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Editor
Shaurya Doval

Assistant Editor
Vangmayi Parakala

Publisher
India Foundation
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e-mail
mail@indiafoundation.in

website
www.indiafoundation.in

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Editor's Note

Dear Readers

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce to you the first issue of the in-house journal of the India Foundation. Meant for circulation among the members and well-wishers of the Foundation this journal is named as The India Foundation Journal. We intend to bring it out as a bi-monthly journal.

The first issue of the journal is in your hands. The Focus of this issue is 'Cultural Nationalism: The Indian Perspective'. The CSRS, a wing of the India Foundation, has started a series of conferences on this theme, first of which was held in Delhi in November 2012. Some of the important presentations made at the Conference have been included in the Focus section of the Journal. More papers on the theme, presented at the first Conference, will be published in subsequent issues of the Journal.

A delegation of the India Foundation visited Sri Lanka in May 2013 upon the invitation of the Bandaranaike Center for International Studies, Colombo. The delegation spent 4 days in the island nation. Its members visited the Northern Province Head Quarters city of Jaffna besides visiting Colombo and held extensive discussions with the leaders of the Government as well as the representatives of the Tamils of the North including the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) leaders. A brief summary of the visit is included in the journal. A separate publication is being prepared on the visit with more details.

India Foundation is an independent research center focused on the issues, challenges and opportunities of the Indian polity. The Foundation believes in understanding contemporary India and its global context through a civilizational lens of a society on the forward move. The Foundation aims at increasing awareness and advocating its views on issues of both national and international importance. It seeks to articulate Indian nationalistic perspective on issues.

This Journal is a new step by the Foundation in that direction. The Foundation is a non-profit organization. The Journal is meant for in-house circulation. However you are welcome to support the initiatives of the Foundation by generously contributing to it.

I wish you a Happy Independence Day – 15 August.





Centre for Security and Strategy (CSS)

Cordially invites you to the
BORDERS' CONFERENCE

Friday, September 27, 2013 and
Saturday, September 28, 2013

For the first time in India, a conference is being organised by the Centre for Security and Strategy of India Foundation, to discuss the ground-realities prevailing on our land-borders. The conference aims to provide a platform for interface between various stakeholders in management of India's border areas. The participants include policy makers, executive agencies, and the people living in border areas. This is especially important considering the state of country's security and the volatile relationship that it shares with its neighbours. The sessions of this conference will have various academic, intelligence and security experts, diplomats, Government officials and representatives from the security forces. Besides, we will also have representatives from various border villages, NGOs and the refugee community.

The borders that will be covered in this conference are as follows:

Indo-Pakistan border:

- in Kutch area of Gujarat
- in Rajasthan
- in Punjab
- in Jammu & Kashmir

Indo-Tibet border:

- in Jammu & Kashmir (LAC)
- in Himachal Pradesh
- in Uttarakhand
- in Sikkim
- in Arunachal Pradesh

LoC in Jammu & Kashmir

Indo-Bangladesh border:

- in Tripura
- in Meghalaya
- in Assam
- in Bihar
- in West Bengal
- in Mizoram

Indo-Myanmar border:

- in Arunachal Pradesh
- in Nagaland
- in Manipur
- in Mizoram



Centre for the Study of Religion and Society (CSRS)

Cordially invites you to the
NATIONAL SEMINAR ON CULTURAL NATIONALISM

Wednesday, August 7, 2013 and
Thursday, August 8, 2013

Bengaluru

The nature of Indian nationalism has been the subject of intense debate in recent times.

It will also focus on different intellectual traditions that have their own contributions to Indian nationalism.

Recent research in the Social Sciences has, in the process of micro-study and subaltern empowerment, virtually split up Indian society into multiple nations. All such research also adheres to a colonial interpretation of Indian history.

Our attempt would be to discover an 'Indianness' based on holistic study and understanding, while exploring the relevance of the idea of cultural nationalism in the Indian context today.

Several papers will be presented on various sub-themes during the Seminar.

Shri V. Nagaraj
Honorary Secretary
The Mythic Society
Bengaluru

Dr. Shri Prakash P Singh
Associate Professor,
Aurobindo College,
Delhi University

Conveners of the Seminar

National Seminar on Cultural Nationalism : The Indian Perspective

November 9 & 10, 2012, New Delhi

Keynote Address, Day 1

Cultural Nationalists Have to be Eclectic not Exclusivist

Prof. Pralay Kanungo

Nationalism is both political as well as cultural. While Rosseau gets credit for producing a political nation, Herder is credited as the father of the cultural doctrine. German romanticists like Herder and Fichte see nation as community of **dissect**, with its identity steeped in tradition and history thus producing cultural conceptualization of nation. The German romantic idea claimed that the identity of a distinct cultural community can be discovered and investigated; that humanity was divided into nations with specific characteristics of which language was the most important marker. In fact, Herder argues that language makes us human, and that meaning and thought are synonymous with language. This does not seem so startling now but it was novel in his time. Hutchinson has brought this point out succinctly. Consequently, Herder argued that language can be learnt only in a community; those who share the language make up the rudiments of a nation. Herder's emphasis on language was meant to underline the human capacity for culture because following his thoughts, "Humans are who they are because they were brought up with a particular culture, with people."

The revolutionary year of 1948 often referred to as 'the spring of the nations', became the embodiment of a cultural nation seeking Rosseau's political roof, thereby manifesting the congruence of the cultural and political. They said that nation is both cultural as well as political. Thus, there is always a kind of congruence between the cultural idea and the political idea. However, there is a difference between political nationalists and cultural nationalists. Political nationalists look to reason as an ethical source. Their ideal is civic polity of citizens. They reject existing political and traditionalists' allegiances that block the realization of this ideal; theirs is cosmopolitan rationalist conception of the nation that looks forward ultimately to a common humanity transcending cultural differences. But because the world is divided into multiplicity of political communities, they are forced to work within a specific territorial homeland in order to secure a state that will embody their aspirations. So, 'nation' and 'state' are not really completely separate. One needs a state and that's why we are today talking about the idea of 'nation state'. To mobilize a political constituency on behalf of this

* The author is Chairperson, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Science JNU, New Delhi, India.

whole, political nationalists may be driven to adopt ethnic-historical facts. Political nationalists incidentally use culture for their legitimacy; so it is not that political nationalists are completely devoid of culture. The identity is ethicized as well as traditionalized. Their objectives are however essentially modernist to secure a representative state for their community, so that it might participate as an equal in the developing, cosmopolitan and rationalist civilization.

By contrast, in the cultural nationalist perspective, the state is seen as an accidental. The essence of a nation is its distinctive civilization

Unlike the political nationalist, who is fundamentally a rationalist, a cultural nationalist like Herder affirms a cosmology according to which humanity, like nature, is infused with a creative force which endows all things with individuality.

which is the product of its unique history, culture and geographic profile. Unlike the political nationalist, who is fundamentally a rationalist, a cultural nationalist like Herder affirms a cosmology according to which humanity, like nature, is infused with a creative force which endows all things with individuality. Nations are the primordial expressions of the spirit, and like families they are **natural solidarities**. Nations are then not just political units, but organic beings - living personalities, whose individuality must be cherished by their members in all their manifestations. Unlike the political nationalists,

the cultural nationalists find the nation not a mere consent or law but the passions implanted by the nature and history. Cultural nationalists often undertake a myth-making exercise in order to establish an authoritative and authentic sense of nationhood. For only by recovering the history of the nation to all its triumphs and disasters, can its members rediscover their authentic purposes. These histories form a set-up of typically repeated mythic patterns containing a migration story, a founding myth, a golden age of cultural splendor, a period of inner decay and a promise of regeneration.

Since such histories have rarely been documented by pre-modern political and religious elites, these quests have resulted in an explosion in the genetic sciences including archeology, folklore, philology and topography in order to resurrect the civilization "of the people" from the cultural substratum.

Political nationalists have as their objective the achievement of a representative nation state that will guarantee uniform citizenship rights to its members. They tend to organise on legal-rational lines, forming centralized apparatuses in order to mobilize different groups against the existing polity and to direct them to its unitary end. For a cultural nationalist such as Herder, however, the state is regarded with suspicion as a product of conquest, as imbued with an inherent bureaucratic drive that is exemplified in a cosmopolitan-imperial state. This [cosmopolitan-imperialist state] seeks to impose a mechanical uniformity on living cultures. The glory of a country comes not from its political power but from the culture of its people and the contribution

of its thinkers and educated humanity. As Hutchinson observes, the aim of cultural nationalists is rather the moral regeneration of the historic community. Or in other words, the recreation of their distinctive national civilization. Since a civilization is a spontaneous social order, it cannot be constructed like a state from above, but has to only be resuscitated from the bottom up. Typically, cultural nationalists establish informal and decentralized clusters of cultural societies and journals that are designed to inspire a spontaneous love of community in the different members. This is done by educating them about their common heritage of splendor and suffering.

It is not just a question of putting that in syllabus; cultural nationalists can also educate by creating a kind of alternate education system, if in actuality, the universities are not capable of taking it off on their agenda. Of course there are various experiments that are going on.

Political nationalist movements, which like the Indian Congress may have transformed themselves from being elite and urban-based to being a mass organisation that promise different groups the redressal of grievances in a national state.

However, cultural nationalism remains in normal circumstances a small scale movement that promotes progress through communal self-help. They start on a small scale but become huge and gigantic.

This in effect, is an introduction, detailing the difference between the cultural and political conceptions of nationalism. But there is one or two things that I need to mention to end this section.

Many scholars would argue that cultural

nationalism makes a positive contribution to the task of nation building, in other words, to the identification, political organisation and unification of the community within a given territory. So territory is important for both political and cultural nationalists. But even among these the consensus is that cultural nationalism is a regressive force, 'a product of intellectuals from backward societies who when confronted by more scientifically advanced cultures compensate the feelings of inferiority by reiterating history to claim descent from a once great civilization'. But how actually are we confronting a "more scientific" kind of western civilization? How has western civilization branded us as a civilization which is trying to assert itself primarily because it is backward? Scholars like Gellner have touched upon such interpretations.

I now move to the evolution of cultural nationalism. I would use cultural nationalism and Hindu nationalism interchangeably so that our understanding should be clearer. Well we know that RSS is a major organisation or institution in India, which claims that India is synonymous with the Hindu tradition, and that our cultural tradition is, in a way, Hindu tradition. Let us now deal with the slightly problematic understanding of what and who can be considered 'Hindu'. Probing the etymology of Hindu one surprisingly does not find this word in Sanskrit. Even the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagwat Gita are silent on this word. Then how did this word originate? The term it is argued emerged as a geographical nomenclature and implied a geographical identity to the people across the Sindhu (or the Indus River).

Then how does one explain Hinduism? It is

described as a 'false conceptualization'. This is not my phrase - W.G.Smith suggests that even the word 'Hindu' was unknown to the classical Hindus and they certainly didn't have a concept like Hinduism. This is W.G.Smith's view. Did the people of this geographical area really identified themselves with an inclusive Hinduism? It is observed that multiple communities based on various identities rather than some sort of inclusive Hinduism existed in pre-modern India. Hinduism was a, to quote Romila Thapar, "mosaic of distinct cults, deities and ideas adjusting to and distancing themselves from each other." The term Hindu which emerged as a geographical nomenclature, gradually came to be used not only for who were living across the Indus river but also for those who professed a religion other than Islam or Christianity.

This all inclusive term was doubtless a new and bewildering feature for the multiple sects and caste who generally saw themselves as separate entities. Since Hinduism was a culture of distinctive sects and cults, the people identified themselves with region, language and caste rather than with an inclusive Hinduism; unless by 'Hindu' one means nothing more and nothing less than 'Indian'. There was never any such thing as a single Hinduism as Robert Frykenberg said. In fact he has written history of Christianity and he is also talking about Hinduism. I am not taking his argument seriously, but I am nevertheless putting it forward. Furthermore, he said there has never been any one religion or one system of religions to which the term Hindu can be accurately applied. The fact that self-contained religious constellations existed in pre-modern

India may in deed be true. They identified themselves with much more immediate and obvious domains of religious commitment rather than with a wider field of Hindu tradition. Yet the manner in which the representatives of this theistic formation relate and refer to one another indicates the presence of this one wider field. (Harpas)

In fact, though these were separate entities in a way, they did not have a name, but the way they connected with each other gave the idea that there was a kind of all India connectivity among these different kinds of sects. Thus it represents a sense of identity, a sense of coherence in a shared context and inclusion in a common framework; it refers to us to some fundamental implications of the elusive reality of the 'Hinduism'. It may be further argued that (and I suggest this): that just because the term Hindu was first used (because the argument is that we were not essentially Hindus, but only the Arabs actually gave us this name, which has stuck) in Arab texts, does not make the application of the term 'Hinduism' to earlier periods invalid. Despite the existence of a wide range of beliefs from animism to atheism, the term Hinduism could still be applicable to the belief system of pre-modern India as one could see some of its features in the Hinduism of the later period. In fact Dharma Kumar makes this point very succinctly.

Now I come to the 20th century. V.D.Savarkar's definition in 1920s when community politics was in ascendance, Hindu leaders began searching for a definition of the term 'Hindu' which would justify a separate Hindu identity. Different definitions were attempted but each contradicted and turned down. At this

moment, V.D.Savarkar's definition of Hindu in his work *Hindutva* in 1923 seems to be a departure from the definition given by earlier Hindu leaders. He provided a clear and precise definition which apparently resolved the dilemma of Hindu leaders once and for all. Savarkar defined a 'Hindu' as a person who regards the land of 'Bharatvarsha' from the Indus to the seas as his fatherland as well as holy land. That is the cradle land of his religion. This definition got applause and acceptance from the Hindu leaders and was heralded by Swami Shraddhanand as the message given at the dawn of a new age. Hedgewar subscribed to Savarkar's definition of Hindu and founded the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to propound India as a Hindu *rashtra*.

However, his successor M.S.Golwarkar seems to have reservations on Savarkar's formulation. As Golwarkar explains, "Of course, many attempts at definition have been made from time to time, but all such definitions have proved to be incomplete. They do not express the whole truth and it is but natural in the case of a people who have been growing and evolving for the last so many scores of centuries." In fact, more than reservations, I think that Golwarkar finds Savarkar's definition incomplete.

Thus Golwarkar did not accept the finality of Savarkar's definition of 'Hindu'; he preferred to project Hindus as 'growing and evolving people'. He understood that flexibility of the definition could be used to the advantage of the RSS in the future. Golwarkar admits the difficulty in defining the term Hindu. For him it is a paradox that though the sun and moon could be defined easily, it is impossible to define their creator God.

But does it imply that God doesn't exist, questions Golwarkar. The origin of the Hindus is unknown to the historians. In a way Golwarkar says that Hindus are '*anadi*' (without a beginning). Thus, Golwarkar tries to keep the origin of the Hindus out of historical scrutiny by the mystique expression of *anadi*, the Hindu concept of timelessness. The Hindus were enlightened people and knew laws of nature and the laws of the Spirit, says Golwarkar. He says that, "Then the rest of humanity were just bipeds and so no distinctive name was given to us. Sometimes, in trying to distinguish our people from others, we are called

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'the enlightened' – the *Aryas* – and the rest *Mlechhas*."

Thus Hindus existed when there was no need of any names. According to him the necessity for naming was felt only when the Hindus came into contact with the alien faiths. Golwarkar perhaps arrogantly projects the Hindus as learned and enlightened and the others as uncivilized and barbaric thereby making every attempt to prove the superiority of Hindus vis-à-vis other communities.

Why does Golwarkar prefer Hindu to *aryan* and *bhartiya*, especially while the latter were much more ancient than the former? It is because he thinks that the use of the term *arya* would be self-defeating because of the following reasons. First,

it has been out of use for the last thousand years. Secondly, some historians have spread the venom of 'aryan-dravidian' controversy. He also discards the term *bhartiya* as it would include Muslims and Christians. He prefers the word Hindu "as the word alone connotes correctly and completely the meaning that we want to convey". Despite having a bewildering variety of phrases and forms, Golwarkar notices one thread of unification running inherently through the multitude of its expression and manifestation, a single way of life called 'Hindu'. He cites the example of a tree that has many heterogeneous parts but the sap running through and nourishing all its parts. Golwarkar has been using the term Hindu society (Hindu *samaaj*) instead of Hindu community. It is depicted as a living reality. Thus, Golwarkar takes a wide assimilationist view of the term 'Hindu' comprising all sects and castes.

Now to discuss the very contentious issue of 'Hindu history'. The RSS historiography rejects the thesis of Aryan invasion as a myth. It treats the prevalent Indian historiography as a bias exercise as it projects Ramayana and Mahabharata mythologies and the pre-Muslim period as the Dark Age. This interpretation, RSS believes, has deprived many well educated Indians of the chance to learn about the glorious achievements of the Hindus, for example, the establishment of a vast cultural empire in the Far East. It represents the fact that this historiography treats India as a mere geographical unit and denied due place to Hindu national heroes like Maharana Pratap and Chatrapati Shivaji.

Coming to the periodisation of history, the RSS rejects the European periodisation of Indian

history into Hindu, Muslim and British. Despite fluctuating fortunes, the history of Bharat is one long Hindu period, as Golwarkar argues. His logic, interestingly, is that the periods of history are known after the nationals, and not after foreign usurpers and dictators masquerading as kings. Therefore there is only one period of history, and that period is the Hindu period; the later two periods are considered as aberrations which have been extirpated so that Hindu society can once again attain its continuity with its past history.

Ironically, while analyzing historical events, the RSS historians follow the pattern of European periodisation when they glamourise the glorious golden age of ancient Hindu India, decry the dark Muslim age of the medieval Muslim India, and show indifference towards colonial British India. The RSS gives priority to the reinterpretation of ancient India as during that period the ideal imagined Hindu society flourished. While emphasizing the indigenous origins of the Hindus, Golwarkar uses the terms 'Hindu' and 'Aryan' interchangeably, thus implying that Aryans did not immigrate from outside but originated in India and then spread towards Western Europe from here. The Indian civilization and culture started with the Aryans. The RSS historians insist that the Harappan culture was created by the Vedic people despite the striking contrast between the pastoral life of the Rig Veda and the urban life of the Harappans. They also stress that the Harappan script was alphabetical and that it represents examples of proto-Sanskrit, a claim contrary to the archeological evidence. I mean we have no proof because this has not been deciphered so far despite various attempts.

The attempt to prove that India is indigenous home of the Aryans is solely an attempt to bolster the sense of national pride. The theory of the indigenous origin of the Aryans serves a dual purpose. First, it refutes the claim of the Dravidians as the original inhabitants of India, who were pushed beyond the Vindhya by the Aryan aggressors, according to Romila Thapar. Second it highlights that only the Central Asian Muslim migrants were foreigners.

Of course there are many historians the viewpoint of RSS gets sustenance from. The writings of leading ancient Indian historians like K.P. Jaiswal, H.C. Raychaudhury and Neelkanth Shastri. The relevance of the claim of the foreign origins of Indian Muslims is questioned on the grounds that most of them have indigenous origins- mainly being converts from the lower castes. Moreover, those who came from outside made this country their home and adopted this culture.

