

Bhavan Australia

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● Life ● Literature ● Culture

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः- *Rig Veda, 1-89-1*
'Let noble thoughts come to us from every side'



VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM - 'The whole world is but one family'

World Peace

Relevance of Guru Granth Sahib's Message Today

- Harbans Juneja

India is today plagued with mass hysteria of religious intolerance, communal disharmony, regional factionalism and parochialism that may break the very fabric of Indian statehood.

The country is witnessing bomb blasts by divisive forces that are designed to ruin brotherhood among members of different communities. One religious group is having a bloody fight with another religious group on conversion from one faith to the other. India is facing economic crises where we need to share our resources instead of hoarding to make personal gains. At this critical juncture of the nation's life, the celebration of the tercentennial accession of Guru Granth Sahib as the ultimate Guru of the Sikhs has brought into focus the catholicity of the text of the Granth Sahib, which is devoid of bias, animus and controversy.

There is no stress or coercion to follow a particular religion or a ritual to be a Sikh or the Guru's *chela*. What is stressed is to be a Gurumukh, *ie* follow the virtuous path of Guru, and to desist from being a Manmukh, *ie*, to follow the dictates of your mind. With the grace of Guru you learn to be a master of your mind and don't say it's subservient. That all religions are equal; that all castes are equal and that all rich and poor are equal is brought out by the fact that the Granth Sahib contains the hymns compiled by 16 saints such as Kabir (a weaver), Ravi Dass (a cobbler), Dhanna (a jat), Namdeo (a shudra), Tirlochan (a brahmin), Sheikh Farid (a Sufi saint), Sadhana (a butcher), Sain (a barber) and numerous bards (religious hymn singers, mostly brahmins), who are from different social background, yet they are accorded the same reverence, sanctity and dignity as the Sikh Gurus.

Importance or weightage is given to the words that describe the glory of the creator instead of the religion or social status to which the saints belong. The secular nature of Guru Granth Sahib is evident by the fact that in its entire text of 1430 pages the Supreme Power is not referred to by a single symbolic word but is avidly and profusely referred to as Hari (8334 times), Ram (2533 times), Prabhu (1371 times), Govind (475 times), Gopal (431 times), Parbhramn (324 times), Parmeshwar (136 times), Daata (131 times), Murari (67 times), Sat Nam (56 times), Allah (46 times)



Narayan (85 times), Jagdish (60 times), Waheguru (15 times), Bhagwan, Mohan, Mahadeo, etc.

There is no call to devotees or Sikhs to induce or force people to owe allegiance to a particular religion, region or a caste. There is not an iota of controversy, hatred and animosity directed towards adversaries, in the text of Granth Sahib. There are no stories or tales, dictums and dictates on religious codes to what to do. What is required of you is to deeply ponder on what the Guru Granth Sahib conveys, internalise the message, meditate on the holy name, earn your livelihood truthfully, share your savings with the needy, and gracefully submit to the will of the God.

The Guru Granth Sahib exhorts you to love your fellow-beings irrespective of caste, creed, profession, gender, age whether rich or poor, of high or low status. The Guru also exhorts you to shun violence, to be polite, humble and, to respect human values and human-dignity in all respects. The Guru abhors greed, egoism, castes and ritualism. The central theme of the Guru Granth Sahib is peace to all. There is only one God who is beyond time and beyond the circle of birth, death and rebirth. He, the creator, is without fear and without hate. He is immortal, omniscient and omnipresent, self-existent. All are equal before the creator. Isn't that a sterling blend of universal brotherhood devoid of religious taboos?

Guru Granth Sahib is truly universal, a reservoir of humbleness, piety, equality and charity. We all need to imbibe the spirit of Guru Granth Sahib in our daily lives.

Source: Bhavan's Journal July 31 2009

President's Page

Lest we forget

Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr Rajendra Prasad pleaded with Mahatma Gandhi, as did everybody else in the Congress, to remain in Delhi to join in the celebrations on 15 August 1947, but he politely declined. The Mahatma said his presence was needed among the suffering people of Noakhali.



On arriving in Calcutta (now Kolkata), on his way to Noakhali he learnt that the city was once again in flames; there was recurrence of rioting and killing. He was prevailed upon to stay there for some time and provide his proverbial healing touch. He consented on the condition that Muslims in Noakhali should guarantee the safety of Hindus in that strife-stricken district. Likewise the Hindus in Bihar had to stand as guarantors of the safety of Muslims there. Or else he would not hesitate to sacrifice his life in order to bring this about. When some Hindus told him that his sympathies lay with the Muslims, he responded with tears in his eyes: "how can you ever think like this. I am proud to be a Hindu. I have lived and will die for Hinduism. Every fibre of my being is Hindu. To say that I do not care for Hindus is the worst travesty of truth."

The Mahatma found the fire of hate was raging everywhere and he did not know how long it would take him to extinguish it but he had to extinguish it or it would engulf both India and Pakistan. Anti-social elements had run amuck, they were destroying the very basis of civilization. Under the League Ministry Hindus were earlier massacred and then under the Congress Ministry Muslims were being done to death. The Mahatma beseeched the people of Calcutta to stop, what he called this "hot goondaism" and this senseless race of retaliation.

As the Mahatma went round the affected areas, Muslims who had been living in terror regained their confidence. Hindus responded to his call and promised to follow his advice. Shaheed Suhrawardy joined him on behalf of the League to create an atmosphere of communal harmony; Shyama Prasad Mookerjee lent his support on behalf of Hindu Mahasabha. Meanwhile in Delhi, preparations were made on a grand scale to celebrate the birth of independence.

On 15 August 1947 addressing the Constituent Assembly in its midnight session Nehru said: "On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, the Father of our Nation, who embodying the old spirit of India, held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surrounds us. We have often been unworthy followers of his and have strayed from his message, but not only we, but the succeeding generations, will remember this message and bear the imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength, courage and humility. We shall never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest."

The Mahatma stayed in the house of his Muslim host in Calcutta on Independence Day, fasting and spinning. There was no joy in his heart though he responded to the thousands of Hindus and Muslims who came for his *darshan*; it was a moving spectacle of Hindu Muslim fraternity. The next day 16 August hundreds of thousands of Hindus and Muslims attended his prayer meeting. Touched by this the Mahatma said: ".....the delirious happenings remind me of the early days of the Khilafat Movement. The fraternization then burst on the public, as a new experience. Moreover, we had then Khilafat and Swaraj as our twin goals. Today, we have nothing of the kind. We have drunk the poison of mutual hatred, and so this nectar of fraternization tastes all the sweeter and so sweetness should never wear out." He spoke more about Hindu Muslim unity than of the birth of freedom because the new dominion was infested with the agony of partition.

As the process of inter-communal harmonization was being consolidated, news came from Pakistan that Hindus were being killed and driven out of Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi and other cities. This inflamed the crowds in Calcutta and the fragile edifice of unity that the Mahatma had built during his stay began to crumble and collapse. He wrote to Patel on September 1, 1947: "I hear that conflagration has burst out at many places. What was regarded as the 'Calcutta miracle' has proved to be a nine days' wonder."

Meanwhile Nehru asked him to come to Punjab where the situation had gone out of control. The Mahatma replied to Nehru at once, on 2 September 1947: "I would have started for today but for the flare-up in Calcutta. If the fury did not abate, my going to Punjab would be of no avail. I would have no self-confidence." The Mahatma

therefore stayed on in Calcutta and decided to fast unto death, hoping that what his “word in person” could not do, “my fast may do. It may touch the hearts of all the warring elements in Punjab if it does in Calcutta.”

In less than four days of his fast the attitude of people in Calcutta changed. Leaders of all political parties, religious groups, and social organisations went round the streets and asked Hindus and Muslims to give up their arms, abjure violence and pledge to restore peace. The *goondas* and their *dadas* came forward and repented for what they had done. Everyone appealed to the Mahatma to break the fast, but he said that unless mutual trust was restored he would not do so. Finally on the assurance of C Rajagopalachari who had taken over as the Governor of the province, he agreed to concede to their request if they promised him that there would never be a repetition of such a tragedy in the city. And, that they would sincerely strive for genuine change of heart and actively foster communal unity. If they were unable to give such a guarantee, the Mahatma Said he would continue fast.

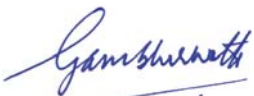
In the deliberations that followed, a document pledging to work for communal unity was prepared; it was signed by all the prominent citizens; it was endorsed by the Governor. The Mahatma said: “I am breaking this fast so that I might be able to do something in Punjab. I have accepted your assurance at its face value. I hope and pray I shall never have to regret it. I would certainly like to live to serve India and humanity, but I do not wish to be duped into prolonging my life.”

