

Unity in Diversity

Essay No. 01

India is a big country. Her civilization is around 6000 years old. She has given birth to the world's most important cultures and religions. She has also accepted different cultures of the world. People of many races have come to India and settled here. She has absorbed different faiths, cults, beliefs, sects, religions, language, manners, lifestyles, etc. Unity and synthesis are the embodiment of Indian culture.

India's fundamental unity rests upon her peculiar type of culture. There is no single character or aspect that can be defined as culture. It is expressed through language, literature, religion, philosophy, customs, traditions and architecture. India has achieved cultural unity by fusion of many cultures. She has assimilated the good qualities from all cultures. Various cultural groups live side by side in India. This has made Indian society a multi-cultural society.

In India people of different religions live together. Hence, she has a multi-religious society. Besides Hinduism other religions like Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism have a large following in India. According to 2001 census Hinduism other religions like Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism have a large following in India. According to 2001 census Hinduism is practiced by more than 80.4 percent of the people there are 13.4 percent Muslim 2.3 percent Christians and 1.8 percent Sikhs. The rest of the people follow Buddhism, Jainism and other religions.

India is famous for religious festivals. Hindu festivals like Diwali, Dussehra, Holi, etc. are celebrated all over the world. Muslims celebrate Eid. Christians celebrate Easter and Christmas. Sikhs celebrate Guru Nanak Jayanti. Buddha Purnima and Mahavir Jayanti are celebrated by the Buddhists and the Jains respectively. During these festivals people exchange greetings forgetting their religious affiliations. That India is a fact from the preamble of our Constitution.

We find a kind of emotional unity in our country. The very name of our country India brings us emotionally close. We may be in any part of the world but we will always be called Indians no matter what religion we follow and what region we belong to. India's diversity has always been recognized as a source of its strength. When the British ruled India women and men from different cultural, religious and regional backgrounds came together to oppose them. India's freedom movement had thousands of people of different backgrounds in it. In his book *The Discovery*

imposed from outside but rather it is something deeper and within its fold widest tolerance of belief and custom is practiced and every verity acknowledged and even emphasized.

Independent India inherited a conservative community which followed the rigidities of the caste system and had diverse religions. The Indian Constitution gave paramount importance to secularism. It declares that there would be no state religion in India. The state will neither establish religions of its own nor confer any special patronage upon any particular religion. The typical Indian concept of secularism is defined as Sarva Dharma Samabhava.

The Indian civilization has always been based on religious and moral values. Herein lays its unity and strength. In all parts of the country, cultural unity the unity of the way of life and outlook transcends the vast diversity in faiths and beliefs at times bordering on superstition, magic, charms and other practices. One may travel from one part of the country to another and everywhere he will recognize a common thread in some aspect of life which makes him feel at home. This is because the Indian culture has preserved its fundamental character through the ages. We have experienced revolutionary economic and political changes in recent times but our past remains very much with us. Our rich cultural heritage has passed from one generation to another and in this process it has got nurtured and renewed.

Indian culture has remained alive and dynamic because it has always been tolerant of different cultures. It imbibed the good qualities of other cultures and constantly upgraded itself. Influence of various cultures has made it rich and vibrant. Significant contributions have been made to it by the Dravidians, Aryans, Greeks, Persians, Arabs, Mughals and Europeans. The Persian and Western influences on our art literature painting and dress have now become an integral part of our own culture.

At times we have witnessed conflicts and disturbances. Certain anti national and external forces try to disrupt the unity of the country by encouraging communal feelings and sentiments. The demolition of Babri Masjid, Mumbai blasts, Massacre of innocent Sikhs in the 1984 riots Gujarat riots of 2002, blasts in the capital of the country, terror attack in Mumbai etc. resulted in the loss of thousands of lives. The militancy problem in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East have further weakened the secular fabric of India. Terrorism should not be allowed to raise its ugly head and destroy our basic unity. We can overcome this problem if we bury our differences and work united for the unity and integrity of the country. In recent times there has been a cultural awakening of the educated youth who have become aware of the beauty of our art forms and crafts they have started taking

interest in educating themselves about their rich cultural tradition. The government has also started organizing big cultural events to promote national integration.

Now National Youth Festival is celebrated from 8th to 12th January every year. This is a major activity under the programme of National Integration camp. The idea behind this Youth festival is to organize a gathering of the youth so that the concept of National Integration, spirit of communal harmony brotherhood, courage and adventurer may be propagated. It is the effort of the government to strengthen the common bond of unity that ties the people together in spite of the diversity in their religions and rich culture. We should strive to maintain the relationship of common brotherhood. We should uphold the torch of unity irrespective of our different faiths and creeds.

Essay No. 02

Unity in Diversity

Indian culture is a composite culture. In spite of vast variation in the languages, customs, rituals, religious beliefs and social norms of various ethnic groups, there is basic unity which runs through the Indian mainstream of life and thought. One of the remarkable characteristics of India has been its ability to adapt and absorb new ideas and respond to fresh challenges. This unique feature of Indian civilization has given it strength and unity despite the diversity.

