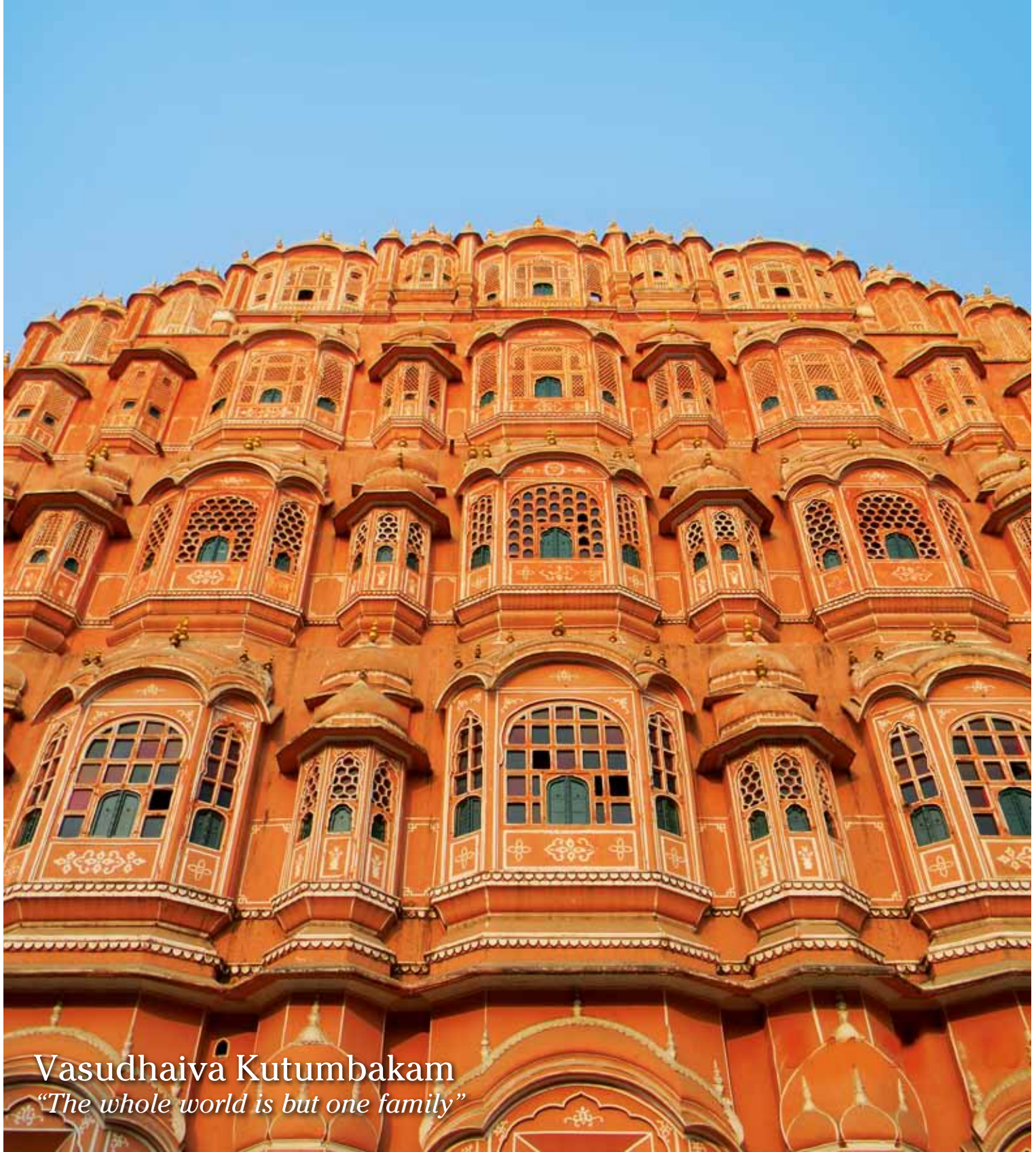


Bhavan Australia

www.bhavanaaustralia.org

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side - Rig Veda, 1-89-i



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
"The whole world is but one family"

Life | Literature | Culture

July 2012 | Vol 10 No.1 | Issn 1449 - 3551

Sydney Peace Foundation

Peace with Justice



Peace with justice is a way of thinking and acting which promotes nonviolent solutions to everyday problems and thereby contributes to a civil society.

The Sydney Peace Foundation was founded in 1998 in order to promote public discussion about peace with justice and so influence public interest. It is a not-for-profit organisation at the University of Sydney and is supported by the City of Sydney. The Foundation is run by a diverse council of sixteen members, which includes representatives from the media, business, academia and the community sector.

The Priorities

The Foundation's priorities are to promote universal human rights and peace with justice in any context, locally and internationally. Such priorities are regarded by the council as the building blocks of any civil society. Without such goals and ideals, any culture becomes merely a survival of the fittest.

The Activities

To achieve its goals, the Sydney Peace Foundation:

- Selects and awards the Sydney Peace Prize; Australia's only international prize for peace.
- Engages the mainstream and independent media in its strong advocacy strategy.

- Hosts educational seminars and public forums. In 2011, such seminars included *WikiLeaks and Freedom: Breaking Australia's Silence*, addressed by Andrew Wilkie MP, Julian Burnside QC and John Pilger to an audience of 2,500 in the Sydney Town Hall.
- Runs various peace projects, including the Youth Peace Initiative and the West Papua Project.
- Develops corporate sector and community understanding of the value of peace with justice in diverse contexts and countries.
- Sponsors peace initiatives, particularly the work of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney;
- Teaches peace and conflict studies and creates jobs for young people in areas of peace research, conflict resolution and the promotion of human rights.
- Awards scholarships and internships in peace, human rights and conflict resolution.

In 2011, with a lean staff of the equivalent of two full-time employees, the SPF events attracted audiences of at least 6,000 in Sydney and events were covered by all major news outlets. In addition, the 2011 Sydney Peace Prize recipient also addressed audiences in Melbourne of 5,000 and in Adelaide of 2,500.



The Signature Events

Every year in the first week of November, the Sydney Peace Foundation presents the Sydney Peace Prize at *The Sydney Peace Prize Gala Dinner & Award Ceremony*.

The City of Sydney Peace Lecture on the evening before the Award is presented, the Sydney Peace Prize recipient presents the City of Sydney Peace Lecture.

Apart from that the Sydney Peace Foundation presents special events and seminars with distinguished guests throughout the year.

The Visitors

Since the inception of the Sydney Peace Foundation, Partners in Peace have had the opportunity to meet some of the world's most inspiring leaders and advocates of peace with justice. Visitors to the Foundation have included: Nelson Mandela, Former President of South Africa, His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet.

Sydney Peace Prize

The Sydney Peace Foundation awards Australia's only international prize for peace—the Sydney Peace Prize. The Sydney Peace Prize is awarded to an organization or an individual whose life and work has demonstrated significant contributions to:

- The achievement of peace with justice locally, nationally or internationally
- The promotion and attainment of human rights
- The philosophy, language and practice of non-violence.

A purpose of the Sydney Peace Foundation is to promote a cosmopolitan view of peace with justice.

Past Sydney Peace Prize Winners

2012 marks the 15th year of the Sydney Peace Prize. Previous winners include: Noam Chomsky (2011), Vandana Shiva (2010), John Pilger (2009), 2008 Patrick Dodson (2008), Hans Blix (2007), Irene Khan (2006), Olara Otunnu (2005), Arundhati Roy (2004), Hanan Ashrawi (2003), Mary Robinson (2002), William Deane (2001), Xanana Gusmão (2000), Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999), Muhammed Yunus (1998).

Sydney Peace Prize 2012

Senator Mrs. Sekai Holland Co Minister for Reconciliation Healing and Integration in the Cabinet of President Robert Mugabe and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai was announced as the recipient of The Sydney Peace Foundation Sydney Peace Prize 2012 in a ceremony hosted by the Australian Embassy in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 30 April 2012.

Source: <http://sydneypeacefoundation.org.au>

For this Month

Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa

I am happy that I am invited by Ms Ela Gandhi, granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi and trustee of Gandhi Development Trust to make a presentation at the three days Conference “Roots to Fruits: Nonviolence in Action” at Durban University of Technology, South Africa, 31 July – 2 August 2012. About two years back I started writing a book ‘Karam Yogi Mahatma Gandhi’ and recollect my reading his life in South Africa. To me Mahatma Gandhi’s contribution in South Africa was much more significant and important.

When Gandhi landed at Durban, Natal, in May 1893, his mission was simply to win a lawsuit, earn some money and perhaps, at long last, start his career: ‘Try my luck in South Africa,’ he said. As he left the boat to meet his employer, a Moslem business man named Dada Abdulla Sheth, Gandhi wore a fashionable frock coat, pressed trousers, shining shoes and a turban. South African society was sharply divided by colour, class, religion and profession, and each group jealously defended the words and symbols which demarcated it from the others. Englishmen called all Indians ‘coolies’ or ‘samis’, and they referred to ‘coolie teachers’, ‘coolie merchants’, ‘coolie barristers’, etc., forgetting, deliberately, that if coolie meant anything it meant manual labourer. To rise above the coolie level, Parsis from India styled themselves Persians, and Moslems from India chose to be regarded as ‘Arabs’ which they were not. A turban was officially recognized as part of the costume of an ‘Arab’ but not of a Hindu.

Several days after arriving, Gandhi went to court. The magistrate ordered him to remove his turban. Gandhi demurred and left the court. To obviate further trouble, he decided to wear an English hat. No, said Dada Abdulla Sheth, a hat on a coloured man is the symbol of a waiter. The lawsuit required Gandhi’s presence in Pretoria, the capital of Transvaal. First class accommodations were purchased for him at Durban where he boarded the train for the overnight journey. At Maritzburg, the capital of Natal, a white man entered the compartment, eyed the brown intruder, and withdrew to reappear in a few moments with two railway officials who told Gandhi to transfer to third class. Gandhi protested that he held a first class ticket.

That didn’t matter; he had to leave. He stayed. So they fetched a policeman who took him off with his luggage. Gandhi could have returned to the train and found a place in the third class car. But he chose to remain in the station waiting room. It was cold

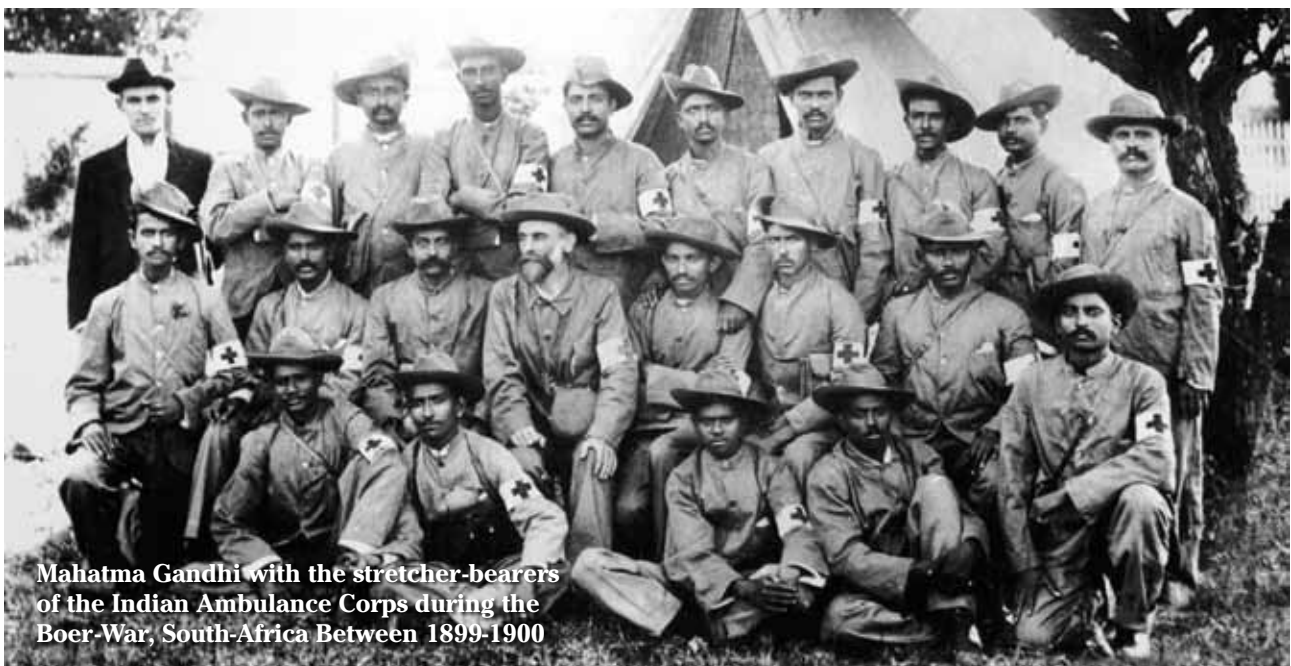


Gandhi group in South Africa

in the mountains. His overcoat was in his luggage which the railway people were holding; afraid to be insulted again, he did not ask for it. All night long, he sat and shivered, and brooded. Should he return to India? This episode reflected a much larger situation. Should he address himself to it or merely seek redress of his personal grievance, finish the case, and go home to India? He had encountered the dread disease of colour prejudice. It was his duty to combat it. To flee, leaving his countrymen in their predicament would be cowardice. The frail lawyer began to see himself in the role of a David assailing the Goliath of racial discrimination.

Many years later, in India, Dr. John R. Mott, a Christian missionary, asked Gandhi, 'What have been the most creative experiences in your life?' In reply, Gandhi told the story of the night in the Maritzburg station. "Why, of all people, did it occur to Gandhi to resist the evil? The next morning Indians he met recounted similar experiences. They made the best of conditions; 'You cannot strike your head against a stone wall.' But Gandhi intended to test its hardness. His father and grandfather had defied authority. His own meagre contacts with it in India were unhappy. He had rejected the authoritative, time-and-tradition-honoured version of the *Bhagavad-Gita* for his own. Was it this inherent anti-authoritarianism that made him rebel against the government colour line? Was he more sensitive, resentful, unfettered and ambitious because his life, so far, had been a failure? Did he aspire to be strong morally because he was weak physically? Did challenging immoral practices in an uncrowded arena present greater opportunities for service than the pursuit of personal gain in crowded courts? Was it destiny, heritage, luck, the *Gita*, or some other immeasurable quantity?

That bitter night at Maritzburg the germ of social protest was born in Gandhi. But he did nothing. He proceeded on his business to Pretoria. The Charlestown-to-Johannesburg lap was negotiated by stage coach. There were three seats on the coach box, usually occupied by the driver and the 'leader' of the trip. On this occasion, the 'leader' sat inside and told Gandhi to ride with the driver and a Hottentot. There was space for Gandhi inside, but he did not want to make a fuss and miss the coach, so he mounted to the driver's perch. Later, however, the 'leader' decided he wanted to smoke and get some air; he spread a piece of dirty sacking at the driver's feet on the footboard and instructed Gandhi to sit on it. Gandhi



Mahatma Gandhi with the stretcher-bearers of the Indian Ambulance Corps during the Boer-War, South-Africa Between 1899-1900

complained; why could he not go inside? At this, the 'leader' began to curse and tried to drag him off the coach. Gandhi clung to the brass rail though he felt that his wrists would break. But he did not relax his hold. The 'leader' continued alternately to pummel and pull him until the white passengers intervened: 'Don't beat him,' they shouted. 'He is not to blame. He is right.' The 'leader', yielding to the customers, relented, and Gandhi entered the coach. The next day, Gandhi wrote to the coach company and received a written assurance that he would not be molested again.

In Johannesburg, Gandhi went to a hotel, but failed to get a room. Indians laughed at his naivety. 'This country is not for men like you,' a rich Indian merchant said to him. 'For making money we do not mind pocketing insults, and here we are.' The same person advised Gandhi to travel third class to Pretoria because conditions in the Transvaal were much worse than in Natal. But Gandhi was obdurate. He ordered the railway regulations to be brought to him, read them, and found that the prohibition was not precise. He therefore penned a note to the station master stating that he was a barrister and always travelled first (it was his ninth day and first journey in South Africa) and would soon apply in person for a ticket.

The station master proved sympathetic. He sold Gandhi the ticket on condition that he would not sue the company if the guards or the passengers rejected him. The collector came to examine the tickets and held up three fingers. Gandhi vehemently refused to move to third class. The sole other passenger, an Englishman, scolded the guard and invited Gandhi to make himself comfortable. 'If you want to travel with a coolie, what do I care,' the guard grumbled.

At the station in Pretoria, Gandhi asked a railway official about hotels, but got no helpful information. An American Negro, who overheard the conversation, offered to take Gandhi to an inn run by an American: Johnston's Family Hotel. Mr. Johnston cheerfully accommodated him but suggested, with apologies, that since all the other guests were white, he take dinner in his room. Waiting for his food, Gandhi pondered the adventures. He had had on this strange trip. Not everybody was prejudiced; some whites felt uncomfortable about it all. Presently Mr. Johnston knocked and said, 'I was ashamed of having asked you to take your dinner here, so I spoke to the other guests about you, and asked them if they would mind you having dinner in the dining-room. They said they had no objection, and they did not mind your staying here as long as you liked.' Gandhi enjoyed the meal downstairs. But lodgings in a private home were cheaper than Mr. Johnston's hotel.

Within a week of his arrival Gandhi summoned all the Indians in Pretoria to a meeting. He wanted 'to present to them a picture of their condition'. He was twenty-four. This was his first public speech. The audience consisted of Moslem merchants interspersed with a few Hindus. He urged four things: Tell the truth even in business; Adopt more sanitary habits; Forget caste and religious divisions; Learn English. A barber, a clerk and a shopkeeper accepted his offer of English lessons. The barber merely wished to acquire the vocabulary of his trade. Gandhi dogged them for months and would not let them be lazy or lax in their studies. Other meetings followed, and soon Gandhi knew every Indian in Pretoria. He communicated with the railway authorities and elicited the promise that 'properly dressed' Indians might travel first or second class.

Though open to arbitrary interpretation, this represented progress. Gandhi was encouraged. The Pretorian Indians formed a permanent organization. The lawsuit for which Gandhi came to South Africa brought him into contact with Roman Catholics, Protestants, Quakers and Plymouth Brethren. Some of them tried to convert him to Christianity. Gandhi did not discourage their efforts. He promised that if the inner voice commanded it he would embrace the Christian faith. He read the books they gave him and tried to answer their searching questions about Indian religions. When he did not know the answers he wrote to friends in England and to Raychandbhai, the jeweller-poet of Bombay.

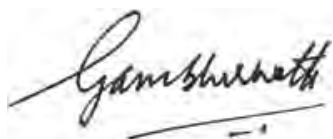


Once Michael Coates, a Quaker, urged Gandhi to discard the beads which, as a member of the Hindu Vaishnava sect, he always wore around his neck. 'This superstition does not become you,' Coates exclaimed. 'Come, let me break the necklace'. 'No, you will not,' Gandhi protested. 'It is a sacred gift from my mother. 'But do you believe in it?' Coates questioned. 'I do not know its mysterious significance,' Gandhi said, defensively. 'I do not think I should come to harm if I did not wear it. But I cannot, without sufficient reason, give up a necklace which she put round my neck out of love and in the conviction that it would be conducive to my welfare. When, with the passage of time, it wears away, and breaks of its own accord, I shall have no reason to get a new one. But this necklace cannot be broken.' Later in life he did not wear beads. Gandhi's Christian friends taught him the essence of Christianity. They said if he believed in Jesus he would find redemption. 'I do not seek redemption from the consequences of sin,' Gandhi replied. 'I seek to be redeemed from sin itself.' They said that was impossible. Nor could Gandhi understand why, if God had one son, He could not have another. Why could he go to Heaven and attain salvation only as a Christian? Did Christianity have a monopoly of Heaven? Was God a Christian? Did He have prejudices against non-Christians?

Gandhi liked the sweet Christian hymns and many of the Christians he met. But he could not regard Christianity as the perfect religion or the greatest religion. From the point of view of sacrifice, it seemed to me that the Hindus greatly surpassed the Christians. And Raychandbhai assured him that Hinduism was unexcelled in subtlety and profundity. On the other hand, Gandhi doubted whether the sacred Hindu Vedas were the only inspired word of God; 'why not also the Bible and the Koran?' He recoiled from the competitiveness of religions.

He also disliked the competitiveness of lawyers. His client, Dada Abdulla Sheth, and the opposing party, Tyeb Sheth, were relatives, and the cost of the litigation, dragging out for more than a year, was ruining both. Gandhi suggested a compromise out of court. Finally, the plaintiff and defendant agreed on an arbitrator who heard the case and decided in favour of Dada Abdulla. Now a new problem confronted Gandhi. Tyeb was called upon to pay thirty-seven thousand pounds and cost. This threatened him with bankruptcy. Gandhi induced Dada Abdulla to permit the loser to pay in installments stretched over a much extended period. In preparing the case, Gandhi learned the secrets of bookkeeping and some of the fine points of law. Above all, it reinforced his opinion that settlements out of court were preferable to trials. He followed this practice during his twenty years as a lawyer: 'I lost nothing thereby- not even money, certainly not my soul.'

The lawsuit settled, Gandhi returned to Durban and prepared to sail for India. He had been in South Africa almost for twelve months. Before his departure, his associates gave him a farewell party. During the festivities someone handed him the day's *Natal Mercury*, and in it he found a brief item regarding the Natal government's proposed bill to deprive Indians of their right to elect members of the legislature. Gandhi stressed the necessity of resisting this move. His friends were ready but they were 'unlettered, lame' men, they said, and powerless without him. He consented to stay a month. He remained twenty years fighting the battle for Indian rights. He won.'



Gambhir Watts
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia



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MESSAGE


I have pleasure to note the excellent work being done by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia to promote intercultural activities and provide a forum for true understanding of Indian culture, multiculturalism and foster closer cultural ties in Australia.

Founded in 1938 with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, the parent body of Bhavan Australia, is an internationally reputed institution dedicated to the promotion of education and culture. It was created to fulfil the dream of a resurgent India, to encompass the best of the modern world in the fields of science, technology, economics and management, and has 112 Kendras in India and 8 overseas Centres.

Following the footsteps of its parent body, Bhavan Australia 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.

I have read some recent copies of their monthly publication *Bhavan Australia*, which I have found to be of great interest. In fact, I am trying to go through the past issues, as many of the articles are worth reading in detail.

I convey heartiest congratulations to Bhavan Australia for the excellent work they are doing and wish them all success in their future endeavours.


(Arun K. Goel)
July 2012

Please note our new address : Level 10, 190 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000



Prohibition or Awareness?

This debate is going on since Gandhiji's time, whether to prohibit Alcohol or to generate awareness against its use. Anything that makes addiction or extra natural pleasure cannot be stopped only with awareness. This is not only in respect of Alcohol, but, Tobacco products, Tea, Coffee, Soft drinks, flavored and taste added (additives) foods like Chinese food, other dangerous drugs that create addiction and many more.

Awareness creation against these vices will definitely bring very good result, especially if targeted on groups like children including students of various age groups, house wives, voluntary organizations, social groups and various office staff. Experts' panel can be formed and trained to conduct these awareness programs including doctors, Psychologists, teachers, social workers and volunteers of organizations like Gandhian constructive work groups. Central and state Govts must compulsorily channelize a good percentage of revenue earned through the sale of these dangerous vices, until they are prohibited. Country wide campaigns through all available Medias like newspapers, radio and T.V. channels, Stage shows, Road shows, hoardings, banners, leaflets and booklets can be organized.

There is a limit of success to win over this task through any amount of awareness generation programs because of the addiction making character of these products and the large industrial interest behind its marketing. With minimum investment maximum profit is earned through sale of unimaginable large quantity owing to its addiction making characters.

When the product is addiction making, the best way to reduce or avoid its use is to reduce or prohibit its availability. For example if Gutka, Alcohol or other dangerous drugs are available in every shop or nook and corner of the country, its use will be very high because of addiction to it, in spite of any amount of awareness against it. On the



other hand if it is highly difficult to get a product due to various reasons like very few outlets and with higher level of awareness against its use, the use of a product can be effectively brought down. Best example in India is the propaganda against use of tobacco and prohibition of smoking in public places. It has definitely given good result but, implementation of these policies are not done or continued willfully. Prohibition was concentrated or limited only to public smoking and not for 'any' tobacco products. Recently in Kerala sale of Gutka is prohibited. Reports on very good result, is being received.

Prohibition policies should be formulated with detailed studies considering different aspects of it, like how effectively it can be implemented, strong will, be developed among the officials that they be determinate in implementing the policy, deep awareness among the public to accept the policy etc.

However unless the availability is reduced and stopped, there will be no much use of creating awareness. For example, in the name of source of revenue, Govts are promoting sale of Alcohol by increasing the number of outlets. Simultaneously speaking of awareness against Alcohol and we know the result. Year by year, the quantity of sale and revenue are increasing. More and more children and women are also taken to the habit of Alcoholism. As a result, physical ailments and psychological problems are on an increase in families and the entire society. Medical expenditure of not only the individuals and families but of the state is also on an increase due to accidents and various other remedial services. Calculations clearly teach that all addiction generating items are also generating more than hundred percent loss in every way.

Hence, Prohibition or Awareness?

Naturally Yours!

**Dr. Babu Joseph, Chief Editor,
Nisargopachar Varta**

**Source: Nisargopachar Varta,
National Institute of Naturopathy,
India, Vol. 4 Issue 7, July 2012**





Naturopath's Advice (India)

Question & Answer

Q. Can you please suggest me the Naturopathy treatment for my chronic Boil problem?

-Pradnya, Mumbai

A. A Boil, also referred as skin abscess is nothing but a localized skin infection. The general site of infection is within the hair follicle. One another seen commonest, is the infection of the clogged oil ducts of the skin, known as Acne. Similarly depending on the site of the infection there are different nomenclatures for this skin infection. Folk medicine claims it as a resultant of excess of heat in the body. Naturopathy considers this as an attempt of the body to eliminate the toxins deposited in the body, by forming pus.

The boil when small and firm, opening and draining it is not advisable. However, once the boil becomes soft or "forms a head", i.e., when pus collection is noted in the boil, it can be drained. Most small boils, such as those formed around hairs, drain on their own with localized heat application. Larger boils when it is associated with fever, there should be medical intervention.

Treatment

Poor personal hygiene being common among the cause, frequent washing with water should be the first resort. Cold Water with pressure in the form of shower and douches shall be applied for the basic cleansing purpose.

If the boils are recurrent and scattered throughout the body, it is to be understood that the blood is vitiated. In such cases, getting rid of those circulating toxins is the first line of treatment. Fasting with tender coconut or fruit juice for a minimum span of three days or as per the individual's endurance along with enemas is to be undertaken first to cleanse the system. Gradually, natural foods in the form of fruits, salads and sprouts should be consumed. Effort should be taken to void the synthetic / pre-prepared foods available in the market, as almost every item has toxic chemicals in the name of preservatives.

The key treatment for most boils is the local heat application, usually with hot packs. Heat application increases the circulation to the area and allows the body to better fight off the infection by bringing inherent antibodies and white blood

cells, the innate infection fighters, to the site of infection. The heat will thereby cause the boil to erupt and heal faster.

Application of mud is another good remedy for these boils. It generally clears the skin pores and invigorates the circulation to the applied area. The eliminatory channels are thereby stimulated which would be evident with the sweating which appears thereafter.

Inducing sweat through steam bath is a method of promoting the eliminatory process through skin. A healthy individual has sweating even with little physical warm up. On the contrary, individuals in any diseased state rarely sweat. Thus sweating is considered as indication of health and promoting it to happen every day ensures purification of blood from its toxins through skin which in turn results in keen and supple skin.

Turmeric is most effective against boils. It can be applied directly to boils in the form of paste mixed with plain water. Turmeric and neem leaf paste can be applied for the non-erupting long-standing boils. The action of both those herbs is through their anti-bacterial potencies.

Washing and covering the affected area with tea tree oil and a bandage also promotes healing of the boils. Along with preliminary Yoga practice, the cleansing procedures in Yoga like Kapalbhati, Vaman dhouti, Neti and Nauli shall be performed for sustained benefit.

Dr. D. Sathyanath, Nature Cure Physician, National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN), Dept. of Ayush, Ministry of Health & F.W., Govt of India, based at Bapu Bhavan, Tadiwala Road, Pune, India. NIN provides multifaceted Services and Monthly Activities including, OPD Clinic, Yoga Classes, Magazine, Weekly Lectures, Monthly Workshop, Naturopathy Diet Centre, Courses and Acupressure Clinic etc. For more details visit: www.punenin.org, Email: ninpune@vsnl.com.

