

The Indian Institute of World Culture  
Basavangudi, Bangalore-4

Transaction No. 34

HUMANISM  
AND  
UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

By

Major-General S. L. BHATIA,  
CIE. MC. MA., MD (Cantab.), FRCP (Lond.),  
FRS (B), FASC., IMS. (Retd.)

1966

Re. 0.50

## PREFACE

---

THIS transaction is a resume of a lecture delivered at the Indian Institute of World Culture by Major-General S. L. Bhatia, CIE. MC. MA., MD (Cantab.), FRCP (Lond.), FRS(E), FASC., IMS. (Retd.), former Director-General of Medical Services in India and Member, Executive Committee of this Institute, on the occasion of Independence Day celebration, 1966.

## HUMANISM AND UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

WE have assembled here today to celebrate the 19th anniversary of a great day, when India achieved its goal of Independence. This was the fulfilment of a dream, which we had cherished for a long time. I am particularly reminded on this occasion of our great leader, the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru of revered memory, whom we all deeply loved and respected. May I recall his words, which he addressed to the Nation 19 years ago, on 15th of August 1947? "It is a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia, and for the World," he said. "A new Star rises, the Star of Freedom in the East, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materializes. May the Star never set, and that hope never is betrayed the future beckons to us. Whither do we go, and what shall be our Endeavour? To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty, ignorance and disease; to build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation; and to create social, economic and political institutions, which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman. We have hard days ahead. There is no resting for any of us, till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India, what destiny intended them to be. We are citizens of a great country on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard."

These noble words will ever remain a source of inspiration to us all.

Today, it is an occasion when we must all pledge ourselves to the service of our motherland and do all we can to make it a happy, peaceful and prosperous country. We must also see that peace and happiness prevail in this world. This is the time for making great resolutions and cherishing great ideals. In our onward march, there is need to recall the fundamental principles of human life and conduct and to seek inspiration from our past culture and traditions, which will guide us in successfully accomplishing the task that lies ahead.

We must act in our daily life and conduct so as to promote mutual concord, goodwill and happiness amongst all our countrymen, as well as a sense of Universal Brotherhood throughout the world.

The subject of Humanism and Universal Brotherhood seems to be very apt at this moment, when there is so much discord and unhappiness not only in our country but throughout the world. It also harmonizes with the Objects of the Institute where we have assembled.

Let me, at the outset, briefly remind you of the objects of this Institute where we are assembled today to celebrate the Independence Day:

1. To maintain a centre affording opportunities for cultural, intellectual and ethical development;
2. To spread correct ideas on education;
3. To promote cultural exchange among various States in India, and with other countries for the establishing of true national and international unity, concord and co-operation;
4. To raise the consideration of world problems to the plane of moral and spiritual values;
5. To promote Literature, History, Science and the Fine Arts and their study and the diffusion of useful knowledge.

The Indian Institute of World Culture represents an effort to add to the number of enlightened, broadly tolerant and responsible citizens of a United World.

This non-partisan and non-sectarian institution was, founded on August 11th, 1945, to promote human brotherhood across all man-made frontiers by spreading knowledge of that true culture, which is not the exclusive property of any nation, race or creed. Its promoters believe, that throughout human history there has existed a culture that has embraced all walks of life and all higher modes of human Endeavour. National, racial and regional cultures are many but the highest contribution of each is the enrichment of the mosaic of World Culture.

The propagation of the international outlook, the fostering of the truly cosmopolitan spirit, is carried on by this Institute, week after week, without a break, among the men and women who will be the builders and responsible citizens of the One World of the future, or perhaps, the teachers of these. The Institute's non-political effort is directed to the service of souls as well as of minds.

Lasting World Peace, with freedom and justice for all, must rest on a foundation of broad tolerance, and mutual respect and sympathy. This foundation is being laid by promoting acquaintance with each other's cultural achievements, difficulties, hopes and aspirations. Believing that culture, like humanity, is one, the promoters of the Indian Institute of World Culture are in touch with cultural organizations in different parts of the world.

We live in an age of rapid technical progress. We see before our eyes how Science is developing, and new discoveries are made. Some wonderful implements have been created by the human brain and human hands, which are beyond the imagination of our forefathers. At the same time, man is bewildered as to his own place in the scheme of things and there is a gradual decline of civilization owing to diminished appreciation of spiritual values in an atmosphere of materialism. The result of all this is that human beings are split into two groups.

There are some who feel a natural accord with their fellowmen. We are all alike in flesh and blood. But, there are others, who have hatred towards other men, hatred arising out of some personal differences and dissatisfaction. This is true of relations between individuals as well as nations. In this unhappy world, one would wish that human beings should have a clear perception of their ideals in life; they should develop mutual goodwill and accord; they should be able to adjust their differences and make an earnest effort to agree with one another; they should develop a spiritual integrity attended by a multiplication of spiritual values, where man sees his fellowmen as friends and brothers.

There are spiritual values, which constitute humanism, namely, love, unselfishness, honesty and purity. Man must try to attain self-perfection before he tries to improve the society he lives in, by imbibing these virtues. Love, friendship and humanism are great values, which should be suitably incorporated in our social system. This will make the system harmonious, just and progressive. From times immemorial, all religions teach us that people should love one another. 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' This has been the teaching of all great religions. They called upon all human beings to forget the discord amongst themselves and to love one another. This idea has been handed down from generation to generation as a symbol of man's most cherished hopes and expectations. Human beings have always dreamt of a kingdom of Universal Love and Justice. But, this dream is still a dream and we do not know when it will be converted into a solid fact, and when man's environment shall be made humane.



It causes purification of the heart and intellect. The whole human family is bathed with an element of love.

