



Bhavan Australia

Issue 4.4/4.5 October / November 2006

● Life ● Literature ● Culture

*'Let noble thoughts come to us from every side
आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः - Rig Veda*



World Peace

The Nobel Peace Prize 2006



Muhammad Yunus

1/2 of the prize
Bangladesh
Founder of
Grameen Bank



Grameen Bank

1/2 of the prize
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Founded in 1976

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006, divided into two equal parts, to **Muhammad Yunus** and **Grameen Bank** for their efforts to create economic and social development from below. Lasting peace can not be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty. Micro-credit is one such means. Development from below also serves to advance democracy and human rights.

Muhammad Yunus has had phenomenal success helping people lift themselves out of poverty in rural Bangladesh by providing them with credit without requiring collateral. Yunus developed his revolutionary micro-credit system with the belief that it would be a cost effective and scalable weapon to fight poverty.

Muhammad Yunus has shown himself to be a leader who has managed to translate visions into practical action for the benefit of millions of people, not only in Bangladesh, but also in many other countries. Loans to poor people without any financial security had appeared to be an impossible idea. From modest beginnings three decades ago, Yunus has, first and foremost through Grameen Bank, developed micro-credit into an ever more important instrument in the struggle against poverty. Grameen Bank has been a source of ideas and models for the many institutions in the field of micro-credit that have sprung up around the world. Every single individual on earth has both the potential and the right to live a decent life. Across cultures and civilizations, Yunus and Grameen Bank have shown that even the poorest of the poor can work to bring about their own development.

Micro-credit has proved to be an important liberating force in societies where women in particular have to struggle against repressive social and economic conditions. Economic growth and political democracy can not achieve their full potential unless the female half of humanity participates on an equal footing with the male. Yunus's long-term vision is to eliminate poverty in the world. That vision can not be realised by means of micro-credit alone. But Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank have shown that, in the continuing efforts to achieve it, micro-credit must play a major part.

What Does Grameen Bank Do?

Grameen Bank has reversed conventional banking wisdom by focusing on women borrowers, dispensing of the requirement of collateral and extending loans only to the very poorest borrowers. In fact, to qualify for a loan from the Grameen Bank, a villager must demonstrate that her family owns less than one half acre of land.

The bank has provided \$4.7 billion dollars to 4.4 million families in rural Bangladesh. With 1,417 branches, Grameen provides services in 51,000 villages, covering three quarters of all the villages in Bangladesh. Yet its system is largely based on mutual trust and the enterprise and accountability of millions of women villagers.

Today, more than 250 institutions in nearly 100 countries operate micro-credit programs based on the Grameen Bank model, while thousands of other micro-credit programs have emulated, adapted or been inspired by the Grameen Bank. According to one expert in innovative government, the program established by Yunus at the Grameen Bank "is the single most important development in the third world in the last 100 years, and I don't think any two people will disagree."

Source: www.nobelprize.org

President's Page

The month of October was graced with perhaps the biggest festival of India Deepavali or Diwali, the festival of lights celebrating victory of good over evil. The Muslim festival of Eid (at the end of the month long Ramadan fasts) immediately followed Deepavali. Early November witnessed the auspicious Sikh festival Guru Parab celebrating the birth anniversary of Shri Guru Nanakdeva, the first Sikh Guru. Christmas, which is not very far away, is also celebrated in India in a grand style. That is India, highly revering, in theory and practice, all the religions of the world.



October was also quite an eventful month for Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia (Bhavan Australia) starting with October 2, 2006 (which witnessed the 138th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi). We celebrated this day, like every year, with the **World Culture Concert and Art Festival** as a tribute to the greatest apostle of peace on earth, the man of the world.

The Art Gallery of New South launched the Art Exhibition **GODDESS Divine Energy** 14 October 2006 to 28 January 2007. Bhavan Australia was invited to present the cultural and ritual ceremony for the opening day on 13 October which was attended by over 1,100 people. Bhavan Australia was also invited to host the Deepavali festival at the Art Gallery of NSW on 25 October which was attended by over 600 people.

The **Australian National Field Days** (ANFD) the 58th annual rural fair in **Orange**, 300kms west of Sydney was hosted from 17 to 19 October. India was invited as a guest nation. The Consul General of India Sydney invited Bhavan Australia along with the India Tourism Sydney to participate in showcasing India. It was a great success: 'one of the most colourful displays by any guest nation in the history of ANFD'. This was the first time India was showcased in the regional Australia.

There is no doubt that India is being seen with much greater respect and keen interest in Australia. It is the duty of us Australians of Indian heritage to nurture the good image of Indian culture and heritage by participating in the mainstream Australian activities and be seen in every aspect / field of the Australian lifestyle. We Australians of Indian heritage have been inviting the important political figures to our major public events and festivals. However, when it comes to the events hosted by the same political figures we are conspicuous by absence. Recently I have attended a number of fundraising functions hosted by the well known politicians who have always been supporting by their presence and otherwise the 'Indian' functions; I have to say with great dismay that I hardly could see any other person of the Indian origin. We Australians of Indian heritage must come forward with much more vigour and enthusiasm and be seen in the mainstream political scene at all levels of the government – Local, State and Federal. Then only we will be seen as an integral and important part of the Australian Society.

It is, I consider, the duty of the fortunate ones to come forward and contribute to the rehabilitation of those affected by natural / man-inflicted disasters and amelioration of the underprivileged on ongoing basis. According to Mahatma Gandhi these fortunate people are trustees of the wealth in their possession which they must utilise for the benefit of the underprivileged and affected people. The practice codes of the various religious scriptures also encourage keeping aside a proportion of one's income for charitable causes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gambhir Watts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Gambhir Watts
President
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

COMMUNAL HARMONY

The key to the solution of the communal tangle lies in every one following the best in one's own religion and entertaining equal regard for the other religions and their followers.

I would not like to live in this world if it is not one world.

My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or the exploitation of other nationalities.

One cannot serve the country injuring the world at large, in the final analysis, we must die so that the country may live and country must die so that the world may live.

The golden rule is to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family as one.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Editorial Page

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Bhavan Australia - ISSN 1449 – 3551

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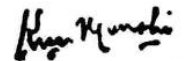
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The Test of Bhavan's Right to Exist

The test of Bhavan's right to exist is whether those who work for it in different spheres and in different places and those who study in its many institutions can develop a sense of mission as would enable them to translate the fundamental values, even in a small measure, into their individual life.

Creative vitality of a culture consists in this: whether the 'best' among those who belong to it, however small their number, find self-fulfilment by living up to the fundamental values of our ageless culture.

It must be realised that the history of the world is a story of men who had faith in themselves and in their mission. When an age does not produce men of such faith, its culture is on its way to extinction. **The real strength of the Bhavan, therefore,** would lie not so much in the number of its buildings or institutions it conducts, nor in the volume of its assets and budgets, nor even in its growing publication, cultural and educational activities. It would lie in the **character, humility, selflessness and dedicated work of its devoted workers, honorary and stipendiary.** They alone can release the regenerative influences, bringing into play the invisible pressure which alone can transform human nature



Bhavan's Institute for Indian Arts & Culture

Classes in Indian Music - Tabla and Sitar and Clasicl Dances - Kathak, Bharatnatayam, Odissi.

Gandhi Institute of Computer Education & IT

Bhavan Australia in partnetship with Microsoft offers short Courses in Microsoft Windows, MS Office, Orientation for University Assignments and other Research Projects at subsidised rates.

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Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan
AUSTRALIA

World Culture Concert & Arts Festival 2 October 2006 - A Report

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia's third annual World Concert & Arts Festival, held at Sydney Town Hall on Sunday 2nd October 2006 was yet another exotic experience for the fortunate ones. Ostensibly held on Mahatma Gandhi's Birth Anniversary, the music and dance concert with over 150 artists from cultures around the world, and an arts exhibition in fact celebrated the spirit of multiculturalism and the vibrancy of the ethnic arts community in Australia.

The confirmed VIPs for the special event included Hon Judy Hopwood MP, Member for Hornsby representing Hon Peter Debnam, Leader of the Opposition; Hon Julie Owens MP, Member for Parramatta; Kamahl; Warren Duncan, Media Officer, Community Relations Commission; Mohanakumaran, Consul, Consulate General of India; Elvira Boselli, Consul, Consulate General of Italy; Mr Guterres, Consul General of Timor; Gothami Indikadahena, Consul General of Turkey; Nick Hubble, Executive Director, Sydney Olympic Park; Mohammad Anwarzai, Ambassador of Afghanistan.

A special Souvenir magazine was brought out on the occasion which included the programme schedule, brief description of the artists, their traditional and folk performances and articles like World's Cultures, World's Religions and articles on Mahatma Gandhi. The souvenir magazine also included the messages of support and appreciation for Bhavan's multicultural activities were received from The Hon John Howard MP Prime Minister of Australia; Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO.

The Hon. John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia stated "The World Culture Concert and Arts Festival provides an opportunity for professional and community artists to join together in the showcase of art, music and dance that is representative of the many cultures in Australia. The concert and arts festival coincides with the anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi and seeks to honour the Mahatma's legacy by making a meaningful contribution to strengthening community harmony and cultural understanding in Australia."

Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales mentioned "This annual event provides a joyful opportunity to celebrate the multicultural diversity of our world. This diversity is reflected today in Australia's people, and in the harmony and stability of our nation. It inspires us to reflect on so much that is fine in the Australian community. Your own group contributes much to this. A festival such as this demonstrates the humanity we share in common. It builds greater understanding and peace at an individual level which can then extend to communities and nations".

Our Sponsors and Supporters included, India Tourism Sydney, HCL, City of Sydney, State Bank of India Sydney, Small Business Guru, Sydney Morning Herald; Community Relations Commissions for Multicultural Affairs; Madan's Video Productions.



Aboriginal Traditional Welcome Dance

Performed by: Yidaki Didge and Dance Australia

Coordinated by: Les Saxby



Kuchipudi Art Academy

On of the musical trinity, Saint Dikshitar describes at length in this piece, the divine beauty and grace of the Goddess, Kamakshi of Kanchipuram. He describes her lotus like eyes, her stately and graceful gait, resembling that of Gajendra, her statuesque figure and so on. The [*Sanchari Bhavam*] in this piece depicts the Goddess, who, in order to please Lord Shiva and to be blessed with His love and affection serves Him while He is doing *tapas*. Manmada tries to cause hindrance to the *tapas* but becomes victim to the fury of Lord Shiva and is reduced to ashes. Upon the solicitations of Kamakshi, Lord Shiva brings Manmada back to life.



Performers : Shailja & Shobhna; **Coordinated by:** Dr Bharathi Reddy



Asim Gorashi & Friends

Asim Gorashi is an acclaimed musician from Sudan and plays in The Blue Nile Quartet. Through his music he took the audience in a journey to discover Afro Arabic Sudanese music.

Performers: Asim Gorashi; Daniel Godacre, Alex Masso

Geetanjali Dance School

"Peace Love and Joy" dance was presented by Geetanjali School of Dance and Performing Arts. The energetic girls demonstrated with their dance movement that to them music is "God, peace, philosophy, tradition, tolerance and kindness. In the second part they expressed music as love, passion, beauty, desire, tears and happiness. In the last part of the item music is life, laughter and joy.

Coordinated by: Sharmila Maitra



A Garden of Peace

Blue Sky Choir - World Choir

Presented vocal and instrumental musical symphony resonating the sound and message of peace on earth

Cordinated by: Sumiko Jones



Poornima Sharma
Master of Ceremony

Fusion of Kathak & Flamenco Classical

Namaste a form of greeting signifies the meeting of the two art forms of kathak and flamenco which have common origins. The artform of kathak travelled from India with the gypsies to Spain where it developed as flamenco. This piece was first performed by 'El duende Flamenco' and 'Ruchi School for Indian dance' for the pageant "Miss India Australia".

Coordinated by: Ruchi Sanghi & Susana



Kamahl - Songs of faith and Comfort

Kamahl is perhaps best known for his song *The Elephant Song*, as well as his sensitive interpretations of standards in the repertoire of popular music. He received the *Australian Father of the Year* award in 1998 and the *Order of Australia* in 2003. His first album was *A Voice to Remember*, which was released in Australia in October 1967.



Gennadi Dubinsky

Joyful Russian Songs in traditional music and style were presented by the Russian musical maestro.

Indialucia

A dance medley, with an amalgamation of such varied dance styles and music, it seems made for a cultural night promoting unity within diversity. Among the many facets of the performance include the classical North Indian dance stylings of Kathak, interspersed with elements of Spanish Flamenco, its slower tempo counterpart *silencio*, the exotic and energetic rhythms of Arabic music and an engaging and riveting Bharatanatyam finish. Comprising a cast of 15 dancers, the performance is a fitting finale encompassing varied global regions which Indian culture.

Choreographed & Coordinated by: Avanti Deshpande



Gambhir Watts
President



Avijit Sarkar
Cultural Director



Catherine Knox
Director and Master of Ceremony



Isabella, Maharishi Raval & Krish Mitra

Isabella sang Swedish songs on instrumental Indian music-Tabla and classical Hawaiian guitar.



Nupur Dance School

Presented Classical dance based on A R Rehman's Music *Bol Re Sajni*, mixed with a Semiclassical Dance from the historical *Ashoka* and also a Fusion Of Indian Classical with Aboriginal Digeree Doo

Coordinated by: Manjusha De

Chinese Dancing School of Sydney

Presented The Waist Dance of Chu (pre-Qin) dynasty and a Group Dance of Royal Court tradition of Ching Dynasty.

Coordinated by: May Wang



Punjabi Beat Bhangra Group

Presented **Giddha** a vigorous folk dance of Punjabi village women dressed up in Punjabi traditional dress, Salvar Kameez embroidered 'duppattas' and heavy jewellery to further exaggerates the movements of happiness and celebrations. Costumes: A Salvar Kameez is composed of a long colorful shirt and baggy vibrant pants. Duppatta is made of colorful pieces of cloth and wrapped around the neck like shawl.

Coordinated by: Harinder Kaur

Kerala Folk Dance

Presented a group folk dance *Kai Kottu Kali*. Kerala has a rich repertoire of folk dances of which *Kai Kottu Kali* occupies the pride of place. It is a very popular symmetric group dance performed by the women of Kerala during the festive seasons of Onam and Thiruvathira. It resembles Kummi and is simple with the Lasya element predominating throughout the dance. The costume for the dance is mundu and neriyathu which is both unique and traditional. The dance is very simple but beneath its simplicity lies a profundity of conception and a directness of expression, which are of a high artistic order.

Coordinated by: Sudhir



Heroines of Peace

Aung San Suu Kyi



At the ceremony for Aung San Suu Kyi in December 1991, she was still being held in detention by the military dictatorship in Myanmar (Burma) and could only be represented by her two sons, her husband and her picture facing the audience. In his speech presenting the prize to her sons, Professor Francis Sejersted, chairman of the committee, declared, "Her absence fills us with fear and anxiety," but he felt we could also have confidence and hope. He went on to sum up the meaning of her prize:

In the good fight for peace and reconciliation, we are dependent on persons who set examples, persons who can symbolize what we are seeking and mobilize the best in us. Aung San Suu Kyi is just such a person. She unites deep commitment and tenacity with a vision in which the end and the means form a single unit. Its most important elements are: democracy, respect for human rights, reconciliation between groups, non-violence, and personal and collective discipline.

The sources of her inspiration, Sejersted explained, were Mahatma Gandhi, about whom she had learned when her mother was ambassador to India, and her father, Aung San, the leader in Burma's struggle for liberation. She was only two when he was assassinated, but she had made his life a center of her studies. From Gandhi she drew her commitment to nonviolence, from her father the understanding that leadership was a duty and that one can only lead in humility and with the confidence and respect of the people to be led. Both were examples for her of independence and modesty, and Aung San represented what she called "a profound simplicity."

We must add that undergirding her political philosophy in spirit and deed has always been her Buddhist faith, which is also the foundation for her belief in human rights. In championing human rights in her political opposition to the military dictatorship, she needed to be fearless. Sejersted referred to the incident during her election campaigning when she courageously faced a detachment of soldiers, whose officer lined them up in front of her, prepared to fire if she continued to walk down that street, which she did.

Several times in his speech Sejersted cited the collection of her essays, entitled *Freedom from Fear*, which her husband, Michael Aris, edited and published before the ceremony, so that her voice could be heard beyond the reach of her oppressors. The title essay begins, "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it." Fearlessness is the best response to governmental violence. In conclusion she writes that "truth, justice and compassion... are often the only bulwarks against ruthless power." These are the teachings of Buddha.

Sejersted told how Suu Kyi spent many years abroad, first when with her diplomat mother in her younger years, then studying at Oxford, working at the United Nations in New York, marrying Aris, a British Tibetan scholar, starting a family when they were in Bhutan, finally ending up in England, after scholarly assignments in Japan and India. Burma was always on her mind and heart, however, especially after the military seized power in 1962. When she married Aris, she told him that one day she must return to Burma when she was needed.

It was to nurse her dying mother that she returned from England, but as the daughter of Aung San, she could not stay aloof when she saw the government brutally repressing a popular movement in opposition. She headed a political party in the elections which the military permitted, but she was so successful that even before election day, she was ordered confined to her home. Nevertheless, her party won by a great majority, after which its other leaders were jailed.

"We ordinary people, I believe," Sejersted declared, "feel that with her courage and her high ideals, Aung San Suu Kyi brings out something of the best in us... The little woman under house arrest stands for a positive hope. Knowing she is there gives us confidence and faith in the power of good."