Source: Nisargopachar Varta, National Institute of Naturopathy, India, Vol. 4 Issue 7, July 2012





In our Darkest Moments

Life is seldom smooth sailing. Even while the going is good, we should not forget that we might be hit by a storm, metaphorically speaking, when we least expect it. In the aftermath maintaining our composure and belief in ourselves is difficult, but extremely necessary. In those dark hours most often our self-belief wavers and we become unsure that we can ever override the storm. But never for a moment should we allow ourselves to suffer from self-pity. What is required at these times are huge reserves of optimism and resilience. These alone can show us the way to surpass a seemingly impassable obstacle.

During such times recalling Beethoven and others like him provide great strength and inspiration. At the height of his career when Beethoven began to lose his hearing and eventually lost it completely, he experienced insufferable despair.

But he found a way to survive. As music was his life he could not live without it. He sawed off the legs of his piano so that he could put it on the floor and feel the vibrations of his music when he played. His symphony No. 9 of which he never heard a single note is one of the best known works of classical music. If Beethoven had given in to the suicidal thoughts which overtook him during his darkest moments, he would have just become another poetic tragedy and Symphony No. 9 would never have been composed.

The human spirit is indomitable and life has its ways of testing it. From time to time it places roadblocks like adversity, misfortune and disaster before us. Momentarily we may be flustered. But by our fortitude, resilience, optimism and most of all our intrinsic un-put-down-able spirit we can overcome our darkest hours. At these times we have to make ourselves almost invincible.

There is no standard roadmap. The road we take will be uniquely our own. In the words of Camus "In the depth of winter I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer". When we go through our personal dark moments we learn that we can not only survive but we also have within us the ability to do more than we thought we could. We must learn to be a firm believer in the dictum that adversity always has the effect of eliciting the best in us which otherwise in less stressful circumstances would have remained dormant.

Surendralal G Mehta

President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan



Swami Vivekananda's Poems

No One to Blame

The sun goes down, its crimson rays
Light up the dying day;
A startled glance I throw behind
And count my triumph shame;
No one but me to blame.

Each day my life I make or mar,
Each deed begets its kind,
Good good, bad bad, the tide once set
No one can stop or stem;
No one but me to blame.

I am my own embodied past;
Therein the plan was made;
The will, the thought, to that conform,
To that the outer frame;
No one but me to blame.

Love comes reflected back as love,
Hate breeds more fierce hate,
They mete their measures, lay on me
Through life and death their claim;
No one but me to blame.

I cast off fear and vain remorse,
I feel my Karma's sway
I face the ghosts my deeds have raised—
Joy, sorrow, censure, fame;
No one but me to blame.

Good, bad, love, hate and pleasure, pain—
For ever linked go,
I dream of pleasure without pain,
It never, never came;
No one but me to blame.

I give up hate, I give up love,
My thirst for life is gone;
Eternal death is what I want,
Nirvanam goes life's flame;
No one is left to blame.

One only man, one only God, one ever perfect soul,
One only sage who ever scorned the dark and dubious ways,
One only man who dared think and dared show the goal—
That death is curse, and so is *life*, and best when stops to be.

Om Nama Bhagavate Sambuddhaya
Om, I salute the Lord, the Awakened.

**Source: In search of God and Other Poems
by Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama,
Publication Department, Kolkata**





Swami Vivekananda Conversations and Dialogues¹

Myself:—Whatever you may say, I cannot bring myself to believe in these words. Who can come by that oratorical power of expounding philosophy which you have?

Swamiji:—You don't know! That power may come to all. That power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years, with the sole object of realising God I have practiced that kind of Brahmacharya myself, and so a screen has been removed, as it were, from my brain. For that reason, I do not need to overthink things anymore or prepare myself for any lectures on such a subtle subject as philosophy. Suppose I have to lecture tomorrow; all that I shall speak about will pass tonight before my eyes like so many pictures; and the next day I put into words during my lecture all those things that I saw. So you will understand now that it is not any power which is exclusively my own. Whoever will practice unbroken Brahmacharya for twelve years will surely have it. If you do so, you too will get it. Our Shāstras do not say that only such and such a person will get it and not others!

Myself:—Do you remember, Swamiji, one day, before you took Sannyāsa, you were trying to explain the mystery of Samādhi to us. And when I called in question the truth of your words, saying that Samadhi was not possible in this Kali Yuga, you emphatically demanded: "Do you want to see Samadhi or to have it yourself? I get Samadhi myself, and I can make you have it!" No sooner had you finished saying so than a stranger came up and we did not pursue that subject any further.

Swamiji:—Yes, I remember the occasion. Later, on my pressing him to make me get Samadhi, he said, 'You see, having continually lectured and worked hard for several years, the quality of Rajas has become too predominant in me. Hence that power is lying covered, as it were, in me now. If I leave all work and go to the Himalayas and meditate in solitude for some time, then that power will again come out in me.'

VII

Reminiscences—Pranayama—Thought-Reading—Knowledge of Previous Births

[Shri Priya Nath Sinha]

A day or two later, as I was coming out of my house intending to pay a visit to Swamiji, I met two of my friends who expressed a wish to accompany me, for they wanted to ask Swamiji something about Prānāyāma. As I had heard that one should not visit a temple or a Sannyāsin without taking something as an offering; we took some fruits and sweets with us and placed them before him. Swamiji took them in his hands, raised them to his head, and bowed to us before we even made our obeisance to him. One of the two friends with me had been a fellow-student of his. Swamiji recognised him at once and asked about his health and welfare. Then he made us sit down by him. There were many others there who had come to see and hear him.

After replying to a few questions put by some of the gentlemen, Swamiji, in the course of his conversation, began to speak about Pranayama. First of all, he explained through modern science the origin of matter from the mind, and then went on to show what Pranayama is. All three of us had carefully read beforehand his book called Rāja-Yoga. But from what we heard from him that day about Pranayama, it seemed to me that very little of the knowledge that was in him had been recorded in that book. I understand also that what he said was not mere book-learning, for who could explain so lucidly and elaborately all the intricate problems of religion, even with the help of science, without himself realising the Truth?

His conversation on Pranayama went on from half past three in the afternoon till half past seven in the evening. When the meeting dissolved and we left, my companions asked me how Swamiji could have known the questions that were in their hearts, and whether I had communicated to him their desire of asking those questions.

A few days after this occasion, I saw Swamiji in the house of the late Priya Nath Mukherjee at Baghbazar. There were present Swami Brahmananda, Swami Yogananda, Mr. G.C. Ghosh, Atul Babu, and one or two other friends.

I said—'Well, Swamiji, the two gentlemen who went to see you the other day wanted to ask you some questions about Pranayama, which had been raised in their minds by reading your book on Raja-Yoga some time before you returned to this country, and

they had then told me of them. But that day, before they asked you anything, you, yourself raised those doubts that had occurred to them and solved them! They were very much surprised and inquired me if I had let you know their doubts beforehand.' *Swamiji replied*:—"Similar occurrences have come to pass many times in the West, people often used to ask me, 'How could you know the questions that were agitating our minds?' This knowledge does not happen to me so often, but with Shri Ramakrishna it was almost always there."

In this connection Atul Babu asked him: 'You have said in Raja-Yoga that one can come to know all about one's previous births. Do you know them yourself?'

Swamiji:—Yes, I do.

Atul Babu:—What do you know? Have you any objection to tell?

Swamiji:—I can know them—I do know them—but I prefer not to say anything in detail.

VIII

The Art and Science of Music, Eastern and Western

It was an evening in July 1898, at the Math, in Nilambar Mukerjee's garden-house, Belur. Swamiji with all his disciples had been meditating, and at the close of the meditation came out and sat in one of the rooms. As it was raining hard and a cold wind was blowing, he shut the door and began to sing to the accompaniment of *Tānpurā*. The singing being over, a long conversation on music followed. Swami Shivananda asked him, 'What is Western music like?'

Swamiji:—Oh, it is very good; there is in it a perfection of harmony, which we have not attained. Only, to our untrained ears, it does not sound well, hence we do not like it, and think that the singers howl like jackals. I also had the same sort of impression, but when I began to listen to the music with attention and study it minutely, I came more and more to understand it, and I was lost in admiration. Such is the case with every art. In glancing at a highly finished painting we cannot understand where its beauty lies. Moreover, unless the eye is, to a certain extent, trained, one cannot appreciate the subtle touches and blendings, the inner genius of a work of art. What real music we have lies in *Kirtan* and *Dhrupad*; the rest has been spoiled by being modulated according to the Islamic methods. Do you think that singing the short and light airs of *Tappā* songs in a nasal voice and flitting like lightning from one note to

another by fits and starts are the best things in the world of music? Not so. Unless each note is given full play in every scale, all the science of music is marred. In painting, by keeping in touch with nature, you can make it as artistic as you like; there is no harm in doing that, and the result will be nothing but good. Similarly, in music, you can display any amount of skill by keeping to science, and it will be pleasing to the ear. The Mohammedans took up the different *Rāgas* and *Rāginis* after coming into India. But they put such a stamp of their own colouring on the art of *Tappa* songs that all the science in music was destroyed.

Q. Why, Mahārāj (Sir)? Who has not a liking for music in Tappa?

Swamiji:—The chirping of crickets sounds very good to some. The Santāls think their music also to be the best of all. You do not seem to understand that when one note comes upon another in such quick succession, it not only robs music of all grace, but, on the other hand, creates discordance rather. Do not the permutation and combination of the seven keynotes form one or other of the different melodies of music, known as *Ragas* and *Raginis*? Now, in *Tappa*, if one slurs over a whole melody (*Raga*) and creates a new tune, and over and above that, if the voice is raised to the highest pitch by tremulous modulation, say, how can the *Raga* be kept intact? Again, the poetry of music is completely destroyed if there be in it such profuse use of light and short strains just for effect. To sing by keeping to the idea, meant to be conveyed by a song, totally disappeared from our country when *Tappas* came into vogue. Nowadays, it seems, the true art is reviving a little, with the improvement in theatres; but, on the other hand, all regard for *Ragas* and *Raginis* is being more and more flung to the winds.

Accordingly, to those who are past masters in the art of singing *Dhrupada*, it is painful to hear *Tappas*. But in our music the cadence, or a duly regulated rise and fall of voice or sound, is very good. The French detected and appreciated this trait first, and tried to adapt and introduce it in their music. After their doing this, the whole of Europe has now thoroughly mastered it.

—Swami Vivekananda

Source: Swami Vivekananda's Works

¹These Conversations and Dialogues are translated from the contributions of Disciples to the Udbodhan, the Bengali organ of the Ramakrishna Mission.



Ayurvedic Medicine, Its Approaches and Principles

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient medical sciences in the world. It is considered to be the Upaveda (part of) of Atharva Veda and thus has its origin from Vedas, the oldest recorded wisdom on the earth. It has survived through two sets of original authentic texts each consisting of three books, namely. *Vridhdhatrayi*, the three big books: *Charaka Samhita* (500 BC), *Sushruta Samhita* (500 BC), and the *Samhitas of Vagbhata* (600 AD); and *Laghutrayi*, the three small books: *Madhav Nidana* (900 AD), *Sarangdhara Samhita* (1300 AD), and *Bhava Prakasa* (1600 AD). All of these texts were originally written in Sanskrit and are in the form of an encyclopedia dealing with all aspects of life, health, disease, and treatment. The approach is essentially philosophic, holistic, and humanistic. Ayurveda is more life and health oriented than disease and treatment oriented. It presents a total life science and visualizes the total health of an individual in a holistic way.

Ayurveda advocates a complete restorative, preventive and curative system of medicine and appears to have been practiced in ancient times in the form of eight major specialties: Kaya Cikitsa (general medicine), Salya Tantra (surgery), Salakya Tantra (diseases of eye, ear, nose, and throat), Kaumarabhritya (pediatrics, obstetrics, and gynecology), Rasayana Tantra (nutrition, rejuvenation, and geriatrics), Vajikarana (sexology), Bhuta Vidya (psychiatry), and Agada Tantra (toxicology). Thus, Ayurveda was a well-developed system of medicine even in ancient times. With the changing needs of the health care system today, the holistic approach of Ayurveda has once again drawn the attention of the world. There is a need to make full use of this ancient wisdom after due evaluation and scientific assessment to meet the newer challenges of the medical world.

The Approach

The extensive knowledge and wisdom about all aspects of medicine available in the Ayurvedic classics are very rich. Ayurveda, like all other systems of ancient Indian learning, made discoveries through the most subtle sources, namely, the Pramana (observations), Pratyaksa (direct perception), Anumana (logical inference), Aptopadesa (verbal and authentic documentary testimony), and Yukti (experimental evidence). In view of the above nature of the Ayurvedic knowledge, it is suggested that all studies and investigations directed toward its revival should take into account historical perspective, linguistic interpretation, and comparative evaluation of Ayurvedic medicine with contemporary sciences such as Western modern medical sciences.

If we examine the Ayurvedic concepts in the proper historical perspectives with the correct linguistic interpretations in the light of comparable contemporary knowledge, it may not be difficult to reach the genuine meaning. While undertaking the comparative studies, one has to appreciate that Ayurveda and contemporary modern medical sciences have very different approaches. The obvious distinctions between Ayurveda and Western medicine are: Ayurveda is essentially experiential, whereas modern medicine is an experimental science; Ayurveda has a holistic and totalistic approach whereas modern medicine is analytical; Ayurveda is function (physiological) oriented, whereas modern medicine is structure based and organ oriented. Ayurveda looks at the whole organism as a total indivisible being which has to function as a whole in order to exist as a whole.

Fundamental Principles

Microcosm-Macrocosm Continuum

Ayurveda is based on the laws of nature. The theory of Loka-Purusa Samya (the macrocosm-microcosm continuum) is the most important principle; it states that the individual is a miniature replica of the universe. The individual and the universe both are essentially Panchabhautika (made up of five basic physical factors or elements). The elements are Akasa (ether or space), Vayu (air or motion), Teja (fire or radiant energy), Jala (water or cohesive factor), and Prithvi (earth or mass).

The Purusa (individual) and the Loka (universe) remain in constant interaction with each other and also derive and draw materials from each other in order to maintain normalcy and homeostasis. This exchange follows the law of Samanya and Visesa (homologous vs. heterologous) on the simple principle that similar/homologous matter increases itself, whereas dissimilar/ heterologous matter decreases or depletes itself.

The interaction and exchange between Loka and Purusa continues in a natural way as an individual breaths air, drinks water, and consumes food articles available in nature. As long as this interaction is wholesome and optimal, the Individual is in optimal health. When a harmonious interaction breaks down, a disease state is initiated. Hence, the main principle of treatment of a disease is to restore harmony between the Loka and the Purusa and to restore the normal balance of Pancha Mahabhutas (five basic physical factors or elements) in the body and mind.

Ayu and Pancha Mahabhuta Theory

Ayurveda conceives Ayu (life) as a four-dimensional entity consisting of Sarira (physical body), Indriya (senses), Satva (psyche), and Atma (the soul or the conscious element). Thus, the individual life being is a comprehensive psychophysical spiritual unit which is highly dynamic and is in constant interplay with the cosmos. The human body is Panchabhautika, consisting of a proportionate combination of the five Mahabhutas (elements). The Pancha Mahabhuta Theory is essentially a theory of physics.

Theory of Tridosha

The five Mahabhutas (physical attributes) constitute the Tridoshas—the three major biological components of the living body namely, Vata, Pitta and Kapha. The functions of the body are explained in terms of these Doshas. The biological components are called Doshas because of their inherent tendency to become vitiated and to vitiate each other. Vata is the biological product of the predominance of air and space, Pitta is the product of predominance of fire and water and Kapha is the product of earth and water factors of the Pancha Mahabhuta. Thus, the Tridosha theory of Ayurveda is a biological application of the Pancha Mahabhuta theory of Hindu physics.

The three Doshas can also be understood as conceptual constructs to explain human physiology in a unique holistic way. The human body consists of a mass of solid substratum with an intensive Interplay of chemical activity and an energy pool of motion and movement. These three aspects coexist in a predetermined proportion and function in a manner complementary to each other in the interest of the overall function of the total organism. The solid substratum of the body is called Kapha, the chemical moieties are the Pitta, and the energy or motion component is the Vata. The existence of the three Doshas can be felt in the body as a whole and can be traced at the molecular level.

“The existence of the three Doshas can be felt in the body as a whole and can be traced at the molecular level.”

Each cell of the body consists of a mass substratum, a chemistry, and an operative energy. They are the Kapha, Pitta, and Vata aspects of a cell's organelles, respectively. The proportion of the three has to remain in an appropriate range of normalcy which varies from organ to organ, tissue to tissue, and cell to cell. For example, a neuron in the brain may have higher degrees of Vata than the other two Doshas, while a cell of an endocrine gland such as the thyroid has more Pitta, and the relatively inert cells of the bone or muscle may have more Kapha.

Dosha Prakriti

The relative proportion of the three Doshas (elements) is very important. The genetically determined relative proportion of the three Doshas within normal range is called Dosha Prakriti (personality). The properties of the Doshas are responsible for determining an individual's constitution, the sum total of his physique, physiology, and psyche. Thus, the Dosha Prakriti



“With the changing needs of the health care system today, the holistic approach of Ayurveda has once again drawn the attention of the world.”

is an important consideration in understanding human life, health, disease, disease susceptibility, preventive and promotive health care, and treatment requirements of a patient. The Ayurvedic texts describe in detail the physical, physiological, and behavioral features of individuals with different Prakritis. The texts describe seven types of Dosha Prakritis.

The Trigunas

The Pancha Mahabhutas are represented in the psyche of an individual in terms of the Trigunas—the three Gunas (qualities) of the Manas (mind)—namely, Satva (clarity), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (inertia). Akasa Tattva (space) is represented in Satva Guna. Vayu (air) and Teja (fire) are represented in Rajas Guna. Prithvi (earth) and Jala (water) are represented in Tamas Guna. The Tamas Guna represents mass and inertia, whereas the Rajas Guna represents dynamism and activity. Satva is the state of complete balance. The psychic makeup of an individual varies depending upon the genetically determined relative preponderance of the three Gunas. This variation is categorized as 3 major Manas Prakriti (mental constitutions) which are subdivided into 16 subtypes or traits. In principle, an individual's constitution reflects the combination of the 16 traits. However, one of the traits may predominate, giving characteristic features to the individual and defining the type of Manas Prakriti.

Swabhavoparamvada and Self-Healing

Ayurveda propounds an important theory of self-healing termed Swabhavoparamvada (natural self-cure). According to Ayurveda, the human body is inherently endowed with a unique power of self-defense and spontaneous healing against injury and disease. The body heals itself and a natural cure follows after every injury and insult. The role of medicine is to assist nature.

Basic Causes of Disease

In spite of the rich resource of natural resistance and immunity of the body, technically termed

Vyadhihsamatva, people do suffer from a variety of mental and physical disorders warranting medicinal interventions. Ayurveda propounds that the primary cause of all diseases is the failure of harmony between Purusa (the individual) and Loka (the universe or environment), an imbalance in the interaction of microcosm and macrocosm, respectively. Fundamentally, the Loka-Purusa interaction takes place at three levels: Kala (time and its chronobiological influences), Buddhi (intelligence, the major source of thought information), and Indriyarth (the objects of the five sense organs, the source of stressful information from the macrocosm to the microcosm).

The normal functions of Kala, Buddhi, and Indriyarth are important attributes of the life process. Their unwanted malfunctions are classically named Atiyoga (excessive utilization), Ayoga (nonutilization), and Mithyayoga (wrongful utilization). The Ayoga, Atiyoga, and Mithyayoga of Kala, Buddhi, and Indriyarth are named Kala Parinama (chronobiological changes occurring in the body as a result of alterations in time factors such as diurnal variations), Pragnaparadha (deliberate or volitional erring), and Asatmyendriyarth Samyoga (unwholesome contact of sensory objects), respectively, and are considered to be the primary causes of all diseases. All other causes of ill health known and described in different schools of medicine are secondary to these primary factors, which are essentially environmental factors. Thus, the cause of disease according to Ayurveda lies in the environment, and so the cure is also to be found in nature.

Evolution of a Disease and Dosika Rhythm

When an individual is indisposed because of the above-mentioned etiological factors, the disease process ensues in the form of Tridosika arrhythmia and vitiation of the Doshas (physical elements), which may lead to irreversible diathesis and gives rise to a full-fledged disease. Sushruta Samhita, a leading Ayurvedic classic, describes six stages of the evolution of a disease, depicting each stage

as a specific opportunity to apply appropriate therapeutic interventions. The Satkriyakala (stages of a disease) are Sancaya (accumulation of the Doshas), Prakopa (vitiation of the Doshas), Prasara (spread), Sthana Samsraya (localization), Vyakti (manifestation), and Bheda (chronicity and complications).

The precision adopted in describing these stages of the disease process and the relevant therapeutic intervention is a unique concept of Ayurveda. The basic philosophy behind the concept of Kriyakala (intervention time) is to emphasize the need for early detection of a disease and an appropriate timely therapeutic intervention so that the disease process may be reversed toward normalcy without waiting for later stages of the disease to become manifest. An Ayurvedic physician will detect the defect in the Sancaya stage, at the beginning stage of the disease.

Agni and Ama

In the above context, it is often wondered why the Doshas start to accumulate. What is the main triggering factor responsible for precipitating the Kriyakala (stages in the evolution of a disease)? Among many factors, Agni (the digestive and metabolic fire of the body) is considered to be the most important factor. There are 13 types of Agni in the body which are responsible for digestion of food and metabolism at different levels. When the Agni becomes weak, Ama (unwanted byproducts of digestion and metabolism) begins to accumulate in the body at different levels from the gastrointestinal tract to the systemic level in tissues and cells. Amas act as toxins and antigenic materials. Their presence renders an Ama state in the body which is characterized by increasing impermeability and sluggishness of the Srotas (body channels). The Ama state allows Sancaya (accumulation of the Doshas), the first Kriyakala leading to the progression of a disease. Ayurveda emphasizes that all diseases are the product of weak Agni (digestion and metabolism), and in turn the main principle of treatment is to restore and strengthen the Agni.

Ayurvedic Diagnostics

Diagnosis in Ayurvedic medicine is not always in terms of naming the disease, but is in the form of a description of the disease process depicting the pattern of vitiation of the Doshas (elements of

the body) and Dusyas (seven basic tissues of the body) and the Adhithana (seat of origin of the disease), including the organs or Srotas (channels of the body) involved and the quality of life, health, and personality of the patient. All this demands a very extensive interrogation and examination of the patient. Ayurveda makes a twofold approach to diagnostics, namely, Rogi Pariksha (examination of the patient) and Roga Pariksha (examination of the disease pathology). Rogi Pariksha is essentially concerned with ascertaining the constitution of the individual and status of his health and vitality. It is not meant for the diagnosis of the disease.

The emphasis on ascertaining the constitutional background and evaluation of the status of health in a diseased person is a unique concept of Ayurveda. Ayurveda advocates that the patient is always of great help in making the diagnosis, in prognostication, and in deciding the overall approach in disease management and treatment.

Charaka, the foremost authority on Ayurveda, describes the Dasavidha Pariksha (a tenfold methodology used in Rogi Pariksha to assess the patient's health); it consists of Prakriti (constitution), Vikriti (current state of disease susceptibility or morbidity), Sara (quality of the tissues), samhanana (bodybuild or compactness of the body), Pramana (anthropometry, measurement), Satmya (adaptability), Satva (mental constitution or stamina), Ahara Sakti (digestive power), Vyayama Sakti (physical strength), and Vaya (age and rate of aging).

The Roga Pariksha (examination of the disease pathology) is carried out to diagnose the present state of the disease. This is usually done in three parts: Prasna Pariksha (the interrogation or patient history); Astavidha Pariksha (the popular eightfold examination) including Nadi (pulse), Mutra (urine), Mala (stool), Jihwa (tongue), Sabda (voice), Sparsa (skin), Drk (eye), and Akriti (facial appearance or expression); and Sadanga Pariksha (systemic examination of the whole body including the Srotas (13 gross channels) spread over the Sadangas (the 6 major parts of the body), namely, the head, neck, chest, abdomen, and the extremities. Nadi Pariksha (pulse reading) is considered to be one of the most important aspects of clinical examination. After acquiring the necessary experience and expertise, an Ayurvedic physician can determine a lot about the health and disease of the patient. Many physicians claim

to depend entirely on pulse reading for making a diagnosis, although classical Ayurveda does not make such a claim.

Promotive and Preventive Health Care

Ayurvedic Medicine is essentially promotive and preventive in its approach. However, it also provides a comprehensive system of curative medicine for the treatment of the sick, adopting a unique holistic approach. In accordance with the four-dimensional concept of Ayu (life), Ayurveda conceives a four-dimensional definition of Swasthya (health). Sushruta, one of the classic authors of Ayurveda, defines Swasthya as a state of Sama (balance) of the 3 Doshas, the 13 Agnis (digestive or metabolic factors), the 7 Dhatus (bodily tissue groups), and the Malas (impurities). A Swastha (healthy individual) is in a state of total biological equilibrium as well as Prasanna (a state of sensorial, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being). Thus, Ayurveda presents a complete definition of health.

Ayurvedic texts describe a comprehensive regimen to maintain health, a code of health conduct popularly known as Swastha Vritta (daily and seasonal routines). This includes Dinacarya (the daily code of health conduct), Ratricarya (conduct for the night), and Ritucarya (conduct in relation to various seasons). Details about Sadvritta (codes) for lifestyle, diet, exercise, and personal and social hygiene have been described. Extensive information is available on the role of periodic biological purificatory measures and consumption of Rasayanams (restorative remedies) for promotion of health, longevity, and Vyadhihksamatva (immunity or resistance against disease).

The Cure and Its Approach

The object of curative treatment in Ayurveda is to restore the Dhatu Samya (balance of Doshas in the Dhatus—seven bodily tissues; equilibrium or homeostasis). The therapeutic attempt to restore balance is done by augmenting the weakened Doshas, decreasing the increased Doshas, and preserving the normal ones. Therapeutics consist of utilizing appropriate diets, drugs, and activities drawn from nature. Based on the principle of Samanya (homologous) and Visesa (heterologous), a similar or homologous material enriches the similar in the body and a dissimilar or heterologous material depletes its counterpart in the body. The

“External purification measures such as oleation, fomentation, and massage are considered to be preparatory measures for the major internal purification therapies.”

concept of Samanya and Visesa is considered to be the fundamental basis of all actions in Ayurvedic treatment.

The Three Streams of Therapy

Ayurveda describes three main types of therapeutic interventions which may be complementary to each other but are used more often to treat specific types of ailments. The three classical therapies are Daivavyapa-shraya Cikitsa (divine therapy), Yuktivyapa-shraya Cikitsa (biological, rational, or diet-drug therapy), and Satvavajaya (psycho-therapy).

Daivavyapashraya Cikitsa is indicated in Karmik diseases (diseases caused by actions in past life), in cases where no definite acquired cause can be determined, and when Yuktivyapashraya Cikitsa is not effective. It is often practiced in tune with Astrology. Stars, stones, Mantra (chanting of hymns), Japa (chanting of sacred Incantations, meditation), oblations, prayers, and so on are the usual therapies for this purpose. This is a kind of Astrotherapy (spiritual healing). It is not psychotherapy or a therapy of biological significance.

Yuktivyapashraya Cikitsa is a rationally planned therapy taking into account the doctrines of Pancha Mahabhuta (five basic elements), Tridosha, Triguna, Agni, Ama, and so on and following the principle of Samanya and Visesa (homologous and heterologous). This is essentially a rational biological therapy aiming for Dhatu Samya (restoration of balance of homeostasis).

Rational Ayurvedic Therapy

Rational Ayurvedic treatment is carried out in two parts: Samshodhana (purification therapy) and Samsamana (curative treatment). The aim of Samshodhana therapy, which is popularly known as Panchakarma therapy, is to purify the body



from gross to subtle levels and to clean the Srotas (channels of the body) to enable the free flow of nutrients, medicaments, and metabolites. The living human body consists of innumerable Srotas which are traceable up to the level of the pores of cell membranes. The Srotas become blocked and sluggish as a result of age or ill health. Ayurveda advocates that these channels should be cleaned by Samshodhana measures in order to enable the individual to heal spontaneously and also to enable medicaments to reach the target sites more easily. Thus, Samshodhana is considered to be a prerequisite for all kinds of medications and therapeutic interventions.