India is a vast country comprising many ethnic groups with myriad spoken languages, dialects and regional variations. Its people profess and practice different faiths according to their beliefs which is reflected in their customs, rituals, morals, norms, dresses, festivals, etc. The unique feature is that in spite of his diversity they are essentially united. History is witness to the fact that though several foreign invaders have attacked India, none ever succeeded., in obliterating the basic Indian culture. Indian culture emerged richer from these external invasions because of its inherent tolerance and willingness to imbibe and learn. the new, thus bringing about richness to AS culture through the-process of synthesis.

After Independence our Constitution declared, India a secular State, A secular State is not irreligious. It has propound reverence for faiths and gives all its citizens freedom to profess and practice their religious beliefs. It does not recognize any distinction based on religion, race, sex, caste or colour. In the eyes of law all are equal. It was indeed a sign of great maturity and foresight on the part .of the Owners of our

Constitution that they did not impose one religion or language on the people. Any attempt to do so would have proved counterproductive and defeated the very purpose. No one could have known this better than the people who fought for the Independence of the country from foreign rule.

In those early days of struggle for independence, people from all Walks of life, with diverse religious, cultural, social, economic, linguistic backgrounds, stood united in their determination to throw the British out of the country and take the reins of the country in their own hands. Even in more recent times, during two wars with Pakistan and one with China, the entire nation stood as one behind its armed forces to boost its morale.

Indian civilization has always been based on religious and moral values, Herein lay its unity and strength. In all parts of the country, cultural unity, the unity of the way of life and outlook, transcends the vast diversity in faiths, beliefs—at times bordering on superstition, magic, charms, etc.—and practices. One may travel from one end of the country to another and encounter a totally different milieu, where people talk, dress and worship differently, yet one will not feel a stranger, Everywhere he will recognize a common thread in some aspect of life which makes him feel at home.

Indian culture has preserved its fundamental character through the ages. We have experienced revolutionary economic and political changes in recent times, but our past remains very much with us. Our rich cultural heritage is passed from one generation to another to be nurtured and renewed in their hands.

Many ancient civilizations, have decayed and degenerated because .Of stagnation and resistance to changes with the tide of time. Indian culture has remained alive and dynamic because it has always been in contact with, other cultures, constantly influencing and interacting with them. Significant, contributions have been made to, it by Aryans, Dravidians, Greeks, Persians, Arabs, Moghuls and Europeans. Had it not been for the tolerance shown by the people of India during the rule of foreigners who brought in their own traditions and sought to impose them on the Indian people, the flexible Indian culture would have lost its moorings. The Persian and western influence on our art, literature, painting, dress have now become an integral part of our own culture.

However, we cannot keep our eyes closed to the reality. We are passing through turbulent times, when certain anti-national and external forces are trying to disturb the unity of the country by encouraging communal feelings and sentiments. It has led to increasing intolerance, disharmony and, lawlessness and also to riots and killings of innocent people and virtually terrorized people. In panic, when the people face threat to their lives, they tend to cling to their socio-religious groups which lead to distrust of the intentions of other people belonging to different communities. Terrorism should not be allowed to raise its ugly head and destroy our basic unity. When a country is torn by internal strife there is always a danger of external aggression.

Today Indian culture is in a stage of transition and progress. The winds of change in the wake of rapid advancement of science and technology have swept over the entire world including our country. But there should not be an indiscriminate following of the western modes to the utter disregard of what suits the nation. Certain cultural and social changes are inevitable with the times. However, it is the moral responsibility of the people to ensure conservation of their own cultural tradition. People should not be allowed to forget their own cultural and social heritage. Exposed to western culture the educated youth adopt the western life style—western fashion, tastes, dresses, fast foods, etc. and create a big gulf between themselves and the rural masses. This trend should be checked.

While it is universally accepted that science and technology should be increasingly used to raise productivity, standard of living of the people, reform the existing social stricture, it is also felt that only when we have combined these with our values can we achieve success and guarantee a balance between tradition and modernity and retain the distinction of being a country unique for maintaining Unity in spite of diversity.

Our rich cultural heritage is a legacy which should be preserved at all costs. A correct balance of traditional, values with modern ideas should be the objective. The future generations should be able to hold their head with pride for being born in a country with rich tradition of values and morals. Our goal should be to achieve a happy synthesis of new trends of science and traditional ideals which have sustained the country through all times.

In recent, times, there has been a cultural reawakening among the educated youth who have become aware of the beauty of our art forms, crafts and have started taking a keen interest in educating themselves about their rich cultural tradition. Government has also in, its effort to promote national integration started organizing big cultural events and has set up four regional cultural centers in different parts of the country. All these attempts should help in strengthening the common bond. of unity that ties the people together in spite of the diversity in their beliefs, ways and religion.