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The Concept of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” in Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Dr. Kazuyosi Ikeda

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Abstract

‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ is a phrase, originally appeared in chapter six of *Maha Upanishad*. This phrase is also visible in Rig Veda. The core of this phrase is ‘the world is a family’. These words of Maha Upanishad denote the idea that all the people on this Mother Earth are brothers and sisters. No one is nobody’s enemy yet we are struggling in this era of war and upheaval. There are some poets and writers who are writing about the universal brotherhood and world peace. Most of them are scientists and philosophers. Both A.P.J. Kalam and Kazuyosi Ikeda are scientists but they have humanist concerns so they write poetry for the well being of the human race.

Keywords- Peace, Poetry, Brotherhood, Morality, Humanity

Dr. Kalam, 11th president of India and Dr. Ikeda, a scientist and a Japanese poet have different branches of ideas under single root. Both have the voice of universal brotherhood and love in their writings. Both are scientists par excellence as well as the peace-loving poets, philosophers and preachers. Both have depicted the power, beauty and existence of God in each and every object of the world. Their poems remind us the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and the Holy Vedas People are Suffering today from mental, moral, political, psychological, cultural and natural pollutions. Their poems heal the humanity.

Kalam says that when the people adopt the path of spirituality, they will never try to dominate others and will consider all alike. The problem arises when the modern society seems like a ‘wasteland’, devoid of spirituality. Kalam seeks the way of spirituality to make a country peaceful and to spread the feeling of universal brotherhood. In the same strain Ikeda magnetizes the whole world through his poems, abounds with the idea of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.’ The theme of Ikeda’s poetry is based on Japanese scripture, Shinto. According to Shinto’s voice all creatures in this world are brothers and sister. They have the same divinity in them. Even the man-made things should be loved because those things are made by man and man is the creation of God. So, the man-made things are the indirect creation of Almighty. To save the humanity from doldrums, Ikeda has shown the feeling of universal brotherhood because everyone one this earth, whether it is animate or inanimate are the parts of the Divine Being.

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Advaita philosophy accepts the fact that the same divine nature is present in the lowest creature like insects and in the highest human being. Behind everything the same divinity exists and out of this, comes the basis of morality. One should not injure anyone. Love everyone as your own self because the whole universe is one. By injuring other, I am injuring myself, in loving other, I am loving myself. Everybody should remind this idea again and again. The individualized self creates differences among people. It creates hatred, jealousy, misery, struggles and all other evils. Humanity must cease all these evils to create an atmosphere of brotherhood and love.

The eradication of this individualized self can portray the human tendency in a new and different hue. This very notion can be seen in both Kalam and Ikeda. Kalam says that God has given us the power of reason to differentiate between 'good' and 'evil'. The traits of 'good' as well as 'evil' both are present within us. The need is to inspire the good and suppress the evil. When good qualities are inspired for their active participation in our deeds, the people on this earth would feel a sense of universal brotherhood. Kalam says that human beings should give 'wings' to the 'fire' which resides within them. Only then they would be able to remove hatred, enmity and violence prevailing in our society. In his poem 'Kingfisher' Ikeda also searches the mystery of the oneness of God and human being. He tries to probe the existence of Immortal in the hearts of mortals. One must "want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran"¹

It is the selfishness of a man who has created a lousy atmosphere for others for the sake of religion and rights. War, terrorism, hatred, corruption and greed etc. are becoming the knotty problems for mankind. One should accept that the "first human being came into existence when he understood he had killed a human being."² Both Kalam and Ikeda attempt to efface all the evils in the society with the help of their precious words.