Let me now jump to medieval India. For the RSS historian, the Muslim medieval period was a dark age. These historians are inspired by some leading historians like R.C. Mazumdar who traces the dusk of Indian civilization to 10th century and the long night to the establishment of Delhi Sultanate. Mazumdar observes that during the establishment of the Sultanate, India was permanently divided into two distinct communities and cultures, each with a marked individuality of its own. This ruled out any fusion or even coordination between the two. He also talks about the wholesale destruction of the temples and monasteries by the Muslim invaders and rulers who very nearly extinguished the Hindu

culture. RSS historians echo the same when they point out that the Muslim period was one of the unmitigated savageries that brought a near standstill in scientific progress and the destruction and loss of the numerous cultural treasures. (Koenraad Elst)

On the other hand Marxist and secular historians observe that Islam did not appear as a monolithic religion to the inhabitants of India when it arrived in her soil. They argue that the term 'Muslim' does not appear in the records of early contacts. The term used frequently were *turushka*, *yavana*, *malicha* and so on. In contrast, RSS argues that the Muslim invaders were not only plunderers, they were also religious fanatics. Marxist historians on the contrary argue that though these invaders were plunderers, their sole obsession was loot and plunder of the invaded land irrespective of the faith of those who inhabited. I argue that this is a kind of defensive argument. For example, Mohhamad of Ghazni, Muhammad Gori and so on massacred the Muslim rulers and masses in Central Asia. These historians find that the main reason behind the destruction of Hindu temples was the vast amount of wealth that they had accumulated. In contrast, the architecture of mosques being minimalistic in the sense that they are merely open structures meant for prayers, leaves no room for speculation about the storage of looted wealth. I do not think that there is any kind of merit in this kind of argument.

As Girilal Jain observes, the *Bhakti* movement was a Hindu response to the Muslim rule. It was a form of resistance rather than an attempt at synthesis or compromise. It was an attempt to disarm Islam with the help of a popular

movement, with a clear message that equality before God was as much part of Hinduism as it was of Islam.

In fact, cultural nationalism should really emphasize this aspect: it is not that Hinduism is not interested in equality, it is. The RSS rejects the view that the medieval period symbolized an efflorescence of a composite culture and cultural synthesis. Keeping in tune with their interpretation of Muslim India, the RSS argued that Babar, the fanatic invader, in order to humiliate the Hindus, had willfully demolished the temple that commemorated the birth place of Lord Rama in Ayodhya, erecting a mosque at the site. The claims about the historicity of the destruction of the temple, and the building of a mosque have been severely challenged by several historians. Though most scholars dismissed the claims of the RSS as a mythical construction of the past, a few among them recognize that in a popular perception myths are a way of constructing the past. As Sheldon Pollock would argue, "We cannot dismiss such myths. We cannot counterpoise history to myth as truth to falsehood." Thus one should note that there is a thin line between myth and history. These are different modes of knowledge, different ways of understanding the world. The facts, the events and the social actors refer to in myths often have no real historical existence yet myths do refer to reality. They talk about the world symbolically and metaphorically. Hence it seems relevant to understand the critical task history made here. It's not what really happened but how the people perceive that event. So if in the popular perception Babar is the invader and the destroyer of the temple, it may be a myth but the very fact that it is

popular perception makes it important.

Therefore my argument here is that one has to really go beyond these two approaches while understanding Indian culture.

Now I move to Colonialism. There is this oft-heard argument that the all India Hindu community was a colonial creation and so was the all India Muslim community, to a large extent. The notion of single Hindu community became necessary in colonial situation. In fact Frykenberg gives three explanations as to how Hindu community and the Indian state were twins, which had evolved at the same time. He mentions three parallel processes: institutional, ideological and socio-political. Institutional is census, ideological is Orientalism (Warren Hastings and Orientals like William Jones, Coalbrook, William Carry, Wilson, James Princep etc.) and socio-political is missionaries and conversion. So these are the three processes that catapulted all India kind of identity.

RSS claims the legacy of Vivekananda, Bankim, Rabindranath Tagore, Dayananda, Tilak and Savarkar and so on. You are all aware how the 19th Century cultural counter-offensive against colonial rule had a great range and variety from emancipatory to divisive. It was a conscious effort to overcome the markers of subordination and humiliation inflicted by colonial rule. I would talk a bit about Gandhi. From the perspective of Hindu intellectual searching for a unifying banner in an anti-colonial struggle for home rule, *swaraj*, the discourse of Vedanta provided a centralizing ideology around which Hindus might rally as well provide an established indigenous and highly intellectual Hindu theology which might promote unified national identity. For these intellectuals,

the philosophical traditions of Hindutva seems to typify the ancient noble aesthetic spirituality of Hindu people. Rammohan, Dayananda, Vivekananda, Radhakrishna were all reading Vedanta in their own way, but they believed that this was a unifying force.

Perhaps Gandhi's appropriation of the ideal of other worldly *sanyasin* in the terms of social activism was the most appropriate. Thus, Gandhi consciously inverted colonial presuppositions of Bengali effeminacy (huge colonial stereotype created as to how Bengalis are effeminate) otherworldly spirituality and the passivity of ascetic ethics of non-violence, and reaped these symbols in terms of organized non-violence social protest. Unlike the emphasis placed by earlier Hindu thinkers on the many spirituality of Vedanta, Gandhi's injunction to engage a passive resistance thereby feminized the usually masculinist struggle against the colonizer. I quote from Ketukarthaka, "Gandhi represented himself as female performing feminine roles like spinning. His own feminization in this type of political iconography- the image of Mahatma sitting before the *charkha* patiently spinning *khadi* was effective particularly in mobilizing men and women to *Satyagraha* work." As we know the *Satyagraha* is a cultural concept and coming from our cultural tradition. I think when we are talking of cultural nationalism, Gandhi has to be taken, interrogated and researched seriously and we must reflect on his contribution in this regard. Quite remarkably the renunciation philosophy that exemplified for the British a passive and other worldly quietism became a vehicle for anti-colonial protest in the form of *Satyagraha*. Thus Gandhi offered what

Richard Fox called 'a new orientalism and an affirmative one, leading to effective resistance'.

Now, let me elaborate as to how cultural nationalism evolved from the time of Tilak and Savarkar. Tilak's writings and particularly *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*. Here Tilak proves that his Aryan ancestors had actually planted the seed of civilization. Though Tilak's thesis did not have strong scholarly foundation, his conclusions certainly generated a sense of psychological superiority among the Hindus. Golwarkar claims a similar superior status by defining Hindus as *anadi*.

Let us now consider Golwarkar's idea of cultural nationalism. In *We and our Nationhood Defined* Golwarkar proposes the idea containing the word nation is compound of five distinct factors fused into in-dissolvable whole. The famous five unities are: geographical country, racial race, religious religion, cultural culture and linguistic language. All these five components are indispensable ingredients for the nation to exist and that the loss or destruction of any one of these means the end of nation as a nation. Golwarkar gives the example of England, Germany and Russia in which these five units exist. I believe that you can find the reflection of German romanticists like Herder and others in Golwarkar's writing. *We and our Nationhood Defined* became a controversial text and in fact all secularists who criticize Hindutva quote ad nauseam from this text. But I would not get in to that. I am just saying that Golwarkar is just talking of de-nationalisation. He attributes the decline of the powerful Hindu nation to something called de-nationalization. He states that over the centuries the nation allowed itself to

slip into attitudes of laxity and sloth and the cohesive spirit of Hindus gradually disappeared. As a result, a number of small kingdoms arose each trying to be independent of the others. The idea of the nationhood was lost. The dormant national spirit awakened under Shivaji and others but it was not strong enough to repel the British. The dilution of Hindu religion by the Muslims continued under the British. Under British patronage India's history was distorted, and Hindus were taught they were never a nation. Golwarkar argued that this de-nationalisation had reached a point at which the Hindu was almost unable to think for himself and readily ascribed real wisdom and greatness to alien ideas and achievements. We are really unable to comprehend our strength because we are not exposed to our resources. It has come to be understood that everything Western is a gospel of truth. Everything Hindu in contrast was naturally false and foolish. Pointing to westernized Hindus, he states, "This educated class of Hindus became, in truth slaves of the English. They cut their moorings, lost their footing in the national past and became de-culturalised and de-nationalised people." This was also the conclusion of Hedgewar.

Another leading light of RSS who contributed to cultural nationalism is Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. Upadhyaya supplements Golwarkar's cultural nationalism with his theory of 'integral humanism' (*ekatma manav vad*). This new theory adds some sophistication to the RSS concept of Hindu Rashtra and enriches its ideological underpinnings. Upadhyaya avoids the crude, aggressive and offensive formulations of certain texts and offers a sober, logical and refined version

of 'nation' and 'culture'. Though essentially he shares Golwarkar's formulations, Upadhyaya adds some innovative dimensions to it. Despite Golwarkar's talk of India's spiritual mission in the world, he very rarely went beyond the confines of nation. Upadhyaya on the contrary, talked of the integration of the nation with the rest of humanity, universe and the almighty what he called as '*paramehiti*'.

But this integration is more emotional and philosophical rather than political. The central idea of integral humanism is that while the humanity and the entire animate and inanimate nature around man are full of almost infinite diversity, it has got a common *atma* (nearest English rendering is ethos or soul). The diversity is superficial because of the common *atma*. All things naturally are cooperative and complimentary which is expressed by the word *ekatmata*. This aspect has to be further developed because the whole idea is not to reject, but the is also to assimilate and integrate. Therefore more research has to be done on this idea of *ekatma manav vaad*, than to simply give it an ideological variation and shape. This is because the idea itself opens a lot of possibilities. We must see how the Jansangh accepted this document in 1965 and later on how the party had opened up. The need of the hour is therefore to look at this text closely and develop it further.

Deen Dayal writes that an individual is a conglomerate of body, mind, intellect and soul. They are all integrated. Confusion has arisen in the west because they have treated each of the above mentioned aspects of human beings separately and without any relations to the rest. This is our cultural strength. But in Bharat, he

proceeds, we have placed before ourselves the ideal of the four-fold responsibility of catering to the needs of body, mind, intellect and soul with a view to achieving integrated progress of man. *Dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha* are the four kinds of *purushartha* of human efforts. These four efforts are meant to be integrated. As a cultural nationalist Deen Dayal Upadhyaya explains the term 'nation' too as a soul; the technical name he gave is '*chiti*' which is analogous to that of the individual. *Chiti* determines the direction in which the nation is to advance culturally. Whatever is in accordance with *chiti* is included in the culture. These things are to be cultivated. Whatever is against *chiti* is to be discarded as perversion, undesirable and to be avoided.

In the post-Deen Dayal period, there is no single ideologue to really mention who dominated the Sangh ideology the way Golwarkar and Deen Dayal did. The ideological writings by Dattopant Thengadi, Shesadri and others confirmed broadly to the concept of nation enunciated by the former ideologues. However, they have, in their limited capacity tried to enrich the concept and fill in the gaps. It's not that ideological exercise has not been taken but I would argue that it lacks the rigor of Golwarkar and Deen Dayal. For instance, in the changed socio-political context of Hindutva writers have made Nehruvianism as their main target. Though Golwarkar's cultural nationalism have always remained an antithesis of Nehru's concept of India, he never launched a frontal attack on Nehru as such. As the Nehruvian framework started withering, the RSS intensified its anti-Nehru tirade. In fact when Nehru immersed the ashes of Kamla Nehru in Ganges, Golwarkar made

a very pertinent point that look what Nehru is doing, this is our *sanskara*. He was very strong critic and very hard on Nehru, but whenever there was a cultural aspect he recognized that too. This is an important point.

Thus cultural nationalism you may admit or not, is a political movement. It rejects the passive isolation of the traditionalists and presents the nation as a progressive and a dynamic culture in the midst of an integral part of other societies. It is my view that in the present contemporary context we can not really talk in terms of cultural

Thus cultural nationalism you may admit or not, is a political movement. It rejects the passive isolation of the traditionalists and presents the nation as a progressive and a dynamic culture in the midst of an integral part of other societies.

purity. No culture can remain pure and the way there is a kind of assault and interaction and the waves coming from various spheres, our culture has to respond. We cannot have a kind of isolated Hindu culture. That is a thing of the past. Cultural nationalists are wrongly portrayed as revivalists and traditionalists. They are not. They are using tradition while confronting the modern. I think it is time that we need to confront modern as do cultural nationalists- by taking sources from tradition.

So if cultural nationalism is a political movement it has to have a model of its own.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya squarely rejected

the two models: the liberal as well as the socialist model. As we have seen, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya argued that each nation has its own indigenous model to follow. Revivalists appeal to intelligentsia to borrow from other cultures in order to regenerate rather than to efface the national community. Developmental models must be chosen and adopted in order to realize the natural talent and resources of each culture. Only then does each nation make its distinctive contribution to humanity.

Cultural nationalists in India should be pragmatic enough to recognize the natural divisions within the nation with regard to religion, region, class, caste and gender and respect these expressions and convert these differentiations in to a dynamo of national creativity. The important point that I want to bring in conclusion is that cultural nationalists confront various kinds of challenges. What are the challenges? On the one hand there is a kind of propaganda that it is multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual plural sphere. That is one part. So when there are pluralities we have to recognize them as pragmatists. Only such cultural nationalists would succeed in the Indian context.

In Golwarkar's writing we also see that there have been changes through the years when he realized the realities. In that context I would suggest that cultural nationalism cannot be very exclusive in character. It is juxtaposed with territorial nationalism that is inclusive, while cultural nationalism is exclusive. Therefore I think that cultural nationalism has to fight it out and

come out of these charges of exclusivism. Golwarkar's assumption of Hindus as homogenous cultural community perhaps ignores certain dimensions. Culture has many dimensions. Culture is not singular in its approach. It has material dimension, social dimension and ideational dimension. All these dimensions have to be explored for a proper understanding of cultural nationalism.

I would thus say that cultural nationalists have to be eclectic not exclusivist.

Lastly, while analysing the Hindu Diaspora, it is important to note that they have moved out settled all over the world and are a strong force of about 30 million. They have adopted different homelands. I think that you can call them cultural nationalists in a way because they come back and make repeated visits to the nation. Therefore they are eclectic; I am not saying that we should be eclectic in that fashion. But I think that an element of eclecticism must be learned from them. They are protecting their culture in overseas cultural milieu by being eclectic.

Cultural nationalists have also to look at sub-nationalism. We can't draw a picture that everything is fine. I think that if cultural nationalists become complacent and say this is all one culture and one finds that there are sub-national assertions with different kind of divisive propaganda, then cultural nationalists should address these problems, not just say everything is fine in Hindu India. Both sub-nationalism and supra-nationalism have to be countered, recognized and addressed.



National Seminar on Cultural Nationalism : The Indian Perspective

November 9 & 10, 2012, New Delhi

Keynote Address, Day 2

Need to Develop Alternatives to Christian Social Sciences

Prof. Balagangadhara

Thirty five years ago I went to Belgium. At that stage I was a convinced full time Marxist. But I had problems with Marxism, so I went to Europe to study the philosophical roots of Marxism. The result of the study was of course it brought me out of Marxism. But having brought me out of Marxism about twenty five years ago, it launched me in the direction of understanding cultural differences between India and Europe.

As a result of the study, I encountered many startling conclusions. One such conclusion is that most of the social sciences that we practice today, be it political science, sociology, anthropology or law in general basically embroider/develop Christian theological ideas. In fact western culture is a child of Christianity; it is not the child of Greeks or Romans though the public relations department tells you that. It is as removed from Greek and Europe as anything can be. Western culture is a child of Christianity in a very precise sense. These theological ideas, and Biblical ideas have been secularized...

According to them their God (Christian God) whom they consider as The God (singular), reveals himself in two places: the first is in the good book,

the Bible and the second is in nature. So through the study of nature they suggest human beings know the purposes and goals of God. So in that sense all this nature is a book. If you take for example the idea that man was born free - famous idea of Rosseau - this is another common place idea. Now these are actually theological ideas which they translated into common place ideas. When we say that nature is a book it seems to suggest as though you do not need Christianity to understand the sentence. 'Man is born free' appears trivially and obviously true to all of us even though we do not understand what man is; and we understand what freedom is because we simply translate it to *swantantra*. But this is nonsense because *swantantra* has nothing to do with freedom. The Europeans question the Christian conception of freedom, we Indians cannot even understand.

For example in India, '*tatvamasi*' or '*ahambramhasmi*', are our common place ideas. Now there are certain common place ideas which are called *topoi* (plural of *topos* in Greek). It basically means common place idea. They are very productive in the sense that you can have multiple

* The author is Professor, Department of Comparative Science of Culture, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium.

interpretations of common place ideas. Like for example any number of books on tautological nature of human freedom written in the west for the last 2000 years. You know that freedom is a pre-condition in Christianity to be a moral person whereas it is interesting to contrast with India where if there is no strict determinism, morality is not possible in the Indian culture. But if there is no total freedom, morality is not possible in the western culture. So the ideas are completely different and opposite about what human beings are, what freedom is and what morality is.

These common place ideas are surrounded by other common place ideas which allow for

Western culture is a child of Christianity in a very precise sense. These theological ideas, and Biblical ideas have been secularized...

different interpretations and develop into theory. So these are *topoi* of a culture. So secularization as I see it, in the realm of ideas is a transformation of theological concepts or theological ideas into *topoi* of a culture, into common place ideas of a culture. That is secularization. So in this sense, secularization of Christianity in the west has occurred. It really means transformation of Biblical ideas into common place ideas and one such is 'culture', one such is 'nation', one such is 'nationalism'. We endorse the concept of nation because we have a concept of *Rashtra* in Sanskrit. But *Rashtra* has nothing to do with 'nation'. Absolutely nothing. If one reads the Old Testament

Bible, which is also the foundation of Christianity and Judaism, you discover that God of Israel first gave one language, Hebrew, to all the people and they started creating a tower which started reaching up to heavens to the Gods who was afraid and gave people multiple languages. It is called the tower of Babel, and as you know a lot of confusion arose because of the languages and the tower never got built due to confusion of tongues. So if you read deeply into this you will find it had the idea of a 'nation'. The Jews were a nation according to the Old Testament. What does it mean? It means that it's a group of people who have a religion because religion is God's gift to humanity according to Christianity. They have a language. And as punishment the God of Israel scattered the Jews all over and took away Judea from them. That means that people have a territory. So it has language, it has religion, it has its territory and that is how God created Israel and other people. This is precisely what, sociology tells you today when asked what a nation is: language, territory and religion. So now this is commensurate from the Old Testament. This is not science.

Now, of course it is logically possible that the Biblical God is also God, it is also logically possible that he came to middle east, a desert (not once, not twice but three times). Of course he never came to India or China. My hypothesis is that Christian God does not like our country; it's too hot for him. So there is a Christian God, a Jewish God and a Muslim God and we have no way of understanding what they mean by God. We just translate *deva* into God. But we did not do this, the missionaries suggested these

translations. They told us that our *pooja* is worship; our *deva* and *devatas* are gods. They translated Sanskrit words into English using their theology and today we are blindly reproducing them. We are giving doctorates to students in it. We think that we are doing research. but what we are doing is bad theology. There is nothing scientific about it. You are doing bad theology because you do not understand Christian theology. You have not studied it. I do not want to be critical of you; I want you to be honest. There has been no interesting, important, non-trivial social scientific research in India. It has been third rate. Look into your own hearts and tell me do you agree with me or not?

