

The Vision of India for World Peace

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Paper Submission Date: 7th Oct. 2015

Paper Acceptance Date: 14th Oct. 2015

Abstract

Today, the whole world is passing through an unprecedented crisis of search for peaceful and happy leaving. Despite affluence of various kinds, man is perplexed about from where to get love, inspiration and trust. Selfishness seems to have entered in thoughts, words and deeds. It is evident from rising incidents of corruption, violence, rapes, exploitation and cheating. The rising generation has unsafe future. The present generation is starved of peace and contentment, which can be shared with the present generation. Since 1945, the disaster of a third world war has posed a thrust to the survival of humanity. It is supposed that nuclear bombs may eliminate the human race. Dr. Radha Krishnan has rightly put, “We need today an adjustment of the human consciousness to the nuclear age in which we live. It is now conceivable that the human race may put an end to itself by nuclear warfare or preparations for it. Thus, if it happens will be the result of the failure of man’s consciousness to adjust itself to the technological revolutions”. Terrorism, recession and global warming are the challenges before the world today for which an alternative system and lifestyle are needed. Intellectuals are looking towards India. India will play an instrumental role in bringing in philosophical and attitudinal change (Soni, 2014). The Indian way of life has always been humanist. Indian culture has distinct identity and composite strength. It has had a strong and honorable tradition of International understanding. Gurudev Ravindra Nath Tagore states, “... it never makes me forget that the best efforts of our Indian sages are directed to the abolition of disunity. The paper discusses on the present condition of the world. It focuses on the importance of the rich Indian ideals, values and thoughts for a peaceful world. The article highlights the vision of India for world peace.

Key words: *World peace, Indian vision, Present scenario of the world*

Introduction

"Today due to lack of oneness and self-centered attitude, the world is facing problems like war, violence, terrorism etc. India can play a very important role and make a big contribution towards world peace through its philosophy of ahimsa (non-violence), spiritualism, knowledge and religious harmony" (H H Dalai Lama at the World Hindu Congress, 2014). Terrorism, recession and global warming are the challenges before the world today for which an alternative system and lifestyle are needed. Intellectuals are looking towards India. India will play an instrumental role in bringing in philosophical and attitudinal change (Soni, 2014). The Indian way of life has always been humanist. Therefore, praying for happiness and prosperity of every living being, not only material but all pervasive, is inherent in our culture. Hence, in present times when we are facing racial violence, religious persecutions, mindless materialism, this only surviving humanist tradition is the lone hope for many. Considering this, the coming together of people who believe in humanist way of living cannot be only for themselves but for the whole humanity.

Present Scenario of the World

In order to realize our vision, it is necessary to understand what is happening in the world. Today the world stands at crossroads. The Prime Minister of India Sh Narendra Modi (2014) said at BRISBANE, "The world is grappling with two major challenges - Terrorism and Global Warming and these problems are causing anxiety". In the world, the Muslim community, despite geographical boundaries, has religious, social and psychological boundaries (Dr Meena Singh Roy). The statistics of terrorist attacks are mind-boggling. In 2013, according to South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), Jihadi terrorism worldwide resulted in the killing of 18,000 people. Of these, 80 per cent were Muslims with Pakistan figuring among the five worst-affected countries; the others being Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Nigeria. Since 9/11, near 60000 terrorists, civilians and security force personnel have been killed in Pakistan. The Pakistan Taliban and Al-Qaida

have killed 15000 security personnel which are nearly as many have died in wars against India. These figures show that the enterprise of bleeding India through a thousand cuts is working in the reverse. Pakistani apologists say that their country is the biggest victim of terrorism without concealing that it is hara-kiri. However, internationally, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, has declared 2015 as the year to focus on the elimination of terrorism (Mehta, 2014). During his visit to Australlia, Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi laid stress on taking action against those who harbor terrorists, empowering states that will fight them and have a policy of no distinction between terrorist groups and delinking religion and terrorism.

A US military advisory board study released in 2007 warned that climate change is a serious national security threat and would lead to instability in geopolitics. The UK's new security strategy includes climate change as a serious threat alongside terrorism and other risks (Times of India, 2008). Due to privatization, water faces the threat of commercialization; wherever water markets exist, the 'ability to pay' becomes the criterion for access. By 2025, 1800 million people will be living in countries/regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of world's population could be under stressful conditions. In the last 50 years, there have been 37 cases of reported violence among States over water, involving minor skirmishes (Nellyyat, 2013).