Kalam's line, "You the human race is the best of my creation' exhibits the idea that man is superior to all other creatures and he can give much to the humanity by pouring the feeling of universal brotherhood in every mind of this beautiful planet. Kalam says that the right knowledge and guidance must be scattered in the mind of every individual because "perception of disability lies in the mind"³ Ikeda believes in self-improvement and this betterment must be the battement of entire human race as well as of other creates and even man made things. He says emphatically that human being must "see the omniscient in every particle and being of the world"⁴ Only then the humanity will be able to accept the idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

For peaceful life and to create the world as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Kalam and Ikeda advocate the path of Gandhian perspective. Differences in thoughts are natural in any society but when it has been converted into a serious combat, Gandhiji suggests a peaceful method to adopt and the method is 'Satyagrah' "This method abjures and stresses on changing the heart of the opponent to see reason and restore the rights of the contending party without restoring to court, arbitration or physical violence. In this method violence is not answered by violence but by suffering and this process continues till the oppressor changes his heart and comes

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around to the negotiating table as equal.”⁵ This method helps in spreading the feeling of universal brotherhood in this era of war. Kalam, like Gandhi, is against the war and violence. The pathetic condition of humanity has been pictured in his poem entitled ‘God’. He accepts the fact that the riots “had broken the cage of peace and faith.”⁶ It is because of the ignorance of man that forces him to neglect the good task and to acquire the path of violence Kalam says in his Ignited Minds, “.....I fell to thinking why the human race best of all God’s creation has been so deeply divided by violence.”⁷

Kalam and Ikeda support knowledge with action because “Knowledge without action is useless and irrelevant, knowledge with action brings prosperity.”⁸ Knowledge is meaningless if it has not been converted into action and action does not have any importance if it lacks knowledge. Knowledge with action can achieve a great goal. This positive search of great goal will empower the feeling of universal brotherhood, love and peace among people. Kalam says “that all God’s creatures are his family, and he is the most beloved of God who tries to do most good to god’s creatures”⁹

Kalam considers it crime to have a small aim. Big aim gives forth direction to our action small aim promotes ego and ego promotes turmoil in the society. It is a well-known fact that ego is the root cause of war and struggle. Man should separate ego from his mind. Even sometimes war is the result of ego. Ikeda has expressed that he is “gloomy, sad and depressed at news of war. Men’s Killing men is in contradiction with God’s intention.”¹⁰ Ego must be prevented to spread love and brotherhood. Ikeda wishes the entire abolition of nuclear weapon. A country having the power of nuclear weapon considers itself the most powerful country in the world, but this country does not understand that it is destroying its own race by using the nuclear weapons. Ikeda strongly asserts “the necessity of the harmony between science and literature in education.”¹¹

Both Kalam and Ikeda select the shelter of Buddhist philosophy to enhance the feeling of universal brotherhood. Lord Buddha has defined the world under four noble truths. His noble Truths tell about the sorrows and its remedy to the society. One of his noble truths depicts the world, full of suffering. This very idea has beautifully been depicted by Kalam in his poem entitled ‘Anguish’. Through his poem ‘Tears’ Kalam asserts that tears make an individual strong. Like Buddha’s second noble Truth, Kalam accepts desire as the root cause of suffering and enmity in this world. Because of his greed, lust and desire for worldly pleasure man lowers his higher self. In his poem ‘Pursuit of Happiness’, Kalam seems to depict Buddha’s third noble Truth. In his third noble Truth Buddha describes that removal of desire can bring peace in this world. Kalam in his poem ‘Pursuit of Happiness’ has given the example of flower to remove our desires. Like Kalam, Ikeda has also followed the teachings of Buddha. Ikeda has depicted that life is full of suffering in his poem entitled ‘An Otter.’ An otter like a human being is forced to reside into a river and teaches its children “to catch fish and to bear life’s burden.”¹²

Ikeda encourages the humanity to take arms against the gusto of desire. He accepts the removal of desire like Buddha.

Both Kalam and Ikeda postulates that all religions of the world lead to the ultimate Truth. The directions may be different but the destination is one. Therefore, both of them

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emphasize upon 'harmony'. They subscribe to the spiritual oneness of all beings. All living as well as non-living beings are the part of the same 'self.' Both of them justify some social responsibility. These social responsibilities help to awake the humanity from spiritual blindness and scatter the idea of spiritual oneness of all in every human being. Both have used their ink effectively to bind the humanity into one thread. Ikeda rightly says "all human beings are brothers and sisters born from God, so they should love one another with brotherly affection."¹³

Both Kalam and Ikeda assume that death is not the last call of a man's life. Each human soul shall be resurrected on that day of Judgment to see the consequences of its past action. The soul will receive the final reward or punishment in accordance with its past deeds. Submission and obedience must be visible in our works. Submission is the acceptance of God's commands and obedience is the way to put God's commands into practice.