As of this writing Suu Kyi is still under detention, separated from her family, despite efforts of many governments and the United Nations to secure her liberation. A group of Nobel peace laureates only got as far as Thailand in an attempt to bring their petition to the military dictators who hold her. In 1994, however, a U.S. congressman was permitted to see her, and, as a result of mediation by a Buddhist monk, she had a conference with members of the government. There is now more hope.

Source: www.nobelprize.org

Bhavan's participation at 55th Australian National Field Days, Orange, NSW, Australia

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was delighted to have had the opportunity to participate in the 55th Australian National Field Days, 2006 where India was Guest Nation Exhibitor. India's participation at the event was a part of the initiative taken by Consul General of India Sujan R. Chinoy to project India regionally. Consul General informed Bhavan that this was the first time that India was participating in a regional event in Australia in a major way. Mr Gambhir Watts President of Bhavan Australia welcomed the opportunity to project India's tradition, culture, life and literature. Mr Watts also accompanied the Consul General Mr Sujan Chinoy on a reconnaissance visit to Orange to gauge the level of logistics involved. The Australian National Field Days (ANFD) is known to be Australia's longest-running Agricultural Exhibition. This event is held annually to showcase and demonstrate products that are offered to the Australian farmers, agriculturalists and related industries. Ireland, China, New Zealand, Canada and the UK were some of the countries who had participated as Guest Nation Exhibitors in the past.



Bhavan Australia organised Indian dance performances featuring the Nupur Dance Group, Ruchi Sanghi Group and the Punjabi Beat Bhangra Group, all from Sydney, over the course of the three-day event. It was a logistical challenge for the Bhavan to coordinate the various dance troupes and fashion companies to be present in Orange for the three days. Each of the dance troupes were assigned a day to perform. Every day a special coach arranged by Bhavan would bring a dance troupe to perform and then driven back to Sydney the same day! Performances were given both at the outdoor venue, as well as indoors. Each of the dance troupes gave lively performances during the Fashion Parade at the Women's Interest Centre. Bhavan Australia also organised a Fashion Show of traditional and modern Indian dress, twice daily, at the Women's Interest Centre with help from a local choreographer arranged by the ANFD for the fashion show. Bhavan arranged for Dilbur Fashions of Sydney to provide the dresses for the shows using local Australian models arranged by the Consulate and ANFD. Special mention must be made of Ruchi Sanghi Dance group, Punjab Beat Bhangra, Nupur Dance School who took part in these events with great enthusiasm.



Yoga in Daily Life welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Australian National Field Days and readily accepted when the founder Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda was invited by Mr Sujan Chinoy, Consul General. It was represented by Shanta Goundar, Amritma and Gowri Sriraman. They were struck by how well received Yoga was in the rural community. A few pregnant ladies dropped in seeking advise on Yoga poses to practise during their pregnancy. Groups of school kids dropped in to have a go, so did farmers who also dropped in for some rest and relaxation! There was an interest in the Yoga supplies, including CDs and books on display. Some of the AFND organisers also took this opportunity to practise their Yoga. They also provided free tea (both black and herbal) to the steady flow of visitors. Brahma Kumaris bringing with their Positive Mind, Positive Future felt it was a timely to spiritually support the rural Australia in Orange. Mr Kamath of BK said that the Australian farmers were facing the 7th year of drought and hence to serve them spiritually was a great honour. He added that several farmers and their



sarees kurtis stoles

skirts salwar kurtas

dilbar

children visited their stall. A special talk organised called "Sustaining your Mind". Were the basics of positive thinking was imparted to the visitors to help stabilise their Mind and to look positively to the future. One of the visiting farmers told Mr Kamath that he just could not stop worrying day or night about what might happen. He said he would definitely try to bring the practice of meditation into his life. Even school children visited the stall and enjoyed the meditation experience. Brahma Kumari's felt that a special good will was created during those 3 days of the event.



This year's event, according to the organisers, drew about 30,000 visitors to the Field Days from all over the south-central part of Australia. For India the Field Days provided an opportunity and a platform to project India in a comprehensive manner, including its vibrant economy, its modern technologies and its traditional culture, to regional Australia. The 55th. Australian National Field Days was declared open by the Consul General of India at the inauguration organised on the first day of the event, in the presence of a large gathering that included Orange City Mayor John Davis and Cabonne Council Mayor John Farr. Russell Turner, the local MLA, was also present along with ANFD Chairman Allan Watts and his team. The inauguration ceremony was held against the impressive backdrop of a traditional Indian façade, an ornate wooden structure, provided by Mr. Shankar Dhar, Regional Director, India Tourism. Bhavan Australia, added value to the event by organising scintillating performances of Indian dance. The Consulate General Of India, Sydney showcased India's Agricultural, Manufacturing, Services and Technology sectors at the event. The participants organised by the Consulate General of India, Sydney, included Mahindra & Mahindra Tractors Division, Mahindra & Mahindra Automotive Division, MRF Tyres, NASSCOM, the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) among others. India's varied culture on display at the Field Days invited very favourable comments from among the visitors, media and local officials. They observed that it was the first time that a Guest Nation at the ANFD had put on such a remarkable display of its culture in addition to exhibits. As part of a publicity blitz to make Australians in regional parts of the country aware of modern India and its multi-faceted achievements, the Consulate General of India had arranged for the distribution of over one thousand copies of a special publication on India entitled "India- A Dynamic Democracy" brought out by the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to visitors at the Field Days, especially to school children. A large quantity of tourism-related brochures were also made available to visitors. A special exhibition hall decorated with traditional Indian motifs and tourism posters was set up by the Consulate General of India in co-operation with the Orange City Council with facilities to screen documentaries on India to visitors throughout the three days.

The Consul General of India also addressed the Rotary Club in Orange at a dinner meeting which was attended by about 45 Rotarians from the region. Mr Gambhir Watts President was also specially invited to the Rotary Club for the dinner. Door prizes on each of the three days of the ANFD were generously provided by ACR International Travel & Tours "Spice Trails", the Taj Group's Hotel Blue located in Woolloomooloo Bay, Sydney, Blue Line Cruises, Sydney.

Snakes and Ladders

An Australian Film produced and directed by an Australian Indian Navneet Choujar.

Set in a classic Hitchcock format, the film is an example in what can be achieved on a shoe string budget. Shot entirely on location, it tells the story of a fugitive John Barrot, who is being chased by two detectives Peter Brown and Helen Carter. He breaks into a film director's (Craig Lockwood) house. There he finds Craig's girlfriend (Olivia Bowman), alone in the house and forces her to provide him with a hiding place for the night. It is the story of one fateful night when all of them learn that life is a game in which winning or losing can make the difference between life and death. running for approximately 90 minutes, the film attempts to delve into the psychology of a fugitive and his hostage, and the working of a human mind.



The Director Navneet Choujar first started a manpower agency catering to the films in Bombay. Navneet worked as a Chief Assistant Director for many serials which were broadcasted on the mainstream Indian channels and various movies. Navneet is the Direction / Editor & Storywriter for this film.

This film will be screened at Chauvel Cinemas, Paddington Town Hall on Sunday 17th December at 12:00pm followed by Question / Answer sessions with the Director & Actors.

For Tickets & Inquiries contact Navneet Choujar Ph: 043 933 9007.

GODDESS Divine Energy

An Exhibition at ART GALLERY OF NSW 13 October - 28 January
Opening Celebration and the launch by Dr Margaret Olley AC

The grand exhibition, GODDESS Divine Energy 13 October – 28 January 2007 was launched by Dr Margaret Olley AC in traditional Indian way in the presence of Mr David Gonski AO and Mr Edmund Capon the President and Director respectively of the Art Gallery of NSW; HE Mr Prabhat Shukla, High Commissioner of India for Australia; Hon. Sujan Chinoy, Consul General of India, Sydney and a galaxy of other VIPs and invited guests.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia in conjunction with the India Tourism Sydney presented the ritual of lighting the lamp; the procession ceremony and cultural performances of traditional dances from the heart of India. Manjusha De of Nupur Dance Group choreographed the dances.



GODDESS Divine Energy

An Exhibition at ART GALLERY OF NSW 14 October-28 January

Deepavali Celebrations

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia (Bhavan Australia) jointly with the Art Gallery of NSW (Art Gallery) presented a comprehensive program of Lakshmi Pooja (the ritual of worshipping the Goddess of riches and prosperity); cultural performances of dances and music from the various parts of India; and distributed Deepavali sweets to all the guests (over 600). This program was filmed by the ABC TV (Asia Pacific program) and SBS TV (Here Comes Neighbourhood series).



The ritual of Lakshmi Pooja was presented by Swami Rami Sivan (Ramaanuja) of Sydney followed by home style worships in North Indian and South Indian traditions presented by Dilbar Vora of Dilbar Fashions and Sheela Kumar of Darshan Events and Pushpa Jagdish the talented singer. Kumud Merani (of SBS Radio) narrated the significance of Deepavali and Lakshmi Pooja.

Cultural performances in dances included:

Maharishi, Bhavan's Tablaa teacher, presented instrumental music together with his associate on keyboard.

Sweets from Maya Sweets were distributed by the compliments of Bhavan Australia.



GODDESS

DIVINE ENERGY

14 OCT- 28 JAN 2007

OVER 150 EXQUISITE
SCULPTURES AND
PAINTINGS OF THE
GODDESS HAVE
BEEN GATHERED
FROM AROUND THE
WORLD FOR THIS



Worshipping Shakti

- M. N. Chatterjee

The most popular of Indian festivals, Diwali is commonly associated with illuminations and fireworks, closing of accounts to herald a new year, partaking of delicacies and the rituals of puja befitting the occasion. Deepavali, literally a row of lamps, is expected to dispel the pitch-darkness of the 'Kartik Amavashya' or the new moon, generally in November, when the festival is celebrated. The darkness stands for the negative tendencies in man like ignorance and ego against which the eternal battle rages unabated while the fireworks serve to symbolize man's resounding victory over the persisting evils, year after year. Diwali, the festival of lights, thus represents the perennial human Endeavour to light up the inner self. Kali pooja is an integral part of Diwali in most of eastern India. In fact, sometimes considered synonymous with Diwali. Of dark or deep blue hue, 'Goddess Kali is presented generally in an intimidating form, adorned with severed arms as a grisly girdle and freshly cut heads as a necklace, with a lolling tongue and long dishevelled hair, the battle field or the cremation ground being her usual habitat. Though hailed as an independent deity in some references, she is mostly associated with Siva as her consort and is presented as a fierce form of the gentle Parvati.



Kali Mata

In the Linga-purana, Siva asks Parvati, his spouse, to destroy the demon Daruka, who is empowered by a boon to be invincible but is destined to be killed by a female. Parvati, accordingly, transforms herself into the ferocious Kali by means of the poison stored in Siva's throat. She then confronts Daruka and with the help of the 'pisachas', the flesh-eating spirits, she overpowers him. Though Siva's object is achieved a different problem crops up. In the fury of the battle Kali becomes bloodthirsty and goes on a destructive spree, threatening the cosmic order. Siva has now to intervene to pacify her and stop the carnage. Iconographic representations of Siva and Kali almost always depict Kali as the dominant partner, usually seen standing or dancing on Siva's prone body. Never totally subdued, she symbolizes irrepressible feminine power.

According to another legend, after defeating the demons Sumbha and Nishumbha, Kali retires to a forest along with her savage companions. As she terrorizes the entire area, a devotee of Siva is distracted in his austerities and appeals to the god to help restore peace. But Kali ignores Siva's overtures of peace, claiming the place as her own. Siva then tactfully challenges her in a dance contest in which she is defeated as she is no match for Siva's 'tandava' dance. Realising her position, she ultimately calms down. The Mahanirvana tantra, (the way to salvation) refers to Kali as the primordial 'Shakti', the Adya Kali. It is believed that Kala (Time), represented by Kali, will end everything and Siva is called Mahakala as he is above Kala. But Kali, paradoxically enough, has the potential to destroy Mahakala also and she is, therefore, sometimes addressed as the supreme Kalika. She is regarded as endless, with no beginning, ineffable and indestructible. But, despite a terrifying exterior the so-called black goddess is depicted as having one hand raised in what is known as 'abhaya mudra', blessing the devotees to be fearless. After all, whatever begins will end. Central to the Tantric cult, Kali symbolises a reality that is grim and grotesque. The Tantric practices seek to find unity in the opposites like the sacred and the profane, microcosm and macrocosm, male and female, order and chaos.

Death and destruction are a part of the unique mystery of the Kala Chakra or the cycle of time. Since death is projected as inevitable and time takes its toll, we should come to terms with reality. This is the enigmatic message. According to another philosophic interpretation, life itself is chaotic. Any attempt to find order amidst chaos is futile. But such a view should not be used as an excuse to justify a defeatist attitude. On the contrary, it enables one to be mentally prepared for the worst while trying to work for a 'dharmic' or just order in the cosmic context.

Kali is testing her devotees by presenting a fearsome exterior to inculcate fearlessness in them. They are expected to accept the grim truths of life which should be looked upon as equilibrium of opposing and contradictory forces. No wonder, there is a profusion of devotional literature eulogizing the goddess and describing her unique attributes. Ramprosad Sen, for instance, is a household name in Bengal, famous for composing songs addressed to her. And no talk on the goddess can be complete without a mention of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, one of her most ardent and greatest devotees

Source: Bhavan's Journal November 15 2004



From Bhavan's Journal 21 October 1956
Reprinted Bhavan's Journal 31 August 2006

Mission of Religions - Arnold J. Toynbee



religion cannot be objective. Our impulse to pass judgment between the different living religions ought to be restrained till the physical "annihilation of distance" has had time to produce the psychological effects that may be expected from it. A time may come when the local heritages of different historic nations, civilisations, and religions will have coalesced into a common heritage of the whole human family. If that time does come, an effective judgment between the different religions may then begin to be possible. We are perhaps within sight of this possibility but we are certainly not within reach of it yet.

Meanwhile, all the living religions are going to be put to a searching practical test. "By their fruits we shall know them." The practical test of a religion, always and everywhere, is its success or failure in helping human souls to respond to the challenges of suffering and sin. In the chapter of the world's history on which we are now entering, it looks as if the continuing progress of technology is going to make our sufferings more acute than ever before, and our sins more devastating in their practical consequences.

Sanskrit in Modern Life - K. M. Munshi



Sanskrit is the parent national language of India; its grammar and vocabulary have provided the texture of Indian languages of the North; its vocabulary has enriched the languages of the South and given them their idiom and literary inspiration. People with limited historical knowledge identify Sanskrit exclusively with ritualism, and ritualism with communalism. We must, however, remember that Sanskrit has, for the last three thousand years, provided us with basic unity, the unity of our languages, the uniform development of their literature and social solidarity. Moral and spiritual values have also been given to us through Sanskrit. And if Sanskrit were neglected, we will imperil this basic unity.

The question, therefore, is: How can we retain the influence of Sanskrit to modern life? We must realise once for all that the conditions of life in modern times are so changed that we cannot expect Sanskrit to preserve its influence unless its education is altered to meet the needs of present times. Religious orthodoxy is slowly disappearing from our midst, the institution of the family-priest has practically disappeared from the towns. Unless, therefore, at the end of years of labour, a student of Sanskrit is able to find a suitable livelihood, fewer people will be attracted to the study of Sanskrit. At the same time, we must realise that modern education in Sanskrit given by our universities is not enough, nor of the proper quality. The Pathshala method gives both a thorough textual grounding and a faith in the value of Sanskrit. Without this equipment Sanskrit will cease to be a living language.

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Energy Security

- T. A. Subramanian & M. P. Navalkar*

Commonly accepted definition of 'Energy Security' means uninterrupted availability of sufficient supplies of energy at affordable price for any nation. This concept was realised by the great statesman Winston Churchill, during the World War I and, in fact, gave his visionary direction too. Scarcity or interruptions used to occur in days of strife, natural calamities, industrial strikes etc. While these continue to be traditional reasons, current geopolitics has given totally a new dimension to the topic. Oil price hike in seventies may be termed as the new era of awakening to all nations to address this issue of energy security, rather seriously. Oil price is now a powerful weapon.

Economy of the USA used to dictate the demand and supply of raw materials, called fossil fuels, namely, oil, coal and natural gas needed for energy production. But in today's scenario, two Asian giants, namely, China and India, are well acknowledged players to affect the world economy through their demands for fossil fuels. This is so since the era of liberalization introduced in both these countries in the nineties. The demand for energy resource of such nations has made US and other developed nations (so called G8) to reassess the situation more seriously. While the energy security for developed or developing nations is their concern of uninterrupted supply at affordable prices, it is other way for oil producing nations. For such oil producing nations, their security concern is that there should always be someone knocking at their doors for more demands so that they can schedule the production to their advantage. Even for poorer nations, where demand is not much, yet spiraling prices adversely affect their balance of payment thus upsetting the national budget. For them, this constitutes major part of energy security. For developing and underdeveloped nations, the security concern is also towards their long-term goal of self-sufficiency. So far we have seen only the notional side of energy security stemming primarily from oil production and its international pricing. Of late, other critical parameters too need to be considered. They may be summarized as follows:

(a)Tight oil market: Largely controlled by a cartel of nations (OPEC) producing bulk of oil. They supply to most of the world.

(b)Uncertain cure of Oil prices: - Till 2000, it was universally accepted that all nations would be prepared to absorb an anticipated gradual rise in oil prices (in fact, at times there was a slight decline too). But in the last 3 years (since 2003), oil prices have doubled and showing no indication of any stability.