A number of procedures are described for Samshodhana Karma. From a practical point of view, it is practiced in two forms, external or internal purification. External purification uses oleation, fomentation (hot compress which may contain herbs), and massage. A therapist uses oil baths, heat, and the physical pressure of massage as the tools of the treatment to soften and mobilize the Malas (impurities). External purification measures liquify the impurities and push them into gross channels (excretory systems) from where they are easily excreted or are expelled with the help of major internal purification procedures. Thus, external purification measures such as oleation, fomentation, and massage are considered to be preparatory measures for the major internal purification therapies. Internal purification is the major intervention and consists of Vamana (emesis), Virecana (purgation), Anuvasana Vasti (oleus enema), Asthapana (nonoleus enema), and Sirovirecana (nasal instillations). The internal

purification therapies are popularly known as Panchakarma (fivefold therapy).

In principle, Samshodhana Karma is followed by a specific Samsamana (curative treatment) that consists of a rationally planned diet, drugs, and lifestyle. In formulating a scheme of Samsamana treatment, the physician takes into account the patient's Prakriti (constitution) and components of his Vikriti (morbidity), namely the pattern of vitiation of the Doshas (physical elements), Dhatus (bodily tissue groups), Agni (digestion and metabolism), and so on. Ayurvedic physicians use the Panchabhautik composition of drugs and diets including their Rasa (taste), Guna (properties of the drug responsible for mediating its therapeutic actions), Virya (potency of pharmacological action), Vipaka (effect), and Prabhava (mechanism of action) and follow the law of Samanya and Visesa (homologous and heterologous).

"To deal with the problems caused by technology, stress, artificial lifestyles and global pollution we are once again seeing the value of these natural healing systems which offer safe and proven remedies as an alternative..."

-David Frawley

-R.H. Singh

Source: Ayurvedic and Allopathic Medicine and Mental Health, Proceedings of Indo-US workshop on Traditional Medicine and Mental Health 13-17 October, 1996, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Swami Prakashananda Ayurveda Research Centre (SPARC), Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, India

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Quit India Movement,
1942 mass participation

Our India



Mahatma Gandhi

How should one try to understand one's own country? The country grows on you and you grow in the country. Understanding one's own country becomes more difficult if you are an Indian. India a civilization of antiquity, of great achievements and numerous short-comings fills one's mind and often causes bewilderment. And yet, one has to undertake this journey, howsoever, formidable the task may be.

Those of us who were born in the first half of the 20th century saw the struggle for freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi which reached its zenith in the Quit India Movement (1942-44). Mahatma Gandhi mobilized the people of India for a non-violent struggle against foreign rule and its scale and depth was unprecedented in history. The freedom movement had the distinction of bringing for the first time millions of women into the political realm of civil disobedience and Satyagraha campaigns.

On 15 August, 1947 India attained freedom but it was an India divided into India and Pakistan. It was accompanied by unprecedented violence. Many then felt that the partition was temporary while others feared that this will impede India from getting her due position in the country of nations. Partition of India was not merely a political failure. It was also our civilizational failure.

Side by side, there was also a literary movement in the country to which Rabindranath Tagore in the north and Subramaniya Bharati in the south provided leadership with imagination and fervor. The new and rapidly growing corpus of books and monographs also revealed to its readers India in terms of its spirit, its philosophy, its arts, its poetry, its music and its myriad ways of life.

All these brought a new perspective in an Indian's understanding of his surroundings, of emerging challenges and, of course, of his country. An age was ending and the 'soul' of India 'long suppressed' was finding 'utterances'. India could be understood in many ways.

What is India?

Viewed in terms of geography, the Indian sub-continent "is a world of its own, extensive yet enclosed by marked geographical boundaries". A recent survey has indicated that 4,653 communities live in India (that include all major religions of the world in a predominantly Hindu society with a sizeable Muslim population), professing different faiths, practicing diverse forms of worship, entertaining different notions about the migration of the soul, speaking several languages and dialects. Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "*India is a cultural unity amongst diversity a bundle of contradictions held together by a strong but invisible thread*".

In fact, for the past five thousand years or so, Indians have developed common traits, thoughts and feelings. These have given successive generations of Indians a mindset, a value system, and a way of life, which has been retained with remarkable continuity.

The Indus Valley civilization provides the beginnings of the Indian historical experience. The archaeological excavations at various sites connected with that civilization, such as a Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Dholavira, have amply proved that there existed a well-developed city life, irrigation system, and agricultural operations in India during this period.

Much later, during the Vedic period divine narratives were pieced together out of subconscious allegory, poetic symbolism, personification of nature, or worship of spirits. But in all these, the human mind played as important a role.

The Vedas are the world's oldest literature. It is called *shruti* (hearing) which is eternal, self-evident and divinely revealed. The sages had seen and perceived the Vedic mantras while in a stage of meditation and contemplation. The entire Vedic literature is *shruti*. On the other hand, we have several human creations in literature which are known as *smriti* (recollection). The Ramayana,

the Mahabharata including the *Bhagvad Gita*, the *Upanishad* and *Dharmashastra* represent the finest examples of the *smriti* tradition.

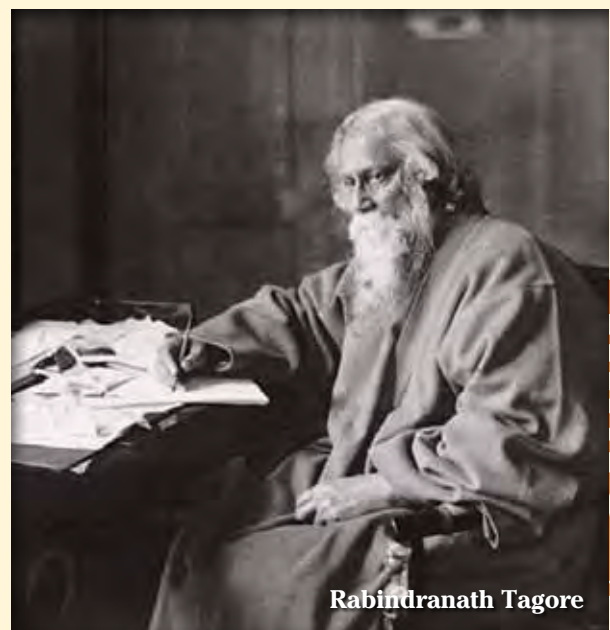
Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit, have greatly contributed to the growth of modern Indian languages like Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Assamese, and have enormously influenced their script, grammar and literature.

A remarkable feat of the conservation of memory, the Hindus, through the tradition of *shruti* and *smriti* have passed on the *Vedas*, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagvad Gita and other sacred texts to the present day. This remarkable aspect of historical consciousness of Indians was highlighted by Rabindranath Tagore in his paper, '*A vision of Indian History*', where he writes:

I love India, not because I cultivate the idolatry of geography, not because I have had the chance to be born on her soil, but because she has saved through tumultuous ages the living words that have issued from the illuminated consciousness of her great sons.

Where lies the genius of India? As Sri Aurobindo rightly observes:

"Spirituality is indeed the master-key of the Indian mind; the sense of the indefinite is native to it. India saw from the beginning, and, even in her ages of reason and her age of increasing ignorance, she never lost hold of the insight, that life cannot be rightly seen in the sole light, cannot be perfectly lived in the sole power of its externalities. She was alive to the greatness of material laws and forces; she had a keen eye for the importance of the physical sciences; she knew how to organize the arts of ordinary life. But she saw that the physical does not get its full sense until it stands in right relation to the supra-physical."



Rabindranath Tagore

It is thus not surprising that during the period of recorded global history of the past 2500 years India was a major power for 1400 years.

Our ancestors developed rational traditions in this country. The Indian genius initiated some of the earliest steps in algebra, geometry and astronomy. The decimal system emerged here. It was in India where early philosophy—secular as well as religious—achieved exceptional sophistication. People invented games like chess, pioneered sex education, and began the first systematic study of political economy. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, the finest works of art and sculpture of Ajanta and Ellora and various Buddhist shrines, the best universities of the world of their times at Nalanda and Vikramshila are achievements that should give us pride in our heritage.

The Story of Civilisation

In its 5000 years long history, the Indian civilization has undergone both external and multi-dimensional internal upheavals. In this epic story, five encounters (among millions) have been particularly significant.

The Vedic period (1500 BC and before) witnessed the intermingling of the Aryans with autochthons which made a decisive influence not only on religion and spirituality but also on patterns of agriculture, industry, trade and overall productivity. There were also notable advances in music and medicine, mathematics and astronomy.

The second most significant encounter was through the discourses of Lord Mahavira (599-521 BC), the founder of Jainism, and Lord

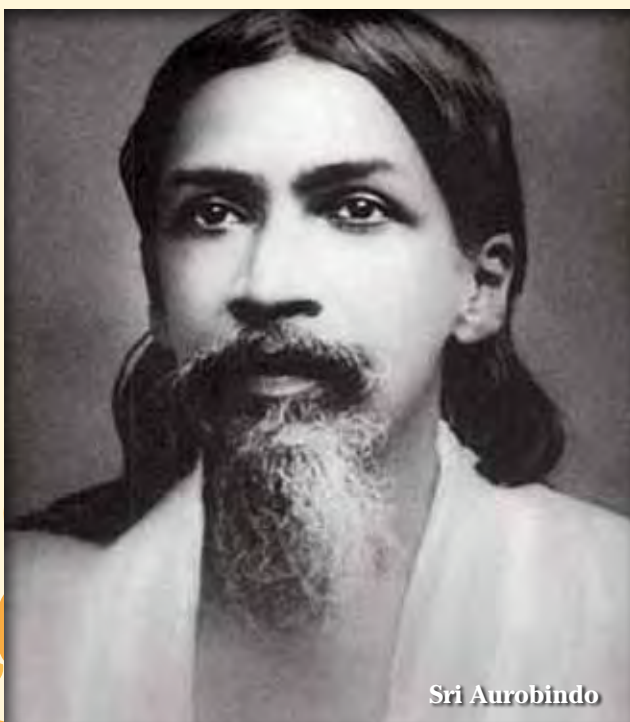
Buddha (566-486 BC), the founder of Buddhism. These enabled people to see things in a new light. Both Mahavira and Buddha strove to build an inclusive social order.

I have found in the encounter between the Vedic philosophy and the Buddhist precepts a highly interesting dialogue and one of great value in understanding the Indian mind. The Buddhist world-view generated introspection among the Hindu elite. The greatest loss in my view, on account of the 'banishment' of Buddhism from India was the method of rationality and scientific enquiry that Buddhism had encouraged.

The Brahmanical order excluded women and the working class (of farmers, artisans and dalits), from reading and writing. It reasserted its position in the name of religion and tradition and pursued its dogmatic policies with renewed vigour in the absence of the Buddhist challenge. The decline of such a society was inevitable and the Indian society gradually slid into backwardness while maintaining a few pockets of prosperity and some persons of exceptional intellectual talent.

The period of decline that began in the economy and polity after the eighth century AD created space that was filled by Muslim invasions and eventual Muslim rule in India. Thus commenced the third encounter—that between Islam and Hindu belief systems.

Islam in a predominantly Hindu society became the religion of the ruling elite for nearly 600 years. It brought to its believers a single God, a rigid code of worship and a way of living. Unlike Buddha, Muhammad could not be accommodated in the Hindu pantheon.



Sri Aurobindo



Subramaniya Bharati



There were, however, significant attempts to find a *modus vivendi* between Islam and Hinduism. It meant that India had to devise ways and means by which Hindus and Muslims could live together in a society based on different spiritual and social conceptions. In fact, Islam gradually lost its Arabia and Persian identity and absorbed many Hindu folk traditions.

The creative genius of the India people—both Hindus and Muslims—found unique expression in Sufism and Bhakti literature, in music and painting, in the birth of the Urdu language and enrichment of the other Indian languages, and in architecture. This is popularly referred to as Ganga-Jamuni etiquette or *tahjeeb*.

Christianity came to India well before it went to several European countries. However, the civilisational encounter began with the entry of the Europeans in India and the establishment of the East India Company by the British. With the spread of the English language and the concept of democracy and rule of law began the fourth civilizational encounter and that led to introspection in the Indian society. The religious and social reforms of Hinduism in the nineteenth century were attempts to assimilate these new influences.

The first sign of this political awakening was the inauguration of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and this gradually led to a new conception of nationhood and struggle for independence. Mahatma Gandhi brought the common people including women in the freedom movement and through a massive non-violent movement, he succeeded in securing independence. By creating a favorable environment after 1947, the framers of the Indian Constitution rising above considerations of religion, ethnicity, caste and gender gave the people of India the right to adult franchise.

Since the end of the last century, another fifth great civilisational encounter encompassing all aspects of our living is taking place. This is popularly known as the information and communications revolution and has resulted in rapid integration of markets as well as trade, in the sharing of cultural values as well as products, and in disseminating information as well as in imparting training.

Today, a new kind of knowledge is being produced and circulated, based on India's own traditional knowledge as well as scientific achievements of the world. In understanding this phenomenon one ought to be also aware of the circumstances governing the kind of knowledge that the new generation of Indians is producing and circulating. Young Indians are trying to reach across cultural divides and understand languages, scientific methodologies, histories and faiths other than their own.

The number of renaissance men and women in the



The monolithic statue of Lord Gomateshwara or Bahubali at Shravanabelagola in Karnataka, is one of the important Jain pilgrim centers.

country is on the rise. They have courage, intellect and the ability to compete in the world and a significant number of these people have a strong desire to connect with the rest of their community and make a contribution towards building a strong and just India.

Renewal of India

India has been living through pluralistic challenge longer than several other nations. In terms of faith, well before the advent of Christianity and Islam in the West and other parts of the world, India was a significant playfield of civilizational encounters between Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Both Judaism and Christianity came to India in the first century itself Islam too commenced its entry through the coastal towns of the Indian peninsula from the eighth century onwards. In the ninth century, when the Zoroastrians of Persia felt that their religion was in danger from the invading Muslims, they moved to the north-west coast of India. Their descendants still live there and are known as Parsis. The birth of Sikhism in the fifteenth century in India had the avowed objective of bringing peace to conflicting encounters among Hinduism and Islam. In the last century, when the Tibetans felt a threat to their religion and culture, they chose India as a refuge and a large number of them still live here.

Multi-culturalism is a basic feature of India's civilisational experience. In its practice in India, it is not atheistic in character but a combination of religions. Secularism and multi-culturalism are not in conflict. It is this openness of the India experience that provides the base for the making of a public policy of harmony.

In our long and uninterrupted civilisational history one thing strikes us constantly that the common people of India have always provided strength to the values of pluralism and tolerance.

We are living in a period of great turbulence in India. Terrorism, Naxalism and insurgencies, sectarian violence and narrowness, the

politicization of ethnic, caste and religious ties, and lack of opportunities are causing enormous distress in our society. Some people even think that the democratic system is noisy, messy and dilatory in handling these challenges. It is our faith that in the long run democracy alone through people's unity and determination shall prevail over terrorist forces.

In recent years, India's achievements in the economic domain is quite impressive. The Indian middle class has a size of 300 million people. India's new economic policy has unleashed creative energy of the business class; there is a new emphasis on efficiency, productivity and competition. The right to information (Right to Information Act, 2005) has emerged as an effective instrument in the hands of the common people to check corruption, fight injustice and make governance transparent.

We have to create and sustain an environment that will enable and encourage competition, efficiency and inclusiveness. Towards this, we need fresh ideas and new policies and programmers based

on these new ideas. And we need boldness and a sense of purpose to implement those policies and programs. Dialogue—an essential prerequisite of democracy—would ensure that.

There can be no one way—religion, caste, culture, or linguistic of being an Indian. Pluralism is the founding principle for building a pan-Indian identity and need not be in conflict with other identities. To accord respect to the identity of others is a part of our constitutional obligation.

India of the Future

I have been a keen student of India's history. I have found inadequacies in the traditional approach of ruler-centric narrative of events in understanding my country. I have thus tried to hear the voices of saints and mystics, poets and sculptors, scientists and engineers, farmers and artisans. I have learnt more from the common people living in our villages than others. I have also found that folklore and folk tales are as important in understanding our nation as scientific inventions, economic processes and political events.



I imagine this approach of “one truth many expressions”. This was best expressed in the Rig Veda: “*Ekam Sad Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*”; (The truth is one the sages describe it variously) was formulated by our rishis both in order to understand the complexities of natural objects and their inter-relationships and for harmonious living in society among people of multifarious beliefs and practices.

The Bahudha approach not only underlines equal respect for all points of view but it also calls for—and that is significant—inculcation of a habit in which one person thinks that the other person’s point of view may perhaps be right also underlines the same approach. Understanding the point of view of those with whom one profoundly disagrees is the first step toward learning to create a society which manages such disagreement.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, I wonder as to what kind of India my grand-children and generations to come thereafter will have. The emergence of India as a global player in economic and political terms in coming years is visible and

along with that a greater awareness of India’s cultural heritage.

A significant feature of India’s cultural attitude is that while absorbing the teachings of its ancestors it has also aligned itself with the global trends. India has all the ingredients of becoming a powerful nation-state: economic, military and cultural strength as well as a large body of young people. What is needed is that all of us should try hard and move forward through our democratic processes.

Democracy is at the heart of governance in India. Election after election common people are asserting their voice, changing their representatives in a manner that has ensured change in government in the states and also at the Centre. Democracy has really moved beyond periodic elections toward ‘good’ governance. Good governance does not occur by chance. It must be demanded by citizens and nourished explicitly and consciously by the nation-state.

As long as Indian society and polity encourage creative minds in the literatures and arts, science and technology, and give primacy to democratic institutions and to an approach of an inclusive and just social order, its age-old cultural strength would continue to be renewed.

I do also believe that like individuals, countries too have their destinies. India’s emergence as a significant global power is full of promise. Tomorrow’s India will be a country free of the scourges of poverty and illiteracy.

I am still learning about India. At times, India’s history, its achievements and failings make me happy; at others I feel angry. But I always feel proud, not in a narrow nationalistic sense, which in itself is significant, but in the wider sense of values that India provides to her children: a simple living, family ties, tolerance for the point of view of others, a spiritual quest and a respect for ecology.

“I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.”
-Mahatma Gandhi

-Balmiki Prasad Singh, currently Governor of Sikkim, is a distinguished scholar thinker and public servant. His latest book is *Bahudha and the Post-9/11 World* (Oxford University Press (OUP): 2010).

Source: India Perspectives, Vol 24, No. 4/2010



Ajmer Sharif Dargah is the shrine of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti



Wellness and Illness

“Perfect freedom is as necessary to the health and vigor of commerce as it is to the health and vigor of citizenship”.

-Patrick Henry

Wellness is the overall wellbeing of humans. Illness is a state where one does not feel well. While quantum physics has opened a new vista in the field of human physiology of wholeness in place of our reductionist, mechanistic, biochemistry based human physiology, the world has now come to realise that the conventional definition of health by the WHO needs change. In this context, the IOM, the audit body of US medical establishment, in its February 2010 meeting had accepted the new definition of Whole Person Healing (WPH) as the future illness care system.

Wellness (conventionally called health) is now defined as “enthusiasm to work and enthusiasm to be compassionate.” Interestingly, this fits in with the time honoured definition of health in Indian Ayurveda, the mother of all medical wisdoms in the world. We have now come one full circle in the so-called scientific medicine with a down to earth doable definition of health while the WHO definition of health as a state of physical, psychological, spiritual, emotional, social etc. wellbeing, according to Richard Smith, the former editor of the British Medical Journal, is attainable only under two circumstances—after death and during the height of orgasm which only lasts for a few seconds anyway!

The man who led the movement for WPH was the late Prof. Rustum Roy, one of the greatest

scientists the world ever had. “Over forty? It is time to fix a date for mammogram and the cost has come down for this holiday season from the 3950 INR to just 1750,” proclaimed a prominent headline advertisement in The New Indian Express of October 9, 2011 in Chennai. This kind of disease mongering efforts is at the root of all problems in medicine based on the wrong science of reductionism. Cancer is not a disease in this reductionist mode.

Cancer cells are a bunch of “jobless, directionless, rogue cells” which start their wandering inside us for years before they show themselves as clinical cancer where their numbers have swollen to millions already. Therefore there is nothing called early diagnosis of cancer. While I have been writing about this for years, now the US government has issued a circular that screening for prostate cancer using PSA test is unscientific and unreliable. Mammogram is not far from that truth. In fact, many places routine mammograms have been given up as mammograms themselves could help cancers to grow faster from those wandering cells which otherwise would have died a natural death before they become clinical cancers.

Cancer is an area where the so-called cancer researchers can tap from bottomless pockets of the research fund giving organisations. The research has gone still further towards vivisectionist from reductionism. The immune system works as a whole and in association with the other aspects of a human being. This has been proven time and again, but we do not seem to learn from our own mistakes. Our cloning efforts, our genetic

engineering efforts, our stem cell (exogenous) research have all come to naught. In fact, we conveniently forget the efforts of those researchers who have shown us the right path for stem cells research.

Way back in the early 1950s, Prof. Robert Becker of New York University Medical School, a great brain in orthopaedic surgery, showed how the body cells, wherever they are, under stress and urgent need, could transform themselves into pluripotent stem cells. That is body's own effort to produce endogenous stem cells. Bob demonstrated that the red blood cells at a fracture site under the periosteum of the broken bone, could slowly change into nucleated cells and then put out pseudopodia to become real powerful pluripotent endogenous stem cells and they know what to do to heal the bone.

Whereas the stem cells produced in the laboratory (in vitro) from any source, when introduced into the human body, need the help of the internal environment to do what we intend them to do. The environment includes not just the body as we see it but the mind. In fact, human body is the human mind seen as a solid body according to quantum physics! The exogenous stem cells could even harm the human system as happened with the first attempt to treat childhood cancers with this method; when the original cancer died, a new cancer cropped up!

Dolly, the first cloned animal died prematurely as she was as old as her mother (from whom the original cell was used for cloning) and suffered from old age diseases like cancer and joint damage even in infancy!

Eric Drexler's project to produce self-replicating nanobots which do not require father and / or mother died a premature death before it took off. Drexler, however, made billions from his company shareholders when he claimed that human beings could be made in the laboratory! Venture capitalists poured billions into his booty without any returns at the end of the day.

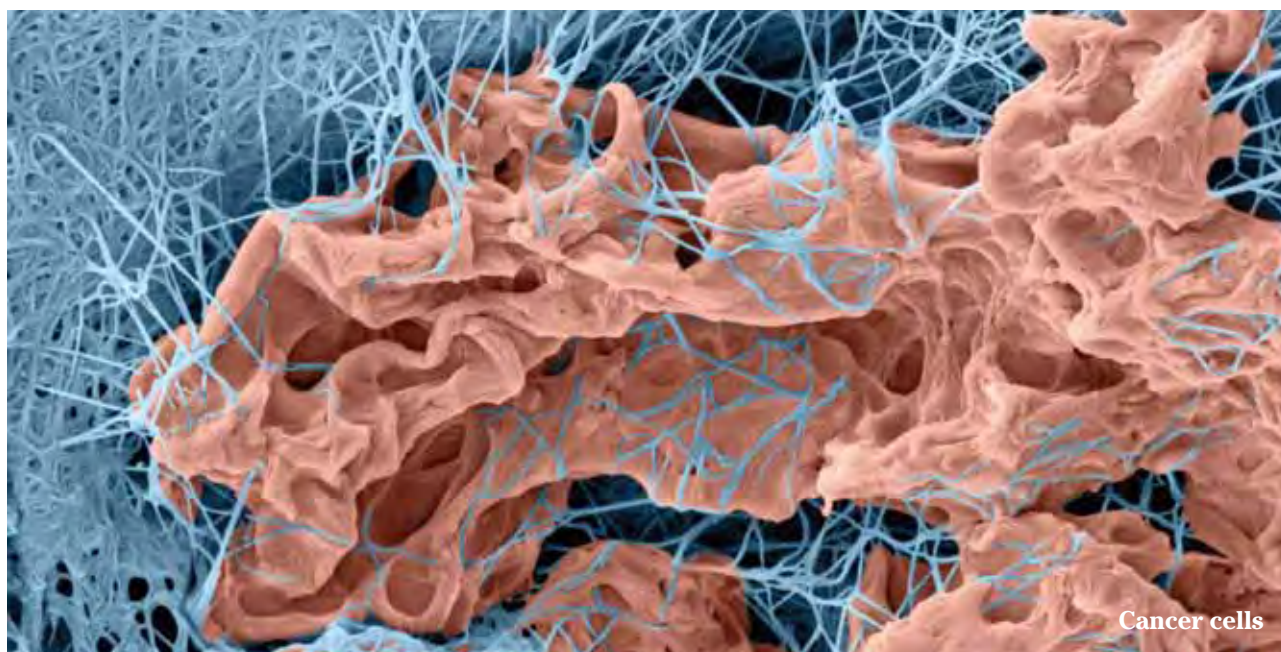
AIDS research is another example. While the protean causes of that syndrome are still very vague, researchers make hay when the research funds are in plenty going after that poor virus, the HIV, whose original fault was that it was discovered in the bone marrow of that first young

homosexual male in San Francisco when he died of the syndrome in 1981. In retrospect, we know that any germ could be found in such patients as their immune guard is very weak. The original paper of this association in *Science* is only a case history. Based on that report the author got his Nobel.

The time has come to rethink in this area of repetitive research to that of holistic and refutative research. When once we understand wellness and the real definition of health we quickly come to the conclusion that all illness management has to be holistic where the body mind and soul of the individual is taken into consideration.

“Cancer cells are a bunch of “jobless, directionless, rogue cells” which start their wandering inside us for years before they show themselves as clinical cancer... Therefore there is nothing called early diagnosis of cancer.”

The era of disease and diagnosis will replace the era of understanding the suffering human being (the patient) and trying to make him whole again, called healing. Research must be true “outcomes” research and not research to better surrogate end points as we do now. One example will be in order here. All the studies of cholesterol lowering efforts with reductionist chemicals from the original colestyramine to the present statins have only shown the effect of their lowering the blood report of cholesterol levels while they all showed higher death rates on the treated group at the end of the day. Death is the real outcome while lowered blood



*“Wellness
(conventionally called
health) is now defined
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report is a surrogate end point. The story seems to be similar with our efforts to lower many of the biological levels which we have been labelling as “diseases”. Chemical reductionist molecular therapeutics will have to give place to energy therapeutics as human body is a bundle of jumping leptons and correction of errors will have to use energy scientifically.

Many proven methods of energy treatment have been in vogue for eons, including many alternate systems where energy is the basis of the treatment. One more reason why energy methods are better is the speed with which one gets results in the two methods. Whereas chemical message transmission happens at a rate of one centimetre per second, energy healing transmission happens at a rate of 186,000 miles per second!

Most, if not all, reductionist chemical molecules are alien to the system and they are being rejected by the liver in the first place. (The first pass effect that we teach medical students in pharmacology means that the body is trying to destroy as much of the drug as possible).

The ghost of Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) staring in our face as the biggest cause of death in modern medicine could be avoided if we follow the holistic management of illnesses to bring man back to his/her state of wellness as defined above. Long live mankind on this planet in good health and happiness. Medical profession is always needed as the doctor is not just a drug vendor but a real friend, philosopher and guide to anybody who is ill. In addition, science has now shown that all the drugs or surgical methods that we use work *mostly* because of the faith the patient has in the doctor, the so-called placebo effect. This is also called the expectation effect (EE). A good doctor, humane and human, full of empathy will be God to patients at all times even in the future. Basically, a good doctor should be a good human being.

*“People who change AFTER change —SURVIVE.
People who change WITH change—SUCCEED.
People who CAUSE the change—LEAD”
-Anon.*

B.M. Hegde, MD, FRCP, FRCPE, FRCPG, FACC, FAMS. Padma Bhushan awardee 2010. Editor-in-chief, The Journal of the Science of Healing Outcomes; Chairman, State Health Society's Expert Committee, Govt. of Bihar, Patna. Former Prof. Cardiology, The Middlesex Hospital Medical School, University of London; Affiliate Prof. of Human Health, Northern Colorado University; Retd. Vice Chancellor, Manipal University, Chairman, Bhavan's Mangalore Kendra.

**Source: Bhavan's Journal
June 15, 2012**



Distinctive Features of Sanatana Dharma

Our religion has a number of unique or distinctive features. One of them is what is called the theory of karma, though this theory is common to religions like Buddhism which are offshoots of Hinduism.

What is the karma doctrine? For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. There is an ineluctable law of physics governing cause and effect, action and reaction. This law pertaining to physical phenomena our forefathers applied to human life. The cosmos includes not only sentient beings endowed with consciousness but also countless insentient objects. Together they constitute worldly life. The laws, the dharma, proper to the first order must apply to the second also. According to the karma theory, every action of a man has an effect corresponding to it. Based on this belief our religion declares that, if a man commits a sin, he shall pay the penalty for it. Also if his act is a virtuous one, he shall reap the benefits thereof.

