

# PEACE AND HUMANISTIC CULTURE

*by*

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Many valuable lectures are given, papers read, discussed and oral reviews of outstanding books presented at THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF WORLD CULTURE. These Transactions represent some of these lectures and papers and are printed for wider dissemination in the cause of better intercultural understanding so important for world peace and human brotherhood.

### **TRANSACTION No 89**

Shri M.V. Venkataramiah has been deeply committed to the Institute for over three decades. In the beginning he was Secretary of the Institute and later was nominated Director and also Vice President of the Institute. In 1987 he was unanimously elected President of the Indian Institute of World Culture, at a specially convened meeting of the members of the Institute.

On August 17, 1991 he relinquished his position because of his age and health. It is the consensus of everyone that a special function to felicitate Shri Venkataramiah be arranged where he would be also invited to deliver the 1991 Shri B P Wadia Memorial Lecture. He has chosen for his subject a very apt and germane subject, namely Peace and Humanistic Culture.

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M.V. VENKATARAMIAH

## PEACE AND HUMANISTIC CULTURE

“Peace be to all beings” had been the refrain of the Buddha’s benediction at sermons delivered along the length and breadth of the plains over which he traveled on foot for years on end, preaching his gospel of love. Before his time, earlier centuries had great beings likewise educating the masses for a life of harmony and brotherhood. After the Buddha, over these twenty five centuries, many illustrious teachers have in their own impressive way, repeated the inevitability of peace for the survival and the good of mankind. Jesus, the Christ, was known as the prince of peace. Mohamed, the Prophet, preached a daily renewal of prayer for peace. Mahatma Gandhi, through his talks, travels, writings etc. brought home to the ears of every listening fellow being, the blessings inherent in love. Many of the thinkers, teachers and savants have emphasized the vital fact that peace and prosperity, peace and plenty etc. go together.

In the present century, the United Nations Organization has espoused the cause of peace world wide. How it then, that peace, i.e. real peace is still elusive? Why have wars, persistently been fought throughout the know historical periods? Even the so called war to end all wars failed to achieve its objective. Will there ever come a time when the world would be totally rid of war?

An examination of the problem in depth must take us to the root cause of human tragedy caused by these wars. As causes are hidden and not easily perceptible it would be mainly speculative to catalogue the causes, although the results which are apparent may yield clues to a few causes. There appears to be a nexus between arms manufacturers and war mongers to fan the flames of most wars. In some cases the impression is projected to justify war on the ground that it is defensive and that so long as there is no aggression, such wars would be inevitable.

In either case, the result is destruction, misery, bloodshed etc. The worst aspect of any such war is that innocent people unconnected with war, women, children and all such voiceless humans are made to suffer long periods of agony.

In the ultimate analysis, what does the so called victor in the war gain? What takes years on end to build is reduced to dust and ashes in a trice. Prolonged bitterness lingers for a long period of time all round. Nothing is gained either in material or other benefits; absolutely nothing! It is an irony that civilized and highly intelligent people should fail to investigate the true cause of war which is a blot on civilization.

### “GOOD AND EVIL”

Thinkers have found through their researches that the root cause of unrest lies in the mind of man. The United Nations Organization has also stated that wars arise in the minds of men and that the seeds of peace should be sown in the minds of men. Sages of old have also

gone deeper into the problem and have stated that the cause of conflict within man himself is the lack of a 'blend between the heart and the mind'. To tackle the problem of disharmony, one should understand the universal problem of good and evil.

Evil men such as Ravana, Kamsa, Duryodhana, Hitler etc. have done deeds that show forth the dichotomy between the heart and the mind. This is also seen in a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Dhritarastra. In the Mahabharata, Vyasa states that Sri Krishna not having succeeded in persuading Duryadhana to avoid war with Pandavas, finally approaches Dhritarastra appealing to him to prevent his son from embarking upon such a disaster as war with Pandavas. The king's reply is suggestive of man in a strangely helpless condition - "I know Oh! Krishna, what is Dharma; but my heart does not respond to it I know what is Adharma; but mind remains captive." Deep rooted is indeed the enigma. Perversion of the mind appears to be rampant in human beings either in a subtle form or in an obvious state. This is a surface observation and should not make one blind to the fact that there are many evolved beings who stand as beacon lights of goodness.