(c)Militancy was earlier attributed to dissent segments of population fighting for political justice. Now terrorism is targeting the global economy. It has shaken even the most powerful USA. Incidents at oil installations or facilities in West Asia, Nigeria, Venezuela have been reported. Military vigil is called for, to tackle this.

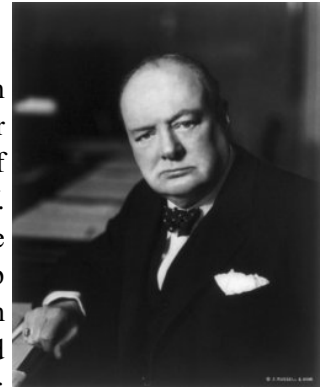
(d)Volatile regimes in oil-producing areas: Usually big powers are blamed for such puppet regimes, but in turn, it affects the very big power as one regime gets thrown by its rebels. But as long 'fish-in troubled waters' attitude of big power stays, this menace too will stay.

(e)Natural calamities too need to be addressed. Recent experience in the US of Hurricane Katrina damaged heavily oil refineries and this tragic event is an eye-opener to other nations. For any future installation like refinery, adequate caution is needed in the choice of location vis-à-vis its vulnerability to hostile natural phenomena like hurricane, tsunami, earthquakes etc.

The above discussions are primarily with regard to oil, natural gas and coal. While oil is consumed universally, it is not the case with gas or coal. Europe is a large user of gas (USA too). Major suppliers are Russian Federation. Major coal users are USA, China and India. Oil is given special importance, as it is not only used as fossil fuel for energy generation, it is also vital for transportation sector (automobiles, ships, aircraft, rail engines etc). All above arguments apply equally to demand and supply of gas and coal, though it is somewhat 'region - specific'.

Meeting the Challenges

(a) Diversification: Great statesman Churchill coined this word diversification in World War -1, when he asked the Royal Navy to use oil instead of coal to get better speed. Diversification essentially means to have many alternatives. In the case of energy, dependence only on oil/ gas should be avoided. Use of coal can be bought of. However other attractive alternatives are nuclear power and harnessing renewable sources (wind, solar, hydro). A good mix of these alternatives will be a good hack up for exigencies. Nuclear energy was opposed in many nations in the west, mainly on grounds of hazardous nuclear waste and, to some extent, proliferation by the so called 'rogue states'. Even these nations are now having a serious review to induct nuclear power reactors. Likewise, expanding the renewable sources need consideration. Moreover these recourses are not directly usable. They have to be developed, produced and finally delivered to the end users. Good amount may be needed for investing in developmental efforts and it has a direct bearing on the resource utilization and allocation of nations. For nations like India, there is lack of adequate infrastructure for storage, transporting efficiently fossil fuels. Unless each alternative is put in operation, one cannot think of expansion of a particular source. In this context, it should be noted that while nuclear plants are based on proven technologies, they are again limited by availability of nuclear fuels on a long-term basis. Other alternative fuels could be fuel cell, bio-diesel (blend of ethanol and gas olive).



Winston Churchill

(b)Efficient Appliances:

New practically all energy consuming devices are designed to use minimum energy. We have energy-efficient electric lamps and other appliances. There will be significant savings in energy in domestic and industrial sectors. Likewise, major efforts are on especially in the US to improve car/auto design to utilise fuel efficiently. It is a major concern for the US because about 70% of oil is consumed in transport sector in the US. But energy efficient transport research can be of use to other nations too, where public transport too can avail of this. In the case of Europe, there is a healthy trend to expand public transport to minimise oil consumption by individual users. In developing countries, anyway public transport is heavily relied upon. Currently, interest is also on, vehicles using hydrogen as fuel (for example, fuel cells)

(c)Disciplined Use: There is a global awareness to minimise wastes of energy use. Utilities and domestic users are well advised to cut down their requirements and response in general is positive from corporates and citizens. Energy thus saved gives extended tenure for our scarce resources

(d)Back-up Reserve: Today's savings are tomorrow's treasure. So, there should be a conscientious effort on the part of government as a whole to devise policies to generate a good back-up reserve.

(e) Cleaner Technology: While switching to alternatives, uses of coal are not overlooked. However, major concern of coal burning (to some extent, oil too) is release of greenhouse gases. There is strong evidence that growing concentrations of greenhouse gases increase average global temperature, modify rainfall patterns, increase severity of tropical storms, raise ocean levels and thus sharply disrupt ecosystem. Any option to improve energy security should also improve environmental security and vice-versa.

(f) Viable Policy: While long-term policy in all aspects of energy like production, consumption, audit, security is recognised by all nations, such policies are usually nation specific. Particularly for developing nations, which have joined global liberalisation recently (e.g. China, India) huge investments are needed to establish alternative sources of energy. All the resources may not be mobilised internally and thus a direct need and option for foreign collaboration and investment. To attract such investments, there should be well-laid down policies that aim end procedural delays and bureaucratic inertia. While policies need to be investor friendly, it cannot compromise other aspects of national security.

(g) Global Collaboration: International forums called International Energy Agency are in vogue. However, many leading players are not yet full-fledged members. Mutual sharing of knowledge and experience in such a forum can go a long way in the co-ordination activities of IEA. This can create a better harmonious understanding

among member nations for overall energy security. An example often cited herein is the beneficial role played by IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency).

Indian Scenario

We are a power-starved nation. Our demands are much higher than supply. This is obvious both on grounds of growing economy and growing population. We have to face a tough competition with our dynamic neighbour, China. China too initiated many bold steps of economic reforms and liberalisation along with India to boost foreign investments in spite of being branded as a communist state. Infrastructure development in China is reportedly far superior compared to India. They are strong in several industrial sectors. But then we too have a strong and professional skilled manpower competent in some equally important sectors. So we can get prepared to tackle this challenge. Ever since we launched liberalisation our economy is an upward trend. For example, GNP has increased from \$33 billion in 1992-93 (when reforms were introduced) to \$411 billion in 2001-02. While these are rosy pictures, we have many shortfalls. We are criticised on many fronts - some of them are constructive. For example a long-term energy plan seems to be lacking. This apart, we have too many agencies in energy sector. While this sounds good for the causes of diversification, but on practical grounds we are often blamed for bureaucratic inertia and delays. We have several ministries / departments, for example, petroleum, power, non-conventional energy, coal, atomic energy and so on. Over and above this, is the watch dog Ministry of Environment. Decision- making, at times get prolonged to go through so many agencies and this tend to dilute the investor-friendly image.

At times there is also lack of co-ordination among these agencies, especially now that we are having coalition government where such portfolios are handled by coalition partners, each having there, their own agenda despite the collective responsibility for progressive decisions. We are witnessing bottlenecks again with respect to hydropower generation. We need to augment this renewable sector in a big way in years to come. However, looking at frequent droughts and floods occurring at many places seems to give an indication of poor management of our water resources. We have initiated in a limited sense for wind power and solar energy. But they too need to be expanded.

The recent Indo-US nuclear deal is in the right direction of our intense desire to diversify our energy generation. Today, we hardly feed 1 to 2 % of total energy generation through nuclear power. Our target is fixed at about 10% by 2020 or so. To achieve this, such bilateral deals need encouragement. Here again we are debating and such debates only delay our journey to energy security. Hopefully we overcome these and live truly up to global expectation that India and China will be the tall leaders in all spheres including people-oriented energy security.

* M.P. Navalkar - Formerly with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and presently with Bhavan's Gandhi Institute of Computer education and Information Technology and Shikshan Bharti

Source: Bhavan's Journal October 15 2006

Madan's Video Production

Madan graduated from Film & TV institute in 2003 (specializing in cinematography & direction) He caters for marriage packages, receptions, birthdays, corporate events, advertisement and music videos.

He has been producing a TV show known as "Mantra TV" on a free to air community TV channel TVS. This program is aired on Mondays at 5:30 pm, Wednesdays at 8:am and Sundays at 2pm. Mantra mainly broadcasts Documentaries, Music videos dance videos and lifestyle related topics. He has also successfully produced upto 8 advertisement for TVS channel that are running well. Madan is also a good singer.

Madan Video Productions Ph:9638 3989 / 0412 316 917 mantratv@optusnet.com.au

Prime Minister (India) Dr Manmohan Singh in Bhavan Head Quarters



The Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, dedicated the First Unit of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Gandhi Computer Centre to the memory of Bharata Ratna (late) C. Subramaniam, former Union Minister and former President of the Bhavan, at a function held on October 6, 2006 at the Bhavan's Headquarters in Mumbai. The Prime Minister was received by Shri Pravinchandra Gandhi, President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Shri Murli Deora, Union Cabinet Minister, Petroleum & Natural Gas and Vice Chairman of Bhavan's Gandhi Institute, Justice Shri B.N. Srikrishna, Trustee, Bhavan, Shri H.N. Dastur, Executive Secretary and Director General, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and Shri Milind Deora, Member of the Lok Sabha, South Mumbai. The Prime Minister who was accompanied by Shri S.N.Krishna, Governor of Maharashtra and Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, unveiled the plaque installed at the entrance of Bhavan's Gandhi Institute, Chowpatty Centre, to dedicate the first computer centre of Bhavan's Gandhi Institute in the memory of C.S. In 1996, Dr. Manmohan Singh himself had inaugurated this very centre. Dr Manmohan Singh then

visited Bhavan's Gandhi Institute's Computer Lab. He was welcomed by Dr. M.P. Navalkar, Dean of the Bhavan's Gandhi Institute and Shri Ashok Kamble, Dy. Dean. He saw the photographs displayed on the Notice Board depicting milestones in the history of Bhavan's Gandhi Institute. The photographs included Dr Manmohan Singh, Union Finance Minister-1996, Dr.R.Naryanan, President of India-1998, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India-1998, Ms Sonia Gandhi, Leader of Opposition-2001, Mr. Bill Gates, Chairman and Chief Software Architect, Microsoft and other dignitaries.

In Bhavan's Gandhi Institute, Shri Niranjana Rao, Coordinator, explained to the Prime Minister about the working of the Institute and how the costly equipment is fully utilised. He was impressed with the ambience and quality of computer training, offered FREE to the economically challenged segment of society. Dr. P. M. Navalkar reminded Dr. Manmohan Singh about his visit to Bhavan's Gandhi Institute in 1996 to inaugurate its first centre in South Mumbai and specifically mentioned that this FREE computer education to economically challenged people was the 'brain child' of Shri Murli Deora. With keen interest Shri Manmohan Singh interacted with students in the computer lab.

After dedicating the Centre to Shri C. Subramaniam, the Prime Minister and other dignitaries gathered at the Bhavan's Sabhagriha. Shri S. M. Krishna, Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Pravinchandra Gandhi Justice Shri B. N. Srikrishna, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India & Trustee of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Smt Swatantra Saktivel and Shri H.N.Datur were the other dignitaries present on the dais. The function started with Sarva Dharma prayers rendered by students of Bhavan's A.H.Wadia High School. Welcoming the Prime Minister, Shri Pravinchandra V Gandhi, President of the Bhavan said: "If the entire world looks at our country with appreciation and admiration as an economically strong and vibrant democracy, one of the main architects, who have brought this about, is Dr. Manmohan Singh. We, as a nation, are very fortunate indeed to have as our Prime Minister, a leader of Dr. Manmohan Singh's great caliber and character, integrity and vision, humility and compassion. "Our Founder, Dr. K. M. Munshi, called Bhavan an Adventure in Faith. It is a faith in the immortal and imperishable wisdom bequeathed to our people and through them to the entire mankind by the ancient seers of Bharata Varsha, whose minds were illumined by Vedic wisdom. Bhavan is a cultural movement which believes in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - the world is one family- and Sarva Dharma Samabhava. "From a seed that was sown 67 years ago, the Bhavan has grown into a mighty tree. It has over 360 constituent institutions, 117 Kendras in India and a few abroad. Annually about two lakh and fifty thousand students benefit from Bhavan's cultural and educational programmes. So far, Bhavan has published over 1750 titles and has sold over 27 million books. Its staff today numbers about 10,000 persons." Shri Gandhi further said: "The late Shri C. Subramaniam, who was my close friend and colleague, was one of the tallest leaders of free India, whose contribution to the development of Agriculture, Economy and Science and Technology is written in golden letters. He rendered great service to Bhavan as its Vice-President and President. It is a matter of pride for all of us that the Prime Minister has dedicated the Bhavan's Gandhi Institute's first Centre to Shri Subramaniamji's sacred



Pravinchandra V
Gandhi, President
Bhavan Worldwide



memory." Shri Gandhi welcomed and thanked Governor Shri S. M. Krishna, Chief Minister Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh and Justice Shri B. N. Srikrishna for blessing the Bhavan with their august presence.

Shri Murli Deora, Vice-Chairman of Bhavan's Gandhi Computer Institute, gave the background of the establishment and rapid growth of the Institute, and declared that it would exceed even its present target of 50 centres throughout India. He described how this dream of the Bhavan was turning into reality due to the generosity of Shri Bill Gates and other donors. He gave moving examples of the Institute's students who were too poor to get computer education and who have

lucrative jobs, thanks to the Bhavan. Shri Deora recalled Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to the Mumbai Bhavan in 1996 to inaugurate the Computer Centre, then a small room with 15 computers, intending to provide free IT education to the weaker sections of the society. Today, the institute has 39 Computer Centres across the country. He appealed to the Prime Minister for more funds to help the institute achieve its goal of 50 centres in 50 cities, teaching 50,000 students each. Welcoming Dr Manmohan Singh, he said, "When we started the institute we never believed that we would get so much support and money and help from the people, and I am very thankful to Dr. Manmohan Singh. Whether he is a PM or not a PM, he continues to take interest in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. When he was elected as a Member of Parliament from Rajya Sabha from Guwahati, he said you must start a centre there. I am glad that Dr. Manmohan Singh encouraged us by giving Rs 10 lakhs from his MP's fund. That is how the Guwahati Centre came into being. The young man, Shri Deepak Kumar, has come from that centre to express his feelings of gratitude. "Mr C. Subramaniam was like a father and guru to all of us. I am very grateful to the Prime Minister for his idea that we must honour today and dedicate this centre to Shri C. Subramaniam and I am happy to inform you just before he entered here in this auditorium, Dr. Manmohan Singh has unveiled the plaque which he has dedicated to Mr C. Subramaniam.

"I am very happy and privileged to welcome Swatantra, Mr. Subramaniam's daughter and Rajasekhar, his son, who have come from Chennai. I would request the Prime Minister to offer the plaque we have created in honour of Shri C. Subramaniam, and present it to Swatantra. "The photograph you are seeing in the stage on the backdrop was taken during July 1996, when Mr. C. Subramaniam, was the President of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and in his speech, he quoted a line of Mahatma Gandhi "Find the purpose and the means will follow". I was telling him we need more money, we need to establish more centres and he was right that he gave a good cause. If you have something dedicated to a good thing, money is not a problem. When I was in Delhi last month, I was talking to Bhavan's Delhi Kendra Director, Mr. Veeraraghavan.



Shri Murli Deora

A Management College is being established in Delhi in the premises of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and he told me that we need Rs.3.5 to 4 crores. I spoke to some industrialists who were also present. "I told Mr. Mittal your photograph is there and this is the time to help and I am very glad that he agreed to my suggestion. He sent a cheque of Rs.5 crores. I request AH, who is our Congress volunteer to present this cheque to Mr. Pravinchandra Gandhi. "Sir, we have an established centre, not only in a place like Guwahati but we also have a centre working in Srinagar, a centre working in Manipal and we are trying to see that such centres are spread specially in the North East areas of our country. Whenever I met Dr. Manmohan Singh, he would ask me what is happening at the Bhavan's centres and I would tell him that we need more money from him. He himself telephoned the Finance Minister, Mr. P Chidambaram, instructing him to see that some more funds are made available and Mr. P Chidambaram is trying his best to get more money. I would like to put in one small request. Huge amounts of earmarked money to be spent on development of North East areas are lying unutilised. The Prime Minister knows that. If you give to an NGO like Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, we can set up many centres in these areas, Itanagar, Shillong, Manipal, all these areas because fortunately the children speak good English. They have access to the language and they should have such centres, which they just cannot afford. I talked to one of our Senior Members of Parliament from Shillong. He said we can't afford such centres. So if you consider it proper, Sir, when you go to Delhi, when you have some time, we would very much like the Government of India to consider and give more money to NGOs like Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, so that we can have more such programmes. I am very grateful to Dr. Manmohan Singh for coming to this programme and I am very sure we would touch our original dream, 50



Shri Dastur welcoming the Prime Minister

centres in 50 cities and 50,000 children. Mr. Subramaniam, while inaugurating the second centre in Chennai had said, anything free may not be valuable, so you must charge. I did not agree with him and I can assure you sincerely, that all our centres are totally free. We see the boys and girls who come from such poor state of society that they can't afford Rs.700-800. The books are given free by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan because they can't afford to pay the Rs.500 as deposit for that. We have many such cases. I am very happy that even though it is totally free, we have the latest computers, air-conditioning is good and one student and not two, is sitting on one chair, with one computer.

"I remember when Smt. Sonia Gandhi was visiting Lathur, the CM's area, we requested her to inaugurate our centre. I am so happy that the Lathur centre and other centres are doing very well. "Twice Mr. Bill

Gates came to Bombay and both the times he visited Bhavan. I am very glad that he has donated \$ 5 million i.e about Rs. 24 crores and earlier he donated \$ 0.7 million, when he came first time to India. We are getting money. But we need more money. "I thank Dr. Manmohan Singh and other Honourable trustees, Mr. Banwarilalji, Mr. Sonawala and other friends, for their support. I welcome Justice Shri Srikrishna, who has a new job. I would request him to continue to spend some time in Bombay and help us.

