad historical trend in the modern era, designating it as "ethnic revival."[2] Exemplifying these configurations in retrospect into the history of the "pre-national" empires in Europe and Asia seems to present a great number of cases for comparison with the present-day situation and its problems. It also proposes various analogies to the complex conditions of multiculturalism to be expected from the emergence of multinational/supranational communities of our time, such as the European Union.

As regards the "aboriginal" type of minorities, the reaction on political change is directly mirrored to the extent to which schools using the vernacular medium for teaching. Thus, the difference from the dominant group are furthered, tolerated, disputed or forbidden depending on the political climate of the diverse nations. Apart from equality of educational opportunity existing in federal states, there is a wide range within the category of nation-states, beginning with governments denying the right to non-dominant groups to set up schools using the vernacular medium of education, and ending at the opposite side, with agreements on the basis of specific legislation dealing with cultural autonomy. These regulations may be part of overall political solutions, as is the case of German-medium schools in South Tyrol, or just pertain to the education system.

A good example of the latter type can be discovered on both sides of the German-Danish border. In Schleswig-Holstein the Danes enjoy a special status including their right to maintain Danish-medium schools. These institutions are privately run, but at the same time are highly subsidized by the Land of Schleswig-Holstein. Since the end of the 1940s this issue has been handled in a satisfactory way, giving no serious reason for complaint on either side. More-

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[2] Cf. A. D. Smith: *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: University Press, 1982).

over, it is legally reciprocated by the maintenance of German-medium schools to the norm of the German-Danish border.

Regarding the medium of education of the immigrant groups, we have two models in the West: the first, the model that is followed in the United States, the United Kingdom and France; and the model that is followed in Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. According the first model vogue in the United States, the United Kingdom and France - until recently, the governments had recognized no necessity to provide particular schools in a non-English or non-French medium. In these countries, as a rule, the immigrants accept the language of their host country as the instruction medium, even though in everyday practice, it is much more complicated than the overall *panorama* indicate.

The British and French governments support this practice with the argument that their immigrants - Indians, West Indians and Pakistanis in the United Kingdom and Algerians in France - have a certain historical affinity to English or French, due to the establishment and liquidation of the British and French Empires. The second model - practiced in Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands - presents a totally different situation. In this system, the migrants bring their languages with them from their home countries, and the members of the first generation are hardly willing to give them up in favor of the languages spoken in their new environment. From this starting point, several approaches to adjusting migrants' children to the school conditions of their home countries are possible, from the setting up of special "national classes" to the integration of the newcomers into regular "native" classes from the beginning. The second section clarifies the pathways of intercultural education.

## Pathways for Intercultural Education

Multiculturalism has become a crucial problem of universal scope because its current relevance and necessity is questioned in many nations. However, there are two possible responses to the issue of multiculturalism. The first consists in that the nations facing the issue of multiculturalism close their eyes to the problem, with all the consequences this engenders from it. The second involves the nations taking the necessary measures to analyse and investigate the problem, using conceptual and empirical approaches, preferably

combined with projects in the field of active research. The outcomes of such research can directly lead to recommendations and guidelines for action that would find solutions to the problem of multiculturalism.

Implementing multicultural education in the education process of a nation is comparatively simple as long as goals and objectives are stated in a general way. Children are to be educated and brought up under circumstances which, to an optimum degree, are beneficial to their personal and social development. This statement includes compliance with the need to make specific provisions of both, "ethnic" and "national" quality. In closed societies, this demand can be conceived as a linear task. This implies that education is focused on applying generally accepted traits of ethnic and national identities based on the habits and value patterns of the child's immediate environment. It is true that the complexity of this task should not be underestimated, particularly in a period marked by internal revolutionary changes in many regions and countries. Nevertheless, radical though they are the "mono-ethnic and mono-national" restrictions of such changes permit, basically, a certain predictive distinctness must be made with regard to educational and curricular planning.

The complexity of the task multiplies, wherever people of different ethnic identities have to coexist in one territory, particularly when political status makes explicit or implicit difference between dominant majorities and non-dominant minorities. Moreover, it is the scope of the territory - local, provincial or national - which poses different problems and entails many kinds of strategies. There is, however, a common problem to be solved everywhere, which concerns multicultural education as a universal task. It is complicated because it has to contribute to peaceful coexistence. It can be tackled in a reasonable way, only when it is considered as a pathway for intercultural education, focused on the criteria of ethnicity and nationality. While multicultural education is restricted to policies providing conditions for "coexistence," in its literal meaning, the intercultural education is directed towards coaction and cooperation. As a component of humanistic education, it is focused on the acknowledgement and development of the basic values of human rights, freedom, democracy and solidarity. In this conceptual range, it is closely interrelated to and identified with "education to pluralism" to be reinforced by an active and dynamic mastering of

coexistence among people and nations. Moreover, by education we should facilitate the younger generation to be ready to reconcile cultures in their intrapersonal developments and lives.

## Conclusion

Multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education, which holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education. It is based on social justice, educational equity, and respect for thought. More specifically, the components required in ensuring a multicultural education system are: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social culture. It seems apparent that each element is related to the others, and each requires considerable attention, particularly when thinking about the efforts of conflict resolution in the world.

In this paradigm, to be tolerant in social interactions, to give value to every opinion, and not to criticize and object others seems to be the distinguishing features of a multicultural society. When people are overly harsh, the result is destruction. When people are constructive, they bring richness and reflection. The idea that "if you do not like something, make a better one" fits very well with the idea of multicultural education. Here, the task is to reduce the form, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination between in-groups and out-groups. It is a more effective education for a changing society.

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**33.**

# Multicultural Education: For "Being Human and Shaping a Global Citizen" in a Diversified World

T. UMA DEVI

## Introduction

Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process has effects on the environment, culture, political systems, economic development, prosperity of the people, and physical wellbeing of humans in societies around the world. Globalization is the tendency of businesses to move beyond domestic and national markets to other markets around the globe, thereby increasing the interconnectedness of different markets. This tendency has had the effect of markedly increasing not only international trade, but also cultural exchange in this diversified world. Historically, human beings have always formed communities based on shared identity. Such identity gets forged in response to a variety of human needs: economic, political, religious and social. As group identities grow stronger, those who hold them organize into communities, articulate their shared values, and build governance structures to support their beliefs.

Today, the forces of global engagement are helping a few people to identify as global citizens, who have a sense of belonging to a world community. This growing global identity in large part is made possible by the forces of modern information, communication and transportation technologies. In increasing ways, these technologies are strengthening our ability to connect to the rest of the world through the internet, participation in the global economy, the ways in which worldwide environmental factors play havoc with our lives, the empathy we feel when we see pictures of humanitarian

disasters in other countries, and the ease with which we can travel and visit other parts of the world.

Those of us, who see ourselves as global citizens are not abandoning other identities, such as allegiances to our countries, ethnicities and political beliefs. These traditional identities give meaning to our lives and will continue to help shape who we are. However, as a result of living in a globalized world, we understand that we have an added layer of responsibility; we also are responsible for being members of a worldwide community of people, who share the same global identity that we have. In the wider sense, the term "global citizens" or "world citizens" is defined as persons, who place their identity with a "global community" above their identity as citizens of a particular nation or place. The idea behind the "notion of global citizen" is the fact that one's identity transcends geography and political borders; the planetary human community is interdependent and whole; and the humankind is essentially one. The term has been used in education and political philosophy; and has enjoyed approval of popular movement, such as the "World Citizen or Global Citizen Movement." The aim of this movement is building a sense of belonging to a common humanity and helping learners to become responsible and active global citizens.

At "The Global Citizens' Initiative," it is said that a "global citizen is someone who identifies with being part of an emerging world community and whose actions contribute to building this community's values and practices." Global Citizenship Education aims to empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. Hence, multicultural education is vital for learning to be human and shaping a global citizen in a diversified world.

Having made the above introductory observations, in first section of this chapter, we analyze the nature, approaches and dimensions of multicultural education. Multicultural education promotes principles, such as inclusion, diversity, democracy, skill acquisition, inquiry, critical thought, value of perspectives, and self-reflection. It is an educational philosophy that focuses on celebrating cultural differences, and challenges all forms of discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, ability or sexual orientation. There are four approaches to multicultural education - contributions approach,

additive approach, transformation approach and social action approach, which makes education more effective for the formation of global citizens. There are five dimensions of multicultural education - empowerment, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, knowledge construction and content integration.

The second section highlights the role of intercultural sensitivity in multicultural education. The first subsection clarifies the notions of cultural sensitivity and intercultural learning, besides expounding the path of intercultural learning, which moves through the levels of ethnocentricity, awareness, understanding, acceptance and respect, appreciation and valuing, selective adaption and multiculturation. The second subsection deals with developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, which follows the path of intercultural learning and moves through diverse stages of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and integration of difference. The third subsection recounts the stages of intercultural sensitivity, which are basically the same as the six phases of the developmental model for intercultural sensitivity.

The conclusion states that the potential of multicultural education to be the catalyst to bring diverse cultures together, by eliminating the problems of stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and bigotry. Now, in the next section, we clarify the nature, approaches and dimensions of multicultural education.

### Multicultural Education: Nature, Approaches and Dimensions

In first subsection, we make an attempt to elaborate on the nature of multicultural education. In the next two subsections, we also briefly clarify different approaches to and dimensions of multicultural education.

*Nature of Multicultural Education*

Multicultural education refers to any form of education or teaching that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds. It is a set of strategies and materials that are developed in responding to the many issues created by the rapidly changing demographics. It provides knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions

of diverse groups; and it assumes that the future as pluralistic. Therefore, multicultural education promotes decision making and critical thinking while moving toward cultural pluralism. Multicultural education relates to education and instruction designed for the cultures of several different races in an educational system. This approach to teaching and learning is based on consensus building, respect, and fostering cultural pluralism within racial societies. Multicultural education acknowledges and incorporates positive racial idiosyncrasies into classroom atmospheres.

Multicultural education is a field of study, based on the idea that people from diverse backgrounds should have equal opportunities to education. It draws on insights from different fields, including ethnic studies and women studies. Besides, it reinterprets content from related academic disciplines. Multicultural education, viewed as a way of teaching, promotes principles such as inclusion, diversity, democracy, skill acquisition, inquiry, critical thought, value of perspectives, and self-reflection. It encourages people to bring aspects of their cultures into practical life of the community and, thus, allows supporting their intellectual and social/emotional growth. Thus, multicultural education is an educational philosophy that focuses on celebrating cultural differences. Besides, it recognizes the need to challenge all forms of discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, ability or sexual orientation.

### Approaches to Multicultural Education

In this subsection, we look into different approaches we can take recourse to, in making multicultural education more effective for the students. There are four approaches that facilitate multicultural education - contributions approach, additive approach, transformation approach and social action approach. We briefly consider each of these approaches here below.

### Contributions Approach

Teachers using this approach provide examples of the relevant contributions and heroic accomplishments of people from different races and cultures, without changing the lesson plan or goals of the unit being taught. For example, in a science unit, students could

learn of the contributions of scientists from different countries or American ethnicities.

## Additive Approach

This approach requires adding cultural realities that traditionally are left out of a curriculum that focuses on a traditional holiday, such as Independence Day or Thanksgiving. Providing stories about how Native Americans were involved in the first Thanksgiving celebration would be one way to add a multicultural element. The Additive approach does not change the overall curriculum.

## Transformation Approach

The transformation approach seeks to change the attitudes about cultural differences by using a different curriculum, one that encourages students to view problems and concepts from the perspective of different cultures. For example, if students were studying the American Indian wars, they would consider the views of the settlers, soldiers and also the native peoples.

## Social Action Approach

The social action approach uses the concepts from the transformation curriculum and takes it a step further, where students take action for social change. After acquiring the necessary knowledge about something in their community that needs change, students get involved in activities that may effect that change, such as writing letters to senators or taking the time to reach out and befriend students of different races or ethnic backgrounds.