This is not because we are stupid. Not because we are less intelligent than Europeans or Americans. Then why we have not produced serious social scientific research? When I go to sociology, the only thing I hear about is a third rate sociologist called M.N.Srinivas and his absolutely idiotic idea, 'Sanskritization'. As if he is the best we have produced. I should be ashamed to call him a sociologist but people are proud. Why?

It's very simple, we do not understand Christian theology and so we do bad theology and we call it sociology, we call it political science, we call it economics, we call it rational choice theory, we call it social choice theory, we call it law, and we call it anthropology. It's none of it. So when we work on nation or nationalism, we do not even know where it is coming from. We just assume that nation has to do with language, culture and religion of our people. But why should

it have anything to do with any of the three? For over two thousand years this Biblical idea has been the *topos*. The first threat came from the idea of formation of nation. So you will discover if you read Old Testament that Israelis and the Jews were a nation. Hence the book if you have read it says nations before nationalism. So the idea of the nation comes from there and it doesn't come from *rashtra*. You may want to call *Rashtra* as nation

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but it would be simply accepting the consideration that protestant theologists have given to our languages be it Sanskrit, be it Tamil, be it Telugu, be it Kannada. This is a first threat.

There is a second threat that has gone into the idea of nation and nationalism and that has to do with the unique contribution of Christianity. In Christianity you have two extraordinarily important ideas. One is an idea of an ecclesia as a Church and the other idea is Church as an institution. An ecclesia is actually a community of believers past, present and future. As the Christians call it, it is the community of sinners and saints. This Christian ecclesia is the first

community that Christianity ever thought of. This community has to be maintained but maintained in what way? I hear many people using the word 'interest': 'interest of the state', 'interest of the community'. Well I challenge them to tell me the Sanskrit equivalent of the word 'interest'? Well we simply do not have the word and do not know what it means. What is my interest? No idea. What is the interest of all of you? No idea. What is the interest of India as a whole? No idea. We speak about the interests of Indian state. We do not know. We can not answer that question and I will tell you why. Because it also fundamentally a Christian idea. Interest of an individual lies in his salvation. Do not confuse interest with *moksha*, it has nothing to do with it, absolutely nothing. The interest of the church as an institution is to obey, look after and implement God's will on earth as defined and dictated by Christ. That is interest of the church as an institution. The interest is a community. It is to make the sinners using the saints to seek the grace of God for salvation. That is the interest of a community.

These 2000 years of history allows them to talk about the interests of the state. So today America continuously talks about the interest of the American nation. It goes to war in the Middle East to protect American interests. It goes and bombs Afghanistan to protect American interests. This is the typical language of America for the last 50-70 years. When the British ruled us, they implemented policies in India which ran counter to the desires in Britain and they said it was in the interests of the Empire, even if it conflicted with the interests of the British nation. But surely you

can't think that you can make sense of that. What is in my individual interest? We in our culture have no way, no capacity and no possibility of making sense of this notion/word 'interest'. Interest does not mean to be benefit. In Kannada we have a word which is actually Sanskrit '*hitashakti*'. We would translate to 'interest' as we think it means the same. Split *hitashakti*, you have *aasakti* and *hita*. What is *hita*? It is pleasant. What is perhaps, to some extent, good. But that is not 'interest'. So when we do not have the notion of interest which requires a church, which has an interest in salvation, carrying out God's will on human community, when individuals have interests there which is their salvation and not to go to hell, when the ecclesia is there which is in the interest of the community, this is a second threat of which the notion of nationalism arises.

The notion of nation does not make sense, notion of interest doesn't make sense and without the idea of interest you can neither define a state, nor define a group, nor define a social class, nor define a community. In other words, the idea of nation is religion, language and suchlike, as the theological comes from there. The cornerstone of nationalism arises from the Christian understanding of the Church, ecclesia as a community and the individual as Bible defines it. So how is it possible that we Indians then talk endlessly about nations and nationalism? You are simply reproducing mantras.

At least today some of us know enough Sanskrit to know mantras but most of the mantras that we reproduce are without knowing their meaning.

*Om bhûr bhuvah svah
tât savitûr váren(i)yam
bhárgo devásya dhîmahî
dhíyo yó nah pracodáyât*

What does it mean? I have no clue. But I do recite them every day (not now, I mean I used to do it). So that's *mantra*. So too 'nation' and 'nationalism' is a mantra to us. That's why we have not been able to produce anything serious, anything significant, and anything fundamental of importance to India. But that is not the problem. The problem lies deeper. The problem is that we do not understand what is going on in Indian society, in Indian culture. We are giving the wrong diagnosis.

Speaking of 'identity' for instance is nothing but the use of American jargon. Individual identity, collective identity: you where that comes from? That's true with the American society. Chinese American, Indian American, Irish American, and Italian American: these are hyphenated identities in United States of America. They make no sense to us.

I ask you the most fundamental question. Why do you need identity at all? A dog and a cat survive without identity. Do they not? So why do humans make these identities? Because human beings are supposed to have soul (and soul has nothing to do with *atman*, please.) It's a Christian soul, it's a Jewish soul, it's a Muslim soul and that is identity of human being and it's unique. So they bothered about identities again for 2000 years. One of the most fundamental questions in Christianity was this: What does it mean to be a Christian? Today we are reproducing it. 'What does it mean to be a Hindu?' A 2000 year old

Christian question suddenly became important for us. I will give you an example of what 'Hindu' means. Today we think we all know what it means. But according to me nobody knows what 'Hindu' means. I am now about sixty years old now. But when I was say, 14 or 15 I went to a government High School. I had had a form to fill up. In that form one had to answer following questions: what is your religion? The options were Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and others. As 14 year old I didn't understand the question. So I went to my father, who was a graduate, so in those days a man of some learning, and I asked him how should I answer this question because I did not know what it meant. He looked at it and asked me to select the option of 'not applicable'. I did it. I took it to my class teacher, who said,

Sir: Hey Balgangadhar, come here.

Me: Yes sir

Sir: What is this?

Me: Sir I do not know what it means. I have no religion.

Sir: Are you a Christain?

Me: No Sir.

Sir: Are you a Muslim?

Me: No Sir.

Sir: Are you a Budhist?

Me: No Sir.

Sir: Then you are a Hindu.

Me: No sir I am not a Hindu I am a Sanketi (because that was the language that we speak at home)

Sir: Write Hindu.

Me: No sir I am a Sanketi.

He hit me on my head and said to write Hindu. So I wrote Hindu. The next year another

class teacher tried the same trick and I got beaten again. Then I decided that if anybody asks me who I was, I would say I am a Hindu. I do not believe that you are any different from me. You may cite Savarkar, but it is a citation. We do not have any clue as to what it means to be Hindu. It makes no sense to us. Why? In one of my research results I show that the Hinduism, Buddhism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism: do not exist in India. They are literally fictional creatures and creations of the European description of India. Hinduism does not exist as a religion or as anything. But these different 'schools' do exist. You know where? In American universities, in Belgian universities, in Dutch and German universities where they produce doctorate after doctorate about Hinduism. It is like writing doctorates on unicorns and Hogwarts school of Harry Potter. There is no science.

You know why have we not studied religion? Because we have no religion to study. That is why there has been no studies on religion in India compared to in Europe. Hinduism and Buddhism never fought. That's the story of the British. That's a story of Europe about India. Of course there was some in Buddha, his disciples and *advaita*. Nobody denies that, but it was not a Hindu-Buddhism conflict. Such is the depth of the nonsensical story about the Indian religions. Perhaps most do not and America. According to what is taught there, there was an original religion of the Hindus which

is of course from the Aryans. This was pure religion. Why it was pure? That is because it has the intimations of the Biblical God. The original message of the Biblical God is found in the pure religion of India which is the Aryan religion. Then it got corrupted by Brahmins which is a Vedic religion. It then became Brahmanism. Then it got further degenerated when it came to India and that is Hinduism. So Hinduism is a double corruption of original Vedic religion. That is the story that is being taught in America and Europe for the last 300 years. So if you sit here proudly and say we are Hindus studying Hindu religion, put it in the framework! What do you think we all are: people from an extraordinarily corrupt religion? We do not even know what corruption means in a religion. Do we?

In other words, what I am saying is that most of us (and this has been the result of my research of the last 27 years) do not know India at all. We do not know Europe either. But we think we know both. The problem is that the India we know is the India of Europe.

It is not our India at all. That's not the world we are living in. We are living in an entirely different world than the world described by modern sociology, modern political science, modern law, and so on and so forth. Unless we understand where and how we are living, unless we develop alternatives to Christian social sciences, there is no *mukti* possible for us.



National Seminar on Cultural Nationalism : The Indian Perspective

November 9 & 10, 2012, New Delhi

Concluding Address

Our *raashtra* is spiritual, all inclusive and is for the welfare of all

Shri Krishna Gopal

I have been a science student and subjects like religion, culture and politics have never been a very integral part of my educational field. Nonetheless, with regard to the focus at hand, I would like to flag off one noteworthy detail: it is tough to tell the exact Hindi meaning of the word ‘culture’ or ‘nation’. There are many words whose meanings we have lived out, so to speak. We have thousands of years of ‘feeling’ words and their expressions and these words are not always common with the different countries in this world. Similarly, the words followed by them are not known to us and we do not bring them into our lives. Hence, there is this paradox.

However, I will try to focus my thoughts around ‘*Bhartiya Raashtra*’, by way of a comparative study, without which it is very difficult to understand and explain the ‘*Bhartiya Raashtra*’. It was also a question of my curiosity as to how the ‘nations’ originated in western world. *Misra* (Egypt), came into existence around 3500 BC. Pharaohs were the rulers and were very powerful. They were also scholarly in the sciences. However, it was destroyed due to the invasions

by Alexander the Great and by the Persian invasion. Later, Islamic invasion converted it into Gaddafi’s Egypt. Babylonia was originated by the Hammurabi rulers in 2200 BC and was decimated by the Persian rulers later. The history of Greece also starts in 1200 BC. We have all studied in our childhood the stories of Athens and Sparta. We know about Homer, Iliad and Odyssey. Later, Persians attacked them many a times in which at times Persians won and at times Greeks won. We know about kings like Phillip and Alexander, their military expansion, their conquests and failures. Iran also started at about 800 BC. We all very well know about Syrus and Dara. Iran was also known as a big power in the name of ‘*Pharus*’.

I have enumerated the names of these five big countries because they were made by kings. Bigger tribal factions, which had the power to fight and were led by kings arose and ultimately formed a *desh*; bringing into existence the concept of a ‘nation’. There is a king/monarch, military, military generals, and power to contest and power to defeat others in the background of these. It was their nature to occupy others’ territory. As I understand, this was the age when nations were

* The author is Eminent Scholar and Social Activist, Guwahati, India.

created. This eventually changed and in the West a new concept of nation emerged with Jesus, Christianity, the Church and Pope coming into the picture. The army of the Pope went to different places in world under his orders. The purpose was same- to establish and expand the empire. Another purpose that was added was to convert people world over and bring 'the message of Christ'. They divided the whole world into two factions: believers and non-believers. Their mission was to increase the number of believers. With this sole purpose, nations were built. Later on, specific catholic and protestant nations came into existence.

**{ The intention was to expand
the empire, take people as slaves,
convert others, and plunder
their wealth }**

Further, one studies about the rise of Islam and the spread of the army of the Khalifa. The intention same- to expand the empire, take people as slaves, convert others and plunder their wealth. As a result, we also see nations that are either Sunni or Shia.

Next, one sees a phase wherein even Islam and Christianity are belittled. Under the banner of Islam or the Islamic brotherhood, Muslims cannot make one nation. Similarly, the call of Jesus cannot bring together all Christians into one nation. There are divisions on the lines of language. Two groups speaking different languages are not able come into one nation even if they belong to the same religion. Therefore, at stage one sees that language had become a basis

for the formation of nation. Spain could not coexist with Portugal although they are both Christian nations. Germans could not live with France though both are Christians and similarly on the same lines Ireland could not live with England. The Czech and Slovaks could not live together. Why this is so? It is because language divides people. Societies with two languages cannot live together. Therefore, now, language had become the basis for nationalism.

Thus we can see that there is a pattern/way of development of nations in the West; the army, the army commander, and the monarch are primary. The power to loot or to defeat is primary. Only after that does a religion come into picture, but is also very much an important part. However, it so happens that later, religion was also not able to unify them and as a consequence therefore, language became a major factor and thus smaller fragments were formed.

My conclusion is that it is basically divisive. The urge/feeling to live together is developed into the peoples. There is a dearth of the common factors which actually bind a society/. They have a tradition since the beginning - from the time of Babylonia, Rome, Greek, and Persia - to individually amass wealth, to increase one's desire for indulgence and to accumulate resources for the same. This tradition still continues. The basic concept is the same, as we have seen that in various stages of history.

In Bharat however, there is the evolution of the *rashtra*. The underlying concept under it is different. This is not the same as the concept of the 'nation' in west. This confusion of words has

created a muddle. What is the thought of Bhartiya Raashtra? Where did it come from? Where did this concept, philosophy or thought come from? There is a *shloka* in the *Athrvaveda*:

*Bhadram ichantah rishiyah
swar vidayah, tapo dikshaam
upanshed agre.
tato raashtram, bala, ojasya jaatam
tadasmai devaupasanmantu*

It means that a *bhadra iksha* (benign wish) originated. This benign wish is the desire for the welfare and auspiciousness for all. This is not divisive and is not guided by the desire of an individual's pleasure. These *rishis* are supreme, learned and it was their benevolent wish, after *tapa* (devotion) and *saadhana* (meditation). This is a very important *shloka*. Due to this *bhadra iksha*, a determination had arisen in them (*rishis*) to be engaged in meditation for the well-being of all. This feeling and emotion under them gave rise to the consciousness of *rashtra*. It then got power and vigor. The *rishi* says that we should bow before such *arashtra*. Now what is a 'rashtra' here? This concept is not political but it is spiritual – the desire for the welfare of all that arose in the *rishis* who performed these *tapas* and *saadhana*.

However the question is what this *bhadra iksha* (benign wish) to begin with and why did it originate in the imaginations of the *rishis*? What is the purpose of it? The *rishi* is sitting in a forest with very few clothes and few things to eat. Why would such thought for everybody's wellbeing come to his mind?

In the minds of these *rishis* one concept is very clear and that is this whole universe

(including animate and inanimate things) contains the substance of God. This is a fundamental difference between the Western and Indic thought. Our *rishis* say:

*Isavasyam idam sarvam
yat kim ca jagatyam jagat,
tena tyaktena bhunjitha,
ma gridhah kasyasvid dhanam*

(Chapter 4: The Isavasya Upanishad).

This means: All this is pervaded by the Lord, whatever is moving and not moving in this world. This half sentence is the foundation stone of all Indian thought and philosophy. This small line changed the vision of the society of this nation

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and saadhana.**

and gave it new dimensions. It changed how we visualize human being, nature, animals or any living or non-living thing. As soon as I realized that this person has God/supreme being in him, my way of visualizing him changed.

This thought of the *rishis* gave a new direction to Indic society and that resulted in changes in every sphere. Be it to see society, to behave in society, to think, to work, to earn, this tenet became the guiding principle of this whole country. The immediate next line in this *shloka* (*tena tyaktena bhunjitha*) tells us the art of living. It says that one should let go of things and only live with whatever is left. Gandhi ji said that he

would not get care if the entirety of Hindu philosophy were obliterated, if just this one *shloka* is kept safe. As soon as this *shloka* comes into mind one is also reminded of the *shloka* that says all are equal and there is no big or small.

*Samanam sarvabhuteshu
sarvabhuteshu yenekam
eko devah sarvabhuteshu*

This is a fundamental thing. No Indian text can contradict this; and in fact all of them formulate the same thing. All of them say that the supreme-being and all are equal. It is not divisive or propounding the idea of big or small. Of course, there can always be people in society who are capable of perverse thinking, but the Indian stream of thoughts and philosophy accorded respect to only that thought which considered everyone equal. Recently we were in Chennai and visited Ramanujacharya's birth place. He was such an omniscient saint who had allowed *shudras* in temples. He was highly regarded in the whole country. The Buddha was so greatly revered because he took everyone along with him, considered everyone equal and loved all. This was done because of the realization that God exists in all.

As soon as we say that we come to second thing and that is: *sarve bhavantu sukinah*. No one should be distressed. Therefore Lord Krishna says: *sravabhoot hiterataha* (the one who cares for all and prays for everyone's welfare, is my only disciple/*bhakta* and is dear to me). This concept of the philosophy of God and *tadanuroop vyavahaar* is fundamental knowledge.

A third thread emanated from it which said:

Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti. How fundamental this thought is! The *rishi* who gave this *richa* must have been supremely ordained. These disputes must have started at the time of Rig Veda because this is in the pratham mandal (first part) of the Rig Veda. Different practices of worshipping must have originated. At that time the *rishis* must have realized this division and would have formulated ways to stop it. Let us keep in mind that those *rishis* were omniscient and forward-looking. The *rishi* says:

*Indram mitram varunnamagnimaahutathoe
divyah sa suparnoe garutmaan /
Ekam Sadvipraa bahudhaa Vadanti
maatarisvaanamaahuh || 46 ||*

Meaning: The Vedic Shuktam says it is one existence that the wise ones speak in diverse ways; whether as Agni or Yama or Matri Shvan.

Worship anyone, follow any ideology, take any path and do not worry because there is only one truth ('*satyam ekam*'). This very spirit bonded and unified the whole society. Our country is fortunate that this *shukta* from 1st Part (*mandal*) of Rig Veda is still valid today and no one has the strength to contradict it. One observes that every philosopher tries to adjust his philosophy in accordance with this *shukta*. We are with *ekam sad viprah* that is to say that we all have the same supreme soul in us and ultimately this supreme soul is the only final summit. The destiny is one and not two. There can be thousands of paths to reach it. This mantra is a supreme medicine to achieve oneness, solidarity and harmony which this *rishi* of ours gave us. This vision of *ekam* (oneness) and the heart of many (*bahuda*)

broadened the hearts of this whole Hindu/Bhartiya society. After this, different sects and communities were let to flourish here. It is like when in a jungle all kinds of vegetation grow, whether it's a tree or grass and no one stops anyone. All grow according to their own powers. This is the perspective of a society. This is the demeanor/conduct and behavior of Hindu society.

We see lakhs of stones in the Ganga and all of them are rounded. How did this happen? Many peculiar communities came into this country; many had intolerant behavior too, they had their own high arrogance and ego, but this cultural-philosophical-ideological flux rounded/smoothened many rough edges, so to speak. As in the Ganga, all stones get smoothened similarly many philosophies here were smoothened so that they do not cause irritation to one other. They are not intolerant towards each other and do not target each other. This one *shukta* did the work of eradicating this intolerance. Bhartiya and Hindu society are not two different things. They are one and the same. We must try and understand what this flow/flux is that rounds off any belief or thought. This is the philosophy of India and people who behaved or lived according to this philosophy were Bhartiya.