"Mr. Dastur is a dedicated man and is helping us so much. On behalf of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, I once again thank Dr. Manmohan Singh". An ex-student, Deepak Kumar Rahul Shethi, from the Bhavan's Gandhi Centre of the Computer Institute, Guwahati, narrated how the Institute had helped him overcome stupendous obstacles. He said: "I am truly proud of being a student of this Institute because it is one of the very best. Gandhi Institute has given me the required knowledge about Computer operations and has helped me develop a healthy personality through various personality development modules & camps organised by the Centre. The practical skills that I acquired from my Institution has helped me get a very good job, to launch my career. My father has retired from the railways and we could not afford the fees of expensive computer classes. "I was working as a Salesman and after this course I got a job at a Call Centre at a salary of Rs.4500/- p.m. The difference that Gandhi Institute has made is tremendous. It has given me confidence to face difficult situations and made me ambitious and have higher goals."

While accepting the Certificate as the Institute's 1,50,000th student, Shri Pravin Menon said: I have completed Accounts Assistant & Office Assistant Courses at the Chowpatty Centre of Gandhi Institute. I was very happy to learn that I am the 1,50,000th student of this great Institute. I am really humbled by this fact and proud to be a part of a revolution in Computer Education for the underprivileged. My father retired three years ago and I did this course in June 2006. I hope to become the breadwinner of my family."

In his address the **Prime Minister said:** "I am truly delighted to be here today amongst you. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is one of our most cherished national institutions. I bow my head and pay tribute to the memory of Kulapati Dr. K. M. Munshi. He was a towering visionary belonging to a historic generation of great leaders. Our nation was truly blessed in the 20th century, being home to some of the greatest men and women of our era. "They were great not because they were powerful. They were great not because they headed governments, or led armies. They were great not because they were wealthy. They were great because they were men and women of great compassion, intellect and abiding commitment to humanity.

"Inspired by the tallest of them all, Mahatma Gandhi, a generation of Indians created and nurtured great institutions. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is one such. The Bhavan started as an institution dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Sanskrit - the most ancient of languages, the most musical of languages, the most scientific of languages. However, under Munshiji's inspiring leadership the Bhavan branched has out into diverse activities. "From the days of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, successive governments have greatly valued the Bhavan's contribution to human development in our country. The Bhavan has also inspired people abroad to come forward and contribute their mite to the preservation and promotion of Indian culture and learning. "The Bhavan is a unique institution because its feet are firmly placed on the solid foundation of our rich heritage and culture, while its head has soared into the skies to embrace all that is new and modern, particularly the Information Technology Revolution. The Bhavan has spread its wings and has flown into new areas of education. It is a valued institution across the country. It is, therefore, only natural that the Bhavan has branched off into the teaching of information technology, particularly focusing on the needs of the downtrodden and the displaced."

The Prime Minister further said: "Shri Murli Deora drew my attention to the need to accelerate the Computer



Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, with (L to R) Chief Minister Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh, Governor Shri S M Krishna, Shri Murli Deora, Smt Swatantra and other dignitaries leaving the dias.

education revolution in the North-east. I will hold discussions with my colleague, Tribal Affairs Minister P. R. Kindyaji to see how we can work together to carry forward the computer Revolution in other parts of the North-east after I return to Delhi." Dr Singh recalled that he had dreamt that India would one day be swept by the IT and energy revolutions to usher in a new decentralised way of development. "As I said earlier, some people are great not because they are powerful or head a government, but they are illustrious for being compassionate and proving their intellectual ability to inspire the masses. Today I laid the foundation stone to honour the author of the "Green Revolution" along with late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Their vision, their courage, their steadfastness, their commitment to our national values ensure that this country today is self sufficient in food grains. Shri Subramaniam

was a multifaceted personality. He was always inspired by the promise of science and Technology . As a Minister of Science and technology, he produced a paper on science policy for the development of the country. I worked with him when he was the Finance Minister.

"I am deeply honoured that this particular occasion today coincides with the dedication of this South Centre to the memory of one of the greatest Indians of our age, Shri C. Subramaniam. His contribution to the development of our country in diverse fields is truly phenomenal. First, as a Minister in the Government of Tamil Nadu, then, as a Minister for Agriculture and Food in the Union Government. He left a deep imprint on the growth of our agricultural economy. "I had the privilege of working very closely with him, when he became the Finance Minister and his passionate striving for excellence, his deep commitments to the cause of rural development, his great awareness of the role of science and technology have transformed our country. These were PrlmeMin the qualities which chief Mini had a profound Shri SMK impact on the andother« revolution of our policies in the mid 70's.

"When I came here ten years ago, I had a vision. Gandhiji's vision was to promote decentralised ways of developing our country, to avoid concentration of wealth in cities, and to create new pathways to regenerate our rural areas . I said I have a dream that the Information Technology revolution will sweep our country and we will together make the revolution in energy, particularly decentralised energy which would usher in a new decentralised way of development, making the Gandhian dream of decentralisation, not only more equitable but also economically more viable. I think the first leg of that twin desire of mine, the spread of Information Technology Revolution, particularly its ability to empower the poorest of our country has become true and that's a unique contribution of this centre, 1,50,000 students being trained without having to pay a single pie for their training is an achievement, which is indeed most praiseworthy. I pray that Shri Murli's skill in raising resources would prove a strong spur to make this Computer Education Centre reach its goal. It's a doubly blessed occasion to coming back to a centre where excellence and social commitment and social equity go hand in hand and to dedicate this centre to the memory of one of the greatest men of our age for whom I had the greatest love, regard and affection and from whom I learnt the most. Such was Mr. C. Subramaniam."I compliment the Bhavan on its unceasing and untiring efforts to remain relevant to the needs of our society. I salute the patriotism and the humanism of all those who have helped build the Bhavan and continue to help in its manifold activities. I assure you that I will always be here to support and encourage the good work of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. May your path continue to be blessed."

Justice Shri B. N. Srikrishna, former Judge, Supreme Court of India and Trustee of the Bhavan proposed a vote of thanks. He said: "I propose a formal vote of thanks to the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singhji for having spared some of his valuable moments to come and look at this Computer Centre and rededicate it because it was formally inaugurated by him. I also thank the Governor Shri S. M. Krishna for giving us the pleasure of his gracious company and Chief Minister, Vilasraoji. "I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart and our thanks are also due to you because it is your presence that makes this occasion so solemn and so gracious. "One last observation before I wind up, the Computer Centre is going to grow and make strides. I have three reasons for that. It was named after a very great man, it is dedicated to the memory of a very great man and it has been inaugurated and re-inaugurated by Dr. Manmohan Singh. That he is a Prime Minister today just an incidental matter. It is what he is, as human being that counts more to all of us. Thank you very much."

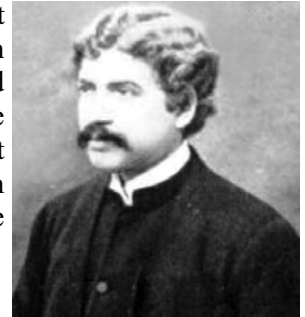
Source : Bhavan's Journal October 31 2006

Holistic Science of the Living and the Non-Living

- Gambhir Watts*

Human Response of Metals and Plants

Dr Jagdish Chandra Bose, the Indian scientist, who first proved by experiments that metals which are supposed to be inanimate objects, behave like plants even human muscles. Bose, in fact, established the connection between physics, botany, and physiology. Bose's fame as a physicist of all times was established in 1895. It is Bose who in 1895, the year before Marconi's patent on radio-waves was issued, first successfully demonstrated the propagation of radio-waves. Bose had no interest in commercial market; instead, he went deeper into other aspects of physics, namely the discovery of sensitivity or organic behaviour in inorganic matter like metals.



Dr Jagdish Chandra Bose

In 1901, May 10, Bose demonstrated all his experiments on the effect of fatigue, stimulation, depression and poisonous drugs on human muscles, metals and plants in England, and concluded:

'I have shown you this evening the autographic records of the history of stress and strain in the living and non-living. How similar are the writings! So similar indeed that you cannot tell one apart from the other.....it was when I came upon the mute witness of these self made records, and perceived on them one phase of a pervading unity that bears within it all things – the mote that quivers in ripples of light, the teeming life upon our earth and the radiant suns that shine above us – it was then that I understood for the first time a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the bank of the Ganges thirty centuries ago. "they who see but one, in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth – unto none else, unto none else."

Sir Robert Austen, one of the world's authorities on metals in those days, praised Bose for his faultless arguments, and said: "I have all my life studied the properties of metals and happy to think that they have life."

Bose continued with his experiments and expanded the scope to plants and other things.

Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bard wrote on Bose "that the western science was dealing with a genius half century ahead of his time." Bose's discovery established the fact that all science is interdependent and leads to the knowledge of unity in life. George Bernard Shaw dedicated his collected works to Bose as "the greatest living biologist." Times of London wrote: "While we in England were still steeped in the rude empiricism of barbaric life, the subtle Easterner had swept the universe into a synthesis and had seen the one in all its changing manifestation." In 1926, along with Albert Einstein, N A Lorentz and Gilbert Murray, Bose was nominated a member of the League of Nations Committee on Inter-cultural Co-operation. Bose summed up his findings in 1929:

In many investigations on the action of forces on matter, I was amazed to find boundary lines vanishing and to discover points of contact emerging between the living and non-living. My first work in the region of invisible lights made me realise how in the midst of luminous ocean we stood almost blind. Just as in following light from visible to invisible our range of investigation transcends our physical sight, so also the problem of the great mystery of Life and Death is brought a little nearer solution, when in the realm of the living, we pass from the Voiced to the Unvoiced.

After the discoveries of J C Bose and his interpretations, modern science has been gradually discovering that there is only one Consciousness which pulsates in man, plants and even metals, in various ways. And the nature of this pulsation of life in the so-called non-living can be demonstrated not in one or two but a hundreds of different experiments. Erwin Schrodinger echoed Sir J C Bose when he wrote nearly three decades later:

Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular. How does the idea of plurality arise at all? ... Much sillier questions have been asked: Do animals have souls? It has even been questioned whether women or only men have souls The only possible alternative is simply to keep to the immediate experience that consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown.

The Bio-plasmic Body

George Dela Warr, a physically-gifted civil engineer in 1955-56 found seeds were responding not only to radiation, but to human beings who were involved in the act of radiation. His conclusion therefore was that “the mind of a human being could affect cell formation”. He also suggested to leading English physicists that “a universal energy could be evoked by the proper attunement of one’s thoughts”. Despite being ridiculed, Dela Warr reiterated his conclusion which he arrived at after seeing the effect of the extra-energy that seeds received from the human factor involved in their treatment.



Swami Vivekananda

Following the line of Dela Warr, Dr Robert N Miller experimented in 1967 with seeds which irradiated with human goodwill and “blessings”. These seeds showed an “eighty-four percent faster” growth than seeds planted without the human treatment with prayers and goodwill.

Swami Vivekananda gave the Vedantic view of this unseen human energy-field which influences others around us: “The body is objectified thought. The sun and Moon current bring energy to all parts of the body. The surplus energy is stored at certain points (plexuses) along spinal column known as nerve centres”.

“Part of our energy is used up in the preservation of our own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is day and night being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our intellect, and our spirituality – all these are continually influencing others; and so, conversely, we are being influenced by them. This is going on all around us”.

More Startlingly J I Rodale found after some experiments that the mother-plant need not necessarily have to be growing near her children for them to benefit from her ‘protection’. The mother could apparently be in the next city, the next country, across the ocean, or anywhere on earth. Rodale’s findings remind us of the discovery of a holistic universe where two similar objects were somehow instantaneously connected even despite an enormous distance. This was the result of David Bohm’s successful experiment of Bell’s Theorem, which proved conclusively that two identical objects are somehow instantaneously connected, whatever may be the physical distance between them.

The Field of Life

Physicists have hardly considered so far the idea of fields of living systems including both plants and living organisms. The natural sciences were so long divided into departments. The study of molecules and crystals is the province not of physicists, but of chemists, crystallographers, biochemists, and molecular biologists; living organisms were studied in the realms of biology, and minds in the realms of psychology and parapsychology. Today however these watertight compartments have virtually disappeared and interdisciplinary study has become common.

Modern physics has at last arrived at the concept of ‘fields’ behind all matter, even the subatomic particles. There are many kinds of matter-fields, one for each type of particle; an electron is a quantum of the electron-positron field; a proton is a quantum of the proton-antiproton field and so on. Different kinds of matter-fields can interact with each other and they can also interact with electromagnetic fields. All these interactions are mediated by quanta.

The latest discoveries in the physics have proved that particles of matter are quanta of energy in fields, which are states of space, or the vacuum. This is the modern foundation for the understanding of material reality. “Yet this new vision of the physicists has so far had very little effect on the understanding of living organisms”, writes plant-biologist Rupert Sheldrake. Quantum physics has dissolved atoms into a complex system of quantized fields. Yet in the field of biological research much of the old atomistic way of thinking has persisted. Molecules or atoms still seem to provide the foundation for biology. In mechanistic biology there is no consideration of the possibility of new kinds of fields which are unknown to quantum physicists. Any living organism, a human body, for instance, is composed of billions and billions of molecules of different elements. If each of these molecules or atoms has a distinct force-field of its own, what is that central or ruling force-field inside one particular living

organism which guides and whose power is manifested through the force-fields of each of these billions of molecules and atoms?



David Bohm

Since the last 75 years or so biologists are trying to conceive of a single force-field in a living organism. In 1960s F.S.C. Northop and Harold Saxton Burr postulated this field as the bio-gravitational field or L-field. Rupert Sheldrake, a Cambridge scientist, in 1980s started building up, on the basis of some of his successful experiments, a similar idea of morphic field. The “morphic field” is only the “field” of the activities of life-force inside a human body or a living organism.

Swami Vivekananda explains for modern man the Indian ideas of Akasha (Primal Matter) and Prana (Primal Energy) out of which, according to this theory, all the world of the living and non-living came into existence.

“According to the philosophers of India, the whole universe is composed of two materials, one of which they call Akasha. It is the omnipresent, all-penetrating existence. Everything that has form, everything that is the result of combination, is evolved out of this Akasha. It is the Akasha that becomes the air, that becomes the liquids, that becomes the solids; it is Akasha that becomes the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars, the comets; it is the Akasha that becomes the human body, the animal body, the plants, every form that we see, everything that can be sensed, everything that exists.

“... By what power is this Akasha manufactured into this universe? By the power of Prana. Just as Akasha is the infinite, omnipresent, material of this universe, so is this Prana the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe. At the beginning and at the end of a cycle everything becomes Akasha, and all the forces that are in the universe resolve back into the prana; in the next cycle, out of this prana is evolved everything that we call energy, everything that we call force. It is the Prana that is manifesting as motion; it is the Prana that is manifesting as gravitation, as magnetism. It is the Prana that is manifesting as the actions of the body, as the nerve currents, as thought force.”

The prana is the vital force in everything. Thought is the finest and highest action of Prana. This little wave of the Prana which represents our own energies, mental and physical, is the nearest to us of all the waves of the infinite ocean of Prana.

In the ancient Upanishads of India, one of the most important symbols of Brahman (the Ultimate Reality) is Prana, the life-principle that pervades and sustains the universe and the individual body. “Prana is verily Brahman” **Prana vai Brahma**, says Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Prana which is the life-principle in the individual is also the cosmic principle of Energy. The Upanishads speak of the identity of the microcosm and the macrocosm; that which is manifest in the universe as a whole, with all its phenomena, finds complete expression in man as well, although in a miniature form.

Another symbol of Brahman is Akasha, whose characteristics are omnipresence and all-pervasiveness. “It is Akasha from which all these creatures take their rise and into which they again return. Akasha is older than these; Akasha is their ultimate end,” says the Chandogya Upanishad.

Both Prana and Akasha matter are only manifestations or projections of the One Undivided substratum which Vedanta describes as Absolute Consciousness or Absolute Existence.

.....
The Holistic Background of Existence

The morphic-field or the energy field in a living organism works in a way which is strikingly different from a mere mechanical function. In 1890s, the embryologist Hans Driesch discovered that when half a young sea-urchin embryo was destroyed the remaining half did not give birth to half a sea-urchin; but to a smaller and a complete sea-urchin. Conversely, Driesch showed that if two young embryos were artificially fused together, they produced not a double sea-urchin, but a normal single one. The holistic capacity to regenerate is seen in living beings. A flat worm may be cut into pieces, and each piece – a head, a tail, a side or a mere slice can yet grow into a complete flat worm. In human body when part of the liver is removed is removed, the liver tissues develop and grow into a complete liver. Branches of trees give birth to complete trees. Severed nerves grow fully in animal bodies. Even in

some physical systems like magnets, when a magnet is cut into two, two smaller but complete magnets come into being. In a holographic plate, when a part is severed from the main hologram, that part gives rise to the complete picture in a miniature form.



Rupert Sheldrake writes: “The capacity to regenerate is, in fact, one of the most fundamental features of living organisms, and any theory of life has to try to explain it. ... Process of regeneration reveals that in some sense organisms have a wholeness that is more than the sum of their parts; parts can be removed, and yet wholeness can be restored.”