The transformations among Hindus and Muslims that the Mahatma brought about were indeed amazing. And that too in the face of raging violence in other parts of India and Pakistan! He was happy at the outcome because he believed that it would bring sanity among the people of not only East Bengal, but also Bihar. He proposed to take a trip to Punjab next. The League organ of Calcutta, *Morning News*, commented that Gandhi was ready to die so that the Muslims could live peacefully. Likewise *The Times*, London, wrote that what the Mahatma had achieved, several military divisions could not have accomplished. C.R., the Governor, known as Gandhi’s conscience keeper, observed, “Gandhiji has achieved many things but there has been nothing, not even independence, which is so truly wonderful, as his victory over evil in Calcutta.”

Thus having completed his mission of mercy, the greatest Apostle of Non-Violence, left for Delhi on 7 September, unaware that worse trouble awaited him in the heart of the capital of free India which he had brought into existence, by sheer grit, courage, hard work, suffering and sacrifice even if it was not in the form that he had desired.

Inspired by Late Dr Rafiq Zakaria: *Gandhi and the Break-up of India*, 1999 Bhavan’s Book University

According to Mahatma Gandhi fortunate people who have amassed wealth are trustees of the wealth in their possession which they must utilise for the benefit of the underprivileged people. The practice codes of the various religious scriptures also encourage keeping aside a proportion of one’s income for charitable causes.



Gambhir Watts
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia



**Sujatha Singh
High Commissioner**



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4 August, 2009

Message

It gives me great pleasure to convey my best wishes on the occasion of the 62nd Anniversary of India's independence to the Indian community through the Bhavan Magazine, that is read by a large cross section of the Indian community.

India is the world's largest democracy. The recently concluded elections have confirmed India's standing as the largest democracy in the world, firmly wedded to its secular, pluralist ideals.

Both India and Australia are strong democracies and strongly believe in multiculturalism. In recent years, bilateral relations between India and Australia have expanded in all areas. I am happy to note that the Indian community in Australia has been doing a laudable job in furthering the relations between our countries.

I commend the Bhavan in its efforts to promote an understanding of Indian culture in Australia and in reaching out to a wide and ever growing audience.

**Sujatha Singh
High Commissioner**

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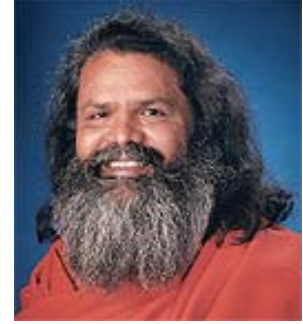
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Articles & Focus Themes

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------|----|
| Indian Women Freedom Fighters | 10 | Singhs Leading in Australia | 30 |
| The Unsung Indian Freedom Fighters | 16 | Who is an Indian | 31 |
| Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose | 19 | What India means to Me | 38 |
| Bhagat Singh: An Evergreen Icon... | 20 | The Australia India Relationship | 47 |
| They too fought for the Freedom | 22 | The Bond: Indo-Aus Cultural Heritage | 53 |
| Why Partition Failed | 24 | Dimdima - Children's Section | 55 |
| Indian Ocean Unity | 28 | Flash Back - Rewind | 56 |



**Vishwaguru Mahamandaleshwar
Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda**



July 31, 2009

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

On the occasion of India's Independence Day celebrations, there is much to show gratitude for, as India's Hindu civilisation is the most ancient: it is rich in culture, ethical values, spiritual traditions and philosophy. Hinduism nurtures the wellbeing of all humanity by cultivating divine virtues in humans, leading them to the highest summit of development – Moksha, liberation. The Hindu way of life promotes Ahimsa, non-violence and reverence for all life forms, revering God's existence in all creation. Thus it is our responsibility to protect and not destroy. India's Independence Day is an opportunity for resident and non-resident Indians to reflect on all that our civilisation stands for and to celebrate the unique attributes that we offer generously and unreservedly to the entire world.

With Blessings

H.H. Vishwaguru Mahamandaleshwar Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda



Charter of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (*Bhavan*) is a non-profit, non-religious, non-political Non Government Organisation (NGO). Bhavan has been playing a crucial role in educational and cultural interactions in the world, holding aloft the best of Indian traditions and at the same time meeting the needs of modernity and multiculturalism. Bhavan's ideal 'is the whole world is but one family' and its motto: 'let noble thoughts come to us from all sides'.

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

Bhavan Australia Charter derived from its constitution is:

To advance the education of the public in:

- a) the cultures (both spiritual and temporal) of the world,
- b) literature, music, the dance,
- c) the arts,
- d) languages of the world,
- e) philosophies of the world.

To foster awareness of the contribution of a diversity of cultures to the continuing development of multicultural society of Australia.

To foster understanding and acceptance of the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the Australian people of widely diverse heritages.

To edit, publish and issue books, journals and periodicals, documentaries in Sanskrit, English and other languages, to promote the objects of the Bhavan or to impart or further education as authorized.

To foster and undertake research studies in the areas of interest to Bhavan and to print and publish the results of any research which is undertaken.

www.bhavanaustralia.org

Bhavan Australia's—Upcoming Events:

- Kavi Goshti - 13 August 2009
- Hindi Day (Divas) - 14 September 2009
- Mahatma Gandhi Birth Anniversary & International Day of Non-Violence - 2 October 2009
- Musical Concert by Debpriya Adhikari and Samanvaya visiting artists from India - 4 October 2009 - North Ryde Community Centre.
- Indian Cultural Awards - 14 November 2009

For details visit www.bhavanaustralia.org

Gandhi: The Power of One

- Chiranth Wodeyar

‘The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others’—M.K. Gandhi

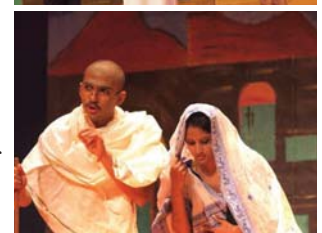
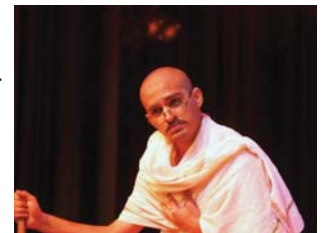
Gandhi: The Power of One—A large scale stage production based on the life of Mahatma Gandhi, presented by the Indian Students group of the University of NSW.

This was the creed that underpinned the tireless efforts of the cast and crew of Vishwaas Productions both on and off the stage. On August 1 2009, a sell-out crowd at the Greenhalgh Theatre, UTS Ku-ring-gai, was taken on a journey through Mahatma Gandhi’s life, from his early struggles in South Africa to his last breaths as India drew her first. The play, *Gandhi: The Power of One*, proudly supported by *Bhavan’s Australia*, sought to raise funds for the Medical Student’s Aid Project (MSAP) to improve medical care in rural India, however, it also called on the audience to reconsider the life and legacy of Mahatma Gandhi.

The auditorium buzzed with excitement, as more than eight hundred people filed in, carrying great expectations and an immense curiosity. The play, written by Bibhu Aggarwal and directed by Shankar Vasudevan, began with a young Mohandas K. Gandhi being callously thrown from a train in South Africa. It was here that Mahatma Gandhi discovered the enduring will to resist injustice; it was here that he grew from a lawyer who was often uncertain of his abilities to a leader who was uncompromising in his pursuit of justice and equality. On Mahatma Gandhi’s return to India, the audience was taken on a cultural tour filled with vibrant dance and soulful music as he discovered the country he would later lead to independence. They returned to witness Mahatma Gandhi’s stubborn adherence to his ideals when he called off the non-cooperation movement; the enduring power of his example as he led the nation on his emblematic salt march; and the flickering promise of a united India fade into the darkness of partition. The second half of the play was a searing comment on our tendency to amplify our differences and diminish what we share and as the chasm between Hindus and Muslims widened, as figures such as Mohammad Ali Jinnah

and Jawaharlal Nehru clashed, the audience saw the enduring relevance of Mahatma Gandhi’s message of love and compassion. This message reached them through the honest and heartfelt performance of Chiranth Wodeyar, who captured every bit of Mahatma Gandhi’s searing pain as he saw India divide herself.

