How to Unite Human Society

While trying to bring about the development and prosperity of individuals and society, we should encourage the common points only among different communities – not the points of difference. It is natural that there are differences in society concerning dress, customs, cultural expressions, food habits, language, etc. But if these points of difference are given undue importance, social problems will only be aggravated, and as a result the unity and very existence of society will be jeopardized. If nothing is done immediately to check the deterioration of contemporary society, then as a result of different factors, in due course society will automatically evolve some common principles. So the points of difference should never be encouraged in any way.

Social and political leaders should refrain from harping on the points of difference in society. Rather, they should continually emphasize that it is not the appropriate time to bring up complicated divisive issues. For example, take the case of Indian languages. There are many people in India who unnecessarily fight over the issue of language, but is now the proper time to raise this issue when there are so many people suffering from hunger, famine, disease, educational backwardness, economic distress, etc.? Can the people of India afford to waste their valuable time over the comparatively unimportant issue of language? On the contrary, they should immediately launch a campaign against exploitation, as this will keep the

divisive forces under control. If this is not done, the fissiparous forces will create impediments and dissension in society, and the important burning issues confronting the people will remain unsolved.

Points of Unity

The progress of a country depends on unity, so emphasis should be placed only on unifying factors. To eliminate fissiparous forces, we will have to fight a relentless war against disunity in the following three spheres.

The Socio-Economic Sphere

While some people are enormously rich, a large percentage of the population is languishing in poverty. Naturally, to build up a strong society, socio-economic disparity must be completely eradicated.

With the eradication of socio-economic disparity, the collective wealth of society will have to be increased progressively. Only then can the growing demands of the population be successfully met. Let us take the example of Orissa. Agricultural production, particularly in the rainy season, depends almost entirely on the monsoons. But if the irrigation system was properly developed, the total agricultural production in the state would increase 300 percent, and an additional 40 million people could be fed. Today only 15 million people are being fed with the present levels of production. Orissa is also rich in mineral resources. Abundant coal, bauxite, manganese and other minerals are readily available in the state, but many of these minerals are being exported to other countries. If these raw materials were properly utilized to manufacture finished goods in the state, Orissa could establish at least four large-scale steel plants. This would substantially increased the purchasing power of the people. Unfortunately, the incompetent political leaders of the country do not think in a rational way. On the contrary, they formulate plans that neither remove socio-economic disparity nor increase collective wealth. These leaders have committed a major blunder by placing the cart before the horse.

In all countries of the world, economically deprived people can be united through a common programme of socio-economic struggle and by fighting against cruel capitalist exploitation on the one hand, and by implementing developmental programmes to enhance the amount of collective wealth on the other. By undertaking extensive irrigation, mining, agriculture and industrial development,

the collective wealth of a country can be easily increased.

Self-sufficient socio-economic zones should be established throughout the world to smoothly eliminate social disparity and increase collective wealth. The formation of states on political grounds should be carefully avoided. In one political unit there may be several socio-economic zones which can live unitedly together with their respective problems. For example, the state of Bihar is a political unit but while the Chotanagpur Hills are confronted with the problem of irrigation, the plains of North Bihar are suffering from the problem of drainage. In Royalseema, Srikulam and Telengana areas of Andhra Pradesh are situated in the political unit of Andhra Pradesh, but their socio-economic potentialities are quite different. To derive the maximum benefit from these areas, distinct socio-economic zones should be formed, regardless of whether or not they remain in the same political unit. It is a great mistake to form states on the basis of politics or language. If a capitalist and a labourer speaks the same language, who will think that they are friends because of their linguistic affinity?

The Psycho-Sentimental Sphere

In the psychic sphere, there are certain factors that serve to unite different linguistic groups of people. For example, all North Indian languages and a few South Indian languages originated and developed from Sańskrta. These languages have been greatly influenced by Saḿskrta. In such circumstances, the study of Saḿskrta should not be opposed by anybody. This may appear to be a trivial matter, but if it is encouraged it will be a great unifying factor in Indian society.