This fundamental holistic pattern behind all systems was first proposed by physicist David Bohm. Bohm’s successful experiment with Bell’s Theorem in 1972 confirmed the fact that there is a far deeper underlying unity behind all natural phenomena. Bohm proposed the theory of implicate order in which all things and events are enfolded in a total wholeness and unity.

Rupert Sheldrake

This ‘implicate order’ is ‘primary’, ‘self-existent’, ‘universal’, and ‘an unidentifiable totality’. This is the ground for both ‘life-explicit’ and ‘inanimate matter’, whose functioning go on in an ‘unbroken and undivided totality’. This is the SELF or BRAHMAN, the substratum of all things, ‘living’ and ‘non-living’ described in Upanishads.

Vivekananda explains the holistic background of the living and non-living:

Now when we study metaphysics, we come to know the world is one, not that the spiritual, the material, the mental, and the world of energies are separate. It is all one, but seen from different planes of vision. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of tapering existence; the thickest part is here, it tapers and becomes finer and finer. The finest is what we call spirit; the grossest, the body.

This mind is a part of the universal mind. And each mind, wherever it is located, is in actual communication with the whole world. The end and aim of all science is to find the unity, the one out of which the manifold is being manufactured, that one existing as many.

David Bohm’s idea of ‘implicate order’ is approaching the holistic world view of Vedanta. The ‘morphic-field; located in a particular body, proposed by Sheldrake, is connected with a universal field, according to David Bohm. He says: “Moreover, such a field would not be located anywhere. ...When the explicate order enfolds into the implicate order, which does not have any space, all places and all times are, we might say, merged so that what happens in one place will interpenetrate what happens in another place.”

Today’s science has already started shifting to a new paradigm (as explained by Thomas Kuhn): “on the one hand, it stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community; on the other hand, it denotes one sort of elements in that constellation, the concrete puzzle-solution which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzle of normal science.” A new paradigm may emerge as a sudden illumination or a ‘gestalt switch’ or an ‘intuitive leap’ as Einstein said, to a completely new way of thinking.

After the discoveries of J C Bose, David Bohm and others the dualistic and mechanistic science of the 19th Century has been gradually accepting the new paradigm of a Holistic Science, a paradigm which is emerging powerfully out of the findings of in many branches of late 20th Century Science.

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* This Paper was prepared by Gambhir Watts, President of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia, who was invited to chair a session of panel discussants, for the **National Symposium on the Science of Holistic Living and its Global Applications** organised by the **Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences**, Arogyadham, Sevagram (Wardha) India, 16 -17 November 2006.

Lobbying For Earth

On 21 June, former US Vice President Al Gore gave a lecture at the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, UK founded in 1754). In it, he argued that market forces alone will not successfully avert ecological disaster. Here is an edited version of his speech.



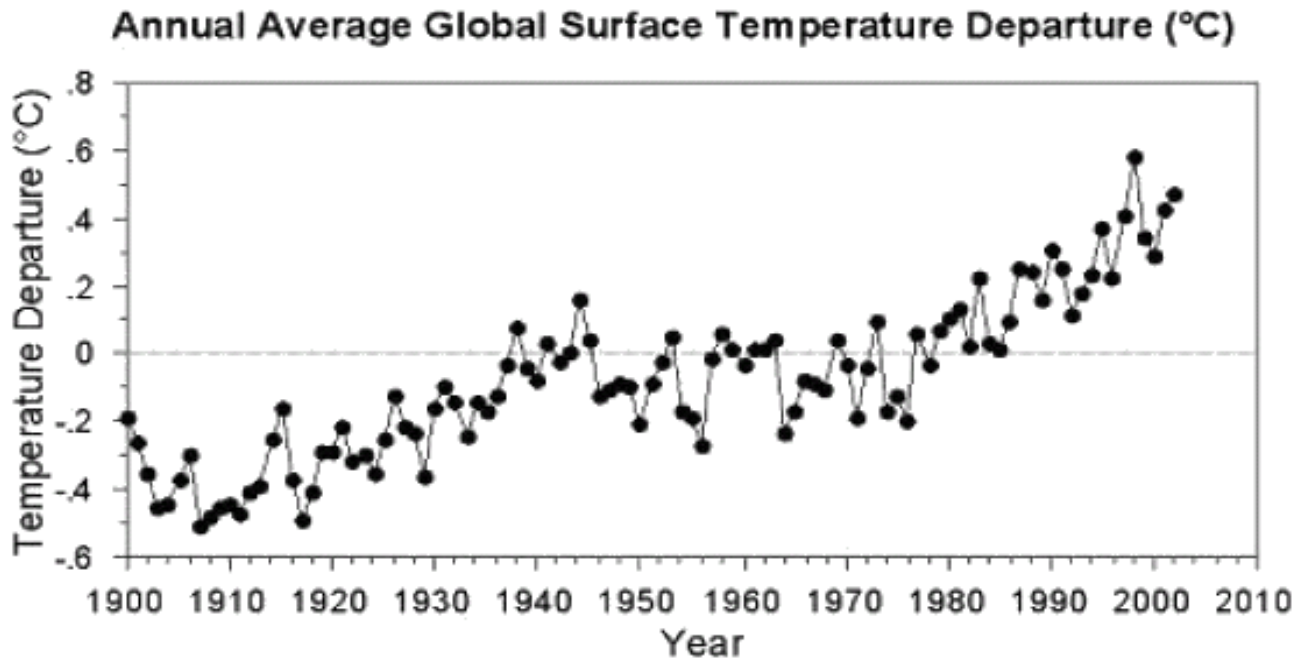
The topic of the climate crisis is one that has motivated me for more than 30 years. Our civilisation is now colliding, rather violently, with the ecological system of the planet. What people call global warming is only a symptom of this underlying collision? How can this be? We are creatures of this earth and it is impossible to think that we could be in the process of destroying its habitability for us. There are instances in nature where living organisms destroy the host, or destroy parts of the environment that are necessary to sustain their existence. It is an open question whether we are part of that aspect of nature's design or some other. But it is a question that we have the capacity to answer and, in order to do so, we must disabuse ourselves of illusions that have been created over a long period of time.



During the darkest days of America's existence and the horrible tragedy of our civil war, our greatest president, Abraham Lincoln, addressed the American people in an effort at unifying the nation. He said: "We must disenthral ourselves, and then we will save our country." For me, the word 'thrall' sounds arcane and odd, but it embodies meaning I believe to be deeply relevant to the circumstances of our current climate crisis. 'Thrall' means mental imprisonment by illusions or misunderstandings, ideology or mistaken beliefs. We are now imprisoned by a form of thrall. Sometimes we hear the metaphor of addiction used in order to try to get at this aspect of the climate crisis or our dependence on oil from unstable parts of the world, but it is thrall - it is a way of distorting the accuracy of our thinking - that we must confront. There is nothing in our prior history or experience that equips us to understand that human civilization is capable of doing significant harm to the ecology of the entire planet. Nothing in our history equips us for it because it has never been possible before. Our relationship as human beings to the planet itself has been radically transformed by dramatic changes in two of our circumstances. Firstly, our numbers.

The population story

In less than a century, we have multiplied by four the number of human beings living on the surface of this planet. It took 60,000 years for us to reach a population of a quarter of a billion, at the time of Julius Caesar. By the time Columbus sailed, it was half a billion and when Benjamin Franklin went back to the colonies from London, the population of the planet had reached one billion. When I was born, around the end of the Second World War, we had just crossed the two billion mark. But in my half century-plus, we have seen the global population go from a little over two billion to six-and-a-half billion. And my generation will see it reach nine billion and more. So, it took 10,000 generations to reach two billion, and then we moved from two billion to nine billion in one human lifetime, we are now undergoing what the economists call a discontinuity - a radical break from a long-established pattern that no longer defines the pattern of the present. Population is actually a success story in the sense that the last couple of decades have seen a more rapid reduction in average family size worldwide than anyone thought was possible. The demographic transition from high birth rates and high death rates to low birth rates and low death rates was produced by a combination of factors: the empowerment of women, the education of girls, the availability of culturally acceptable birth control and, perhaps most importantly, the survival of children. As Julius Nyerere said 40 years ago, in what is now Tanzania, "The most powerful contraceptive in the world is the confidence that your children will survive." Those factors have combined to bring about a dramatic and rapid decline in average family size everywhere, most of all in Europe, Japan and Russia. Population growth rates are at zero in some places and negative in others, such as Japan. And though the population is still exploding in places like Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and north Africa, the average family size has come down dramatically. Population is a success story, but the momentum caused by the rapid increase in this past century is ongoing and drives the formation of this radically new relationship between our species and the planet.



Transformative technologies

The second factor that has transformed our relationship with the planet is the magnification of the power with which we exploit the earth, due to the effectiveness of our technologies. Think of the old human habit of war. The consequences of war, when conducted with bows, arrows and muskets, was one thing, but the introduction of nuclear weapons transformed its consequences to such an extent that we have been forced to completely re-evaluate our vulnerability in the face of conflict. However ingrained war might be in our nature, we must continue to find ways to avoid indulging that habit. We have always exploited the earth for sustenance, but when we do so in an unrestrained manner, with new technologies thousands of times more powerful than the ones we have used throughout most of our existence, the consequences are dramatically transformed. Think of fishing. Small nets and hooks have fed villages for thousands of years. Nets are now sometimes 60 miles long and reach down to the ocean bed. They scour vast areas of the ocean, extracting every living thing in order to get at a few that have commercial value. In the wake of these destructive missions, the oceans find it difficult to recover. The accumulated power of our technologies does not have the dramatic visual effect of a nuclear explosion but, taken altogether, they have magnified

our ability to do harm to the ecological integrity of the planet. Therefore, just as we have begun to rethink the old habit of war, we must rethink the habit of exploiting the earth in an unconstrained way. Why is it that our markets, which have assisted us in almost every effort to allocate resources rationally and to accomplish every human endeavour, have not seen us through this crisis? Because part of the thrall that has interfered with our recognition of the crisis, and our common resolve to confront it, is the assumption that the markets will sort it out. The hard truth is that, without intervention and action, they will not. Markets are one way of assigning, recognising and measuring value. What is value? It is a way of ascribing differential importance to objects or services. The invisible hand of supply and demand in all its various forms has been the most powerful mechanism ever devised for assigning and measuring value. But the way markets recognise value where the environment is concerned is now flawed. The psychologist Abraham Maslow focused on the abstract question of value and is best known for his hierarchy of values. But he is also the author of the aphorism, "If the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem begins to look like a nail." To adapt and apply that metaphor to this question, I would say that, if the only tool we use to designate value is a price tag, then values that are not easy to place a price on begin to look as if they have no value. The examples are sometimes overused: the beauty of a sunset; the clean air that we would like to breathe; the integrity of the earth's climate system. When, in the last century, Lord Keynes endeavoured to create a system of national accounts from which a great deal of business accounting is still derived, he did it in an environment in which the colonial era was waning rapidly, but was still present. Natural resources had been gained easily in great

abundance by European nations all around the world, and perhaps that influenced the design of these accounts. But the accounting and mathematical rigour that was applied to the accounting for capital and, to a lesser extent, the value of labour, was simply not applied to natural resources. Depreciation does not apply in the national accounts. If you are prime minister of a small island nation with a million acres of rainforest and you decide to sell it for harvesting, your accounts would reflect a positive entry in a large sum. Nowhere would you have to account for the fact that you had destroyed the future of your nation.

In a similar manner, we simply do not account for the 'externalities' in the form of environmental destruction. Someone said not long ago: "We are operating planet earth as if it is a business in liquidation." The sustainability movement is grounded on the principle that our generation should operate on terms that do not diminish the chance for the next to have opportunities at least as good as the ones available to us. As a student, I saw the depiction of the electromagnetic spectrum from ultraviolet to infrared and microwaves and everything in between. The visible portion of that spectrum, the part that we can see, is so small compared to the whole, but we assume that what is visible is the important part. My point is that the market system now focuses on a tiny slice of reality and feels validated because almost all other market participants focus on the same quarterly reports, annual reports, accounting forms and the rest. But like the island nation that has destroyed its own future, if these reports exclude any accounting for the destructive aspects of these activities, surprises can be in store. We must disenthral ourselves from the destructive activities that are associated with the way we now exploit the earth for our sustenance.

A shared moral purpose

I want to conclude by highlighting what some people view as a cliché. The Chinese express the concept of 'crisis' by using two symbols in combination: the first by itself indicates danger; and the second in isolation means opportunity. In English, when we say 'crisis', we convey and understand the danger, but we don't always accept that there is great opportunity. This climate crisis - which is now so dangerous that leading scientists are saying we may have as little as 10 years before we reach a point of no return - confronts us with more danger than any in the history of civilisation, but it also presents us with a greater opportunity than any we have ever had. This opportunity is not just for new jobs and new businesses, new technologies and new profits, but a much larger opportunity. This is a shared moral purpose, an opportunity to experience what few generations have ever had the privilege of knowing: an ability to rise together to address a challenge that is worthy of our best efforts, one that can inspire us to transcend our limits, as some past generations have. My parents were part of what in America is sometimes called the greatest generation. The generation that joined their British counterparts to rise to the challenge of defeating fascism in Europe and in the Pacific simultaneously, at great expense and effort. When they had won the famous victory, they had gained the vision and moral authority to create the Marshall Plan and to create the United Nations, of which the US and the UK are among the five permanent members. This laid the foundations for a half century of peace and prosperity. It is unimaginable in 2006 that American taxpayers could, at this moment, be induced to a kind of tax increase associated with what was then mandatory for the Marshall Plan. But that generation willingly - enthusiastically - said "Yes!" because they had transcended their notion of themselves. They had gained the moral authority.

Omar Bradley, one of the Allied generals, known as the 'GIs' General' in my country, said in 1947: "It is time we steered by the stars and not by the lights of each passing ship." At the dawn of the 21st century our world is experiencing multiple crises masquerading as political problems: there are 20 million AIDS orphans in Africa alone; India has replaced South Africa as the epicentre of the crisis of HIV/AIDS; tens of millions are dying from easily preventable diseases; famine and starvation are still widespread despite being preventable; and chronic civil wars are being fought by child soldiers. All this in a world in which we enjoy so much and are so privileged. These are not political problems - they are moral imperatives. But the most serious problem of all, which overlaps with the others, is the climate crisis, because it threatens our future as a civilisation. As we recognise the crisis and then rise to meet it, we too will gain vision and moral authority, and create the opportunity to do things we cannot now do. The challenge is to rally our fellow citizens, in our respective countries and around the world, to meet these other crises with similar resolve and lay down the foundation for a world that our children deserve.

Albert Al' Gore is an American politician, businessman and environmentalist who served as the 45th US Vice President from 1993 - 2001. He was the Democratic Party nominee in the 2000 US Presidential election.

Source: RSA Journal October 2006 reproduced by Gambhir Watts FRSA

From Incredible to Credible



I was a bit surprised when I was asked to participate in this programme because I am not sure how qualified I am to inaugurate a marketing summit, filled with brand managers and marketing experts. But I thought I would address this with a different theme — the theme of the summit "Marketing in a Global World". Many years ago we would not have thought of it.

I came across an article in the New York Times sometime ago and the title of the article was the "Myth of New India", which essentially sought to highlight serious gaps that need to be addressed in India's social and physical infrastructure. Reading the article, I was a bit disappointed because it looked as if India was being put back into the same mould of the past. I was thinking over it. I thought that maybe it is good because many years ago the New York Times would not have even taken notice of India. Now, they are taking notice of India. And these great paradigm shifts are taking place, not only in India but in the world. Now, we are referring to an ecosystem not in terms of an ecological system but in terms of global economic dynamics. I remember when I was the environment minister; I used to speak very often about the need for an all-inclusive ecosystem. Today, many years down the road, I am talking of a different ecosystem, and this ecosystem has a new connotation. When we are today saying that we have to build a brand, the most dramatic change that comes to my mind is the WTO (World Trade Organization). In the early 90s, we were sceptical about the WTO. We were skeptical about engaging with the global economy. But over the past five years, as we are every day getting more and more globally competitive, we are becoming the champions of globalization. The western countries - the United States and the European Union - had the mantra of globalization. Now we find we are becoming a champion of globalization because we want the rules of the game and global trade to be fair because we are globally competitive.

When India moves on to become more and more globally competitive, how do we brand India? There was a dilemma. We have the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF). We were grappling with the issue of how India should be branded. We did this for Davos. We had the "India Everywhere" campaign — a government-private sector partnership. That was very well done by the IBEF.

How we brand India was a dilemma one-and-a-half years ago when I was at a meeting at the IBEF. I said, we have this Ministry of Tourism, big posters and advertisements, saying "Incredible India". I said we have got to be "Credible India". And there is a dichotomy that, on the one hand, we are saying it is "Incredible India". Of course we are incredible India. But, on the other hand, one of our greatest trump cards — because of our institutions, because of our democracy and so on and so forth — is that we are credible India. So when people in the West or the US think of India, they do not just think about going to the national park but also going to the National Stock Exchange. And it is this "Credible India" which is going to find our place in the world. Why? As investment opportunities become more and more comparative, as the consumer base becomes more and more comparative, the basics of a brand will be the credibility of the brand. When you are talking about building a brand for India, you are talking about building a credible brand. What are the ingredients for that? They are our laws, our institutions, and our implementation of the laws. When we brought in, last year, the patent laws, this was very essential because people looked at India and said they don't respect intellectual property. Now even China has a very good intellectual property law. But in China you can buy a counterfeit Rolex watch; in India you cannot. It is because of the way we go about it. And that is the message we want to give. I have talked to many consumer brands (companies). They said in India we respect intellectual property. In India you cannot go and find a consumer brand which is counterfeit. But in other parts of Asia you can. The most important point is the credibility in building that brand and the credibility in the ingredients of that brand.