### *Dimensions of Multicultural Education*

Here, we attempt to highlight the different dimensions of multicultural education. The five dimensions, as indicated in the diagram here below are empowerment, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, knowledge construction and content integration. We briefly clarify each of these in this subsection.
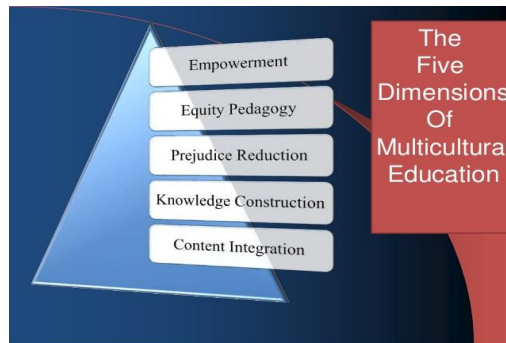
## Empowerment

This dimension involves restructuring the culture and organization of people from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and language groups experience equality. Grouping and labeling practices, sports participation, gaps in achievement among groups, different rates of enrollment in gifted and special education programs among groups, and the interaction across ethnic and racial lines are important variables that are examined and reformed.

## Equity Pedagogy

Equity pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and language groups. This includes using a variety of teaching styles and approaches that are consistent with the range of learning styles within various cultural and ethnic groups, such as being demanding but highly personalized when working with American Indian and Native Alaskan students. It also includes using cooperative learning techniques in math and science instruction to enhance the academic achievement of students of color. Equity pedagogy assumes that people from diverse cultures bring much strength to the groups.

## Prejudice Reduction

This dimension of multicultural education seeks to develop positive and democratic racial attitudes. It also helps to understand

how ethnic identity is influenced by the attitudes and beliefs of dominant social groups. Prejudice can be reduced by interracial contact, if the contact situations have these characteristics: firstly, they are cooperative rather than competitive; secondly, the individuals experience equal status; and thirdly, the contact is sanctioned by authorities, such as parents, principals and teachers.

## Knowledge Construction

The knowledge construction process describes coaching activities that help understand, investigate and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives and biases of researchers and textbook writers influence the ways, in which knowledge is constructed. This process understands why the cultural identities and social positions of researchers need to be taken into account when assessing the validity of knowledge claims. Multicultural theories assert that values, personal histories, attitudes and beliefs of researchers cannot be separated from the knowledge they create.

## Content Integration

Content integration deals with the extent to use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline. The infusion of ethnic and cultural content into a subject area is logical and not contrived when this dimension is implemented properly.

## Multicultural Education and Intercultural Sensitivity

In this section, we attempt unfold the significance of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural learning for the promotion of multicultural education. In the first subsection, we clarify the notions of cultural sensitivity and intercultural learning, besides expounding the path of intercultural learning. The second subsection deals with developmental model for intercultural sensitivity. The third subsection recounts the stages of intercultural sensitivity.

*Intercultural Sensitivity and Intercultural Learning*

Intercultural sensitivity is the ability to be open to learning about and accepting of different cultural groups. If we are aware of our biases, we can correct them and steer ourselves towards cultural sensitization. Intercultural learning is an area of research, study and application of knowledge about different cultures, their differences and similarities. Intercultural sensitivity is vital for genuine intercultural learning. The following diagram presents with clarity the path of intercultural learning. Let us, now, briefly spell out the different elements of this path.



The first element of the path of intercultural learning is ethnocentricity. It is a state of relying on only our own paradigms based on our cultural heritage. We view the world through narrow filters and accept only the information that fits our paradigms. We resist and/or discard diverse elements of other people and cultures. The second element is awareness. It consists in the realization that there are things that exist, which fall outside the realm of our cultural paradigms. The third is understanding. At the stage of understanding, we are not only aware that there are things that fall outside our cultural paradigms, but also we see the reason for their existence. The fourth element of the path of intercultural learning is acceptance and respect for other cultures and peoples. At this stage, we begin allowing people of other cultures to be who they are; and accept things that do not always fit into our paradigms. The fifth stage of this path is appreciation of and valuing the positive elements of other cultures. At this point, we begin seeing the worth in the things that fall outside our own cultural paradigms. The sixth element is

selective adoption. It is the point at which, we begin using things that were initially outside our own cultural paradigms as they are valuable to us as well. The final point of the path of intercultural learning is multiculturation. At this stage, we begin to integrate our lives with our experiences from a variety of cultural experiences of other cultures and peoples.

### Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity follows the path of intercultural learning and moves through diverse stages of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and integration of difference. In this section, we elucidate the different stages of developmental model for intercultural sensitivity.

### Denial of Difference

Individuals experience their own culture as the only "real" one. Other cultures are either not noticed at all or are understood in an undifferentiated, simplistic manner. People at this position are generally uninterested in cultural difference, but when confronted with difference their seemingly benign acceptance may change to aggressive attempts to avoid or eliminate it. Most of the time, this is a result of physical or social isolation, where the person's views are never challenged and are at the center of their reality.

### Defense against Difference

One's own culture is experienced as the most "evolved" or best way to live. This position is characterized by a dualistic "us-them" thinking and frequently accompanied by overt negative stereotyping. They will openly belittle the differences among their culture and another, denigrating race, gender or any other indicator of difference. People at this position are more openly threatened by cultural difference and more likely to be acting aggressively against it. A variation at this position is seen in reversal, where one's own culture is devalued and another culture is romanticized as superior.

## Minimization of Difference

The experience of similarity outweighs the experience of difference. People recognize superficial cultural differences in food, customs, and the like. However, they emphasize human similarity in physical structure, psychological needs, and/or assumed adherence to universal values. People at this position are likely to assume that they are no longer ethnocentric, and they tend to overestimate their tolerance while underestimating the effect; for instance, the privilege of their own culture. Thus, people who adopt this point of view generally approach intercultural situations with the assurance that a simple awareness of the fundamental patterns of human interaction will be sufficient to assure the success of the communication. Such a viewpoint is ethnocentric because it presupposes that the fundamental categories of behavior are absolute and that these categories are, in fact, our own.

## Acceptance of Difference

One's own culture is experienced as one of a number of equally complex worldviews. People at this position accept the existence of culturally different ways of organizing human existence, although they do not necessarily like or agree with every way. They can identify how culture affects a wide range of human experience and they have a framework for organizing observations of cultural difference. We recognize people from this stage through their eager questioning of others. This reflects a real desire to be informed, and not to confirm prejudices. The key words of this stage are "getting to know" or "learning."

## Adaptation to Difference

Individuals are able to expand their own worldviews to accurately understand other cultures and behave in a variety of culturally appropriate ways. Effective use of empathy, or frame of reference shifting, to understand and be understood across cultural boundaries. It is the ability to act properly outside of one's own culture. At this stage, one is able to "walk the talk."

Integration of Difference

One's experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews. People at this position have a definition of self that is "marginal" (not central) to any particular culture, allowing this individual to shift rather smoothly from one cultural worldview to another.

*Stages of Intercultural Sensitivity*

Based on the above discussion on the developmental models of intercultural sensitivity, we can speak of its six stages. Now, we briefly consider each of the six stages: The first stage is denial. Here one does not recognize cultural differences. The second is defense against difference. It consists in recognition of some differences between one's culture and that of others. However, one sees other cultures as negative and defends one's own culture. The third stage is minimization of difference. Here, one is unaware of the projection of one's own cultural values over that of others. Hence, one sees one's own cultural values as superior to other cultural values. The third is acceptance of difference. At this stage, there happens a shift in perspective. One understands that the same "ordinary" behavior can have different meanings in different cultures. The fourth stage is adaptation of difference. It consists in one learning to evaluate other's behavior from their frame of reference. Hence, he is ready to adapt behavior to fit the norms of a different culture. The fifth is integration of difference. Here, one is able to shift the frame of reference and see, think and act from other cultural perspectives. He is also able to deal with the resulting identity issues.

## Conclusion

Hence, multicultural education is the potential catalyst to bring all races together in harmony. Integrated curriculum, social activities, administrative support, and staff training would reduce fear, ignorance, and personal detachment in various sections of people. Benefits to multicultural education can help to eliminate the problems of stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and bigotry.

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**34.**

# Role of Multicultural Education in Imparting Tolerance and Promoting Harmony

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## Introduction

India has a population of 1,210,193,422 according to the 2011 census. This billion plus population forms a sixth of the human race who practice all the major religions of the world, such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. In addition to this, a myriad of indigenous cults, practices and religious beliefs are followed by numerous sects and sub-sects in various parts of the country. According to B. S. Guha, the Indian population is derived from six ethnic groups: Negrito, Proto-Australoids or Austrics, Mongoloids, Mediterranean or Dravidian, Western Brachycephals, and Nordic Aryans. India is also multi-lingual. The astonishing linguistic diversity of India is revealed in the 1961 Census, which recorded 1,652 mother tongues in India, taking into account dialects spoken even by five persons. Tribal languages constituted a quarter of the 1,652 languages. The 1971 census gives a figure of 700 languages as only dialects spoken by 1000 people and above were taken into account. Another aspect of India's iniquitous social order is the caste system, which pervades almost every social section and aspect of life. The "People of India Project," by the Anthropological Survey of India, generated comprehensive *data* on the sociocultural diversity of the country between 1985 and 2000, and it identified 4,694 communities, 2,619 castes, nearly 4,599 languages and dialects in twelve language families and some twenty four scripts. Thus, India is an abode of variety in kinship, marriage rites, customs, inheritance, modes of living, community life and so on. India is developing rapidly, with ever increasing diversity and modernity in the society. The towns are becoming more and more

cosmopolitan; and the number of international schools is also on a steady rise. All these contribute immensely towards the richness of social interaction, and at the same time create an environment fraught. [1]

Multicultural Education tries to bring equity among diverse cultural groups in a multicultural nation like India. Multicultural education has been defined by James A. Banks, the father of multicultural education, as "an inclusive concept used to describe a wide variety of school practices, programs, and material designed to help children from diverse groups to experience educational equality."[2] Multicultural education has incorrectly been viewed as merely curriculum reform that involves the addition of content regarding diverse groups. In fact, it is more comprehensive than this limited conception and is characterized by five dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, empowering of school culture and strengthening of social structure.[3]

Having made these introductory observations about the value of multicultural education for multicultural nations like India, in the first section of this chapter, we proceed to analyze the need for multicultural teaching and learning. A pluralistic world facing analogous issues need to embrace the global perspective of multicultural education so as to bring about better understanding among diverse cultural and ethnic groups. Multicultural education achieves this goal by orienting the young minds towards the concept of cultural diversity in the context of the classroom and prepares them to live an integrated life in a multicultural society. Since multicultural education attempts to preserve the uniqueness of diverse cultures, while bringing people of all cultures together to build the nation, it is vital for multicultural world.

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[1] Cf. Yogendra Singh: *Modernization of Indian Traditions* (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 1996).

[2] J. A. Banks: "Multicultural Education and Its Critics: Britain and the United States," *Race, Culture, and Education: The Selected Works of James A. Banks*, ed. J. A. Banks (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1984), p. 182.

[3] Cf. J. A. Banks: "Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice," *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, eds. J. A. Banks et al., 2nd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004). pp. 3-29.

The second section speaks of the benefits of multicultural education. Multicultural education recognizes cultural pluralism as an ideal and healthy state in any dynamic society. It aims to promote equity and respect among the existing cultural groups by developing more positive attitudes towards different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups. It bridges the gulf of ignorance and arrogance. Thus, multicultural education makes young minds to live without fear, hold their heads high, exchange knowledge freely, and relate rationally to people who are different from them. In doing so, multi-cultural education becomes an instrument of communicating to the students tolerance and harmony, which we consider in the third section of the chapter. Multicultural education engages students in activities that encourage cooperation, build consensus, make them reflective listeners and help them to become effective problem solvers. Students are taught that all are equal and free, and so everyone should be treated with respect. Thus, by teaching students language of pace and mutual respect, multicultural education helps them to carry out positive interactions in daily situations in the microcosm of the classroom, thereby helps them to be instrumental in building up a just and equitable world order.

The conclusion states that multicultural education is not only a device to teach tolerance and harmonious living among diverse cultural groups, but also a way to enhance the spirit of celebrating their differences. Thus, multicultural education informs, ignites and inculcates mutual acceptance and respect for each other, thereby paves the way for a healthy, harmonious and happy living together of diverse people, where differences no more divide, but only unite. In the next section, we analyze the need for multicultural teaching and learning.