In social traditions also, some common points may be developed. Research and archaeological excavation on glorious past civilizations and great personalities will help arouse a strong national sentiment. For example, the excavation of the Mahenzodaro and Harappa civilizations highlighted the accomplishments of ancient Indian culture.

The study of history should also be encouraged. Itihása is not synonymous with the Saḿskrta word itikathá which means "history" and is the chronological record of past events. The word itihása means that part of history which has great educative value. The study of itihása or the cultural history of a country arouses a sense of unity amongst the members of society, and they become aware of their impact on cultural legacy. For example, the study of the historical epic

Mahábhárata creates a sense of pride and inspiration in the minds of the people, and this fosters the spirit of collective unity.

The memory of illustrious, saints, and sages also binds people together with common bonds of affinity. When people cherish their past leaders and saints, it creates a strong foundation for collective unity.

The Spirituo-Sentimental Sphere

The sentiments of a common spiritual heritage and a common spiritual goal are the only sentiments which can bind people together permanently. Socio-economic and psycho-sentimental issues are extremely useful for creating social unity and cohesion, but the sentiments arising out of these issues are temporary. Cosmic sentiments are permanent. By inculcating universal sentiments, socio-economic unity and fraternity will be based on a strong fundament. People will think in terms of cosmic paternity and universal fraternity. My firm conviction that we have all come from the same Entity and we will all merge in the same Entity will generate a unique unifying sentiment. All people will feel united by the ties of universal love and friendship, which will ultimately pave the way for a universal society. The poet Satyendra Dutta, the great universalist, has eloquently expressed this sentiment in the following poem:

Ráge anuráge nidrita jáge ásal mánuś prakat hay
Varńe varńe náhika visheś nikhil bhuvan Brahmamay!
Nivir aekye yáy mishe' yáy sakal bhágya sab hrday
Mánuśe mánuśe náiko prabhed nikhil mánava Brahmamay.

[When love awakens in sleeping souls, then true human beings will emerge.
There is no difference between one person, one race, and another, for the entire universe is pervaded by one Infinite Consciousness!(1)]

Wherever there is a common point among people it should be encouraged, while the points of difference have to be discouraged and eliminated. For fostering unity and enhancing the prosperity of the people, this must be the fundamental approach. We should always remember:

Jagat juŕiyá ek ját áche
Se játir nám mánuś játi
Eki prthiviir stanye pálita

Eki ravi shashi moder sáthii.

[There is only one race in the entire world,
And the name of that race is the human race.
We are bound together with the same breast milk of mother Earth,
And the same sun and moon are our common companions.]

Points of Difference

There are conspicuous variations in four main areas of human society – food, dress, language and religion.

Food

In India there are four distinct food zones where either coconut oil, mustard oil, sesame oil, or vegetable oil or ghee are used. In the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, most people prefer bread, whereas in eastern and southern India, people prefer rice. The food that people eat depends upon geophysical conditions. If all the people of India are made to eat the same food, regardless of their geophysical necessities, it would be a great mistake.

Dress

Similarly, dress and customs also depend upon various geophysical factors. For example, take the case of the Arabs who live in dry deserts. Hot winds and burning sands are their constant companions. Naturally, they are compelled to cover their bodies from head to foot and build their houses underground, otherwise it is next to impossible to survive. On the other hand, the people who live in North Bihar have to be careful that their clothes are not soiled by mud or dirty water caused by the heavy rainfall. Obviously, the 1 dress that people wear in a particular area is largely determined by climatic considerations. It is ludicrous to prescribe uniform dress for people, disregarding environmental conditions. People living in extremely cold countries automatically wear warm clothing, while people living in tropical regions do not.

Language

In every country, languages originate and develop according to racial and cultural factors. Though the origin of languages is fundamentally the same everywhere, languages vary from place to place.