At the end of the play, the audience greeted the cast and crew of *Gandhi: The Power of One* with a standing ovation and calls for a second show. When asked about the response, the producer and creator of the production Dinesh Ramanan said simply “we inherited the great challenge of telling the story of Gandhiji’s life and I’m glad that our work reached out to you tonight.” It was necessary for Vishwaas Productions to understand the methods and values of the Mahatma. And they did their job confidently, portraying values that were relevant to today’s society and displaying how true independence is achieved by finding the truth within. Dinesh added, “It was neither wealth nor power that made Mahatma Gandhi famous. Instead, it was the simple values for which he stood strongly. He always practiced what he preached and he worked tirelessly throughout his life to put an end to hatred and spread the ways of truth and love”. Well, it looks like one group of young individuals have started doing just that. Mahatma Gandhi’s life was his message, a message that is as pertinent today as it was then, and a message that we must strive to follow.



Mahatma Gandhi Exhibition provided by Consul General of India, Sydney

Indian Women Freedom Fighters

- Cristy Chopra*

We record our homage and deep admiration for the Womanhood of India who in the hour of peril for the motherland forsook the shelter of their homes and with unfailing courage and endurance stood shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk, in the frontline of India's national army to share with them the sacrifices and triumphs of the struggle".

-From a Resolution passed on January 26, 1931

When the history of India's fight for Independence comes to be written, the sacrifice made by the women of India will occupy the foremost place—Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru had remarked. When most of the men-folk were in prison then a remarkable thing happened, our women came forward and took charge of the struggle. Women had always been there of course but now there was an avalanche of them, which took not only the British Government but their own menfolk by surprise.

The entire history of the freedom movement is replete with the saga of bravery, sacrifice and political sagacity of great men and women of the country. This struggle which gained momentum in the early 20th century, threw up stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, C. Rajagopalachari, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chander Bose. Their number and stature often gives us an erroneous impression that it was only a man's movement. But it is not so. Many prominent women played a leading role in the freedom movement. The important place assigned to women in India dates back to the time of the *Vedas* and *Smritis*. Manu declared that India was a place where women were adored, Gods frequented. During the Vedic age the position of women in society was very high and they were regarded as equal partners with men in all respects. Who had not heard of Maitri, Gargi, Sati Annusuya and Sita? In keeping with this tradition, burden of tears and toils of the long years of struggle for India's freedom was borne by the wives, mothers, and daughters, silently and cheerfully. The programme of self-imposed poverty and periodical jail going was possible only because of the willing co-operation of the worker's family. In the various resistance movements in the villages, the illiterate women played this passive but contributory part as comrades of their menfolk. Woman's participation in India's freedom struggle began as early as 1817 when Bhima Bai Holkar fought bravely against the British colonel Malcolm and defeated him in guerilla warfare. In 1824 Rani Channama of Kittur resisted the armed might of the East India Company.

Begum Hazrat Mahal



Begum Hazrat Mahal (1820–1879), the Begum of Oudh. She took active part in the defence of Lucknow against the British. Although, she was queen and used to a life of luxury, she appeared on the battlefield herself to encourage her troops. Begum Hazrat Mahal held out against the British with all her strength as long as she could. Ultimately she had to give up and take refuge in Nepal.

Begum Hazrat Mahal was the wife of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. Begum Hazrat Mahal was endowed with great physical charm and grace as well as organizational skills. After, her husband was exiled to Calcutta, she took charge of the affairs of the state of Awadh, which then was a large part of the current state of Uttar Pradesh, India. During India's First War of independence (1857–58), she led a band of her supporters against the British, and was even able to seize the control of Lucknow. She declared her son Birjis Qadra as the King of Awadh. She is believed to have worked in close association with other leaders of the India's First War of Independence, including Nana Sahib. When the forces under the command of the British re-captured Lucknow and most part of the Awadh, she was forced to retreat. She turned down all offers of amnesty and allowances by the British rulers. Ultimately, she had to retreat to Nepal, where she was offered asylum by the Rana Prime Minister Jung Bahadur. She died there in 1879 and was buried in a nameless grave on the grounds of Kathmandu's Jama Masjid.

Government of India issued a commemorative stamp in the honour of Begum Hazrat Mahal on 10th May 1984.

Rani of Jhansi

Rani Lakshmi Bai (19 november 1828–17 June 1858) of Jhansi whose heroism and superb leadership laid an outstanding example for all future generations of women freedom fighters. Married to Gangadhar Rao head of the state of Jhansi. She was not allowed to adopt a successor after his death by the British, and Jhansi was annexed.

With the outbreak of the Revolt she became determined to fight back. She used to go into the battlefield dressed as a man. Holding the reins of her horse in her mouth she used the sword with both hands. Under



Rani of Jhansi

her leadership the Rani's troops showed undaunted courage and returned shot for shot. Considered by the British as the best and bravest military leader of rebels this sparkling epitome of courage died a hero's death in the battlefield.

Even her enemies admired her courage and daring. She fought valiantly and although beaten she refused to surrender and fell as a warrior should, fighting the enemy to the last. Her remarkable courage inspired many men and women in India to rise against the alien rule.

Madam Cama

"This flag is of Indian Independence! Behold, it is born! It has been made sacred by the blood of young Indians who sacrificed their lives. I call upon you, gentlemen to rise and salute this flag of Indian Independence. In the name of this flag, I appeal to lovers of freedom all over the world to support this flag." -B. Cama, Stuttgart, Germany

Bhikhaji Rustom Cama (24 September 1861–13 August 1936) unfurled the first National Flag at the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart (Germany) in 1907. A thousand representatives from several countries were attending. An Indian lady in a colorful sari was a rare phenomena in those days and her majestic appearance and brave and clear words made everybody think that she was a Maharani or at least a princess from a native state.

The tricolor-flag Madam Cama unfurled had green, saffron, and red stripes. Red represented strength, saffron victory, and green stood for boldness and

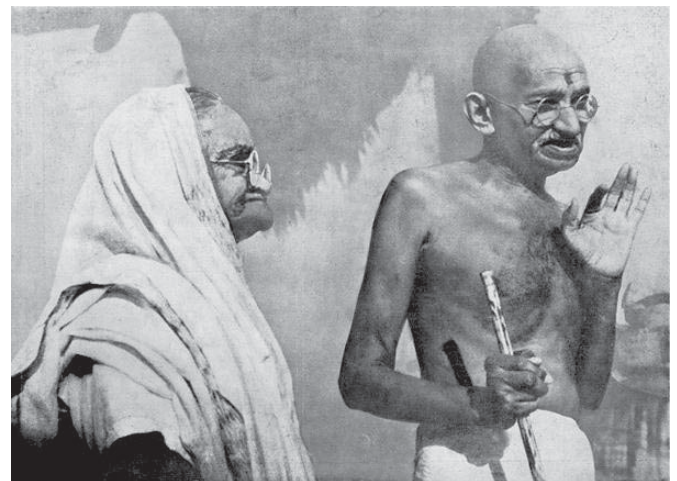
enthusiasm. there were eight lotuses representing the eight provinces and flowers represented princely states. "Vande Mataram" in Devanagari adorned central saffron stripe which meant "salutation to Mother India." The sun and the moon indicated Hindu and Muslim faiths. The flag was designed by Veer Savarkar with the help of other revolutionaries. After Stuttgart, Madam went to United States. She traveled a lot and informed Americans about Indians struggling for Independence. She told about British efforts to smother the voice of educated Indians who protested against tyranny and despotism of British who always boasted themselves as "mother of parliamentary democracy" over the world! She could be called "Mother India's first cultural representative to USA".



Madam Cama

Kasturba Gandhi

Kasturb Gndhi (April 11, 1869–2 February 1944), affectionately called Ba, was the wife of Mohandas Gandhi. She worked incessantly with her husband, Mahatma Gandhi, in his freedom struggle movements. Kasturba often joined her husband in political protests. She travelled to South Africa in 1897 to be with her husband. From 1904 to 1914, she was active in the Phoenix Settlement near Durban. During the 1913 protest against working conditions for Indians in South Africa, Kasturba was arrested and sentenced to three months in a hard labor prison. Later, in India, she sometimes took her husband's place when he was



Kasturba Gandhi

under arrest. In 1915, when Gandhi returned to India to support indigo planters, Kasturba accompanied him. She taught hygiene, discipline, reading and writing to women and children. She was a leader of Women's Satyagraha for which she was imprisoned. She helped her husband in the cause of Indigo workers in Champaran, Bihar and the No Tax Campaign in Kaira, Gujarat. She was arrested twice for picketing liquor and foreign cloth shops, and in 1939 for participating in the Rajkot Satyagraha.