Although there were people who would not believe in God, they could not continue being silent for long on the matter of God. But *rishis* very well knew that this crisis would also arise in which some would believe in God and some not, giving rise to a new dispute. *Rishis* being supremely wise gave another concept/thought. This second concept clarified as to who we are.

They praised this earth through beautiful poems in Vedas where they said that all we need is given by this Mother Nature and it has done this for our ancestors too. The *rishis* were overwhelmed by seeing the generosity of this earth. They sing gratefully and with reverence:

Mata bhumi putro'ham prithvyā dyau pita
(Atharva Veda 12|1|12)

This whole earth is our mother. When Sushil Kumar, the wrestler goes to China for the

This vision of *ekam* (oneness) and the heart of many (*bahuda*) broadened the hearts of this whole Hindu/Bhartiya society. After this, different sects and communities were let to flourish here. It is like when in a jungle all kinds of vegetation grow, whether it's a tree or grass and no one stops anyone.

Olympics, he takes the soil and puts on his forehead. Why? That is not Bharat mata. It is because the *rishis* have not talked about only Bharat mata but of the whole earth. I may have been born in Delhi but this whole earth is my mother. This is not divisive. I saw our girls preparing to play kabaddi – they also touched their forehead with Beijing soil. I have seen an old lady getting down in Guwahati station also apply soil of the platform on her head. As soon as we started seeing this earth as mother our perspective changed and every part of this mother became pure for us. Even if we construct our house on a fragment of this earth we perform *bhumi-pooja*.

Even if we dig a well or install hand pump we worship that land. There is no tree in this country about which we do not have a tender imagination/idea. We witnessed how 300 years ago in Jodhpur, 360 women sacrificed their lives to stop the cutting of a *Kejri* tree. I have seen women in Assam performing *poojas* of the tea plants before plucking the tea leaves. I have seen in Arunachal Pradesh as to how the community-head goes to each tree to seek its permission for cutting and worships it before cutting it. We worship the fields from where we get our grains (*Bihu* in Assam). Therefore, we consider this whole earth as our mother with this shloka.

They all replied that they considered *dharti* as their mother and *devi*. It may be possible that they may not know this shukta from Veda, but they certainly knew its essence and its practice.

After that we move a step ahead and The Shukta further hails the earth for giving shelter to numerous faiths:

*jana vibrati bahudha vivacasam
nana dharmanam prithivi yathaukasam
sahasra dhara dravitasya ye duham
dhruvena dhamurenk pasphuranti*

Meaning: The earth is full of variety; it contains people speaking different dialects and speech, of diverse religious customs, each living according to what they think is right. The earth contains innumerable valuable things. It bears trees and plants of great diversity. We should pay homage to that Earth.

There may be people speaking many languages (but they do so without any language dispute). There may be many people believing in different *dharmas* (not only religion, but this term also means having different thoughts, ideas, demeanors, behavior and living patterns). '*Prithivi Yathaukasam*' means that it is one abode. Our earth acts as a home and shelters all these different kinds of people. By this way our *rishis* gave another philosophy that it is alright if you do not believe in God, but one must believe in this earth which provides us with aplenty.

In a conclave of North eastern states, I asked the leaders of each of the 42 communities present there about their views on *dharti* (earth) and all of them said that they considered earth as their mother. I was again surprised when in a seminar in Bhopal I asked people of different tribes who came there from all over India about their views on earth. They all replied that they considered *dharti* as their mother and *devi*. It may be possible that they may not know this shukta from Veda, but they certainly knew its essence and its practice.

Thus two streams flowed at the same time, one in the name of *paramatma* (supreme soul) and the other in the name of *dharti* (earth) to unify the whole society and to keep it as a family. It was designed to inculcate love towards each other and to make every member of the society to be committed towards each other. This feeling was evoked and it gave a new dimension to our nation.

Now we need to understand one thing from this whole discourse. Our *rishis* say that this whole earth is one *rashtra*. So this *rashtra* is a theoretical concept. It is a philosophy. It is not political and

therefore no Vedic *rishi* defines any political boundary. Consider the mention of word ‘*rashtra*’ in the Mahabharata. And then consider the discussion between Dritarashtra and Sanjay in 76 *shlokas* where he speaks numerous *rajyas*, *janapadas*, rivers, tribes etc. This same thing is mentioned in Vishnu Purana also. Therefore our *rishis* accepted that this whole earth surrounded by oceans is one *rashtra* (*prithivyayi samudra parayantaayah eak raat iti*). Therefore the idea and concept of *rashtra* is a philosophy here. It is a way of life and principles to live life which defines the relationship and expected behavior between people and other beings. It tells that there may be different kind of *rajyas* – in fact it goes on to describe 10 kinds of such *rajyas*. This is from *Etrey Brahman* which is the oldest one. So there can be 10 different kinds of *rajyas* but there is only one *rashtra*.

sAmrajyam. bhaujyam. svAradjyam. vairadjyam.

pArameShThyam. rajyam.

mahAradjyamAdhipatyamayam.

samantaparyAyI syAt. sArvabhauma

sArvAyuSha AntAdAparArdhAt.

pR^ithivai samudraparyantAyA ekarALiti..

So *rajya* may be of any kind but the concept and its *atma*, that is *raashtra*, is one. Now the third thing is that it is *vishwaroop*. The feeling thereby is to care for this whole world. This idea of unity and *rashtra* has been foundational basis of all literature that was written. Whether it is the Rig Veda, Atharva Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, Panini’s Vyakaran, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhasa’s works, Tulsidas’s work or any Aagam Granth, all have the same philosophy. In most of

the literatures we will find the philosophy of Bharat. Panini when writes 4000 *sutras* he also mentions 600 *nagars*. Kalidas when makes his clouds move he makes us travel thousands of places on this earth. What we did was to decide one area where people who believe in this philosophy live. It is true that we consider whole earth but here we will be concentrated. Thus, such geographical unity was a result of and was propounded by our ancient texts written by our spiritually wise *rishis*.

Someone from Assam mentioned how Shankerdeva, while living in Assam, never mentioned any particular place in Assam but talked only about Bharat (at 41 places). Nanak living in Punjab never mentioned Punjab, but talked about the dangers that India was facing. Chaitanya never mentioned Bengal while still residing there but mentioned about whole Bharat. This is a philosophy then, which is not divisive on any lines and therefore whenever our nation faced or faces any crisis, this spiritual idea/thought appears on its own. Whenever there was any adversity or perversion these spiritual people arose. Even when rulers are defeated, when the army loses, when temples are decimated, when the whole Bhartiya samaaj is in despair, the water from Tulsi’s *kamandal* never dries up, Kabir and Raidas’s voices are never stifled, Nanak had continued to write, Gyaneshwar got active, and the tradition of Alwars was kept alive. It was this philosophy underneath all of them. It was this philosophy which was made Bharat conscious enough to regenerate itself even when it was in the depths of dark defeat in many a war. These saints provided

people this Vedic voice in their own native languages. We can see this awakening from Tamil Nadu to Kashmir and from Gujarat to Assam. These saints do not transmit or propound unity in diversity, but they show diversity in already existing natural unity. This unity in Bharat is intrinsic and does not emanate from its diversity. It is intrinsic and manifests itself in terms of

The primary meaning behind it is not political or divisive. This *rashtra* does not exist on the basis of rulers or army. This *rashtra* has originated from the *bhadra iksha* (benign wish) of the *rishis*.

diversity. This ‘diversity’ is the diversification and proliferation of this inherent, fundamental and natural unity. We see this in Kumbh, in various pilgrimages and in other forms. This unity is fundamental and is not like United States where many states came together to form a nation.

We have travelled a long way. In these thousands of years many valuables were left behind. Many valuables were lost. We have carried

with us many things which are valueless and worthless. It is now a time to think.

We need to keep the valuables and shake off things which are valueless and worthless. Our nation has a spiritual conception, a spiritual definition, it has its own values, and it has a long journey behind it. We must remember it and keep it in our memory. We need to reflect upon it continuously. It is required of us to think as to how this can be politically manifested.

Our *raashtra* is spiritual, all inclusive and is for the welfare of all. The primary meaning behind it is not political or divisive. This *rashtra* does not exist on the basis of rulers or army. This *rashtra* has originated from the *bhadra iksha* (benign wish) of the *rishis*. This *bhadra iksha* sees element of the supreme soul in all, it propounds the idea of *Ekam Sadvipraa* and has a vision of *sarve bhavantu sukinah* before it. Let us preserve this *bhadra iksha* which has given rise to this nation. We all must keep this basic thought behind *rashtra* alive and active.

This is what I think and understand. I do not know this subject of ‘cultural nationalism’ as a political scientist would. Therefore, if I have erred somewhere I would like humbly apologise.



Raashtram: Spritual-Ethical Concept of Nationhood

Ram Madhav Varanasi

ABSTRACT

Nation, nationalism and nationhood are relatively new concepts as far as the West is concerned. It was in the 18th and 19th centuries that the discourse on what constitutes nation had really gained currency and momentum. However, even at the turn of 21st century no single definition for nation and nationality could be agreed upon.

Joseph Stalin in his work *'Marxism and the National Problem'* described nation as a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. Many Marxist historians like Eric Hobsbawm argued that nationalism defies any definition. Benedict Anderson viewed nations as imagined communities.

Paul Gilbert, in his work *The Philosophy of Nationalism*, describes seven categories of nations – Nominalist, Naturalist, Voluntarist, Territorial, Linguistic, Axiological, Destinarian. Cultural dimension to nation discourse was added recently by scholars like Samuel Huntington, Lawrence E. Harrison etc.

In India, the concept of nation existed for millennia in the form of a pan-Indian spiritual-emotional identity. In *Rig Veda*, the most ancient

work of Hindu seers, the word '*Raashtram*' was used to describe the national identity of the people of the land called *Bharatavarsha*. '*Raashtram*' is a uniquely Indian concept for nationhood founded essentially on the spiritual foundations. Thus '*Raashtram*' as an idea is a unifying and development-oriented (*Abhyudayam*) concept as against today's concept of nation which has been a major source of political conflict and violence throughout last three centuries.

This paper explores the epistemology of the word '*Raashtram*' and determines how it has acted as a catalyst for the gradual evolution of the Indian national identity over millennia. This spiritual-emotional identity of '*Raashtram*' is the principal unifying factor of Indian nation through the centuries. It is this identity that was invoked by the Indian freedom fighters of all hues – from the revolutionaries to the Gandians alike – in their efforts to rouse the Indian nation against the foreign yoke of the British in 19th and 20th centuries.

A profound understanding of this concept helps in evolving new theories and concepts of nationhood that are based on universal ethical and spiritual principles. Such understanding of the concept of nation in the light of the idea of '*Raashtram*' will help forge a world free of sectarian nationalist conflict and misery.

Nation, Nationalism and Nationality are

* The author is Director, India Foundation, New Delhi, India and Member, Central Executive, RSS.

essentially European ideas which evolved in the 18th & 19th centuries. Emergence of Nation States in Europe and their expansion into America was the first catalyst for the discourse on the concept of Nationhood in the West. This discourse is still on, and no one definition or explanation can fully and comprehensively explain this concept.

Nation-states : A History of Just Two Centuries

One of the main reasons for this lack of clarity is the relatively recent exposure of the world to this concept. Nation States came into existence hardly two centuries ago in Europe. “The concept

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of nation-states, i.e. that the aspirations of the people that constitute a nation are best served by a common political entity is considered a relatively recent idea in Europe from the 18th century. Nationalism led to the formation of nation-states and modern countries. This development was followed up with a gradual hardening of state boundaries with the passport and visa regime that followed it”, says Sankrant Sanu in an enlightening article “Why India Is a Nation”.

Many European nations that we see today didn’t exist 200 years ago or 300 years ago. We heard of monarchs and royals earlier, but the Nation States that we see today came into being much later. Their boundaries too kept changing

in the last two centuries. Two World Wars witnessed great changes in the geography of many of these Nation States and the disputes about their boundaries and their very existence are contested by many groups to this day. Take the case of the Scots in the UK or the Flemish in Belgium or the Kurds in Turkey... they all challenge the Nation State they live in and say they are a different Nation.

History of the United Kingdom in last two hundred years itself is a testimony to the upheavals that the concept of Nation State has endured. England, Scotland and Wales got together in 1702 to form what is called the Great Britain. Even then they retained different laws and held on to separate National Churches. Scotland had a Presbyterian Church for a very long time to which many of its citizens adhere to. It is in a way the national Church of Scotland and is known as Kirk in that country. It is essentially a Protestant Church. The British continue to have the Anglican Christianity as their State Religion. Although an Anglican Church, the Church of Wales has its own Arch Bishop who is independent of the Anglican Establishment of England.

Using political, military and religious power Great Britain abolished the Irish Parliament and annexed Ireland in 1801. Thus what we today call as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland emerged. However the Catholic majority never accepted this arrangement and a long, often bloody, struggle followed, which culminated in the collapse of the arrangement of the United Kingdom. Catholic majority areas of South Ireland seceded from the UK to emerge again as the Republic of Ireland, although the Anglican Church ensured that its followers, who have by then

become a dominant group in Northern Ireland, continue their allegiance to the United Kingdom. Thus the Nation State of UK that we see today can boast not even a century's history.

Even American history also tells the same story. The Anglo Saxon aggressors, who sailed to the shores of the east Coast of America and anchored near Boston were hardly in control of less than 10% of geographical entity of what is today called the United States of America at the advent of the 18th Century.

At the time of the great American Revolution in 1776 when the 13 British Colonies came under one umbrella led by Thomas Jefferson and declared independence from the British Parliament's control, their geographical area was limited to the area covering the States on today's East Coast of the USA. Texas and California joined in 1845 after the Mexican War and Hawaii became a State in 1900. Seen from this historical background the United States of America as a Nation State is not more than two centuries old.

Also important to note here is the discourse as to whether the Nation State called the USA has really become a nation or not. The Second Continental Congress had declared independence in July 1776 and adopted the United States Declaration of Independence drafted by Thomas Jefferson. The American Revolution was the result of a series of social, political, and intellectual transformations in American society, government and ways of thinking. Americans rejected the aristocracies that dominated Europe at the time, championing instead the development of republicanism based on the Enlightenment understanding of liberalism. In 1788 the new

American Constitution was adopted. The Bill of Rights, the most important part of the US Constitution was adopted in 1791. It is this Bill of Rights that keeps the diverse American peoples as one. However sceptics like Samuel Huntington questioned this very feeble foundation of American identity. In his important work 'Who Are We' Huntington raises the crucial question as to whether the United States of America had really become one nation. His answer was in the negative although his thesis was about creating one national identity for entire America which he described as 'Protestant Ethic without Organised Church'.

The Nation States in Africa were a creation of the Colonists. During 1884 - 1885, European nations met at the Berlin West Africa Conference to discuss the partitioning of Africa. It was agreed that European claims to parts of Africa would only be recognised if Europeans provided effective occupation. In a series of treaties in 1890-1891, colonial boundaries were completely drawn. All of sub saharan Africa was claimed by European powers, except for Ethiopia (Abyssinia) and Liberia. Germans too were major players in this game at that time. But what is most important to note here is the fact that not a single representative of the African people was involved when the Colonial masters were redrawing the boundaries and creating the Nation States in Africa.

There are a few countries that can claim much longer history. For example countries in South America like Mexico and countries in Eurasia like Egypt, Turkey etc. But here again the Nation States of all these countries are of very recent origin and had nothing to do with their ancient past. The Aztec culture that was prevalent in Mexico before

the Spanish Conquest has remained only as a museum item and mark of pride while the present day has become Hispanic in language, religion and culture. Same is the case with countries like Egypt and Turkey etc. The ancient kingdoms of Mesopotamia, Egypt etc had lost all their traces in the modern Nation States of Egypt, Italy, Turkey etc.

All this points to the fact that the global understanding of the concept of Nation, Nationhood etc is based on models that are short-lived and shifting their bases constantly. Yet, based on the experience of last two centuries various scholars have tried to develop theories for Nation and Nationalism. Ethnicity, language, kinship, culture, territory and several other factors have been enumerated as the basis for Nationalism. All this has ended in definitional confusion with regard to Nation and Nationality.

What is the European concept of Nation and Nationhood?

Despite these definitional worries, there was a fair amount of agreement among the modern western scholars about what is historically the most typical, paradigmatic form of nationalism. It is the one which features the supremacy of the nation's claims over other claims to individual allegiance, and which features full sovereignty as the persistent aim of its political program. Territorial sovereignty has traditionally been seen as a defining element of state power, and essential for nationhood. It was extolled in classic modern works by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.

The territorial state as political unit is seen by nationalists as centrally 'belonging' to one

ethnic-cultural group, and actively charged with protecting and promulgating its traditions. This form is exemplified by the classical, "revivalist" nationalism, that was most prominent in the 19th century in Europe and Latin America.

In other words, a nation is any group of people aspiring to a common political state-like organization.

Some scholars have added cultural dimension to the definition. Michel Seymour in his proposal of a "socio-cultural definition" states that nation is a cultural group, possibly but not necessarily united by a common descent, endowed with civic ties (Seymour 2000). By this definition, nation became a somewhat mixed category, both ethno-cultural and civic, but still closer to the purely ethno-cultural than to the purely civic extreme.

Definitional variations abound. The early German elaborations talk about "the spirit of a people", while somewhat later ones, mainly of French extraction, talk about "collective mentality". Isaiah Berlin, writing as late as the early seventies, proposed as a part of his definition of nationalism that it consists of the conviction that people belong to a particular human group, and that "...the characters of the individuals who compose the group are shaped by, and cannot be understood apart from, those of the group ...".

Classical nationalism of the western origin is the political program that sees the creation and maintenance of a fully sovereign state owned by a given ethno-national group ("people" or "nation") as a primary duty of each member of the group.

There are some scholars who believed that the concept of Nation itself is artificial and

imagined. Ernst Gellner observes that nationalism is an 'invention' or fabrication, "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness, it invents nation where they do not exist". Benedict Anderson claims that nations are imagined communities.

Some modern day critics like Prof. Balagangadhara have argued that the European concept of Nation State has its origins in Christianity itself. They cite the story in Genesis of the Old Testament. According to the Old Testament there is a narrative of the City of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. Everyone on earth spoke the same language. As people migrated from the east, they settled in the land of Shinar. People there sought to make bricks and build a city and a tower with its top in the sky, to make a name for themselves, so that they not be scattered over the world. God came down to look at the city and tower, and remarked that as one people with one language, nothing that they sought would be out of their reach. God went down and confounded their speech, so that they could not understand each other, and scattered them over the face of the earth, and they stopped building the city. Thus the city was called Babel.

Ethno-Political or Ethno-Cultural form of Nationalism has led to the creation of a large number of Nation States in the 18th and 19th Centuries. It might have benefitted some, like the Israelis, the Belgians etc and continues to be seen as beneficial by groups like the Scots in UK, the Flemish in Belgium, the Kurds in Turkey and Iran and the Tamils in Sri Lanka. But it essentially is based on divisive and superiority sentiments.

Nation-states Alien to Indian Thought

Influenced by the Euro-centric discourse on Nation and Nationalism some Indian and British scholars have tried to apply the same Nation State concept to India as well. The British, who ruled over India for more than two centuries, were in the forefront arguing that India was never a Nation in the European sense of the term. Sir John Strachey, a Member in the Council of Secretary of State of the British Government wrote in 1888 : "This is the first and the most essential thing to learn about India that there is not and never was an India or even any country of India possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity, physical, political, social or religious. No Indian nation, no people of India' of which we hear so much." As late as 1930, the Simon Commission referred to India as a "conglomeration of races and religions."