Is evil a natural phenomenon? As there is nothing evil per se in nature, it cannot be said that evil is inevitable. The natural order of things as such is the good. The pairs of opposites generally in their interplay give sometimes the impression of contrasts. Take, for Instance the phenomena of day and night, light and darkness, heat and cold etc. which are quite natural. But in man there are the pairs of opposites which tend to denominate one person as good and another as evil. These generalizations are only superficial appearances. There is perhaps no person who is totally evil or a person who is cent-per-cent good. Some persons may have predominantly good qualities while some others may be manifestly evil minded- Is there not a possibility of such tendencies undergoing changes sometime in the life of the individuals?

There is poignant story of an artist whose ambition was to find a human being who was so to say an angel. He found a very handsome boy in a monastery and was impressed. He painted the model very assiduously and carried it with him wherever he went. After many years of travel and artistic achievements which brought him fame, he was looking for a person who could be quite the opposite of an angel and could easily be devilish. He went on searching for such a person but nearly lost hope of finding one. He was getting old and desperately looking for a last chance.

He was told that there was In a local prison a convict who would be hanged (for several heinous crimes) next morning. He rushed to see him for a possible model; even such a seasoned painter stood aghast at the ferocious appearance of the convict. Being satisfied that he could at last fulfill his ambition, he took permission of the prison chief to paint the picture of this convict and finished his task before the man was taken to the gallows. He told the prisoner that he would show him the picture of an angelic person whose image would serve perhaps as a last glimpse of the good in his life time; but the prisoner laughed and asked the artist not to take the trouble since it was he himself as a boy, whose picture the same artist had painted.

### **“TRANSFORMATION”**

The life of emperor Ashoka stands as a classic example of shattered ambition. Having conquered kingdom after kingdom and subjugated people of lands east, west, north and south he saw at Kalinga the horrors perpetrated In the cause of war; the bloodshed, the massacre of innocent women, children, the aged etc. who had no part in the war. Ashoka repented

thereafter, turned to Buddhism for solace and declared his total abandonment of war fare for the rest of his life. His famous edicts depict a fervent appeal for righteousness and have remained a monument for the benefit of succeeding generations.

There are numerous instances in history of persons changing the mode of life so as to transform themselves and possibly others from brutality to humaneness, from self aggrandizement to selfless service, from miserliness to liberality and from passion to compassion.

St Francis of Assisi made his devout prayer thus:  
"Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love "

His mission in life was to serve his fellowmen as an instrument of divine peace.

The general concept of peace appears to be more absence of war. If we go deep into the matter, two concepts emerge, namely (a) that war of a type different from physical combat between armies, goes on and on, (b) but peace is a quality of heart inherent in every human being since It can be activated to sublimity when real love is engendered. Kalidasa, in giving expression to the burning of Kamadeva by the flash of Shiva's anger, states poetically that the innumerable atoms from the ashes of Kamadeva flew into the hearts of human beings. From the love of oneself to the love of others can easily take the form of reverence to parents, affection towards wife and children, fidelity to friends, sympathy for the helpless, devotion to god etc.

Abou-Ben-Adham in his dream saw an angel writing in a divine book. A life of purity had made him fearless, He asked the angel as to what he was writing. The answer came quickly enough: the writing was the names of persons who loved god. Abou questioned whether his name was in the book. The answer came in the negative. Emboldened by his piety Abou asked the angel to put his name as one who loves his fellow-men. The next night the angel again in appeared in his dream still writing in the book. The previous night's question was repeated. The angel answered that Abou's name was the topmost in the list of names of persons who loved God. The poet thus illustrates that the love of one's fellowmen is actually the love of God.

### **"THE INNER WAR"**

The teachers have pointed to the existence of the self of matter and the self of spirit within the human being. In most cases these two are in conflict with each other. This is the root cause of war within man, which the Bhagavad-Gita terms as the greatest of all wars. The conquest of this subtle war is the sublimation of the self of matter by the self of spirit.