As we move on, when India is more and more on the radar screen as an investment destination, India is not competing based on our consumer base, though we have the great advantage of our consumer base. We compare ourselves. What is this comparative analysis? The comparative analysis is with Thailand, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. And I was surprised that Bangladesh supplies more to Wal-Mart today. In the past six months, Bangladesh has supplied more to Wal-Mart than China. That is because in textiles Bangladesh has built a good brand. It is not just in terms of names that the Chinese have built up their brand. They have built it up in terms of their manufacturing base, like we have done in IT (information technology).

Here, I think, lies our greatest challenge. While we have a great strength in our knowledge base, we have to build

upon our manufacturing base. Services represent 53 per cent of our GDP. Manufacturing represents only 17 per cent. Manufacturing in Malaysia enjoys a 28 per cent share. If we have to be a manufacturing base, we have to build our brand. We have already built up our brand in the knowledge sector. The world recognizes us. But BPO is the story of the past. The other day I was in Chennai, setting targets — for EPO (Engineering Process Outsourcing), KPO (Knowledge Process Outsourcing).

What is going to be the economic architecture in the next two decades? I believe, one of the strongest drivers of this economic architecture is going to be our demographics. We have a large young population and a large workforce — 60 per cent of our population of 1 billion is less than 25 of age. We have 400 million people in the age group 18-35. Which other country can say that? You have an ageing population in Japan, Korea, Europe, and the US. There they are going to be the pensioners. In India, we are going to have savers and spenders. That is the big difference. Even China will have a much older population. It is said that China will grow old before it will grow rich.

In this shaping up of the new economic architecture of the future, India is going to play the key role. And that is where we have to decide what kind of brand we want to build. It is not the brand only in the IT sector. Today we are seeing big investors coming in; 70 per cent of our FDI (foreign direct investment) is coming in our manufacturing sector. The challenge for us is: how do we give our large workforce employment in the context of other countries which have a shrinking workforce.

I was telling this to (people in) Japan. The technology and innovation of Japan can only give some boost if it can be converted into a competitive product. To convert it into a competitive product, you need a workforce. If you are not going to have a workforce, your technology and innovation are not going to lead to a globally competitive product. So the centre of gravity is shifting from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean. And, as the centre of gravity shifts, the new rules of the game have to be determined. In India we have to look at the future not with the past as a model because the past for India was very different. We have to simulate the future. And after simulating the future, we have to move towards building the brand. What is the brand we need for our products? What is the brand we need for India? And it is this which will encompass our entire ecosystem. People look at India today as a credible country and as a credible investment destination. We are not starting from scratch. The advantage is something has happened by design, but a lot has also happened by default. I remember, when we started our reform process, it happened because we had mortgaged our gold in 1991. But India has established to the world that reforms of the India brand works. We had no bubble to burst. In the reform process you found in South America and Central America, the bubble burst. In Asia you had South Asian crises. For 15 years we have moved on. And the world recognizes that. I remember Mr. (Lewis Thompson) Preston, Chairman of the World Bank, telling me in 1993 that India will never make it. It is going to be a basket case because your reforms are just not going to work. I said we are going to have India-specific reforms. Our reforms are also a brand today. Countries recognize this. True, you can say that we did not move fast enough. But India is a paradox; India is a great and complex country. And that is what we have got to recognize.

We have found countries with complexity and paradox breaking up. The Soviet Union has broken up. We have seen what has happened in Eastern Europe. But India has sustained itself because we have had our own brand. When you tell the Americans that we have achieved our green revolution with the bullock cart not the tractor, they think there is something wrong somewhere. How can India have an agriculture revolution with a bullock cart and not a tractor? But that is the way we did it. That is why we are a net exporter of food grain. One of the most striking brands we put together is "India the Fastest Growing Free Market Democracy". It conveys that we are a free market economy; China is not. It conveys we are a democracy; some other countries may not be. So it conveys we are operating under the rule of law. We are operating with institutions. Many times people talk about politics in India. I said in my speech and I say it again, in 15 years we have had six governments, five prime ministers, one direction, one economic policy and 8 per cent growth. That is India's brand and this is the brand I urge you all to look at. As companies and corporate all over the world are looking out, reaching out, it is the way to reach out, to look for new brands for your products and for your country.

The text of the speech of Union Commence & Industrial Minister Kamal Nath at the CII Marketing Summit, Held in New Delhi in August 2006.

Source: India Now— A perspective Vol 3. Issue 3 ; IBEF - India Brand Equity Foundation

The Melbourne Cup



The Melbourne Cup is Australia's major annual thoroughbred horse race. Billed as The race that stops a nation, it is for three-year-olds and over, and covers a distance of 3200 metres. The event has been held on the first Tuesday in November since 1861 by the Victoria Racing Club, on the Flemington Racecourse in Melbourne. It is generally regarded as the most prestigious "two-mile" handicap in the world. The race was originally held over two miles, about 3,218 metres, but following Australia's adoption of the metric system in 1972 the current distance of 3200 metres was adopted. This reduced the distance by 61ft 6in, and Rain Lover's 1968 race record of 3min.19.1sec was accordingly adjusted to 3min.17.9sec. The present record holder is the 1990 winner Kingston Rule with a time of 3min 16.3sec.

The event is one of the most popular spectator events in Australia, with over 110,000 people, some dressed in traditional formal raceday wear and others in all manner of exotic and amusing costumes, attending the race. In Melbourne it is the reason for a Public Holiday and is considered the biggest tourist attraction in its home state of Victoria. Seventeen horses contested the first Melbourne Cup in 1861, racing for a gold watch and 170 pounds cash. It has been said that the winner, Archer, walked 800km to the course from Nowra, New South Wales, but it is possible he travelled by ship. A crowd of 4000 watched the race, although it has been suggested this was less than expected because of news reaching Melbourne of the death of explorers Burke and Wills.

Archer won again the following year, but because the owner's nomination form arrived late the next year, Archer was unable to contest a third cup. Many sympathetic owners boycotted the race which started with only seven horses, the smallest number in the history of the cup. The race has undergone several alterations over the past decade, the most visible being the arrival of many foreign horses to contest the race in the last decade (notwithstanding the many winners from New Zealand including the famous Phar Lap. Most have failed to cope with the conditions, with only Irish trainer Dermott Weld successful in 1993 with Vintage Crop and 2002 with Media Puzzle. The attraction for foreigners to compete, however, was the far less visible change to the new "quality handicap" weighting system.

The 2001 the Melbourne Cup was won by New Zealand mare Ethereal, trained by Sheila Laxon, the first woman to formally train a Melbourne Cup winner. She also won the Caulfield Cup, a 2400 metre race also held in Melbourne, and therefore has won the "Cups Double". In 2004 Makybe Diva became the first mare to win consecutive cups, and also the first horse to win twice with different trainers, after David Hall moved to Hong Kong and transferred her to the Lee Freedman stables.



The 2005 Melbourne Cup was held before a crowd of 106,479. Makybe Diva made history by becoming the only horse to win three in a row. Trainer Lee Freedman said after the race, "Go and find the youngest child on the course,

because that's the only person here who will have a chance of seeing this happen again in their lifetime."

The 2006 Melbourne Cup winners were two Japanese horses that have run first and second Delta Blues won in a photo finish from Pop Rock, with Maybe Better coming in third.

Source : www.melbournecup.com.au

- A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.
- Mutual courtesy and respect was the foundation of culture.
- No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive

- Mahatma Gandhi

Music Therapy for Senile Dementia

Music therapy holds promise for many of those who are affected by age-related disorders. It is being recommended as an effective cure not only for memory loss, but also for working with people who have movement disorders, especially Parkinson's.

Research at Beth Abraham Hospital shows that Parkinson's patients regained some ability to organise and perform movements that were lost due to the disease. It was also found that for such results, it is necessary that the music selected for them must evoke a response in each.

To make them move physically or walk, the rhythm must be powerful and pro-active.

While prescribing music, normally therapists go for such genre which is familiar to the patients, based on their taste and preference.

Normally, music therapists study such patients to ascertain their likes and dislikes in music before prescribing an appropriate music dose for them. However, recent research by Dr. Giovanni Frisoni and his team at the National Centre for Research and Care of Alzheimer's Disease, Bersica would reveal that people suffering from dementia could be an exception to this rule, as they sometimes acquire new and even unexpected tastes -and that too all of a sudden.

As dementia is characterised by loss of reasoning abilities, language skills and memory, no reason could be attributed to this sudden transformation in them. These patients started liking those musical forms which they used to hate when they were young!

A 68 year-old lawyer who used to like only classical music in his youth, started developing an 'ear' for pop music, which he used to call as 'mere noise'. A 73 year-old lady, who had developed apathy in her children also started showing interest in pop music, which her granddaughter was learning.

According to Dr Frisoni, this change of behaviour could be due to various reasons. Primarily, this could be due to change in one's attitude toward novelty. For those who are above 60, pop music can be considered novel. Secondly, certain portion of the brain- in such people- could be damaged affecting their perception in pitch, timbre, rhythm and acquaintance.

Another study by neurologists at the University of California-Los Angeles (1998) reported that dementia can bring out artistic talents in people who never had them before.

In that study, it was observed that patients developed artistic talents, including music and drawing, which flourished while the dementia worsened. This indicates that as part of medical treatment, the dementia-affected can be encouraged to learn or play a musical instrument if necessary with the help of a therapist.

However, in working with people affected by dementia, a caution has to be exercised as certain types of music can cause agitation in them. Music can bring out both positive and negative reactions. One should endeavour to play those who bring back positive results in such patients. A close observation by therapists while music is played is, therefore, an important requirement in such cases

Source: Bhavan's Journal October 15 2006

- Contributed by: T. V. Sairam

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Vratas and Utsavas - P. N. Santhanagopal

The line that divides Vratas on the one hand, and festivals and utsavas on the other hand, is extremely thin. Vratas are basically religious in nature. All have elements of festivities. Dr. P. V. Kane in his monumental work on Dharma Sastras has listed an incredible 1257 Vratas that include festivals and utsavas. Though his list is perhaps the largest one prepared in English, there are many more that are listed in compilations in other Indian languages. A Vrata or a festival or an utsava is a form of prayer. The purpose is purely Kamyā or desire driven. It is observed as a fast, simple or elaborate worship, observance of celibacy and being truthful. They are frankly materialistic in their objective. They emerge out of craving for possessions. The Agni Purana describes that these are observed for securing fruits of Dharma in the form of progeny, wealth, beauty, good fortune, virtues, fame, learning, wealth, purity, enjoyment of pleasures, heaven and Moksha.

The Kalpataru goes one step further. It eulogises those observances as means that can secure entry into Brahmhaloka, Siva Loka or Vaikunta and enjoy all pleasures and triumph in all endeavors. The following are some of the important Vratas and festivals that are observed in various parts of India. In the month of **Chaitra** which corresponds to the period from March 20 to April 20 of the Gregorian calendar, Chaitra Pratipad and Sri Rama Navami are the important religious events.

Chaitra Pratipada is worship of the Lord of the year as Chaitra is the first among the twelve months of the Saka era. People have Abhyanga Snana or oil bath and listen to the reading of the Panchang or Almanac. People erect a pole with a pot tied at the top with a piece of silk. Flowers are offered to the pole and neem leaves are eaten.

Sri Rama Navami, the 9th day of Sukhla Paksha of the month of Chaitra is the day when Lord Sri Rama was born. This day is celebrated with elaborate poojas, worship, and gaiety through out the country. It is one of the most important days of worship. During the month of Vaisakha that follows, which corresponds to the period from April 21 to May 21, Akshaya Thrithiya and Parasu Rama Jayanti are the important events.



Rama Navami

Akshaya Tritiya is the Thrithiya of the Sukhla Paksha of the month of Vaisakha. It is a most sacred day. It is an age old belief that anything that is gifted away returns magnified many times more. It is also considered to be auspicious to buy gold and other valuables on this day which is again "prompted by the belief that anything acquired on this day multiplies in the course of the year. It is called Akshaya because the returns are limitless or Akshaya.

Parasurama Jayanti is also the Thrithiya of Sukhla Paksha of the month of Vaisakha when Lord Parasurama, believed to be an incarnation of Lord Maha Vishnu, was born to Renuka and Maharishi Jamadagni. He was born under the star Punarvasu, when six planets were exalted and Rahu was in the Mithuna Rasi. Worship of Parasurama is mainly observed in the Southern States.



Dasara Procession

During the month of **Jyesta** which corresponds to the period from May 22 to June 21, Dasahara and Savitri Vrata or Vata Savitri Vrata as it is more popularly known, are observed. **Dasahara** is so called because its observance is believed to destroy ten major sins. It is believed that Mother Ganga descended on the Dasami of Sukhla Paksha of the month of Jyesta. Taking bath in Ganga on this day is believed to be most auspicious. Savitri Vrata or Vata **Savitri Vrata** falls on the full moon day of the month. Observance of this Vrata is believed to increase the longevity of the observant's husband. Ladies sprinkle water on the Vata Vriksha, wind cotton thread around the tree and offer prayers. Prayers are offered to Savitri Devi seeking good looks, good name, prosperity and freedom from widowhood. Worship is also offered to Yama and Narada.

During the month of **Ashada** corresponding to the period from June 22 to July 22, Ashada Ekadasi, which is the Sukhla Ekadasi of the month, is observed. It is believed that Lord Vishnu begins his sleep on this day and awakens only on the Sukhla Ekadasi of Kartika. The commencement of His sleep is called Sayani. During the month of Bhadrapada the Lord turns on his side and this is known as Parivarthini Ekadasi. His day of awakening is known as Prabhodini Ekadasi.

Ashada Sukhla Ekadasi or Dwadasi or Purnima, is the day when the observance of Chaturmasya starts and concludes on the Sukhla Dwadasi of the month of Kartika. Chaturmasya Vrata is observed during the present times only by acharyas of Mutts. During the month of **Shravana**, which corresponds to the period from July 23 to

August 22, **Nagpanchami** which falls on the 5th day of the Sukhla paksha of the month is observed. On this day snakes are worshipped. In the South and the Bangal people also offer worships to Manasa Devi who is believed to protect people from the effects of snake bite.



Nagpanchami

On the full moon day of Shravana, **Raksha Bandhan** is celebrated with enthusiasm. Popularly, sisters tie an amulet around the wrists of their brothers. In olden days an amulet containing rice grains, mustard seeds tied with silk and gold threads, used to be tied around the wrist. It was believed that Indrani tied such an amulet around the wrist of her husband Indra which helped him to win his fight with the asuras. In the west coast people depending upon the sea for a living, Hindus, Muslims and also Parsis, offer flowers and coconuts to the Lord, praying to Him to make their voyages over the sea safe. The eighth day of the Krishna Paksha of Sravana is celebrated throughout the country as the birthday of Lord Sri Krishna. It is known as **Sri Krishna Janma Astami**.



Ganesha Chaturthi

During the month of **Bhadrapada**, corresponding to the period from August 23 to September 22, ladies observe **Hartalika Vrata** on the Thritiya of Sukhla Paksha. On this day ladies have abhyanga snana, wear silk clothes, offer prayers to Mother Uma and Lord Siva and offer presents in wicker baskets. The month also sees observance of **Ganesha Chaturthi**, which falls on the fourth day of Sukhla Paksha of the month of Bhadrapada. This utsava is observed with piety and festivity throughout the country. On the 5th day of Sukhla Paksha, **Rishi Panchami Vrata** is also observed. The Sapta Rishis and their wives are worshipped on this day. Observance of this Vrata is believed to nullify effects of sins of all. However it began to be observed only by ladies.

Anantha Chaturdasi which falls on the fourteenth day of Sukhla Paksha is popularly the day on which the idols of Lord Ganesha, installed on the Chaturthi day, are immersed in the sea. It is also the day of worship of Lord Hari and Lord Anantha. This is an individual observance of worship and is not considered to be a festival. The month of **Asvina**, corresponding to the period from September 23 to

October 22, is the month of **Navaratri**. It commences on the prathama or first day of Sukhla Paksha and is celebrated for nine days. Devi or Durga is worshipped and the festival is also known as Durgotsava. Navaratri is also celebrated in some parts of the country during the Sukhla Paksha of the month of Chaitra.

The tenth day is celebrated as **Vijaya Dasami**. This day is considered to be one of the three most auspicious days of the entire year. (The other two are Prathama of Sukhla Paksha of the month of Chaitra and Prathama of Sukhla Paksha of the month of Kartika). Commencement of Studies or Vidyarambha is done on the Vijaya Dasami Day. **Diwali or Deepavali**, the festival of joy and splendour and mirth is actually a group of independent festivities spread over five days, commencing from the Thrayodasi or the thirteenth day of Krishna Paksha in the month of Asvina. These are: worship of wealth, celebration of Lord Vishnu's triumph as Sri Krishna over Narakasura, worship of Mother Lakshmi, Victory of Lord Krishna as Vamana over Bali and exchange of greetings and affection between brothers and sisters.

During the month of **Kartika**, corresponding to the period from October 23 to November 21, the first day of the Sukhla Paksha is considered to be one of the most auspicious days of the year. Oil bath is taken and Bali is worshipped. Dwitiya of Sukhla Paksha of Kartika is called **Yama Dwitiya** and brothers greet their sisters on this day. Yama's Sister Yamuna is believed to have entertained her brother on this day.