This Anglicised discourse on India's nationhood was taken forward by some Indian scholars also besides the European ones. Surendranath Banerjee authored a book titled "A Nation in the Making" describing India as a Nation that is slowly being built on the lines of the European Nation State model.

However, the European concept of Nation is alien to Indian thought. "The concept of nation itself is, in fact, alien to the Hindu temperament and genius. It is essentially Semitic in character, even if it arose in Western Europe in the eighteenth century when it had successfully shaken off the Church's stranglehold. For, like Christianity and Islam, it too emphasizes the exclusion of those who do not belong to the charmed circle (territorial, or linguistic, or ethnic) as much as it

emphasizes the inclusion of those who fall within the circle. Indeed, the former, like the heretics and pagans in Christianity and Islam, are cast into outer darkness”, writes eminent Indian author Girilal Jain.

Robindranatath Tagore too was critical of the West contrasting it with the Indian thought: “The civilisation of Ancient Greece was nurtured in the city walls. In fact, all the modern civilisations have their cradles of brick and mortar. The walls leave their mark deep in the minds of men. Thus in India it was in the forests that our civilisation had its birth, and it took a distinct character from this origin and environment. It was surrounded by the

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vast life of nature and had the closest and most constant intercourse with her varying aspects. Her aim was not to acquire but to realise, to enlarge her consciousness by growing into her surroundings. The West seems to take pride in thinking that it is subduing nature as if we are living in a hostile world where we have to wrest everything we want from an unwilling and alien arrangement of things. This sentiment is the product of the city wall habit and training of mind. But in India the point of view was different; it included the world with the man as one great truth. India put all her emphasis on the harmony that exists between the individual and the universal. The fundamental unity of creation was not simply a philosophical speculation for India; it was her life object to realise this great harmony in feeling and action”.

In fact a land of such extreme diversity in language, religions, rituals and customs is a nightmare for and scholar to explain in terms of the modern Nation State concept. That leads us to the question of what is the identity of India if not a Nation in the European sense?

Rishi Aurobindo, one of the greatest saint-philosophers of 20th Century described Indian approach to Nationalism in the following words: “In Positivism Europe has attempted to arrive at a higher synthesis, the synthesis of humanity; and Socialism and philosophical Anarchism, the Anarchism of Tolstoy and Spencer, have even envisaged the application of the higher intellectual synthesis to life. In India we do not recognise the nation as the highest synthesis to which we can rise. There is a higher synthesis, humanity; beyond that there is a still higher synthesis, this living, suffering, aspiring world of creatures, the synthesis of Buddhism; there is a highest of all, the synthesis of God, and that is the Hindu synthesis, the synthesis of Vedanta. With us today Nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the chance of realising the others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity.”

Sri Aurobindo rejected the theory that the essential conditions of nationality are unity of language, unity of religion and life, and unity of race. He pointed out that the English nation itself was built out of various races, that Switzerland has distinct racial strains speaking three different languages and professing different religions, that in America the candidates for White House

addressed at that time the nation in fourteen languages, that Austria is a congeries of races and languages and that the divisions in Russia are hardly less acute. He argued that the idea that unity in race, religion or language is essential to nationality is an idea which will not bear examination. He referred to the example of the Roman Empire, which created a common language, a common religion and life, and tried its best to crush out racial diversities under the weight of its uniform system, but it failed to make one great nation. In an illuminating passage, Sri Aurobindo defined the essential elements of nationality. He wrote:

“We answer that there are certain essential conditions, geographical unity, a common past, a powerful common interest impelling towards unity and certain favourable ‘political conditions which enable the impulse to realize itself in an organized government expressing the nationality and perpetuating its single and united existence. This may be provided by a part of the nation, a race or community, uniting the others under its leadership or domination, or by a united resistance to a common pressure from outside or within. A common enthusiasm coalescing with a common interest is the most powerful fosterer of nationality.”

Rashtram: The Enlightened Path

“Common enthusiasm coalescing with a common interest” as basis of nationhood has been realised in India for Millennia. This is described aptly from the Vedic period as “*Rashtram*” or “*Rashtra*”.

Rastram is etymologically explained as a

firm, enlightened path for welfare of a community. The word is derived as a combination of two roots: *ras'mi* ‘the sun’ and *sTha* ‘firm, placed in’. This leads to an extraordinary evocation in the Vedas: *rastram me datta* (Give me that lighted path).

In India, the concept of nation existed for millennia in the form of a pan-Indian spiritual-emotional identity. In *Rig Veda*, the most ancient work of Hindu seers, the word ‘*Rashtram*’ was used to describe the national identity of the people of the land called *Bharatavarsha*. ‘*Rashtram*’ is a uniquely Indian concept for nationhood founded essentially on the spiritual foundations. Thus ‘*Rashtram*’ as an idea is a unifying and development-oriented (*Abhyudayam*) concept as against today’s concept of nation, in which the basic urge to live together is not developed, and which has been a major source of political conflict and violence throughout last three centuries.

In the foreword to R.K. Mookerjee’s *The Fundamental Unity of India*, late Sir J. Ramsay MacDonald, ex-Prime Minister of Britain writes: “The Hindu regards India not only as a political unit naturally the subject of one sovereignty – whoever holds that sovereignty, whether British, Mohamedan, or Hindu – but as the outward embodiment, as the temple – nay, even as the goddess mother – of his spiritual culture... He made India the symbol of his culture; he filled it with this soul. In his consciousness, it was his greater self.”

Evolution of Rashtra

In Bharat there was evolution of *Rashtra*. The underlying concept was different. It is not similar to the theory of Nation in the West. There is a

beautiful *shloka* in *Atharva Veda* which says:

*Bhadram icchhantah rishiyah
swar vidayah, tapo dikshaamupanshed agre.
tato raashtram, bala, ojasya jaatam
tadasmai devaupasanmantu*

It means that a *bhadra icchha* - a benign wish originated in the minds of ancient seers during the course of their penance. This benign wish was for *Abhyudaya* - the welfare and glory of all. This is not divisive and is not guided by the desire that I should get all pleasures. These rishis – sages were supremely learned and it was their benevolent wish.

Abhyudaya is material and spiritual wellbeing of the mankind. The above *shloka* mentions that the sages, through their penance and meditation, have realised this benign wish of the universal wellbeing and that wish has invigorated the consciousness of the *Rashtram*. The sages say that even gods bow before such consciousness of *Rashtra*. Now what is *Rashtra* here? This is not political but it is spiritual. This is for the welfare of all.

But the most important question is how to explain *bhadra icchha* (benign wish)? The entire philosophy of *Rashtra* emanates from this *bhadra icchha* (benign wish). A doctrine of *Dharma* was developed on the basis of this *bhadra icchha*.

Sage KaGâda in *Vaċecika Sûtra* notes a definition of *Dharma* by its beneficial impact, focusing on discharge of one's responsibility:

Yatobhyudaya nisreyasa siddhihi ca dharmah

“That which leads to the attainment of *Abhyudaya* (prosperity in this world) and *Nihœreyasa* (total cessation of pain and attainment of eternal bliss hereafter) is *Dharma*”.

The *Bhadra Icchha* – Benign Wish of the sages was to secure this two-fold objective.

It is this *Dharma* which is the soul of India. Swami Vivekananda described India as '*Dharma Praana Bhaarata*' - 'Bharat with Dharma as soul'. This concept of National Soul is unique to India and that soul is '*Rashtra*' - the quintessential national identity of India. Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya called it '*Chiti*'. The first Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, despite his Western upbringing and Socialist convictions, had to appeal to this concept of the National Soul in his famous Tryst with Destiny address to the Indian Parliament on the midnight of 14/15 August 1947 when India became independent. He said:

“Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her success and her failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again.”

The ideals that Nehru referred to as those that had given her strength were the ideals of *Dharma*. *Dharma* can be understood a set of values that define the ethical, spiritual life of India as a *Rashtra*. They include its outlook to life, creation, universe, god, state, wealth and everything else. It is these ideals on which the Indian nationhood - *Rashtriyata* - was founded and thrived. It is these ideals India 'never lost sight of' in her long journey through victories and vicissitudes.

Some of the fundamentals of *Dharma* can be enumerated briefly in order to underscore the difference between the concept of '*Rashtram*' and 'Nation'.

On the question of Creation it believes:

* *Isavasyam idam sarvam* (Chapter 4: The Isavasya Upanishad).

The entire universe, animate and inanimate alike, is pervaded by *Isvara* - the divine consciousness.

On the question of ethnic, racial, linguistic and other difference in the world it proposes:

* *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*

The entire world is one family.

On the economic question it talks about 'sustained consumption':

* *tena tyaktena bhunjitah*

One should acquire only that much which was left for him by *Isvara*

On the welfare question, it states:

* *sarve bhavantu sukinah - sarve santu niramayah*

Let ALL be happy and free from diseases

On the environment related questions, its proposition is:

* *Mata bhumi putro'ham prithvyah* (Atharva

Veda 12|1|12)

This earth is my mother and I am her son.

On the question of religious diversity in the world, it proposes:

Indram mitram varunnamagnimaahutathoe divyah sa suparnoe garutmaan /

Ekam Sadvipraa bahudhaa Vadanti maatarisvaanamaahuh - Rig Veda

Truth is one; wise men interpret in different ways. It has attained ultimate levels of tolerance, accommodation and celebration of pluralism on the earth.

nana vibrati bahudha vivacasam

nana dharmanam prithivi yathaukasam

sahasra dhara dravitasya ye duham

dhruvena dhamurenk pasphuranti

'The earth is full of variety; it contains people speaking different dialects and speech, of diverse religious customs, each living according to what they think is right. The earth contains innumerable valuable things. It bears trees and plants of great diversity. We should pay homage to that Earth'.

Entire World is One Rashtram

However, one important dimension needs to be understood here. '*Rashtra*' is not a political concept in the sense that it doesn't define any geographical boundaries. It is more an ethical, spiritual concept - a view and way of life. The sages of India concluded that this whole earth surrounded by oceans is one *Rashtra*

prithivyah samudra parayantaayah eak raat iti

Therefore the idea and concept of *Rashtra* is a philosophy here. It is a way of life and principles to live life which define relationship and expected behavior between people and other beings.

State under Rashtram

What is State under '*Rashtram*'?. We need to look at this crucial question in order to understand the concept of '*Rashtram*' fully. Contrary to Nation State concept *Rashtram* views State as one of the many institutions that help society pursue the path of *Dharma*. State, described as *Rajya*, is thus not coterminous with *Rashtra*.

The *Aitereya Brahmana*, one of the ancient scriptures of India describes 10 kinds of *Rajyas* under one *Rashtra*:

*sAmrajyam. bhaujyam. svAradjyam.
vairajyam. pArameShThyam. rajyam.
MahAradjyam Adhipatyamayam. samantaparyAyI
syAt. sArvabhauma sArvAyuSha
AntAdAparArdhAt. pR^ithivai*

Chanakya, the great Indian political philosopher, states that *Rajah* - the King - is a servant of *Dharma*. Unlike in Nation States the *Rajah* enjoys no special privileges whatsoever. He is mandated to live like a commoner. The happiness of the *Rajah* lies in the happiness of his subjects. Even his powers as ruler are subject to the scrutiny of the *Dharma*. When a *Rajah* is coronated he would declare thrice - *Adandyosmi* - Nobody can punish me. A revered sage is then made to pronounce thrice - *Dharmadandyosi* - The *Dharma* will punish you.

Millinnia-old Experience of India as Rashtram

In India, this kind of *Rashtra* existed for Millennia as an ethical and spiritual idea pervading the entire national life of Hindus. There existed innumerable political units in the form of kings,

vassals, principalities, self-governed republics and occasionally the monarchs. But they never interfered in the national life of the people. Their duties were limited to safety, order and development. In fact while the kings waged wars the society carried on with its daily life unhindered.

In order to sustain this spirit of ethical and spiritual ideals various institutions were devised in India. Innumerable sacred places were strewn across the length and breadth of the country. Pilgrimages, festivals etc became important institutions in the life of the *Rashtra* instead of politics and Statecraft. A unique band of renounced individuals became the vehicles of this ethical, spiritual ideal across the country from place to place, time to time and generation to generation. That is the secret of India's uninterrupted life as a *Rashtra* for Millennia irrespective of the fact that it was never in history a united political entity.

To conclude, *Rashtra* is spiritual, all inclusive and is for the welfare of all. The foundation and the meaning behind it is not political or divisive. This *Rashtra* does not exist on the basis of rulers or army. This *Rashtra* has originated from the *bhadra ichchha* (benign wish) of the sages - *rishis*. This *bhadra ichchha* (benign wish) sees element of supreme soul in all, it propounds the idea of *Ekam Sadvipraa bahudha vadanti* and has a vision of *sarve bhavantu sukhinah* before it.

It is this *bhadra ichchha*, which has given rise to the Bharatiya *Rashtram* - Indian nation and sustains it through *Dharma*, that should be the basis for a new discourse on Nation and Nationality.

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Kashmiris and the ‘The Idea of Pakistan’

P. C. Dogra

Some time back, I read an article by Randeep Singh Nandal of TNN, titled ‘*Fault line in Kashmir makes people root for Afridi and vote in polls*’. It is a sharp and incisive article on the psyche of the people of Kashmir valley. Here are brief excerpts:

“Like rest of the subcontinent, Srinagar shut down for the semi-final clash between India and Pakistan. But, the team they cheered for wasn’t the men in blue. In hotels and homes, at roadside stalls and in Srinagar’s downtown sprawl, in villages and small mohallas, Kashmir was rooting for Shahid Afridi and his team. This support for Pakistan appeared to cut across caste and class, united mainstream politicians and separatists, and brought together prosperous businessmen who live half the year in Delhi and the *shikarawalas* who ceaselessly circle the Dal Lake. Most people who cheered for Afridi’s team have no love lost for Pakistan with its failing economy and daily violence. The reality of Pakistan has done what the Indian state could not for years: made “Kashmir banega Pakistan” vanish from all protests”.

“All that the Kashmiris have done is separate the reality of Pakistan from the idea of Pakistan “There is a connectedness, in the emotional sense, in the hearts of Kashmiris. We

do not bleed blue, we bleed green,” said Abid Hussein, a young professional. The Kashmiri politicians and businessmen are firm in their knowledge that India is the way forward for Kashmir. They shake their heads at every blast in Pakistan. But once it comes to anything that represents the idea of Pakistan, like the Pakistani cricket team, they remember their love for it.

It makes them admire India, its plurality, its progress and its strength; and resent it for these very reasons”

Why do the Kashmiris have such an ‘emotional feeling’ for Pakistan as brought out in the article above? Christopher Thomas, a renowned analyst of the events of the sub continent said way back in 1950s that the “Kashmiri Muslim mind had been indifferent to non-Kashmiri forms of Islam practised beyond the mountains of their natural fortress. The philosophy of Kashmir is the synthesis of Shaivism and Sufism.” He further said that “[T]he Muslims of the valley were long considered to be Hindus at heart. Shaivism is one of the most highly developed school of Indian philosophy and had profoundly impacted the Islamic thought in the valley”¹

What has changed since the 1950s then to bring about this transformation, especially

* The author is Former Director General of Police, Punjab, India.

considering tribal invasion in 1947, an invasion that brutally plundered, murdered and raped in the Kashmir valley? There was so much revulsion against the Pakistanis at that time that Jinnah just did not want to talk of plebiscite, as the memories of the horror trail left behind by the tribes were fresh in the minds of Kashmiris; they would have never opted for Pakistan. However, such feelings had also crept into their psyche even about India, because of the continuous and systematic failure of the Indian leadership in integrating the valley in the Indian national main stream. The political

{ The reality of Pakistan has done what the Indian state could not for years: made “Kashmir banega Pakistan” vanish from all protests” }

class then seemed to be too beholden to Sheikh Abdullah and did everything at his bidding, keeping the valley aloof from the ‘idea of India.’

Let us discuss how. The first deliberate omission was that of keeping the national identity of the Kashmiris (as Indians or not) in suspense. What was the mind set of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1950? This can be gauged from what he said in an interview to a reputed journalist Michael Davidson.

“Accession to either side cannot bring peace, he [Sheikh Abdullah] declared “we want to live in friendship with both the Dominions. Perhaps a middle path between them, with economic cooperation with each, will be the only way of doing it. But an

independent Kashmir must be guaranteed not only by India and Pakistan but also by Britain, the United States and other members of the United Nations...Yes Independence – guaranteed by the United Nations –may be the only solution.”²

Owen Bennet Jones who was a BBC correspondent in Pakistan between 1998 and 2001 has said, “In September 1950, for example he [Sheikh Abdullah] told the US ambassador to India, Loy Henderson that he favoured Kashmiri independence.”³ If Sheikh Abdullah was clear about this, then why was the Indian leadership still batting for him?

When the state of Jammu & Kashmir was attacked by the Pakistani regular forces and the tribes on 26 October 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh sought the help of India and signed an instrument of accession to India. This was similar to the one signed by the rulers of the other states. However the Government of India adopted a different stance in this case. Christopher Thomas wrote,

“Mountbatten wrote to Maharaja after receiving the signed instrument of accession: ‘In the special circumstances mentioned by your Highness, my Government has decided to accept the accession of the Kashmir state to the dominion of India. Consistently with their policy that in the case of any state where the issue of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the state, it is my Government’s wish that as soon as the law and order has been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invaders, the question of the state’s accession should be

settled by a reference to the people.”⁴

There was no need for all this when under the Indian Independence Act of 1935 there was no provision of referendum in the Princely States.