Arjuna seeks an answer from Sri Krishna to the puzzle within himself as to why man commits sin as though he is impelled by some force against his will. Sri Krishna explains that it is the quality of Rajas in man which generates desire, anger etc. and turns out to be the constant enemy of the man. The wisdom of man lies in sublimating the power of Rajas into the quality of Satva whereby the conflict would get resolved in course of time. When this is accomplished, both selves in man work in union and harmony, thereby bringing the war to a close by the power of peace.

Sri Krishna also emphasizes the fact that the self which is actually one in essence is dual in inclinations. This gives the illusion of two selves. The lower and the higher. He says that the lower self must be raised to the level of the higher self and this is the sole responsibility of the higher self. Eventually instead of conflict between the two there will be a distinct effort

to bring about the union of this dual power resulting in benefit for both.

An important factor in the development of the human personality is the discipline of the individual towards progressive evolution to higher and still higher states of cultural, moral and spiritual perfection. For any kind of reform in society the starting point is the individual. This may appear to run counter to the generally adopted method of regulation by the state, the civil authority, the reformist institutions, spiritual centres etc. but even this is for the benefit of individual units, as the ultimate aim is such reform. Instead of imposing discipline from above, it would be more practical to allow the natural growth of self reform by each individual according to his own inspiration, voluntarily willingly and fruitfully.

In spite of wide spread conflict within, as well as outside the individual units of society, alongside this dismal picture strangely enough life goes on persistently from one type of achievement to the next. This duality shows to us that there is a human power which is stronger than a possibility of defeat resulting in the triumph of the spirit over matter. The Buddha stated that the greatest victory is victory over one self, that is the conquest of lower nature such as desire, anger, hatred, lust etc. by the power of the divine nature in man.

### **"THE HUMAN ETHOS"**

Artificial distinctions current in society here and there, such as superiority versus inferiority, high versus low, young versus old, rich versus poor, man versus woman, majority versus minority, urban versus rustic, etc. will have no meaning when one takes cognisance of reality of the Soul as the common denominator of every living being. Over and over again the great teachers have pointed to the fact that every being is a soul. The body is merely the sheath of the soul. While the body comes to birth, grows, matures, decays and dies, the soul continues for ever without being affected by the changes of the sheath. Wisdom lies in doing away with all artificial distinctions, thus leaving full scope for the efflorescence of the individual genius. Superficially considered, artificial distinctions tend to cause considerable mischief and have actually brought about cleavages between man and man.

Every human being has inherently the same capacity, the same scope for development, same measure of power lying dormant within his soul, so much so, that no one can be said to be superior to another, nor inferior to his fellow being. Young persons are considered (erroneously) to be weaklings requiring help from elders. Tradition has survived to glorify the accomplishment of Young devotees like Dhruva, Parashurama, Markandeya, Nachiketa, etc. Even recently a seven year old boy climbed to the summit of Mount Blanc. Women are at par with all men in all aspects, and it is surely fallacy to term them weaker sex. In learning, in teaching, in counseling, in jurisprudence, and in many more similar fields of activities, they have proved their admirable merits. In the art of healing, in missionary service, they have proved themselves worthy of the highest praise. Mother Theresa was recognized by the Nobel Prize Award, was conferred Bharata Rathna and was acclaimed by the world body. Florence Nightingale carved for herself a name in history for her mission of mercy on the battlefield. Helen Keller achieved fame by her courageously overcoming physical handicaps, traveled all over the world and infused self confidence among millions of handicapped persons of diverse nationalities, languages etc. Valentina Tereshcova made history by becoming the first woman astronaut in outer space. The story of Savitri, achieving the revival of her good husband by imploring Yama to save her family is a courageous example of feminine power. These few names are just by way of illustrations. Many more names can be brought to the picture in appropriate context.