Indian Vision

I. Yoga

United Nations General Assembly adopted an India-led resolution declaring June 21 as 'International Day of Yoga' recognizing that "Yoga provides a holistic approach to health and well-being and the wider dissemination of information about the benefits of practicing. Yoga would be beneficial for the health of the world population. The resolution has garnered a record number of 175 co-sponsors, including vast majority of Member States and all the five permanent members - China, France, Russia, Britain and the United States of the UN Security Council. It is for the uplift of the individual in a holistic way. Yoga is perhaps the best exposition of the Indian way of life. When the concept of 'religion' had not yet been invented, Yoga was known as a spiritual process – a way of healing yourself, a sort of medication for your inner being. The

growing acceptance of Yoga at the world level today is nothing but an acknowledgement of the Indianness across faiths and nationalities.

It is admitted by Swiss pilot Andre Borschberg, the Co-founder, Solar Imulse 2(siz) that the world's only fully solar-powered aircraft that took off from Varanasi for Myanmar on 19th March, 2015, has a special Indian connection - Yoga. According to Borschbery (2015), "Yoga and meditation gives us unbalance and keeps us in the right state of mind, which is very crucial when you are on such a difficult mission." Further he says, " While flying alone (Siz) has a single – pilot cockpit, we have to stay awake for days and hours...The challenge to maintain the right mental attitude and keep thinking right and be ourselves, and yoga helps me in that."

II. *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*

According to the views of the Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi (2014), "There is nothing bigger than the *Gita* to gift the world leaders". *Bhagavad Gita* has been addressing contemporary issues and solving day-to-day problems of humanity. It serves as an essential guide to better living and it prompts an individual to think, to take fair and right decisions without surrendering one's identity. It reveals the experience of everyone in this world, the ascent of man from a state of utter dejection, sorrow and total breakdown and hopelessness to a state of perfect understanding, renewed strength and triumph. Hence, Swami Vivekananda considered the *Gita* as the best book of practical Vedanta. *Bhagavad Gita* "Breathes the spirit of tolerance and universality" (Swami Ranganathananda, *the Message of the Upanisads*, Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2007, p.62). The *Bhagavad Gita* deals with human problems in a human way. It has inspired the human mind in India for centuries and centuries, and today it is inspiring millions of people in various parts of the world. Thinkers and writers like Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Thoreau in USA, and Carlyle in England, experienced this broadening and deepening of their outlook after studying the *Gita*, and their writings convey a new message. Henry David Thoreau, American transcendentalist, refers to the *Gita* thus: In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavat Geeta, since whose composition, years of the Gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial . . . (quoted. in Swami Tathagatananda, *Journey of the*

Upanisads to the West, Kolkata: Advaita Asrama, 2005, p.443). During her recent visit to India, U.S. Congresswoman, Tulshi Gobabard (2014) said, “The sayings in the *Gita* are my life and soul. In my experience it is the perfect textbook.”

The lofty principles of socialism have been guiding star of the rules in India since time immemorial. The ideals of socialism can be found clearly explained in the following *shloka* of ‘*Srimada Bhagawata Gita*’ which is a very popular and revered text of Hindu Dharma: “*Yvada Bhariyeta Zatharma tawata Swatwama hi dehinama, Adhikam yovimanayeta so steno dandamarhati* [07:14:08]. It means, a person is entitled to that much wealth only with which he can satisfy his hunger i.e. fulfil his genuine needs. Anyone who lays claim to more than that is a thief and deserves punishment.

III. Nobel Peace Prize

The Nobel Peace Prize is ultimately a marketing tool to show light on some serious issues in the world. Being a political award that focuses on the cause than an individual, the award deciding committee makes sure that they strike balance by awarding competing countries and ethnic countries at the same time. One of the awardees this year has been the 60-year old campaigner from India, who has worked to liberate children from the shackles of compulsory labour and bondage, Mr Kailash Satyarthi who is a relatively unknown name outside the region and his field of work. He has sought to underscore a crucial but widely disregarded prerequisite for development and peace in our times, namely, the responsibility of nations to provide the means of formal education, leisure, safety, and care for all children. As this year’s citation says, “It is a prerequisite for peaceful global development that rights of children in particular area preserved, the violation of children leads to the continuation of violence from generation to generation” (The Hindu, 2014). The Nobel Peace prize this year recognizes the crucial links among child rights, labour, and school education and, in doing so, recognizes one of the most fundamental prerequisites of better tomorrow for millions of children everywhere.