Alan Campbell-Johnson, the Viceroy’s press secretary noted that Jinnah had insisted that it was up to every Indian Prince, including Hari Singh to make his own decision on which nation to join.⁵ “It is open”, Jinnah said in a policy statement on his Muslim League’s position towards the Indian Princely States “to [the Princes to] join the Hindustan Constituent Assembly or the Pakistan Constituent Assembly or decide to remain independent”⁶

Alastair Lamb, a diplomatic Historian and author of several works on international relations said, “Jinnah did not like the plebiscite idea at all, largely because he was convinced that its result would be determined by Sheikh Abdullah. Thus Jinnah was not prepared to run the risk of confirming Sheikh Abdullah in power.”⁷

Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan, the then Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, and later the Chief Justice of India observed, “Plebiscite in my view had no meaning after the Maharaja had acceded to India in terms of the Indian Independence Act. This act of accession was complete and conclusive...The Indian Independence Act did not envisage conditional accession. It wanted to keep no Indian state in a state of suspense. It conferred on the rulers of Indian states absolute power to accede to either of the two dominions. The dominion’s Governor General had the power to accept the accession or reject the offer but he had no power to keep the

question open or attach conditions to it. I fail to understand from what Constitutional provision the Indian Government derives this power to say to the Pakistan that it will re-decide the question of accession of Kashmir by holding a plebiscite in the state of Kashmir after Pakistan’s aggression has been withdrawn. The document of accession does not give it this power. Maharaja never accepted this position.”⁸

Another factor that is responsible for this alienation was the reference to the United Nations Security council. Mountbatten pressurized Nehru. H. V. Hodson, the Constitutional adviser to the Viceroy of India in 1941-42, had observed,

“Lord Mountbatten now bent his efforts to getting the idea of reference to the United Nations accepted. Pandit Nehru was first adamantly opposed. Under what article of the charter he asked, could any reference to the United Nations be made? How did Pakistan come in to picture at all? He insisted that the first step was to drive out the raiders. However he gradually came round and on 20th December Indian cabinet finally decided that India should appeal to the United Nations, accusing Pakistan of helping raiders.”⁹

India’s application to the Security Council was sent on 1st January 1948. “Mountbatten’s haste avoided prior consultation with Patel, who happened to be on a short tour of Assam and returned to Delhi two days after the reference had been made. Had Mountbatten and Nehru waited, Patel they feared would have come in the Mountbatten’s way as he had earlier been in the case of Junagadh when Patel did not allow a

reference to be made to UNO.”¹⁰

Patel’s unofficial comment on India going to UN was, “Even a District Court pleader will not go as a complainant”¹¹ The Times, London quoted Patel’s long held contemptuous view of the Security Council as ‘Insecurity Council and a disturber of peace’¹²

Pandit Nehru had accepted in the first week of January 1948, that the “Kashmir issue has been raised to an international level by our reference to the Security Council of UN and most of the great powers are intensely interested in what happens in Kashmir”¹³ A month later he said that the Kashmir issue ‘has given us a great trouble...the attitude of [the] great powers has been astonishing. Some of them have shown active partnership with Pakistan.”¹⁴ In May he again said, “We feel that we have not been given a fair deal.”¹⁵

What kept the Kashmir valley terribly aloof from the Indian mainstream was the incorporation of Article 370 in the Constitution of India. Nehru had agreed to Sheikh Abdullah’s demand of having a separate constitution for Jammu & Kashmir. Here the sensitivity of Pandit Nehru to the international opinion took precedence over the practicality of the situation. “Even President Rajendra Prasad was ‘taken aback’ when Abdullah conveyed to him Nehru’s acceptance of such a proposal”.¹⁶ It was said to be a temporary provision inserted till the accession was ratified by the constituent Assembly of J&K. It was transitional in nature. Mr G. Ayyangar the then minister of Kashmir Affairs expressed hope that “In due course Jammu and Kashmir will become

ripe for the same sort of integration as has taken place in case of other states.” Prior to its legislation, the article had to have the approval of the Congress Parliamentary Board. At the party meeting, the issue raised a storm of angry protests from all sides and Ayyangar found himself a lone defender.¹⁷

The other compulsion was probably that of the holding of a plebiscite. Security Council passed a resolution on April 21, 1948 recommending to the Government of Pakistan to withdraw tribes and Pakistani nationals from Kashmir. Subsequently, the Government of India was to carry out a progressive withdrawal of the Indian forces to limit it to the minimum strength required for the maintenance of law and order. The resolution also envisaged the appointment of a plebiscite administrator with adequate powers to prepare and conduct the plebiscite. Dr. Karan Singh has rightly pointed out that “Maharaja deeply resented the manner in which Jawaharlal had made his handing over the power to Sheikh, a virtual condition for extending military aid to save the state from Pakistani occupation....Plebiscite being the watch word at that time, this became the trump card in the hands of Sheikh Abdullah. As the man who was supposed to win the plebiscite for India, he could demand his pound of flesh....The offer became a main source of trouble and difficulty later.”¹⁸

Sheikh Abdullah’s views had to be accepted and Article 370 was inserted in the constitution as he wanted it to be. It stipulated that no law enacted by the Government of India would be applicable to the State of Jammu & Kashmir until

it was so approved by the State Legislature. There is dual citizenship; Indians do not become automatically the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir. The state has a separate Constitution and a separate flag. Constituent Assembly approved the accession in February 1956 but this specific provision was not deleted. Article 370 has been misused by the political elite of the valley for building their empires. It is a vicious strategy to keep the state aloof from the national mainstream. 'It militates against the concept of one India' and encourages the Two Nation Theory. It has continued to fan the fissiparous tendencies in the valley and has been source of anguish and unending pain for the people of Jammu and Ladakh who for long had been wishing for the final and total assimilation of the state in the national mainstream.

Another factor that kept the Kashmiris alienated from the Indian nation was the *Nehru-Sheikh Accord of 1952*. Joseph Corbel, the then Chairman of the U.N. Observers Commission has written that,

"On July 24, 1952 Jawahar Lal announced in the Parliament, the signing of an agreement with Sheikh Abdullah. It gave to Kashmir, special rights which other princely states never had like.... 'Hereditary ruler to be replaced by a Head of State to be elected by the Constituent Assembly/State Assembly for a term of 5 years however subject to ratification by the President of India.' "

Secondly fundamental rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution of India will apply to Jammu & Kashmir, subject to the provision that

they will not be applicable to the programme of land reforms including the expropriation of land without compensation, nor they should adversely affect the security measures undertaken by the state Government.

Thirdly the Kashmir legislature shall have the power to define and regulate the rights and privileges of the permanent residents of the state, more especially in regard to the acquisition of immovable property, appointments to services and like matters.

Fourthly the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of India was to be limited as regards Kashmir, to interstate disputes, to the fundamental rights applicable to the state and to matters of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. The Government of India wanted the Supreme Court to be the final Court of Appeal in civil and criminal cases. But the Sheikh did not agree, and had left it open.

The national flag of India was accepted to be the supreme but the Kashmir state flag was also to be maintained. In financial matters, the Govt of India wanted integration but the Sheikh got it postponed.

The most important provision of the agreement was the emergency powers of the President of India. According to Article 352 of the Indian Constitution, President has the power to declare emergency in case of invasion, external danger or internal disturbance. But as per agreement in case of internal disturbance, emergency can only be declared at the request or the concurrence of the Government of the State" ¹⁹

There was a lot of criticism about this agreement in the country. There were angry demonstrations in Jammu. Kushak Bakola, the then Head Lama of Ladakh said in an interview “It should be clear...that there shall be no place for us in a virtually independent Kashmir.”

“Sardar Patel had remarked then ‘neither Sheikh Abdullah nor Gopalaswamy is permanent. The future would depend upon the strength and guts of the Indian Government and if we cannot have confidence in our strength, we do not deserve to exist as a nation.’ ”²³

However there was no change in the stance of Jenab Sheikh Abdullah. “Even when the Delhi Accord had been ratified by the State constituent Assembly, Sheikh Abdullah said immediately thereafter on July 10, 1953 ‘A time will come when I will bid them goodbye.’ ”²⁰

Krishna Menon took a correct stand at the United Nations when he said that,

“Kashmir’s accession was valid and final, that the Kashmiri people had expressed their desire in the elections of October 1951, and that these elections ended India’s obligations in the matter of a plebiscite—a plebiscite to which India had never been actually committed by a binding treaty.”

He further said “Once the merger of Kashmir with India was consummated, it could not be revoked because the Indian Constitution did not recognize the right of secession.” ²¹ Then why has the Indian leadership continued to remain befuddled and ambivalent?

In the end I would like to quote V. Shanker, Secretary to Sardar Patel who had his reservations on Sardar Patel agreeing to Pandit Nehru on Article 370.

“Sardar Patel had remarked then ‘neither Sheikh Abdullah nor Gopalaswamy is permanent. The future would depend upon the strength and guts of the Indian Government and if we cannot have confidence in our strength, we do not deserve to exist as a nation.’ ”²³

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Challenges before Indian Christians

P. N. Benjamin

India is the homeland of four world religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. The ancient sages have from time to time formulated different perceptions of the Almighty. Almost all the non-Indian religions set foot on Indian soil right from their very beginning. Even in their own lands of origin, Christianity and Islam faced stiff opposition in the battle for survival. In contrast, in India, these two religions received hospitality. The mainsprings of India's emotional unity did not arise from its religions, but from its very cultural base. The cultural superstructure was supremely capable of containing all religious systems in all their genuine fullness and grandeur.

The modern Indian State does not sponsor or foster any one religion at the expense of the others. This is in keeping with the genius of India, which through the ages has followed the path, not of mere tolerance, but of acceptance of diversities of creed and practice. Of course, this process of assimilation has to go on continuously. There have been periods when Hinduism has been mainly on the defensive, building up walls, mostly caste regulations, to protect itself from the inroads of other faiths. But there have also been glorious

periods when at least creative individuals have cast aside protective shells and entered into faithful intercourse with other faiths, resulting in significant mutations and advances in the nation's culture and progress.

Christians in India are unique

Delivering the first Stanley Samartha Memorial lecture in October 2001 in Bangalore, Francois Gautier said: "Christians in India are unique: not only did the first Christian community in the world establish itself in India but before the arrival of Jesuits with Vasco de Gama in the 16th century, they developed an extraordinary religious pluralism, adopting some of the local customs, while retaining their faith in Christ and accepting the existence of other religious practices. Even though they constitute only less than 3% of the population, they wield an enormous influence in India through education mainly because many of India's top educational institutions are Christian and also because of the quality care in Christian hospitals and nursing homes."

"The most precious freedom that Indian Christians enjoy is to hold Jesus Christ as their saviour, as the Son of God, as the "only true

** The author is former Member, Karnataka Minorities Commission, Bengaluru, India.*

divinity”. It is their absolute right to cherish that belief. But the moment Christianity tries to impose this belief of only one true God- Jesus Christ- on the world, then it is itself impeaching upon the freedom of others. For this belief of oneliness of our God as the real one and all others are false is at the root of many misunderstandings, wars and terrorism.”

Right to convert

The Indian Constitution guarantees to every citizen the right to propagate religion subject to public order and morality as also the freedom to change religion. But neither of these or even the two taken together can be interpreted as the “right to convert”, says the distinguished jurist and retired judge of the Supreme Court, Justice K.T.Thomas in his Stanley Samartha Memorial Lecture in October 2007.

Those Christians who hold the view that a primary Christian obligation is to convert others into the Christian religion and use the words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel according to Mathew 28:19 to justify it may find Justice Thomas’s position rather confusing, if not totally unacceptable. But a closer look at that frequently invoked Gospel text may suggest that it was not an exhortation to add to the numerical strength of the Christian religion or any of its many branches. For one thing when Jesus gave this command there was no Christian religion. But more than that, it is necessary to reflect on the essence of the mission

of Jesus to understand the true import of his farewell message. Jesus was a Jewish teacher and my understanding is that he was challenging the Jewish people to think of God, the creator of all things, not as an exclusive Jewish deity, but as the loving and caring Father of human beings of all nations and all ages. If Jesus is seen as the messenger of this all inclusive view of the human family, then conversion ceases to be the main concern of Christians and the commandment to love neighbours, with all their differences, including religious ones, takes precedence.

If the essence of religion is the quest for truth, and it is natural that different individuals and groups have but partial perceptions of truth, religious conversations and dialogues will continue. This is more so where one lives in a context of religious plurality as in our country. But religious conversations then cannot be just fault-finding exercises, and certainly not condemnations. Rather, they must be the search for greater understanding of different positions and expositions remembering that religious truths have frequently been communicated through variety of idioms, figures of speech, and often through myths of different ages and cultures.

It is not an easy task. The Indian Constitution guarantees the freedom to pursue this line as also to change one’s position if it leads to that.

Conversions with foreign-funded charity

Large scale conversions have been taking

place since 1947 resulting in significant changes in religious demography in various parts of the country. It has created resentment and social disharmony in the society in several parts of our country.

It is absolutely true that the fundamentalists Christian evangelists cannot separate their charitable work from spreading their faith. “It’s not a crafty attempt to proselytise. It’s an earnest attempt to share what they hold most dear. That’s true of all the proselytising religions. The evangelical Christians, carrying food in one hand and the Bible in the other, are generously funded by American churchgoers. To them, humanitarian relief is just a cover. Their basic motivation is conversion. These groups train workers to go in under the guise of relief to convert people away from their faith.

The reasons for the continued insurgency in the North East are not far to seek. The insurgents have been recipients of foreign funds and arms in massive quantities.

In all fairness it must be said that the role of Christian missionaries in the secessionist activities in North East India has not been above reproach.

In 1970, in the Rajya Sabha, the late Mr. Joachim Alva had reminded the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi: “foreign money was poured into India’s borders and the Nagaland problem was damaged by the flow of funds from Churches abroad.”

Violence against Christians

The alleged attacks against Christians in recent years in some parts of India have been justifiably condemned by all patriotic individuals. The real source of danger to the Indian Christian community is not the handful of Hindu extremists. Most of the violent incidents have been due to aggressive evangelising. Other than this there have been few attacks on Christians. Finally the sensitive and sensible Christians must realize that acts of certain varieties of Christian evangelists who denigrate Hindu gods and abuse Hindu rituals as barbaric are the root cause of tension between Christian and Hindu communities. Christian leaders known for their erudition, equipoise and empathy should come out in the open to disown such acts of intolerance.

A brilliant Danish Professor, Dr. Kaaj Baago, in the United Theological College, Bangalore, made history when he said in the 1960s: “Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists should never give up their religion to join the Christian Church”. On the other hand the Church should humble itself and find ways of identifying itself with other groups, taking Christ with them. Christ, he said, was not the chairman of the Christian party. If God is the Lord of the universe he will work through every culture and religion. We must give up the crusading spirit of the colonial era and stop singing weird hymns like “Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war”. This will lead to Hindu Christianity or Buddhist Christianity.

It must involve the disappearance of the Indian Christian community, but he reminded us: “a grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls to the ground and dies”. Needless to say, the Indian Christians were furious. He left the College, the Church and the mission and took refuge with the Danish Foreign Service!! He later returned to India as his country’s Ambassador and died in harness in 1988.

An Exclusive and Expansionist Faith

When Christians have an exclusive and an expansionist faith and happen to live in a pluralistic society they need to have their own self-control. If not, in the interest of social harmony, state should interfere and curtail such expressions of faith in public arena. The Christians are thoroughly muddled over the business of conversion. The vast majority of the church often moves in the direction of proselytization - planning for the “harvest of souls, devising new strategies - much like the multinational corporations”.

The Commission to preach the gospel is usually quoted by all Christian groups. But, they conveniently ignore the fact that there are other very important elements in the teachings of Christ. “Forgive your brother not seven times but seventy times seven...Love one another as I have loved you...”

Terms such as “evangelistic campaign”, “missionary strategy”, “campus crusade”, “occupying non-Christian areas”, a “blitzkrieg”

of missionaries, and sending “reinforcements” sound more appropriate to military enterprises than to Christian witness to God’s redeeming love in Jesus Christ. The statistical approach implied in the words “the unreached millions” is derogatory to neighbours of other faiths.

“Unreached” by whom? When Indian Christians themselves use these phrases, which have originated outside the country, to describe their neighbours living next door to them in the community, Christians should not be surprised if the neighbours are offended. (Dr. Samartha).

Mutual Respect

While everyone has a right to invite others to an understanding of their faith, it should not be exercised by violating other’s rights and religious sensibilities. At the same time, all should heal themselves from the obsession of converting others. Freedom of religion enjoins upon all of us the equally non-negotiable responsibility to respect faiths other than our own, and never to denigrate, vilify or misrepresent them for the purpose of affirming superiority of our faith. Errors have been perpetrated and injustice committed by the adherents of every faith. Therefore, it is incumbent on every community to conduct honest self-critical examination of its historical conduct as well as its doctrinal/theological precepts. Such self-criticism and repentance should lead to necessary reforms inter alia on the issue of conversion. While deeply

appreciating humanitarian work by faith communities, it should be conducted without any ulterior motives. In the area of humanitarian service in times of need, what we can do together, we should not do separately.

A well-known Hindu scholar has urged that Christians must criticise Hinduism out of knowledge. They must try to understand what Hinduism is. Make an honest attempt to agree as far as you can and state your honest difference in a decent way. This would improve the image of Christianity in India, as the greatest devotion for the personality of Christ. Hinduism has admitted prophets born elsewhere into its own grand galaxy of Avatars. There is no doubt whatever that Jesus Christ was a great avatar in the eyes of Hindus. Every Hindu will bow down before the image of Christ. There is no question of the purity of that great Sage. No Hindu will ever question this. But if the Mission of Jesus is to succeed, it is an obligation on the part of professing Christians not to do anything that will in anyway mar the luminous, beautiful and grand image of Jesus Christ.

Unless Christians in this country share the sufferings of the people they have no word of the gospel to them, whatever true things they might say. Revival songs they sing long prayers they pray and long sermons they preach amount to lip religion and at the same time they swallow widow's houses. This is how Jesus Christ characterises hypocrisy.

I strongly believe that Christians in India need

not too much worry about the acts of violence against them in some parts of the country by the so-called Hindu extremists, but should worry about the internal cancer it carries within its body. The Christians in India will never be protected by international supporters. They are being protected by the majority Hindus and they should be thankful to God for the majority of Hindus who are tolerant and open in spite of the aggressive postures of

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Christians. How unfortunate it is that even some well meaning Christians become so arrogant, self righteous and even give themselves to hate in the name of Christ who came to show a new way of LOVE. I wish the Christian brothers and sisters would engage in serious reflections and identify the causes for the growing antagonism of people of other faiths against certain Christian groups in India.

Being a liberal Christian and raised in a non-fundamentalist tradition, I am able to perceive little or no contradiction between the tenets of Jesus and many of the seminal concepts of Hinduism and Buddhism. The priceless affirmation in the

Hindu scripture which says “one truth, but discerned differently by the wise” is somewhat similar to one of Jesus’ sayings, “in my Father’s house, there are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare one for you”.

Another of Jesus’ sayings which affirms that: “I and my Father are one” is similar to the Hindu Mahavakya, “Aham Brahmasmi” (I am Brahman). The “born again” attribute necessary for a Christian’s salvation as required by Jesus is no different from the concept of “dwija” or twice-born in Brahman (often misconstrued as Brahmin).

There are also several references in the New

Testament indicating that Jesus and his disciples believed in both karma and reincarnation. It appears that the belief in reincarnation has persisted over the years, as evidenced by the continuing belief of Christian fundamentalists in the second coming of Jesus. The Acts of Thomas which were excluded from the New Testament, contain concepts prevalent in the advaita of Hinduism.

*AsatoMaSadgamaya,
TamasoMaJyotirgamaya
MrityorMaAmritamgamaya
Om Shanti hi, Shanti hi, Shantih hi*



India Foundation Delegation to Sri Lanka : A Report

On the invitation of the Bandaranaike Center for International Studies (BCIS) Colombo, a delegation led by Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, MP, Deputy Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha and former Union Minister, visited Sri Lanka from 4th to 10th June 2013. Other members of the delegation were:

Shri Suresh Prabhu, Former Union Minister
Shri Vivek Katju, IFS, Former Secretary,
MEA

Shri Swapan Dasgupta, Eminent Columnist
and Political Commentator

Smt. Monika Arora, Advocate, Supreme
Court

A strategic dialogue was scheduled with the BCIS-led delegation wherein various issues and concerns regarding India - Sri Lanka relations were discussed. The delegation also attended a function wherein, a commemorative postal stamp of Swami Vivekananda was released by His Excellency Shri Mahinda Rajapaksa marking the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of the great Hindu monk. The delegation also visited Jaffna and held meetings with the representatives of local Tamil groups besides visiting projects being sponsored by Government of India in the war-ravaged Northern Province.