Kasturba suffered from chronic bronchitis. Stress from the Quit India Movement's arrests and ashram life caused her to fall ill. After contracting pneumonia, she died from a severe heart attack on February 22, 1944. She died in Mahatma Gandhi's arms while both were still in prison. Such was her charisma and support that Mahatma Gandhi was never the same after her death.

Sarojini Naidu



Mahatma Gandhi with Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu (February 13, 1879–March 2, 1949) was a remarkable woman in the Indian freedom struggle. She was elected to the Presidentship of Indian National Congress (INC).

She was a great orator and a brilliant leader. The period from 1917 to 1919 was the most dynamic phase of Sarojini's career. During this time, she campaigned for the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms, the Khilafat issue, the draconian Rowlett Act and the Satyagraha. When Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement, she proved a faithful lieutenant. With great courage she quelled the rioters, sold proscribed literature, addressed frenzied meetings on the carnage at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. In 1930 when Mahatma Gandhi chose her to lead the Salt Satyagraha, the stories of her courage became legion. After Gandhi's arrest she had prepared 2,000 volunteers under the scorching sun to raid the Dahrsana Salt Works,

while the police faced them half a mile up the road with rifle, lathis (canes) and steel tipped clubs. The volunteers wildly cheered when she shook off the arm of the British police officer who came to arrest her and marched proudly to the barbed wire stockade where she was interned before being imprisoned.

Freedom struggle was in full force and she came under the influence of Gopalakrishna Gokhale and Gandhi. Gokhale advised her to spare all her energy and talents for nation's cause. She gave up writing poetry and fully devoted herself to emancipation of women, education, Hindu-Muslim unity etc. Her contribution to Indian freedom struggle can never be forgotten.

Kamla Nehru

Many women of the Nehru family too had joined the Civil Disobedience Movement. Kamala Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru's wife gave full support to her husband in his desire to work actively for the freedom struggle. In the Nehru hometown of Allahabad she organized processions, addressed meetings and led picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops. She played a prominent part in organizing the No Tax Campaign in United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh).

Kamala Kaul Nehru (1899–1936) was the wife of Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the Indian National Congress and first Prime Minister of India. Kamala married Nehru on 8 February 1916. Their marriage was arranged by his parents. Brought up in a traditional Hindu Brahmin family, she felt alienated amongst the more Westernized Nehrus. It was only with the involvement of the Nehrus in the national movement, that she emerged into the forefront. In the Non-Cooperation movement of 1921, she organized groups of women in Allahabad and picketed shops selling foreign cloth and liquor. When her husband was arrested to prevent him delivering a "seditious" public speech, she went in his place to read it out. She



Kamla nehru

was twice arrested by British authorities. Kamala died from tuberculosis in Switzerland while her husband was in prison.

Vijayalaxmi Pandit



Vijayalaxmi Pandit

Jawaharlal Nehru's sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit (1900–1990) inspired by Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and impressed by Sarojini Naidu entered the Non-Cooperation Movement. She was arrested in 1932 and sent to and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. She was arrested in 1940, and yet again during the Quit India Movement. She attended the Pacific Relations Conference at Hot Springs, U.S.A. as leader of the Indian delegation sponsored by the Indian Council of World Affairs. She was present in San Francisco when the U.N. first met there, and through numerous well attended public lectures she challenged the British dominated delegates rights to represent India therein. Sister of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also played a great role in the freedom movement. She was elected to Uttar Pradesh Assembly in 1936 and in 1946. She was the first woman in India to hold a Ministerial rank. She was imprisoned thrice for taking part in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932, 1941 and 1942. After Independence, she continued to serve the country. She was the first woman to become president of the United Nations General Assembly.

Aruna Asaf Ali

Aruna July 16, 1908–July 29, 1996) was born at Kalka, Haryana into a Bengali Brahmo family. She was educated at Lahore and Nainital. She graduated and worked as a teacher, an achievement in itself for women, given the conditions prevalent in the country at that time. She taught at the Gokhale Memorial School in Calcutta. She met Asaf Ali, a leader in the congress party at Allahabad and married him in 1928,

despite parental opposition on grounds of religion (she was a Brahmo while he was a Muslim) and age (a difference of more than 20 years).

She became an active member of Congress Party after marriage and participated in public processions during the Salt Satyagraha. She was arrested on the charge that she was a vagrant and hence not released in 1931 under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact which stipulated release of all political prisoners. Other women co-prisoners refused to leave the premises unless she was also released and gave in only after Mahatma Gandhi intervened. A public agitation secured her release.

In 1932, she was held prisoner at the Tihar Jail where she protested the indifferent treatment of political prisoners by launching a hunger strike. Her efforts resulted in an improvement of conditions in the Tihar Jail but she was moved to Ambala and was subjected to solitary confinement. On August 8, 1942, the AICC passed the Quit India resolution at the Bombay session. The government responded by arresting the major leaders and all members of the Congress Working Committee and thus tried to pre-empt the movement from success. A young Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the remainder of the session on 9 August and hoisted the Congress flag at the Gowalia Tank maidan. This marked the commencement of the movement. The police fired upon the assembly at the session. Aruna was dubbed the Heroine of the 1942 movement for her bravery in the face of danger and was called Grand Old Lady of the Independence movement in her later years. Despite absence of direct leadership, spontaneous protests and demonstrations were held all over the country, as an expression of desire of India's youth to achieve independence. Aruna Asaf Ali was awarded International Lenin Peace Prize for the year 1964. She was awarded India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, posthumously in 1997. In 1998, a stamp commemorating her was issued. Aruna Asaf Ali marg in New Delhi is named after her. All India Minorities Front distributes the Dr Aruna Asaf Ali Sadbhawana Award annually.

Padmaja Naidu

Sarojini's daughter Miss Padmaja Naidu (1900–1975) devoted herself to the cause of Nation like her mother. At the age of 21, she entered the National scene and became the joint founder of the Indian National Congress of Hyderabad. She spread the message of *Khadi* and inspired people to boycott foreign goods. She was jailed for taking part in the "Quit India" movement in 1942. After Independence, she became the Governor of West Bengal. During her public life spanning over half a century, she was associated with the Red Cross. Her services to the Nation and especially her humanitarian approach to solve problems will long be remembered.

Sucheta Kripalani

The contribution of Sucheta Kripalani (1908–1974) in the struggle for freedom is also worthy of note. She courted imprisonment for taking part in freedom struggle. Sucheta Kripalani was in the words of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, “a person of rare courage and character who brought credit to Indian womanhood”.

She was born in Ambala, Haryana to a Bengali family. Her father, S.N. Majumdar though a government doctor was a nationalist. Educated at Indraprastha College and St. Stephen’s College, Delhi she became a lecturer at the Banaras Hindu University. In 1936, she married socialist, Acharya Kriplani and became involved with the Indian National Congress.

Like her contemporaries Aruna Asaf Ali and Usha Mehta, she came to the forefront during the Quit India Movement. She later worked closely with Mahatma Gandhi during the Partition riots. She accompanied him to Noakhali in 1946. She was one of the few women who were elected to the Constituent Assembly and was part of the subcommittee that drafted the Indian Constitution. She became a part of the subcommittee that was handed over the task of laying down the charter for the constitution of India. On 15th August, 1947 she sang Vande Mataram in the Independence Session of the Constituent Assembly. She retired from politics in 1971 and remained in seclusion till her death in 1974.

Indira Gandhi

The most remarkable of women in modern India’s was Indira Gandhi (1917–1984) who from her early years was active in the national liberation struggle. During the 1930 movement, she formed the ‘Vanar Sena’. A children’s brigade to help freedom fighters. She became a member of the Indian National Congress in 1938. Soon after her return to India in March 1941, she plunged herself into political activities engaged in the struggles for independence of India from British rule. She played very important roles in Indian freedom struggle movements.

Foreign Women in the Independence Movement of India

Besides the hundreds and thousands of Indian women who dedicated their lives for the cause of their motherland, there were a number of noble and courageous foreign women who saw in India—its religion, its philosophy and its culture, a hope for the redemption of the world. They thought that in India’s spiritual death shall world find its grave. These noble women were sick of the material west and found in India and in its civilization, solace for their cramped souls.

Annie Besant

Annie Besant (October 1, 1847–September 20, 1933), an Irish lady became the leader of the of the Theosophical Society. She was born at Adyar, India. In 1902 while in London she criticized England for the conditions prevalent in India. In 1914 she joined the Indian National Congress and gave it a new direction.