IV. Successful Mission of Mars

It was an extended *Diwali* for India on November 5 when the Indian Space research Organization (ISRO) successfully launched *Mangalyaan*, its spacecraft bound for Planet Mars, from Sriharikota. This is India's first interplanetary project. It took 500 scientists and 15 months of hard work to ensure the smooth lift-off of the Mars Orbiter. If all goes well, *Mangalyaan* (a Sanskrit word, translating as Mars craft in English) will enter the Mars orbit on September 24, 2015, 300 days from the day of its launch and after a journey of nearly 700 million kilometers. Accomplished at a cost of around Rs 450 crore, which in itself is an achievement as the most economical orbiter till date, mission *Mangalyaan* is an ambitious leap for India's space programme. If *Mangalyaan* succeeds in its mission, the Mars' Orbiter would make India the first Asian country to have an interplanetary orbiter launch to its credit. Only the former Soviet Space Program, NASA and the European Space Agency have achieved interplanetary missions. Japan and China are the other Asian countries that attempted Mars missions, but they resulted in failure. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, expressed his major delight during delivering the IHC Annual Lecture in Delhi (2015), said that India becoming the only nation to successfully launch a Mars Orbiter Mission in its maiden attempt in 2014 and the country's plan to create a much bigger Chandrayan-2 with an indigenous rover and lander using GSLV by 2017.

Through the ages, the Moon, our nearest celestial body has generated curiosity in our mind much more than any other object in the sky. This led to scientific study of the Moon, driven by the desire and quest for knowledge. This is also reflected in the ancient verse: *Twam som pra chikito manisha, twam rajistha manu nishi pantham*. (O Moon! We should be able to know you through our intellect. You enlighten us through the right path. *Rigveda*, Part-1.91/1, about 2000 years).

V. Integral Humanism

The first characteristic of the Indian culture is that it looks upon life as an integrated whole. It has an integrated viewpoint. To think of parts may be proper for a specialist, but it is not useful from the practical standpoint. The confusion in the West arises primarily from its tendency to think of life in sections and then to attempt to put them together by patch-work. We do admit that there is diversity and plurality in life, but we have always attempted to discover the unity behind them. This attempt is thoroughly scientific. The scientists always attempt to discover order in the apparent disorder in the universe, to find out the principles governing the universe and frame practical rules on the basis of these principles. Chemists discovered that a few elements comprise the entire physical world. Physicists went one step further and showed that even these elements pulsate with energy. Today we know that the universe is only one form of energy (Upadhaya, 1965). The integral humanism needs to be adopted in all spheres of life including government, politics, economic, social, education, etc. It was not new rather it has been in our culture since ancient time and its uninterrupted continuity can be seen at all times. This thinking has never been divisive as the western concepts are.

VI. Democracy

While defining democracy that it is the government of the people, it has to be a government for the good of the people. What constitutes the good of the people? It is *dharma* alone which can decide the issue. Therefore, a democratic government *Janarajya* must also be rooted in *dharma* i.e. *dharmarajya*. In the definition of democracy viz ‘government of the people, by the people and for the people’, ‘of’ stands for independence ‘by’ stands for democracy and ‘for’ indicates *dharma*. Therefore, the true democracy is only where there is freedom as well as *dharma*. *Dharmarajya* encompasses all these concepts (Upadhaya, 1965). In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi takes to task forms of democracy and in western countries which are often upheld as shining models to the rest of the world. This civilization takes a note neither of morality (*niti*) nor religion (*dharma*). Plato talked of ‘Philosopher King’. Chanakya wanted the rulers to be ‘wise and

disciplined by learning.’ Spiritual development is paramount for internal strength and character. Material pleasure and comfort come second. In fact, it was Chanakya who propounded a democratic model in 300BCE ‘King has no individuality of his own. He is for the people and of the People’. In essence we are the repositories of a great wisdom handed down to us from the times of the Vedas. Chanakya insisted that wealth creation is crucial for establishing a welfare state. In the last several decades, we have been able to progress economically well. Today India has more billionaires than any other country in Asia. In a letter to Nehru in 1945 Gandhiji wrote “man is not born to live in isolation but in essentially a social animal independent and interdependent. No one can or should ride on another’s back”.