### Need for Multicultural Teaching and Learning

A significant demographic transformation is noticed in most parts of the world. Population worldwide is becoming increasingly diverse and technology makes the world feel increasingly smaller. Issues related to the ecosystem, nuclear weapons, terrorism, human rights and scarce natural resources are universal, and they pose a threat to one and all. According to J. A. Banks, due to worldwide migration and globalization racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and

religious diversity is increasing in nations around the world. A pluralistic world, facing analogous issues, insists the need to embrace the global perspective of multicultural education in order to stay academically competitive in relation to the rest of the world. Multicultural education acknowledges and incorporates positive outlook into the classroom atmosphere.

In 2002, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization described culture as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Jawaharlal Nehru speaks of culture as that which widens the mind and the spirit of the human person. For Palkhiwala, culture is what remains after you have forgotten all that you set out to learn.[4] Kneller sees a relationship shared by both education and culture. So for him: "Education is the means by which society provides for the transmission or advancement of its culture; for without a viable culture there is no common life by which men are associated."[5] In 2005, the Education Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, attempted to integrate culture in Indian educational system. The committee's primary concern was regarding the diminishing of moral values; the growing intolerance among communities and castes; and the declining awareness among children about their own cultural backgrounds. Diminishing tolerance and rise of conflicts in the multicultural societies immediately demand an enduring solution. Education rationalizes its significant place to the cause of conveying universal values. As a result, multicultural education emerged to achieve the goal of orienting the young minds towards the concept of cultural diversity and multiculturalism.

The constitution of India recognizes the diversity of the nation and reflects a classically liberal view of the world. Its preamble vows to secure justice, liberty, equality and fraternity for all its citizens. The constitutional principles rooted in equality and fundamental freedom of every citizen can be inscribed with the help of

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[4] Cf. N. A. Palkhiwala: *We, the Nation: The Lost Decade* (New Delhi: UBSPD, 1994), p. 124.

[5] G. F. Kneller, ed.: *Foundations of Education*, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1971), p, 50.

multicultural education on the hearts of every citizen, so that they do not deviate and create conflicts when they grow older. Students can be trained in a diverse classroom that they make patience and tolerance as the key words in all realms of human activities. Multicultural education involves what Russell called "a universal sense of citizenship" and what Confucius has rightly said "harmony without uniformity."

Many societies and nations witness tremendous value crisis throughout the world today. Multiculturalism as a value-response is a celebration of diversity and complexity of human experience along with recognizing and respecting cultural, racial, linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity that exist in a society. Multiculturalism is a national policy in Canada and Australia. Similarly "unity in diversity," as an inbuilt quality of India, reflects the idea of living in harmony, respecting and understanding each other. As multiculturalism recognizes the diversity, it also acknowledges and ensures rights of individuals to retain their culture. It is more concerned with preserving the distinction between cultures; yet connecting them. In the next section, we turn our attention to the benefits of multicultural education.

## Benefits of Multicultural Education

Educational institutions have been dictated too long by attitudes, values, beliefs, and value systems of one race and class of people. The future of our universe demands a positive change for all. Though it is a difficult task, positive change is possible and can be triggered by enlightened, empowered and transformed minds. Multicultural education recognizes cultural pluralism as an ideal and healthy state in any dynamic society. It aims to promote equity and respect among the existing cultural groups by developing more positive attitudes towards different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups. It bridges the gulf of ignorance and arrogance.

The country that Tagore prays for in his famous poem "Where the Mind is without Fear" from the *Gitanjali*, can be accomplished so that the world looks up to India. Our nation would be a place, where a citizen's mind would be without fear and everyone would be able to hold their heads high; where knowledge would be freely gathered and exchanged; where society would not be broken up by narrow

domestic walls of misunderstanding and hatred; and where the clear stream of reason would not lose its way in the dreary desert sands of habit or mindless tradition. In the next section we elaborate on multicultural education as an instrument of imparting tolerance and harmony.

## Multicultural Education: An Instrument to Impart Tolerance and Harmony

The society is becoming increasingly intercultural these days and the diversity is reflected in the nation's schools, colleges and universities. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening; the gender based discrimination in classrooms and higher education institutions is on the increase; and students with disabilities struggle to be on par with their classmates. The exhibition of bias in educational institutions not only aggravates the conflicts and promotes disharmony in the society, but in a wider sense diminishes the idea of India as a cooperative multicultural nation. Education has become a commercial venture for schools and corporate colleges. Nonetheless students need to be taught to view events and issues from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives. Students should be engaged in activities that encourage cooperation, build consensus, make them reflective listeners and help them to become effective problem solvers. The young minds need to be informed that "all men and women are born equal and free." The students should be prepared to treat fellow humans with dignity and to become good citizens of their communities, nations and the world at large.

The moment one gets up in the morning and starts his/her routine, one tends to depend on various people, such as the milkman, maid, vendors, barber, cobbler, farmer, doctor, teacher and the like, who come from different strata of the society. One needs all of them for his survival. Students at a young age should be taught that one needs to appreciate and esteem the contribution of others in one's own life. One cannot lead a solitary life in sealed compartments, cut off from others and untouched by the rest of the world. Multicultural education deals with developing effective communication skills on all levels of interaction in order to carry out positive interactions in everyday social situations and in conflict situations with the help of competent teachers and inclusive pedagogies. Multicultural educa-

tion practically teaches the rules of pro-social behaviors, such as cooperation, collaboration, affirming others and communicating effectively by expressing feelings clearly in ways that do not accuse others so as to promote understanding and good will. Thus, multicultural education teaches the language of peace and mutual respect in order to carry out positive interactions in daily situations. It expounds how to be human in multicultural traditions using classroom as a microcosm of a just world order.

It is evident from the contemporary issues and happenings that ethnicity is breaking up many nations. A peek at the former Soviet Union, India, Yugoslavia and Ethiopia reveals that all countries are in some type of crisis. Besides, research has indicated that ethnic minority students are disproportionately poor, dropping out of school, being suspended or expelled, and achieving far below their potential compared to the ethnic majority. As a result, teachers must prepare themselves and their children for the ever changing challenge of interacting and communicating with diverse races. Reduction of fear, ignorance, and personal detachment are possible benefits of multicultural education. Research also shows that integrated curriculum, cross cultural student exchange programs, social activities, administrative support, and training of staff can eliminate the problems of stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and bigotry. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, made the following remark about schools in Kerala. According to him, in Kerala schools, we find all communities: the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians and students who belong to every other religion. It is a unique unity of minds. We can get unity of minds only through the young people, through young minds. If we ignite young minds for unity of minds, the nation grows and develops.[6]

## Conclusion

In a multi-religious, multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual nation, such as India, multicultural education is not only a device to teach tolerance, but also a way to enhance the spirit of celebrating the differences. According to S. Radhakrishnan, the greatest event of

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[6] Cf. Babu K. Verghese: *Let There Be India! Impact of the Bible on Nation Building* (Mumbai: Ebenezer Printing House, 2014).

our age is the meeting of cultures, civilizations, and different points of view. They make us understand that though we adhere to one or the other faith; we should respect diversity of belief. We should always be ready to cooperate, complement, bring together people, establish friendships and have some kind of a right world in which we can live together in happiness, harmony and friendship. Hence, we must realize that this increasing maturity should express itself in this capacity to understand what other points of view are. In a wider sense, conflicts diminish the idea of India as a cooperative multi-cultural nation. The prosperity of India depends on how we treat our fellow beings in daily situations in our classrooms and in the society. Informing, igniting and inculcating mutual acceptance and respect for each other through multicultural education will pave the way for a healthy, harmonious and happy India, where differences no more divide, but unite.

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# Intergrated Mutticultural Education
# in Indian Society

BAIAPHIRA G. LYNGSKOR

## Introduction

India is a cultural melting pot with many cultures, languages, races and a variety of customs, traditions, economic situations and political ideologies. The appalling economic conditions and unemployment are embedded in the psyche and *ethos* of the Indian people. The dehumanizing and oppressive systems that existed in the past still haunt the Indian society. Young people in the higher education have looked at the problems and have protested against the archaic practices and rules which bring divisions and disharmony among the people. This gives rise to many issues in the cultural, social, political and economic spheres. According to Swami Vikrant, India has registered a great advance in the field of science, technology and industrialization. However, her social theories and practices are feudal, reactionary and at times even inhuman. The symptoms of a deep-rooted malaise are sporadic eruptions of social convulsion, such as arson, *dalit*-burning and many other historical syndromes.[1]

John Desrocher sees signs of social, cultural and moral disintegration in the Indian society. There exists a crisis of values: selfishness, disregard for life, intolerance, violence and all forms of oppression and exploitation are becoming more widespread and intense.[2] Acquisitiveness, fanaticism, hatred, jealousy, exploitation and revenge are causing social tensions, economic imbalances, intellectual disparities and political unrest. Values, such as humanism, secularism and universalism, which have been built over the ages, seem to be on the way out. The reasons for these tensions within the society are three-fold: firstly, emerging movement of

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[1] Cf. Swami Vikrant: *The Dharmic Mind vis-à-vis of the New Society* (Bangalore: NBLCP, 1981).

[2] Cf. John Desrocher: *India We Want to Build* (Bangalore: ISI., 1994).

backward castes and classes in search of an egalitarian, social, economic order and greater political emancipation; secondly, the equally strong assertion of upper castes and classes of their religious and cultural identity, and their attempts to retain control of the present position of privileges and dominance; and thirdly, the implications of the global capitalism and market.[3]

From the above analysis the Indians society, it is clear that there are many challenges the Indians face: the society, particularly its economic system, needs restructuring, so that the production for profit is replaced by production for social needs; there is the need to give power back to the people, so that they can shape their own lives; and to create a culture consonant with the dignity of the human person and with the positive values of traditions. Generally speaking, the diversity found in Indian society tends to create the impression that it is not a country, but a subcontinent. However, this does not imply that integration is impossible in such a situation. Differences exist at the levels of languages, religion, cultures, races, customs, traditions, economic situations as well as in political ideologies.

Despite these differences, there is a sense of national integration among the people all over the country. This inner integration is the basis of diversity of Indian culture. Thus, India furnishes an example of unity in diversity. There is the need to deepen this sense of unity among all sections of the Indian society. Education can play an important role, so as to strengthen the bonds that which make us Indians.

In this chapter, our purpose is to examine the relevance of multicultural education in a pluralistic and democratic Indian society for promotion of national integration. In the first section, we present a general consideration of multicultural education. Multicultural education, as a philosophical concept is based on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality and human dignity; and helps students to take up their responsibility in an interdependent world. It affirms pluralism and values cultural diversity. It challenges all forms of discriminations and promotes the democratic principle of social justice. The second section highlights the approaches to multicultural education, principles that guide it and its different types. The diverse

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[3] Cf. Wilfred Felix: *From the Dusty Soil* (Chennai: University of Madras, 1995).

approaches, principles and models of education would facilitate to bring about better teaching-learning experience in the classroom and greater integration among students of diverse cultures. The third section takes up for discussion integrated multicultural education in India. Secondary level education in India is very significant, as it prepares the teachers who would handle the primary level education and prepares students for the higher university education. Besides, this section points to all the efforts of different committees and commission since Independence to bring about an integrated multi-cultural education in India.

The conclusion suggests a number of recommendations that would facilitate both the teachers and students to acquire values, such as justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion and charity, which in turn, would help them understand the multiethnic nature of India, and to foster positive interracial relationships and inter-actions. In the next section, we present a general consideration of multicultural education.

## Multicultural Education: A General Consideration

For the last thirty years, scholars, researchers and organizations have proposed many definitions of multicultural education. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations defines multicultural education as a philosophical concept based on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality and human dignity. It affirms the fact that its task is to prepare the students to take up their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It also recognizes the role of the educational institutions in developing attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. Multicultural education values cultural differences and affirms pluralism in the society. It challenges all forms of discriminations either in educational institu-tions or in society by promoting the democratic principles of social justice. Multicultural education permeates all aspects of educational practices, policies and organizations as a means to ensure the highest level of academic achievement for all students. It helps students to develop a positive self-concept by providing knowledge about histories, cultures and the contributions of different groups in the society. It provides an opportunity for all students to work actively for achieving structural equality in the community as well as in the

educational institutions by providing the knowledge, dispositions and skills for the restitution of power and income among different groups.