The idea of the Home Rule League was first discussed by her. She with the radical congress leader Tilak presented a memorial to Montagu on December 18, 1917 which gave equal rights to women in the matters of political franchise. She was the first woman president of the Congress and gave a powerful lead to women’s movement in India.

Sister Nivedita



Sister Nivedita

Sister Nivedita (1867–1911), was one among the host of foreign women who were attracted towards Swami Vivekananda and Hindu philosophy. She arrived in India in January, 1898, in search of truth. She was impressed by the ideals of Womanhood in India. She once remarked that India was the land of great women. She, however, felt that Indian women needed, to cultivate among themselves a wider and broader concept of the nation, so that they could participate along with men in building a free and strong nation. She propagated for the cause of India throughout America and Europe. Swami Vivekananda described her as a real Lioness. Rabindranath Tagore regarded her as *Lok-Mata* and Aurobindo Ghosh as *Agni-sikha*.

Margaret Elizabeth Noble (1867–1911), better known as Sister Nivedita, was an Anglo-Irish social worker, author, teacher and disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

She met Vivekananda in 1895 in London and travelled to India (Kolkata) in 1898. Swami Vivekananda gave her the name Nivedita (which means one who is dedicated to God) on March 25, 1898. In November 1898 she started a school for girls which is now called Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' High School. She worked to improve the lives of Indian women of all castes.

Mother Mirra Alfassa

Mother Mirra Alfassa, later Morisset and Richard (February 21, 1878–November 17, 1973), also known as '*The Mother*', was the spiritual partner of Sri Aurobindo. She was born in Paris to Turkish and Egyptian parents and came to his retreat on March 29, 1914 in Pondicherry to collaborate on editing the *Arya*. Having to leave Pondicherry during the War, she spent most of her time in Japan where she met the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Finally she returned to Pondicherry and settled there in 1920. After November



Mother Mirra Alfassa

24, 1926, when Sri Aurobindo retired into seclusion, she founded his ashram with a handful of disciples living around the Master. With Sri Aurobindo's full approval she became the leader of the community, a position she held until her death. The Trust she had registered after Sri Aurobindo's death in 1950 continues to look after the institution. The experiences of the last thirty years of the Mother's life were captured in the 13-volume work "*The Agenda*". In those years she attempted the physical transformation of her body in order to become what she felt was the first of a new type of human individual by opening to the Supramental Truth Consciousness, a new power of spirit that Sri Aurobindo had allegedly discovered. Sri Aurobindo considered her an incarnation of

the Mother Divine, hence her name "the Mother". The Divine Mother is the feminine aspect (*Creative Energy*) of the Divine consciousness and spirit.

She took charge of Ashram in Pondicherry in 1926. She was the inspirer of Auroville, the international town near Pondicherry. It was to serve as a meeting place for the followers of Shri Aurobindo. Paying her tribute to the Mother at a women's gathering in Kanpur the late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said: "The Mother was a dynamic lady, who came from France and adopted the Indian culture. She played an important role in motivating women like Mrs Annie Besant and Mrs Nellie Sen Gupta, The Mother had also contributed to enrich India's age-old heritage and culture".

Meera Ben and Sarla Ben

Meera Ben (1892–1982) and Sarla Ben popularly known as Mahatama Gandhi's two English daughters also made significant contribution to the cause of freedom. Meera Ben whose real name was Madeleine Slade attended the second Round Table Conference with Gandhi. She sent news releases concerning Gandhi's campaign to the world press for which she was repeatedly threatened by the government, but she continued her work. She undertook Khadi tour throughout the country. She was arrested for entering the city of Bombay in violation of the government order. Catherine Mary Heilman or Sarla Ben as she was better known, went from village to village helping the families of political prisoners. The list of great women whose names have gone down in history for their dedication and undying devotion to the service of India is a long one. Gandhi squarely summed up the strength of womanhood in his tribute to the gender:

To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women. If by strength is meant moral power then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self sacrificing, has she not greater power of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man would not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is woman. I have nursed this thought now for years.

***Apeejay School, Pitampura, Delhi**

Source: www.liveindia.com

The Unsung Indian Freedom Fighters

- Parveen*

'Free India' was a dream of all Indians under the British rule. Everyone during that rule fought in some way or the other with a common aim of ending British and other colonial authorities in India. After a century of revolutions, struggle, blood shedding, battles and sacrifices, India finally achieved independence on August 15, 1947.

India was free in 1947 from the British Empire but the country lost many men and women who were filled with undaunted courage and spirit of patriotism. Today, they are known as freedom fighters because they sacrificed their lives for their motherland. Indian freedom fighters with their true spirit and undaunted courage had faced various tortures, exploitations and hardships to earn us freedom.

There are endless number of men and women who daringly fought for India's freedom.

The pioneers of the freedom movement were Mangal Pandey, Tantia Tope, Rani of Jhansi and the great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi who introduced non-violent ways of fighting the enemy. Other notable freedom fighters of India were Annie Besant, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bhagat Singh, Bipin Chandra Pal, Sukhdev, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Chandrashekhar Azad, Sarojini Naidu, Dadabhai Naoroji, Sucheta Kriplani and Chakravarti Rajagopalachari and many other great persons. Apart from them there are endless number of men and women who daringly fought for India's freedom. Some of these lesser known, unsung heroes are described below:

Ashfaqulla Khan

Ashfaqulla Khan was born on 22nd of October 1900 to Shafiqulla Khan in Shahjanpur in Uttar Pradesh. Ashfaq was in school when Mahatma Gandhi called the Non-Cooperation Movement. A Movement wherein he called the Indians not to pay taxes to the British and not to cooperate with the British government in any way. This call of Gandhiji had kindled the fire of freedom in the hearts of many, but the Chauri Chaura incident of 1922 where many policemen were burnt alive in a police station deeply saddened Gandhiji and he called off the Non-Cooperation Movement.

A lot of youth of the country felt dejected on the withdrawal of the movement Ashfaq was one of them. He felt that India should become free as soon

as possible and so he decided to join the revolutionaries.

The revolutionaries felt that soft words of Non-Violence could not win India its Independence and therefore they wanted to make use of bombs, revolvers and other weapons to instill fear in the hearts of the British



Ashfaqulla Khan

Empire. The British Empire was large and strong. The withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement united revolutionaries scattered in the country. This revolutionary movement required money to support its needs. One day while travelling on a train from Shahjanpur to Lucknow Ram Prasad noticed Station Master bringing money bags into this guards van. This was a beginning of a Dacoity Called Kakori Dacoity

On August 9th 1925 the plan was brought into action. Ashfaqulla along with his other revolutionary friends namely Ram Prasad Bismil, Rajendra Lahiri, Thakur Roshan Singh, Sachindra Bakshi, Chandra Shekhara Azad, Keshab Chakravarthy, Banwari Lal, Mukundi Lal, Manmathnath Gupta looted the train in Kakori village. They wrote a memorable chapter in the History of India's freedom struggle

Ashfaq was a lion among men

On the morning of 26th september 1925 Ram Prasad Bismil was caught by the police and Ashfaq was the only one untraced by the police. Ashfaq went into hiding. He moved to Banaras and from Banaras to Bihar, where he worked in an engineering company for 10 months. Ashfaq wanted to move abroad to learn engineering to further help the freedom struggle and so he went to Delhi to find out ways to move out of the country. He took the help of one of his Pathan friend, who in turn, betrayed him by informing the police about his whereabouts. Tasadrak Khan, the then Superintendent of Police tried to play the caste politics with Ashfaq and tried to win him over by provoking him against Hinduism but Ashfaq was a strong willed Indian who surprised Tasadrak Khan by saying "Khan Sahib, I am quite sure that Hindu India will be much better than British India".

The case for the Kakori dacoity was concluded by awarding death sentences to Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Rajendra Lahiri and Roshan while others were given life sentences.

Ashfaq was a lion among men, he stood six feet tall. He walked upright and once at the post he drew the rope towards him Kissed it and said “My hands are not soiled with the murder of man. The charge against me is false. God will give me justice”. Then he prayed “*La ilahi il Allah, Mohammed Ur Rasool Allah*”.

Ashfaqulla was hanged on 19th December 1927. It has been said by some historians that Ashfaqulla Khan was the first Muslim to be hanged in a conspiracy case. In fact, Ashfaqulla Khan in his last message to the nation wrote, “I take pride in the fact that I will be the first and foremost Muslim to embrace death on the gallows for the freedom of my country”.

