

India's Vision of World Federation



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Togetherness seems to have started with life, on this planet. Animal kingdom nurtured it and human beings perpetuated. Ancient civilisations carry this thinking in some form or the other. with the advent of feudalistic order, this human value got diluted.

This concept of the “World” can often be seen in the ancient scriptures of India. Most important one is :शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा आ ये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्यु¹ -Shrinvantu vishve amritasa putraa aa ye dhaamaani divyaani tasthuh || , subtly refers to the Children of the world.

Another illustration is from Mahopanishad: अयं बन्धुरयं नेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्। उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्² || “Ayam bandhurayam neti ganana laghuchetasām, Udāracharitānām tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam”, meaning, “One is my brother and the other is not – is the thinking of a narrow-minded person. For those who are broad-minded, liberals, or noble people, the entire world is one family.”

This virtue of belongingness is not prescriptive or isolated, but deep rooted in the then value system, which is reflected in the very first verse of Ishavasyopanishad: ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्। तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् || ishavyamidam sarvam yatkinchya jagatyam jagat, tena tyaktena bhunjitha maa grudhah kasyasvidhdhanam. Meaning, The Lord is present in everything in this world. In other words the world belongs to everyone. Satisfy your needs by consuming (or enjoying) the benefits which are only necessary and are yours. Dont covet

the wealth of others. This teaches us responsible consumption and provides for a wider perspective that the world has enough for everyone's need but not for greed.

If we look at the current times Mahatma Gandhi also called for a world federation where all the nations of the world are placed equal and shall have no military of each nation. The world police will manage the law and order situation. In his letter to Maurice Frydman dated July 28, 1942 he says “If I can get freedom for India now [...] empire idea dissolves and world state takes its place, in which all the states of the world are free and equal, no state has its military. There may be a world police to keep order in the absence of universal belief in non-violence.”

The idea of world federation has hit a roadblock on the issue of sovereignty. It is quite but natural to see every nation being sovereign on the world platform, but clinging to it adamantly will not facilitate progress. In the days of yore, world was content with what it had and many civilisations never crossed their own drawn geographical boundaries. Slowly many developed external trade relations, so that countries evolved to the stage of interdependence, while staying independent. Further civilisational progress resulted in aggrandizement and some who couldn't stay confined, went expansionist idea. They were confronted with resistance so the lavish developed destructive military and weapons, colonised nations, subjugating the timid. This trend continues till day. The earliest idea of sovereign, independent and also interdependent needs to be restated.

Gandhi visualises the nature of his world federation on similar lines. “Isolated independence is not the goal of the world-states. It is voluntary interdependence.”³

This idea was reiterated as “The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another, but a federation of friendly inter-dependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see

nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather, than independence.”⁴

In Continuation of the same argument, Sir Arcot Ramaswamy Mudaliar, leader of Indian delegation to San Francisco Conference of 1945, in his speech says “We talk of independence, We talk of sovereign rights-- I’m one of those that believe in sovereign rights--But I believe in the world the world has come to a stage when the emphasis is not to be so much on independence as on interdependence.”⁵ We see both leaders speaking the same way confirming the philosophy of the land.

Another major impediment in the formation of the world federation is the border/boundary disputes between nations. There is an interesting proverb in Chinese which says “ Love your neighbours, but don’t demolish the fence between.”⁶ Mahatma Gandhi also says: “There is no limit to extending our service to our Neighbours across our State-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers.”⁷

Current system of global governance under United Nations has not been effective mainly because it is not based on democratic principles and processes. Fundamental flaw in the current system is that it does not believe in equality of all nations of the world, as few countries are controlling it. Not all countries of the world are represented therein. Gandhi clearly says “Federation is undoubtedly a greater and nobler end for free nations. It is a greater and nobler end for them to strive to promote Federation than be self-centered, seeking only to preserve their own freedom...The very first step to a world Federation is to recognize the freedom of conquered and exploited nations.”⁸

An interesting fact relevant here is that India was invited to the San Francisco Conference in 1945, even though India was not an independent Country. This was observed by Mr. Molotov, the leader of Soviet Delegation. He said “...We have at this Conference an Indian Delegation. But India is not an independent state. We all know that the time will come when the voice of an independent India will be heard, too. Nevertheless we share the view

held by the British Government which suggested that representatives of India should be granted a seat at this Conference, imperfect though her status is.”⁹. Sad part is India has not been taken in as a permanent member of the decision making body of the UN, the Security Council, even after 80 years of the formation.

India always believed in Non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi describes “The structure of a world federation can be raised only on foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally given up in world affairs.”¹⁰

Sri Aurobindo, great saint and mystic made his dream of World federation in his message on the independence day Aug 15, 1947, which incidentally also was his birthday. His message was aired on the radio. The complete text of his message is below¹¹:

“August 15th, 1947 is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But we can also make it by our life and acts as a free nation an important date in a new age opening for the whole world, for the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity.

August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition. Indeed, on this day I can watch almost all the world-movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though then they looked like impracticable dreams, arriving at fruition or on their way to achievement. In all these movements free India may well play a large part and take a leading position.

The first of these dreams was a revolutionary movement which would create a free and united India. India today is free but she has not achieved unity. At one moment it almost seemed as if in the very act of liberation she would fall back into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. But fortunately it now seems probable

that this danger will be averted and a large and powerful, though not yet a complete union will be established. Also, the wisely drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly has made it probable that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go. Let us hope that that may come about naturally, by an increasing recognition of the necessity not only of peace and concord but of common action, by the practice of common action and the creation of means for that purpose. In this way unity may finally come about under whatever form—the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future.

Another dream was for the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia and her return to her great role in the progress of human civilisation. Asia has arisen; large parts are now quite free or are at this moment being liberated: its other still subject or partly subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

The third dream was a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. That unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect initiation organised but struggling against tremendous

difficulties. But the momentum is there and it must inevitably increase and conquer. Here too India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For unification is a necessity of Nature, an inevitable movement. Its necessity for the nations is also clear, for without it the freedom of the small nations may be at any moment in peril and the life even of the large and powerful nations insecure. The unification is therefore to the interests of all, and only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. But an outward basis is not enough; there must grow up an international spirit and outlook, international forms and institutions must appear, perhaps such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship, willed interchange or voluntary fusion of cultures. Nationalism will have fulfilled itself and lost its militancy and would no longer find these things incompatible with self-preservation and the integrity of its outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

Another dream, the spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society. This is still a personal hope and an idea, an ideal which has begun to take hold both in

India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far this hope will be justified depends upon the new and free India."

Conclusively, it can be said that Indian ethos support formation of a world federation, which is democratic and non-military.

References:

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7. Young India, 31-12-31, p. 427
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9. Page 347, UNIO-Volume-1-E-F.pdf
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"Unless some effective supranational government can be set up and brought quickly into action, the prospects of peace and human progress are dark and doubtful."

WINSTON CHURCHILL
-Former British Prime Minister.