

BALANCING ‘ONE AND MANY’: A CULTURE OF HARMONY

Dr M.D. Thomas

Singular and plural are the two essential dimensions of the reality of creation. These fundamental elements govern the dynamics of life. They compose language. They articulate every item of this multi-faceted network of living. The interplay between the singular and the plural guide the destiny of every form of life on earth. The dynamism of human life follows the dictates of the magical interaction between the singular and the plural, even in its details. “The one and the many” is the joint underlying principle for the singular and the plural. These are two perspective of life. From one angle, life is one and from another angle, life is many. Life is one from a spiritual perspective. It is many from a material perspective. An artistic outlook sees life as many. “One” is a heart-centered approach and “many” is a head-centered approach. “One is a concept of unity whereas “many” is a concept of division. “One” is an experience whereas “many” is an expression. Both perspectives together make up what we know as life.

“One” and “many” are complementary to each other. They are not two independent realities. Unrelated to each other they cannot exist. Even if they were to exist they would amount to nothing for they cannot be separated from each other. They are like two sides of the same coin. Together they make up the reality of life. “One “and “many” need each other for they are inter-dependent. They are like the two wheels of the same vehicle. They support life on a joint basis.

The Bible records a highly eloquent example: one body, many parts. Even though this is a very commonplace reality, it speaks volumes of the interplay of the one and the many in life, in all its dimensions. The Apostle Paul analyzes in detail how one body consists of many parts and how many parts function as one body. There is no part of the body that is superior or inferior in relation to the other. No part can be dismissed. Every part is correctly positioned. Together they give shape to the body. Together they facilitate an experience that is human. Together they prove a worthy dwelling place for the Creator.

The dynamics among the diverse items and dimensions of creation are oriented to an experience of unity. The planets are many but they form a single system. The items of vegetation in nature have countless shapes, sizes, colours, forms, fragrances and qualities. But they have a unique beauty when they are seen together at a glance. The great number living things creatures is fascinating. But they are different varieties of the same life. Human beings exhibit an immense variety of facial expressions. But they

all express the glory of the Creator. They all symbolize the same noble, human sentiment. Human society consists of multifarious civilizations, cultures, languages, religious traditions, social customs, ideologies and practices. But all of them give expression, though in diverse ways, to one and the same human nature. All the above aspects of creation, while being plural and diverse, share the same origin and share in the same equality of life and participate in the same destiny. The whole universe is journeying along the same path of life towards the same Creator, in spite of its multi-faceted streams and strands.

A culture of harmony is the right response to the multiplicity of life units. Harmony is co-ordination between the perspectives of unity and plurality. It means settling the contradictions and maintaining the equilibrium of life. A culture of harmony tunes the human mind so that it can live the gift of human life in a spiritual way. Only through an ever-developing and sustained culture of harmony will the evils of fundamentalism, fanaticism and communalism be combated. A culture of harmony will provide a suitable environment for human beings and for all forms of life on this planet.

Dr M.D. Thomas

Founder Director, Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies

Floor 1, A 128, Sector 19, Dwarka, New Delhi 110075

Tel.: 09810535378 (p), 08847925378 (p), 011-45575378 (o)

Email: mdthomas53@gmail.com (p), ihps2014@gmail.com (o)

Website: www.mdthomas.in (p), www.ihpsindia.org (o)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mdthomas53>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mdthomas53>

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/MDTHOMAS>