



VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE OF WELLBEING

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ABSTRACT

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is a philosophy that inculcates an understanding that the whole world is one family. It is a philosophy that tries to foster an understanding that the whole of humanity is one family. It is a social philosophy emanating from a spiritual understanding that the whole of humanity is made of one life energy. Hitopadesha is a collection of Sanskrit fables in prose and verse. According to the author of Hitopadesha, Narayana, the main purpose of creating the Hitopadesha is to instruct young minds the philosophy of life in an easy way so that they are able to grow into responsible adults. It is almost similar to the Panchatantra.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION:

"Be Universal in your Love. You will see the Universe as picture of your own Being." ---- Sri Chinmoy

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is a philosophy that inculcates an understanding that the whole world is one family. It is a philosophy that tries to foster an understanding that the whole of humanity is one family. It is a social philosophy emanating from a spiritual understanding that the whole of humanity is made of one life energy. If the Divine source is one then how we as individuals are different? If the whole ocean is one then how a drop of the ocean is different from the ocean? If the drop is different from the ocean how then it can ultimately be dissolved in the ocean?

Meaning:

It is a Sanskrit phrase meaning that the whole earth is one family. The first word is made up of three Sanskrit words - Vasudha, Eva and Kutumbakam. Vasudha means the earth, Eva means emphasizing and Kutumbakam means a family. The concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam originates from Hitopadesha. Hitopadesha is a collection of Sanskrit fables in prose and verse. According to the author of Hitopadesha, the main purpose of creating the Hitopadesha is to instruct young minds the philosophy of life in an easy way so that they are able to grow into responsible human beings.

Origin of the concept:

The concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam originates from Hitopadesha. Hitopadesha is a collection of Sanskrit fables in prose and verse. According to the author of Hitopadesha, Narayana, the main purpose of creating the Hitopadesha is to instruct young minds the philosophy of life in an easy way so that they are able to grow into responsible adults. It is almost similar to the Panchatantra. The whole philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is an integral part of the Hindu Philosophy.

The concept originates in the Vedic scripture *Maha Upanishad* (Chapter 6, Verse 72):

"*ayam bandhurayam neti ganana laghuchetasam udaracharitanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam*"

Only small men discriminate saying: One is a relative; the other is a stranger. For those who live magnanimously the entire world constitutes but a family.

This concept is also mentioned in another Vedic text, Hitopadesha: "*Udaracharitanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam*", meaning, "*This is my own relative and that is a stranger*" – is the reasoning of the narrow-minded; for the noble hearts,

however, the entire earth is but one family", and is considered an integral part of the Hindu Philosophy. The statement is not just about peace and harmony among the societies in the world, but also about a truth that somehow the whole world has to live by some rules like a family, set by an unknowable source. Just by contemplating this idea and by at least trying to live by it and practice it in our lives, we could make this world a better place.

Diversity of culture and tradition is our pride

A garden with diverse flowers with diverse fragrances, colours and adoration looks beautiful and gives divinity to the garden. Oneness in diversity is exhibited in nature with the appearance of a rainbow, which is an aggregation of diverse synchronous colours in the ethereal sky. When colours are separate they disperse and are not visible. By the magical prismatic effect of sun and rain clouds the concerted reflection forms sublime rainbow signifying harmony and equanimity. Same way, our Indian culture is a beautiful amalgamation of diverse languages, diverse traditions and diverse existence.

Respecting and celebrating cultures is the beauty of diversity. This is what is respecting the humanity and being human. Universal love and brotherhood makes us understand the pains and pleasures of others and to be aware of it and to share the concerns. All Pervading Consciousness in the whole Humanity is the Universal Consciousness present in each one of us. We all emanate from one supreme source to merge back to the same source.

Unity in diversity is the essence of Indian culture. Nationwide we find people of different religions and colour, practicing different customs and practices, speaking different languages and wearing diverse kinds of dresses. This apparent diversity does not prevent anyone to fall back on their national identity as Indians or the citizens of this grand nation. The manifestation of this national spirit is not new to us. Since long, this subcontinent had been a common home to people of different races, religions and customs. They all have been living a life of harmony and peace. Therefore, it was never a matter of difficulty for this culture to extend this sense of oneness to encompass the whole world.