Submission and obedience to the wish of God bring peace and brotherly love in humanity. Kalam accepts the will of God by becoming a scientist and worked how to fulfil the command of God. He justifies this idea through these words, that all "these rockets and missiles are his work through a small person called Kalam, in order to tell several - million mass of India to never feel small or helpless."¹⁴

Both Kalam and Ikeda freely admit that the freedom of will is the right of every individual on this earth. Ikeda explores every possibility to search calm and soothing thoughts in all objects around himself. His fight is against all sorts of evil prevailing in the society. He tries to probe the heart of every object on this earth and enable us to hear its inner voice. He attempts his best to explore good out of the evil.

Kalam and Ikeda believe in earning livelihood through self-effort and it should be shared with needy. This idea of sharing would enhance the feeling of caring other people. It would build an atmosphere of peace and universal brotherhood. When a man is busy in earning his livelihood, he would not find much time for struggle with other people. Under the shade of 'Karma' the atmosphere of love peace and brotherhood would automatically be established. Kalam recalls the words of Khalil Gibran in his autobiography and says "Bread baked without love is a bitter bread that feeds but half a man's hunger."¹⁵ Through his poem named 'Message' Kalam makes the humanity confident then a man should love his work and should have faith in his dreams that there is no force on earth that can shatter his dreams.¹⁶ Ikeda has mentioned the sacrifice of a deer. He writes that a deer's horns help to calm the fire of hunger throughout its life and after death its horns would be used as ornaments. In this way a deer contributes everything before as well as after its death. Similarly, everyone has a special feature to contribute.

A question haunts the mind of a man when he broods over the dismal condition of society. The question is that what is the reason behind the mishap, fight and struggle and disturbances caused in the society. Why people are fighting for the sake of sometimes became of religion and sometimes on the name of nationality etc. After pondering over the matter, one would realize that it is the feeling of hegemony that tempt the people to prove themselves better than the other people. But humanity must realize that all are the children of one Almighty, so there is no need to prove before anybody. When humanity realizes this sense of universal

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brotherhood nobody will try to demean anyone. Both Kalam and Ikeda have the same notion in their works. They prove themselves the saviour of humanity and staunch supporter of love and universal brotherhood. They have tried their best to abolish this feeling of hegemony with the help of their precious words. They make sure in their writings that existence and hegemony both are different. Existence is an integral part of humanity but the feeling of hegemony must be forbidden in the life of a man. Hegemony creates inequality and this inequality leads to the lack of universal brotherhood. The feeling of togetherness originates only due to the idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Kalam and Ikeda both have depicted in his writings that this 'World Family' is the creation of one God so there should not be hatred and enmity among us.

Kalam and Ikeda both do not reject the idea that there are also some negative aspects in our life but one must accept the fact that day exists due to night. We would not be able to understand the importance of light until we experience the darkness. It is the spirit of a man that erase the dankness of hatred and enmity and interact with the light of universal brotherhood.

According to Kalam and Ikeda optimism is the door through which humanity can enter the vast area of positivity. This world abounds with innumerable problems but a spark of optimism can lead to the peace of mind, and when there is a peace in the mind of the people, the feeling of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam will automatically be flourished.

After analysing the writings of both Kalam and Ikeda, one would realize that both have touched the tradition of our ancient sages to appease the undesirable desires that are pernicious for the society. Both have shown various path to detect our follies. A practice for humanity's welfare can give the utmost happiness. It is well-known fact that beauty lies in beholder's eyes so it is our own outlook which makes the world beautiful or ugly. God has created the world in a very artistic way. Everything has been placed in apt position and now it is on us that what we want to receive -the light or the darkness.

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