Our religion further asserts that one is born again and again so as to experience the consequences of one's good and bad actions. "Do good." "Do not do evil," such are the exhortations of all religions. But Hinduism (and its offshoots) alone lay stress on the cause-and-effect connection. No religion originating in countries outside India subscribes to the cause-and-effect connection, nor to the reincarnation theory as one of its articles of faith. Indeed religions originating abroad hold beliefs contrary to this theory and strongly oppose the view that man is born again and again in order to exhaust his karma. They believe that a man has only one birth, that when his soul departs on his death it dwells somewhere awaiting the day of judgement.

On this day God makes an assessment of his good and bad actions and, on the basis of it, rewards him with eternal paradise or sentences him to eternal damnation.

Some years ago, a well-known writer from Europe came to see me—nowadays you see many white men coming to the Matha¹. This gentleman told me that the Bible stated more than once that God is love. He could not reconcile this with the belief that God condemns a sinner to eternal damnation without affording him an opportunity for redemption. On this point a padre had told him: "It is true that there is an eternal hell. But it is eternally vacant."

The padre's statement is difficult to accept. Let us suppose that the Lord in his compassion does not condemn a sinner to hell. Where then does he send his soul? Since, according to Christianity, there is no rebirth the sinner is not made to be born again. So he too must be rewarded with heaven (as much as the virtuous man). This means that we may merrily keep sinning without any fear of punishment. After all, God will reward all of us with heaven. This belief implies that there is no need for morality and truthfulness. According to our religion too, Isvara who decides our fate after death on the basis of our karma is infinitely merciful. But, at the same time, he does not plunge the world in *adharma*, in unrighteousness—that is not how his compassion manifests itself. What does he do then? He gives us another birth, another opportunity to reap the fruits of our good and bad actions. The joys of heaven and the torments of hell truly belong to this world itself. The sorrow and happiness that are our lot in our present birth are in proportion to the virtuous and evil deeds of our past birth. Those who sinned much suffer much now and, similarly, those who did much good enjoy much happiness now. The majority is made up of people who know more sorrow than happiness and of people who experience sorrow and happiness almost in equal measure. There are indeed very few blessed with utter happiness. It is evident from this that most of us must have done more evil than good in our past birth.

In his mercy the Lord gives us every time a fresh opportunity to wash away our sins. The guru, the sastras, and the temples are all his gifts to wipe away our inner impurities. That Isvara, in his compassion, places his trust even in a sinner confident that he will raise himself through his own efforts and gives him a fresh opportunity in the form of another birth to advance himself inwardly— is not such a belief better than that he

should dismiss a sinner as good-for-nothing and yet reward him with heaven? If a man sincerely believes, in a spirit of surrender, that there is nothing that he can do on his own and that everything is the Lord's doing, he will be redeemed and elevated. But it is one thing for God to bless a man who goes to him for refuge forsaking his own efforts to raise himself and quite another to bless him thinking him to be not fit to make any exertions on his own to advance inwardly. So long as we believe in such a thing as human endeavour we should think that Isvara's supreme compassion lies in trusting a man to go forward spiritually through his own efforts. It is in this way that the Lord's true grace is manifested.

That God does not condemn anyone to eternal punishment in hell is the personal opinion of a particular padre. It cannot be said that all religions like Christianity which believe that a man has only one birth agree with this view. They believe that God awards a man hell or paradise according to the good or evil he has done in one single birth. Since sinners who deserve to be condemned to hell predominate, the day of judgement has come to be known by the terrible name of doomsday. Here we have a concept according to which the Lord's compassion seems to be circumscribed.

There is strong evidence to support the reincarnation theory. A lady from the West came to see me one day and asked me if there was any proof of reincarnation. I did not have any discussion with her on the subject. Instead, I asked her to visit the local obstetric hospital and find out all about the children born there. There was

a learned man who knew English where we were camping then. I asked him to accompany the lady. Later, on their return from the hospital, I asked the woman about her impressions of the new-born children. She said that she had found one child plump and lusty, another skinny; one beautiful and another ungainly. One child was born in a comfortable ward [that is to a well-to-do mother] and another to a poor mother.

"Leave aside the question of God consigning a man to eternal hell after his death," I said to the foreign lady. We are not witness to such a phenomenon. But now you have seen with your own eyes how differently the children are born in the hospital that you visited. How would you account for the differences? Why should one child be born rich and another poor? Why should one be healthy and another sick? And why should one be good-looking and another unpretty?

"If you accept the doctrine that human beings are born only once, you cannot but form the impression that God is neither compassionate nor impartial—think of all the differences at birth—and that he functions erratically and unwisely. How are we to be devoted to such a God and have the faith that he will look on us with mercy? How are we to account for the differences between one being and another if we do not accept the doctrine that our life now is determined by the good and the bad we did in our past births." The lady from the West accepted my explanation.

Such an explanation is not, however, good enough for people in modern times. They demand



scientific proof of reincarnation. Parapsychologists have done considerable research in the subject and their findings are in favour of the theory of rebirth. During the studies conducted in various parts of the world they encountered people who remembered their past lives. The latter recalled places and people they had seen in their previous birth—places and people that have nothing to do with them now. The parapsychologists verified these facts and to their amazement found them to be true. The cases investigated by them were numerous. Most of us are wholly unaware of our past lives, but some do remember them. According to the researchers the majority of such people had been victims of accidents or murder in their previous lives.

The doctrine of the incarnations of the Lord—*avatars*—is another unique feature of our religion. The Reality (*Sadvastu*) is one. That it manifests itself as countless beings is one of our cardinal tenets. It follows that it is this one and only Reality that transforms itself again and again into all those beings that are subject to birth and death. Also it is the same Reality that is manifested as Isvara to protect this world of sentient beings and insentient objects. Unlike humans he is not subject to the law of karma. It is to live out his karma—to experience the fruits of his actions—that man is born again and again. But in birth after birth, instead of washing away his old karma, he adds more and more to the mud sticking to him.

If the Lord descends to earth again and again it is to lift up man and show him the righteous path. When unrighteousness gains the upper hand and righteousness declines, he descends to earth to destroy unrighteousness and to establish righteousness again—and to protect the virtuous and destroy the wicked. Sri Kṛṣṇa Paramatman declares so in the Gita².

Isvara is to be known in different states. That the Lord is all—that all is the Lord—is a state that we cannot easily comprehend. Then there is a state mentioned in the “vibhūti³ yoga” of the Gita according to which the Lord dwells in the highest of each category, in the “most excellent” of things⁴. To create the heights of excellence in human life he sends messengers to earth in the guise of preceptors (*acaryas*), men of wisdom and enlightenment (*jñanins*), *yogins* and devotees. This is another state in which God is to be known. Not satisfied with the previous states, he assumes yet another state: he descends to earth as an *avatara*. The word “*avatarana*” itself means “descent”. Isvara is “*paratpara*”, that is “higher than the

highest”, “beyond what is beyond everything”. Yet he descends to earth by being born in our midst to re-establish dharma.

*“But it is one thing for
God to bless a man who
goes to him for refuge
forsaking his own efforts
to raise himself and quite
another to bless him
thinking him to be not fit to
make any exertions on his
own to advance inwardly.”*

Siddhanta Saivas⁵ do not subscribe to the view of Siva having *avatars*. Nor do they agree with the belief that Adi Sankara and Jñānasambandhar were incarnations of Siva and Muruga (Subrahmanya) respectively. Their view is that if Isvara dwells in a human womb, in a body of flesh, he makes himself impure. According to Advaitins even all those who inhabit the human womb made up of flesh are in substance nothing but the Brahman. They see nothing improper in the Lord coming down to earth.

All Vaisnavas, without exception, accept the doctrine of divine *avatars*. Philosophically speaking, there are many points of agreement between Vaisnavas and Saivas though the former are not altogether in agreement with the view that it is the Brahman itself that is expressed as the individual Self. When we speak of the *avatars*, we generally mean the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. Vaisnavas adhere to the doctrine of *avatars* because they believe that Viṣṇu descends to earth to uplift humanity. Indeed it is because of his boundless compassion that he makes himself small [or reduces himself] to any degree. In truth, however, the Lord is neither reduced nor tainted a bit in any of his incarnations because, though in outward guise he looks a mortal, he knows himself to be what in reality he is.

Altogether the Vedic dharma that is Hinduism accepts the concept of incarnations of the Lord. Saivas too are one with Vaisnavas in believing in the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.

That the one and only Paramatman who has neither a form nor attributes is manifested as different forms with attributes is another special feature of our religion. We worship idols representing these forms of deities. For this reason others label us polytheists. Their view is utterly wrong. Because we worship the one God, the one Reality, in many different forms it does not mean that we believe in many gods. It is equally absurd to call us idolaters who hold that the idol we worship is God. Hindus with a proper understanding of their religion do not think that the idol alone is God. The idol is meant for the worshipper to offer one-pointed devotion and he adores it with the conviction that the Lord who is present everywhere is present in it also. We see that practitioners of other religions also have symbols for worship and meditation. So it is wholly unjust to believe that Hindus alone worship idols –to regard them with scorn as idolaters are not right.

*“Why should
we worship a God
who has no mercy? Or,
for that matter, why
should there be any
religion at all?”*

That ours is the only religion that does not proclaim that its followers have an exclusive right to salvation is a matter of pride for us Hindus. Our catholic outlook is revealed in our scriptures which declare that whatever the religious path followed by people they will finally attain the same Paramatman. That is why there is no place for conversion in Hinduism.

Christianity has it that, if a man does not follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, he shall be condemned to hell. Islam says the same about those who do not follow the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. We must not be angry with the adherents of either religion on that score. Let us take it that Christians and Muslims alike believe that the followers of other religions do not have the same sense of fulfillment as they have. So let us presume that it is with good intentions that they want to bring others into their fold (Christianity or Islam as the case may be) out of a desire to help them.

Let us also assume that if they resort to means that seem undesirable, it is to achieve what they think to be a good objective, luring others into their faith. It was thus that they carried out conversions in the past, by force of arms. Islam, particularly, expanded its sway in this way. It is often said that Christianity spread with the help of money power. But Christians also used their army to gain adherents, though with the force of arms was associated the philanthropic work of the missionaries. White men had the advantage of money that the Muslims of the Arabian desert did not possess⁶. Christian missionaries built schools, hospitals and so on to induce the poor to embrace their faith.

We may not approve of people being forced into a religion or of conversions carried out by temptations placed before them. But we need not for that reason doubt that those who spread their religion in this fashion really believe that their work will bring general well-being.

We cannot, however, help asking whether their belief is right. People who do not follow either Christ or the Prophet, are they really condemned to hell? A little thinking should show that the belief that the followers of Christianity or Islam have an exclusive right to salvation cannot be sustained. It is only some 2,000 years since Jesus was born and only about 1,400 years or so since the birth of the Prophet⁷. What happened to all the people born before them since creation? Are we to believe that they must have passed into hell? We are also compelled to infer that even the forefathers of the founders of Christianity and Islam would not have earned paradise.

If, like Hindus, all those who lived before Christ or the Prophet had believed in rebirth, we could concede that they would have been saved: they would have been born again and again until the arrival of Christ or the Prophet and then afforded the opportunity of following their teachings. But if we accept the logic of Christianity and Islam, according to which religions there is no rebirth, we shall have to conclude that hundreds of millions of people for countless generations must have been consigned to eternal hell.

The question arises as to whether God is so merciless as to keep dispatching people for ages together to the hell from which there is no escape. Were he compassionate would he not have sent, during all this time, a messenger of his or a teacher to show humanity the way to liberation? Why should we worship a God who has no mercy?

Or, for that matter, why should there be any religion at all?

The countries are many and they have different climates and grow different crops. Also each part of the world has evolved a different culture. But the Vedas encompassed lands all over this planet from the very beginning. Later other religions emerged in keeping with the changing attitudes of the nations concerned. That is why aspects of the Vedic tradition are in evidence not only in the religions now in force but in what we know of those preceding them. But in India alone has Hinduism survived as a full-fledged living faith.

It must also be added that this primeval religion has regarded—and still regards—with respect the religions that arose subsequent to it. The Hindu view is this: “Other religions must have evolved according to the degree of maturity of the people among whom they originated. They will bring well-being to their adherents.” “Live and let live” has been and continues to be the ideal of our religion. It has given birth to religions like Buddhism and Jainism and they [particularly Buddhism] have been propagated abroad for the Atmic advancement of the people there.

I have spoken about the special characteristics of Hinduism from the philosophical and theological points of view. But it has also another important feature which is also distinctive—the sociological.

All religions have their own philosophical and theological systems. Also all of them deal with individual life and conduct and, to a limited extent, with social life. “Look upon your neighbour as your brother.” “Regard your adversary as your friend.” “Treat others in the same way as you would like to be treated yourself.” “Be kind to all creatures.” “Speak the truth.” “Practise non-violence.” These injunctions and rules of conduct relate to social life up to a point—and only up to a point. To religions other than Hinduism social life or the structure of society is not a major

concern. Hinduism alone has a sturdy sociological foundation, and its special feature, “varnasrama dharma”, is an expression of it.

Varna dharma is one and asrama dharma is another (together they make up varnasrama dharma). Asrama dharma deals with the conduct of an individual during different stages of his life. In the first stage, as a brahmacarin, he devotes himself to studies in a *gurukula*. In the second stage, as a youth, he takes a wife, settles down in life and begets children. In the third, as he ages further, he becomes a forest recluse and, without much attachment to wordly life, engages himself in Vedic karma. In the fourth stage, he forsakes even Vedic works, renounces the world utterly to become a sannyasin and turns his mind towards the Paramatman. These four stages of life or asramas are called brahmacarya, garhasthya, vanaprastha and sannyasa.

Varna dharma is an “arrangement” governing all society. It is very much a target of attack today and is usually spoken of as the division of society into “jatis”. But “varna” and “jati” are in fact different. There are only four varnas but the jatis are numerous. For instance, in the same varna there are Ayyars, Ayyangars, Raos, etc these are jatis. Mudaliars, Pillais, Reddiars and Naikkars are jatis belonging to another varna. In the Yajurveda (third astaka, fourth prasna) and in the Dharmasastra a number of jatis are mentioned—but you do not meet with them today.

Critics of varna dharma brand it as “a blot on our religion” and as “a vicious system which divides people into high and low”. But, if you look at it impartially, you will realise that it is a unique instrument to bring about orderly and harmonious social life⁸.

Candrasekharendra Saraswati

Source: Hindu Dharma The Universal Way of Life, Bhavan's Book University, Mumbai

Notes & References

¹ Obviously the Paramaguru states this with a touch of irony.

² *yada-yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati Bharata
Abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srijamyaham
Paritranaaya sadhunam vinasaya Ca duskrtam
Dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge*—Bhagavadgita, 4. 7 & 8.

³ “Vibhuti yoga”, Chapter 10 of the Bhagavadgita.

⁴ Some scholars express this idea by describing God as the “quintessence of essences”.

⁵ Siddhanta Saivas, followers of the Saiva Siddhanta, that developed in the South about the 11th century. One of its chief exponents was Meykandar, 13th century, author of Sivajnanabodham.

⁶ The situation in this respect has changed now with the boom in petrodollars in West Asia.

⁷ Prophet Mohammed—A.D. 570-632.

⁸ Aspects of varna dharma are dealt with in detail in Parts Three and Twenty.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

“If we trace the history of any nation backwards into the past, we come at last to a period of myths and traditions which eventually fade away into impenetrable darkness.”

-Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an Indian nationalist, social reformer and freedom fighter was the first popular leader of the Indian Independence Movement. Besides being a multifaceted personality, a scholar of Indian History, Sanskrit, Hinduism, Mathematics and Astronomy, Bal Gangadhar was a great Sanskrit scholar and astronomer also. He fixed the origin and date of Rigvedic Aryans, which was highly acclaimed and universally accepted by orientalists of his time. His roles in Congress and advocating Home Rule for India were enormous.

Lokmanya

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was popularly known as “Lokmanya” (Beloved of the people). Tilak sparked the fire for complete independence in Indian consciousness, and is considered the father of Hindu nationalism as well. “*Swaraj is my birthright*,

and I shall have it!” This famous quote of his is very popular and well-remembered in India even today. It roused a sleeping nation to action, making Indian people aware of their political plight under a foreign rule.

Early Life

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was born on 23 July 1856 in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. He was a Chitpavan Brahmin by caste. His father, Gangadhar Ramachandra Tilak, was a Sanskrit scholar and a famous teacher. Tilak was a brilliant student in Mathematics. Since childhood Tilak had an intolerant attitude towards injustice and was truthful and straightforward in nature. When Tilak was 10 his father was transferred to Pune from Ratnagiri. This brought sea change in Tilak’s life. He joined the Anglo-Vernacular School in Pune and got educated by some of the well-known teachers. Soon after coming to Pune Tilak lost his mother and by the time he was 16 he lost his father too. While Tilak was studying in Matriculation he was married to a 10-year-old girl called Satyabhama. After passing the Matriculation Examination Tilak joined the Deccan College. In 1877, Bal Gangadhar Tilak got his BA degree with a first class in Mathematics. He continued his studies and got the LLB degree too. After graduation, Tilak began teaching Mathematics in a private school in Pune and later became a journalist.

The Britishers

Tilak knew well the attitude of the British towards the economic exploitation of the Indians. The British used the raw material from the Indian soil and produced finished products in their country, which in turn were sold in India. This made the Indians totally dependent on the British. In the process, all the self-employing industries of India like spinning, weaving, glass making, sugar, dyeing, paper making were destroyed. People became destitute for no fault of theirs to help an empire become richer and stronger. To fight this situation, he gave four mantras called Chatuhsutri: (1). Boycott of foreign goods (2) National Education (3) Self Government (4) Swadeshi or self reliance. He realized that mere protest against British rule was not going to help and insisted on native production and reliance.

Deccan Education Society

Tilak became a strong critic of the Western education system, feeling it demeaning to Indian students and disrespectful to India’s heritage. He came to the conclusion that good citizens could be moulded only through good education. He believed that every Indian had to be taught about Indian culture and national ideals. He founded Deccan Education Society to give better education as per the country’s needs. He wrote articles over inhuman punishment meted out to the nationalist youth who protested the division of Bengal. This



all led him to jail, after a namesake trial. For the first time in British history, intellectuals in England (including the great orientalist, Max Muller) were able to convince the Government that the trial was unfair. But the second time (1908) was no different. Tilak advocated his own case and when the judgment of six years of black-waters (kala pani) imprisonment was pronounced, he gave the famous statement: *“All I wish to say is that in spite of the verdict of the jury, I maintain my innocence. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of men and nations. It may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may prosper by suffering than by remaining free”*.

His trial and punishment led to national upheaval. But the British were careful enough to arrange everything in secret and the judgment was delivered at midnight and Tilak was taken under military vigil to be deported to Burma (present Myanmar, which was also under British control).

The Great Social Reformer

Bal Gangadhar Tilak joined the Indian National Congress in 1890. He was a member of the Municipal Council of Pune, Bombay Legislature, and an elected ‘Fellow’ of the Bombay University. Tilak was a great social reformer. He issued a call for the banning of child marriage and welcomed widow remarriage. He signed a proposal where in one of the clauses was that the girls (boys) should not be married until they are 16 (20). He educated all of his daughters and did not marry them till they were over 16. There are instances when he privately paid for the education of women. Tilak was especially keen to see a prohibition placed on the sale of alcohol.

An Extremist

Realizing that the constitutional agitation in itself was futile against the British, Tilak opposed the moderate views of the party. This subsequently made him stand against the prominent leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale. He was waiting for an armed revolt to broom-away the British. His movement was based on the principles of Swadeshi (Indigenous), Boycott and Education. But his methods also raised bitter controversies within the Indian National Congress Party and the movement itself so as a result, Tilak formed the extremist wing of Indian National Congress Party. Tilak was well supported by fellow nationalists Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab. The trio was referred to as the *‘Lal-Bal-Pal’*. Congress was split into two camps—Moderates and Extremists. Extremists led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak opposed the moderate faction led by Gopal Krishna.

The Architect of Modern India

He was one of the prime architects of modern India and heralded Asian nationalism. He was a brilliant politician as well as a profound scholar

who believed that independence is the foremost necessity for the well-being of a nation and that to win it through extreme measures should not be dispensed with. He was the first intellectual leader to understand the importance of mass support and subsequently became the first mass leader of India. His thoughts on education and Indian political life have remained highly influential—he was the first Congress leader to suggest that Hindi, written in the Devanagari script, should be accepted as the sole national language of India, a policy that was later strongly endorsed by Mahatma Gandhi. Usage of Hindi (and other Indian languages) has been reinforced and widely encouraged since the days of the British Raj, and Tilak’s legacy is often credited with this resurgence.

“He realized that mere protest against British rule was not going to help and insisted on native production and reliance.”

Tilak with Mahatma Gandhi

Tilak was a critic of Mahatma Gandhi’s strategy of non-violence, civil disobedience. Once considered an extremist revolutionary, in his later years Tilak had considerably mellowed. He favoured political dialogue and discussions as a more effective way to obtain political freedom for India. Tilak is considered in many ways to have created the nationalist movement in India, by expanding the struggle for political freedoms and self-government to the common people of India. His writings on Indian culture, history and Hinduism spread a sense of heritage and pride amongst millions of Indians for India’s ancient civilization and glory as a nation. Tilak was considered the political and spiritual leader of India by many including Gandhi. Gandhi called Tilak “The Maker of Modern India”.

Final Days

Tilak was so disappointed by the brutal incident of Jalianwala Bagh massacre that his health started declining. Despite his illness, Tilak issued a call to the Indians not to stop their movement no matter what happened. He was raring to lead the movement but his health did not permit that. Tilak had become very weak by this time. In mid-July 1920, his condition worsened and on 1 August he passed away.

Source: www.liveindia.com, www.iloveindia.com, www.wherincity.com, www.culturalindia.net



Guru Harkrishan Sahib

Guru Harkrishan Sahib was the Eighth Nanak Guru of the Sikhs. He was the epitome of sensibility, generosity and courage. Guru Harkrishan, blessed with the divine spirit ascended the ecclesiastical throne at the age of 5 years and 8 months. His Divine presence and Divine Look would rid the patients of their maladies.

Early Life

Guru Harkrishan Sahib was born on Sawan Vadi, July 7, 1656 at Kiratpur Sahib. He was the second son of Guru Har Rai Sahib and Mata Krishan Kaur (Sulakhni). Ram Rai, the elder brother of Guru Harkrishan Sahib was ex-communicated and disinherited due to his anti-Guru Ghar activities. Sri Harkrishan Sahib was declared as Eighth Nanak Guru by his father Guru Har Rai Sahib before his death in 1661.

Guru Har Rai's Death

After Guru Har Rai's passing away on October 6, 1661, Guru Harkrishan consoled the disciples and asked them not to give way to despair but abide by the Will of the Almighty. All should sing God's praises and not weep or lament. Disciples began pouring in from far and near. They were delighted to have a sight of the Guru. He sat on the throne, a small figure, young in years, but mature in wisdom. Bhai Santokh Singh said, "The early morning sun looks small in size, but its light is everywhere. So was Guru Harkrishan's fame, without limit." Those who came to see him were instructed in true knowledge.

They had their heart's desires fulfilled and their sins erased. The Sikhs recognized him as the picture of Guru Nanak. They saw on Guru Harkrishan's handsome face the same light as must have been on Guru Nanak's. Guru Harkrishan had a rare ability in explaining passages from the Holy Granth. He delighted the hearts of his disciples by his commentaries. He reminded them to cherish the One God alone, and asked them to discard passions and learn the virtues of patience, charity and love. Guru Harkrishan carried on the teaching

of the Gurus and preserved intact the legacy he had inherited from them.

Eighth Nanak Guru

The declaration of Guru Harkrishan Sahib as Eighth Nanak Guru by his father Guru Har Rai Sahib before his death in 1661 inflamed Ram Rai with jealousy and he complained to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb against his father's decision. The Emperor replied in favour issuing orders through Raja Jai Singh to the young Guru to appear before him. Raja Jai Singh sent his emissary to Kiratpur Sahib to bring the Guru to Delhi. At first the Guru was not willing, but at the repeated requests of his followers and Raja Jai Singh, he agreed to go to Delhi.

Bhagavad Gita

At this occasion, a large number of devotees from every walk of life came to bid him farewell. They followed the Guru Sahib up to village Panjokhara near Ambala. From this place the Guru advised his followers to return back. Guru Sahib, along with a few of his family members proceeded towards Delhi. But before leaving this place Guru Harkrishan Sahib showed the great powers which were bestowed upon him by the Almighty God. Pandit Lal Chand, a learned scholar of Hindu literature questioned Guru Sahib about the meanings of The Bhagavad Gita. Guru Sahib called a water-carrier named Chhaju Ram, and with the Guru's grace, this unlettered man was able to expound the philosophy of the Gita. When Pandit Lal Chand listened the scholarly answer from Chhaju, he bent his head in shame and besought the forgiveness of Guru Sahib. Pandit Lal Chand became the Sikh and escorted Guru Sahib up to Kurukshetra.

A Messiah

On reaching Delhi Guru Sahib was greeted with great fervour and full honours by Raja Jai Singh and the Sikhs of Delhi. Raja Jai Singh had come barefooted to meet the Guru. He requested

the Guru to stay at his palace, now known as Gurudwara Bangla Sahib in New Delhi. Thousands of people of Delhi came to have 'Darshan' (holy sight) of the Guru. The sick were healed and those in distress were comforted at the very sight of the holy Master.

Guru Sahib was lodged in the palace of Raja Jai Singh. The people from all walks of life flocked the palace to have a glimpse (*Darshan*) of Guru Harkrishan Sahib. Emperor's son, Prince Muzzam also paid a visit and conveyed his father's desire to see the Guru. The Guru declined and replied emphasizing that if the Emperor understood the religious instructions and acted upon them, the blessing of Guru Nanak would show light on him and he would be happy. The Prince asked for the instructions and the Guru dictated the following *Sabad* of Guru Nanak:

*"If the True God dwell not in the heart,
What is eating, what is clothing,
What fruit, what clarified butter and sweet molasses,
what fine flour and what meat?
What dresses, What a pleasant couch for billing
and cooing,
What an army, what mace-bearers and servants, and
what palaces to dwell in?
Nanak, except the true Name all things are
perishable."*(*Var Majh ki Mohalla 1*)

Epitome of Spirituality

In order to test the Guru's intelligence and superhuman power, of which everyone spoke very highly, Raja Jai Singh requested the Guru Sahib to identify the real Queen out of the equally and well-dressed ladies surrounding Guru Sahib. His head Queen had dressed like a maid servant and sat among other maid servants and Queens. As he came near one dressed modestly in a maid's coarse homespun, he stopped and said, "You are the Rani. Why should you have dressed yourself in a maid's suit?" The Rani bent her head in homage. Raja Jai Singh and his queens acknowledged the Guru's spiritual power.

Within a short span of time Guru Harkrishan Sahib through his fraternization with the common masses gained more and more adherents in the capital. At

the time, a swear epidemic of cholera and smallpox broke out in Delhi. The young Guru began to attend the sufferers irrespective of cast and creed. Local Muslim population was highly impressed with the purely humanitarian deeds of the Guru Sahib and nicknamed him *Bala Pir* (Child Prophet). Guru went all over the city even in narrow lanes and bylanes. The Guru ordered to spare all the offerings to reduce the sufferings of the poor. The food, medicine and clothes were distributed among the poor and the sick. He won many followers in this way. He gave succour to all in anguish without any discrimination whatsoever. His very presence and the Divine Look would rid the patients of their sufferings.

Final Days

While serving the suffering people from the epidemic day and night, Guru Sahib himself was seized with high fever. Small-pox was so rampant in Delhi that the Guru out of human compassion took the small-pox to himself and absolved the inhabitants of Delhi of it. Raja Jai Singh got a tank excavated. The Guru dipped his feet in the water of the tank and after that whosoever took bath with that water, was cured from small-pox.