Jatin Mukherjee

Jatin Mukherjee is a martyr to the cause of Indian independence. Jatin was born in the late 1890 in Koya, Bengal. From a very young age Jatin was aware that his mission in life was to help oust the British from his motherland. Jatin’s mother, a widow, raised him to be self-confident and to fight for those who could not fight for themselves.

Jatin was well-known not only for his physical prowess, but also for his absolute commitment toward his principles. He on more than one occasion spent time in jail for assaulting British officers. An example is of reaction when he noticed four British officers harassing a young lady and her grandfather on a train in a neighboring compartment. Jatin ripped apart the bars that separated the compartments and made short work of four officers single-handedly. He was arrested for the action a few days later, but the judge fearing that the publicity would inspire other Indians youth to follow in Jatin’s footsteps dismissed the case.

His methods for bringing India closer to independence were often violent. He advocated and taught other young revolutionaries to make and use bombs and firearms. While pursuing his passion secretly, he maintained his day job as a stenographer to the Governor’s Secretary. The Police Commissioner, Tegart, was puzzled by the continued spate of deadly assaults on British officers. It seemed that as soon as one revolutionary was caught and hanged, another sprung up. They did suspect Jatin to be mastermind of the revolutionary operations but could produce no proof against him. A young jailed revolutionary was tricked into revealing the identity of his leader and Jatin was arrested based on the revolutionary’s confession. Jatin was held for 15 months before being released for lack of proof.



Jatin Mukherjee

Soon after his release, Jatin quit his government job and opened up a contracting firm known as Harry Company. This company was a front for importing arms from Japan and Germany to continue the fight for India’s independence. When Aravinda Gosh left for Pondicherry, Jatin took over leadership of the

His methods for bringing India closer to independence were often violent

revolutionaries. A plan was setup by Jatin, Rash Behari Bose and other revolutionaries to launch an armed conflict against the British army on February 21, 1915 in Punjab and the rest of North India. An informant in guise of a revolutionary relayed the planned campaign to the British. The British swooped down upon the revolutionaries. Those who were arrested were sent to the gallows. The officials in Calcutta went on alert and a manhunt for Jatin began.

He was tracked down to a hideout in Kaptipada. He along with four other young revolutionaries went into the nearby forest in an attempt to escape the British. A gentleman against all odds, Jatin backtracked to the house where the revolutionaries had sought shelter in the middle of the night to thank the owner for his hospitality.

The five revolutionaries ended being cornered on a small hill and there they held off British officers for hours. When the British soldiers finally reached the top they found one dead and the other four revolutionaries severely wounded. As Jatin was being taken to the hospital he insisted that he himself was entirely responsible for the events and that the 3 surviving companions had nothing to do with what

had happened. Jatin's undying devotion to his cause and his single-minded dedication to India's freedom even commanded the respect of those who worked so hard to have him captured. Police Commissioner Tegart rushed from Calcutta (now Kolkata) to Jatin's side as he was being operated on. Jatin passed away on September the 15th, 1915. Officer Tegart remarked at Jatin's deathbed that Jatin was one of the bravest Indians he had ever seen.

Senapati Bapat

India's freedom fighters seem to have come from all walks of life and from many varied backgrounds. Of those freedom fighters one stands out as a man who had only one goal and only one vision. His fight centered not on the issue of whether to use violence or not in the struggle, nor was he too concerned about how the new India was to be governed. His goal in life was to see a free India by any means possible.

His goal in life was to see a free India by any means possible.

If bombs and guns brought him closer to that goal then they were good for him. If Gandhiji's methods of Non-Violence brought India closer to freedom then these were also acceptable to him. He was born in Ahmednagar, a district of Maharashtra, on November 12, 1880. He was fearless as a child. Having once almost drowned in a nearby stream, he didn't think twice of venturing into the stream again. He brought this same dedication and fearlessness to the aide of his motherland.

Bapat was educated in Edinburgh, Scotland, because he lost a scholarship he had received from the British Government, for expressing anti-British views at a meeting of the Independent Labor Party. Despite the loss of the scholarship he continued his studies abroad, and came home with preliminary knowledge

of how to build bombs. Armed with this knowledge he planned to join other revolutionaries to use it against the British Government, not in an attempt to kill innocent victims, but to draw attention to the cause of freedom. There were others whose opinions differed, and soon a fatal bomb attack, in which he was accused of indirect involvement, resulted in his going underground. He took this opportunity to travel around the country he was working so hard to free.

During these travels the realization came to him that the vast majority of Indians had yet to realize that they were under foreign rule. Thereafter his focus shifted from overthrowing the government, to educating the masses regarding the foreign government. For 4 years he eluded the British officials and worked towards this new goal. The British government caught up with him because of a tip-off from one of his friends regarding his location.

This was to be the first of three trips to jail for Bapat. The second came shortly after his release when he went to fight for the rights of those whose homes were threatened by a Dam project. Bapat repeatedly stopped work on the dams by uprooting rail lines that were being planted to move equipment to be used during construction. For this act he turned himself in and was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment. His final trip to jail was a result of defying orders not to speak at a public gathering held by Netaji Subash Chandra Bose.

On August 15, 1947 when India was declared free, Jawaharlal Nehru raised the Indian flag in Delhi for the first time. Senapati Bapat was given the same honor in Pune. After independence Senapati Bapat took an active part in political life. He passed away on November 28, 1967 at the age of 87.

**Parveen, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia*

Source: www.liveindia.com, www.indianfreedomfighters.in/

We cannot have real independence unless the people banish the touch-me-not spirit from their hearts.

Freedom of worship, even of public speech, would become a farce if interference became the order of the day.

Freedom received though the efforts of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn.

-Mahatma Gandhi

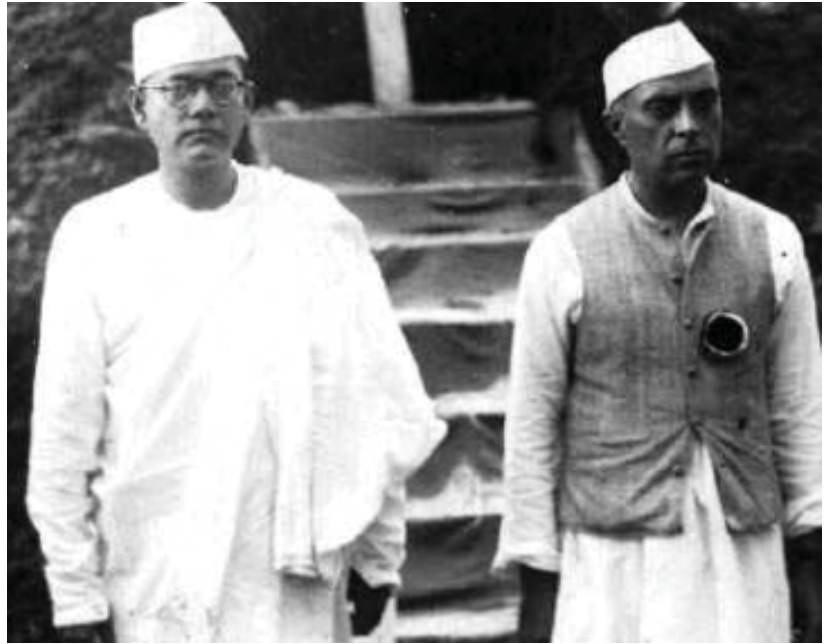
Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

The famous freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897 at Oriya bazaar of Cuttack district, Orissa. His father Janaki Nath Bose was a famous lawyer and his mother Prabhavati Devi was a devout and religious lady. Unlike other prominent leaders of the Indian freedom struggle, Subhas strongly believed that an armed rebellion was necessary to wrest independence from the British. Subhas Chandra Bose is popularly known as 'Netaji'. In the year of 1902, when he was only 5 year old, he got admission in Cuttack Protestant School and then he started his educational career. In the year of 1909 he got admission in Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack. In 1913, he started his higher secondary educational academic career in Presidency College, Calcutta. On 21st October 1943, Netaji formed the Indian National Army (I.N.A.).

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is remembered for his Salutation and slogan of 'Jai Hind'. The famous words of Subash Chandra Bose "*Give me blood, I will give you freedom*" encouraged the freedom fighters. The famous book "The Indian Struggle" was written by him.

