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civilization, epitomising the concept of "*Vasudhev Kutumbukam*" (Earth is one family), could not have thrived and flourished in its own social milieu.

Unfortunately, immediately after independence, our social, cultural and religious leadership, not knowing the a,b,c,d of politics, shunned their basic responsibility, and jumped into the political fray to grab a share of power. As a result, the emphasis shifted from collective harmonious living to an individualistic life-style. And instead of discharging their respective duties, they were loudly asserting their individual rights.

In truth, one does not come across an emulative model of democracy anywhere in the world. The so-called "developed" west cannot boast a character conducive to fostering democracy. These nations owe their prosperity to the plunder and pillage of undeveloped nations. The Europeans occupied huge expanses of land on the American continent after perpetrating an unprecedented genocide of the native inhabitants. Their democracy is confined to the electoral process alone. Nor have they ever felt the necessity of a fully-evolved form of democracy. Their humanitarian instincts are fuzzy; captives of consumerism. Leading an epicurean life is their sole objective. The tendency to exploit other nations to raise the standard of their own self-indulgent life-styles still exists. The invasion of Iraq, in the teeth of global opposition, illustrates this mindset.

India is a unique example of a nation that never coveted the wealth and prosperity of others. Lord Ram, after slaying Bali, installed his brother Sugreev in Kishkindha. Similarly, after conquering Lanka, Ravan's brother Vibhishan was put on the throne.

India reached the pinnacle of glory due to her immense inexhaustible natural resources. There too, she was never lured into the lust for material superiority. She assiduously strived for the holistic evolution of mankind. "*Sarvebhavantu Sukhinah*" (happiness for all), is the quintessence of this aspiration.

Keeping this in perspective, the protagonists of the Indian freedom struggle had reiterated that their objective was not to regain the reins of power alone but to present to the world an emulative paradigm of communion, peaceful co-existence, cooperation and progressive life-style. This elucidates what the future direction of the nation should have been.