The swear attack of small-pox confined him to bed for several days. When his condition became serious, he called his mother and told her that his end was drawing near. With five paise and a coconut, he waved his hand three times in the air in token of circumambulating his successor and said, "*Baba Bakale*". These words were only meant for the future (Guru) Teg Bahadur Sahib. In the last moment Guru Harkrishan Sahib wished that nobody should mourn him after his death and instructed to sing the hymns of *Gurbani*. The '*Bala Pir*' passed away on 30 March, 1664 reciting the word "*Waheguru*" till the end. His body was cremated on the bank of river Jamuna where now stands the Gurudwara Bala Sahib. Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib paying tribute to Guru Harkrishan Sahib stated in "*Var Sri Bhagoti Ki*"... "Let us think of the holy Harkrishan, Whose sight dispels all sorrows..."

Source: www.allaboutsikhs.com, www.sgpc.net,
www.allaboutsikhs.com, www.singhsabha.com

*"The Guru dipped his feet in the
water of the tank and after that
whosoever took bath with that water,
was cured from small-pox."*



The Indian Miracle Lives

New Delhi: To hear some people tell it, the bloom is off the Indian economic rose. Hailed until recently as the next big success story, the country has lately been assailed by bad news.

Tales abound of investor flight (mainly owing to a retrospective tax law enacted this year to collect taxes from Indian companies' foreign transactions); mounting inflation, as food and fuel prices rise; and political infighting, which has delayed a new policy to permit foreign direct investment in India's retail-trade sector. Some have even declared that the "India story" is over.

But today's pessimism is as exaggerated as yesterday's optimism was overblown. Even as the world has faced an unprecedented global economic crisis and recession, with most countries suffering negative growth rates in at least one quarter in the last four years, India remains the world's second-fastest-growing major economy, after China.

Many reasons have been cited for this success. India's banks and financial institutions were not tempted to buy mortgage-backed securities and engage in the fancy derivatives trading that ruined several Western financial institutions. And, though India's merchandise exports registered declines of about 30%, services exports continued to do well. Moreover, remittances from overseas Indians remain robust, rising from \$46.4 billion in 2008-2009 to \$57.8 billion in 2010-2011, with the bulk coming from the blue-collar Indian expatriate community in the Gulf.

Finally, the external sector accounts for only about 20% of India's GDP. Most of the economy is a domestic affair: Indians producing goods and services for other Indians to consume in India.

The Indian private sector is efficient and entrepreneurial, and is compensating for the state's inadequacies. (An old joke suggests that the Indian economy grows at night, when the government is asleep.) India is good at channeling domestic savings into productive investments, which is why it has relied so much less on foreign direct investment, and is even exporting capital to OECD countries, where it is well able to control and manage assets in sophisticated financial markets. Indeed, India, home of Asia's oldest stock market and a thriving democracy, has the basic systems that it needs to operate a twenty-first-century economy in an open and globalizing world.

There are other reasons for confidence that India will weather the storm. Not only does India have considerable resources of its own to put towards investment; as the persistence of global recession drives down returns in the West, foreign investors will look anew at India.

Still, many are inclined to compare India unfavorably with China, so a few macroeconomic numbers are worth considering. Half of India's growth has come from private consumption, and less than 10% from external demand; by contrast, 65% of China's real GDP growth comes from exports, and only 25% from private consumption. China is thus far more vulnerable to external shocks.

Moreover, India has the highest household savings rate in Asia, at 32% of disposable income. In fact, households account for 65% of India's national annual savings, compared to under 40% in China. Bad loans account for only 2% of Indian banks' credit portfolios, versus 20% in China. And India's workforce has been growing at nearly 2% annually in the last decade, while China's grew at less than 1%.

Putting China aside, India's economy grew by 6.5% in 2011-2012, with services up by 9% and accounting for 58% of India's GDP growth—a stabilizing factor when a world in recession cannot afford to buy more manufactured goods.

McKinsey & Company estimates that the Indian middle class will grow to 525 million by 2025, 1.5 times the projected size of the US middle class. According to last year's census, the country's 247 million households, two-thirds of them rural, reported a rise in the literacy rate to 74%, from 65% in 2001. In just the last two years, 51,000 schools were opened and 680,000 teachers appointed.

An impressive 63% of Indians now have phones, up from just 9% a decade ago; 100 million new phone connections were established last year, including 40 million in rural areas; and India now has 943.5 million telephone connections. Nearly 60% of Indians have a bank account (indeed, more than 50 million new bank accounts have been opened in the last three years, mainly in rural India).

Some 20,000 MW in additional power-generation capacity was added last year, with 3.5 million new electricity connections in rural India. As a result, 8,000 villages got power for the first time last year, and 93% of Indians in towns and cities now have at least some access to electricity.

These trends all augur well for India's economic future. And they aren't slowing: India is looking for \$1 trillion in infrastructure development over the next five years, most of it in the form of public-private partnerships. This offers hugely exciting opportunities to investors.

The real picture of dogged progress is far removed from the perception of a government beset by inaction and policy paralysis. As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh modestly put it: "I will be the first to say we need to do better. But let no one doubt that we have achieved much."

Shashi Tharoor, a former Indian Minister of State for External Affairs and UN Under-Secretary General, is a member of India's Parliament and the Author of a dozen books, including *India from Midnight to the Millennium* and *Nehru: the Invention of India*.

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Language is the only effective medium through which one can effectively convey one's feelings to others. In other words, language is the means of communication. Exchange of views forms the basis of the formation of a society. Without languages, formation of society is impossible and similarly, culture has no basis in the absence of a society. As such, it is clear that there can be no culture without language, implying that language is a pre-requisite for culture. Therefore, language and culture go hand in hand and thereby thrive by mutual support. Every language has got its own society in which it is used. One can have a fairly good idea of the culture of a society on the basis of the language of that society and vice-versa.

Language has rightly been described as the vehicle of any culture. Language is an important component of culture; but it is not culture in itself. From primitive times, man has struggled against nature and his environment. He has to adjust himself with nature for his life and livelihood. For eking out a livelihood, he has to mould nature, according to his own needs and requirements. In this process, development of his own self and his society does take place. It is obvious that in this process, his language and culture would have developed or evolved side by side.

Language is written, spoken and heard. It is an activity of the mind and the senses. It is an indispensable link for establishing meaningful relationship between and among the people. Language and culture are complementary to each other. Whereas language gives expression to our views, culture is a voluminous vehicle of human glory, as well as refinement. In other words, every language has got its own culture and culture is mute without language and becomes deaf and dumb.

Culture stands for those *Sanskaras* which determine the conduct and behaviour of a human being. These *Sanskaras* and cultures both pass through phases of ups and downs, and both of them are concerned with the ever changing natural and social milieu. The manner in which a man conducts himself in the milieu is called culture. *Sanskaras* go on becoming and unbecoming constantly. Same is the case with culture also. The materialistic equipments acquired or used by mankind ever since the primitive age are all symbols of his culture. Religion, philosophy, literature, art, science, styles of living, customs, conventions, rituals, social set-up, all these are constituents of culture. These are the physical components of culture.

The world is made up of several communities. Despite being different from one another, these communities are part and parcel of mankind, as a whole. As such, culture is also of two types—community culture and universal culture. Those threads of unity and similarity, perceptible in the cultures of various communities, despite their diversities are the factors which constitute the culture of humanity. All communities are the same by virtue of their human component. The universal culture of mankind is an ocean, made up of the tributaries of various community cultures that join this great ocean. Despite being an integral part of the culture of the mankind, we continue to do our best to preserve our culture and feel proud of it.”¹

Geographical circumstances in which a particular community lives and the specific natural and social milieu go into the making of a community culture. The manner in which a particular community conducts itself by overcoming its milieu and circumstances determine the culture of that society. Among other material equipments like style of dress, way of eating, customs and conventions, etc., language is also one of the determining factors in the evolution of the culture of any community. Language contributes its might in the evolution of culture, along with setting up of the society. “Language is undisputedly an integral part of human culture and at the same time, culture has got no identity of its own, without its own language. More than anything else, it is the language factor which underlines the importance of culture.”²

It is clear that language is helpful in the evaluation of culture and we express our culture through the medium of our language. Language in itself is a core factor of culture. That is why it is said that language like culture, of which it is a part has stemmed from human conduct and observation.”³ However, language is something which came to mankind, far ahead of culture and as such, its existence precedes the existence of culture. Therefore, it has been rightly observed that: “No culture is possible till such time a language is born.

In other words, language is the first step in the formation of the culture of the mankind. We can put it like this: language precedes culture or culture succeeds language.⁴

Thus, the relationship between language and culture is crystal clear. It is no doubt true that language contributes a lot to the formation of culture and at the same time it is also a constituent of culture. But language itself is not a culture. As a matter of fact, it is distinctly different from culture. No language ceases to exist with the change in social culture. Consequent upon the change in culture, outer form of language may change. That is, its external structure, vocabulary may change, but there is no change at all in its internal content i.e. grammar and phonetics which continue as hitherto. When the Russian society established a socialistic culture after rooting out the federal culture of Czarism, the language there did not undergo any change. The Russian language developed on the basis of the Moscow locality, which had been equally serving well the Russian society right from the regime of Czars till the then communist regime. Joseph Stalin, the then Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, while answering questions of some of his comrades had made this remark: "They do not realise the differences between language and culture."

Along with the development of the society ingredients of culture also undergo a major change, but basically the language remains the same, serving both the old and the new cultures alike. The well-known Marxist critic and linguist Dr. Ramvilas Sharma, while discussing this issue has remarked: "The economic structure of any social set-up is its basis and culture is its mental reflection. It is the outer structure built on the economic structure. Language should be taken as something basically necessary for the cultural edifice. Telegram and atom bomb are the material equipments of culture and in the same way, language is the equipment of human culture. To put it in a nut-shell, language is not a culture in itself, but it is just a container of culture."⁵

In fact, language is the mirror of any culture. We can estimate the essence of culture on the basis of any language. "If, in any particular culture, material and scientific elements happen to play a prominent role, the language of that culture will comprise of words related to these elements in particular."⁶

The culture of the Western countries is considered to be materialistic or scientific. They are far ahead of other countries in terms of materialistic, scientific and mechanical progress. Consequently, their languages like English, German and Russian are having fully developed terminologies relating to science, mechanics and other branches of technology.

Besides, these nations provide their own terminology to other countries in these particular fields. Indian languages have also developed their own scientific and technical terminology and contribute to the cause of enriching technical terminology of other languages of the world. Similarly, Indian languages have also adopted terminologies relating to scientific and technical knowledge from other world languages. Generally speaking, the culture of India is considered to be more allied to religious philosophy. Consequently, Indian languages especially Sanskrit, has a great deal of religious and philosophical vocabulary in it. As such, western languages all over the world have benefited from this.



"Language is written, spoken and heard. It is an activity of the mind and the senses. It is an indispensable link for establishing meaningful relationship between and among the people."



Literature too is a part of culture. It is a fact that literature is created only through language. The culture of a community can be known by an analytical study of its language and literature. The differences between the language and the literature of the *Bhakti* and *Riti* periods of Hindi and the realistic descriptions of the village life depicted in the novels and stories of the modern period indicate two different cultures—feudal and democratic cultures.

The cultures of different communities keep on influencing one another. Besides, cultural exchanges continue to take place among neighbouring countries and communities. Trade, commerce and means of transport are the major contributory factors in such cultural exchanges. In the ancient and medieval ages, Indians used to migrate to South-Eastern countries like Java,

Sumatra, Borneo, Cambodia, Siam etc, through sea-routes. Buddhist missionaries also used to go to other countries like Burma, China, Sri Lanka etc. Along with the religion they knowingly or unknowingly carried our vocabularies also to those countries.

Terminology was no exception to this export and expansion. The cultural impact of India on South-East Asian countries and their languages is quite perceptible. Similarly, Indian languages, especially Hindi language, has been greatly influenced by foreign languages like English, Persian and Turkish. As an outcome of the cultural contacts of those alien communities, our languages got enriched with innumerable gem-like words. Their invasion and subsequent settlement here have helped a lot in this process of linguistic as well as cultural transformation. In this context, words of Otto Jespersen deserve to be quoted: "When a nation assimilates the cultural impact of some other nations for centuries together, a flood of terminology of that language into other languages is quite natural."⁷

Apropos the same subject the world famous linguist Mr. Bloomfield has remarked: "Each language learns a lot from its neighbours. Both natural and manufactured things get circulated from one community to the other. Similarly, work-procedures such as technical methods, warfare-rehearsals, religious congregations, fashion-tendencies etc., prevalent in a particular culture spread into the other, knowingly or unknowingly. Terminologies are no exception to this exchange as well as extension."⁸

What is meant by this is that changes and developments in languages take place consequent upon the contacts of the communities as well as cultures. Enrichment of terminology is also given pep-up by the cultural exchanges, cultural domination and cultural exploitation. In short, this is what is called cultural incarnation. As a matter of fact, what we term as a culture of mankind is what language has given to us. It is the human language and the human culture which do relegate animal culture to a lower level. The famous sociologists W.F. Coghurn and M.F. Nimkaff have said: "The speaking and understanding of a particular language was an important event which provided a higher pedestal to man in comparison to animals. A language preserves knowledge and culture for generations together."⁹

Linguists are of the opinion that no language is undeveloped. Every language is capable of giving expression to the culture of its social set-up as well as emotions and ideas of the people of that particular society. A living language continuously goes through the process of development on a never ending basis. In this process of development

a language goes on leaving out the unimportant elements and goes on assimilating the essential elements. However, this transformation and reformation largely depend on its cultural progress, physical requirement and essential needs. Though the language of the people in isolated islands, lonely forests and mountains may seem to us to be undeveloped, the fact is that language is quite sufficient for their use. New elements creep into the languages, consequent upon their culture coming into contact with that of others. A living language is bound to develop like a living creature, slowly but steadily. Adoption and elimination processes keep the language fine and fresh.



*"Indian languages
have also developed
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technical terminology
and contribute to the
cause of enriching
technical terminology
of other languages
of the world."*



There is an inseparable relation between culture and language. The culture leaves an indelible impression on the language because culture is recognised by the standard of the language. The literary writers are duty-bound to hold the dignity of the culture through the language in the highest possible realm. In short, culture is the soul of the nation which finds its expression through the body of the language.

Culture is a means by which a person makes his life meaningful by inculcating and developing a lot of human qualities, so as to fit himself into the social framework. 'Sanskriti' is the synonym of the English word 'culture'. *Sanskriti*, derived from the root "Kri" means reformed or refined. According to anthropologist, E.B. Tyler: "Culture is a complex entity, comprising knowledge, values, rules, laws, practices, conventions, along with combination

of capabilities and habits obtainable to man as a social being". In sum, culture is a social heritage.

Though *Sanskriti* is a nominal form of "*Sanskar*", its meaning embraces a wide range of political, economic, social, religious and spiritual activity of a human group within a defined space and defined time. In the words of Professor Humayun Kabir: "Culture is that internal institution of the society which generates circumstances conducive to the growth of civilisation". T.S. Eliot says that culture is related to the social development of man. According to him, civilisation of man is based on the civilisation of a community and civilisation of a community is based on the civilisation of the whole society. These two aspects are interlinked, and hence inseparable, to say the least.¹⁰

Thus, culture is a holistic symbol of the sum total of our mindset, lifestyle, traditional habits and ideologies. It is used to depict the peculiarities of the then existing people of a particular area, consisting of one or more communities. This culture is a visual or written expression of the physical activities, mental resolutions and spiritual experiences. Building up culture is an all-round development of a community, specific to the society at the root of which there are seeds of creative works and a saga of sacrifices, which are destined to flourish on finding a favourable and fertile field. It is the end result of that process which generates new dimensions of creativity by awakening the mind and setting a high intellectual level.

The first ideal of high culture is a continuing dynamism devoid of distinction between ancient and modern traditions. In this context, the great poet Kalidasa has observed:

*Puranamitheva na sadhu sarva chapikavyam
nava mithyavadhyam,
Santh pareechyanarad banjathe moodah par
prathyaneya budedhih.*

Simply because a culture is aged-old, it should not be abandoned; similarly, a culture becomes acceptable not on the basis of modernity alone. The first and foremost characteristic of a noble culture is constant dynamism through use of discretion as to what in a culture is to be retained and what is to be discarded.

The second ideal of culture is that it should be result-oriented. Its aim should be to create a favourable condition for the progress and development of mankind, so as to give an impetus to human efforts through spiritual motivation and thereby create conducive circumstances to usher in spiritual and physical comforts and conveniences. This cultural development is the result of timeless efforts, keeping pace with the life-force of man".¹¹

The third ideal of culture is co-ordination of welfare elements and building up of a national life. Genuine culture benefits the definiteness and indefiniteness, mind and deeds, as well as physical and spiritual life. This social welfare is a cultural contribution to the society. Through such a culture only feelings of universal brotherhood get strengthened".¹²

Culture is the lifeline and motivational force of life. It is the outcome of human efforts in various spheres of life which is a testimony to the mental awareness as well as alertness of the society. As such, culture is an indispensable, inseparable and imperative requirement of man whose ultimate aim is to make human life sustainable, safe and secure.

Broadly speaking, religion is synonymous with culture. As a matter of fact, influence of religion is comparatively more than that of culture of man. In its narrow sense, religion is a less important component of the cultural spectrum. While religion symbolises internal experiences through which man discovered the meaning and purpose of life, it can also be termed as the sacred soul of culture. However, where religion is used for the mere outer form of culture, it is just a part of culture; not an important part. Religion can never be an anti-culture concept where it is a manifestation of the ultimate truth. Quite contrary to this, when religion is reduced to a mere outward manifestation, it causes a degeneration. Then comes a clash between religious and cultural lives, destined to destroy society and its culture.

Quite often, the term 'civilisation' is used, as a synonym of the word 'culture', though it cannot be accepted by the right thinking people. Maybe, this usage is meant to signify a higher grade of culture, perhaps a superior variety. In fact, civilisation is that stage of the cultural development of a community or a nation while it takes place at a higher realm. It is a well-known fact that city life is comparatively of a higher level, full of snobberies. It reflects a higher level of physical life only when it is meant for attaining some high ethical values. Needless to say, if it opposes any ethical value or it is devoid of it, it will prove to be an obstacle on the path of cultural progress. Therefore, civilisation is not always supportive of culture. On the other hand, it can be inimical to the correct sense of culture. History is replete with such examples, when an obsolete, outdated and outmoded civilisation had to be abandoned in the interest of a thriving culture.

If, for solving the language problem which is the lifeline of the cultural problem of India, a prudent and far-sighted approach is adopted, it will strengthen the foundation of the cultural unity of our country. Civilisation and culture do differ from each other. Civilisation is what we have acquired and culture is that attribute, which permeates our

very being i.e., our own existence. The various day-to-day equipments and commodities are the constituents of our civilisation. Culture is the skillful and utility-oriented use of the equipment. Using clothing for the protection of our body is a part of our civilisation, while artistic use of the clothes for adding to one's beauty is a part of our culture. "Generally activities of human life have been confined to body, heart, money and people.



"Culture is a holistic symbol of the sum total of our mindset, lifestyle, traditional habits and ideologies. It is used to depict the peculiarities of the then existing people of a particular area, consisting of one or more communities."



However, intelligence, knowledge, meditation, character and conduct etc., are related to the human mind. As such, culture is the creative name of knowledge and meditation which include fine arts, good conduct, health, prosperity, service-mindedness and all such human qualities which motivate man to indulge in good deeds and words. As such, culture is an attribute of the soul, not that of the body. Our relationship with various equipments of civilisation is not of a permanent nature, because the equipments are co-terminus with the body. But this cannot be and should not be said of our culture, because culture is capable of sustaining through our heart and soul even after our life ceases to exist".¹³

"Civilisation is the blossomed form of culture".¹⁴ When civilisation gets illuminated from within, it is culture in its real form. Civilisation is concerned with the outward life whereas culture is concerned with the heart and soul. Civilisation

is the outer embellishment of man, while culture is the chastened internal state of man. As such, solemnity, consistency and durability are the attributes of culture. While civilisation keeps on changing, there are greater possibilities of annihilation of a civilisation. The words of Dr. Ramdhari Singh 'Dinakar' are worthy to be quoted in this context: "Compared to civilisation, culture is of greater significance. This culture permeates into civilisation in the same way as butter in milk and fragrance in flowers, respectively. It is more durable than civilisation. Civilisation is subject to decadence, whereas culture cannot be wiped out, that easily".¹⁵

Culture is an institution in itself, capable of civilising the society. A civilised society provides enhanced environment to the creative aspect of man. On the contrary, civilisation is the offshoot of this institution which finds expression through language, art, philosophy, religion, rituals, social customs and practices, political institutions, so on and so forth. Civilisation is related to the external scheme of human life, while culture is concerned with the soul. The former is transitory and perishable, but the latter is permanent and immortal. One is devoid of farsightedness in relation to the present, while the other is farsighted not only towards the past, but also towards the future.

Consequently, while there is a basic difference visible between civilisation and culture, there is an intimate relationship between these two. Civilisation and culture are complementary to each other. They are intertwined attributes. In this context Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi's words are worth quoting—"Just as the two adjacent pages of a book apparently appear opposite to each other, they are, in fact, complementary to each other. In the same way civilisation and culture are intimately related to each other".¹⁶

In the very same context, Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has observed: "The internal impact of civilisation is coined as culture. Civilisation is the name that we give to the external scheme of things in society, while culture is concerned with the internal development of man. While civilisation is concerned with the facilities available in society on that date, culture is concerned with the ideas of the future or the past. Civilisation considers law above man, while in the eyes of culture, man is beyond the law. Being an outward manifestation, civilisation is ephemeral while culture is permanent, being an internal phenomenon.

By making society secure, civilisation provides so many facilities to its people for both internal and external development. As such, the more accomplished the civilisation and political organisation, the ethical values and intellectual

pursuits, the inhabitants of that country will be cultured to that extent. Thus, the civilisation and culture are interdependent. They are deeply related to each other. However, what has been stated above does not mean that civilisation and culture are contradictory concepts. It is crystal clear that civilisation and culture are complementary to each other in the same way as the apparently opposite but adjacent two pages of a book are complementary to each other.

Whatever Dwivediji has expressed here is true to a greater extent. As a matter of fact, culture is inseparably related to 'Sanskaras' and as such, it is something which is concerned with the internal value-system and hence well sustainable. On the contrary, civilisation is concerned with what we call 'civilised' and hence a civilised person is one who is fit to adorn the society in which he lives. It is evident that civilisation is concerned more with the outward demeanour as well as character and conduct of a person defined by the civilised society of that day. In the English language, the word 'civilisation' is considered as an antonym to the word 'Barbarism'. But it is an accepted fact that even barbaric societies also have their own culture, though they may not be civilised on par with others. Despite all this, 'civilisation' and 'culture' are not diametrically opposite ideas. On the other hand they are complementary concepts to a certain extent and dependent on each other.

After all, a question arises as to what are the identification marks for readily recognising culture. What are its salient features? In other words, what are those things pertaining to human life, its tradition and its milieu which are directly or indirectly related to the concept of culture? If one looks at it deeply and analytically, language, art, literature etc., are concerned with culture on one side while on the other side it is connected with the environment which includes society, flora and fauna, geography etc. Thirdly, religion, philosophy, dogmatic taboos, stupid superstitions and mythological beliefs are all inseparable constituents of culture, as already established above.

The fourth set of things related to culture can be counted as history, traditions, customs and conventions, culinary arts, food-habits, dressing styles etc. Some more points also can be mentioned in addition to these aspects enlisted above. All the points mentioned above are related to language also in one way or other, as there is an integral and permanent relationship between the language and culture which are interdependent both directly and indirectly.

Dr Malik Mohamed, is a well-known Hindi writer from non-Hindi speaking area. He has served as University Professor of Hindi for nearly four decades in the Kerala and Calicut Universities with distinction. He has been trying his best all long to promote communal harmony among various linguistic and religious groups through his writings. He was honoured with 'Padmashri' in 1973. He was a recipient of the coveted Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship (1977) for preparing a book on "The Contribution of Medieval Indian Saints and Sufis for Communal Harmony". He has travelled widely in India and abroad and visited many foreign Universities to deliver lectures. He has served as the Chairman, Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (Govt. of India) in New Delhi. He was the first Vice-Chancellor of D.B.H.P. Sabha, Madras (Deemed University). He is the Founder-Chairman for Centre for National Integration Studies in Chennai. In addition to this, he has been the President of Bharatiya Hindi Parishad and President of All India Nagari Lipi Parishad. He has been a member of the National Integration Council for a long time.

Source: Culture of Hindi by Dr Malik Mohamed, Kalinga Publications, Delhi



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Munshi Premchand

*Beauty doesn't need ornaments. Softness
can't bear the weight of ornaments.
To be successful in life what you need is
education, not literacy and degrees.*

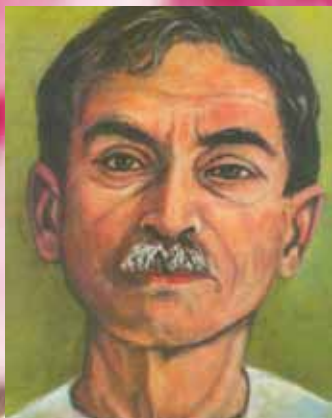
-Munshi Premchand

Premchand popularly known as Munshi Premchand was one of the greatest literary figures of modern Hindi literature. His stories vividly portrayed the social scenario of those times. The main characteristic of Premchand's writings was his interesting storytelling and use of simple language. His novels describe the problems of rural and urban India. He avoided the use of highly Sanskritized Hindi and instead used the dialect of the common people. Premchand wrote on the realistic issues of the day—communalism, corruption, zamindari, debt, poverty, colonialism etc. Premchand's writings have been translated not only into all Indian languages, but also Russian, Chinese, and many other foreign languages. Premchand was born in the British India and the Indian Independence movement was at its peak when he started his writing career. His early writings were largely influenced by the nationwide movement in which he often expressed his support to the fight for freedom.

Early Life

Premchand's real name was Dhanpat Rai Srivastava. He was born on 31 July 1880 in Lamahi near Varanasi where his father Munshi Azaayab Lal was a clerk in the post office. Premchand lost his mother when he was just 7 years old. His father married again. Premchand was very close to his elder sister. His early education was in a Madarasa under a Maulavi, where he learnt Urdu. When he was studying in the ninth class he was married, much against his wishes. He was only 15 years old at that time. Premchand lost his father when he was 16 years old. He was left responsible for his stepmother and stepsiblings. He was married to a girl in an arranged child marriage—as then was the custom—but the marriage proved to be painful for him and he left her in 1899. After that Premchand married a child widow Shivrani Devi in 1906, who wrote a book on him, 'Premchand Gharmein' after his death.

He earned five rupees a month tutoring a lawyer's child. Premchand passed his matriculation exam with great effort and took up a teaching position as a schoolmaster at a mission school in Chunar, another remote area. The salary was minimal and he was the only earning member in the family. With that negligible amount he had to support his wife, step mother, his siblings and himself. The condition became even worse when he was fired from the job and had to return to his village. After some efforts, he succeeded in getting a job of Assistant Master at a Government school in Varanasi. He was transferred to a town near Allahabad, where he became the Headmaster of a school in year 1902. After two years, he was sent to Kanpur as the Deputy Sub-Inspector of schools in what was then the United Provinces. While working, he studied privately and passed his Intermediate and BA examinations.



“Premchand was the first Hindi Author to introduce realism in his writings... He wrote of the life around him and made his readers aware of the problems of the urban middle-class and the country's villages and their problems.”

Early Career

He first started writing seriously in Allahabad, where Premchand started his literary career as a freelancer in Urdu and wrote several short stories in the language. In his early short stories he depicted the patriotic upsurge that was sweeping the land in the first decade of the present century. His first novella, *Asrar-e-Ma'abid* was first published in *Awaz-e-Khalq*, an Urdu Weekly. Soon after, he became associated with an Urdu magazine *Zamana*, where he wrote columns on national and international events. In 1910, he wrote a collection of short stories in Urdu which became known as *Soz-e-Watan*. He was hauled up by the District Magistrate in Jamirpur for this writing *Soz-e-Watan* (Dirge of the Nation), which was labelled seditious. The book was banned by the then British Government, which burnt all of the copies. Initially Premchand wrote in Urdu under the name of Nawabrai. However, when his novel *Soz-e-Watan* was confiscated by the British, he started writing under the pseudonym Premchand. It was then that his career as a writer began to take shape and he became a reputed part of the literary world of Kanpur.