Let us see what Gautama Buddha has to tell us about the stability of Societies.

“And the Exalted One said to the venerable Ananda:

‘How now, Ananda? Have you ever heard that the Vajjians repeatedly assemble together and in large numbers?’

‘I have heard so, Lord.’”

‘Well, Ananda, so long as the Vajjians shall assemble repeatedly and in large numbers, just so long may the prosperity of the Vajjians be looked for and not their decay.

‘...So long, Ananda, as the Vajjians assemble in harmony and disperse in harmony, so long as they do their business in harmony, so long as they introduce no revolutionary ordinance, or break up no established ordinance, but abide by the old-time Vajjian Norm, as ordained, so long as they honour, reverence, esteem and worship the elders among the Vajjians and deem them worthy of listening to; so long as the women and maidens of the families dwell without being forced or abducted; so long as they honour, revere, esteem, and worship the Vajjian shrines both the inner and outer; so long as they allow not the customary offerings given and performed to be neglected, so long as the customary watch and ward over the Arahants that are among them is well kept, so that they may have free access to the realm and having entered may dwell pleasantly therein; just so long as they do these things, Ananda, may the prosperity of the Vajjians be looked for and not their decay.’”

— *Digha Nikaya*, II. 73 (*Some Sayings of the Buddha*).

F. L. WOODWARD. 1939)

In Buddha’s teachings, *maitri* or loving kindness finds the first place in the four kinds of contemplation to exercise proper relationship with other human beings. They are ‘*maitri*’ or loving kindness, *karuna* or compassion, ‘*mudita*’ or gladness at others’ success, and ‘*upekkha*’ or equanimity.

It is essential that goodwill and loving kindness should prevail amongst the nations as between individuals. For this purpose, a complete change of heart is necessary. In all our actions, we should be guided by our conscience in which are enshrined all the highest ethical and moral principles, including the principle of *maitri*. The conscience of the individual should thus become the conscience of Humanity, promoting goodwill and loving kindness amongst all, and removing hatred and animosity.

It is through actual experience that mankind in different parts of the Earth has pinned its faith in a higher power as taught by religion, and it is religion that has been the great moral force in the world and has kept mankind on the path of righteousness. Our moral life tells us that God is not only the goal, but the spring and sustainer of moral effort. Our spiritual experience reveals to us the fact of the supreme comprehensiveness of the deity. The character of God as wisdom, love and righteousness is not a mere abstract demand of thought, but is the concrete reality which satisfies the righteous demand. The unhindered progress of Science since the Renaissance resulting in the modern age of nuclear warfare has produced an unprecedented state of fear and insecurity in the world, which needs to be checked. The only effective way of checking it is the practice of Humanism and Universal Brotherhood, which really means the integration of the philosophy of science with the spiritual concept of the human mind, resulting in a clear vision of the ethical values.

Evolutionary Humanism is a term, which denotes an overall relation between man and his destiny, and one involving his deepest feelings, including his sense of what is holy and sacred. I agree with Julian Huxley that Evolutionary Humanism is capable of becoming the germ of a new religion, not necessarily supplanting existing religions, but supplementing them. It is yet to be seen, how this could be developed, how to work out its intellectual framework, to see how its ideas could be made inspiring, and how to ensure its wide diffusion.

Man is always concerned about his position and role in the Universe and his destiny. These ideas are usually included in Religion. Man is a unique creature whose maintenance and change depend primarily on psycho-social mechanisms, in which mental activities play a dominant role. The special role of religion concerns with man's position in the Universe\* his relations to the rest of the cosmos, and in particular, to his attitude to the powers operating in it, or in other words to his destiny. This attitude involves an attitude of reverence to the spiritual power in the universe (God or Brahma), and some relation to the moral and practical problems of existence, both individual and social. Man is essentially a social being, and his relations with other human beings are of prime importance. It is here that the need of Universal Brotherhood is so vital. In a broad sense such ethical values as Love, Humanism and Brotherhood are the product of the human mind, which is influenced by spiritual concepts.

Evolutionary humanism gives us a better under-standing of the relations between human life and the Universe, as well as amongst human beings themselves. In view of our new knowledge of Biology, History and Psychology, we learn that human nature contains the possibilities of evil, waste and frustration, but it also contains those of good, of achievement and of fulfilment. The lesson of evolution is that we must think in the limited but positive terms of fulfilment, the degree to which we, individually and collectively, can manage to realise our inherent possibilities. It also helps us to see how science and humanism can be reconciled, and how science can contribute to religious progress.

The *present* world situation (including that in India) is very disconcerting and disappointing, and so there is need for a special effort on the part of us all to dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to the task of promoting Humanism and Universal Brotherhood. This is the special message on the Independence Day today. I may address the following words to all my friends:

“Thy task with beauty crown,  
Thy life, with love,  
Thy mind with Truth uplift to God above,  
For whom all is, and by whom was all begun,  
In whom Beauty Love and Truth are one.”

—ROBERT BRIDGES

Indian History has been distinguished throughout by a tendency towards toleration, synthesis and adaptation. Our cultural heritage is a very composite thing. It is a true synthesis, as I have said, of all that is best in the East and West.

Every Member of this Institute has to sign the following declaration:

“I declare my sympathy with the ideal of Universal Human Brotherhood and will Endeavour to cultivate the attitude of brotherliness in my daily living.”

On this Independence Day, let us renew this pledge and pray that God may bless us all, and shower His sublime gifts of love, compassion, kindness, friendliness and benevolence on us In India and the entire human race, so that we may all cherish Humanism in the best manner possible, and thus bring about a sense of Universal Brotherhood in all sections of Humanity and promote happiness and peace in our own Motherland as well as the world as a whole.