In Colombo, the delegation met the political and the executive leadership of Sri Lanka including H.E. the President, the Speaker of the

Parliament, the Defence Secretary, the Urban Development Minister, Minister for Publicity and the Leader of the Opposition. The delegation's visit also included receptions hosted by the Foreign Minister, the Colombo-based Sri Lankan Tamil community and the Indian High Commission.

Through this visit, the delegation wished to highlight the need for closer strategic and people-to-people relations between India and Sri Lanka. Peace and prosperity in the neighbourhood being paramount for India. Sri Lanka is a close neighbor and for over a millennia, a civilization cousin of India. This delegation, from the India Foundation on the invitation of the BCIS, was a goodwill mission to Sri Lanka wherein we wished to contribute to the strengthening of the ties between the two countries and ensuring peace and justice in the region.

Basic facts about Sri Lanka

1. Population	: 20 Million
2. Ethnic Make-up	: Sinhalese 73.8%, Sri Lankan Moors : 7.2% Indian Tamil : 4.6% Sri Lankan Tamil : 3.9%, 10.5%
3. Religion(s):Buddhist	: 69.1%
Muslim	: 7.6%
Hindu	: 7.1%
Christian	: 6.2%

-
- Other : 10%
3. Government : Republic
4. Language in Sri Lanka: Sinhalese, Tamil, English
5. Currency of Sri Lanka is the ‘*Sri Lankan Rupee*’
6. Sri Lanka was the first country in the World to have a democratically elected head of state who was a woman namely Sirimavo Bandarnaike.
7. Sri Lanka was known as ‘Ceylon’ before 1972.

The High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam invited the members of the delegation to the Sri Lankan Embassy. He stated that Government of Sri Lanka attached great importance to this visit. There was also free and frank discussion on various topics ranging from politics, economics to civilization and historical ties between India and Sri Lanka. Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam told us very interesting facts about the civilization, historical and religious legacy of India and Sri Lanka.

We arrived in Colombo on 4th June, 2013 at the Bandarnaike International Airport.

Wednesday, 5th June, 2013

The entire delegation had decided that the first port of call will be Jaffna as it was a city which had witnessed the destruction due to 30 year war which started in 1983 and ended on 16th May, 2009. We had come with the message of hope and peace and that bullet had given day to ballot at the municipal council level and that soon there will be elections at the provincial level also. We also visited the North Sea Fishernet Factory. This factory was a gift from India in which Indians

invested millions of dollars to make good quality fisher nets for the fishermen.

We then met with the Jaffna Civil Society leaders at the Conference Hall of Jaffna District Secretariat. This meeting with the Civil Society included the Hindu Priests, the Christian Clergy, Muslim leaders, former Government servants, Educationists and Business Men. There was a free and frank discussion on various topics. The two Tamil Hindu Priests voiced their concern at Hindu Temples being destroyed in Northern and Eastern Provinces. They were vocal about not getting any help from India. Mr. Sundaram who retired from Ministry of Education was concerned about the execution of the 13th amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka which gave provincial legislatures. He further said that India was duty bound to safe guard the 13th amendment and that election must be conducted under it.

A retired government servant from Ministry of External Affairs stated that after the age of darkness came to an end and era of excellent relations with India has started. He further said that the Government of Sri Lanka had the responsibility of rehabilitation and resettlement of over 3, 00,000 refugees which was a big challenge. Mr. Tilak Raj, a businessman raised his concern about the fact that not many people were investing in Jaffna. And that the interest rates need to be brought down to bring more investment. There were concerns about the Land issue in Northern and Eastern provinces and that they could escalate violence again. Some also alleged that Sinhala Buddhists were being made to settle in the Northern and Eastern provinces thereby

changing the demography of the region.

About India's role, people stated that India was investing a lot in the infrastructure and the vocational and skilled training in Sri Lanka. India is actively engaged in housing schemes, railways and industrial zones and that the support of the Indian Government is needed to develop the region including greater investment in education and training for skilled jobs. People wanted India to play a more pro-active role as regards rights of Tamils and other ethnic groups including Muslims were concerned.

There were also voices which said that by not supporting Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council on the issue of Human Rights and by calling for an Independent and credible enquiry into the violations, India has betrayed their nation. There were also allegations that India was responsible for the instability in the region. Fishermen raised the issue of Indian fishermen entering into Sri Lankan territorial waters and that this adversely affected their livelihood.

Some concluding remarks by the people stated that trust needs to be build between the Tamil and the Sinhala community and more than anything else there is need for development and mutual co-operation between India and Sri Lanka.

Shri Ravi Shanker Prasad, addressed the gathering and responded to the various apprehensions, concerns and queries. He stated that India is a friend and shall always remain a friend. The relations between India and Sri Lanka were based on thousands of years of civilizational, historical, traditional, religious and spirituals ties between the two countries. He stated that India

could never be a bully to its civilizational cousin. India has never attacked any country. Both the countries had unfortunate experience in the past and important leaders lost their lives. This is the 150th year of Swami Vivekanada being celebrated in India and outside. This great saint talked about humanity. He further stated that Sri Lankan and its people have to make their own destiny and India is always there to help. He referred to the fisher net factory which is established in Jaffna as a gift from the Indian Government and further promised that apart from continuing investment in railways and other fields, India will help Sri Lanka in providing training to the youth in skill development. He further stated that India is only a facilitator and Sri Lanka Government and the people have to take a call on ensuring that elections are held in time and are free and fare. He concluded by saying that respect for each other case is important and also the concern about religions are equally important.

Being aware of the enormity of the housing needs in the conflict affected areas, Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh had announced India's commitment to build 50,000 housing units during the state visit of President of Sri Lanka H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa to India in June, 2010. The delegation also visited this housing project.

In a meeting with Consul General of India & a group of local leaders the demands and concerns were voiced around the 13th amendment which promised revolution of powers and also to the contact of free and fare elections to the provincial councils in September, 2013 as had been announced by the Government of Sri Lanka.

Doubts were raised by many Tamils over the honesty with which the Central Government would fulfill its promises.

Then we met with the Hon. Major General (Retd.) G. Chandrasiri, Governor, Northern Province at the Governor's Residence. A Power Point presentation on the developmental work carried out by the Sri Lankan Government in the Northern Province was shown to the delegates. On the question of the land issue, the delegation was surprised to hear that the Governor stated that all land belonged to the Government. On the other side were the Tamils who had been raising great concern at the taking away of their lands by the Military and the Government for various purposes which they had possessed and owned for generations. But the delegation was aware of the fact that Jaffna City had witnessed lot of development in the post war period.

Thursday, 06th June 2013

We visited Nallur Kovil, a large and beautiful Hindu Temple which was founded in 948. The Temple is socially important institution for the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Hindu identity of North Sri Lanka. Nallur is the Epitome of Punctuality, order, neatness and strict discipline.

Then we visited the Jaffna Library. Mayor of Jaffna was very enthusiastic to take us on a round of the Jaffna Library whose entrance had a big statue of Devi Saraswati with Veena and the Library had its splendid colonial charm. The people visiting the Library took off their slippers outside the Library as if this was a Mandir of Vidya, a Temple of knowledge. The burning of

the Library in Jaffna in 1981 leading to destruction of more than 90,000 books and things of immense historical value had been a major turning point in convincing the Tamil people that Government could not protect them or their cultural heritage and persuaded many of them to take to militancy.

During our flight, we had the fortune to see the *Ramsetu*, contemporarily called the Adam's Bridge. Long and wide, going into the Indian Ocean it was an event which cannot be explained or described but only felt by a faithful heart. The Bridge is 18 miles (30 km). It is said that Rama's Bridge was completely above sea level until it was broken by a cyclone in 1480AD.

We then met with the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Ranil Wickramasinghe. He was the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka twice from 7th May, 1993 to 19th August, 1994 and from 9th December, 2001 to 6th April, 2004. His Government had entered into Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) with the LTTE wherein both the parties agreed to halt all offensive Military operations.

Then we met Mr. Chamal Rajapaksa, speaker of the Parliament. He remembered the visit of the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Mr. Shiv Raj Singh Chauhan. The Madhya Pradesh Government under Chief Ministership of Mr. Shiv Raj Singh Chauhan has decided to construct the Goddess Sita Temple in the Island Nation at Divurumpola, a place believed to be associated with Ramayana.

We then met Mr. R. Sampanthan who is against all attempts to repeal the 13th amendment to the Constitution, to dilute the powers that the Provincial Councils have, to demilitarize the Tamil areas in the North and is not ready to join the

Parliamentary Select Committee. Mr. Sampanthan and other TNA Leaders were very concerned about the discrimination and hostilities towards Tamils as a race.

At the dinner hosted by the Indian High Commission there were cultural exchanges. Impact of free and fair elections leading to a democratically elected government were discussed, and analyzed.

Friday, 07th June 2013

India Foundation delegation met with Dr. Mervin Silva, Minister of Public Relations and Public Affairs and Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Secretary, Ministry of Defence and Urban Development. Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa is an ex-military man, celebrated as a war hero. He was responsible for bringing 30 year old war to an end and is the one who controls the Army. His entire office has large paintings of the cruelty, atrocities and barbarianism leashed out by the LTTE against innocent persons. He told us how he got trained at NDA, Rajasthan, India and also that how he got his training in Assam. However on the question of Sri Lanka seeking help from China in building its infrastructure and also the commercial projects, he simply stated that Sri Lanka will consider taking help in form of loans, investment in infrastructure building and in buying arms and ammunition from whichever country it got help from. Though he talked about development but he did not talk about democratization and devolution of power. On the question of demilitarization of Northern and Eastern Provinces, he gave a very candid reply stating that

where will he rehabilitate and keep his lakhs of Military Personnel who have been engaged in the war for the last 3 decades. He stated that a major Military unrest will be caused if these Army personnel were made to sit idle without any activities specially welfare activities. Hence opposed to the popular demand of demilitarization and sending military back to the barracks and a minimal role for it in the provinces, the Defence Secretary visualized a big role for the Military in maintenance of the peace, supervising the development, implementing and putting the systems online and a large role in the welfare activities including farming. War was over but concerns remained. According to him the noise about human rights violations in Sri Lanka by USA was because USA perceived that Sri Lanka was getting closer to China. He stated that China and Pakistan had been the main weapon suppliers of Sri Lanka during a war. India trained the Soldiers and also gave Ships and Radars but offensive Weapons were not given by India. He further stated that every year about 2800 Sri Lankan Officers were trained in India, 800 in Pakistan and about 100 in China. They had further asked India to train 1000 more young officers every year. He stated that the Sri Lankan Army and the Indian Army understood the mutual problem and had deep level of understanding.

On a lighter side, when asked about the prevalent absolute cleanliness in Colombo and other places, he replied that all the systems had always been in place. What he did was to make those systems work and do their duty honestly and diligently. Hence he said he directed his officers

that there should be no garbage in and around Colombo and if any such garbage was found, the particular person responsible for removing it will be arrested. He said the entire city got cleaned in one week time. Mr. Gottabaya Rajapaksa was very interested in the facts narrated by Mr. Ravi Shanker Prasad regarding the rise and fall of militancy in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir and how democracy was a big healer and a balm which led to moderation of extremist tendencies.

The delegation then went on to meet H. E. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. We were greeted by the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of External Affairs Hon. (Prof.) G. L. Pieris, Minister of External Affairs. The interaction with the President of Sri Lanka Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksha continued for over an hour. The delegation voiced their concerns regarding the implementation of the 13th amendment, the devolution of power to the Provincial Legislative, the police and land powers and also the apprehensions of Tamils.

The President in conclusion stated that the ties between India and Sri Lanka were thousands of years old. He said that a strong and stable Government in India was always in the interest of Sri Lanka. What he stated in the last was “*trust us.*” He also assured the delegation on implementation of 13th amendment and that the elections to the Northern and Eastern Provinces will take place in September 2013. He further stated that he was ever ready to talk and discuss the problems with the Tamil Leadership specially the TNA and they should be persuaded to join the Parliamentary Select Committee and engaged in

fruitful discussions with the Government.

Then there was a ceremony on the occasion of issuing of a Commemorative Stamp on Swami Vivekananda by H.E. the President. The gathering included the priest from Rama Krishan Mission, Colombo. The life history of Swami Vivekananda was recited. Sri Lanka became the first country outside India to release a stamp on Swami Vivekananda on the occasion of 150 years of his birth.

We then met Mr. Basil Rajapaksa who had handled the resettlement of large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) maintaining their privacy. The delegation reminded him of the four D's of the President i.e. Demilitarisation, Development, Democratisation and Devolution. While Demilitarisation and Development had been initiated, the focus should now also be on democratization and devolution. He assured us that he was aware of the above and will do the needful and also ensure elections at the right time.

Saturday, 08th June 2013

We visited the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic. It is a Buddhist Temple in the city of Kandy, Sri Lanka located in the Royal Palace Complex which has the relic of tooth of Buddha. The tooth relic can be seen ones in 5 years when the inner cascades are opened. The replica of the tooth relic is taken across the region on the back of an elephant. Custody of the tooth relic has become to symbolize the right to rule.

Then we visited the Peradeniya University which is famous for its natural beauty which has the honour of having Prof. Sir Ivor Jennings (1942-55) as its first Vice Chancellor.

Civil War in Sri Lanka 23 July 1983 to May 2009

The war began with the insurgency by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against the Government of Sri Lanka to create an Independent Tamil State cold Eelam in the North and East of the Island. LTTE was defeated by the Sri Lankan Military after 26 years Military campaign around 100 thousand people were killed and the Sri Lankan forces were also accused of human rights abuses and serious and human rights violations. In May 2010 Mahindra Rajapaksa, the President of Sri Lanka appointed the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission to assess the conflict between the time of the Ceasefire Agreement in 2002 and the defeat of LTTE in 2009. The points of conflict between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil population included amongst others the move by Jayawardene who decided in 1944 to replace English by Sinhalese as the Official Language and thereafter the “Sinhala Only Act” led to Ethnic Riots. Further the policy of standardization for University admission also drove many Tamil Youth into Militancy.

Indore Sri Lanka Peace Accord was signed on 29th July 1987 by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayawardene. Under this accord, Sri Lankan Government promised devolution of power to the provinces, merger of Northern and Eastern Provinces into a single province, official status for the Tamil Language (this was enacted as the 13th amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka).

(Monika Arora, Advocate, Supreme Court of India)



India agreed to establish order in North and East through a force called Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) which after hostilities and casualties suffered was withdrawn in March, 1990.

Conclusion

The delegation to Sri Lanka was overwhelmed by the commonalities of rich cultural heritage and traditions, the commonness of Buddhism and Hinduism, the very fact that both the majority Sinhalese as well as the minority Tamil trace their origin to India which is also referred by Sri Lankans as *Jambudweep* i.e. a pilgrimage. The delegation was impressed by the investments made by India in the rebuilding of the war torn areas of the Northern and Eastern Provinces with the establishment of Factories including Fishernet Factory and implementing housing projects at a very large scale. Indian investment in roads, railways and other areas has also drawn appreciation from all quarters. Indians give a boom and a boost to the Sri Lankan Tourism Industry. Food and entertainment have stark commonalities. A large number of Army Officers of Sri Lanka get training in India. However, the conflict over Tamil issue dominates all the above. The regional factors have their importance and especially so when people with common wants and linkages have genuine grievances which should be and must be addressed expeditiously but carefully and cautiously. Let not myopic vision and short sightedness estrange our trusted neighbor and civilizational cousin.

Border Speaks - Untold story of the Indo-Tibetan Border

Seminar held on May 17, 2013, New Delhi

India shares large borders with its neighbor China in the North-East and Northern parts. These borders have not been stable since the time of Independence and there have been continuous Chinese incursions in the Indian Territory. **Border Speaks** was a seminar organized by India Foundation to get to know the truth of the Chinese incursions in the Ladakh area from people's representatives in Ladakh. It also provided them a platform to share their livelihood issues and day to day problems.

The speakers at the Seminar were **Shri Thupstan Chhewang**, Former MP, Leh. **Shri Ringzin Tangey**, Sarpanch, Kuyul (Demchok), Ladakh and **Shri Nawang Norboo**, Ex-Councillor, Nyoma. **Lt. General Arvind Sharma**, Retd. chaired the Seminar.

Lt. Gen Arvind Sharma began his address by stating that the Seminar was a consequence of the intrusion by People's Liberation Army (PLA) patrol in the northern area of Ladakh, to be precise, in the south of the Karakoram pass. The intrusion was for a period of three weeks and was vacated on 5th

of May, 2013. How and why the intrusion took place, the reactions and how it was resolved has left the majority befuddled. He said that information relating to this intrusion has left more questions unanswered than answers. The timing of the intrusion creates a doubt in the mind as it was preceding the visit of the Chinese Premiere Le Keqiang. Lt. Gen Sharma (Retd.) questioned the motivation of the intrusion. He said it was talked of as a localized affair. But, according to him, Chinese do not do things in a knee-jerk manner. It is a well thought-out plan and it was done to achieve certain aims. A lot of speculation and discussion has taken place regarding the aims, a lot of analysis has been done by strategic thinkers. According to Lt. Gen Sharma (Retd.), the aim was two-fold: one was strategic and the other was an assessment of India's standing on the issue.

As per Lt. Gen Sharma (Retd.) only once in 2010, an intrusion took place in the area of Daulat Beg Oldi, which is to south of the Karakoram Pass. Karakoram Pass has been accepted as one of the strategic points, south

of which is India. Similarly Demchok, which is in the south east was the other point. Why this area? It was the first time that the PLA came with definitive plans to stay put. Patrols, he said, do not carry tents. They come and assess the situation up to the point that they want. They then wait for a reaction by the Indian patrols. When nothing happens for a considerable period of time they settle down. This is what happened at Daulat Beg Oldi. According to Lt. Gen Sharma (Retd.) it was not another Kargil, but it was something similar. The strategy of this incursion was to keep a check on the area of Shaksgam valley that Karakoram Pass has to its West and North-West. This area was ceded to China by Pakistan in 1963. On going further West of Shaksgam pass, is the area of Gilgit Baltistan. The area of Gilgit Baltistan is now virtually under control of the PLA. Lt. Gen Sharma (Retd.) said that there are around 3000-4000 troops of the PLA working in that area. The area links to the Karakoram Corridor. Lt. Gen Sharma (Retd.) said he deliberately calls the Karakoram area a 'corridor' because today there is a highway there, very soon there will be a pipeline and not long after, railways will arrive, so that corridor gets linked up. In the early 50's when the Aksai Chin road was being made, Lt. Gen Sharma (Retd.) said one never knew about it. And when Chinese came in and

claimed areas, they claimed areas so that security was provided to this Karakoram highway. One could not even look into that area. If the Chinese want to link up via the difficult terrain of Shaksgam valley, which is a possibility, one must not forget that at a certain point of time, even Siachen was a difficult terrain. To give a certain amount of depth to this road, the Chinese have to have this sort of area; this according to Sharma is why for the first time they have come down to the area.