The Writings

Before Premchand, Hindi literature consisted mainly of fantasy or religious works. Premchand brought realism to Hindi literature. In 1914, when Premchand switched over to Hindi, he had already established his reputation as a fiction writer in Urdu. Premchand was the first Hindi Author to introduce realism in his writings. He pioneered the new art form—fiction with a social purpose. He wrote of the life around him and made his readers aware of the problems of the urban middle-class and the country's villages and their problems. He supplemented Gandhiji's work in the political and social fields by adopting his revolutionary ideas as themes for his literary writings. Premchand was a prolific Writer. He wrote over 300 stories, a dozen novels and two plays. The stories have been compiled and published as *Maansarovar*. His famous creations are: *Panch Parameshwar*, *Idgah*, *Shatranj Ke Khiladi*, *Poos Ki Raat*, *Bade Ghar Ki Beti*, *Kafan*, *Udhar Ki Ghadi*, *Namak Ka Daroga*, *Gaban*, *Godaan*, and *Nirmala*. Many of his works have been translated into English and Russian and some have been adopted into films as well. His first novel *Godaan* is ranked amongst the finest novels of his era and remains so till this day. Other bestselling novels *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* and *Seva Sadan* were adopted into films by Satyajit Ray.

Social Reformer

Premchand was a great social reformer and thinker, he married a child widow named Shivarani Devi. In 1921 he answered Gandhiji's call and resigned from his job as his support to the Indian independence movement and Swadeshi movement. He took up a job in a printing press and became the proprietor of the press. During that time he also worked as the Editor of Hindi and Urdu journals to support himself. It was miserable to see that though he had established himself as a great Writer and Novelist, he failed to earn money and led a life of struggle amid poverty and financial crisis. Despite all these constraints he worked to generate patriotism and nationalistic sentiments in the general populace.

When the Editor of the journal '*Maryaada*' was jailed in the freedom movement, Premchand worked for a time as the Editor of that journal. Afterward, he worked as the Principal in a school in the Kashi Vidyapeeth. He believed in the principle: '*hate the sin and not the sinner*.' His greatness lies in the fact that his writings embody social purpose and social criticism rather than mere entertainment. Literature according to him is a powerful means of educating public opinion. He believed in social evolution and his ideal was equal opportunities for all. The Writer was mainly recognized for his creations that always contained a social message and raised voice against the social evils pertaining in the Indian society. The great novelist is ranked among the greatest Authors of the 20th century in India.

Final Days

Premchand believed that literature is a powerful medium to educate people and it showed in his writings. In his later life, he continued to write fictions with social purpose and social criticism. Now a revered Author and thinker, he presided over conferences, literature seminars and received huge applause. He chaired the first All-India conference of the Indian Progressive Writer's Association in year 1936. However, in his personal life he was still struggling to make both ends meet. He also suffered from health problem particularly 'abdominal problems'. Despite ever difficulty and challenges, Premchand did not abandon writing and embarked on completing his last novel *Mangalsootra*. The novel still remains incomplete as he died in the middle of it on 8 October 1936.

Source: www.munsipremchand.iitk.ac.in,
www.iloveindia.com, <http://rrtd.nic.in>,
www.thefamouspeople.com



Chandrashekhar Azad

*If yet your blood does not rage,
then it is water that flows in your veins.
For what is the flush of youth,
if it is not of service to the motherland.*
-Chandrashekhar Azad

A daring freedom fighter and a fearless revolutionary, Chandrashekhar was the face of revolutionary India. His fierce patriotism and courage inspired others of his generation to enter freedom struggle. A contemporary of Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad was a born firebrand revolutionary. Along with Bhagat Singh he is considered as one of the greatest revolutionaries that India has ever produced.

Early Life

Chandrashekhar Azad was born on July 23, 1906 in village Bhavra in Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh. His original name was Chandrasekhar Tiwari. His parents were Pandit Sitaram Tiwari and Jagarani Devi. He received his early schooling in Bhavra. For higher studies he went to the Sanskrit Pathashala at Varanasi. Chandrashekhar was deeply troubled by the Jalianwalabagh massacre in Amritsar in 1919.

Non-Cooperation Movement

In 1921, when Mahatma Gandhi launched Non-Cooperation Movement, Chandrasekhar Azad actively participated in revolutionary activities, at the age of 15. He was caught by the British Police while participating in the Non-Cooperation Movement. When the Magistrate asked him his

name, he said “Azad” (independent). From then Chandrashekhar assumed the title of Azad and came to be known as Chandrashekhar Azad. Azad was sentenced to fifteen lashes. With each stroke of the whip the young Chandrasekhar shouted “*Bharat Mata ki Jai*”. Chandrashekhar Azad vowed that he would never be arrested by the British Police and would die as free man.

A Revolutionary

After the suspension of Non-Cooperation Movement Chandrashekhar Azad got attracted towards more aggressive and revolutionary ideals and committed himself to complete independence by any means. Chandrashekhar Azad and his compatriots would target British officials known for their oppressive actions against ordinary people and freedom fighters. Chandrashekhar Azad was involved in Kakori Train Robbery (1926), the attempt to blow up the Viceroy’s train (1926), and the shooting of Saunders at Lahore (1928) to avenge the killing of Lala Lajpat Rai. Along with Bhagat Singh and other compatriots like Sukhdev and Rajguru, Chandrashekhar Azad formed the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA). HSRA was committed to complete Indian independence and socialist principles for India’s future progress.

Mahatma Gandhi

Young Azad was one of the young generations of Indians when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement. But many were disillusioned with the suspension of the struggle in 1922 owing to the Chauri-Chaura massacre of 22 policemen. Although Gandhi was appalled by the brutal violence, Azad did not feel that violence was unacceptable in the struggle, especially in view of the Amritsar Massacre of 1919, where Army units killed hundreds of unarmed civilians and wounded thousands in Amritsar.

Bhagat Singh

Bhagat Singh joined Azad following the death of Lala Lajpat Rai who was beaten to death by Police. Azad trained Singh and others in covert activities, and the latter grew close to him after witnessing his resolve, patriotism and courage. Along with fellow patriots like Rajguru and Sukhdev, Azad and Singh formed the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.

The Tragic Day

Chandrashekhar Azad was a terror for British Police. He was on their hit list. Police badly wanted to nab him dead or alive. On the 27 February 1931, Chandrashekhar Azad met two of his comrades Veer Bhadra and Prithvi Raj Azad. Prithvi Raj was there along with Veer Bhadra for a briefing on his mission to Russia. The Revolutionaries of the HSRA or the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association were planning a revolution in India with the help of the Communists of Russia.

Veer Bhadra excused himself saying he had an appointment and left. He had been behaving highly suspiciously for a few days. A few minutes later a brigade of policemen suddenly fired a shot and had

the park surrounded. Azad asked Prithvi Raj to flee and said that he would continue the fight. He was injured in his leg.

The Superintendent asked him to raise his hands and come out. Next moment he fell to the ground in agony as a bullet ripped through his arm. The brigade opened merciless fire in the course of which Azad was badly injured. He himself had already shot at least three policemen dead and many more were injured.

At Alfred Park, behind an ancient tree, Azad made his last stand, one which would characterise the Indian independence movement. Till his last breath the soldiers were terrified of his sharp shooting skills. And this was to be the final stage of his movement, the final scene in his life as well as the end of the revolutionaries of the HSRA. Seeing no way out Azad loaded his last bullet into his gun and put to his temple and shot himself.

He had vowed to remain 'Azad', meaning free in Urdu, all his life. He said that as long as he had his '*bumtulukara*' or his pistol no one would ever catch him alive. He said that he would never be taken to the gallows tied up. His favourite couplet and only known composition is as follows: "*Dushman ki goliyon ka hum samna karenge Azad hee rahein hain, azad hee raheinge!*" (We will face the bullets of the enemy, we have been free and will remain free always!" Years of man hunt, terror, raids, assassinations and demonstrations had at last ended for the British Raj.

Source: www.mapsofindia.com,
www.iloveindia.com, www.liveindia.com,
www.culturalindia.net



The Ill Wind from the West

New Delhi: At the nadir of the financial crisis four years ago, many Asian governments came to believe that robust growth had led to a near-“decoupling” of their economies from the West and its ongoing problems. But now, as the eurozone teeters and America’s recovery weakens, Asia, too, is showing signs of faltering.

Some Asian politicians will, quite conveniently, blame the West for any softening of growth. But their failure to pursue necessary structural reforms and economic opportunities is equally responsible, if not more so, for the region’s growing travails.

Consider India. According to the forecaster International Market Assessment, “capital flows that have dried up are not...a reflection of global market conditions,” but of a loss in confidence among investors, arising principally from fiscal mismanagement, which has led to “price instability, falling investments and eventually a decline in... growth.” With the “government in dormancy,” IMA concludes, “India is quickly losing the plot.”

India’s situation is indeed worrisome. Double-digit food-price inflation has been accompanied by debate about the share of Indians living below the poverty line, and, indeed, where the poverty line should be drawn. Official statistics use an average daily income of 32 rupees (\$0.57) a day to separate the merely poor from the desperately impoverished.

Instead of addressing the central paradox of contemporary Indian society—poverty amidst plenty—India’s government has buried its head in the sand. It proclaims bold reforms, which it then repudiates before the ink is dry. Even worse, growing official corruption is sapping private-sector dynamism.

But India is not alone in stumbling. China, too, is fearful of a growth slowdown and rising wage inflation. In response, China’s central bank is lowering interest rates to spur domestic investment, and the resulting depreciation of the renminbi’s exchange rate has helped to keep exports afloat. But China’s import figures for the first half of this year have virtually flat-lined, suggesting that Chinese firms are not investing in new equipment—and thus that China’s economy may hit the doldrums soon.

Although their political systems are mirror opposites, there are striking parallels in some of China’s and India’s deepest structural problems. Both countries undertook reforms—China in the 1980’s and India in the 1990’s—that decentralized decision-making, and both progressed rapidly. India was compelled by its democracy to pursue a politically decentralizing route, yet much economic decision-making authority remained embedded in New Delhi’s ossified bureaucracy, retarding growth. By contrast, China achieved economic decentralization, but preserved centralized political power, transferring economic-management responsibilities largely to provincial officials, which has created its own imbalances.

Thus, even as China is compelled to shift from exports to domestic consumption in order to sustain growth, India continues to rely on inward investment, exports of services and raw materials, and lower fiscal and current-account deficits to maintain its growth course. But its most damaging deficit is to be found in governance, as is true of China, where the Bo Xilai scandal has exposed the pathological underside of China's vaunted technocratic leadership.

Elsewhere in Asia, structural problems are also mounting. In Vietnam, inflation has hovered near 20% or more, with the government seemingly unwilling to embrace deeper reforms. Thailand's interminable political imbroglio has left its economy at stall speed; the reformist zeal of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has petered out in his second term following the departure of Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati; and Japan seems to remain in a state of suspended animation.

Europe's malaise, and the resulting rise of populist politics, suggests that Asia's governments can ill afford to sit on their growth laurels. Indeed, they should heed a recent comment by Oxford University's Pavlos Eleftheriadis about a Greek electorate "livid at being led by those who dishonestly caused the problem." Indeed, according to Eleftheriadis, tax collectors in Greece today are confronted by bull-whip-wielding citizens. That sounds a lot like India nowadays.

There are bold ideas in circulation in Asia that could sustain and promote growth. The recent decision by the leaders of China, Japan, and South Korea to launch talks on a trilateral free-trade agreement among, respectively, the world's second, third, and 12th largest economies is certainly audacious, though reaching an agreement between two of Asia's great democracies and China will likely make the failed Doha Round of global trade talks seem simple.

But India is nowhere to be seen in all of this. Indeed, with Burma's economy opening to the world, India ought to be taking the lead in seeking to stimulate South Asian growth and economic integration, for only by doing so can it anchor its neighbour within the region. Yet, when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh recently visited Burma, he had little to offer aside from the usual investment proposals. A bold initiative toward Bangladesh would also yield a strongly positive impact on growth, and yet nothing is happening there, either.

With the major emerging countries, particularly China and India, already in trouble, Asia can expect to be hit hard if the euro sinks. Before that happens, governments must seize the policy initiative, thereby strengthening global financial markets' confidence in Asia's ability to withstand the ill wind from the West.

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Three Queens of Mahabharata



Draupadi, Kunti, Gandhari

There are three queens in the Mahabharata story—Gandhari, the spouse of King Dhritrashtra and mother of the Kauravas; Kuntidevi, wife of King Pandu and mother of the Pandavas; and Draupadi, wife of the five Pandava brothers.

Gandhari was a high-spirited woman who blindfolded her eyes so as to share her husband's woes of blindness. She kept within herself all her pent-up emotions, such as motherly affection even towards her wicked son Duryodhana and some sympathy for the hardships caused to the Pandavas by her sons. Because of her self-imposed blindness, she failed to curb her son's atrocities like dishonouring Draupadi in the royal assembly. Nor did she check her wily brother Sakuni providing Duryodhana with atrociously evil plots such as sending Pandavas to the lac palace in Varanavat for being burnt alive. Her pent up emotions finally burst out only after the Kurukshetra war where all her sons were killed. At that time, she could only pronounce a terrible curse on Krishna (end to his Yadava clan) for his alleged failure to prevent the war of the cousins.

Draupadi faced the most unforeseen predicament of being spouse of all five Pandava brothers, even though it was Arjuna who won her at the Swayamvara by his unrivalled archery skill. She bore them one son each—the Upapandavas.

As Sita in Ramayana, she accompanied her husbands in their twelve-year exile in the forest and living one year incognito as attendant in the court of King of Virata and endured untold difficulties.

Her most dependable refuge was Krishna whose divine powers she witnessed while responding to her appeal he provided her with unending lengths of sarees and foiled Dussasana's attempt to disrobe her in the open court.

The Kurukshetra war was won by the strength of Bheema, the unmatched valour of Arjuna and the stratagem of Krishna. But the anti-climax came in the form of Ashwathama slaughtering the Upapandavas and burning of the Pandava camp. Draupadi had to endure the loss of all her sons as Gandhari did, with only Abhimanyu's child Parikshit as the sole heir apparent to the Pandavas.

Kuntidevi lived happily in the forest with her husband Pandu who had renounced his kingdom after incurring a sage's curse. Three sons were born to her on invoking mantras to Dharma (Yama), Vayu and Indra as taught to her by the sage whom she had served. She, in her turn taught the mantra to Madri who became mother of the Aswini Twins.

Not long after Pandu died consequent to a sage's curse. Madri committed 'Sati', leaving her two sons to Kunti's care. From then on Kunti had to wear the mantle of a dowager queen all her life.

The sons grew up under the care of grandfather Bheeshma and outshone their Kaurava cousins in skills and character, thereby rousing their jealousy. Duryodhana and Sakuni hatched the plot to send the Pandavas and Kunti to Varanavat and burn them to death at the palace made of lac specially built for that sinister purpose.

Having been forewarned by Vidura, Kunti and the Pandavas escaped and lived incognito till Draupadi's swayamwar. It was on Kunti's word that the bride became the spouse of all the five Pandavas. Kuntidevi spent 36 happy years after the partition of the kingdom with Yudisthira as King of Indraprastha. But Yudisthira yet again played and lost the game of dice due to Sakuni's tricks and had to leave along with his brothers and Draupadi to remain in exile for 12 years and live incognito for one more year. Kunti stayed back and lived in Vidura's house.

At the end of the exile when Krishna came as their emissary to Dhritrashtra and asked for a mere five villages for them to settle down honourably, an arrogant Duryodhana refused and challenged his cousins to come to war.

Kuntidevi watched these developments with great anxiety and requested Krishna to protect her sons. She made an effort to win Karna over to their side by disclosing that he was her son, but could only get an assurance that he would engage in battle with Arjuna alone and not harm the other brothers.

True to his promise to Kuntidevi Karna did not harm his Pandava brothers during battles, though he had the upper hand. His main fight was with Arjuna and with Krishna on Arjuna's side, he got killed as he had known in advance. Kuntidevi was beside herself with grief over the death of her noblest and eldest son at the hands of another of her sons but, restrained herself from revealing the truth. It was only when Yudhishtira was offering oblations to the departed souls that Kunti asked him to offer oblations to Karna also as he was a Kaunteya, not Radheya! The Pandavas were shocked and grief-stricken to learn that they had killed their eldest brother.

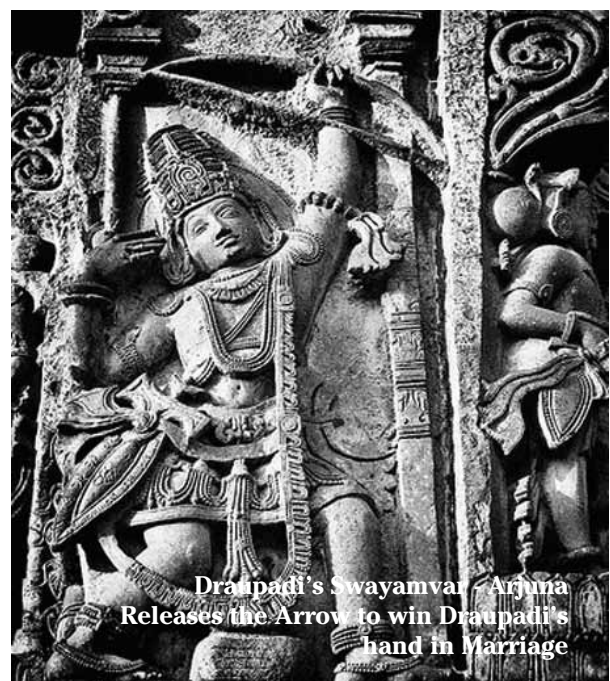
For thirteen years after Yudhishtira's crowning as emperor, Kunti stayed with him as Rajmata. So did Dhritrashtra and Gandhari who were given due respect by Yudhishtira. When they finally decided to leave for the forest, Kunti too decided to join them. Not long afterwards all three of them faced a tragic end in a forest fire.

Kuntidevi bore no ill will towards Duryodhana who had plotted to kill her and her sons. She was the gentlest and noblest queen of the Mahabharata epic. All through her life she was devoted to Krishna and grateful to him for protecting her sons in every crisis. At her last meeting with Krishna before he left for Dwaraka, her prayer was as follows:

"I am an ignorant woman, Krishna, I have not studied the Vedas or been taught Brahmavidya. But I know one truth and that is, that you are



Gandhari



Draupadi's Swayamvar - Arjuna Releases the Arrow to win Draupadi's hand in Marriage

the Isvara, the Lord of Lords. I salute you. Like a seasoned actor on the stage, you have played the role of Krishna to perfection, and everyone has taken you as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva; of Nanda and Yashoda; and as the cowherd who tended cattle at Brindavan."

"You have been our saviour My sons have regained their kingdom because of you. You have been there to protect us whenever trouble visited us. May there be misfortunes again and again so that you will be with us all the time! No one is able to gauge the depth of your purpose. Krishna, grant me that my mind should always be bent on you and thought about you, like the river Ganga which, with a single-minded purpose, flows into the sea unmindful of obstructions". "So be it", said Krishna, wiping her tears.

S.T.V. Raghavan

Source: Bhavan's Journal March 15, 2012



K. Kamaraj



K. Kamaraj with Indira Gandhi and Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Kumaraswamy Kamaraj belongs to the galaxy of selfless, dedicated and intrepid freedom fighters whose sacrifice and service won us independence from British rule. Representing a novel political culture neither bordering on Gandhian thought and action nor possessing the anglicised sophistication and cosmopolitanism of the Nehruvian vision, Kamaraj, rose from an underprivileged background, stood forth as a sober and robust figure winning the confidence and respect of the common people. Kumaraswami Kamaraj, better known as K. Kamaraj, was a powerful Indian politician. He was widely respected for his traits of honesty, integrity and simplicity. Endowed with an extraordinary memory, his minimal formal schooling was never an impediment. In fact rarely could a man from such a humble origin possess such knowledge about Tamil Nadu, be it Geography or Ethnography, which is beyond most intellectuals and academicians.

Early Life

Kamaraj was born on 15 July 1903, in a family of traders at Virudunagar. His real name was Kamakshi Kumaraswamy Nader but was affectionately shortened to Raja by his mother, Sivakami Ammal. His father, Kumarswamy Nader, was a coconut merchant. Kamaraj was enrolled at the local elementary school, the Nayanar Vidyalaya but was later shifted to the high school Kshatriya Vidyalaya. Unfortunately his father died within a year of Kamaraj's enrolment in school. Kamaraj's mother sold all jewellery except her earrings and deposited the money with a local merchant and cared for the entire family on the monthly interest that the money earned. Kamaraj was not a good student in school and dropped out when he was in the sixth grade and for a number of years never had steady and proper employment. But when he entered mainstream public life he felt handicapped and realized the importance of a good education. He educated himself during his periods of imprisonment and even learned English from his co-worker.

Kamaraj joined as an apprentice in his maternal uncle Karuppiyah's cloth shop after dropping out of school. He would slip out from the shop to join processions and attend public meetings addressed by orators like Dr Varadarajulu Naidu and George Joseph. His relatives frowned upon Kamaraj's

budding interest in politics. They sent him to Thiruvananthapuram to work at another uncle's timer shop. Even there Kamaraj participated in the Vaikom Satyagraha led by George Joseph, of the Congress, against the atrocities of the higher caste Hindus on the Harijans. His elders had him called back home and pressured him to marry. Kamaraj resolutely refused to bow to the dictates of his elders.

Political Life

At the age of 16, Kamaraj enrolled himself as a full-time worker of the Congress. He participated in inviting speakers, organizing meetings and collecting funds for the party. He soon found an abiding place for himself in the Congress ranks as a gritty grass roots level, full-time worker and mass leader of the Congress; and he was imprisoned a number of times for actively participating in the freedom struggle. He also participated in the march to Vedaranyam led by Rajagopalachari as part of the Salt Satyagraha of March 1930. Kamaraj was arrested and sent to Alipore Jail for two years. He was 27 at the time of arrest and was released in 1931 following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Kamaraj was implicated in the Virudhunagar Bomb Case two years later.

Dr Varadarajulu Naidu and George Joseph argued on Kamaraj's behalf and proved the charges to be baseless. Kamaraj was arrested again in 1940 and sent to Vellore Jail while he was on his way to Wardha to get Gandhiji's approval for a list of Satyagrahis. While still in jail, Kamaraj was elected Chairman to the Municipal Council. Nine months later upon his release, Kamaraj went straight to the Municipality and tendered his resignation from his post. He felt that *"one should not accept any post to which one could not do full justice."* Kamaraj was arrested once more in 1942 and sentenced to three years in the Amaravathi prison for spreading propaganda material for Quit India movement initiated by Gandhiji. In prison, Kamaraj read books and continued his self-education.

Social Worker

On 13 April 1954, K. Kamaraj became the Chief Minister of Madras. He gave simple advice to his Ministers, *"Face the problem. Don't evade it. Find a solution, however small... People will be satisfied"*



if you do something." The State made immense strides in education and trade. New schools were opened, better facilities were added to existing ones. No village remained without a primary school and no Panchayat without a high school. Kamaraj strove to eradicate illiteracy by introducing free and compulsory education upto eleventh standard. He introduced the Mid-Day Meals Scheme to provide at least one meal per day to the lakhs of poor children. This was for the first time in the world that a measure like this was being executed in 1957. He introduced free school uniforms to weed out caste, creed and class distinctions among young minds.

"Kamaraj, rose from an underprivileged background, stood forth as a sober and robust figure winning the confidence and respect of the common people."

People fondly called him the Gandhi of South India or even the Black Gandhi. In his hometown Tamil Nadu, the denizens still credit him for spreading education facility to the thousands under the poverty line. Under Kamaraj's administration, a number of irrigation schemes were completed in record time. The Land Ceiling Act and the Tenancy Protection Act benefitted small farmers and saved them from being exploited by landlords. Medium and small scale industries prospered in the midst of large industries making Madras one of the leaders in industrialization. Nehru complimented Kamaraj for making Madras (later renamed State of Tamil Nadu) the best administered State in India."

Kingmaker

Kamaraj remained Chief Minister for three consecutive terms. On 2 October 1963, he resigned to serve a greater purpose. Kamaraj noticed that the Congress party was slowly losing its vigour. He came up with a plan which was called the "Kamaraj Plan." He proposed that all senior Congress leaders should resign from their posts and devote all

their energy to the re-vitalization of the Congress. A number of Central and State Ministers like Lal Bahadur Shastri, Jagjivan Ram, Morarji Desai and SK Patil followed suite and resigned from their posts. In 1964, Kamaraj was elected the President of the All India Congress and he successfully navigated the nation through the stormy years following Nehru's death. K. Kamaraj played a crucial role in the appointment of India's two Prime Ministers—Lal Bahadur Shastri in the year 1964 and Indira Gandhi in the year 1966.

Mahatma Gandhi

Responding to the call of Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation Movement, Kamaraj entered the freedom struggle as a Congress volunteer organising meetings, processions and demonstrations. His inquisitiveness for understanding national affairs earned him a host of young friends who, infused in him the burning love for the country. He analysed in depth the social, economic and political plight of the nation. His interest in politics was accentuated when he heard of the 'Jallianwala Bagh massacre'. Kamaraj participated in the famous Vaikom Satyagraha, and, following Mahatma Gandhi's appeal for Non-Cooperation, he started propaganda for Khadi and prohibition. He was jailed many times for participating in "Salt Satyagraha" and in the course of the national struggle for freedom. He took an active part in individual Satyagraha and the 'Quit India' movement initiated by Mahatma Gandhi.

Final Days

As a strange and apt coincidence, Kamaraj, who was considered to be an ardent follower of Gandhiji, passed away in Madras on 2 October 1975. On that fateful day of Gandhi Jayanti, Kamaraj awoke from his afternoon nap feeling uneasy. His housekeeper, Vairavan, rang up his physician. While he was on his way out, Kamaraj said, "*Vairavan, put out the lights when you go out.*" K. Kamaraj died that day. He was honoured with the highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, posthumously in 1976.

Source: www.iglobal-tamil.com,
www.liveindia.com, www.iloveindia.com,
www.maxabout.com

What Happened to India?

Chicago: Emerging markets around the world—Brazil, China, India, and Russia, to name the largest—are slowing. One reason is that they continue to be dependent, directly or indirectly, on exports to advanced industrial countries. Slow growth there, especially in Europe, is economically depressing.

But a second reason is that they each have important weaknesses, which they have not overcome in good times. For China, it is excessive reliance on fixed-asset investment for growth. In Brazil, low savings and various institutional impediments keep interest rates high and investment low, while the educational system does not serve significant parts of the population well. And Russia, despite a very well educated population, continues to be reliant on commodity industries for economic growth.

Hardest to understand, though, is why India is underperforming so much relative to its potential. Indeed, annual GDP growth has fallen by five percentage points since 2010.

For a country as poor as India, growth should be what Americans call a “no-brainer.” It is largely a matter of providing public goods: basic infrastructure like roads, bridges, ports, and power, as well as access to education and basic health care. And, unlike many equally poor countries, India already has a very strong entrepreneurial class, a reasonably large and well-educated middle class, and a number of world-class corporations that can be enlisted in the effort to provide these public goods.

Satisfying the demand for such goods is itself a source of growth. But, also, a reliable road creates tremendous additional activity, as trade increases between connected areas, and myriad businesses, restaurants, and hotels spring up along the way.

As India did away with the stultifying License Raj in the 1990’s, successive governments understood the imperative of economic growth, so much so that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) contested the 2004 election on a pro-development platform, encapsulated in the slogan, “India Shining.” But the BJP-led coalition lost that election. Whether the debacle reflected the BJP’s unfortunate choice of coalition partners or its emphasis on growth when too many Indians had not benefited from it, the lesson for politicians was that growth did not provide electoral rewards.

In any event, that election suggested a need to spread the benefits of growth to rural areas and the poor. There are two ways of going about that. The first, which is harder and takes time, is to increase income-generating capabilities in rural areas, and among the poor, by improving access to education, health care, finance, water, and power. The second is to increase voters’ spending power through populist subsidies and transfers, which typically tend to be directed toward the politically influential rather than the truly needy.

In the years after the BJP’s loss, with a few notable exceptions, India’s political class decided that traditional populism was a surer route to re-election. This perception also accorded well with the median (typically poor) voter’s low expectation of government in India—seeing it as a source of sporadic handouts rather than of reliable public services.

For a few years, the momentum created by previous reforms, together with strong global growth, carried India forward. Politicians saw little need to vote for further reforms, especially those that would upset powerful vested interests. The lurch toward populism was strengthened when the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance concluded that a rural employment-guarantee scheme and a populist farm-loan waiver aided its victory in the 2009 election.

But, while politicians spent the growth dividend on poorly targeted giveaways such as subsidized petrol and cooking gas, the need for further reform only increased. For example, industrialization requires a transparent system for acquiring land from farmers and tribal people, which in turn presupposes much better land-ownership records than India has.