Racial characteristics are defined by the nature of the blood and the structure of the nose, eyes, hair and skin. The differences in the formation of these factors account for the variations in racial characteristics. There are four main races in the world – Aryan, Mongolian, Austric and Negroid. Aryans have red or fair complexions, Mongolians yellow complexions, Austrics dark brown complexions and Negroes black complexions. Austrico-Negroids are called "Dravidians".

The Aryans can be divided into three groups. First, the Nordic Aryans have reddish white skin, reddish or golden hair, brown coloured eyes like those of cats, warm blood and parrot-like noses. Secondly, the Alpine Aryans have milky white skin, brackish blue hair, blue eyes, slightly cooler blood than the Nordics and hawk-like noses. Thirdly, the Mediterranean Aryans have fair skin, black hair, black eyes, ordinary noses, cooler blood than the Alpines and are of medium stature. The people living in southern France, Arabian countries and the Balkan states belong to the Mediterranean sub-race.

The Mongolians can be divided into five groups. First, the Nipponese have big faces, flat noses and big bodies. Secondly, the Chinese have flat noses and slanting eyes. Thirdly, the Malays have small bodies and flat noses. Fourthly, The Indo- Burmese have flat noses and comparatively big bodies. Fifthly, the Indo-Tibetans have flat noses and are quite good looking. All the people in these groups have yellowish skin and little hair on their bodies.

The Austrics have medium-sized bodies and mud-black coloured skins.

The Negroes have black skin, kinky hair, thick lips, slightly colder blood than the Aryans and are often tall in stature.

There are several racial divisions in India which include the Indo-Tibetans, such as the Ladakhans, Kinnariis, Gaŕhwalis, Nepalese, Sikkimese, Bhutanese, Newaris, Mizos and Garos; the Mediterranean Aryans, such as the Kashmirii Brahmins and those with a reddish or fair complexion; and the Dravadians, such as the Andhra Pradeshiis, Kanatakas, Keralites and Tamil Nadus.

In the pre-historic past the entire North India – that is, the entire area north of the Vindhya Hills up to Tibet – was under the sea. The area south of the Vindhyas, the present Arabian Sea, South Africa, Australia and Southeast Asia formed the Gondwana archipelago. The Austrics inhabited the southern portion of Gondwanaland, the Negroes inhabited the southwestern portion and the Austrico-

Negroids, the Dravidians of today, inhabited the central portion. The bio-racial structure of different ethnic groups indicates the race to which they belong.

As a rule, a strong culture exerts a great influence on a weaker culture. When people with different cultural backgrounds live side by side, the language spoken by the people of the stronger culture automatically influences other groups. For example, though there were marked differences between the Aryan and non-Aryan cultures, the Aryan language was so powerful that all the languages of eastern and northern India had to depend mainly on Saṁskrta. The influence of Saṁskrta was so widespread that even in southern India it exerted a tremendous influence on the Dravidian languages. The following statistics demonstrate the extent to which the eastern and northern Indian languages were influenced by Vedic Saṁskrta. In Bengali there are 92% Saṁskrta words, in Oriya 90%, Maethilii 85%, Tamil 3% and Malayalam 75%. Some people from North India travelled to the western part of Madras by sea and settled there, hence Malayalam is full of Saṁskrta words, although the verbs are from Tamil.

The influence of Aryan culture was prominent on the upper classes of the society, although it had a general influence on the other classes. There are some Austric communities such as the Saha, Dhangrsh, etc. who speak an Austric dialect at home but Bhojpurii outside their family circle. Similarly, the Singhmundas and Sarkars of Ranchi district and the Tinneras of Tripura speak their own dialect at home and Bengali outside. The people of Gaŕhwal and the Kumayun have started speaking Indo-Aryan languages instead of Tibetan and Chinese. The Dravidian languages include Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Tulu. The alphabets of the Tibetan, Chinese and Indo-Chinese languages are the same, although the Chinese and Japanese scripts are pictorial. The inhabitants of Ceylon speak Sinhalese (which contains 87% Saṁskrta words) and Tamil (13% Saṁskrta words). Members of the Gunatilak and Bandar Nayak communities of Bengal migrated to Ceylon and became the Sinhalese community. The people of Burma speak several languages – Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Shun and other important and unimportant languages. Like the Sinhalese, their alphabets are based on the Indo-Aryan alphabet.