Therefore, the school curriculum must directly address issues, such as racism, sexism, classes, language, heterosexism, religious tolerance and xenophobia. The main emphasis of multicultural education is the belief that students and their life histories and experiences should be placed at the center of teaching and learning process. The teaching must address multiple ways of thinking and should be done in a context familiar to the students. Thus teachers and students must critically analyze obstacles and power relations in their community and society at large. Thus, the situation demands comprehensive reforms in the educational institutions. To achieve its goal, the multicultural education demands that teachers and students should be culturally, racially and linguistically of different types.

J.A. Banks[4] mentions five dimensions of multicultural education. The first is *content integration*, which includes materials, concepts and values from a variety of cultures in teaching. The second is *knowledge construction*. It consists in the recognition that all knowledge is socially constructed and created in the minds of human beings to explain their experience. Hence, all knowledge can be challenged. Knowledge construction is a primary aspect of multicultural education because before teachers can effectively teach about multiculturalism, they must construct their worldview. The third is *equity pedagogy*. It involves teachers communicating teaching methods to accommodate the various cultural differences of diverse students, so as to stimulate academic achievement. The fourth is *prejudice reduction*. It is concerned with changing the students' attitudes towards differences of race and ethnicity. Prejudice reduction also includes teaching tolerance about religious, physical and mental abilities and sexual preference. The fifth is *empowering school culture*. This dimension of multicultural education is that enables the other four dimensions to be effective in the schools system.

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[4] Cf. J. A. Banks: *Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals* (New York: Routledge, 1997). Cf. also J. A. Banks: *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies*, 6th ed. (London: Routledge, 1992).

Educators must examine the structure of education that blocks learning facilities to diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups. Thus, one of the main aims of multicultural education is about social change through education; and it encourages the full development of all students. To achieve this aim, all require deep and critical thinking, imagination, and commitment for the future. M. F. Green[5] stresses the fact that for people to be fully human, they must engage in critical thinking and imagine that their expected hopes can be achieved. Besides, they must overcome their silence regarding those actions that would destroy the multicultural spirit in the society.

Until recent times, the most accepted view on multicultural education is the "melting pot perspective," which calls for multi-cultural societies to be absorbed and assimilated into the mainstream society and its macro-culture, by giving up their different cultural identities. The purpose of this melting pot perspective is to bring integration through development of a shared culture as each micro-culture becomes absorbed into a shared macro-culture.

Thus, it becomes difficult to achieve widespread democracy among micro-culture, because the main stream culture does not subscribe to the view of cultural diversity within the nation. According to this view, the members of the micro-cultures are accepted only once they give up their original identity, values, behavioral styles, languages, and traditional practices. As such other cultural distinctiveness and identification with other ways of life are viewed as unacceptable, inferior, and a threat to the national integration. Therefore, attempts are made by the popular culture to suppress the other cultures and the contributions of other groups.

Today, there is the need to expand multicultural education beyond the melting pot perspective with an emphasis on equity pedagogy as a means of creating the inequalities and exploitation among people in the society. There is the real need now to include integrated perspective, in which cultural pluralism is recognized as an ideal to be achieved by any productive and progressive society. Therefore, the scope of multicultural education needs to be broadened so as to include democratic values, cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies and national interdependence. The

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[5] Cf. M. F. Green: *Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity* (Washington D. C.: American Council on Education, 1989).

integrated multicultural education allows promotion of equity among all cultural groups in the society. It allows students to develop respect and appreciation for all cultural groups within the society.

## Approahces, Principles and Types of Multicultural Education

In this section, we highlight some of the approaches scholars and thinkers have put forward regarding multicultural education. We will also spell out some of the principles that guide multicultural education. Further, we will look into three specific types of multicultural education.

### Approaches to Multicultural Education

In the context of multicultural education, we must distin-guish between "equality" and "equity." Multicultural education attempts to offer all students an equitable educational opportunity and also encourages students to critique society in the interest of social justice. Scholars proposed several approaches to multicultural education. We briefly clarify some of them.

The first is culturally *different approach*. It raises the academic achievement of the students through culturally relevant instruction.

The second is *human relations approach*. It teaches about the diversity of cultural communities, to which the students belong, so that they may understand their social and cultural differences. However, in relation to institutional and economic process, there should be more equality and all should be treated in a similar way.

The third is the *single group approach*. It deals with the histories and contemporary issues of oppression of different people, such as women, deprived socio-economic group, and the like.

The fourth is *multiple voices and dreams approach*. It promotes the transformation of educational process, by articulating the ideals of democracy in a pluralistic society. Here, the instructional methods that value cultural knowledge and differences are taught to students.

The fifth approach is *social reconstruction list approach*. It teaches about oppression and discrimination. It enables students to be agents of social change and to play their role in the generation of more equitable society.

*Principles of Multicultural Education*

Besides these approaches to multiculturalism, there are also some principles and ideals of multicultural education. These principles provide the ideals of multicultural education. We briefly consider some of these principles/ideals below. Firstly, multicultural education promotes cultural differences, respect for cultural differences, and expression of human rights. Secondly, its curricula promote social justice and equity for all people. Thirdly, multicultural education upholds attitudes and values for the continuation of a democratic society in schools. Fourthly, it provides knowledge, skills and dispositions for redistribution of power and income among diverse group of people. Fifthly, multicultural education creates an environment that supports diversity and multiculturalism.

Adequate understanding of the various cultural elements and how they defer among people from diverse cultures is a way to develop positive relations among persons from different cultures and provide inclusive programs for diverse student population.

*Types of Multicultural Education*

We can speak of three types of multicultural education. We briefly clarify each of these types in this subsection. The first type is the *content-focused education*. In this type, the curriculum contains facts about various students and groups. It highlights the life and achievement of heroes belonging to different racial and ethnic groups. Besides it also spells out the heroic achievement of women, minorities, LGBT groups, *dalits*, tribals, and the like. The second type of education is *student-focused education*. It addresses the academic needs of targeted groups of students, such as minorities, *dalits* and tribals, to make the transition into the mainstream of education. It is a program based on culture based learning styles and is often bilingual. The third type is the *socially-focused education*. Its main emphasis is to reduce bias and to increase cultural and social tolerance. To organize inclusive programs that promotes national integration by stressing integrated learning. It provides an avenue for contact among different races and cultures. It provides scope for minority communities to take up teaching career, and encourages open academic debate on controversial issues. It respects freedom of

choice and speech. Thus, multicultural education serves as a model for multicultural societies and for democratic human values.

## Integrated Multicultural Education in India

The Indian school education is broadly divided into two stages: the primary education and secondary education. Secondary education is an important stage of education. It prepares the students for higher education in the colleges and universities. So the standard of university education will largely depend on the achievement and preparation of the students in the secondary schools. It is also the stage that makes the completion of education for a large majority of the students, who choose carriers other than the academic one. The performance of these students in life will depend on the quality of their preparation in the secondary schools. The teachers, who take the responsibility for the primary education, come from secondary schools. So they can be good teachers only to the extent that they are prepared in the secondary school level.

Before and after Independence four Expert Bodies examined the problems of secondary education in India: Tara Chad Committee (1943); University Education Commission (1948-1949); Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953); and Education Commission (1964-1965). After reviewing the political, social and economic changes that had taken place in the country, the secondary commission formulated four aims of secondary education. The most significant among them is preparing the students for democratic citizenship. India has decided to transform itself into a secular democratic republic.

Therefore, secondary schools must develop in students' qualities, which will enable them to bear worthily the responsibility of democratic citizenship. The path of secular democratic republic is not an easy one. It requires many intellectual, social and moral qualities. A democratic citizen should have the understanding and intellectual integrity to differentiate truth from falsehood, and facts from propaganda. Besides, education should facilitate students to reject the dangerous appeal of fanaticism and prejudice. The citizen must develop scientific attitude of mind to think objectively and base his/her conclusion on the tested *data*. Citizen should not be confined to the old and the new; but must have the courage to reject whatever

arrests justice and progress. Therefore, democracy has to lay stress on education for living an integrated life. It should take into account the psychological, social, cultural, emotional and practical needs of the citizens. Since the individual can achieve greatness for oneself and others only by living and working with others, he/she should be helped to cultivate qualities, such as cooperation, social sensitivity and tolerance.

The Kothari Education Commission (1964-1966) observed that the most important and urgent need is to transform education so as to relate it to life, needs and aspiration of the people. This, in turn, would make education a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for realization of the national goals. For this purpose the commission recommended a four-fold program: the first is relating education to productivity; the second consist in strengthening social and national integration through educational program; the third is modernizing students socially by awakening curiosity and building up skills; and the fourth consisting in developing social, moral and spiritual values.

To achieve integrated multicultural education in India, with the help of the above-said four-fold program, the following goals have been formulated: developing responsibility to the Indian society; developing reverence to the environment/mother earth; developing acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity; developing respect for human dignity; developing a historical perspective; strengthening cultural and intercultural competence; encountering racism, sexism and discrimination and build social action skills; and increasing awareness of the state of the nation, planet and integrated life.

The main emphasis of these goals is to pave the way for respect and appreciation for various cultures by strengthening cultural consciousness and multicultural dependence. To avoid the promotion of one way of thinking and one way of life that one cultural group identifies itself in India, there arises the need to promote institutions of secondary level, where culturally diverse students and faculty can feel at home and achieve academic excellence. This led to the establishment of Model Schools - Navodaya Vidyalayas - as conceived by the National Policy on Education (NEP) in 1986. Such pluralism makes models of pluralistic democracy. The applications of the responsibility to the Indian society a sense of acceptance and

appreciation of cultural diversity and respect for human dignity and learning practices among diverse population at the institution of secondary level is more important today as compared to the past century. Thus, education in the secondary level in India must become models and pillars for excellence, models for pluralistic societies and models for democratic human values.

Integrated teaching and learning can become an exciting instrument for life process. It is about learning within life, as one seeks to integrate education into life. According to Ken Gnanakan there are five integrated factors with regard to teaching and learning in a multicultural society: maximizing the learner's experience in real life rather than in artificial academic setting; integrating academic knowledge or theoretical concepts in a real life; ensuring that teaching and learning are related to a particular gift of the learner; establishing interrelationship between one area of learning with another and to break down the wall that is built in the artificially segregated curricula; and employing modes of delivering education, even those transcending classroom, for total learning to take place.[6]

According to Gnanakan, integration in education must include holism, interconnected curricula and relevance to the social and physical context, which would make education an integral part of the process. Integrated education is defined as education that promotes learning and teaching in non-fragmented ways that embrace notion of holism, complexity and inter-connection. Integrative education rejects the common emphasis on transmitted knowledge.

Rather, it proposes that knowledge and meaning is constructed by the learner through the processes of interaction with others, the material, and the social and physical contexts. Integrated education calls to question the traditional gulfs between teacher and learner, and rejects the divisions between physiology, cognition and emotion in the learning process. Furthermore integrative education embraces the links, rather than the divisions, between the academic disciplines, various subjects, objective epistemologies and methods of inquiry.[7]

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[6] Cf. Ken Gnanakan: *Integrated Learning* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[7] Cf. *Ibid*.

## Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, we conclude by suggesting the following recommendations for an integrated multicultural education in India.

Firstly, the teachers should know the complex characteristics of different groups of learners and the way in which race, ethnicity, language and social class interact to influence the learner's behavior.

Secondly, the school should ensure that all learners have equitable opportunities to learn and to meet high standards of learning processes.

Thirdly, the curriculum should help the learner understand that knowledge is socially constituted and reflects the social, political and economic contents, in which they live and work.

Fourthly, opportunities should be provided for extracurricular and cocurricular activities that develop and foster positive interracial relationships.

Fifthly, the students should know that negative attitudes and other related biases have negative impact on racial and ethnic relations.

Sixthly, the students should learn, values such as justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion and charity shared by all racial groups.

Seventhly, teachers should help students acquire the social skills needed for effective interaction with students from other racial, ethnic cultural and language group.

Eighthly, the teacher should use multiple culturally sensitive techniques to assess complex cognitive and social skills.