Indian National Army and Netaji

Netaji Arrived at Tokyo in May 1943. He attracted the attention of the Japanese high command, including Hideki Tojo, Japan's Premier. The Japanese agreed to cooperate in founding an Indian National Army (INA) in Southeast Asia. Bose flew to Singapore and became Commander of the INA and Head of the Free India provisional government. The INA included both Indian Prisoners of War (PoWs) from Singapore and Indian civilians in Southeast Asia. The strength of INA grew to 50,000 and fought Allied forces in 1944 inside the borders of India at Imphal and in Burma. For Bose any means and any ally were acceptable in the struggle to liberate India. By the end of World War II none of Bose's Axis allies had helped, and Bose then turned to the Soviet Union. On Aug. 18, 1945, it is believed that Bose was en route to the Soviet Union in a Japanese plane when it crashed in Taiwan, burning him fatally. However, his death is a very controversial and disputed subject in India till date. It is due to the lack of evidence and records of his final days in his life. Bose indirectly and posthumously achieved his goal of Indian independence.



Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose with Jawaharlal Nehru

Political View of Subhas

Bose's earlier correspondence (prior to 1939) also reflects his deep disapproval of the racist practices and annulment of democratic institutions in Nazi Germany. He also, however, expressed admiration for the authoritarian methods (though not the racial ideologies) which he saw in Italy and Germany during the 1930s, and thought they could be used in building an independent India. Bose had clearly expressed his belief that democracy was the best option for India. The pro-Bose thinkers believe that his authoritarian control of the Azad Hind was based on political pragmatism and a post-colonial recovery doctrine rather than any anti-democratic belief. However, during the war (and possibly as early as the 1930s) Bose seems to have decided that no democratic system could be adequate to overcome India's poverty and social inequalities, and he wrote that an authoritarian state, similar to that of Soviet Russia (which he had also seen and admired) would be needed for the process of nation's re-building. Accordingly some suggest that Bose's alliance with the Axis power during the world war was based on more than just pragmatism, and that Bose was a militant nationalist, though not a Nazi, nor a Fascist. Netaji supported empowerment of women, secularism and other democratic ideas.

Source: www.orissa.gov.in

Bhagat Singh: An Evergreen Icon of Indian Youth

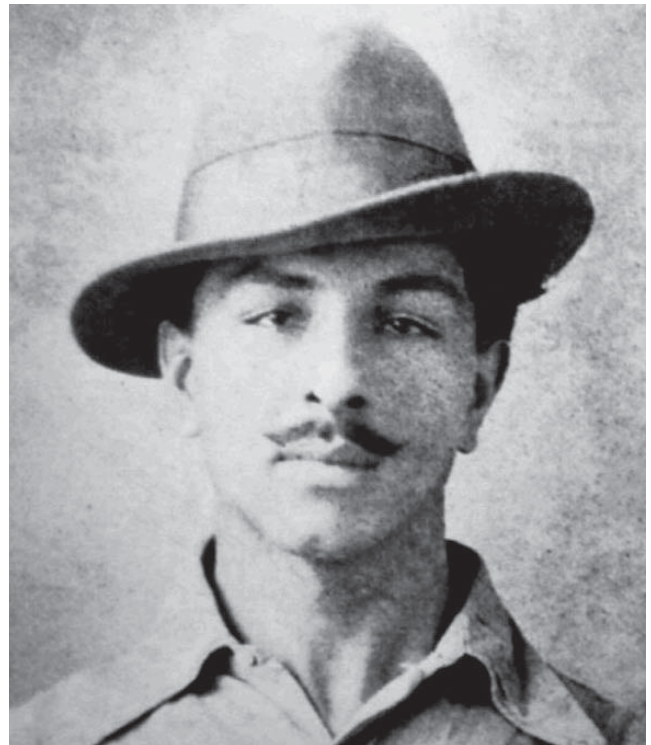
- Debabrata Biswas*

The name Bhagat Singh has become a synonym of revolution. He was one of the great revolutionaries who made supreme sacrifice for the nation. Thousands of young people sacrificed their lives in the altar of India's liberation struggle but the name Bhagat Singh has a special place in the history of our independence. No other young revolutionary of India got much empathy in the minds of the people of India like Bhagat Singh. Still he is an inspiration source for the patriotic people of our motherland. It is important today to study the contributions of Bhagat Singh and his comrades when our country is again falling under the grip of imperialism and its designs.

Unfortunately Bhagat Singh did not have much place in the history textbooks. There was a concerted effort to underestimate the contributions of revolutionaries who sacrificed everything for the liberation of our motherland.

Bhagat Singh came from a family of patriots and freedom fighters. His uncle, Ajit Singh was a pioneer in opposing the Colonization Act 1905 and had to remain in exile till the country gained independence. His father also was an active participant in the struggle for the liberation of the country from the colonial rule. While as a student Bhagat Singh came under the influence of the revolutionaries. The October revolution led by Lenin attracted Bhagat Singh and he started to collect and read the literatures about socialism and socialist revolution.

The years of the twenties in general and those of 1928–30 in particular were of great significance in the history of India's freedom struggle. Due to the failure of first non-cooperation movement, the revolutionaries of that period were frustrated and started to think about some alternative action plan. The formation of the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA), the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA) and the *Naujawan Bharat Sabha* [All India Youth League (AIYL)] all happened during this period. Bhagat Singh and his comrades were imbued with the ideas of revolution and socialism. The manifesto of HRA says "The immediate object of the revolutionary party in the domain of politics is to establish a federal republic of the United States of India by an organized and armed revolution. The basic principle of this republic shall be universal suffrage and the abolition of all system, which makes the exploitation of man by



Bhagat Singh

man possible. In this republic the electors shall have the right to recall their representatives if so desired, otherwise the democracy shall be a mockery". India could not think about such ideas even after sixty years of independence!

The protest against the visit of Simon Commission turned into violence. Lala Lajpath Rai died due to police lathicharge. The country witnessed unprecedented protest rallies. Bhagat Singh and his associates threw bombs in Central Assembly. A few days later bombs exploded in the Central Assembly and they were arrested. The trial began in 1929 July. The farcical trial ended in October 1930. It awarded death sentence to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. The charge was conspiracy to overthrow the British rule and murder of a British official. They accepted the verdict with raising slogans. A few days before the execution Bhagat Singh wrote a letter to the British authorities demanding that as he and his two condemned comrades were Prisoners of War (PoWs), they should not be hanged but that the sentence should be executed by a firing squad of the British army. Such was the unconquerable spirit and stuff of which Bhagat Singh was made.

The conduct of Bhagat Singh and his comrades during their historic trial at Lahore created new precedents of revolutionary behaviour. They were making use of the British courts as a forum to address the people, broadcast their revolutionary views and ideology. This was something different from the nationalist tradition set by Mahatma Gandhi. They appeared everyday in the nationalist press and every activity of theirs was watched by lakhs of people. Their revolutionary declarations were also denied publicly but this did not restrain them. Intent upon every aspect of British Court, justice and jail administration, they fought against every humiliating restriction, every discriminatory rule and demanded proper status for freedom fighters in jail. They refused to be treated as common criminals and demanded treatment in consonance with dignity and prestige of the freedom struggle. During the trial days Bhagat Singh and his comrades were asked to refrain from raising revolutionary slogans in the

They may kill me, but they cannot kill my ideas. They can crush my body, but they will not be able to crush my spirit.

court. But they continued to shout ‘*Inqilab Zindabad*’. They were beaten and handcuffed in the court, they were assaulted with lathis till they bled profusely and fell unconscious. Bhagat Singh and his comrades succeeded in completely exposing the anti-Indian and arbitrary character of British justice in India and the barbarities of the British Indian jails. This was the aim of their fight for which they prepared to undergo all the tortures. They turned their trial into a public trial of the British government.

In a joint statement before the trial court, Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt explained why they threw the bombs in the Central Assembly. They said their purpose was not to harm anyone but to expose the dependent character of the Legislative Assembly which was being paraded by the British as a Parliament and create the belief that India was being democratically governed. The statement further says “A radical change, therefore, is necessary and it is the duty of those who realize this to reorganize society on a socialistic basis. Unless this thing is done and exploitation of man by man and nation by nations is brought to an end, sufferings and carnage with which humanity is threatened cannot be prevented. All talk of ending war and ushering in an era of universal peace is undisguised hypocrisy”. In the statement

they explained about their concept about revolution. They said that” By revolution, we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of the society which may not be threatened by such breakdown and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognized and a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and the misery of imperial wars”.

Bhagat Singh symbolized his struggle in the slogan he raised after he threw a bomb in the Legislative Assembly of Delhi—“Long Live revolution” (*Inqilab Zindabad*), a slogan totally unfamiliar at that time to the Indian people. Bhagat Singh was not content with slogans. He embodied the indomitable courage, the death-defying spirit, the capacity to sacrifice everything and unflinching courage in the face of torture.