During the month of **Agrahayana** corresponding to the period from November 22 upto December 22, one does not come across observance of any vrata, utsava or festival. During the month of **Pausa** corresponding to December 22 upto January 20, Makara Sakranti or commencement of Utarayana occurs. It happens when the sun leaves Dhanu Rasi and enters the Rasi of Makara.

In the month of **Magha** corresponding to the period from January 21 upto February 15, the Chaturdasi thithi of the Krishn Paksha is the sacred **Maha Siva Ratri day**. Though the chaturdasi of dark half of every month is observed as Siva Ratri, the Siva Ratri of the month of Magha is considered to be most sacred and hence is known as Maha Siva Ratri. During the month of **Phalguna**, corresponding to the period from February 20 upto March 21, on the day of the full moon, is celebrated the festival of Holika or Holi.

Ramadan: Season of Piety



The Islamic holy month of Ramadan begins marking the onset of 30 days of fasting from dawn to dusk and spiritual communion with God for the world's one billion Muslims. The fast during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islamic faith. Other mandatory duties a Muslim has been called upon to perform are to stand witness to faith (verbal admission of faith in Allah and the prophethood of Mohammad), five times namaz everyday, zakat or payment of 2.5 per cent of accumulated savings or wealth or 10 per cent of the annual agriculture produce for the underprivileged people and a pilgrimage to Mecca-Madina (Haj) at least once in a lifetime.

The fast of Islam is not an attempt to enforce religious asceticism upon the faithful, but an effort to unite the religious community through a common awareness of suffering and denial. Ramadan denotes the beginning of the Prophet Mohammad's Divine mission through the revelations sent down by God through the angel, Gabriel, which began in the 610 A.D.

But fasting became obligatory only after the Prophet had moved to Madina. The fasting of Ramadan places a Muslim in a position whereby he gets attuned to continuous remembrance of God because of his thirst and hunger. It so charges a common Muslim with piety that he or she, besides the necessary abstinence from food, drink and sex, comes to avoid even common evils such as lying, backbiting and character assassination.

The Ramadan fast lasts approximately two hours before sunrise until sunset. During this time, Muslims may not eat, drink or smoke. Failure to observe the fast is a heinous sin, but some categories of people are exempted. The Quran being the gift of Ramadan, Muslims are advised to read it from cover to cover at least once during the month. This is mostly done through the special namaz of Taraweeh, nearly two hours after sunset. The Prophet has also recommended that devout Muslims should spend the last 10 days in prayers and meditation in the mosque and avoid all worldly dealings during this period. This practice is termed Itikaf. Mostly one person in a locality is enjoined to perform this. The worship on the night of destiny brings forgiveness and it is worth more than worshipping for one thousand nights. At the end of the month of fasting comes Id-ul-fitr, an event of mammoth rejoicing and relief. Id-ul-fitr, (festival of charity) marks the culmination of the sacred month.



Islam has commanded that a major festival like Id-ul-fitr, psychologically reserved for merriment, should be aptly engaged to meet the needs of fellowmen. In fact, one of the factors behind the Ramzan fasting is the need to appreciate the hunger and thirst of the poor so that we can be helpful to them. Islam ordains one fortieth of a person's assets, one tenth of the agricultural produce (if the land is irrigated by rains) and one twentieth (if the land is irrigated by man-made systems) to be compulsorily spent on the poor annually. Even women have to spend one fortieth value of their gold and silver (on attainment of limit) on the poor annually. This poor rate is known as Zakath. The object of Islamic charity aims at raising the living condition of the poor to the point of realistically admitting them into the brotherhood of mankind. (from The Hindu: Speaks on Religious Values)

Source: "The Hindu speaks on religious values"
Reprinted in the Bhavan's Journal November 15 2004

GURU NANAK

November 5, 2006 was the 537th birth-anniversary of Guru Nanak, a Spiritual Teacher & the Founder of Sikhism. This brief article describes his teachings.



Guru Nanak Founder of Sikhism - Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism, was born in Punjab, an area located in Northern India and now in Pakistan. After a revelatory experience at the age of 37, Guru Nanak traveled extensively to spread his word. Guru Nanak's message was simple. It was: There is one God and one human race. He was a poet, a mystic, a philosopher, and a singer. His philosophy centered on belief in one God for all of creation, a God that is formless, omnipresent, compassionate, and attainable through prayer, humility, service, meditation, and virtuous living. He denounced ritualism, discrimination against women and against those of lower socioeconomic status. This philosophy became the foundation of Sikhism which is the fifth largest religion in the world. *Guru* is a term, used in reverence, for the supreme teacher in the Sikh tradition.

Nanak's followers became known as Sikhs. *Sikh* means seeker of truth or disciple.

Guru Nanak's Teachings - The three basic tenets of Guru Nanak's teachings are (1) "Naam Japo" - Constant meditation on God's name, (2) "Kirat Karo" - Earning livelihood through honest means, and (3) "Wand Chakko" - Sharing one's earnings out of love and compassion for others. Guru Nanak taught that human life is an opportunity for spiritual union with the Supreme Being; that such stage of enlightenment can be achieved by God's Grace. Any person of whatever intellectual or economic level may become enlightened through a life of single-minded devotion to God. As all creation has the same origin and end, humans must live in harmony with God's creation by conducting themselves through life with love, forgiveness, compassion, simplicity, and justice.

Equality - Guru Nanak preached total equality for all people of whatever race or gender. He denounced the idea that spirituality was only for those of the male gender. He perceived that there could be no enduring democratic culture unless it was grounded in unreserved recognition of the full equality of woman with man. Guru Nanak instituted three practices to promote equality and alleviate suffering. *Sangat* was an invitation to people of all backgrounds to meditate and pray together. Irrespective of their social background, race or religion, people were asked to sit and eat together to create a sense of equality, called *Pangat*. He also started a tradition of free distribution of food to rich and poor alike, termed *Langar*. These customs instituted by Guru Nanak continue to be observed by Sikh communities throughout the world. He preached that one of the requisites for the betterment of individuals was *Sadh-Sangat* (keeping the company of spiritually-oriented persons), and righteous conduct towards one's neighbors.

Humility - Guru Nanak repeatedly emphasized humility. He said, "This body is the field, the mind the ploughman, modesty the irrigating channel, contentment the leveler. Pulverize the crust of pride into true humility, sow the seed of love of God and Divinity will flourish."

Religion of the household - Guru Nanak's religion is for the householder. He was a teacher of the positive approach and his teachings are a call to life. He did not accept the idea of retreating from family and relatives in search of God. He strongly disapproved of a life of withdrawal and encouraged full participation in family and workday life, and responsibility in society as the framework within which to seek God. According to him salvation and spiritual enlightenment is not incompatible with joy, laughing, eating, playing, and dressing well.

Service - There can be no understating the importance of love and service in Guru Nanak's teachings. According to his doctrine, the Beloved is within all people and therefore, serving people is serving God.

He encouraged his followers to live normal, compassionate lives in tandem with the larger society. *seva* (service to the wider community) and volunteerism, not just within the Sikh community but throughout the community of man, is a key goal set for all Sikhs.

Respect for all faiths - Guru Nanak was opposed to any exclusive claim on spiritual truth. This indicates a pluralistic acceptance of the legitimacy of all faiths, and therefore, an acceptance of all groups and individuals. He did not attempt to convert the followers of other faiths, but rather urged them to rediscover the internal significance of their own beliefs and rituals, not forsaking their chosen paths. He collected the hymns of spiritual men of other faiths and some of whom were shunned by society because of their caste and social status and included them in the Scriptures for his own followers. This collection later formed the Sikh scriptures. Interfaith dialogue and cooperation has been a part of Sikhism since Guru Nanak's time. Guru Nanak's groundbreaking example of interfaith acceptance 500 years ago is even more resoundingly pertinent in a world fragmented by religious strife. He showed that respect, and not just tolerance, for those of other faiths is the cornerstone of a democratic society.

Ardas, the prayer recited at the end of Sikh religious services, among other messages, requests May the whole world prosper by your Grace.

Overview - Guru Nanak's teachings are simple and straightforward. His sole mission was the spiritual revival of mankind in the modern world. Equality, liberty, social justice, love and compassion for all, and community service are the cornerstones of his message. Guru Nanak's status is that of a universal leader whose teachings offer the entire human race the serenity that gives spiritual strength to face the sufferings of this world by accepting them with calmness, love, and devotion, and by working to alleviate them.

Some Sayings of Guru Nanak -

Those who know one God and shun duality are merged in God.

Acts of kindness, virtue, and inner enthusiasm in serving others results in mind's immersion in God.

Spiritual wisdom comes from inner searching. It is diminished by arguments and competition.

When you taste the ultimate nectar of God (love and God's presence in your heart) all vice and negativity crumble to dust.

True education makes one a benevolent and compassionate person.

When I become Yours, O Lord, the whole world I see as mine.

When ego departs, You manifest and I see everything connected in You.

It is useless to ask for happiness all the time;

Happiness and sadness are outer garments of each person's life.

These spiritual sayings are from the Sikh Scriptures "Guru Granth Sahib". During their own lifetimes, Guru Nanak and his successors compiled their sacred poetic devotional compositions as part of the Sikh scripture.



Contributed by Harmohan Singh Walia



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A Festival that Reflects the Nation's Psyche

Deepavali, another name for Diwali, literally means a row of lights. This annual festival is verily the only one which is observed by almost all communities in the country including the Muslims of Lucknow and the Parsis of Surat. It has a universal appeal, verily subscribing to the Indian secular traditions built over millennia without proclaiming the ideal from road corners and rooftops. World over, the harvest season is an important occasion for rejoicing in all agrarian societies. Harvest usually implies prosperity. Eventually celebration of this prosperity, and paying obeisance to this renewal of life, got linked to the local legends and mythologies, giving birth to festivities with religious fervour. Deepavali is observed in the month of Karthika (October-November) and coincides with the harvest of the Kharif crop. It is in honour of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth; in some parts in India, the business community celebrates its New Year on this day. It is the opening of the accounting year for businessmen.



Several legends are associated with this festival. One of them narrates the destruction of Narakasura by Lord Krishna. In western and southern India this is celebrated as Naraka Chaturdasi day. This is, however, not known in the North or the East. Parts of North India celebrate the occasion as Rama's triumphant return to Ayodhya after his victory over Ravana of Lanka. There are yet others who say that when Lord Vishnu, in the form of Vamana, had sent the demon King Bali to the nether world, Goddess Lakshmi was also freed along with the others who had been held captive by the demon king. This king, we are told, also had a long and happy reign. To propitiate the god he performed a yagna, which was so successful that it made the gods uncomfortable; hence taking advantage of King Bali's generosity and hospitality, the gods lost no time in sending him to hell.

Deepavali is equally auspicious for the Sikhs as it is on that day that Guru Hargobind Singh was freed from the Mughal prison. The legendary Vikramaditya of Ujjain is believed to have been crowned as King on this day, thus marking the start of the era named after him. Kanchi Paramacharya conveys the message of Diwali in the following enlightening words: "In the early hours of the dawn of the day preceding the new moon day - Chaturdasi -when the Sun is in the Thula Rasi (Libra) of the Zodiac, water anywhere in the world is Ganga and all oil becomes saturated with the auspicious presence of Goddess Mahalakshmi. Everyone from the simplest gipsy to the proudest magnate, from the innocent to the serene saints should take a bath with oil and water and be happy, illuminating every nook and corner with strings of light". This is the boon prayed by a mother when her son Naraka, literally a hell to the world at large, was being killed by Lord Krishna. "Let the happiness of every creature of the world be the compensation for the grief caused to me by the death of my son", was the prayer of that bereaved mother. The dying son also prayed to the same effect.

Deepavali outweighs every festival because of its having emanated from two hearts in which the happiness of the world at large out weighed the highest pitch of personal tragedy. Nothing can be nobler than this last wish of the dying demon, and more so, the prayer of a bereaved mother. Deepavali stands as a monument of a high ideal of realising that the self should be discarded for universal welfare and that any calamity caused by Bhagavan, far from being a cause of grief, should be taken in a mood of ecstasy, as emerging from the supreme grace of the All-Merciful God. These festivals, many in number, are a welcome break from the monotony of daily life, and largely help to foster the feeling of harmony and benevolence. Sharing of joy through the exchange of good food, new clothes, acts as a cementing factor for an otherwise self centered lifestyle of today, be it in the cities, or villages, the excitement and joy knows no bounds, and the air of love and joy pervades society and country. Thus the festival becomes auspicious for several reasons and people vie with one another to celebrate it with pomp and eclat. Earthen lamps or, in some cases, candles are lit to illumine houses. Even markets, streets and public places are decked with glittering lamps. People wearing new attire exchange greetings and sweets with their relatives and friends. Some, including women, especially in parts of Karnataka, indulge in the play of dice all through the night. India with its colorful store of legends and an equally rich heritage, has many such festivals to celebrate round the year. These festivals transcend the barriers of religion and caste as they are linked to the change of seasons. Over a period of time local legends have integrated into the community psyche and the celebrations represent the victory of good over evil.

Source: Bhavan's Journal November 15 2004
-Contributed by M.V. Kamath

Saving Water - the Gandhian way



“Mahatma Gandhi did not set out to evolve a philosophy of life or formulate a system of beliefs or ideals. He had probably neither the inclination nor the time to do so. He had, however, firm faith in truth and ahimsa, and the practical application of these to problems which confronted him may be said to constitute his teachings and philosophy” observed Dr Rajindra Prasad, the first President of the Independent India.

Gandhiji first realized the virtue of truth and ahimsa at a very early age, probably even earlier than the beginning of his teen years and, perhaps, his firm faith in truth was established then. When Gandhiji was 15 (1884), he had removed a bit of gold from his brother’s armlet to clear a small debt of his brother. He felt so mortified about his act that he decided to make a confession to his father. He wrote it on a slip of paper and personally handed it to his father. Gandhiji recalled in his

autobiography: “In this note not only did I confess my guilt, but I asked adequate punishment for it, and closed with a request to him not to punish himself for my offence. I also pledged myself never to steal in future.” One of the sentences in the confession was: “So, father, your son is now, in your eyes, no better than a common thief.” The incident left a lasting mark on his mind. In his own words, ‘it was an object-lesson to him in the power of ahimsa.’

Gandhiji was given a send-off by his fellow students of the Alfred High School, Rajkot on 4 July 1888 (in the nineteenth year of his age), when he was leaving for England to study for the Bar. In *An Autobiography* (Pt I.Ch XI) he says: “I had written out a few words of thanks. But I could scarcely stammer them out. I remember how my head reeled and my whole frame shook as I stood up to read them.” His speech reads thus: “I hope that some of you will follow in my footsteps, and after you return from England you will work wholeheartedly for big reforms in India.” (This is the English translation, published in the Kathiawar Times, of his speech in Gujarati). We can sense here the budding leadership quality of perhaps the world’s greatest leader of all times.

Gandhiji had very limited funds to survive his studies in London and on the top of that he had vowed to remain vegetarian. One of his promises given to his mother to obtain her permission to go to London was to remain vegetarian. He had adhered, in the teeth of opposition, to his vows. It was extremely hard in those days to remain vegetarian as the vegetarian restaurants were scarce and sparsely spread. This, 19 years old, Mohandas Gandhi in the process of locating vegetarian restaurants around the place of his residence was put in contact with the London Vegetarian Society. He was taken on the executive committee of the Society and was called on to give a talk on, of all subjects, “The Foods of India” which was published in *The Vegetarian Message*. Soon he started contributing regularly on the Indian Vegetarian system, Indian foods, and Indian festivals...for their weekly magazine *The Vegetarian*. Mohandas’s English vegetarian friends, all of them belonging to Britain’s respectable classes gave him company, a chance to serve a cause (vegetarianism), training in selling a cause (he helped organize meetings and cooked and displayed sample vegetarian meals) and in writing and friends. With one of them, Josiah Oldfield, he shared lodgings during his final London months. Mohandas was drawn to these men and women; their character and courage evoked his respect, and they seemed to enjoy a standing in British society. The coincidence between their views and his mother’s was not a small discovery for Mohandas. It gave a vital legitimacy to his Indian inner voice. In the autobiography he writes that his London experiences harmonized his inward and outward life and that his soul knew no bounds of joy. These words also apply to the concord he felt in London between the universal and the Indian, between pure truth and his vows.

This brief account of Mahatma Gandhi’s early days entitles us to consider that by the time he finished his studies in London he had already developed his thoughts, ethical values and essential character on which he built his later life and the early words of Mohandas Gandhi may be taken as seriously as those of Mahatma Gandhi of later time. Mahatma Gandhi had written a little handbook or *Guide to London* that he had set about to prepare in answer to numerous inquiries on his return from London (He never published it). This guide includes a very meticulous system of detailed tips, step by step starting with the preparation to leave India for London and then how to live in London with various levels of budgets and an extensively itemized cost estimates (with lower and upper limits). I will refer to only those tips relevant to *saving water*. He writes:

As to bathing, it is only the newly built houses that bathrooms are attached to them. In ordinary houses no bathrooms can be found. In such cases very many visit the public baths weekly which cost 6d or 4d. But it is possible to have a daily bath without any expense wherever you go. You

can take a sponge bath with two or three tumblers of hot water always to be supplied at your request by the landlady in the morning. You can pour water into basin, dip a sponge in it and rub hard with the sponge twice or thrice and then rub the body with a dry towel, and you have taken a very nice bath which gives a glow to the body and keeps it clean. ... To these daily baths may be added a fortnightly or monthly visit to the public baths. Your landlady supplies you with two towels every week. All these arrangements must be made with the landlady before engaging a room so that no misunderstanding may arise in future.