India is a mini world, we do not find anything outside India that is not in India and you find everything in India that is elsewhere in the world. Since times immemorial, what we find in this subcontinent is a fusion of differences emerging to surface as a composite whole where all the differences resolved and a harmonic and grand mosaic or collage is presented to the viewers.

Looking from the spiritual sense, the Vedas ultimately stress on the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man in myriad ways. While the Supreme Godhead is labelled as 'Paramatma' (The Supreme Self), human is addressed as Jivatma (the limited-self engaged in earthly life). Every man is said to be essentially divine in sharing the powers, attributes and properties of the supreme self in a limited way. As many lamps are lighted from a single lamp, Jivatmas emanate from the Paramatma during creation and merge back in the Paramatma during dissolution. Thus, there is no reason why one human is basically different from another though there are apparent differences in terms of appearance, attributes and accomplishments.

Indian culture has been advocating a life of non-violence, peace, love and harmony. It does not support hurting, harming or fighting with others. It does not allow any sort of discrimination to draw lines in between people and divide them. It does not view one set of people as high and the other as low. Since long, it has been endeavouring to create a society where the objectives of every individual is collectively realized and evolve a framework in which every individual contributes his or her talents, skills and accomplishments for the benefits of the society at large. The resulting output is a highly potential and wonderfully symphonic social medley.

The concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam enjoins people to practice acceptance and live in harmony. It exhorts people to realize a lofty universal culture wherein there are no fights and assertions of the supremacy and arrogance of a given race or sect. 'Live and Let Live' is the truest manifestation of the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. It is a philosophy that tries to foster an understanding that the whole of humanity is one family. It is a social philosophy emanating from a spiritual understanding that the World of humanity is made of one life energy. If the Paramatma is one how then an Atma can be different? If Atma is different how then can it ultimately be dissolved in the Parmatma? If the whole ocean is one how then a drop of the ocean be different from the ocean? If the drop is different from the ocean how then can it ultimately be dissolved in the ocean? It is a Sanskrit phrase meaning that the whole earth is one family.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Be a World Citizen

A World Citizen is a one who sees no boundaries of religion, race, gender, creed, society, sect, and nation. He respects every human life on Earth, without any prejudices and is ready to share everything that nature offers. There are three recommended steps. The first step is to develop our consciousness by recognizing the common thread binding everything on this planet. Thus the first step is the understanding of oneness.

The second step is to develop a global perspective. This can be done by reading the history of other countries, understanding their culture and appreciating their uniqueness. This will make you respect every culture and nation in this world. Interact with people of various countries and cultures. You can do this by travelling, by reaching out to expatriates in our city, through social networking websites, etc. Understand how communities, societies and nations are built. Studying the nature, environment, the balance between the human, plant and animal kingdoms will make us revere the beauty of creation and in turn shall inspire us to take effort to restore and maintain the balance of nature. We shall begin to recognise the common teachings of all great leaders, prophets and saints, pointing to the same Oneness, God and Consciousness present in each one of us. By recognising and identifying oneself with this deeper realm, you operate as a world citizen, seeing the world as one family. All our deeds then emanate from the oneness and you shall only think of the well being of everyone.

The third step is to work towards the benefit of the whole world. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this is to do with taking on impersonal projects for the benefit of others, if possible not just for the country – but for the whole world. Being a World Citizen does not mean you are no longer patriotic to your country. A true patriot is one who elevates the consciousness of his country and also of the world. A world citizen is devout to his country and to the entire world. But he is not one who is only devout to his country while demeaning other countries or is indifferent about other countries. The focus of a World Citizen is elevation of global consciousness – in which his country surely benefits.

A World Citizen works towards establishing an ideal and highly evolved society on Earth. His entire focus, his endeavours, his creation, his inventions are targeted only for the betterment of the whole life on Earth. We have now known the path for travelling beyond, from being personal to impersonal. Being truly impersonal is when you are 'globally – impersonal'. Practice the third step to be a world citizen by being 'globally – impersonal'. It simply needs you to add a global perspective to an impersonal project that you undertake.

CONCLUSION:

The whole philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is an integral part of the Hindu Philosophy. When we see the same consciousness in every person – then we will be able to see the world as one family. The Upanishads call this *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. One who understands what *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* is one who sees the entire world as his family inclusive of human, plant and animal kingdom. He recognizes being part of the one creation and living like a family sharing everything the world has to offer and caring for others. Seeing the world as a family also signifies being ready to work towards any problem which the world is facing.

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