Ninthly, the schools should provide opportunities to students from different racial, ethnic, cultural and language groups to interact socially under conditions designed to reduce fear and anxiety. Tenthly, the school's organization strategies should ensure that decision-making is widely shared in order to create a caring environment for students.

Finally, the leaders should develop strategies that all public schools, regardless of their locations are funded equally. With the guidance of these recommendations, we could build an integrated multicultural education in India.

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# Conclusion

VENSUS A. GEORGE

We have come to the end of the volume, *Being Human in Multicultural Traditions*, which has attempted to present multiculturalism as political philosophy and a social practice in a world that is becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural, particularly because of the consequences of globalization. The thirty-five essays presented in this volume unfold diverse aspects of multiculturalism and reflect on how we can become "human" and "humane" in our life among people of multicultural traditions in the local, societal, national and international levels. The essays not only present the problems posed and encountered by multiculturalism, but also present solutions and possible ways of coping with them, taking into consideration diverse philosophical, religious and intercultural perspectives. They also highlight the importance of educating citizens of the nations of the world in an integrated and holistic manner, teaching them the values inherent both in the spiritual and secular realms, so that the people of the world may move beyond their narrow and self-centered mindset, accept the multicultural nature of the world they live in, cultivate attitudes that would help them not only to tolerate, but also to accept the people other cultures, foster mutual respect for each other, understand the richness contained in other cultures, and enter into a dialoging relationship with them.

Our reading and reflection on the content of these essays, during the editorial work of this volume, has brought to the fore twelve themes, which we believe need to be highlighted and elaborated. The themes are the following: multiculturalism and multiple identities; restoring humaneness in multicultural societies; reviving the spiritual - solution to humanity crisis; multiculturalism and cultural chauvinism; multiculturalism and globalization; multiculturalism and social cohesion; religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue; integrated multicultural education; pathways for intercultural education; organicism - an integral approach to human and cosmic progress; spiritual globalization - means to embrace cultural diversities, and future of multiculturalism. Thus, in the

conclusion to this volume, our task is to elaborate on these themes, thereby give expression to our reflection on the content of the essays contained in this volume.

## Multiculturalism and Multiple Identities

Diversity and pluralism are the distinguishing marks of today's society. The pluralistic nature of the society implies the existence of a number of social-life-worlds depending on the number of cultural groups found in the society, and one's culture becomes a subculture among multiplicities of subcultures. A push-pull factor is operative in a multicultural society. Either one is pushed out by the unpleasant dimensions of one's own culture, or he is pulled into other cultures by their attractive aspects. Thus, the person is faced with the identity question, as he is multi-related: he has identities related to his culture, language, caste, ethnicity and the like, and the identities he inherits in his association with other cultures. The identity crisis is caused by the uncertainties of the personal and public spheres. In the public sphere, individual has to be in tune with the society of many subcultures, where an individual does not have the freedom to be himself because the social norms define his social roles and functions.

As a result, he becomes, as it were, an anonymous performer - a cog in the wheel of the society. Living in relation to many social-life-worlds calls a person to acculturate, adjust and accommodate himself to the pushes and pulls of his multi-related lifestyle. This, in turn, brings about tension within the person, as he has to deal with his private self and a number of public selves. The tension arises because of the experience of multiple selves and identities, which tear the self of the person apart. Failure to resolve the identity crisis and the tension associated with it can lead to a serious psychological damage because there exist significant disparities between one's indigenous and ethnic origins, and the mainstream society and its subcultures.

Above-mentioned multiple identities, and the tensions and anxieties that arise from it are real among individuals living in multicultural societies. Hence, there is the need to look for new ways of thinking and acting that would turn the predicaments of multicultural living into opportunities for value-based living among

diverse cultural groups of the nation-state. The individual must he helped to cope with multiple identities and the tension that ensue from it. To achieve the goal, the individual human person must be ready to do his part. He must be ready to modernize his consciousness by discovering, recognizing and identifying those perceptions about himself and his life in the multicultural setting that need change and transformation. This calls for readiness to revise and retract the principles and opinions he has held so far. The individual human person can do this by not closing himself up from external influences that come from diverse multicultural life-worlds, but by keeping himself in dialoguing relationship with everything that happens around him. This implies that the self has to locate its place in the wholeness of life in a dialogical manner. This transparency and openness to the world, the interactive relationship to all one encounters in his multicultural living situation, and the diverse feedbacks the person gets due to these interactions - let in some psychological "fresh air" in the person, which in turn, brings a feeling of relief easing some of his tensions.

Another attitude the person must cultivate regarding his multiple identities is flexibility. He must be flexible, imaginative and innovative in his attitude in facing multiple identities the multicultural living places on him. He must realize that his multicultural living is a process, in which he is in dialoging relationship with people, events and situations of diverse social-life-worlds. The cultures from which he gets his multicultural identities themselves are not absolute, as they are in constant process of change and transformation. Hence, the multiple identities he experiences in his multi-relational living are not absolute, but relational and situational. Since individuals belong to cultural identities their experience are not one-dimensional - but multi-relational and evolve gradually - one needs to be flexible about his multiple identities. Knowing this truth and living his life in the spirit of freedom, one can ease out the *aporia* of tension that result from the experience of multiple identities in multicultural living.

The society, on its part, with the help of its social organizations must assist the individuals, through multicultural and intercultural education, to acknowledge the multicultural nature of today's society, and the reality and the nature multiple identities they may

experience, in the process helping them to ease the tensions emerging from multicultural social living.

## Restoring Humaneness in Multicultural Society

Today, the progress of a society is often measured in relation to increase in the production of material goods, expansion in trade and commerce, and enhancement in the material conditions of human living. While material and economic development is vital for the life of the society and the world at large, over-emphasis only on this dimension and forgetting the long-term good of the society, by ignoring those values and qualities that help us to be truly human and humane in our life. True development has to be holistic and not one-dimensional. Because of this one-sided approach to human development, we have become insensitive to the other. This in-sensitivity has made the humans to lose sight of cultivating humane sentiment of compassion of heart, find joy in genuine relationships, and to maintain an intelligent, balanced and holistic worldview that would sustain human beings and their environment.

The loss of humanity in our present-day society - that results from an inhuman and impersonal economy, consumerist culture, and an unbalanced perception of development - brings about unpleasant consequences, such as weakening of humanity and intercommunity tensions, loss of self-assertion of communities, affirmation of humanity, and marginalization of cultural minorities. Hence, there is the need to restore the quality of humaneness in the sociocultural life of the people. Cultivation of some attitudes facilitates this process. Taking a humane approach instead of giving a mere economic response, developing human and sensitive leadership, working for bettering the human condition of those involved so as to ease tension among groups, leadership recognizing their past failures and learning to be humane with each other, tapping the resources of young people and use their abilities as human capital, and educating people to be peacemakers and culture-translators - would effectively restore humaneness in the socio-cultural life of the people.

Besides, understanding the true meaning of "being human" in the sense of "being humane" would also help the humans to make the necessary changes in their attitudes and dealings with others so

that they can truly make the human society more humane. "Being human" in the sense of "being humane" implies that we leave space for each other as communities, we respect and befriend our opponents, we learn to change a grievance into a message, we develop our thinking power, we become not only creative but also persuasive, we value togetherness, we become more responsible, we move beyond party and partisan interests, we become sensitive towards minority communities, we develop a vision for the future, we promote collaboration and a natural sense of fairness, and above all we become spiritual and allow ourselves to be guided by a spiritual perspective.

We can cope with the loss of humaneness in our communities, societies and the world at large, by recognizing the dangerous consequences of the loss of humanity in the sociocultural life of the people, by cultivating the above-mentioned attitudes that can restore humanness, and by becoming more aware of what it means to be truly humane in the context of our everyday living.

### Reviving the Spiritual: Solution to Humanity Crisis

In this globalized age, though the world is shrinking due to extraordinary developments in communication technology, the human beings seem to go far away from each other. Social injustices, racial conflicts, economic inequalities and nationalistic divisions are rampant. That is why despite tremendous material and technological progress humanity has made, we find large sections of the people of the world suffer from poverty, starvation, exploitation and mal-nutrition. Humanity is caught up in a constant battle of man against man. All civilized societies of the present-day world are experiencing a warlike situation. Scientific and technological progress is used to invent and manufacture devastating weapons of war; and there is a competition among nations in military build-up, using billions of dollars, which otherwise could be spent for the good of the nation's poor. Many nation-states and their political leaders think in terms of tribalism, and glorify it as nationalism for their own political advantage. Divisions based on religious beliefs have harmed the social fabric of the nations breeding hatred, antagonism and violence. Self-interest has become the dominant factor of human existence, creating enmity and hatred among diverse social and

cultural groups. Similarly humanity has scant thought about ecology, as human beings destroy forests and rare wild animals for selfish interests. Likewise corporate business houses pollute the air with industrial emissions by not putting in place the needed preventive measures in view of supernormal profit for themselves. Seeing these happenings all-over the world, we cannot but say that humanity is in a crisis situation.

This situation of humanity's crisis is the product of human thinking and thought-process, as it is responsible for all forms of division we find in the society. Human thought belongs to the realm of knowledge and it opposes or agrees, competes or adjusts, condemns or justifies. In doing so, it divides people of a nation into different communities and classes, and makes them compete with each other. Though there are positive products of thoughts, such as science, technology, robots, engineering techniques, medicines, developments, comforts and luxuries, yet, each of these positive products are capable of bringing about negative elements in the society, such as divisions, conflicts, contradictions, violence and wars. The human thought is responsible for positive and negative things in the world. The human thought with unbiased awareness creates freedom and peace. Similarly, lack of proper awareness makes thought to create wars and destruction. In today's society the negative impact of thought is much greater than its positive contributions. It breeds the feeling of ownership and possessiveness, which cultivates jealously. Jealousy tears down love, as where jealousy is love cannot be present. Thus, thought has become the most psychologically dangerous instrument created by man. Hence, the belief that reason and human thought can bring lasting peace and harmonious living among people of our multicultural world is a myth

Secular ways of responding to the situation of humanity's crisis and cultivating peace and harmony among diverse peoples and nations employ reason and human thought as the tool. There are three kinds of theoretical attempts to rationally account for peace-making. One calls for "universal governance" or governance under one roof. Another involves balance of power or maintaining strategic equilibrium. The third is democratization of the political process. We know factually that none of these products of thought has brought an end to the situation of humanity's crisis; instead the world is

moving towards deeper crisis. Permanent peace and harmony among people can be achieved only in the domain of the spiritual because it calls for a movement from selfishness to altruism. Individuals or nations of the world at large cannot transcend selfishness and vested interests unless they see their selves and their wellness in other human beings. This transcending from selfishness to altruism is possible only in a spiritual state. Since the situation of humanity's crisis is finally averted and peace is ultimately achieved in the domain of the spiritual - human thought, reason, regulations and treaties between groups and states do not ensure peace. It is the harnessing of the spiritual within that would result in manifest peace outside and put an end to humanity's crisis.

The best way known to realize the spiritual is the path of meditation. Meditation enables one to control his mental functions. Mind is the instrument that ties the person to the physical world. The *ego* and the inherent instincts make him seek sensory gratification and mundane pleasures. Therefore, the control of the mind is the precondition for spiritual growth. Control of the mind may be achieved either by emptying the mind of all its content that obstructs the spiritual path or by filling it full with harmless content that does not debilitate the person from pursuing the spiritual path. The former involves bringing the mind to a standstill state. In such a state, the mind is as good as nonexistent. The other option is to render the mind by proper training a resource for spiritual advancement rather than a source of physical participation in the world. One is the case of spiritual retreat. The other involves spiritual engagement of the mind. They can be labeled as mindless meditation and mindful meditation.

