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CONCEPTUALIZING THE FACETS OF INDIAN CULTURE

APARNA SINGH

Research Scholar, Department of English, D.D.U. Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur

Email- aparnasingh893@gmail.com



APARNA SINGH

ABSTRACT

The strength of Indian culture lies in its infinite power of assimilation, unification and expansion. Since the inception it is growing through an over-widening process of contiguity and interchange. It has tremendous capacity of holding diverse forms and ideologies as a single force. The axiological nature of Indian culture maps it all-enveloping and all-encompassing. It has evolved through the great ideals of spirituality which has become its backbone. The edifice of our culture is erected on the strong pillars of experience, realization and inner- conversion. Here the culture is not mere outer but comprises all the internal realizations about the mysteries of life and its blend with regular routine which is in form of scripture is preserved and in to say in psychological terms it is being transferred as "Collective Consciousness" from generation to generations.

The paper attempts to explore the salient feature of Indian culture for making it universal in its approach.

Key Word: Aryavarta, culture, assimilation, unification, expansion, divine unity, universal fraternity

Since time immemorial, India has been the land of the discovery of ultimate truth. The sages have realized that every man is potentially divine. There is a divine spark in every human being. The Rishies of Aryavarta proclaimed the ultimate truth that every individual is a part of the infinite, the supernal consciousness i. e. the Bramhan. Each and every being is connected to the divine in the thread of oneness. The beings are the beads of rosary and He is the thread which holds all. Thus the universal fraternity prevails in the world. This truth finds explanation in the Upanishadas which explicates that the Supreme has manifested Himself in various forms though the essence is one and only He, Himself. Rigveda declares;

"The truth is one though sages call it by various names." [1]

The super soul created human soul i.e. Atman and the goal of every Atman, is to merge with the Parmatman, the supernal being. Each and everything is part of Him, not a single leaf is without His presence. The very first mantra of the *Isavasyopanishad* emphatically propounds this truth;

"The whole universe dwells in Him, nothing is above or beyond Him." [2]

On the basis of this realization India has developed the spirit of love, compassion and universal brotherhood. The ideals of Indian culture do not discriminate on the basis of external cast, creed, color and nationality. It has always given a

powerful voice for co-existence. In India, co-existence is always meant for equal participation of each and every being in all aspects of life; completing complementing and balancing each other to achieve the ultimate goal of life. Pointing to this concept of co-existence, the Rishi in the last sutra of *Rigveda*, propagates; "Let's walk together, talk together, let minds be united, let your endeavor be with one another, let your heart and soul be one, so that we all might be happy."(10-191)[3]

This concept of co-existence has found expression in the foundation of Indian culture. No one is greater or lesser, superior or inferior to anyone in any context. This leads Indian masses to establish the atmosphere of religious harmony among several religious sects and faiths without intruding anyone's line of rights and sentiments. This homogeneity of Indian civilization has tied its people in thread of unity, despite the existence of the diversity of cast, creed, religion and traditions. Indian scriptures announce this ambiance on global level as the concept of 'Vasudhaiv kutumbkam' and have accepted the whole world as a one big family. Indian culture's canvas is not limited to Indian geographical region but it has enlarged itself and embraced the entire humanity through its principles of universal acceptance and appliance. This is the practical form of the concept "Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam" of Maha Upnishad where it is encrypted that "it is mine and this belongs to other; such views are kept only by the people having narrow mind and small heart, however to the one who are kind, gentle and have a enlarged worldview, the whole earth is like family". [4]

India has always been breath with the spirit of brotherhood for its early days of civilization. The sense or spirit of fraternity is the outcome of the spiritual awakening in India that all human beings are the offspring of the one eternal being. Therefore with their origin they are bound in one chain of fraternity. This is the one of the important guiding principles of Indian culture and learning tradition. The American transcendentalists, Emerson and Whitman were inspired by these principles and felt their importance for the whole humanity. These thoughts and concepts have found a grand

expression in their literature as Emerson explicates the concept of cosmic unity in 'Each and All';

All are needed by each one,

Nothing is fair or good alone...