The second reason is to gauge how well India is placed in that area and what the country's response to movements in the area will be like. Since 2010 the border responsibility in that area is of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), which operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Though the Army is located in that area, the responsibility is of the ITBP; their deployment of troops is there itself. Their method of functioning, are such that they have a direct communication link with one of their senior officers sitting in Leh, post which the communication goes to Delhi, from where the MHD controls it. So Sharma said, anything that has to happen, happens after the clearance of the MHD. This obviously takes time. And *ipso facto* today, the responsibility of the Chinese borders is with the Ministry of Home Affairs. This, he said

might appear rather strange, but the fact of the matter is that. He stated that the troops there are not very well trained, and nor are they well equipped. They are not actually capable of doing the job that they are posted to do. A lot of the resources of these troops unfortunately remain utilized by the Ministry under whose control they are. This underutilization is so much so that the strength of the troops deployed on the ground are far lesser in number than are required. When the Army had requested a revision and reassessment of these numbers, there was an absolute immediate 'no' from the Ministry of Home Affairs, he said. Intrusion on the borders has been common, except in the area of Daulat Beg Oldi. If one goes further towards the east, to the Depsang plains, there is an area called Track Junction, where intrusions have occurred repeatedly. Further to the north and south of the Pangong Tso lake, intrusions have taken place. Going South, in areas of Demchok, amongst others, intrusions have occurred. Intrusions have occurred even further South towards Chumar.

Lt. Gen Sharma (Retd.) recalled that initially during 2003 and 2004, the Chinese used to come on horseback upto the LAC, and used to go back. Of late they have even had helicopters coming in that area in addition to troops also physically present well inside the Chumar area.

Shri Thupstan Chhewang said that Daulat Beg Oldi is the only place where there is no habitation of theirs. Technically, the last village is Shayog. Initially he says, they did not even have the connectivity of the roadways. Shyog is almost 150 kilometres away from Daulat Beg Oldi.

Shri Chhewang said that it was his earnest desire to come to New Delhi before the proposed visit of the Chinese Premiere, in order to warn the people and the Government of India about the importance of the demarcation of borders with China. He said that with the support of intellectuals and the intelligentsia, they wanted to mount pressure on the Government so that it takes this issue seriously. The people of Ladakh have always shared a good relationship with the Army, he said. Since the Independence, the people of Ladakh have always supported the Indian Army in the battles that have taken place in their area.

He said that people of Ladakh have always fulfilled their duties towards the motherland and shall also fulfill them in future.

Shri Chhewang highlighted that Chinese have built their colonies very close to the borders and have even pushed back the grasslands where their cattle used to feed. He explained the ground realities with a few pictures:

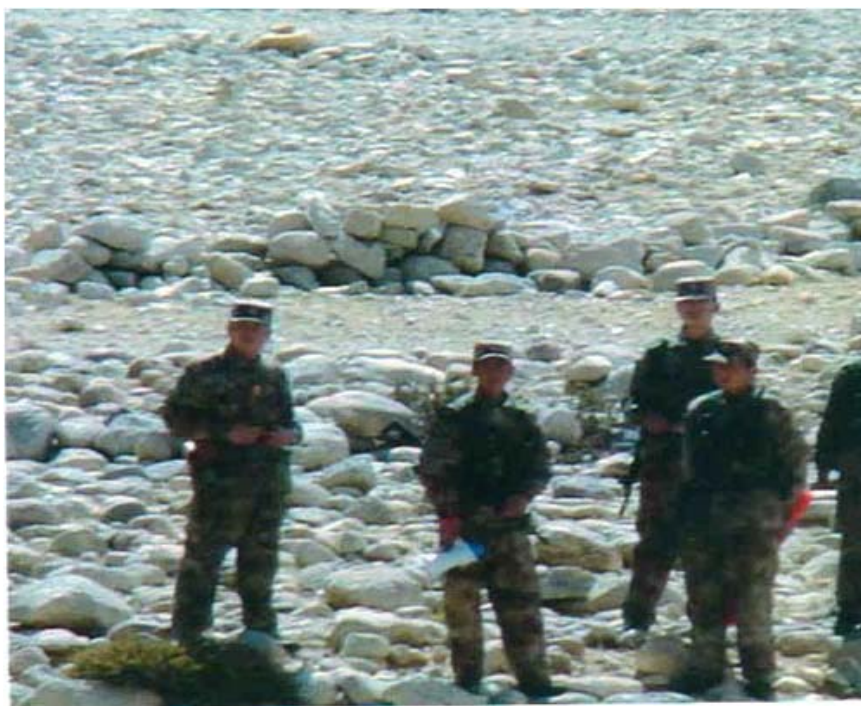


This is a vehicle of the PLA of China. PLA keeps a constant eye on the borders and as soon as any person from our part even nears the border they reach there. Such sights are very frequent in the border areas and incidences have increased recently.

This is also Demchok. The double storey houses are of the Chinese. The houses in the foreground are Indian. Before 1962, they never even used to come to this place. Their army base was way back. There was no civilian population. They had no habitation, neither did their cattle come for grazing here. They have strategically chosen various points in which to settle their population. We have been constantly moving backwards.



This digging has been done under a central sponsored scheme by the locals, but the Chinese object to this digging claiming it to be their land. In reality this land belongs to India. ITBP didn't allow us to dig here. This shows the Chinese influence in the internal matters of our country.



The PLA interferes in the local matters of the people and scares them away if they come to the border.



The King of Jammu annexed Ladakh, In 1836, an agreement was put in place between Jammu and Tibet, in the presence of a Chinese representative. Borders were demarcated at that time. China claimed Tibet and so the borders should have been as per the signed treaty. After the 1962 war ceasefire, an understanding was reached between India and China that until the borders are demarcated, the prevailing territories will be respected. A protocol was signed in case of any possible incursion. However, a banner shall be shown to display protest.

The Chinese paint “China” in their language and in English and claim lands.



This is the police station of Chinese where there is habitation (double storeyed buildings shown above). The Indian police station is in Leh/Nyoma.



This is Busanala, which is patrolling base camp for India.

Since India and China have mutually decided that both shall be 30 kilometers behind the LAC, the Indian post is 30 kilometers behind. Busanala is a strategically very important point. Here India has had its temporary structure.

2 years ago, the Chinese had brought JCB and destroyed the temporary structure. The Chinese entered 19 kilometers inside our boundary. One wonders though as to how the entry can be this simple. Such incidents are very frequent and remind us of Kargil. The Chinese were able to achieve what they wanted to achieve by this incursion. They had problems with the Indian bunker in the

Chumur sector. He said that only when India had agreed not to build that bunker did the Chinese go back. Small incursions such as these have resulted in the loss of kilometers of land.

According to Shri. Chhewang, during the incursion in the Chumur sector in 2011, two Chinese helicopters landed in our area, from which around 20 PLA soldiers got down and patrolled our area for around two kilometers. There was this slope which had a series of Indian bunkers, and a portrait of *Bharat Mata* from white stones. The Indian post was around 10 kilometers behind. They shattered the bunkers and the portrait and went back.



This is the border, this side of the river is India, and on the other side is China. This is of strategic importance to India. If India gets this point, there will be a road yearlong between Leh and Delhi.

Our strategy in Ladakh has been we do not make roads, as they might of use to the Chinese. Such is our Government's attitude. We must make effort to take this point. Our stand as regards borders has been defensive.

This is the Zorawar fort, where Chinese have built their tower now.

Concluding his address Shri Chhewang said that this Chinese military incursion is a reality, but simultaneously they are also trying to the Indian people. China is attempting a cultural invasion; they had first installed a television tower across the border. India had done so only later, after repeated pressure. The Chinese have tailor-made programs so that the people living here get lured, he said. They have hydroelectric power, 24 hour electricity supply while the people on the Indian side live in darkness. They have made mobile phones in Tibetan language and are giving it to our people. The most important thing to discuss and to be worried about is how they are trying to influence our

people. We too need be more careful about the needs and necessities of the people of Ladakh, he said. We need to develop grazing lands and for that we need funds from the Government.

Shri Ringzin Tangey said there have been Chinese activities going on alongside the border right from 1947 till date. He told the Chinese have captured the Zorawar fort and have now converted it to fulfill their purposes. First, it was a part of India, but now the Chinese have captured it. Shri Ringzin said that if India fears the Chinese and bows down to them they will surely keep moving inside our borders. The Chinese are building roads and other infrastructure on the borders. This is a threat to integrity of India. China, by using the slogan “Hindi-Chini bhai bhai” entered inside the borders and betrayed India. China claims any piece of land that it finds suitable. There is no one to contest its claims. Whenever such incidents take place, the government is usually on the defensive. He said that one of the foundations which they had built was broken by the Chinese. 12 sacks of cement were also taken away. Whenever they do any activity related to the Dalai Lama, then too the Chinese cause some instability on the border. In North Ladakh there is no habitation, but in areas such as Demchok, the Chinese have made living very tough. Shri Ringzin was very annoyed with the attitude of the Government. He said

Chinese are right in claiming that the land is theirs as the Indian Government has put in inner line permits for its own citizens. However, there is no requirement of any visa or permit to go inside of China. The Chinese are also providing ration cards to Indian citizens. The Chinese use language of Tibet in their areas, whereas on the Indian forces within India's borders speak English or Hindi, which the people are not very comfortable with. They should speak the languages of Tibet or Ladakh. The Government should consult locals before taking decisions. He concluded by saying that inner line permit should be banned.

Shri Nawang Norboo said that since he has been the Councillor of the border areas, he is well aware of the ground realities. He told that the livelihood in Ladakh area is solely dependent on cattle, there is no farming. All the grasslands have been captured by the Chinese. These grasslands shouldn't have been captured. If the Government or the Army or the ITBP would have assisted we could have not allowed them to be captured. Chinese do not enter blindly, they assess and only then enter in places which aren't under surveillance. During 70's around 50 Chinese army men came on horses, gathered the locals who had taken their cattle to graze and told them that this is Chinese land and you can't bring your cattle here. When we complained some armed

personnel came along with us and the Chinese ran away. So if we allow them to capture our lands, they will definitely incur. Our country is afraid of the Chinese, because when we tried to lay the foundation and Chinese stopped us we complained to the ITBP and they just kept passing our request from one point to another.

Shri Norboo was very frustrated with the Government attitude and said that the Government didn't care how they lived. It didn't matter how they are struggling for survival. He said we have no proper water supplies. For four months we drink water by melting ice. The temperatures go as down as -45° C. He said that he and his generation have lived and helped the Army or the ITBP whenever required. We used to carry ration, oil and other important things. But now when the forces have access to such amenities, nobody even asks us or cares for us. If any adverse situation arises the forces will have to depend on us, so they should try and strengthen relations with us. Shri Norboo said that when locals bring ration from Leh, ITBP personnel create problems for them by checking. They ask questions as to how we got these things. We need permission to even travel inside. The Chinese propaganda is true. He said they have no resources, no employment opportunities; could they not have been exempted from things like inner-line permits. Today he is 69, and has



Left to Right : Shri Shaurya Doval, Shri Ringzin Tangey, Shri Nawang Norboo, Lt. Gen. Arvind Sharma(Retd.), Shri Thupstan Chhewang

lived his entire life here, and so has his son. However, the future generations might not want to. They see development on the other side of the border and say, “Look how well the Chinese are doing.” The loyalty of this generation will not take much time to change. Everyone needs basic necessities like TV or mobile, if they do not get such things people

will either go to cities or move to China. He said that it is because of the presence of people like him that the Chinese are not entering the borders, and that the Government needs to boost their morale.

There is no primary education or no primary healthcare; they have have no choice but to run away.

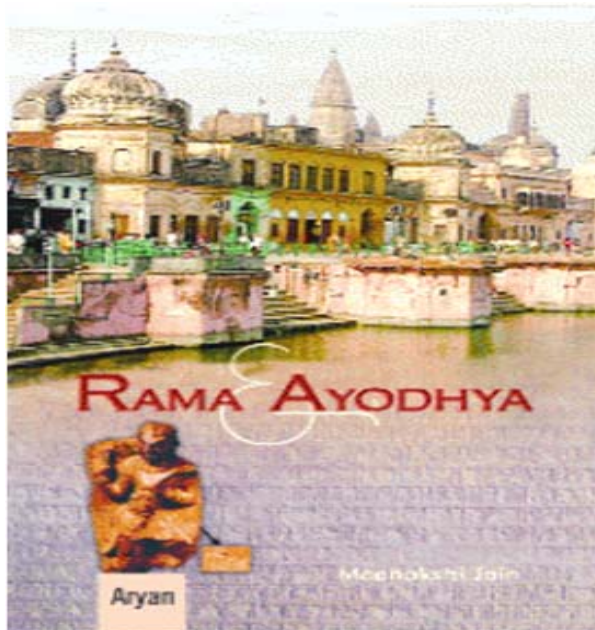


Rama and Ayodhya

Author: Meenakshi Jain

Publisher: Aryan Books, Rs.695/-

Meenakshi Jain's book challenges the lordship of India's 'eminent' historians who indulge in the worst form of negationism to forward their pseudo-secular viewpoints, writes Rohit Srivastava



Before L K Advani converted an Indian icon into a Hindu deity as he flexed his nationalist muscles astride a makeshift chariot, he was on his way to the destruction of an unused 16th century mosque in Ayodhya to reclaim the mythical glory of his Mother India.” Thus wrote Jawed Naqvi, India correspondent of *Dawn*, Pakistan, in an article on humour in religious discourse. The Indian icon in question is Rama, the most popular incarnation of Lord Vishnu and the most beloved deity for at least two millennia.

Naqvi would have us believe that Advani’s *rath yatra* made Rama a deity. He cannot see the hollowness of his claim, for if Rama in his own view was already an Indian icon (a symbol of reverence and devotion), it means he was already a deity.

Naqvi, like others, is in the business of

negating and mocking the civilisational memory associated with Rama, and believes his minority status confers upon him the privilege to do so with impunity. Yet, he would not dare satisfy non-monotheistic curiosity on a fundamental confusion of Abrahamic dogma: Did the patriarch Abraham offer his son Ismail in sacrifice to God, or was it his son Isaac? Christians and Muslims both accept the historicity of the event and agree only one child was offered. Which one?

Over the past two decades, several Left-wing historians have indulged in high-voltage propaganda that Rama was not a deity before Tulsidas wrote *Ramcharit Manas* in the 16th century. The purpose, of course, is to discredit the movement for reclamation of his birthplace. For if there is no proof of Rama and his Ayodhya, the movement falls into disrepute.

Historian Meenakshi Jain has given a robust reply to those who question the historicity of Rama as deity, and provided ample historical proof of Ayodhya as the city of Rama. Activists may question the memory of a civilisation with superficial and politically-motivated arguments, but the book, *Rama and Ayodhya*, has demolished their case.

Jain leaves no stone unturned in collating all historical and literary evidence relating to Lord Rama. She has covered a vast corpus of literature from the eighth century onwards. The Pratihara dynasty, which ruled western and central India from the ninth to the 13th century, claimed descent from Lakshman, younger brother of Rama, and considered themselves defenders of India from *mlechha* (barbarian) invaders, and were proud of their victory over them. For four centuries they gave an intrepid fight to invaders.

The book covers the popularity of Rama in antiquity in three long chapters, citing evidence from literature, sculpture and epigraphy. The author has compiled her evidence State-wise to conclusively prove Rama's pan-national popularity throughout antiquity. The question of his becoming a deity only after the publication of *Ramcharit Manas* in the era of the Mughal emperor Akbar, has been answered with ample evidence to discourage even the most arrogant Leftist historian from repeating old lies again.

Some notable references include Varahamihira's *Brhatsamhita* (sixth century AD) which formulates rules for making images of Rama. The Rama story finds mention in three early Buddhist texts, *Dasharatha Kathanam*

(first-second century AD), *Anamakam Jatakam and Dasharatha Jataka*. The great poet-dramatist, Bhavabhuti (eighth century), a native of Vidarbha, wrote two dramas based on the Ramayan — the *Mahaviracharita* and the *Uttararamacharita*; the latter contained the earliest verbatim quotations of verses from the *Ramayan*, according to Jacobi.

A Gupta period stone panel from Mathura shows Ravan shaking Mount Kailasa, a scene from the 'Uttara Kanda'. A Gupta period brick temple at Bhitargaon, Kanpur (fifth century AD), has several terracotta panels, one of which depicts Rama and Lakshman seated and engaged in conversation.

M Zaheer, in his book on the Bhitargaon temple, mentions two terracotta reliefs showing scenes from the *Ramayana*: One has a woman offering alms to a giant man, clearly Ravan in disguise, while the other depicts a seated Rama and Sita.

The Rama cult was promoted by Madhavacharya Anandatirtha (variously placed between AD 1199-1278 and 1238-1317). He devoted seven chapters to the *Ramayana* story in the *Mahabharat-tatparya-nirnaya* and brought an image of the "world-conquering" Digvijaya Rama to the south. Similarly, Narahari Tirtha, probably the same as Narasimha, is recorded in a Telugu epigraph dated AD 1293, as having set up the image of Rama, Sita and Lakshman in the Vaishnava temple near Chicacole, Ganjam district.

The *Vayu Purana* and the 'Uttara Kanda' mentioned two Kosalas, with Shravasti the capital of Uttara Kosala and Kausavati of Dakshin Kosala

or Mahakosala. The two Kosalas were once believed to have been under the suzerainty of Rama, who installed his son Lava in North Kosala and Kusa in South Kosala.

The book is additionally important for the detailed analysis of the Allahabad High Court ruling on the Babri Masjid case. The motives and scholarship of many of our famed historians are hilariously exposed during the court proceedings. The book shows how an exclusive club of historians (Leftists, of course) have been making false claims of expertise to perpetuate their own agenda, to the detriment of true scholarship. This helps us understand why history has been taught so poorly in our schools colleges and universities — the professors have been taking liberties with truth. No wonder, a nation with such a rich history has some of the dullest history departments!

The Allahabad High Court noted the links between the academics representing the Sunni Central Waqf Board. Suvira Jaiswal, former Professor of the JNU, told the court, “I have not read *Babarnama*... It is correct to say that I am giving statement on oath regarding Babri Mosque without any probe and not on the basis of my knowledge, rather I am giving the statement on

the basis of my opinion... Whatever (information) I gained with respect to the disputed site was on the basis of newspaper or what others told, that is, from the report of historians. By historians’ report I mean ‘Historians Report to Nation’.”

Satyawati College lecturer SC Mishra intoned, “Prithvi Raj Chauhan was king of Ghazni; he (Muhammad Ghori) was king of its adjoining area... I have heard of jaziya tax... At present I fail to recollect when and for what purpose it was levied. I do not remember that the jaziya was levied only on Hindus...”

Little wonder the court observed, “He accepts of being expert in Epigraphy but... neither he knows Arabic nor Persian nor Latin, therefore he had no occasion to understand the language in which the alleged inscription was written... The slipshod and casual manner in which he made inquiry about inscription is further interesting.”

The Ayodhya debate reveals a disturbing aspect of the personality of pre-eminent historian Irfan Habib — he has not hesitated to cast serious aspersions on the integrity of academicians and institutions in disagreement with his views. This book challenges such lord chaplains of Indian history.

(Courtesy: ‘**The Pioneer**’, Sunday, June 9, 2013)

