



శ్రీ వేపచేదు విద్యా పీఠము

**VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**

మన సంస్కృతి

Mana Sanskriti (Our Culture)

Chief Editor: Dr. Sreenivasarao Vepachedu, Esq.

## Diversity

*“We are watching the birth of a new sense of nationhood in India, drawn from the aspiring middle classes in its cities and towns, who are linked together by commerce and technology. They have common aspirations and ambitions, a common Indian dream—rising standards of living, good government, and a celebration of India’s diversity.” Fareed Zakaria, USA*  
([http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/asia-pacific/the\\_rediscovery\\_of\\_india?cid=reimagining\\_india-eml-alt-mip-mck-oth-1311](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/asia-pacific/the_rediscovery_of_india?cid=reimagining_india-eml-alt-mip-mck-oth-1311))

Everybody aspires for the same essentials in this world, except maybe “a celebration of diversity.” There are only a few countries that can claim to have diversity, such as the most modern democracies. But, do they celebrate it? That is the question everyone grapples with in these countries. In those countries where no cultural and ethnic divisions exist, there is the question of visitors rather than immigrants, and the alien cultures that they bring with them.

In the US, we have diversity, but it is a different kind of diversity from the diversity that is in India. In the US, everyone was an immigrant at one time or another, whether by ancestry or by actual immigration. The actual natives have nearly all disappeared. All immigrants learn to live in the US, adapting to its unique culture, whether one wants to call it a “melting-pot” or “salad bowl.” Fresh immigrants keep their ethnic culture and language, while second and third generations forget it. Some of them forget their roots to the extent that they hate new immigrants and label them legal or illegal aliens, at least during harsh economic times and elections.

In India, there is no such immigration issue, per se, but it does have its own unique set of immigration and native issues. Despite Christian (the British, the Dutch, the French, etc.) and Islamic colonization, India retained her natives. As a result, various native nations and tribes still exist in modern United India. Despite losing major chunks of land and people to new countries- now called (together with India), “South Asia,” - there exist millions of so-called castes and tribes in India today.

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Everyone knows that a Tamil-speaking Brahmin from the south shares little with a Sikh from Punjab; each has his own language, religion, ethnicity, traditions, and mode of life, as stated by Fareed. A Tamil from Tamil Nadu has more common culture with a Srilankan Tamil, and Muslim from Punjab has more common culture with a Pakistani. A Khan from Punjab is more like a Khan from Afghanistan and Pakistan, while a Christian from Assam is more like a Christian from Myanmar. The Indian continent's diversity is unparalleled. And so, the immigration problem exists because people migrate from one state to the other and bring their language, religion and culture to their new state within the Indian Union. Added to that is the immigration of people from neighboring states not part of the Union, but with familial, tribal and religious ties.

In the early years of the Indian Union, the leaders had to grapple with the integration of large and small entities, diverse in culture, religion and language. As part of these growing pains and teenage identity crises, the union was reorganized into large and small states. The population per state was not a criterion for reorganization, resulting in large states such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, etc., and smaller states like Nagaland. However, a better reorganization taking cultural, religious, linguistic, geographic, economic and size criteria into account would be beneficial. As part of that process new states were created out of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

The goal is to develop the Indian Union without leaving any population or region behind, creating a healthy competition among the states for opportunities both within the Union and globally, in hopes of keeping the cultural, religious and linguistic identities preserved for all including the major global religions with enormous resources and weaker, native Indian cultures and religions that have no support from anywhere, externally or internally. Destroying diversity in the name of unity instead of preserving and celebrating it is ill advised, especially when human nature creates new groups of identity and fellowship, and discriminates based on such affiliations, resulting in a perpetual war among tribes/castes/religions/nationalities.

Despite the differences among us, there are common interests and aspirations that transcend all of the cultural, linguistic and tribal boundaries that dictate our lives, such as

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the goal to survive and spread our progeny and live a comfortable life. A slum-dweller from Dharavi (where about one million live and the annual turnover of business is estimated to be more than \$650m (£350m) a year, ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/06/dharavi\\_slum/html/dharavi\\_slum\\_intro.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/06/dharavi_slum/html/dharavi_slum_intro.stm))) to the slum-dweller from Favelas of Brazil, to the dwellers of Rancho Santa Fe, California ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rancho\\_Santa\\_Fe,\\_California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rancho_Santa_Fe,_California)) to the richest person on earth, all aspire to live a better life.

Should we destroy the identities that distinguish us from others or should we fight to preserve our identities and perish in the process? In other words, can we build a new world based on certain common human traits, while still respecting the diversities that have developed and evolved over millennia? That is the billion dollar question to which the answer has been elusive, while empires, nations, cultures, tribes, castes, etc., and the brutal wars come and go, in a cyclical fashion.

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"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed." -  
Mahatma Gandhi

Hinduism is a way of life, with diversity of religion, and Indian teachings share the  
importance of *seva* (service).

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**Om! Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma Amritamgamaya,**  
**Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!**

**(Aum! Lead the world from wrong path to the right path, from ignorance to**  
**knowledge, from mortality to immortality, and peace!)**

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