Human capacities are limitless. The teachers have affirmed that there is, in the natural

order of things, a progressive awakening of human possibilities. Jesus, the Christ, spoke warmly of faith, it is also said that man is faith formed. There have been atheists in the past as there are non believers today. Charvakas of old preached hedonism. The modern day, Nasthikas, scoff at worship or prayer and call all such expression of faith as superstitions. None-the-less masses of mankind have always believed in their teachers whose wisdom has proclaimed faith in the divine law. They have also shown that God manifests his divine presence as the macrocosm and that the human being is the microcosm. The divine nature manifests as law and lies latent in the human being. There is, therefore, the possibility for man for making his latent powers patent through perfection may be in many incarnations to come.

Mahatma Gandhi stated that in the midst of death, life persists; in the midst of untruth, truth persists. Likewise in the midst of darkness, light persists. Ignorance is likened to gloom; knowledge to light. It is ignorance that has been the bane of mankind. It is a blot on civilization. It is an irony that having within his own consciousness the scope for complete knowledge, man should grope in darkness being unaware of his own opportunism, capacities and powers to cultivate the art of bringing up to the surface the hidden treasures of knowledge garnered during many preceding incarnations.

The divine design has nicely balanced humanity always in equal proportion numerically of male-female. Manu, the law-giver, stated that where women are honoured, there is god, rejoice. The elevation of womanhood, in the scheme of things, to the status of divinity, bestowing benefits to the devotees is a fine tradition indeed. Shiva is portrayed as Ardhanareeshwara, that is half male and half female, eternally inseparable. Shankarcharya has in one of his beautiful stanzas extolled the transcendental stature describing how Maheshwara remains the patron saint of yogis even while inexhorably joined to Maheshwari.

### **“SIMPLICITY”**

Simple living and high thinking are recommended for any one who aspires for self-improvement Gandhiji stands as a classic example of this axiom. Saints, sages, seers and many holy men have, in the past exemplified in their own lives, the freedom that they were able to enjoy because of very simple form of life. The Buddha freed himself by his change over from princely way of life to that of a lonely wanderer. The Digambara saints discard altogether any covering of their bodies, eat the simplest type of food, go on fast from time to time and what is more possess nothing. They possess wisdom in abundant measure which, in essence, is a treasure which can enrich others while not diminishing in any sense the source of such wealth.

The requirements of any human being are necessities. May be, minimum comforts, luxuries are not necessary at all. Food, clothing and shelter are needs with limitations.

From a mound of food, anyone can take up just so much as his appetite can hold, and, no more. Anything taken in excess will result in vomiting. The body can be wrapped to an extent of a single set of clothes at a time. The colleagues of a professor in one of our universities asked one of the senior professors as to how it came about that he was wearing the same coat everyday for months together. The reply came that he would wash his coat every Sunday and wear the same until the next wash. "Can I wear more than one coat at time?" Even for shelter, there is a limit. One cannot sleep in more space than the measure of his bed nor can he sit in more space than three or four square feet of space. Thus, in the scheme of nature, these limitations provide for a naturally simple life common to all human beings. There is no need for the rich to gather together for themselves all manner of things

which create envy in the minds of the so-called deprived segment of the society. Eating too much, for example, brings no happiness to the glutton who has to suffer ill health for his excesses. George Bernard Shaw once said that such men dig their own grave with their teeth. In the Bhagavad-Gita the Master teaches moderation in even simple things like eating and recreation.

### **"SERVICE AND SACRIFICE"**

The poet states that life of man being uncertain it is best for him to concentrate on the accumulation of merit. This would enable him to make best use of the eternal present. Looking back at the past would be in vain since he cannot do anything to change it. A Sufi poet wrote 'The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on. No amount of tears or prayer can erase a word,' The future is veiled in the womb of time. To think of so called future plans is but day dreaming. It is therefore profitable to concern one self with what can be done in the present.

Duty is what is highly important for every man for his own way of life. What is due to others is one's duty. Service, sacrifice friendliness, sympathy, etc are the marks of duty. The colloquial meaning of this world is generally what is done for livelihood, a too narrow term.