The Indo-Aryan languages are Marathi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Khari, Bali, Vraja, Bundel Khandii, Avadhi, Chattishgarhi, Bhojpurii, Angika, Magahii, Maethilii, Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Gaŕhwali, Kumaynani and Gorkhali. The Austric languages include all the Munda languages, Santal, Kerai and the

Mankhamer group of dialects. The Tibeto-Burmese languages include all the languages and dialects of Assam except Assamese, and the Manipuri and Nagar dialects. The Tibeto-Chinese languages include Ladakhi, Bathii, Kinnari, Kirat, Lepcha, Tahru, Newari, Garo, Kashi and Mizo. The Sino-Japanese languages include Mandarin Sinalese, Cantonese, Japanese, Cambodian, Indonesian and the Malaysian languages and dialects.

Basically there are four types of script – Indo-Aryan, Roman, Semitic (alpha, beta, gamma, etc. in Greek correspond to aleph, beth, gimel, etc. in Hewbrew) and Chinese or pictorial script. The oldest script was invented 6,000 years ago and is called "Samalháptii" script. Kharosthi emerged after 1000 years. Brahmii is written from right to left and Kharosthi from left to right.

Kuthila was used in Allahabad and east Allahabad. In Rajasthan, Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Orissa and Assam Brahmi script was widely used. The old rock inscriptions of Emperor Ashok were written in Kuthfia. Ancient rock inscriptions found at Allahabad, Dacca, Calcutta, Patna, etc., are all written in Kuthila script. Later, the script came to be known as "Sri Harsa script" after King Harsabardhan who used Kuthila in his rock inscriptions or official seals. The present Bengali script is Sri Harsa script.

Sáradá is used in northwestern India while Naŕáda or Nagri script is used in southwestern India. The Nagri script does not use a mátrá or a line over the letters. When such a line is used, it is called "Devanagri script". The Sárasvata Brahmins of Kashmir and the Punjab use Sáradá script, and the Nagar Brahmins of Gujarat used Nagri script. The present Sri Harsa script is about 1,300 years old and the Nagri script is about 300 years old.

In ancient India, Vedic Saḿskrta tried to suppress the Dravidian and Austric languages, just as in Europe Latin tried to destroy all the other European languages. In the Middle East, Arabic tried to destroy all the Persian languages, and in India Saḿskrta tried to suppress all the Prakrta languages. When Buddha began to propagate his philosophy in Pali, the Saḿskrta scholars advised him to use Saḿskrta, but Buddha refused. In Medieval India, Kabir revolted against the use of Saḿskrta as the medium of expression. He said,

Saḿskrta kúpodaka bhákhá bahatá niira.

"Saḿskrta is like the stagnant water in a well, whereas the people's languages

are like fresh, flowing water."

In Bengal, Saḿskrta scholars tried to suppress the Bengali language, but Nawab Hussain Shah extended all kinds of help and encouragement to the development of the Bengali language. Till then, the Rámayańa, the Mahábhárata and the Bhágavat Giitá were written only in Saḿskrta. Later, the poets Krittivas, Kashiramdas and Malladhar Basu (Guna Raja Khan) translated the Rámáyańa, the Mahábhárata and the Bhágavat Giitá respectively into Bengali. The Saḿskrta scholars began to spread the false rumor that the Nawab Suhen Shah was conspiring to destroy Hinduism because the holy scriptures of the Hindus were being translated into Bengali. They imposed social restrictions on Krittivas Oja and excommunicated him from the Hindu religion. This took place about 450 years ago. Recently, some people in Canada and Wales revolted against the imposition of English because they wanted to use their own language as their medium of expression. Likewise, Bhojpurii, Maethilii Magahii, Chattishgarhi, Angika, Avadhi, Bundeli, Marawari, Konkoni and many other important Indian languages are being suppressed by different vested interests.