It is not true to say, as is the commonly supposed, that owing to the severe cold one cannot take baths daily. On the other hand, it is necessary that one should bath daily in order to keep good health. A landlady, I know, drove away her boarder simply because he would not take his daily bath. She often used to quote: "Cleanliness is next to godliness" and, no matter how cold it was, she used to see every morning that everyone in her house had a bath.

Mahatma Gandhi suggested sponge bath with a view to control the cost of living within limited budget (£10-12 per month). Today we need to conserve water not necessarily for pecuniary reasons; water has become a scarce commodity everywhere. A bath or shower may take anywhere between thirty and hundreds of litres depending on the individual bathing habits. Swimming pool is another guzzler of water. I think now is the time we start thinking of conserving the scarce water in all possible areas of use. While the authorities have put restrictions on the gardens and car wash, which we are obligated to observe, we may consider self-imposing voluntary restrictions in the use of water in whatever area we can imagine. Conserving water on baths, the Gandhian way, with sponge bath or any other alternative means, I think, is worth considering. I for myself have been occasionally using this method since my arrival in Australia in 1992; now I will make it a regular feature of my routine.

Gambhir Watts

This article was first published in Bhavan Australia October 2005 issue and has now been reproduced

References: 1.THE GOOD BOATMAN *A Portrait of Gandhi*, Rajmohan Gandhi, Penguin Books, First Edition 1997; 2.The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Volume 1.

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 Savoury Cantonese Fried Rice (Vegan)
 Peas & Cheese Relish (Matar Panner) (Dairy)
 Mixed Vegetable Curry (Sweet & Sour) (Vegan)


Dessert: Gopal's special Trifle (Dairy)
 Cheese Balls in Sugar Syrup (Gulab Jamun) (Dairy)
 GudBud Icecream (Vegan)

Drinks: Mango Lassi (Dairy) / Fresh Orange Juice (Vegan)




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His Holiness Devamrita Swami graduated from Yale University in Economics in 1972. At this time he came in contact with the books of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada; the founder-acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He discovered that the knowledge presented in these books was the beginning of his real education. His attraction to this transcendental information was immediate - and the effect profound. Devamrita Swami decided to abandon a corporate career in order to concentrate fully on his spiritual development. Devamrita Swami became disciple of Srila Prabhupada and accepted the Sannyas (renounced order of life). For past thirty five years he has been traveling worldwide, presenting the philosophy of Krishna consciousness and has also authored few books in this subject matter. He also visits India 2-3 times a year and gives seminars at IIT Mumbai & other technical institutes in India. He has given many seminars in Australia at some of the prestigious institutes like RMIT University & Melbourne University.




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India ranked 'top reformer' in South Asia by World Bank

INDIA has been ranked as the "top reformer" in South Asia in a survey by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). "Doing Business 2007: How to Reform," the special report released by the World Bank and the IFC, finds that India implemented five reforms during the last financial year (2005-06): simplifying business registration, cross-border trade, payment of taxes, easing access to credit, and strengthening investor protection. These five reforms reduced the time, cost and hassles for businesses to comply with legal and administrative requirements. India's overall ranking - 134 of the 175 economies surveyed - has improved significantly during the year. No other South Asian economy was able to improve its business regulations, resulting in the region being placed last in terms of the pace of reforms.

IMF bullish about economic growth in India

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is bullish about the growth prospects in India during the current financial year. According to an IMF growth forecast, India's GDP (gross domestic product) is expected to grow by 8.3 per cent, up a percentage from earlier projections.

The Prime Minister's economic advisory council has projected a growth rate of 7.9 per cent for 2006-07, while the Reserve Bank of India, the country's central bank, estimates GDP growth of between 7.5 per cent and 8.0 per cent. The Indian economy grew by a hefty 8.5 per cent last year. Interestingly, the fund sees prospects for an even higher growth in India during the fiscal. "In fact, India could even witness a higher growth rate than that projected on the upside. According to Michael Klein, vice president for financial and private sector development, World Bank-IFC: "South Asian countries need to do more to reap the benefits from new enterprises and jobs, which can come with more business-friendly regulations." Another World Bank document - 'Financing Firms in India' - noted recently that entrepreneurs in India rely more on informal governance mechanisms - such as those based on reputation, trust and relationships - than formal mechanisms to resolve disputes and finance corporate growth.

The paper notes that the importance of the state sector in the Indian economy has been declining relative to the non-state sector, though as a group public sector undertakings (PSUs) have been growing at comparable rates. The World Bank report notes that informal and alternative financing sources can provide an effective, though partial, substitute for formal channels and support the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in India. While on the downside, inflation has picked up with rising oil prices and strong domestic demand," it adds. The IMF, while noting that higher inflation due to soaring oil prices could pose a risk to the economy, points out that interest rates may have to be raised further to check the rise in consumer prices. The IMF, in its World Economic Outlook, has projected an inflation figure for India of 5.6 per cent this fiscal, and 5.3 per cent in the next financial year.

ADB's \$180 million loan for rural roads

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) is extending a \$180 million loan to India for its rural roads development programme.

The agreement for the first tranche of a \$750 million, multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) for the Rural Roads Sector II Investment Programme, was signed recently between the Manila-based bank and the Indian government in the national capital. The MFF is part of the ADB's 'innovation and efficiency initiative' programme, which aims to reform its business model and provide flexibility to meet the needs of clients like India. Under the programme, the borrower can decide the time to avail of the loan, and even reduce commitment charges.

ADB's assistance to India is expected to increase from around \$2.45 billion in 2007 to \$2.85 billion two years later. Besides focussing on core areas such as transport, energy and urban sector operations, ADB plans to increase its aid to other areas, especially in the rural sector. According to Kunkio Senga, ADB's director-general for South Asia, the bank aims to provide assistance of up to \$1 billion this year for one special project - rural finance through cooperatives. The 20-year-loan will attract an interest rate about 40 basis points over the six months Libor (London Interbank Offered Rate).

Government-owned insurance giant raises market share, premium income

DESPITE the opening up of the insurance sector in India, and the entry of dozens of international players, government-controlled insurance behemoths continue to report excellent performance.

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), which is facing competition from 15 private companies - most of who have signed up with international partners - has for the first time raised its share (since the opening up of the sector) from 71 per cent to 77.51 per cent. According to T.S. Vijayan, the new chairman of the corporation, LIC's premium income has risen by a whopping 180-plus per cent during the first four months of the current fiscal, beating even the industry average. Its new premium income soared by over 190 per cent.

"The life insurance industry in India has grown largely because of LIC's growth in the current fiscal," says Vijayan. For financial year 2006-07, LIC expects premium income to rise by 40 per cent to \$5.1 billion. The corporation, which turns 50 this year, has also set a world record by settling 11.8 million claims worth \$6.06 billion in 2005-06. Every day, LIC settles nearly 45,000 claims, and 97 per cent are settled on or before the due date, he adds. In the case of death claims, 93 per cent are paid within 20 days of intimation of death.

Buoyed by its strong performance, LIC is toying with the idea of entering the credit card business. International consultancy KPMG has prepared a report suggesting LIC could look at making a foray into the lucrative business. But Vijayan says LIC will seek out partners before launching the new business. LIC has invested over \$63 billion in federal and state government bonds, about \$12.75 billion in the infrastructure sector, and just under \$650 million in equities.

India world's fastest wealth creator

India will emerge as the world's fastest wealth creator, with a growth rate of 13.3 per cent during the period 2005-10, as against a global average of 5.6 per cent. International research firm Boston Consultancy Group (BCG), in its 2006 Global Wealth Report, notes that India was the second fastest wealth creator after China between the years 2000 and 2005. Robust growth in sectors like information technology, textiles and Pharmaceuticals has ensured such rapid growth in India. Both India and China have seen the highest

growth in the number of millionaire households - above 15 per cent every year between 2000 and 2005. India today is home to the world's 18th largest population of millionaires - and nearly a third of them live in the country's commercial and financial capital (Mumbai) and the political capital (Delhi). According to the BCG report, the number of millionaire households globally grew by 0.9 per cent in 2005 to 7.2 million; their overall wealth rose by 1.5 per cent to \$25.8 trillion, accounting for 28.6 per cent of total global wealth. India's total wealth - which is reflected in assets managed by wealth managers - shot up to nearly \$560 billion in 2005, more than double the 2000 level of \$268 billion. Of course, the US continued to lead the world with the assets of the wealthy placed at \$31.29 trillion.

India Inc on capex spree

Indian corporates are on a capital expenditure (capex) spree, investing billions of dollars on fixed assets. According to a study, investments by Indian corporates in capex soared by nearly 30 per cent during 2005-06 over the previous year's figures.

India Inc is estimated to have spent about \$23.5 billion in capital expenditure during financial year 2005-06, up from the previous year's figure of \$18 billion. Over half of the expenditure was on plant and machinery, over a quarter on capital work in progress and over 20 per cent on land and buildings. The survey of 1,425 manufacturing and service firms - with total gross fixed assets of over \$160 billion - indicated that just about 25 firms accounted for over half of the spending on fixed assets. Eighty per cent of the capex was incurred by just about 100 top companies.

The big spenders included Reliance Industries (\$2 billion), NTPC (\$1.42 billion), Bharti Airtel (\$1.11 billion), ONGC and Essar Steel (both of about \$1 billion each). Investments by refineries accounted for \$3.75 billion worth of capital expenditure. Steel firms invested about \$2.5 billion, while power generators incurred capex of \$1.7 billion. Telecommunications (\$1.56 billion), textiles (\$1.12 billion) and information technology (\$1.03 billion), were the other big capex spenders.

Source: India Now- A perspective
IBEF Vol 3. Issue 3

- India Brand Equity Foundation



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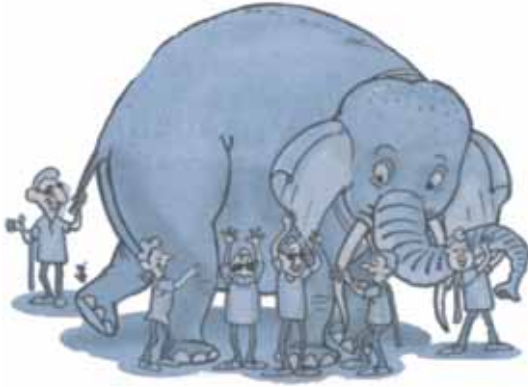
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Mahatma Gandhi returned to India on 9 January 1915. The project of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (the Overseas Indians' day) was initiated to mark the anniversary of his return.



Nandana—Bhavan's Children Section

Six Blind Men



Six blind men heard that an elephant was standing by the side of the road, and hurried there to try to find out what an elephant looked like. "It's like a wall," said one of the men, running his hands across the side of the animal. "You're mistaken," said another of the group, who was holding the elephant's trunk. "It's a toothless snake!"

"Both of you are wrong," piped a third man, who was toying with the animal's tail. "It's more like a rope than a snake!" "I can say with certainty that it's thin and shaped like a fan," said the fourth blind man. He was holding one of the elephant's ears. "How can it be shaped like a fan," mocked the fifth man who was running his hands up and down one of the animal's legs. "It's cylindrical!" The sixth man was running his fingers along one of the elephant's tusks. "It has a smooth body that tapers to a fine point," he proclaimed. Each man

tried to convince the others that his own description of the elephant was the correct one. Tempers rose and they almost came to blows. A passerby, who had stopped to listen, intervened. "Each of you is only partly right," he said. "Pool your information instead of fighting." The six blind men did as he advised and were finally able to get a correct picture of the animal in their mind's eye.

Moral: *The story, based on the poem by John G. Saxe, is not trying to make fun of visually handicapped people. No visually handicapped person would mistake a part of the object for the whole. His sense of touch is too well developed for that. The six blind men represent people who are rigid in their thinking, in other words, are blinded by their prejudice. They go through life thinking they are right and all others are wrong. They never get a correct picture of the truth.*

— Luis Fernandes



The Tricky Fox

A fox, looking for food near a farm, suddenly came upon a large rooster. "What a handsome bird you are!" he exclaimed, his mind racing to find a way to ensnare the rooster. "But do you know? Good looks are not enough to survive in this cruel world. You must know some tricks too. How many do you know?" "Er not many I think," said the rooster. "How many do you know?" "I know a hundred and ten tricks!" said the fox. "My specialty is

giving a loud shout 'while keeping my left eye closed.'"

"I think I could do that," said the unsuspecting rooster. "Watch!" And closing his left eye he crowed as loudly as he could. Unfortunately, he had closed the eye that should have been watching the fox. The fox clamped his teeth around the rooster's neck, and started running. The farmer's wife saw him running away with the rooster, and shouted, "Drop that chicken, he's mine!", "Tell her I'm yours!" urged the rooster, squirming in his captor's grasp, "otherwise she'll follow you all the way I to your den!" The fox opened his mouth to shout out the message to the farmer's wife, and the moment he did so, the rooster leapt free. He flew up into a tree where he was out of reach. "Watch me do it again," he mocked the fox. And closing one eye, crowed: "Cock-A-Doodle-Do!"

— Luis Fernanaes

The law of love could be best understood and learned through little children. - Mahatma Gandhi

Holy & Wise



वेष्णव जन तो तेने कहीए, जे पीड पराई जाणे रे;
 परदुः खे उपकार करे तोये, मन अभिमान न आणे रे,॥ धु॥
 सकल लोकमा सहने बंदे, निंदा न केनी रे;
 वाच काछ मन निश्चल राखे, धन धन जननी तेनी रे॥ ॥
 समद्रष्टिने तृष्णा त्यागी, परस्त्री जेने मात रे
 जिह्या थकी असत्य न बोले, परधन नव झाले हाथ रे॥ ॥
 मोह माया व्यापे नहि जेने, द्रढ वैराग्य जेना मनमां रे;
 रामनाशुं ताली लागी, सकल तीरथ तेन तनमां रे.॥ ॥
 वणलोभीने कपटहित छे, काम क्रोध निवार्या रे.॥ ॥
 भणे नरसैयो तेनुं दरसन करता कुल ऐकोतेर तार्या रे॥ ॥

He is a real Vaishnava who feels other's sufferings as his own. He serves those who I are afflicted and has no conceit. He bows before everyone, despises none; is steady, in word, body and mind. Blessed is the mother of such a man. His outlook is always' dispassionate; he has left all desires; he sees a mother in another man's wife. He I never speaks an untruth, and touches no one's wealth. Ignorance does not overpower | him; his mind knows stern detachment. He has experienced ecstasy in the worship i of Rama; his body in itself possesses all places of pilgrimage. He has no avarice, he knows no fraud, he has outgrown desire and anger. Narsaiya says: To look at such a I man is to earn merit enough to save seventy-one generations from hell. |

The above prayer was very dear to Mahatma Gandhi

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु
 लक्ष्मीरूपेया संस्थितः
 नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै
 नमस्तस्यै, नमोनमः

Salutations to Goddess Lakshmi, salutations to her, salutations to her, repeated salutations to her, who is established as prosperity in all beings.
 (Diwali - Lakshmi Pooja was celebrated on October 21 2006)

- When you devote yourself to achieving your goal, you will not be bothered by shallow criticism. Nothing important can be accomplished if you allow yourself to be swayed by some trifling matter, always looking over your shoulder and wondering what others are saying or thinking. The key to achievement is to move forward along your chosen path with determination.

- Daisaku Ikeda

- Nature does nothing uselessly.
- If liberty and equality, as is thought by some are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.
- The superior man, when resting in safety, does not forget that danger may come. When in a state of security he does not forget the possibility of ruin. When all is orderly, he does not forget that disorder may come. Thus his person is not endangered, and his States and all their clans are preserved
- When we see men of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves.

- Aristotle

- Confucius

- The greatest lessons in life, if we would but stoop and humble ourselves, we should learn not from the grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children.

- Mahatma Gandhi



Serving Multicultural Australia by enhancing mutual understanding of diverse cultures and promoting communal harmony.

As one of the largest NGO's in the world, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, literally meaning **the House of Indian Wisdom**, has over 180 centres in India and other countries the UK, USA, and Australia are the prominent international centres.

The Bhavan, one of the largest cultural organisations in the world, has been playing a crucial role in educational and cultural interactions in the world, holding aloft the best of Indian traditions and at the same time meeting the needs of modernity and multiculturalism. Bhavan's large numbers of publications have been well received all over the world and provide wholesome literature for the modern mind.

Bhavan's members and supporters include: all Presidents of India; all Prime Ministers of India; His Holiness Dalai Lama; Prince Charles, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales; Nelson Mandela; Rev. Mother Teresa; eminent businessmen; international leaders.

Since its launch on 30 August 2003 **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia** has undertaken a large number of activities related to Indian culture and promoting multiculturalism in Australia. The Major annual events are: Holi Mahotsav in Darling Harbour celebrated in the first weekend of April every year; The World Culture Concert and Arts Festival celebrated on 2nd October every year at Sydney Town Hall; Interfaith prayer meeting organised every year on 30 January at Hyde Park, and number of other multicultural events.

Bhavan's Annual Multicultural Events :



Interfaith Prayer Meeting held at Hyde Park, Sydney on 30 January every year.

Holi Mahotsav held at Darling Harbour in the first weekend of April every year.



CRICKET MASALA Cricket Masala (fusion of Cricket competition and multicultural fair) held at Bankstown Oval in the mid April every year.

World Culture Concert and Arts Festival held at Sydney Town Hall in the first week of October every year.



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