Mindful Meditation as currently promoted in the west is a way of controlling stress and promoting wellness. It involves awareness of events from moment to moment. It also means remembering and continuously paying attention to what one experiences so that one may condition the mind to experience the wholesome and what is healthy and to keep away from the unwholesome and debilitating experiences. In traditional Buddhism it is a means of self-actualization, becoming aware of one's authentic being. Practice of mindfulness is a mode of generating power to overcome delusions, false perceptions and distractions. It is a way of achieving a complete tranquil state, ultimately leading to *nirvana*. In the Buddhist

*Theravada* tradition, mindful meditation, firstly prepares the mind to gain wholesome insight and secondly helps gaining the insight itself. Mindless meditation is practiced in the *Yoga* tradition. It involves transcending the mind and its routine functions. The eight steps in Patanjali *Yoga* are progressive steps to control and transcend the mind. In a sense, it is emptying the mind of all its contents so that one may take the spiritual path and achieve self-realization. Thus, self-actualization in the Buddhist *Theravada* tradition and self-realization in *Yoga* tradition are similar pursuits to reach the same goal of moving from self-centered living to altruistic/other-centered living.

When a person achieves self-actualization or self-realization, love is awakened in the person from this pure state of mind, which is the result of meditation. Love is not desire, ambition, greed, passion, attachment, jealousy, ownership, possessiveness and violence. Love is the fragrance of being. Love is a radiation of soul. Love has value only because it gives one "one's ownness." It gives one space enough to be on one's own. A person, who has experienced real love, is capable of owning himself; he is ready to be utterly alone; and yet capable of relating to others and grows with them in togetherness. Love is the nourishment for the soul. If there is passion in love, it becomes hellish, causing unhappiness. If there is attachment in love, it imprisons us. If love is passionless, it is heavenly giving us peaceful living. Love without attachment is divine. Love is a very mysterious phenomenon. Thus, love is radiation and expression of the soul. It is a state of being; one is in love or he is not in love - he cannot be in between. A man is in love, when his being is silent, as love is the song of silence. Love is not addressed to anybody in particular; but it spreads to fragrance in all directions. Love makes no conditions: no "ifs" and no "buts." Love never says: "Fulfill these requirements, and then I will love you." Love is unconditional giving - on the part of the one who possess true love. Love is like breathing: when it happens you simply feel loving and loved. It does not matter, who comes close to one under the influence of love - a sinner or a saint - he begins feeling the vibrations of love and experiences peace and joy. Though love helps one to relate to others in a genuine way, love is not a relationship. A relationship involves a structure, whereas love is unstructured. Thus, love relates, but never becomes a structured relationship. As a matter of fact, relationship as a

structured reality destroys love. Love helps one to be available totally for humanity, nature and universe. In this manner, as the overflow of meditation, love - when directed towards the totality of humanity - becomes the source of pace and happiness of all in the world.

Practice of meditation and love, as its overflow, can solve all humanity crises in multicultural traditions of the world, and bring peace and harmony in social living. It is important that our educational systems must introduce the practice of meditation into the academic curriculum of different stages of education. When every student is taught the art of meditation and practices it as a daily way of life, it will lead to the overflow of love in the heart and mind of every person. When the spiritual energy of love is released, everyone becomes operative in a cumulative manner, which, in turn, will produce amazing results in bringing peace and harmony to the world that is multicultural. Thus, humanity crisis will disappear, when the effects of the art of meditation and resulting overflow of love takes hold of every person in the world. As educators, we will do well to recognize this and act accordingly so that we may do our bit to promote universal brotherhood, peace within oneself, and harmony among people and states, thereby save humanity from the crisis situation.

## Multiculturalism and Cultural Chauvinism

Cultural chauvinism and hegemony of culture are threats to the survival of multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a social practice. They are multidimensional and manifest in different forms. One of the oldest forms of cultural hegemony is political domination. For instance, an imperialist country uses political domination as a means to impose the values of the imperialist culture over its colonies. They influence the social mind of the colonized people by presenting the ethnicity and culture of the dominated nations as far inferior to those of the colonizers. The imperialists do this by making the educational system of the colonies to serve their own interests rather than the colonized people. Education does not help the natives to develop their full potential, as it has no connection to culture and tradition of the native people. Hence, the educational system, the colonizers put in place for the natives, leads to psychological and

cultural alienation. Similarly the educational system does not train the colonized people for the highest level jobs, which are reserved for the colonizers. Hence, the natives are forced to work at the lower levels and accept less-paying jobs, which deprive them of economic security and better standard of living. Thus, political domination effectively brings about cultural, ethnic and economic domination the colonized people.

Another manifestation of cultural chauvinism is "nationalism." It not only shows intolerance to minority cultures, but also interprets the character of the nation in terms of the majority culture, its practices and its religion. Besides, this type of cultural hegemony uses any means to supersede the nation's sub-cultural heterogeneity. In doing so, nationalism destroys the multidimensional character of the nation. Hegemony of nationalism can particularly come against a minority group, when a subgroup belongs to this minority group is branded as indulging in antisocial activities. This can, in a practical life situation, bring about discrimination and denial of social justice, besides violent attack on the members of that minority group. These events are happening in every nation-state in the world and are reported by the media on a regular basis. Thus, nationalism amounts to intolerance of heterogeneity and promotion of homogeneity in the life of the nation. When the nationalists' reluctance to accept heterogeneity in the nation turns into active and hostile measures to marginalize the cultures, food habits and thought patters of the minority groups, then there comes about active discrimination of these groups. In this manner, nationalism often in the pretext of patriotism, undermines the rights of minority cultural groups and destroys the multicultural character of the nation.

Another manifestation of cultural hegemony is the "commodity-culture" of capitalist economic domination that has become popular with emergence of globalization. It proclaims a pragmatic model of "good life" and insists everyone to follow. Like a silent dictator, it orders people to accept the "culture of commodity fetishism." It engages people in a rat race to paste themselves to the existing capitalist frame of wellbeing and insists to develop an outlook that sees everything in terms of individual self interest, in the process putting an end to the basic values of life, present in all traditional cultures. It appears to be in favor of global village and global brotherhood.

However, in fact, the aim of this brotherhood is not humanity - humane solidarity - but the extension of market. The capitalist economy, by its very nature, can staple itself to basic human interest only in so far as such interest does not challenge the capitalist interest. The popular culture of twenty-first century is actually a "commodity-culture" that uses humanitarian feelings and sentiments to fulfill its own purpose. It has no inhibition in shaking its hand even with feudal, fundamental and racist sentiment if that helps expansion of market and achieving supernormal profit. This popular capitalist culture casts a shadow on true cultural identity. It influences people to imitate a particular life style, which is guided by a pragmatic philosophy having least concern for humanity and human solidarity.

Thus, it establishes itself as a foe to cultural and human identity. Human identity goes beyond cultural barriers. This "going beyond" cultural barriers does not entail losing that particular identity. Instead, this "going beyond" always demands the recognition of one's own cultural identity, since the ultimate goal of such "going beyond" is human solidarity and no solidarity is possible without the recognition of cultural identity.

It is important to counter the different manifestations of cultural hegemony and chauvinism that threaten the ideal of multi-culturalism. The call to be human and humane in multicultural social and world order demands mutual recognition and respect for cultural diversity. It is improper to subscribe to a singularist culture at the expanse of indigenous and minority groups. National identity can never be an identity claimed as superior by any single group that excludes all other groups. We must remember that nationalism does not exist on one single group identity, but it is inclusive of all the cultural identities of the nation.

Thus, national identity that is inclusive of the aspirations of diverse cultural groups of the nation would bring about a healthier atmosphere for the overall development of the nation; but if the national identity is exclusive, then it can bring disaster for the nation in the long-run. Hence, both the minority and the majority groups must acquire the wisdom to acknowledge and respect each others' heritages and stand together so as not to allow vested interests to destroy their solidarity as human beings, and the unity and integrity of their nations.

## Multiculturalism and Globalization

Despite its positive contributions, globalization has brought about worldwide poverty, hunger, death of children, unemployment, misery, and the destruction of nature. Many people are threatened with economic ruin, social disarray, political marginalization, ecological catastrophe and moral collapse. Besides, the globalists propagate one-sided notion of development, focusing only on the economic aspect while ignoring all the other aspects of human existence. They stress the fact of becoming more global and call for homogenization, in the process suppress minority cultures and identities. Since globalization focuses on the whole and ignores the diverse cultural groups, fundamentalism and intolerance has been on the rise. Likewise, since the thrust of globalization in making the whole world one market for goods and services, it is opposed and antithetical to the spiritual concept of global consciousness. Thus, globalization brings about a number of negative consequences on the individuals and the society; and it is necessary to find solutions to these problems.

True solution to the problems brought about by globalization can be found in cultivating and practicing genuine concept of international development and bringing about a global ethics to guide the destiny of the people of the world. We need to understand the concept of development seen in the international context of globalization. Development is the realization of human potential leading to the enhancement of the individual personality and the society as a whole. The realization of human potential is a continuous process. Therefore, development is also a continuous process. Human development ought to be measurable both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Development should bring to the individuals results that can enrich their lives. Development must lead to removal of social disadvantages of the people.

The valid method to identify development in a society is to identify the upliftment of the conditions of downtrodden masses of the society. When we have clarity regarding the social goals and make concerted efforts through social action to achieve these goals, there can come about development, which can be assessed objectively. Development should not be understood as the enhancement of any one nation or one section of people. Thus,

development should get linked with the legitimate aspirations of the masses. True developmental programs should bring about the absence of those regressive elements that benumb human initiative for betterment and that hinder the growth of the humans as responsible persons. Development should not mean only the economic or the scientific development. Too much obsession with economic development may result in the destruction of those values, which distinguish man from other creatures in nature.

Similarly belief in pure scientific development, and the attempts to have a society based only on scientific premises would create a monstrous world, which in turn, would eradicate all those checks and values that have characterized civilized human societies for ages. Development, in the international context, has to be a multidimensional proposition that is broad enough to cover the whole gamut of values that must guide the life and activity of the human person. Too specialized and narrow targets of development may result in dehumanizing the human being. Human development has to reflect the emotional, the intellectual, the economic and religious requirements of man within the social reality. It should be seen that no one aspect is allowed to submerge the other aspects within it and make them functionless.

To bring about genuine development in the global level, humanity is in need of a global ethics. By global ethics, we do not mean a global ideology that amounts to a single unified religion beyond all existing religions, which would dominate all other religions of the world. A global ethics consists in arriving at a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes. Without such fundamental consensus on an ethics, sooner or later every community will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship, and development itself will be in peril. Even though the global ethic provides no direct solution for all the immense problems of the world, it does supply the moral foundation for a better individual and global order - a vision, which can lead women and men away from despair and the world away from chaos.

## Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion

Building social cohesion in a multicultural society is vital for the peaceful and harmonious existence of diverse cultural groups that

make up the social order. Social cohesion is about all citizens and for all citizens. A holistic view of social cohesion should consider and incorporate not only cultural and linguistic diversity, but also every other type of diversity that is found within all communities. Any attempt to bring social cohesion in a multicultural society must include the country in its entirety; and no section of the society should feel sidelined, neglected and excluded. Spiritual humanism, interreligious dialogue and individual reformation can serve as means to effectively bring about social cohesion in a multicultural society.

Spiritual humanism recognizes the divine within every human beings and it upholds the sanctity and equality of human life. Vedantic religion express this truth in two great sayings: "I am *Brahman*" (*Aham Brahmasi*) and "That art Thou" (*Tat Tvam asi*). The sacred scripture of the Christians, the Bible, expresses this truth as: "God created man in his own image and likeness." Our con-sciousness that the other is also the divine and "made in God's image and likeness" should make us realize that the other person - though practices another religion, belongs to another caste, speaks another language or comes from another race - is equal to us in every way because God has created all of us equal.

The secular humanism, without this spiritual foundation will degenerate into an enlightened form of self-interest. Spiritual humanism seeks to make our life richer and meaningful without defining life's goal and purpose. It embraces the whole of humanity, irrespective of race, culture, country, religion or social affiliation. For the spiritual humanist, the world is the family of Mother Earth and there is no room for any discrimination based on difference among people. In this manner, when guided by the spiritual humanism, we choose the best in every culture and religion; accept each other as equal before God, and establish an intercultural life of social amicability and peaceful coexistence. Thus, spiritual humanism will enhance social cohesion in the society and the world at large.

