

## ***CELEBRATING DIVERSITIES***

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The two popular theories of the Origin of Life, namely, the Divine and the Evolutionary, think of man as distinct from other species. The former conceives of him as the finest creation of God and the later as the highest expression of Evolution so far. The two also accept the fundamental unity of all creation and hold the view that the world is cosmologically one since the continents that comprise it form part of the same Universe and are governed by the same rules and forces. Some philosophers also believe that all humans share in the same consciousness and have the same destiny; their agonies and ecstasies being the same they also seem to assume that they have the same purpose in life i.e. freedom and fulfillment; freed from want, from all kinds of dependence and inadequacy-its degree and range depending on the state of one's civilization and fulfillment as an expression of harmonious living; of being one with the outside world, with objective reality, fulfillment emanating from a state of mind that is one within and without.

Man the Homo sapiens, the knower, the wise one –has been striving for freedom and fulfillment ever since his creation or advent in the universe. He has been endowed with a creative and inventive mind, a mind that can understand, analyse and organize the universe, and make communication about it possible. The mind has also enabled him to create a parallel world of sound, shape sense and color to satisfy his spiritual yearnings and find peace and harmony in life. He discovered knowledge to organize his environment and developed civilization to enrich the content (what he did) and quality (how he did) of life. The growth of human civilization can be traced back to man's quest for knowledge and harmony, to his natural curiosity to unravel the mysteries of nature as well as to his fear of the unknown and the invisible. The sizeable body of myth that he created to get over or reconcile to the fear was the first effort humans made to be one with the unknown and relate to the invisible, to be friends with them.

The spirit to make friends with the unknown is intrinsic to humankind and the most cultures strove to realize fairly early in human civilization, their range of reference differing according to their catholicity of mind and depending on their worldview. It also implied understanding of differences in their mode of thought, conduct and life-style and an appreciation of the diversities natural to them.

Diversity implies difference in perception, interpretation, expression, judgement and evolutionist may result from differences in birth and background, in the quality of exposure and experience, religion and race, socio-economic order and worldview, in a society's sense of threat perception and crisis resolution. Diversity is present in all communities and cultures. They differ not only in their mode of worship but also in their rituals, symbols and expressions. As a matter of fact, it is natural to life, to the mind that mirrors a diverse world. It is as natural in life as in nature. In sum, it is natural in a world kaleidospic in character.

The world has been one but its natural division into continents, countries and physical habitats and the range of possibilities they offered, created difference in socio-cultural systems, in people's perception of and responses to events and objective reality. As a result, their worldview did not encompass the whole world and view it as one family – their world lay within their range of perception and interaction. Also, fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar and the sense of insecurity it bred, led to the consolidation and consequent isolation of habitations and reacted walls to make interaction between them difficult not only in primitive societies but also in the earlier phases of all civilizations. However, information about individual habitations and societies was difficult to contain as informal encounters between them increased and changes in modes of living became noticeable. Knowledge pulled down the barriers and the growth of civilizations that this promoted initiated the process of what we now call globalization. The process extended over the local, the regional, the national and the international and has become part of a continuum that would eventually blur boundaries that had divided them.

Globalization began as rationalization (the region was the world then) and extended to the whole of the globe as knowledge expanded and commerce that it made possible promoted exchange of goods, technologies and services (symbolically life – styles and value systems). It also engendered competition and conflict among vested interests and new economic order it threatens to enforce may lead to what Prof.Huntington calls a Clash of Civilizations.

Globalization has many connotations, the dominant being the opening up of markets for foreign goods and services and liberalization of national economics to make it possible. It has cultural undertones as well since goods relate to life styles and have symbolic significance. It may even imply encroachment or incursions of dominant economics into territories technologically backward and culturally transient. One might even feel tempted to call it a kind of modern imperialism unless, of course, the affluent societies exercised self-restraint, promoted reciprocity and showed care and concern for societies still struggling for survival in the modern world.

Globalization, by itself, cannot therefore be primitive of a world culture nor of a just and equitable economic world order, not even of a world government unless it answers problems arising from the industrialist-businessman's concern for profit, the politician's obsession with power and the bureaucrat's fondness for perks, and support people's carving for peace, productivity, and promotion of general human well-being by ensuring

their partnership in the management of the wealth generated the world over, until it acts as a forum, not for free enterprise, but for the full expression of the creative genius of communities and cultures the world over and allows what Mao once said, "a hundred flowers to blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" to make the celebration of cultural diversities a means of self-enrichment and self-transcendence.