The word ‘*Lokatantra*’ which is a Sanskrit synonym for democracy find mention in ‘*Pancharatra Agama*’ which comprises 1,000,00 verses and is regarded as holy and authentic as the Vedas. According to Mahabharata, the principles of democracy had been enunciated for the first time by seven sages namely Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulah, Kratu and Vasistha. It is believed that God had invisibly told the sages as follows - *Kritam shatsahasram hi shlokanamidmuttam lokatantrasya, Kritansya Yasmada Dharmah pravartate* [*Shanti Parva: 335:39*] (O sages! You have created an excellent scripture consisting of one hundred thousand verses from which the dharma of lokatantra will be propagated in its entirety). The expression ‘*Dharma of Lokatantra*’ makes it abundantly clear that in our country the principles of polity were never segregated from the ideals of *dharma* as was, for the first time, done by the framers of the present constitution to the great detriment of the country (Jha, 2009).

VII. Man-making Religion

All religions encourage or ensure every man to be his best self in a religion of man. The religion has to recognize the uniqueness of man and provide him opportunities to grow in every possible way - materially as well as spiritually. Snakracharya in his Advaita philosophy says: Man is a spark of the divine - ‘*Auham Brahmasmi*’ (I a God or God’s manifestation). The word ‘*Dharma*’ means which sustains the society. For example, a drop of water and the ocean are essentially same. The fact that by nature a person is truthful is a law that discovered. Many other principles of ethics are similarly discovered. They are not arbitrarily framed by someone. In Bharat, these

principles which bring about harmony, peace and progress in the life of mankind are included in this term *Dharma*. On the sound basis of *Dharma*, then, we must proceed with the analysis of life as an integral whole (Upadhyaya, 1965).

VIII. Spiritual Outlook

Swami Vivekananda, a sage, for his practical wisdom, envisioned Vedanta as a teaching that would save the world from imminent spiritual death. Teachings of Vedanta remind the modern man in distress that unless he accepts and realizes spirituality as the core dimension of his personality, he won't be able to live a peaceful life in spite of his tremendous material progress. For Dharma, the moral force that can hold society together is possible only in an atmosphere of "toned down materialism" and assertion of the Spirit. It is futile to try to find peace outside if we have not found it inside. Swami Vivekananda asserts that "Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our miseries forever; any other knowledge satisfies wants only for a time. It is only with the knowledge of the spirit that the faculty of want is annihilated. . . ." (*Complete Works Vol. I*, Kolkata: Advaita Asrama, 1991, p. 52).

IX. Environment

Some of the gravest problems that the world is facing today are the environmental problems such as ecological imbalance, climate change, global warming, pollution, etc. Two factors that contribute to environmental crisis are – one, the belief that human beings are separate from and superior to nature, and two, man's indiscriminate exploitation of nature, unmindful of the consequences of his actions. According to Vedas, the structure of the world is Nature - oriented. The existence and welfare of the human society depend upon maintaining a balance with nature. Our ancient sages and seers emphasized the significance of ecological balance for the welfare of human beings. 'Need, rather than greed' was the guiding principle in the relationship of man with nature. Verse I of *Isavasyopanisad* says: *Isavasyamidam sarvam yatkinca jagatyam jagat / Tena tyaktena bhunjithah ma grdhah kasyasvidhanam* // "Everything within the universe is possessed by God. He pervades both the animate and the inanimate. Therefore, one should only

take one's share and leave the rest to the Supreme." (www.hindu-blog.com/2008/05/atharva-veda-quotes-on-nature.html)

Concluding Remarks

It is very unfortunate for India that its own wisdom was never found to be acceptable within its own boundaries. We follow discourses of the West, copying and creating hybrid versions of their models and presuming that we are on the right course. We ignored the wise caution our elders offered to us. The whole world looks towards India to seek solace and guidance in respect of spiritual pursuits of higher order objectives in life. It is worthwhile to recall what Arnold Toynbee had to say on this: "It is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a written beginning will have to have an Indian ending, if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race. At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way - Emperor Ashoka's and Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions. Here we have an attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family and in the atomic age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves" (Rajput,2009).

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