Religion

Not everyone follows the same religion, nor is religion a common factor in human society. Rather, the opposite is the case, and very often it divides human society. The Arabic word for religion is majhab whereas dharma in the etymological sense means "characteristic" or "property". In fact, if dharma is understood in the true sense of the term, it is one and indivisible for the entire human race. Dharma is a psycho-spiritual faculty. It gradually brings out the latent divine qualities of the human heart, and helps human beings attain oneness with the Supreme Entity. It has nothing to do with material objects. On the other hand, religion is a psycho-sentimental factor. It is a collection of physical and ritualistic observances. There may be many religions, but dharma is one.

Religions always prescribe various ritualistic observances like lighting lamps in a particular way, holding candles in a specified manner, sitting one way or standing another way, counting beads a certain number of times, etc. Only approved people are supposed to worship particular deities, fixed sacerdotal fees are to be charged, prescribed animals are to be sacrificed to the deities, alters are to be built in a particular way, and so on. While following such rituals, the mind is engrossed in religious rites and material objects, so how can it move in an

ideational flow to a devotional goal? Those who follow a particular religion are supposed to kneel down and stand up a specific number of times, so naturally they are always counting their movements, consequently their minds cannot be withdrawn from physical movements and external activities.

There are some people who vehemently believe that only temples are holy places, and that mosques, churches and synagogues are not. The followers of other religions look upon themselves as the chosen disciples of God, and regard others as heathens or infidels. But how can the bricks, stones, mortar, etc. be holy or unholy? They are only material objects. Most of the masons and carpenters who were employed to build temples belonged to other religions, yet once a temple was constructed, it was declared holy, regardless of who built it. Is this not ludicrous?

Religions are based on external ritualistic observances, so they are preoccupied with physical objects. In the course of time, these physical objects become the objects of ideation. Take the example of cows. Cows are considered sacred by Hindus because they provide milk. Now, if cows are considered sacred for this reason, then what about buffaloes which provide more milk? They should be considered more sacred than cows. The followers of religious dogma do not like to discuss such issues. As a result of ideating on religion, the human mind becomes inert. No amount of discussion or intellectual persuasion can shake that psychic inertia. From childhood, human beings are taught irrational ideas, so when they grow up it is extremely difficult to remove preconceived notions. For example, students conversant with science know that a solar or lunar eclipse is caused by scientific factors and has nothing to do with the mythological demons Ráhu and Ketu. But even then, due to their inherent reactive momenta, they go to the Ganges and take a holy bath. Is this not due to ingrained religious beliefs?

When people's ideas are so fixed that they will not entertain any discussion or argument it is called "fanaticism". It is said that religion is a question of faith, not logic. In India, there are many religious fanatics. Due to religious fanaticism and bigotry, there have been innumerable violent clashes in the past. How repugnant that thousands of people were killed on the pretext of a single strand of hair! These fanatics never bothered to listen to the beliefs of others, and moreover, for them it is a sin to listen to others. In one sense they are worse than animals, because animals do not harbour any communal feeling. Physical sentiments are predominant in such religious expressions. People should keep aloof from the

bondages of religion. Behind all religious dogma, physical considerations are dominant. One community considers it a sin to eat beef but not goats or deer. The custom of wearing a vermilion mark on the head and forehead by Indian women is an expression of religious sentiment. The women of other countries do not follow this practice. It does not matter at all if Indian women stop using vermilion. All religions exploit people by appealing to religious sentiments.