Culture is the expression of a society's total response to objective reality over time. It reflects 'a people's whole way of life'. According to Sir Edward Burnett Tyler British anthropologist, "It is 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". It includes a whole range of thought and behavior and a 'whole world of human meanings and values'. Under its influence mating' becomes 'marriage' human relations acquire moral implications and the world of Nature 'becomes alive with conscious spirits'.

Every human society has its own socio-cultural system: a particular and unique expression of its technological, sociological and ideological elements; its unique ways of answering problems related to food, health, human welfare, etc. of making work a satisfying experience and promising happiness. Some may 'deny satisfaction on one hand but fulfill desire on the other'; even 'triumph over death and offer eternal life'. As a means to an end, it has striven to ~ provide security and continuity to life' and 'ensure its enrichment"

Distinctive cultural traditions of different countries and their responses to reality have some relevance to the present-day situation as well. They can give us a better understanding of the challenges we face and help us initiate and promote a creative response to the realities of the world today' by 'relating specific past experiences to the present day reality' and 'past heritage to the emerging pattern of the future'. They can also help us use past wisdom to shape future destiny and cultivate tolerance, appreciation, understanding of and respect for cultural diversities and their celebration to help people transcend their natural and social world' and find satisfaction in selfless service: in sharing, caring and giving.

Some of the expressions of culture and have helped people to rise above themselves are dance, drama, music, art, craft, literature. Fares and festivals have also been occasions that helped people cross barriers and lose themselves in the abandonment they offered. Restoration of spirit that fostered folk-arts in different cultures would help people to get over the constraints of individual cultures and merge in the rising tide of joy that participation promotes. It will also develop a broader perspective, create a deeper awareness of human concerns and release creative energies that would cleanse people of all that thwart life and its spontaneous expression of friendship, reciprocity and harmony. It will also make people receptive to new ideas and appreciative of the values, symbols and myths of other societies, and their modes of creation, expression and transmission. It will also help them harmonies the achievements of others to evolve a human culture.

Evolution of a common human culture will, however, depend on our ability to remove not only inherited disparities' but also those 'arising out of development'. It will also depend on the affluent nation's willingness to give up what Max Herbert calls the vulgar pursuit of wealth stripped of its religious and ethical meaning' and engage themselves in the more meaningful 'pursuits of life, liberty and human happiness'. A truly human culture can only be a composite culture comprising the constituents of regional cultures. It can be best understood in terms of its various elements, the beauty of the whole lying on its interdependent units.

Culture involves more of assimilation and expression than imposition. It can't be transplanted or thrust upon a people. Person is born or grows into it. He/She internalises and acquires it while interacting with the material and non-material conditions of their life; of their birth, background and upbringing. Their culture also as they grow in mind and spirit following interaction with other communities and change in environment.

Expansion of industrialization and urbanization has created a kind of cosmopolitanism and a culture of commodities and comforts. Its monolithic character may rob the human culture of its Variety, strength and vitality, and make celebration impossible since the culture of the Brave New World will have left no diversities to celebrate. Life would then, be fun, a mere 'orgy of materialism' without depth and dimension, without meaning.

"Most potent actions stem from man's ethical sense", from the ethics of austerity, not from the practice of parasitism or an excess of indulgence. They spring from the disinterested devotion of the minority (the innovators, reformers, leaders, etc.) that dedicates itself to the service of mankind and search of truth. The common human culture must therefore, promote the spirit that encourages service and values achievement more than mere success. It must disallow the cult of consumerism, discount acquisitiveness and prevent the wasteful utilization of natural resources. The new culture must be non-acquisitive, non-exploitative and non-discriminatory so that the common man enjoys a degree of freedom that is essential for the celebration of life and its sublimation. It must respect women, children and the aged, be sensitive to the weak and the disadvantaged, value goodness and moral behaviour, and have positive attitudes to Nature.

Celebration of life is impossible without the appreciation of its diversities. It is equally impossible in the midst of poverty, disease and degradation-moral and environmental. A dehumanized society is a dead society. It has no zest for life. It is only a healthy, happy, and humane society that can celebrate life and find fulfillment in its purposeful pursuits.

Most cultures are an attempt to enrich life and make in a meaningful experience. True, they also built barriers but they have been broken down by knowledge. Therefore, the best way to celebrate life is to celebrate its achievements and richness and share in the material and nonmaterial wealth humans have created the world over-All said and done it is only in freedom and fellowship that celebration of diversities is a genuine expression of jubilation and joy, and becomes a fulfilling experience.