As demand for land and land prices increased, corruption became rampant, with some politicians, industrialists, and bureaucrats using the lack of transparency in land ownership and zoning to misappropriate assets. India's corrupt elites had moved from controlling licenses to cornering newly valuable resources like land. The Resource Raj rose from the ashes of the License Raj.

India's citizenry eventually reacted. An eclectic mix of idealistic and opportunistic politicians and NGOs mobilized people against land acquisitions. With investigative journalists getting into the act, land acquisition became a political land mine.

Moreover, key institutions, such as the Comptroller and Auditor General and the judiciary, staffed by an increasingly angry middle class, also launched investigations. As evidence emerged of widespread corruption in contracts and resource allocation, ministers, bureaucrats, and high-level corporate officers were arrested, and some have spent long periods in jail.

The collateral effect, however, is that even honest officials are now too frightened to help corporations to navigate India's maze of bureaucracy. As a result, industrial, mining, and infrastructure projects have ground to a halt.

Populist government spending and the inability of the supply side of the economy to keep pace has, in turn, led to elevated inflation, while Indian households, worried that no asset looks safe, have

taken to investing in gold. Because India does not produce much gold itself, these purchases have contributed to an abnormally wide current-account deficit. Not much more was required to dampen foreign investors' enthusiasm for the India story, with the rupee falling significantly in recent weeks.

As with the other major emerging markets, India's fate is in its own hands. Hard times tend to concentrate minds. If its politicians can take a few steps to show that they can overcome narrow partisan interests to establish the more transparent and efficient government that a middle-income country needs, they could quickly re-energize India's enormous engines of potential growth. Otherwise, India's youth, their hopes and ambitions frustrated, could decide to take matters into their own hands.

Raghuram Rajan, a former Chief Economist of the IMF, is Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business and the Author of *Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy*, the Financial Times Business Book of the Year.

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Mangal Pandey

Mangal Pandey, whose name is often preceded by '*Shaheed*' meaning a martyr in Hindi, was an Indian soldier during the pre-independence era. A member of the 34th Regiment of the Bengal native infantry of the East India Company, Mangal Pandey is counted among the most popular figures associated with India's freedom struggle in present times and was the first Indian sepoy who woke up the Indian masses to fight for the nation. He was a true freedom fighter who gave a spark to the First War of Indian Independence.

Early Life

Mangal Pandey was born on 19 July 1827 in the Nagwa village in the Ballia district of the Uttar Pradesh state. There is some dispute over his exact place of birth. According to another version he was born in a Bhumihaar Brahmin family to Divakar Pandey of Surhupur village of Faizabad district's Akbarpur Tehsil. He joined as a Sepoy (soldier) force of the British East India Company in the year 1849 at the age of 22. Pandey was part of 5th Company of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry (BNI) regiment.

The Cartridges

Mangal Pandey was a devout Hindu and practiced his religion strictly. The 19th Regiment was charged with testing the new cartridges on 26 February 1857. The sepoys in that regiment refused, when ordered to fire. The whole regiment was dismissed with dishonour from service in order to post an exemplary punishment.

The main reason of Sepoy Mutiny was the Pattern 1853 Enfield rifled musket. To load a new rifle, the soldiers had to bite the cartridge and open to pour gunpowder into the rifle's muzzle. There was a widespread rumor that these cartridges were greased with lard or tallow. Lard is the pork fat which the Muslims regarded as unclean and tallow is the beef fat which the Hindus regarded as sacred. The British army constituted 96% of Indians and so both the Hindus and the Muslims refused to accept these cartridges.

Everyone had a firm belief that this was done intentionally and this discontent turned into a major revolt. The company therefore kept this fact a secret. Thus, when it came out as a rumour, it had an even more damaging effect, as all kinds



of rumours started spreading. It was thought that the British planned to make their sepoys outcaste in the society in order to force them to convert to Christianity. Another rumour said the British had manipulated the wheat flour distributed to the sepoy with bones of cows.

The matters could have been worsened by the fact that an overwhelming number of sepoys in the Bengal Native Infantry were made of Brahmin sepoys from Awadh. As Brahmins are generally vegetarians and are not supposed to eat or touch meat, the resistance was even stronger.

What added to the discontent was that the Commandant of the 34th BNI (Bengal Native Infantry) was a known Christian preacher. Commandant Wheler of the 34th BNI was known as a zealous Christian preacher, and this may also have impacted the Company's behaviour. The husband of Captain Wilma Halliday of 56th BNI had the Bible printed in Urdu and Nagri and distributed among the sepoys, thus convincing them that the British were intent on converting them to Christianity.

Awadh

The 19th and 34th Bengal Native Infantry were stationed at Lucknow during the time of annexation of Awadh (anglicised to Oudh) under the Doctrine of Lapse on 7 February 1856. The annexation had another implication for sepoys in the Bengal Army (a significant portion of whom came from that princely state). Before the annexation these sepoys had the right to petition the British Resident at the Awadh in Lucknow for justice—a significant privilege in the context of native courts. As a result of the annexation they lost that right, since that state no longer existed. Moreover, this action was seen by the residents of Awadh as an affront by the British, as the annexation was done in violation of an existing treaty. Thus, it was quite natural that sepoys were affected by the general discontent which was aroused with the annexation. In February 1857, both these regiments were situated in Barrackpur.

First War of Indian Independence

Mangal Pandey is primarily known for attacking his British officers in an incident that sparked what is known to the British as the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and to Indians as the First War of Indian Independence. His name got etched into the pages of the Indian history after the attack. The attack was not a result of personal grudges but rather driven by ideological (religious / patriotic) motives. In India Pandey is widely considered to be the First Warrior in India's long struggle for independence from the British rule.

“His name got etched into the pages of the Indian history after the attack.”

Execution

At Barrackpore (now Barrackpur), near Calcutta on 29 March 1857, Pandey attacked and injured his British sergeant on the parade ground, and wounded an adjutant with a sword after shooting at him, but instead hit the adjutant's horse. He was however attacked by a native soldier called Shaikh Paltu who prevented him from killing the adjutant and later the Sergeant-Major. When General Joyce Hearsay ordered the Jemadar of the troops, a man called Ishari Pande, to arrest him, the Jemadar refused, as did the rest of the company except Shaikh Paltu.

Mangal then turned the gun against himself, and used his foot to try to pull the trigger to shoot himself. He failed, was captured and sentenced to death along with the Jemadar. Mangal Pandey was hanged on 8 April. His execution was scheduled for 18 April but he was summarily executed 10 days prior to the date, fearing the possibility of a larger-scale revolt. The Jemadar, Ishari Pandey was executed on 22 April. The whole regiment was dismissed on 6 May as a collective punishment, because it was felt that they harboured ill-feelings against their superiors.

Source: www.indianfreedomfighters.in,
www.iloveindia.com, www.mapsofindia.com,
www.liveindia.com

Sister Nivedita: England's 'Gift' to Indian Spiritualism

A glowing tribute on the
savant's centenary

A young lady in her early thirties arrived in Calcutta in 1898 to serve a subjugate country and its most uncared for inhabitants. She belonged to the ruling class—the English, but chose to devote herself to be the servant of those languishing in political bondage—the Indians. The zeal to serve a cause was burning steadily within her. This awakened spirit could not be doused by the mountain-high obstacles. Margaret Noble, she was an ardent follower of the great master Swami Vivekananda.

Margaret Noble was born in North Ireland on October 28, 1867; she had her early education in a London boarding school. Her subsequent college education made her a qualified teacher.

On entering the teaching profession she soon proved herself to be a teacher with distinction for having devised new techniques of teaching. But she had a longing for discovering the truth about religion in particular and mundane matters in general. She had listened to several religious discourses, but they were merely suggestions for leading a comfortable life here on earth. They lacked the depth of spiritual dimension for uplifting man to the higher realms. She was deeply disappointed and nothing could quench her thirst and longing for a deeper meaning of religion.

Her restlessness became more pronounced as days advanced till a memorable moment arrived on a cold Sunday afternoon in 1895. She was a member of a close circle, of eager listeners gathered in



the drawing room of an aristocratic family in London in the presence of an alien speaker on an abstruse topic—The philosophical aspect of religion.

There she met a *gerrua-clad*, turbaned, young sannyasi from India, invited to elucidate the Vedanta philosophy, the quintessence of Hindu religious thought.

She could not fully grasp the import of an alien culture, issued from the lips of an equally alien but splendid expositor. Yet she was charmed, enraptured and captivated by the eloquence and profundity of thought of the elucidator.

She followed the speaker during his subsequent deliveries on this soul-searching topic and decided to make him her Guru, the spiritual master. The master saw in her a burning spirit of a devotee of human welfare, country, colour or sect notwithstanding. He trained her briefly on human worship through selfless service. He forged her life and 'Hinduised' her spirit.

The master, Vivekananda returned to India and wrote to her in 1897, convinced that she was wanted in India as a real lioness to work for the alleviation of the poor Indians, especially its women. Since India could not produce the women of his expectation, he had to seek them from outside. "Your education", Vivekananda wrote, "sincerity, purity, immense love, determination, and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted."

But Swamiji warned her against taking a step hurriedly as she herself might not be aware of the impending predicament—harsh climate throughout the year, barring only a few winter days, discomfort everywhere, men and women half-clad, uneducated, superstitious and above all, the suspicion with which she would be watched by her white compatriots—the rulers of India.

On the other hand, should she venture into this ordeal, she was most welcome, Swamiji added. Finally the Master assured her, “I will stand by you unto death whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it”.

These promises were unalterable and they were sufficient to attract her to India, the holy land of her master, the birth-place of the lofty Vedantic thought and the grand country that produced heroic men and women, saints and reformers.

She reached Calcutta in January 1899. Swamiji introduced her in a public meeting just after her arrival saying that “England has sent us another gift in Miss Margaret Noble”. She in the course of her lecture commended the Indians for “preserving the greatest treasure for the world.” “It is for that I have come to India to serve her with a burning passion”, she asserted. The audience was certainly pleased and so was her Master, who later wrote to another devotee, “Miss Noble is really an acquisition.”

A week later, there arrived for her “a day of days”, when she saw her idol, her spiritual Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, the consort of saint Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. She already had gathered from her Master, who was a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna about the latter’s purity of life, radiance of vision and first-hand acquisition of religious truth. She had learnt how devoted was he towards his wife, Sri Sarada Devi, with whom he had only spiritual communion.

The Mother, who adopted Miss Noble as her spiritual daughter, was a beacon guiding her along the path of spiritual development. Here the epitome of purity and holiness of the East met the nobility and large-heartedness of the West, Margaret. Though she was born in a foreign land, the Holy Mother felt she was here to spread Sri Ramakrishna’s ideas and messages everywhere.

Swamiji initiated Miss Noble into the Ramakrishna Order as a Brahmacharini, an equivalent of a nun and christened her as Nivedita, the dedicated one. The same year Nivedita set out on a pilgrimage to North India with Swamiji and other disciples of the Order. She had a rare glimpse of the Lord of the Universe, Shiva at Amarnath, the snow-clad God nestled in the Himalayas.

The Swamiji was moulding Nivedita along the Vedantic ideals of womanhood, that loving, caring, all-patient, ever-forgiving soul of an Indian woman.



Sri Sarada Devi and Sister Nivedita

*“Many times,
Nivedita met with rebuke,
refusal, even scorn from the
conservative house-holders.
But persistence paved the
way for victory.”*

Women were viewed by Swamiji as the “living embodiments of the divine Mother..... a knower of the Brahman”.

Swamiji wanted her to be a Brahmin Brahmacharini, leading a pure, unspoiled life to work for the masses, without any motive. Her focus should be on the uplift of Indian women, who were, from time immemorial, subjugated, trampled over and exploited by the domineering males. They suffered this iniquity without a murmur, for they were injured to and anointed with such suffering and injustice from their very birth. Only education held the key to their rejuvenation, said the Master to the disciple.

With this requirement in mind, Nivedita embarked upon her first adventure of starting a model school, first of its kind at 16, Bosepara Lane, Calcutta. It was meant for girls and women only. Students had to be collected from door to door because the conservative society never permitted such liberal step to take place. Many times, Nivedita met with rebuke, refusal, even scorn from the conservative house-holders. But persistence paved the way for victory. Nivedita, along with another devoted foreigner, Sister Christine, struggled hard, physically, emotionally and financially to keep the school going in an unsympathetic atmosphere.



Sister Nivedita, as she was now popularly known, reminisced, “Those months between ‘November 1898’ to ‘June 1899’ were full of happy glimpses. My little school was begun on the day of Kali Puja and the Mother herself came and performed the opening ceremony of worship..... I cannot imagine a grander omen than her blessing spoken over the educated Hindu womanhood of the future”.

The Holy Mother “prayed that the blessing of the great Mother Kali might be upon the school and the girls it should train to be ideal girls”.

Students admitted into the school ranged from small girls to married women, widows to housewives. Sister Nivedita and Sister Christine, were on their feet to look after the students’ education, their mannerism, disciplined behaviour, and most important, their sense and dignity of womanhood.

The girls were taught the basics of number-counting, alphabets in their vernacular language, sewing, drawing and painting. Sister Nivedita was a gifted teacher and had the felicity of coming down to the level of the students to see through their eyes and to understand through their soul. She would not be harsh with slow learners, never angry nor sarcastic, while dealing with them individually.

This strain, resulted from direct dealing with and toiling for each student drained her patience and vitality and at the same time brought her a reputation as an able organiser and an excellent trainer. She even adopted a novel method of teaching that senior girls would be engaged in teaching the juniors. It was realised that teaching was such a fun that most seniors, who were child-widows devoted the rest of their lives for teaching the young.

One Sudhira Devi who vowed never to marry came forward to help the two foreign-born Sisters in running the school. The school progressed slowly but steadily propped up by their unflinching devotion to a noble cause.

Teaching for them was not merely a pedagogical occupation, but a labour of love. No personal

discomfort could dissuade the Sisters from this loving engagement. At times during hot summer days, Sister Nivedita would emerge from her classrooms profusely sweating and exhausted and with a splitting headache and a face turning red through over work. But her Master’s words always encouraged and comforted her. After all, she willingly put herself in that piquant position of courting trouble and shunning comfort.

Sister Nivedita taught her students the basics of housekeeping, cleanliness and the spirit of sacrifice. Painting of flowers, stitching of clothes, making of dolls, decorating class rooms with papers and leaves on festive occasions—all these were imparted with the skill of an expert innovator.

Her teaching of history was a marvel. She would describe vividly to her students the places she had visited, the valour of Kings, the heroism displayed by Rani Padmini, Queen of Jhansi and so on. She would take them to nearby historical places, museums to know the richness of ancient India.

She encouraged them to improve their vernacular, not to utter a ‘line’ when a ‘rekha’ was at hand, to understand their epics and the pantheon of mythological characters. She would, on occasions, give treat to students out of her scanty and dwindling resources as to make them feel at home and to improve loving personal bond. Money that she sought for development never came, even though she made fervent appeals in pamphlets and newspapers. But undeterred, Sister Nivedita marched on. The school, now more than a century old, bears witness to the travails this foreigner underwent then and it stands as a tribute to her supreme sacrifice.

At this juncture, plague broke out in Calcutta and soon became an epidemic. With a few local volunteers, Nivedita organised a relief camp, caring for the children and aged, disinfecting the lanes and streets to contain the epidemic. She was a nurse, a sympathiser, a benefactor and a ray of hope in the hours of gloom and despondency.

Sister Nivedita was inspired to delve into the realm of Vedantic teachings. Grand ideas from the ancient Upanishads had already touched her heart. She was aware that the gems of ancient spirituality, contemplated in the Indian forests and in caves, were retrieved by Swamiji to reach the doors of the people. He made these precepts simple and popular, and his worthy disciple wanted to make them practical in life.

The Vedanta declares that the Self is present in all living beings; man and woman have the same consciousness in the outer difference of the body. The Indian concept of Mukti is freedom, man ought to be free from every shackle that binds him, free to pursue any goal he cherishes. But such thirst for Mukti creates its own obstacle on attaining Mukti.

In June 1899, Sister Nivedita sailed to the West along with her Master. Through Swamiji's efforts and support of his followers Vedanta Societies sprang up in America and European countries. Through her lectures delivered in West, she captivated the audience in every meeting hall. She wrote copiously to promote practical teachings of Vedanta in foreign lands.

Swamiji passed away on July 4, 1902 at Belur, Calcutta. At his passing away the world seemed to collapse around her. But Swamiji had assured all, "I shall not cease to work! I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God." This mantra kept her going with vigour in pursuing her cherished ideal of service.

Sister Nivedita was passionately in love with India, the cradle of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism and in which the Lion of Vedanta roared to scare away the foxes of ignorance, materialism and selfishness to fly to their hideouts. She urged Indians to be inspired by their ancient history, so vast and glorious that no alien writer would portray it accurately without any prejudice. To quote her, "Great realms of the ideal open for our exploration. New conceptions of life and duty and freedom; new ideas of citizenship, untried expressions of love and friendship, into all these we must throw ourselves with burning energy and make them our own."

She moulded Indian thinking much after the passing away of Swamiji. Sri Aurobindo in his struggling revolutionary days learnt much from her the ideals Swami Vivekananda stood for, later day patriots— Pandit Nehru, Netaji Subhas, to name a few, acknowledged their debt to Sister Nivedita. Gurudev Rabindranath recalled her contribution to India, "The life of Sister Nivedita was a very great life. There was no defrauding of us on her part—that is, she gave herself up fully for the service of India; she did not keep anything back for her own use. We learnt from her how noble it was to dedicate one's heart to the people".

It was an apt description of a great soul by an eminent thinker and a prestigious Nobel laureate. Sister Nivedita's vital contribution to the Indian masses cannot be easily ignored. She ignited the fervour of patriotism in every Indian. Her periodic outbursts through writings and speeches inflamed the patriotic spirit in no small measure, much to the chagrin of her ruling compatriots. She preferred aggression to docility, which she otherwise viewed as sheer lethargy and cowardice. She would prefer armed assault to meek submission before any unjust authority.

In the process she earned the ire of the white-skinned authorities who viewed her as a traitor of the British Kingdom and prevented her, as far as practicable, from spreading the venom of demanding India's freedom with repressive



measures and without any consideration of her birth, upbringing and human approach.

Sister Nivedita fought them in her own way and endured hardship like any revolting Indian of the day. She even designed our national flag with the thunderbolt of the god-king Indra engraved in it for the weapon represented selflessness and dedication.

The legendary figure of sacrifice and the queen of selfless service breathed her last on October 13 1911 at Darjeeling. But before that she went on a mission to the West and worked tirelessly in preaching her master's lofty thought and message meant for the upliftment of mankind.

She left a monument behind in her pen-portrait of Swamiji, "The Master as I saw Him", a splendid biography, as famous as Boswell's Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, where the hero and not the biographer was everywhere duly focused.

India rose to its feet, though belatedly, in deep reverence and gratitude by paying homage to her dedicated life and inscribing on her tombstone the epithet—"Here reposes Sister Nivedita who gave her all to India."

The debt is still irreparable, even a century after her passing away.

Radhanath Behera

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Glimmering and Hazy Landscape of Indian Politics

He was not in his customary mood. His mind was lost somewhere between his actions and lectures he had been delivering. The driver opened the door of the car to allow sit on the back-seat. Ajeet gave him a folded hand send off without uttering anything. The vehicle found its way through the *kuchcha* road. He reached his bungalow and found four of his partymen seated in the porch.

On his arrival in the porch of his bungalow, his partymen stood up leaving their cups of tea on the table. Sooryaji, where did you go? I suppose...’ said one of them in a rather pleasing manner. ‘I’m sorry. I went out just like that. To have a car ride in the open. You park the car somewhere near fields and then have a stroll. A stroll to solve political problems of the country.’ The other partymen did not lag behind in starting that with the leader. ‘By the way... what about events in the town?’ ‘Such situations are normal in a developing country and democracy. Personally I’m dead against violence. People have a right to express themselves.’ Their conversation took the shape of a mini-group discussion. ‘Rajeev has support neither of a political party nor of a political person of stature.’ ‘He is doomed. Without political support, agitations in India don’t mean anything.’ ‘That’s true. Who bothers about the sentiments of common people? And what about Rajeev?’ ‘Just a slip of a boy! And Smita?’ ‘I tell you. I learn she has two more sisters. No family worthy of mention will welcome them.’ ‘By the way, What’s Smita’s fault? Has she done anything immoral? To sit with three boys in the tent for nights together. And then to be kidnapped. Who knows what has been done to her? Even the most educated, modern, open-minded of us have this line of thinking. The attitude is inherent in us. We fling back to the same obsessions. What do you think Sooryakantji? You are one of the enlightened ones.’ ‘Such discussions add a flavour only on the drink-table. Fix it up to-

night.’ Sooryakant gave a ready approval with a massive nodding of his head. A wave of jubilation swept over their faces. ‘By the way, how about visiting the injured?’ ‘A great idea... Sooryakantji. After that we can have drinks.’ ‘Excellent... Two of you go to the bazar’ ‘Buy some gifts, fruits and sweets.’ ‘O.K. here is some money.’ They got ready for a visit to the victims of the peaceful march. Sooryakant did his best to spread one of the softest smiles on his face. He must be extra nice to the victims of the march. He must visit Smita. She is the worst victim of all. The group visited other victims also and distributed gifts to them. The next day newspaper carried the minor news in a minor way. The group came back to their starting point and drinks were fixed up according to the plans. Sooryakant was in a mood of contemplation. He was the architect of their injuries. What for? He could be secretive or would disclose his mind not to more than two or three persons. He believed in the old adage—everything is fair in love and war. Drinks were fixed up in the big lawn. They sat cosy and comfortable in reclining chairs. No one uttered anything in the first hour. They were lost in their respective dreams of consciousness. Drinks sometimes push us into inner recesses of mind and make us eloquent from within. Sooryakant had decided to be the least participant in the talks to follow. It was something usual with him and his political supporters. One of them came out with definite views, ‘The students have been served right. They had no business to deal with political issues. Look at their miscalculations. An agitation without any political support! Nothing but humbug and foolish.’ One of them muttered the words in a very candid and coherent manner. His lips were steady during the flow of words, Sooryakantji, You have won the hearts of the students. They will definitely be voting for you in the next elections. You really know how to deal with voters, Really!’ Their faces were flushed and minds agitated. There



was no count of glasses of whisky that were being poured through their throats. Sooryakant is quite liberal with them as far as consumption of liquor was concerned. He knows that politics these days cannot be run on the basis of principles. Suddenly he thought of Rajeev, a slip of a boy, out to confront the entire corrupt system.

Sooryakant's friends were quite vigilant about his moods and the rise and fall of his thoughts going on in his mind. One of them grew quite violent in thinking and his expression, A boy like Rajeev is still alive? He has no political backing. He should have been finished by now. We are political leaders. We have seen all political ups and downs. Still Rajeev is surviving. The speaker of this quote lost his balance of mind and words almost drowned in the perfumes rising in his stomach reaching his brain. He seemed to be in a state of uncertain mood giving expression to his blackest thoughts. 'If you wish, Sir,... I can get Rajeev murdered. A very petty job!' Sooryakant lit a cigarette and kept on looking at the burning match-stick and then spoke with a shake of his head, 'No... no... I don't wish him to be murdered. He is already finished. His agitation gone to dogs! ah! ah! He wants to revive Gandhi. He mentions Gandhi to followers.' 'I mean students. They are not mature... mere bookish knowledge is different from the one we practise.' 'I don't think you should bother that much for that boy. Not worth your thought...' Another of his followers flattered him. 'His tent is already up-rooted. I say... what a useless agitation? I say... what's the use of such agitations?' 'It's not your fault, Sir. It's the fault of the stuff gone in your tummy. Mischief maker! Aren't you drinking with us? 'And that Smita... Sali... Why did you spare her? She should have been raped. I can do this job for you. I will leave her finished for ever.' 'I say... What is her existence? Two sisters, father and a mother. They can't run their family. These girls will become prostitutes... otherwise how can they eat their food?' The servant walked in with a fresh supply of liquor. At least they were cautious not to express their precious views in the presence of servants. The night was partially visible in the lawn because of the various dim sources of light. They viewed one-another through intoxicated vibrations of mind. A sort of atmosphere in the lawn conducive to violent and nefarious thinking. One is tempted to go back to those days of sanctity and sacrifice when Gandhi led movements. There must have been some impelling spirit moving the

hearts of people. How did they make supreme sacrifices? Yes... why did they? The entire country was electrified with a moving spirit, a wave lifting masses on the plane of self-sacrifice and love for the country. Not a single idea of this kind passed through Sooryakant's mind. He must keep the reins of the town in his hands by hook or crook. He must put different groups under his thumb. His thoughts did not travel beyond these premises. Nefarious elements of the town seek shelter under him. Where is the distinction between good and bad? Between moral and immoral? All considerations have gone to dogs. Yes, thrown away like the riff-raff, like the rotten stiff of on practical utility. At the moment they are poised upon a pivot—destroy Smita and her family. Why? They are not supposed to raise their voice. They must compromise with Krishna's death. They must forget him for ever. In the morning they landed softly, peacefully before General Hospital of the city and went straight to one of the wards. The injured were already admitted to different wards of the Hospital. There was Smita with her bandaged head. Her eyes were open and were looking into a sort of vacancy. Sooryakant's arrival was announced quietly and he walked in peacefully without much noise. One of his followers carried packets. 'And you Smita... Beti. Hurt much? It's rather sad. Violence in democracy is to be finished. Beti, can you recognise the culprits? I'll see them punished.' Smita just lay on the pillow without any utterance of significance. Perhaps her physical condition did not allow her to answer the queries. With a nod she denied the existence of culprits to her knowledge. 'And Rajeevji. I must congratulate you for undertaking such a bold step. Criminals must be exposed to the public view.' Rajeev just looked at the speaker honestly. His face did not tell any story. It was poised and normal. 'Why don't you help us, Sir?'

Later on, Rajeev was repentant at his own words. Political help was beyond the preview of his agitation. One of the packets was put on the bed where Smita lay brooding. She was given a ceremonial blessing by Sooryakant. His parting words ran like this. 'If you help me in the next elections, I'll not allow such situations. I'll put an end to violence and criminals will be discarded politically. Only if Rajeev gives me support. I promise to carry your ideals to masses. I promise.' Rajeev accompanied him to the door and gave a send-off. Sooryakant's followers spoke in unison.

Sooryakantji, we don't mind doing anything for you. We are your true servants. Our main aim is to keep you in saddle. Once you are in power, money pours in. Women, wine follow. What else do we want? We don't mind the means to achieve our ends.' Their tongues stammered and clattered. Their minds roamed or sank according to intoxicating waves in their minds. No logic, no philosophy, no moral perception and vision. Only strong lust to be near the chair, to keep Sooryakant happy. Everything else was to be used, discarded according to the situations.

It was 2 O'clock in the receding phase of the night. The stars were brighter on the far-off corners of the globe. They seemed to make their presence more eloquent on the quieter phase of the night. Rajeev was awake and restless. He stood watching the movement of heavenly bodies and seemed to co-relate them with fortunes of earthly beings. Was there any connection? Are we governed from the above? Why do drastic changes take place? Perhaps it was all beyond his common understanding. A cool breeze lifted him above his philosophical broodings. Smita was on her way to recovery and many of the injured were yet to get off their beds. There were news in most of the dailies but no editorials. A probe into the incident was likely to be ordered. There was a lot of dismay and depression in the town. They felt suppressed before an unknown Dragon ready to eat them up. Rajeev was lost in a maze of conjectures. Who could be responsible for all the mishaps meted out to him? And why should he go against them? Yes, Ajeet full of mischief and misconduct. But he could not trigger off violence and mishaps on such massive scales. Should we abandon resistance? The town was cowed down. None to offer resistance. The officials were more concerned with their office routine. Moreover they were not supposed to offer resistance as public figures or crusaders. Their primary job was to keep the town in trim. A strange mental anguish filled Rajeev's mind. Was he there to set everything right? Time was out of joint. Suddenly he thought of Hamlet's predicament and his ultimate destruction. Was he to go the same way? And what about Smita? She was already out of the four walls of the house and poised for a public venture. Despite a series of pit-falls she had encountered, she had not dismayed. Rajeev's emotional fervour was pitched to a sensitive strong. Should he withdraw and settle

down to a life of routine commonalities? If Gandhi had thought like this, the country would not have seen the dawn of emancipation. It was none of his jobs. Then whose job? He tried to understand the historical process. Curiously enough most of us remain passive spectators. He was watchful and observant about his thinking. There piled up a lot of tension in his mind and he didn't know how to get out of it. He didn't know how to arrange his ideas as they came with a lot of on-rush of feelings without any check. People need a guide to lead them. Does he have all those qualities to become a leader? Already there were rumours in the town. He and Smita were being projected as the future successful candidates for elections. They must fight elections. About Smita there was a lot of back-chat. The girl has already spoiled her family. She is a curse to her parents. She should have kept herself under the bounds of family ties. She should not have bothered her aging parents. Poor creatures! Rajeev has already spoiled her. Now she is not fit for marriage. We can't trust boys and girls these days. Old ladies of the Mohalla weren't scarred of commenting at all.