Dharma is appropriately used to denote duty, (among other concepts under this wide term). In the Mahabharata an episode narrates a quiz. Yaksha asks Yudhishtira, "What is Dharma?" Yudhishtira answers "Compassion to living being." Obligatory duties are taught in the Gita as follows: "Acts of yajna (sacrifice), Dana (gifts), Tapas (austerity) should not be given up."

Service includes caring for one's family, neighbors, friends, preceptors etc. Simply stated it is a spontaneous extension of a helping hand when such help is needed, and is given in proper time at the proper place and what is more, without any expectation of reward or recognition. Jesus, the Christ, proclaimed: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long and in kind; charity envieth not; charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: But the greatest of these is charity."

The Bhagavad-Gita warns that it is preferable to perform one's duty even at his peril, than to perform well the duty of another. Interference in other's duties is full of risks. Sometimes ignorant people develop a poor opinion of their tasks while comparing the feats of another. This is manifestly a wrong attitude, because no duty is poor or low, high or lofty. Every duty has its own merit in the natural scheme of things and will yield appropriate results in the fullness of time. A person finds himself in particular situation on account of past karma whether agreeable or disagreeable. It is he alone that is responsible for it. He should transform disagreeable matters to agreeable once by willingly and cheerfully discharging every such task, thereby he would be mitigating the burden of karma. A hope lies in front of man if he wants only agreeable matters to emerge in the future - here and now he should so conduct himself in the performance of his present tasks as to watch out that there is no blemish in his work. A good act is bound to bring forth good effects in its own sweet course. In the life of the Buddha, he was impressed by the simple household duties of Sujatha as detailed by her that he remarked "you can teach even the wise by your admirable duties of life"

Service has as its corollary, sacrifice. Self interest has no place in this scheme. Bharata, the younger brother of Sri Rama, has shown a marvellous attitude of Tyaga. His



mother Kaikeyi, instigated by Manthara, demanded banishment of Sri Rama to the forest for fourteen years and the enthronement of Bharata as king of Ayodhya. When Bharata came to know of this, he was stricken by sorrow at the tragedy of the situation. He shocked his mother by telling her that she has brought disgrace to the Ikshvaku dynasty by her selfish act. He rejected the plea of his mother to be the king. In sorrow, he went out to the forest with a view to bring back Sri Rama and install him as king of Ayodhya. When Sri Rama insisted on completing his fourteen years of exile, Bharata swore that he would only await the return of Sri Rama to Ayodhya after the expiry of the period of exile, governing the people for that period for and as a proxy to Sri Rama. The heroic act of self abnegation has glorified the name of Bharata.

Bahubali got his right of result of a duel with his brother to rule the kingdom; but he relinquished his right in favour of his defeated brother and retired to Chandragiri, a monumental act of tyaga.

Chanakya, the author of Arthashastra, secured for Chandragupta Maurya the kingdom of Ujjain by his mastery of state craft. Amathya Rakshana, a capable minister of the previous hostile king went into hiding. Chanakaya manoeuvred to bail him out, persuaded him to be the minister for Chandragupta and after installing him as Amathya, Chanakya retired to his hermitage to continue his meditation. No amount of persuasion by the king, nor the glamour of high authority, could change his noble act of self sacrifice.

Apart from various types of sacrificial of a material nature, there is perhaps nobler counterpart of tyaga within man. It can express itself in the three avenues of action, namely thought, word and deed. Father Damien, a Belgian priest, voyaged at an young age to the distant island of Molokkoy which was infested with leprosy among practically all the inhabitants. He spent the rest of his life ministering to their needs for a long time, cured a sizeable number of them at personal risk and put the others on the road to recovery. He contracted the dreaded disease and died. His martyrdom and self sacrifice are one of the noblest events of history.

Altruism is the noblest quality associated with thought. The mind of man is instinctively humane. Kindness, sympathy, identification with fellow beings in their joys and sorrows come naturally to one who has overcome the illusion of material self interest. Quite often the mind gets entangled in personal likes and dislikes, which obstructs the natural flow of what is termed as the milk of human kindness. This can be overcome by the simple process of adherence to Satya, the truth. The poet states that just as the body is purified by water, the mind is purified by truth.