There are many people who worship particular scriptures. These scriptures were most likely composed, printed and bound by the followers of other religions. As soon as a book of scripture has been published, Hindus regard it as the goddess Saraswati. There are many people who spend money extravagantly to build idols, then after a day or two, a long procession and a lot of fanfare, the idol is immersed in a river. If a member of another religion accidentally damages any part of the idol, an undesirable incident of unprecedented magnitude may occur.

Fanaticism occurs when physical considerations outweigh rationality. Religious fanaticism occurs when fanaticism centres on a particular religion. A powerful intellectual appeal rather than the application of force is required to bring religious fanatics onto the right path, because force will only create a reaction which will intensify religious fanaticism.

Certain practices were not originally religious rituals, but traditions or customs. Long ago the Jews started practising circumcision. When Moses converted some of his contemporaries to Judaism, and later when Mohammed converted some local people to Islam, neither prophet dared to instruct their new followers to discard the old customs they followed, consequently the old customs continued after their conversion. In ancient times, the Austrics used to worship the sun god because they believed that if it was propitiated it would send abundant rays and produce rich harvests; In Austric society, women have a very important role, consequently the role of the priests is not so important. The Austrics believed that the sun was a female god and that the moon was a male god, so they addressed the sun as mother. They introduced Chat Puja, the worship of the sun goddess. In olden times, people used to worship the sun goddess only once a year, but in Magadh it is worshipped twice, during the two major harvests. The tradition of Chat Puja became so strong among the inhabitants of Magadh that despite the enormous influence of the Aryans, Buddhists and Muslims, the custom of Chat Puja continued unchanged. Even today, the Muslims in some areas of Magadh worship the sun goddess. In some places they perform the worship themselves,

and in other places they get it done with the Hindus. Similarly, in Bengal the Muslims worship the deities Satya Narayana and Olabibi. These are expressions of traditional beliefs which have been passed down from one generation to another.

The only way to combat religious fanaticism is to strengthen the logical wave. Through the study of science, we know that an eclipse is a physical phenomenon. The deities Ráhu and Ketu have nothing to do with it. Although this sort of superstitious belief is no doubt diminishing, there are some people who still worship mythological deities because they believe that the deities can be propitiated to release the sun and the moon from an eclipse. The reason is that the fear psychosis in human beings is stronger than logic. When human rationality is strengthened, irrational ideas will vanish from society.

Many people today advocate the formation of theocratic states (dharmarasta). But when they use the term theocratic states, they mean religious states, not states which uphold the cause of righteousness. We should strive to establish states which uphold righteousness (dharma), and for this the physical sentiments that are the basis of religion should be ignored. People must remain aloof from dogmatic religious ideas. Some people perform religious observances which relate to the moon – after sighting the moon, they start their religious penance. But what will happen to those who will live on the moon itself. Rational thinking will remove the fear psychosis from the human mind – rationality will defeat fanaticism.

In India, the Aryans tried to establish the Vedic religion by destroying the Austric religion. In the Buddhist period, particularly during the reign of King Binbisai of Magadh, Buddhism was imposed upon non-Buddhists. Later, the Hindus forcibly converted Buddhists and Jains to Hinduism. During the Muslim period, the Islamic rulers forcibly imposed Islam in India, Iran and Egypt. In false contemporary Egypt is a mixture of Arabian civilization and Islamic religion. Countless Jews were forcibly converted to Christianity. During the British rule of India, the Christians propagated Christianity in a very psychological way, consequently thousands of Hindus became Christians. Before the British came to India, there were hardly any Christians in the country. In the Muslim period, many Hindus were converted to Islam by both psychological pressure and physical force. Besides this, many Hindus embraced Islam because they were disgusted with the defects in Hinduism. At that time, along with severe religious

upheaval, there was also extreme social disparity, and as a result many people turned to Islam. Even today, some missionaries are converting people into their respective religions by taking advantage of the peoples educational backwardness, superstition and poverty. The medieval crusades are also burning examples or the suppression of one religion by another.

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