'This family of Smita's should be thrown out of the Mohalla. Slut three of them. How do they earn their bread?' One-eyed old man of the street often came out with his nefarious thoughts. He tried to create an atmosphere against this family. May be he had some grudge against them? But he was sometimes contradicted by saner elements. 'It is none of our business. Why can't Smita join politics? They are not taking anything from us. Moreover girls should be encouraged to battle their life.' All sorts of opinions floated in the Mohalla and the town. No one in the Mohalla thought that Krishna had been a riot-victim. The family needed support. Only Rajeev had come to their real help but he weaned away Smita to politics.

It was six O'clock in the evening when the sky began to look grey and dark. The corners of the sky were rather blank without the presence of dust. Rajeev was walking through lanes towards Smita's house. The house was rather isolated, if not physically but morally and socially. There was something unusual about house because of Smita's active participation in politics. She had taken a recourse to something which most of the girls were not supposed to. Moreover she had violated the moral precincts of the town. Rajeev was reluctant to walk in not because of any moral

considerations but Smita's sisters and parents. They must have cursed him profusely. He was the architect of their misfortunes. He walked through an unswept lane leading to a narrow *Kachcha* pavement terminating at the threshold of Smita's house. There she was in the same room cosy on her bed. Her forehead had a plastic bandage and there was passive cheerfulness on her face. She gave a curious look to Rajeev and nodded him to sit down. There ensued several moments between them. Perhaps they were in the grip of a seething turmoil. Smita suddenly became tender towards him, 'You shouldn't expect much from my people. They certainly dislike you. They have no understanding of your ideals and aspirations. Better don't argue with them. Otherwise, I'm with you, Rajeev.' There were tears in her eyes. She touched his hand tenderly and spoke. 'Rajeev, when woman surrenders, she is ready for anything. Perhaps there was something smoldering in me, you gave a direction in a channel.' Meanwhile the two sisters rushed in bearing stern expressions on their faces. Rekha pounced upon him. 'Are you our friend or enemy? Why do you come here? Are you to finish our home? Smita had a narrow escape from death. In the hospital, I contained myself but now there is no check.' She was extremely defiant in her attitude towards him. Misery sometimes makes us extremely angry with ourselves. We are not able to reckon with the mysterious manifestations of the sub-conscious through myriad ways unknown to us. Smita looked at Rajeev with a lot of understanding and kept her expressive in his face. He was rather feeling down-cast because of the constant shower of curses at him. He dared not face Smita's parents. Rekha continued in the same vein, 'For God's sake spare us. Leave us alone. Let's face starvation and death. Father's already coughing beyond sleep, we don't know.' Rajeev went in a great mental anguish and he did not know what to do. Moreover he didn't want to extract money through foul means. But he could not evade his responsibility to this family. He was in a way responsible for dragging Smita into the present crisis. Rekha and Sona were still in fumes and frets. They were perhaps out to extract an oath atleast from Smita regarding her future participation in politics. Sona came forward and spoke in aggressive tone. 'You better don't visit us. We have already earned a bad name in the town.

We are stared at, commented upon and ridiculed.' There was a pin-drop silence in the small attic and a lot of mental turmoil in them. Rajeev was down in spirits and full of dismay. He didn't know how to set things right. Smita, so far, didn't know how to shape her impulses. The moment was gaining tension for her. How to resolve the crisis? Rajeev was relentless. He didn't know how to proceed further in his way of thinking. Evil lay as bright as the day light and even then he couldn't do anything. Should he fall flat on his knees and accept everything like this? He could live a life of no protests, and no thinking. He could just live like lots of people without thinking. He could become a part of the rat-race and live a life of abject surrender. He suddenly got up and looked at Smita. There was the same depth of feeling and understanding that she always encountered in her eyes. 'Why don't you sit down Rajeev?' The two sisters were shocked to hear Smita. I don't know what to do? I'm lost Smita. I don't know how to fight further... what to do? I don't know... What to do? I'm surrounded by evil. They are too strong for me. Yes, too strong. I feel like a haunted, trapped, animal.'

(Concluded)

Dharam Pal

Born on October 1, 1941, Prof Dharam Pal, Retd Head, Department of English, Hindu College, Sonapat, Haryana, India has published Novels, Short-stories in Hindi and English. These include, Upnevesh, Mukti, Raj Ghat ki Aur, Tharav, Basti, Avshes, Nirvastra, Ramsharnam, Twilight, The Eclipsed Serialized in Indo-Asian Literature and other stories. Two students have been awarded MPhil Degrees on his Hindi Works. His plays, stories have also been broadcast on Indian Radio. He has been twice honoured by Governor of Haryana, India. He has won Hindi Rashtriya Shatabdi Samman and also Penguin Award.





“The basis of any religion... forms the basis of culture. Hinduism gives Indian Culture its special characteristic. One culture may be more spiritual than another but it is the philosophies of religions that mould our lives.”

The eminent Indian Jurist, Late N.A. Palkhivala says, ‘It has been my long standing conviction that India is like a donkey carrying a load of gold. The donkey does not know what it is carrying; but it goes along with the load on its back. This is the situation in our country today. We do not realise the load of gold we have inherited—*The Indian Culture*’. This priceless heritage has been ours over the centuries. Yet very few people talk about it; few still are concerned with living their lives according to the great lessons imparted by our forefathers; few dwell on it; people even seem to feel shy and embarrassed to talk about it since they feel shy to confess that they believe in Indian Culture and Spiritual and Moral Values. A statement of fact.

What is meant by Culture? The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) sponsored book “Traditional Cultures in South East Asia” gives the following definition: “Culture means the sum total accumulation of objects, ideas, symbols, beliefs, sentiments, values and social reforms which are passed on from one generation to another in any given society”. This appears to be an acceptable definition.

Culture differs from civilisation though sometimes they tend to overlap. The former is essentially spiritual while the latter is more materialistic. The basis of any religion—Christianity, Islam, Hinduism etc., forms the basis of culture. Hinduism gives Indian Culture its special characteristic. One culture may be more spiritual than another but it is the philosophies of religions that mould our lives. Both culture and civilisation are heritages. In both, the past unconsciously merges into the present and is carried into the future. Civilisation refers to the conditions dealing with the welfare of the community while culture relates to the ideas cherished in a society. A civilised state need not necessarily be a cultured state and vice versa.

A broader definition of culture today, includes the five arts; music, dancing, painting, sculpture and architecture. Thus culture also includes the love of arts and we find that right from ancient times, our forefathers were interested in all these aspects defining culture.

History tells us that the civilisation and culture of Egypt, Babylonia, Greece etc., flourished for many years and was finally lost. The study of Indian Culture is of special significance since it is a living factor of the lives of 1/7th of the human race. It has withstood the onslaught of invasions and is fascinating as a field of study.

Any treatise on culture will have to deal with history and geography as well. Mother India has been created by nature as a natural geographical unit bounded in the north by the mighty Himalayan ranges and on three sides by the seas—the Arabian Sea in the West, the Bay of Bengal in the East and the Indian Ocean in the South. The Vindhya mountains separates the northern plains from the Deccan Plateau, forming a natural boundary.

The Himalayan range covers a height of 3000 metres with lofty peaks of more than 7000 metres. There are passes in the mountains and historians say that the Indo-Aryans came down from the Steppes of Central Asia through the passes, to settle in the northern plains and from there began the Indian Culture. From the point of rivers, India is perhaps the most gifted nation in the world. The three mighty rivers—the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra all arise from the Himalayas. The Indus pours itself into the Arabian Sea and the other two rivers into the Bay of Bengal. The Ganges is the holy river held sacred by the Hindus. Yet it is the Indus river that is closely associated with Indian History, to begin with, since it is the mighty river one comes across on entry from the western



Indus Script

side. The Punjab gets its name of “the land of five rivers” from the five tributaries of Indus—Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. It is suggested that India owes its name to the river Indus. The Vedic Aryans called the river Indus, Sindhu. Their Iranian cousins changed this to Hindu and the country came to be known as Hindustan. The Greeks changed the name to Indus. Indus has remained the name of the river and the country became India. Bharat is the name derived from the sage Bharatha Muni.

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has published in eleven bulky volumes “The History and Culture of Indian People” involving work by 60 Historians and Scholars, with Dr. R.C. Majumdar as the Chief Editor. It took 32 years to complete the eleven volumes. The first volume deals with “The Vedic Age” and gives an idea of the evolution of common Indian Culture 5000 years ago. To quote from the book “We have the Nordic Aryan speaking group of India, who gave to India its Aryan speech and by their organisation, imagination and adaptability helped to bring about a great *Cultural Synthesis* leading to the foundation of the Hindu Civilisation of India. The antiquity of Indian History and Culture as gleaned from Vedic Literature is also not supposed to go beyond the second millennium before Christ. But the archaeological discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro and other localities in the Indus valley have pushed back this limit at a single stretch to 3000 BC, if not to a still remoter period and India can now claim the honour of being a pioneer of civilisation along with Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, Egypt and Assyria.”

The real visible culture started with the *Indus Civilisation* as seen from the excavations of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Some of the tanks 5000 years old are still preserved. The culture of writing was invented by the Indus people. Agriculture

had developed with evidence of specimens of wheat and barley. Female statues were common representing the Divine Mother similar to the Indian religious tradition. “Thus this prehistoric culture (3250 – 2750 BC) mainly as indigenous growth is the linear progenitor of the Indian Culture of today”.

The Indus culture preceded the Rig Vedic Culture and there are references in Rig Veda to the non-Aryans. Opinion is gaining ground that this Indus culture and civilisation is the earliest in the world. This is suggested by scientific research in plant breeding in wheat. The Indian people had initiated growth of food crops through agriculture.

In the recent publication “The invasion that never was” by Michel Danino, the author has questioned whether there was any Aryan invasion at all or immigration. The author contends that “the ancient Indian civilisation was in fact the Indus, Saraswathi civilisation of Aryavarttha and it began as a pastoral civilisation around 6500 or 6000 BC and then entered a matured phase around 2600 to 1900 BC”. The occurrence of the word Krishna has been wrongly used by the Aryan Race theorists to conjecturally advance the theory of, invading Aryans annihilating indigenous and earlier dark-skinned inhabitants of India; of the dark skinned, people being forefathers of the so called non Aryan Dravidians who were pushed south from their earlier northern abodes, of the so called invading Aryans burning the cities and villages of indigenous people and of the inhuman cruelty with which these so called invading Aryans treated the original inhabitants of India, Ladli Nath Renu ‘Aryan Cult: no Aryan race’ (3 issues). Ladli Nath Renu (2000) was passionate about research into the Vedas with particular reference to Aryan origin. Based on intensive research on Rig Veda, Nath came to the conclusion that there is no Aryan race. There is



Rig Veda

only the Aryan Cult which originated in India with the sound of OM.

It spread all over the country and abroad. Its followers were called Aryans. (Presented at the All India Oriental Conference, 2000). From 650 BC there is political history as separate from cultural history. Indian Culture seems to have got mixed up with political culture, through political history involving the Mauryas, Kushanas, Guptas etc. in the north and the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras in the South. Later history tells us about the Muslim invasions and the British rule. It was only once in the cultural history of the country that the whole of India including the present Baluchistan and Afghanistan had a common history and culture under the control of a common Government, the Mauryan empire under Ashoka. In the sixth century, Buddhism and Jainism added a new dimension to Indian culture.

During the Muslim rule and the British regime, our culture sustained itself and though there have been peripheral adjustments, the core has withstood the onslaughts. Since independence, there has been an erosion in culture in terms of moral values. Suffice to say that the country has been enveloped in cultural crisis in the garb of materialistic development of the country. There is a misconception in the western world that Indian culture is other worldly and has nothing to contribute in this materialistic, scientific age. A deep analysis of this statement reveals that the people of India always had a healthy materialistic view of life with the ideal of a happy blending of Artha (wealth), Kama (love and affection) with Dharma as the guiding principle.

A materialistic culture marks the first appearance of Indians. The spirit of modern science is not different from our cultural heritage. Our heritage and modern science are quite compatible. Centuries before his birth, Pythagoras' theorems were known to Indians. The two rules contained in the theorems are parts of Sulva Sutras of the 8th Century. It is to the credit of India that the world owes its decimal notation. The names Aryabhatta the astronomer and the mathematician Bhaskaracharya are well-known. Aryabhatta was the first to discover the rotation of the earth on its own axis. All this go to prove that our ancients were scientific minded. Whenever they had leisure

they spent the hours in the higher plane of man's inner life, thus giving rise to the second aspect of culture namely, mental culture. To quote Swami Ranganathananda "Indian Culture in its long career has experimented with life in its diverse aspects and levels. It has not neglected any of the values of life, but has concentrated more on some than on others".

The essential features of our culture are;

- 1) Spiritualism; 2) Divine nature of man;
- 3) Vasudaiva Kutumbakam; 4) Fearlessness;
- 5) Tolerance; 6) Truth; Yoga; 7) Karma Yoga;
- 8) Bhakti Yoga; 9) Character (values).

Never before in all history have the cultural values become a greater challenge than today.

A healthy cultural tradition and a make adjustable, Science can go together. A balanced adjustment of the twin aspects, materialism (Science and Technology) and the spiritual side is necessary.

Science and Technology are bound to affect profoundly, our culture and tradition. We must ensure that only the peripheral aspects are affected and the central core remains intact. Science must be combined with traditional spiritualism and cultural aspects. People should be encouraged to appreciate our national cultural heritage. The younger generation must be trained to appreciate values to enable them to live in peace and harmony, with each other and nature.

Dr. J. Thuljaram Rao, a well-known Agricultural Scientist, was connected with the world renowned Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore (Government of India) for 40 years, holding the position of the Head of the Institute for 18 years. With specialisation in Plant Breeding and Genetics, Dr. Rao was responsible for evolving improved sugarcane varieties (Co) which are in cultivation in the country and abroad. Dr. Rao was associated with The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan at Coimbatore as Honorary Vice Chairman for a period of 22 years till 2003. During the 22 years, Dr. Rao had the unique opportunity to read the Bhavan's Journal from 1956 for the last 50 years (which is the store house of the history of Indian culture) covering over 300 issues and books and understand the history of the culture of the country from Rig Vedic times to the present day with its ups and downs in relation to social conditions. The present publication is the outcome of this rewarding study.

Source: Cultural Heritage of India by Dr. J. Thuljaram Rao, Impress, Coimbatore, India

Note: References are available on request.



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World Population Day

“On this World Population Day, I call for urgent, concerted action by Member States to bridge the gap between demand and supply for reproductive health care. We must mainstream reproductive health and rights into all development and poverty reduction plans. Investing in universal access to reproductive health is a crucial investment in healthy societies and a more sustainable future.”

- United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 11 July 2012

World Population Day is observed every year on 11 July. The day was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989 when the earth reached the population of Five Billion on 11 July 1987. The United Nations authorized the event as a vehicle to build an awareness of humans and impact of humans on the environment.

Significance

The main aim of World Population Day is to increase people's awareness on various population issues such as: Importance of family planning, including gender equality, poverty, maternal health, human rights etc. The concept of human population came up in 1968. The world leaders proclaimed that humans had a basic right or human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and timing of their offspring.

World population is calculated everyday. Population rate growth rate is checked yearly and decadelly. The fastest growth rate of population was seen during the decade of 1950 with the increase of 1.8% per year. It reached its peak of 2.2% in 1963. In 2008, the rate growth almost halved its peak. The world population is expected to reach 9 billion between 2040 and 2050.

Celebrations

World Population Day is celebrated worldwide by business groups, community organizations and individuals in many ways. Activities include seminar discussions, educational information sessions and essay competitions.

WPD 2012 Theme: Universal Access to Reproductive Health Services

This year's World Population Day, 11 July 2012, focuses on the theme of "Universal Access to Reproductive Health Services." Reproductive health problems remain the leading cause of ill health and death for women of childbearing age worldwide. Some 222 million women who would like to avoid or delay pregnancy lack access to effective family planning. Nearly 800 women die every day in the process of giving life. About 1.8 billion young people are entering their reproductive years, often without the knowledge, skills and services they need to protect themselves. On the World Population Day, many activities and campaigns will call attention to the essential part that reproductive health plays in creating a just and equitable world.

Source: www.un.org,





*Bhavan's
children*

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

It's a large country, India. From all over the world, people came, to learn, to conquer and often to steal its treasures. The land was 20,000 years old, perhaps even more. It was a forest land filled with beautiful trees, wild animals, birds of many colours, and men and women who lived in forest hermitages, meditated and from the inner depths of their wisdom brought out the wisdom of humankind. Children studied in forest groves and learnt from their surroundings, from the animals and the birds. They looked up into the vast sky, and knew of a power beyond their imagination. They wondered where they had come from and where they were going. The trees taught them the way of growing and with their wide branches gave them shade and nourishment. Flowers showed them all the beauty of colours and the herbs of the earth gave them the gift of healing.

Wandering bands of players told them exciting stories of the past. They learnt of the Mahabharata, the Great War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, of the hero Arjuna and the brave and beautiful Draupadi. Stories of Krishna too were retold, and the children loved to hear of his mischief and his many exploits. He was only a cowherd boy, tending cattle, but everyone loved him and when he grew up his wisdom took root in the world, the wisdom that he spoke of to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Whenever there was a place for a performance, the wandering players would come and enthrall the audience, singing and dancing to the beat of drums. It happened one day in a small town called Porbandar in Gujarat. There was excitement and joy, for that night the drama "Harishchandra" was to be staged. All day, the children talked of the play. One little child was more excited than the rest. He had already seen pictures of the story. Now, a real drama group were going to present "Harishchandra" a play that captured his heart. What was the story that so moved him? Let me tell you.

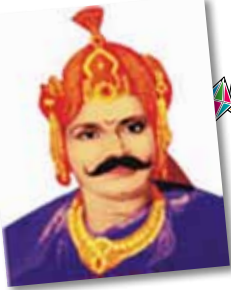
There was a great king called Harishchandra who ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya. He was a caring, good king and his finest quality was that he believed that truth was important and that no human being should ever tell a lie, even under the most difficult situations.



-Mrinalini Sarabhai, an internationally recognized dancer and choreographer, began her training at an early age in Bharata Natyam. She has travelled extensively and has received many distinguished awards and citations. She is a director as well as an author of scholarly books, novels and children's books. She was Chairperson of the Gujarat State Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation Ltd and is one of the trustees of the Sarvodaya International Trust, an organization dedicated to promoting the Gandhian ideals of Truth, Non Violence, Peace, Universal Brotherhood and Humanitarian Service. She is the Chairperson of the Nehru Foundation for Development, which has been promoting educational efforts since 1966 in the areas of science, nature study, health, development and environment. As a keen environmentalist, she is the President of Prakriti, an organization committed to preserve the greenery of Ahmedabad. She is closely associated with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for the past more than three decades. The Bhavan has published her book "Sacred Dance of India" and it was well-received. The Bhavan has also published The Mahatma and the Poetess, a selection of letters exchanged between Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu edited by Mrinalini Sarabhai.

Source: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi by Mrinalini Sarabhai, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, India





Untold Stories of King Bhoja

The Marriage Parleys

Seeing his fate, the female rat from the cavity chuckled: "Fool! It never entered his head that by following the forbidden path one seeks one's own destruction!" Moralising on this anecdote, Indradatta said: "Prince! Don't you see that you can never expect a good turn from women?" On hearing the story Ratnamandana replied: "Friend! Don't you remember that it was you who brought the news that the princess loved me deeply? Now, why do you relate this inappropriate story and cause me mental pain? And tell me, on whom should I have faith, if at all?" Indradatta: "Prince, it is quite true that the princess loved you. What I mean to say now is that it is quite unnecessary to exercise your mind too much about it: no good will come out of it. I shall meet your royal father, and arrange for your early marriage with the girl who has stolen your heart." Accordingly Indradatta set about, as a result of which King Nanda sent royal emissaries to King Sampati asking for his daughter's hand in marriage to his son. King Sampati on hearing it felt immensely happy but at the same time the evil prophecy too came to his mind which made him sad. Feeling that it would be a sin to hide his knowledge of what was in store for his daughter, Sampati related the sad prediction, hearing which the emissaries felt very sad and promised to convey it to their king on their return.

To the eager Nanda the emissaries said: "What shall we say, King? Fate is indeed cruel. Sampati is quite willing to give his daughter to our prince, but she is under a curse." To the shocked king, they narrated how at the time of her birth the astrologers had predicted that on the ninth day of her marriage her husband would be killed by a Brahmarakshas. King Nanda felt like the blind man regaining his sight and losing it the next moment. "What a cruel fate! How possibly can I invite this calamity on my son, however much I wish for his happiness?" Prince Ratnamandana who had been a silent spectator so far, replied: "Father! Please forgive me if I say that I am fully prepared for the eventuality for love of Pushpagandhi. Should you, however, think differently, even Devendra's daughter will not be acceptable to me. Please therefore give up all other thoughts and instead of wasting time on them, arrange for my marriage with Pushpagandhi. Even a few days' married life with her will be more than compensation. Happen what may! Leave it to fate." King Nanda who realised the strength of his son's love for Sampati's daughter relented and calling the

learned Brahmins of the palace and narrating the circumstances, said: "Great men! From now on please perform non-stop recitation—*japa*, and carry out all other Vedic injunctions that will avert all disasters to my family and ensure only happy auguries!"

The Brahmins replied: "King! We fully appreciate your efforts. Having regard to the exemplary character of your son, we are confident of warding off all evils and may God be pleased to bless your efforts. Now, celebrate the marriage of your son without any fear." Nanda: "Sirs! How is it that you are so confident? If a sick man asks for unapproved food, would the physician give it? What you say is like asking a third man to enter the sea stating that the sea is but knee-deep. I think your hasty words only confirm the saying that Brahmins are only fit for eating." Chandra Sarma, the spokesman of the Brahmins, replied: "No, you are wrong, King. The word of a *Vipra* will never go wrong. Lord Janardana will carry out His behests through the words of *Vipras* and hence the saying *Vipra Vakya Janardanah*. There is no difference between God's words and a true *Vipra*'s words. The *Vipra* is embodied God. Don't you know of the story of how the blessings of a *Vipra* saved a man from certain death?" To the attentive king, Chandra Sarma related the following story.

Ratnamandana Weds

Following is the anecdote related by Chandra Sarma to King Nanda: A king of Nepal by name Bhadraka had gone out on a shikar (hunting). On his way a bird of omen, perched on the branch of a tree, uttered some significant sounds. On hearing them, the king asked a member of his party who was conversant with the language of birds: "What does the bird say?" The interpreter replied: "King! What the bird says does not concern you. It says that a farmer who is going uphill for cutting grass for his cattle will die, bitten by a snake." Just as he had uttered these words, the party saw a farmer proceeding towards a nearby hillock, carrying a scythe. On seeing him, the interpreter observed: "I think this is the farmer referred to by the bird. Your Majesty may be sure that he will die as foretold." Out of curiosity the hunting party stayed in the vicinity, waiting for the farmer to return.

To be continued...

V.A.K. Ayer

Source: Untold Stories of King Bhoja, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

Charter of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (*Bhavan*) is a non-profit, non-religious, non-political Non Government Organisation (NGO). Bhavan 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 ideal 'is the whole world is but one family' and its motto: 'let noble thoughts come to us from all sides'.

Like Bhavan's other centres around the world, Bhavan Australia facilitates intercultural activities and provides a forum for true understanding of Indian culture, multiculturalism and foster closer cultural ties among individuals, Governments and cultural institutions in Australia.

Bhavan Australia Charter derived from its constitution is:

- To advance the education of the public in:
 - a) the cultures (both spiritual and temporal) of the world,
 - b) literature, music, the dance,
 - c) the arts,
 - d) languages of the world,
 - e) philosophies of the world.
- To foster awareness of the contribution of a diversity of cultures to the continuing development of multicultural society of Australia.
- To foster understanding and acceptance of the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the Australian people of widely diverse heritages.
- To edit, publish and issue books, journals and periodicals, documentaries in Sanskrit, English and other languages, to promote the objects of the Bhavan or to impart or further education as authorized.
- To foster and undertake research studies in the areas of interest to Bhavan and to print and publish the results of any research which is undertaken.

www.bhavanaaustralia.org

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.



From Bhavan's Journal June 24, 1962
Reprinted in Bhavan's Journal June 30, 2012

Hari Kirtan

The Kirtana is the meditation of God Himself.
There is no merit on earth equal to that of the Kirtana.
Believe me, says Tuka, God stands up where Kirtana is being performed.
A man performing the Kirtana not only saves himself but also others.
Without doubt, says Tuka, one can meet God by performing a Kirtana.
He alone attends a Kirtana who wishes to uplift himself.
Nobody asks an ant to go where sugar is to be found.
A beggar seeks out the donor of his own accord.
He who suffers from a disease goes of his own accord to the house of a doctor.
He who wishes to uplift himself says Tuka, never fails to attend a Kirtana.
A Kirtana requires soundness of limbs.
Do not allow my limbs to grow weak, O God!
I do not mind if my life is cut short.
But so long as I live, let me be sound, says Tuka, in order that I may pray to Thee.

-Sant Tukaram

Thoughts from Tiruvalluvar on Dharma

A life that abjures jealousy, avarice, anger and a harsh tongue verily constitutes a life of righteousness or *dharma*. Inasmuch as *dharma* bestows on its adherent prosperity in life here, and greatness in life hereafter, it becomes the foremost benefactor of life. Indeed, there is nothing on earth that can ennoble life more than *dharma*, and there is no worse disgrace in life that ignores righteousness.

The performance of *dharma* is obligatory on all, each in his measure and at the right place. By definition, a *dharmic* act implies a pure heart. It follows that similar acts with an impure heart are but imitations, meant for demonstration.

The performance of *dharma* cannot brook delay or postponement, as *dharma* alone is the benevolent companion of the soul when it departs from the body. Duration of life being uncertain, postponement of *dharma* becomes a very unwise risk. The fruit of *dharma* need not be pointed out. It is self-evident in the fact of there being some people to carry the palanquin and another to ride in it. Righteous actions performed consistently all through life ultimately prove to be the unfailing plug that bars soul's further entry into life. That happiness alone which results from righteous actions is of the lasting quality leading one to greatness; all other forms of happiness will be mixed, transient, and will ultimately lead to one's discredit.

Sri Narayana Guru: The Saint-Reformer of Kerala

Sri Narayana Guru was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable figures of modern India. In his life-time he achieved what very few of the so-called leaders could have achieved. He was a great soul, born with a great mission. Even from his childhood he realised this and prepared himself for fulfilling that task. Sri Narayana Guru was acknowledged as a great spiritual reformer even in his own lifetime, even by persons who could not by any means be called his followers. He lived to see the fructification of his mission in a large measure.

Great people like Narayana Guru are born with a definite mission; even from their infancy we get glimpses of their greatness. His life was full and purposeful, all the incidents in it fit into a pattern. Born in lowly surroundings he rose, by his own efforts, aided of course by God, to the position not easily attained by mortal man.

-R. Srinivasan

<<< *Flashback*

Holy & Wise

Better indeed is knowledge than mechanical practice. Better than knowledge is meditation. But better still is surrender of attachment to results, because there follows immediate peace.

-Bhagavad Gita

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.

-Confucius

A truly good book teaches me better than to read it. I must soon lay it down, and commence living on its hint. What I began by reading, I must finish by acting.

-Henry David Thoreau

Truth quenches untruth, love quenches anger, self-suffering quenches violence. This eternal rule is a rule not for saints only but for all.

-Mahatma Gandhi



Kulapatiwani

Nature

The first thing I realised was that man's well-being and progress are intimately related to the soil, the sunshine, the river system, the forests and the natural surroundings of his native land. All these form the whole; their richness and strength are common.

If the equilibrium of common strength is disturbed, man dies. The Carthaginians, the Babylonians and the Egyptians of the ancient world were highly civilised in their time, but they emphasised man at the cost of nature, with the result that their over-exploited lands became deserts. Their empires disappeared; they were effaced from the earth.

Dr K.M. Munshi

Founder, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan



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