Beauty through my senses stole,

I yeilded myself to the perfect whole. (38)[5]

And the same explication we find in the poem Rhodhora, where he presents a clear cut explanation of the reason for existence and placement of things in a particular order in this universe. He asserts;

Why thou wert there, o rival of the rose

I never thought to ask, I never knew,

But in my simple ignorance suppose

The selfsame power that brought me there
brought you.(40)[6]

Whitman, the other master poet and self realized saint of America who was very much influenced by Vedantic thoughts and philosophy, lifelong practiced and preached the divinity of human soul and spiritual concept of liberty, equality and fraternity. He realized the fact after going through the Indian scriptures and Emerson's writings that there is the same divine potentiality inherent in every being so each one is equal, free and being the offspring of same Supreme Being, is united in the chain of universal brotherhood. In his *Song of Myself*, he expresses the sense of divinity, universal unity and brotherhood in these lines;

I hear and behold God in every object...

In faces of men and women I see God and in
my own face in the glass...(329)[7]

&

Do you see, o my brothers and sister...?

"There is that in me-I do not know what it is-
but I know it is in me....

It is without name, it is a word unsaid, it is
not in any dictionary,

It is not chaos or death-it is form, union, plan-
it is eternal life-it is happiness. (352)[8]

The spirit of brotherhood is the basis of the spirit of humanity which is paramount in Indian culture. India possesses it since its making of a civilization and this particular quality of Indian culture enables India to have equal respect for all religious faiths and tradition of every part of the globe. Whether Islam, Christianity, Persian or Jews, all are flourishing and blossoming in India on their own terms and

trends with all possible kinds of religious, political and social freedom. Swami Vivekananda pointed it out in his Chicago Parliament of Religion in the following words;

I am proud to belong to a nation which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal acceptance but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the prosecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth.(C.W.20) [9]

Indian culture is like a beautiful living vase where flowers of variant colors and kinds identical to various casts, creeds, religions, customs and traditions, are flourishing and blossoming together, not contradictory but complementary to each other. The whole world is in accord with the love of India which does not believe in exclusion. The culture is all inclusive and has an enormous power of assimilation. It has enriched itself since ages by the onslaught of various socio- religious and cultural influences on its soil. Various cultures and traditions have found shelter and acceptance in India and they have gradually become a part of Indian culture. From the beginning, Indian land was intruded by several invaders like Sakas, Hunas, Greeks, Turks, Mughals, British and many more. The cause of attraction of these invaders was prosperity and rich natural resources of India, known as Golden Bird in ancient days. With the passage of time, the Indian soil made them to lose their distinct nationality and dissolve themselves in this culture as Indians only. Indian culture has expanded and enriched itself through the assimilation of these cultures and traditions. It has now turned into a vast ocean in which various castes, creeds, religions and traditions have merged and acquired a unified shape. The sloka from Shivmahimstotra, quoted by Swami Vivekananda in his Chicago Address, presents it exactly;

As the different streams having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in sea, so o Lord! The different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear,

crooked or straight, all lead to thee.(V.S.20) [10]

The whole world is leading towards only the materialistic approach and Carpedium concept of life and turning into a heath or waste land, confronting with spiritual infertility. The contemporary world is surrounded by the flames of numerous problems leading towards the final explosion like communal revolts and civil wars. The spiritual sterility is the root cause of the sufferings of the whole human species. The world is standing at the point of a sleeping volcano with so many turbulences inside. The solution of these turbulences and problems is not the outer reforms or practice of certain legal laws and doctrines, but the inner transformation of the entire humanity. The material and outer progress will never provide the eternal peace and joy to the world. The humanity must investigate the root cause of these problems and their complete solutions. The fundamental principles of Indian culture address all the problems at global level. The application of these principles such as co-existence, universal brotherhood, tolerance and acceptance can bring harmony in all spheres of the globe, which is full of diversity. That will lead to actualize the concept of Vasudhaiv kutumbkam in the world and make the earth a one big family. The world must accept and adopt the solutions presented by Indian culture to resolve the problems of the day. Let us make a collective effort to establish peace and harmony in the whole world and to revive and rejuvenate the greater concept of Vasudhaiv kutumbkam.

To conclude, I would like to quote the prayer from the Puranas that sings for the well -being of each and peace for the whole world which has ever been the motive of every worshiper;

May everyone live in bliss,

May all be free from every kind of malice,

May all seek purity and look for well- being of others,

Let no one suffer from misery of any sort.

Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih! [11]

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