Interreligious dialogue consists in bringing together the reli-gions in matters of education, training, socialization, charity work, and the like. Interreligious dialogue aims at developing a common religious view of the actual processes taking place in the country and in the world. Dialogue of religions happening in the public space gives a joint certificate of deep religious truths and the possible

influences of these truths in the life of society and the state. One of the major issues relating to interreligious dialogue is the question of the principles on the basis of which it should take place. Generally there are three principles. They are: tolerance and mutual respect; equality in dialogue; and political neutrality of the participants in the dialogue. Interreligious dialogue takes place at various levels: the first, the dialogue between the leaders of religions; the second, the dialogue between believers of religions; and the third, the "dialogue" between the forms of socially significant activities of different religions.

Let us pay attention to the second level of interreligious dialogue - a dialogue between believers of different religions. This dialog is specific; it seems to be invisible. You could even say that it is not happening. However, it is this level of dialogue, in the end, is at the center of interreligious dialogue. At the first glance, the believers of different religions interact casually with each other. One or another religious organization lives its own religious life; the faithful who belong to a particular religious community adhere to their religion; and very little they are interested in other religions.

Yet, in practice this is not the case. The existence of other religions forces to respond to them. Believers of different religions, not even in their direct contact with each other, conduct correspond-dence in faith-dialogue; they do not compete with each other as to whose faith is better; but just know that there are a number of people who profess a different faith. These believers are a group of people - the congregation of different religions - are very close to each other, as interreligious ideals of a variety of religions have much in common. Between flocks of these religions living in a community, conceptually speaking, there is no contradiction, but there is agreement, based on their faith in God. Thus, genuine interreligious dialogue contributes to peace between peoples and religions; stabilizes the society; allows religions to know each other; and contributes to the moral quality of society, thereby establishes social cohesion in multicultural living.

Individual transformation leads to social cohesion in the society. According to Ramanuja, the founder of *Visishtadvaita* philosophy, man's attitude to God is the only parameter to his character. The religion of Ramanuja expounds that all human beings are equal. Only the bodies have differences, but all souls are equal in nature.

The words "religions" and "castes" are all for the bodies only and not for the souls.

Hence, there cannot be any disparity on the basis of caste and religion. When everyone looks at others as belonging to God, then there cannot be any bitterness in the society, which in turn, will pave the way for a perfect form of social justice because all look at every life, every body, every soul, and find God is in all of them. When all realize this truth and bring about transformation in their attitudes and actions, there cannot but come about genuine social cohesion in the multicultural social order.

In this manner, spiritual humanism, genuine interreligious dialogue and individual transformation of the human person will facilitate social cohesion in the multicultural society.

## Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue

Philosophical model of religious pluralism admits more than one adequate ways to reach the ultimate goal of human existence - Self-realization/God-realization. This does not mean that it is relativism; but rather it is the recognition that each path proposed by different religions, in its own right, is adequate for the final realization of human destiny. Besides, religious pluralism believes that the Ultimate Reality is one; but it can be known by many different names. Since God has many names and forms, we are to recognize that the difference among institutional religions as true. The acceptance of difference does not necessarily mean that they are mutually exclusive.

Likewise, religious pluralism upholds that all religions of the world are true because they all lead to the realization of the Ultimate Reality. Hence, unlike religious inclusivism and religious exclusivism, religious pluralism is open-ended, rests upon the direct experience of "otherness" and proposes to internalize our religious position by considering other's religious beliefs as similar to our own. In terms of expressions of religious experience, it proposes to relativize one's own religion by situating it within the broader infinite context of religious multiplicity. It provides room for the possibility of alternative worldviews.

The logic for such a pluralistic theory cannot allow us to say "if you are not with me, then you are against me." It conveys the

message that "if you are speaking differently, you are only suggesting an alternative way and you are not my enemy." Instead of phenomenal level identity in expression, it speaks of resemblances. "I-other" relationship may be reshaped as not mutually exclusive, but as mutually complementary. It can provide a solid philosophical foundation, on which the highest common aspirations of mankind and human unity can be built up. If we are to move creatively into the world, we need to learn the oneness of mankind. Instead of the anarchy of foolish competition leading to self-destruction; we need to realize the meaning of oneness in our selfhood.

In this manner, religious pluralism recognizes and proclaims respect for peoples' rights to diversity of culture; encourages self-criticism and self-determination; and increases one's range of choices. The practice of passive tolerance to others' faith is not enough for initiating either an intra-religious or interreligious understanding through dialogue; but a genuine dialogue calls for the acceptance of other religions - which implies the recognition of the essential identity among religions and the so-called difference from the "other" is only external and peripheral. Hence, we can speak of the other, speak with the other and speak about the other as equals.

Thus, religious pluralism is an open recognition that different faith communities live in proximity and face common issues and problems. In this new dimension, it does not aim at achieving agreement, but on achieving relationship based on the bond of love, compassion and empathy. This approach stands for something, which lies in a common orientation to diversity and not in its abolition. We are to accept all religions and sects as they are, with all their differences. Interreligious conflicts arise, when we refuse to accept plurality of our temperaments; when we hold that our religion is the only true religion; and consider other religions are either as false or inferior in status.

Besides, religious pluralism is important for its receptivity and openness towards other traditions, and its willingness to recognize and respond to the presence of truth in them. Pluralistic approach can provide us a wider range of alternatives, a practical model for maintenance of social harmony and communal peace, particularly in a multi-religious society. This kind of religious pluralism can serve as a solid foundation of true secularism, where one practices one's

religion; and where one does not prevent others to practice their faith. This sense of religious pluralism though encourages sects, it does not allow sectarianism. It inspires us to work for a religious cosmopolitanism.

This model of religious pluralism is a precondition for inter-religious dialogue. Interreligious dialogue is primarily a cooperative, constructive and positive interaction among the people of different faith. Hence, it is imperative to admit the logic of religious pluralism to make interreligious dialogue effective. Humility, empathy and recognition of common sharable grounds in spite of differences are some of the conditions admitted for any meaningful dialogue. Inter-religious dialogue demands that we look into the blind spots of our traditions through the eyes of another. It demands that we are secure enough in "where we have come from" and risk-venturing by moving towards "where we have never been." Genuine dialogue requires a commitment to our personal "ism" that is strong enough to allow us to suspend belief and step beyond the "ism" to meet "what is" in the other. All these are prerequisites for genuine interfaith dialogue.

This type of pluralistic understanding and dialogue would initiate, slowly but steadily, a common spiritual journey into the depth level of our spiritual being-hood. We cannot deny that inquisitiveness, catholicity of mind and the implicit conviction that 'truth' has ulterior expressions in form of alternative discourses. It is always imperative for interreligious understanding and peace in a multi-religious society that the followers of each religion should have the opportunity to know fundamentals of other religions. Plurality of religion would, then, be rendered as a thing of beauty on the basis of common sharable grounds instead of differences. There is no question of dominance by any particular religion and differences are to be overcome through constant discussion with mutual respect. We are to work for collective good and to give up the belief that our faith is more genuine and true than that of others. We are to cultivate the belief that my religion is only one among many.

## Integrated Multicultural Eduction

Integrated education for any multicultural society must develop in students qualities, which will enable them to bear worthily the

responsibility of democratic citizenship. Any nation's path to secular democratic republic is not an easy one. It requires many intellectual, social and moral qualities. A democratic citizen should have the understanding and intellectual integrity to differentiate truth from falsehood, and facts from propaganda. Besides, education should facilitate students to reject the dangerous appeal of fanaticism and prejudice. The citizen must develop scientific attitude of mind to think objectively and base his/her conclusion on the tested *data*. Citizen should not be confined to the old and the new; but must have the courage to reject whatever arrests justice and progress. Therefore, democracy has to lay stress on education for living an integrated life. It should take into account the psychological, social, cultural, emotional and practical needs of the citizens. Since the individual can achieve greatness for oneself and others only by living and working with others, he/she should be helped to cultivate qualities, such as cooperation, social sensitivity and tolerance.

Hence, the most important and urgent need is to transform education so as to relate it to life, needs and aspiration of the people. This, in turn, would make education a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for realization of the national goals. The following four-fold program would facilitate this endeavor: the first is relating education to productivity; the second consist in strengthening social and national integration through educational program; the third is modernizing students socially by awakening curiosity and building up skills; and the fourth consisting in developing social, moral and spiritual values.

To achieve integrated multicultural education with the help of the above-said four-fold program, the following goals have been formulated: developing responsibility for the nation's social order; developing reverence to the environment/mother earth; developing acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity; developing respect for human dignity; developing a historical perspective; strengthening cultural and intercultural competence; encountering racism, sexism and discrimination; building social action skills; and increasing awareness of the state of the nation, planet and integrated life. The main emphasis of these goals is to pave the way for respect and appreciation for various cultures within the nation, by strengthening cultural consciousness and multicultural dependence.

Integrated teaching and learning can become an exciting instrument for life process. It is about learning within life, as one seeks to integrate education into life. We can speak of five integrated factors in regard to teaching-learning process in a multicultural society: maximizing the learner's experience in real life rather than in artificial academic setting; integrating academic knowledge or theoretical concepts in real life situations; ensuring that teaching and learning are related to a particular gift of the learner; establishing inter-relationship between one area of learning with another and to break down the wall that is built in the artificially segregated curricula; and employing modes of delivering education, even those transcending classroom, for total learning to take place. Integrated education must include holism, interconnected curricula and relevance to the social and physical context, which would make education an integral part of the life process itself. Integrated education is defined as education that promotes learning and teaching in non-fragmented ways that embrace notions of holism, complexity and inter-connection.

Integrated education rejects the common emphasis on tran-smitted knowledge. Rather, it proposes that knowledge and meaning is constructed by the learner through the processes of interaction with others, the material, and the social and physical contexts. Integrated education calls to question the traditional gulfs between teacher and learner, and rejects the divisions between physiology, cognition, and emotion in the learning process. Furthermore integrated education embraces the links, rather than the divisions, between the academic disciplines, various subjects, objective epistemologies and methods of inquiry.

Based on the above discussion, we say that an integrated multi-cultural education should include the following. The teachers should know the complex characteristics of different groups of learners and the way in which race, ethnicity, language and social class interact to influence the learner's behavior. The school should ensure that all learners have equitable opportunities to learn and to meet high standards of learning processes. The curriculum should help the learner understand that knowledge is socially constituted and reflects the social, political and economic contents, in which they live and work.

Opportunities should be provided for extracurricular and co-curricular activities that develop and foster positive interracial relationships. The students should know that negative attitudes and other related biases have negative impact on racial and ethnic relations. The students should learn values, such as justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion and charity shared by all racial groups. Teachers should help students acquire the social skills needed for effective interaction with students from other racial, ethnic cultural and language group. The teacher should use multiple culturally sensitive techniques to assess complex cognitive and social skills. The schools should provide opportunities to students from different racial, ethnic, cultural and language groups to interact socially under conditions designed to reduce fear and anxiety. The school's organization strategies should ensure that decision-making is widely shared in order to create a caring environment for students. The leaders should develop strategies that all public schools, regardless of their locations, are funded equally. Putting some of the strategies into practice, we would be able to build an integrated multicultural education.

## Pathways for Intercultural Education

Multiculturalism has become a crucial problem of universal scope because its current relevance and necessity is questioned in many nations. However, there are two possible responses to the issue of multiculturalism. The first consists in that the nations facing the issue of multiculturalism close their eyes to the problem, with all the consequences this engenders from it. The second involves the nations taking the necessary measures to analyse and investigate the problem, using conceptual and empirical approaches, preferably combined with projects in the field of active research. The outcomes of such research can directly lead to recommendations and guidelines for action that would find solutions to the problem of multiculturalism.

Implementing multicultural education in the educational system of a nation is comparatively simple as long as goals and objectives are stated in a general way. Children are to be educated and brought up under circumstances which, to an optimum degree, are beneficial to their personal and social development. This statement includes

compliance with the need to make specific provisions of both, "ethnic" and "national" quality. In closed societies, this demand can be conceived as a linear task. This implies that education is focused on applying generally accepted traits of ethnic and national identities based on the habits and value patterns of the child's immediate environment. It is true that the complexity of this task should not be underestimated, particularly in a period marked by internal revolutionary changes in many regions and countries. Nevertheless, radical though they are, the "mono-ethnic" and "mono-national" restrictions of such changes permit, basically, a certain predictive distinctness with regard to educational and curricular planning.