The second avenue of action namely word follows the trend of thought. So long as thought is pure, so long indeed the word be harmonious, comforting, loving etc. whether articulated verbally or reduced to writing. A constant practice in the happy blend of word and thought will help in the development of a habit which avoids contact with undesirable matters. Such a habit is found in those who select good reading, good company for conversation, good planning for beneficial action etc.

The third avenue namely action follows the pattern of thought and word. Controversies are avoided, harmful action of any kind becomes abhorrent, an aura of peace is radiated around the action of a person whose thought, word and deed are synchronized. The Buddha as in the Dhammapada taught that better than a thousand words of meaningless jargon is a single word hearing which one is at peace.

"Though a poem consists of a thousand couplets, if they be lacking in sense, better a

single couplet (gatha) full of meaning, on hearing which one is at peace."

"Neither father nor mother nor kindred can confer greater benefits than does the well directed mind."

### **"HAPPINESS"**

The pursuit of happiness is a universal effort and is natural to man. The concept varies from person to person depending on the aspiration, inclination; erroneous understanding of what exactly constitutes one's happiness. For instance, money is supposed to give satisfaction, comfort etc. Some people regard the family and their kith and kin as sources of one's own happiness. Physical enjoyment such as good food, parties, travel, perquisites, etc is considered a happy way of life. Much of these is illusory, because the more we have the more grows the craving. There is on point of satisfaction. "Let us then live happily, we who own nothing can call nothing our own; Let us be like shining ones who are nourished on love."

Deep reflection on the above teachings of the Buddha will enable us to perceive that happiness lies in non possession, freedom from hatred, lust etc. whereby nourishment comes to our heart by the talisman of love.

Provocation, retaliation, insinuation, calumny, etc. are other manifestations of an inner malady for which the root cause is selfishness. These defects can be overcome by self introspection. One can perceive that the above tendencies yield nothing while they can cause considerable injury to oneself and to others. Correct regulation and elimination of such defects can be brought about by the magic of love.

Cultivation of finer sensibilities is a continuous regulatory process. The more it is done the better will be one's accomplishment. A true gentleman exercises complete self control, in his contacts with others. He takes care to see that no offence is done unwittingly. He takes no offence at other's remarks. Devadatta's outbursts against Prince Siddhartha evoked a mild response. "I do not accept your compliments." Shankaracharya teaches endurance of all sorrows without any kind- of counter offensive. Purandara Dasa has in one of his popular songs advised that instead of paying back in the same coin as it were, one should go to the extent of naming his new born son after his enemy. When a devotee came with his offerings to pray at the altar, Jesus asked him to leave his offerings at the altar, to go back and reconcile with his enemy and then return to offer prayers. Such practices at self control will bring about a mental satisfaction of a unique character among all concerned.

### **"LOYALTY"**

They say that trust begets trust. In human society there are interrelated obligations which from duties towards those with whom one comes into contact. In a smaller or greater measure, such obligations ought to be discharged faithfully and to the best of one's ability. This calls for personal loyalty which is a natural adjunct to trust.

Loyalty to teachers goes a long way in reinforcing one's individuality as he goes on assimilating the essence of such teachings. Similarly loyalty to parents, wife, children, friends etc brings about a great uniting force that will tend towards harmony, wherein no misunderstanding or lack of faith can find room for happiness. Likewise loyalty to a cause to which one has set his heart upon must be strenuously guarded. This is also true of religion, which actually is 'religiore', meaning to bind together. A comprehensive understanding of such faith will bring about brotherhood in its practical sense.

## **"CIVILIZATION"**

Many books have been written on civilization. History is incidentally an account of human civilization. Great changes have occurred from the time heralding benefits to mankind. Cannibalism is extinct, slavery has been abolished, sati has been outlawed. Some countries have abolished capital punishment. Many such reforms have shown great strides in humanistic culture. Civilized behaviour starts with the individual and unless more and more individuals cultivate civilized behaviour, civilization will be partial. The impediments in individual behaviour are mainly defects in the personality. Take for example: greed. Craze for money seems to overrule common sense. What logic can there be for lotteries? What benefit does one accrue from horse-racing and betting at horse races? What is the logic behind brewing intoxicating liquors? The expectation of amassing wealth by easy means or speculation blinds a man to the moral aspect of the system. If one expects to obtain a prize of, say Rs 1 lakh, in a lottery by buying a ticket for Rs 1, can he not visualize that his gain is unearned and is at the cost of thousands of his fellowmen? It is said that hunger grows from that which it feeds. The more one gets, the more one wants. In the Manava Dharma Shastra, the law of Rita is emphasized. This is the moral order which rules the universe. It is adherence to this law that makes civilization glorious.

## **"RENUNCIATION"**

"Renounce and enjoy" is the dictum contained in Isavasya Upanishad. It warns against coveting the wealth of others. If one is wise, he will realize that everything in the universe belongs to God. What he has with him from time to time is Iswara's property placed in trust with him; at best he is only a trustee. Ownership is a misnomer.

The teachers of old have said that money in terms of coinage or otherwise is worthless by itself. It is just a token for exchange of goods and services. Real wealth is free for all and is abundantly available at all times. Agni (fire) is wealth; Vayu (air) is wealth; Surya (sun) is wealth; etc. Any one has access to all these. Knowing that one has to give up everything, even his body at the time of death. He should have no attachments for worldly possessions. What he is able to carry with him is the moral wealth which he was able to accumulate during his life.

Freedom is a panacea for peace. Jesus, the Christ, said, "The truth shall make you free." Sri Krishna refers to "freedom from hypocrisy, self esteem and injury to others." The Buddha said that he wept along with others till he found freedom within himself. His discovery was that desire was the chief cause of sorrow. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore has said in Geetanjali, "My desires are many and my cry is pitiful; but ever didst thou save me by hard refusal; and this strong mercy has been wrought into my life through and through." The concept of Moksha or Mukti is sometimes believed to be what comes after death. The wise ones have affirmed that it is here in physical existence that Mukti can be achieved. This freedom is not only for a life but also for the enduring, amrithathva.

It is not necessary to give up the world in order to gain liberation. A person has to live in the world, in the midst of his fellow beings and yet not get entangled in worldly attachments. The Masters have shown the way. It is said of them that they are like the lotus flower which is clean and beautiful although growing in mire and muddy waters.

## **"LIFE IS EARNEST"**

"Life is real, life is earnest,  
And the grave is not its goal...  
Not enjoyment nor sorrow is

Our destined end of way  
But so to act that each tomorrow  
Will bring in farther than today.”

These words of Longfellow have greatly influenced the minds of millions of readers. The popular saying is that work is worship and labour is love. Activity of the right type can keep one vigilant, considerate and tolerant of what comes day after day. Cultural way of life strengthens man's sensibilities and makes him responsible to higher values of human existence, namely creation, preservation and destruction (for regeneration). These are symbolized in traditional ideas of: Sristi (Brahma), Sthithi (Vishnu) and Laya (Shiva). This is the order of nature whereby the old yields place to new, "and God fulfills himself in many ways." Destruction becomes necessary for regeneration and re-creation; but this does not mean wanton destruction. In practical terms nothing material or immaterial can ever be destroyed where it ceases to be anything at all. There is no void in existence. What happens at the point of destruction is a transformation or re-creation in perhaps a better and purified form.

Truth, beauty, and goodness are complementary to one another and are also facets of a comprehensive culture. Doordarshan has adopted these terms in the motto: Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram Mahatma Gandhi in his lifelong experiments with truth realized the grace and solace embellished in the great term: Satyameva Jayate. The motto inscribed by the Banaras University is: There is no religion higher than Truth, Satyat nasti parodharmaha. The University of Mysore has the motto: "I shall uphold truth always; Satyamevo dharmyaha." In similar descriptions goodness and beauty have always been highlighted to convince man that the positive and most purposeful way of life is culture which in its mellow beneficence makes the votary a humane unit in society.