The complexity of the task multiplies, wherever people of different ethnic identities have to coexist in one territory, particularly when political status makes explicit or implicit difference between dominant majorities and non-dominant minorities. Moreover, it is the scope of the territory - local, provincial or national - which poses different problems and entails many kinds of strategies. There is, however, a common problem to be solved everywhere, which concerns multicultural education as a universal task. It is complicated because it has to contribute to peaceful coexistence. It can be tackled in a reasonable way, only when it is considered as a pathway for intercultural education, focused on the criteria of ethnicity and nationality.

While multicultural education is restricted to policies providing conditions for "coexistence," in its literal meaning, the intercultural education is directed towards co-action and cooperation. As a component of humanistic education, it is focused on the acknowledgement and development of the basic values of human rights, freedom, democracy and solidarity. In this conceptual range, it is closely interrelated to and identified with "education to pluralism" to be reinforced by an active and dynamic mastering of coexistence among people and nations. Moreover, by education we should facilitate the younger generation to be ready to reconcile cultures in their intrapersonal developments and lives.

Thus, multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education, which holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education. It is based on social justice, educational equity, and respect for thought. More specifically, the components required in

ensuring a multicultural education are: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering of school culture and social culture.

It seems apparent that each element is related to the others, and each requires considerable attention, particularly when thinking about the efforts of conflict resolution in the world. In this paradigm, to be tolerant in social interactions, to give value to every opinion, and to not criticize and object to others seems to be the distinguishing features of a multicultural society. When people are overly harsh, the result is destruction. When people are constructive, they bring richness and reflection. The idea that "if you do not like something, make a better one" fits very well with the idea of multicultural education. Here, the task is to reduce the form, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination between in-groups and out-groups. It is a more effective education for a changing society.

## Organicism: An Integral Approach to Human and Cosmic Progress

According to Indian philosophical perspective, reality is a symbiosis of unity and multiplicity. Multiplicity originates from, situated and embedded in, and sustained by unity that is all-inclusive. It is an organic unity - a multiplicity-in-unity - as multiplicity issues forth from unity and is accommodated in unity in an orderly fashion. Hence, the world we live in is a *cosmos* and not a chaos; a universe and not a multiverse. As "one and many" are inevitable facts of our experience, the philosophical approach called "Organicism" *(S'arirakavada)* does not see them as opposites but as complementary, and accommodates them in a holistic and integral system, in which the primordial unity manifests and expresses itself in and through multiplicity of diverse forms and functions. The analogy of a living organism best explains this philosophical approach. A living organism is neither an assemblage of scattered and unrelated multiple parts, nor is it a barren unity or an abstraction that is bereft of the multiplicity of its organs.

It is a concrete unity that realizes itself in and through the multiplicity. Just as a part is not intelligible except through the whole of which it is a part, so also a whole is not conceivable without any reference to its constituent parts. In the same way, the organs are not intelligible except as inhering in an organism and the organism also

is not conceivable without any reference to its organs. Thus, Organicism regards one and many as members of an organic whole each having a being of its own, but a being that implies a relation to the other. This holistic and integral approach is based on the principles of interrelation and coordination, mutuality and coopera-tion, reciprocity and interdependence.

Unlike absolutism where there is no manifoldness; dualism where there is no mutuality, but only a rigid bifurcation; and pluralism where there is no interrelatedness, but monadic exclusive-ness - in Organicism there is mutual appreciation, caring and sharing; and organic interrelation and interdependence. The chief value of Organicism is that it recognizes the inalienable individuality and the reality of manifoldness of finite spirits and matter, and assigns them a proper place, function and value in the unifying framework of an all-embracing unity without in any way destroying its wholeness. The unity differentiates itself into multiple finite entities without being exhausted by them, just like a whole which is not a mere summation of the parts. It is both immanent and transcendent. The multiplicity is not annihilated, but preserved and protected in the unity, derives its being, discharges its functions and realizes its value within the concrete unity. Both are necessary to each other and realize themselves in and through the other.

Multiple consequences stem from this unitive and integral vision of the world. Seen from this unitive perspective the universe is viewed as a corporate coexistence; the human existence is seen as finite-infinite and multidimensional; the value-schema of a society as founded on culture; tradition is visualized as transmitting culture; progress is considered as an evolution based on tradition being rooted in culture; and the relatedness of human existence, culture and nature. Thus, this unitive perspective of reality aims at the pursuit of integral excellence as the goal of human life and the cosmic process.

The pursuits of excellence, striving for betterment and attain-ment of quality of life have been perennial human concerns and aspirations. All human endeavors in diverse fields of culture and civilization have been directed towards realization of this goal. Freedom from imperfection and consequent suffering has been the chief motivating factors for all cognitive enterprises and technolo-gical advancements. Though every human being cherishes and

strives for these and posits them as the goal of life, their realization requires planned corporate efforts. It cannot be a single individual enterprise. A single individual may work out a plan; but its execution has to be collective. Moreover, this goal implies attainment of excellence and the best possible quality of life not only for the individual, but also for the entire *cosmos*, since the two are interrelated, interdependent and constitute an organic whole.

Therefore, it calls for collective efforts. This being so, one cannot attempt to realize a good quality of life keeping in view an isolated individual, society, nation or region. It has to be a global vision and a universal realization without any prejudice to any one section of the universe. Everyone has to participate and partake in the fruits of this venture, as it is a collective enterprise. Everyone should be able to contribute by manifestation of one's capabilities through a dynamic discovery of one's potentials, being assisted in this process by the society and natural surroundings. So, when we plan for social progress, our outlook should be global, though our performance has to be at the local level. Genuine social progress consists in the realization of universal wellbeing, in the sense of care and concern for all, a feeling of oneness with all, and an attitude of sharing and cooperating.

In this manner, the all-embracing unitive perspective of reality is an integral approach that aims at achieving the wellbeing of every individual in relation to every other reality in the universe. Thus, the individual progress enhances cosmic progress and the cosmic progress enhances the individual progress, as the individual is an integral part of the *cosmos*.

### Spiritual Globalization: Means to Embrace Cultural Diversities

When we speak of spiritual globalization we do not mean globalization understood in materialistic terms - in the sense of liberalization of trade and commerce, and the proliferation of market economy. Here, we speak of globalization as the spiritual ideal to be embraced by everyone who lives in this world. It consists in inculcating the attitude of seeing self-sameness everywhere leading to global unity. It is the realization of fundamental unity of the entire *cosmos*, human beings and other living beings. It is a mode of cosmic coexistence with a spirit of mutual support, mutual sacrifice, mutual

caring and sharing. It is an enlightened conduct and a life of contentment attained by great sages, which made them constantly engaged in universal wellbeing; feel happy in the happiness of others; feel sad in the miseries of others; always thinks of the good of others and act for their welfare. The seers and sages, spiritual and religious leaders, all over the world have enjoined this mode of living. The moral codes prescribed in all the cultural and religious traditions in all ages and places aim at the cultivation of this mindset of universal affinity and self-sameness.

Thus, spiritual globalization is not a monopolistic patenting and bulldozing of multiplicity in overt or covert form. It consists in accommodating and harmonizing multiplicity within the organic unity of the entire *cosmos*. It stands for coordination rather than uniformity of thought and action. It envisages no antagonism or incompatibility between one part and the other. Like one organ and the others in an organism, all are perceived as interconnected, interrelated and interdependent elements of one and the same whole, constituting a single field, *continuum* and unity.

The analogy of a living organism highlights the true nature of spiritual globalization. It explains the "multiplicity-in-unity" - not "unity-in-multiplicity" - many situated in One, not as separated, segregated and scattered elements, but in mutual openness and reciprocity, supplementing and complementing one another. Here, conflicts and disorders may not be unnatural; but their resolutions and harmony may also not be unrealizable. Spiritual globalization calls for propagation, profession and practice of a global ethics. Besides, it implies the "universalizability of ethical norms" and adherence to them without exception.

Thus, spiritual globalization is not only a viewpoint, but also a course of action, a policy instrument and a world-wide movement for a new social and world order, based on enlightened principles of conduct. It aims at enhancing the quality of life, not only for human beings, but also for the entire *cosmos*. This calls for newer formulations of global ethical norms, which will regulate the entire gamut of the conduct of human persons among themselves, and human beings and rest of the *cosmos*, both animate beings and inanimate things. This is the precursor of the emergence of a global society, in which the entire world can be experienced as one single family. This is possible through the realization of selfsameness and

cultivation of the spirit of sacrifice. Besides, this necessitates a trans-valuation of values, a paradigm shift in values, a changed mindset, an enlarged vision of *cosmo*-centricity, an enlightened view and a way of life - which involves a proper training of body and mind by illuminating knowledge and liberating wisdom. It calls for a total transformation of matter and mind, and the realization of spiritual oneness. It is widening of the self as a totality, from "I" to "We," from one self to total self, and from individual to cosmic.

In achieving this goal, there should be no deprivation and exploitation; no sorrows and sufferings that are unmitigated; and no injustice and discrimination unabated. Figuratively speaking, spiritual globalization is the realization of heaven on earth. In this integrated global living there is an equitable sharing of global material and spiritual resources, and holistic sustenance can be provided to all the world's inhabitants, in a just, fair and equitable manner. However, this is possible only through the postulation of a new value-schema other than the one we are presently pursuing. It is the restoration and reformulation of the classical value-schema that we have forgotten. It is practice of new ethics that tends all and cares for all. This has been the "cherished desire of the enlightened minds" throughout the history of humankind. It is not a *utopian* dream; but an ideal realizable in actual practice through proper and adequate education.

When spiritual globalization becomes a reality the fundamental unity of the entire *cosmos* will be actualized; and all forms of diversities will be integrated and embraced into the unity, without any destruction to their individual identities and uniqueness.

## Future of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism, as a political philosophy and a social doctrine, takes into account diversity and cultural differences, and define itself as an alternative to total assimilation of diversity by the dominant group. However, presently the possibility of multiculturalism being recognized as a political philosophy and a social doctrine is very slim. For, there is a big move from many countries to prevent further immigration and the nationalistic thinking is on the increase in many of these countries. Many nation-states challenge the "doctrine of state multiculturalism" and propose the doctrine of "muscular

liberalism," which calls for bringing minority cultural groups into the national mainstream. This trend does not usher in good prospect for multiculturalism.

Similarly, liberal ideas of toleration, freedom of conscience and freedom of association challenge multiculturalism's concern for diverse groups and protecting their rights. Thus, liberal reaction to multiculturalism comes from antiimigration policies of different nations-states, nationalistic thinking prevailing in many countries, and from groups that over-emphasize individual rights over rights of groups. These opposition from liberalism seems to threaten the possible continuance of multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a social practice.

Clearly the concept of multiculturalism is unable to deal with these voices that go against it. At the same time, in the twenty-first century, seclusion is not an option anymore. Globalization - set in motion by liberalist ideology - would continue to have its effects on the world scene: further immigration cannot be totally prevented; the people of diverse culture already present in different nations cannot be ignored; and their rights cannot be restricted. The ideology of multiculturalism is the most recent solution to the problems of minority groups that grew from listening to them and respecting their cultural practices.

Therefore, it does not seek to homogenize diverse cultural groups, but to integrate them into society by maintaining their cultural diversity, thereby make them loyal to the nation-state they have become part of. Multiculturalism aims at preventing frictions among different cultural groups; and uses this diversity to bolster the economy of the nations of the world. Hence, multiculturalism has not failed yet, but it must adapt to the changing circumstances. Countering "muscular liberalism," multiculturalism must bring about a balance between universality of the nation-states and the difference among cultural groups. This "approach of balance" does not impose one's culture on the other, but invites the majority and the minority groups to learn about and from each others' heritages. They must not try to convert each other; but must converse with each other. This approach envisages a universality among people and their cultures that involves not a homogenization, but a diversity shared and understood *via* tolerant dialogue and understanding. In real life situations, social integration may be better achieved by

attempting to mutually *understand* one another's values and practices, so as to *bridge* the differences in cultures, rather than to remove them. Every group must acknowledge the fact that today's world is multicultural and act accordingly.

If we take such an approach to multiculturalism, it definitely has a future and would facilitate diverse people to live in peace and harmony for generations to come.

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# Index

# The Council for Research
# in Values and Philosophy

**Purpose**

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

**Projects**

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life.* Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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