In 1930 July Bhagat Singh told some of his fellow comrades in jail, “*This is the highest award for patriotism and I am proud that I am going to get it. They think that by destroying my terrestrial body they will be safe in this country. They are wrong. They may kill me, but they cannot kill my ideas. They can crush my body, but they will not be able to crush my spirit. My ideas will haunt the British like a curse till they are forced to run away from here. But this is one side of the picture. The other side is equally bright. Bhagat Singh dead will be more dangerous to the British enslavers than Bhagat Singh alive. After I am hanged, the fragrances of my revolutionary ideas will permeate the atmosphere of this beautiful land of ours. It will intoxicate the youth and make him mad for freedom and revolution and that will bring the doom of the British imperialist nearer. This is my firm conviction. I am anxiously waiting for the day when I will receive the highest award for my services to the country and my love for my people*”.

Now this is the duty of the present day youth to fulfill the dreams and aspirations of *Shaheed-e-Azam* Bhagat Singh by organizing revolutionary movement against neo imperialism and neo colonialism. In this context the three slogans rose by Bhagat Singh and his comrades—*Long live revolution, Long live proletariat and Down with imperialism*—are still relevant.

***Debabrata Biswas, Former Member of Parliament (MP), General Secretary, All India Forward Bloc**

Source: <http://www.forwardbloc.org>

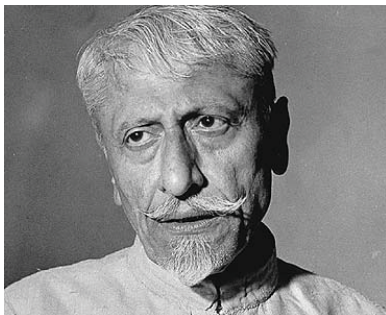
They too fought for the Freedom—

Roles of Minorities in Indian Freedom Struggle

- Asghar Ali Engineer

The new generation of Indians is hardly in knowledge of the role played by minorities in our freedom struggle. They think only majority community fought for it. In case of Muslims, partition made them culprits for dividing the country. Firstly all Muslims were blamed for partition and secondly it was thought they played no role in the freedom of the country. It is this view with which the whole new generation has grown. Even Maulana Azad's role has been obscured and our textbooks on history of our freedom struggle either totally ignore him or mention him just casually. In fact besides majority community all other minorities have played important role in freedom struggle.

The role of Dalits also has been ignored by and large and also that of tribals from different parts of India. While much light has been thrown on the role of Mangal Pandey (recently a film also has been made on him), a Brahmin, one hardly finds mention of various Dalit leaders who also played role in 1857 war of independence.



Maulana Azad

The Christians and Parsis too were in the forefront of freedom struggle. Who can forget Dadabhai Naoroji and Phirozshah Mehta besides others? But today we find hardly any mention of these

persons who never hesitated to throw themselves in the struggle for freedom of our country. But our school textbooks hardly mention them. If the role of these communities is not highlighted what of Muslims who are thought to be culprits for dividing the country. During the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) rule even Father of the Nation Gandhiji's role was sought to be de-emphasised. I would like to emphasise the role played by Muslims and other minorities in freedom struggle, as this is important for de-communalising thinking of our people today. However, before we proceed further I would like to point out that while it is important to discuss the religious identity of people who fought for our freedom it is not our intention to communalise the role of those individuals in history. Those Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Muslims and Hindus fought for freedom as they loved their motherland and not simply because they belonged to this or that

community. Yet in the Indian subcontinent since nineteenth century religious identity became main identity as the British rulers divided us on the basis of religions and each individual despite his/her patriotism also considered himself/herself as belonging to this or that community. It is for this reason that we have to talk of role of minority communities in freedom struggle. Unfortunately the minority communities have been marginalized in every respect including in respect of their role in freedom struggle. The history of freedom struggle as also that of medieval period is being written today from majoritarian perspective. It thus becomes necessary to emphasise the role of minority communities. While Mangal Pandey, a Brahmin's role is glorified in the 1857 war of independence (recently a film also has been made on him) the role of dalits has been completely ignored or if at all mentioned, it is mentioned only on the margin. The tribals also played important role but is hardly mentioned in history books.

Who can ever forget the role of Sikhs (though Sikhs are often clubbed with Hindus but Sikhs themselves resent being so clubbed) in freedom struggle. Who can ever forget the supreme sacrifice made by Bhagat Singh. He has become an icon of Indians' hearts. Besides Bhagat Singh, Sikhs played glorious role right from the beginning. None can ever forget Ghadar Party which was formed mainly by Sikhs. It Party played very important role in Indian freedom struggle. The Sikhs went to Canada and America to fight for India's freedom. The members of Ghadar Party migrated to Canada and United States in early twentieth century to fight for India's freedom.

The Namdhari Sikh movement, which came to be known as Kuka movement and consisted of lower caste Sikhs from artisan class and poor peasant started after occupation of Punjab by the Britishers posed a great threat to the British rule and challenged the role of Sikh elite including the Mahants of Sikh temples. It was the first radical challenge to the British rulers in Punjab. On the other hand the "Punjab Unrest of 1907", which was spearheaded by Ajit Singh's Bharat Mata Society or alternatively called *Anjuman-e-Muhibban-e-Watan* (ie organisation of the lovers of the country) was a secular, political struggle of the peasantry against the destructive economic policies and laws of the British Government.

Similarly, our history of the freedom struggle ignores the role played by lower class Muslims led



Phirozshah Mehta

by the orthodox Ulama. The Muslim masses were mostly from artisan classes and belonged to poor peasantry. Most of the ulama came from these sections of Muslim society and they fought British rule tooth and nail. When Indian National Congress (INC) was formed in 1885, Maulana Qasim Ahmed Nanotvi (who was founder of Darul Ulum, Deoband) issued a *fatwa* urging Muslims to join INC to fight against British rule. He also got *fatwas* issued by several other Ulama on similar lines and published them in a book form called *Nusrat al-Ahrar* (help for freedom fighters) and as a result of his efforts large number of Muslims joined INC. It is true Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, an ardent advocate of modern education among Muslims and founder of Mohommedan Anglo-Oriental College (MAO) opposed Muslims joining the Congress but it was because of his priority to modern education rather than politics and not because of lack of patriotism. Also, he was representing the interests of upper classes of Muslims *ie Ashraf* whereas the Ulama in north India represented interests of lower class Muslims known as *Ajlaf*.

But realities in western India were quite different. There Badruddin Tyebji, the retired acting Chief Justice of Bombay High Court urged upon Muslims to join INC and himself joined it with three hundred Muslim delegates and was elected President of INC. It is interesting to note that three Presidents of INC were from minority communities in those days. Badruddin Tyebji, a Muslim, W.C. Bonnerjee, a Christian from Bengal and Phiroz Shah Mehta, a Parsi. Dadabhai Naoroji was a critic of British economic policies and was devoted to the cause of India's welfare. The ulama, particularly of the Deoband School, were greatly devoted to the cause of Indian freedom. Maulana Mahmudul Hasan of the *Reshmi Rumal* (silk handkerchief) conspiracy fame was staunch supporter of freedom movement. Another important name in this respect is that of Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi. Prof Barkatullah also played key role in fighting the British in those days.

In fact, a provisional Azad Hind Government was formed in Afghanistan with Raja Mahendra Pratap as President and Prof Barkatullah as Prime Minister. The Ulama urged upon Muslims to migrate from India to Afghanistan as they had declared India as *Darul Harb* under the British rule. Thousands of Muslims migrated and faced great hardships. Though it was not a wise decision but that is a different matter. What we intend to show here is that Muslims played very important role in freedom struggle. Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi

was very enthusiastic fighter. When he was forced out of Afghanistan by the Afghan King he migrated to Russia through Central Asia and witnessed revolution in Russia. He was greatly influenced by Russian revolution. Another very important figure is Maulana Hasrat Mohani who stood for complete freedom along with Tilak. He was great admirer of Tilak and opposed the Congress policy of Home rule in those days. He used to publish an Urdu magazine, which was confiscated by the British along with his press and his valuable books were also destroyed by the British police.

Mention must be made here of Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani, the then President of *Jam'at-ul-Ulama-I-Hind* who was an important ally of INC and was totally opposed to the partition of the country. He opposed two nation theory and wrote a book *Muttahida Qaumiyyat aur Islam* (Composite Nationalism and Islam). It is a seminal contribution by the Maulana. He argued against separate nationalism and quoted from the Qur'an to support his contention. He gave example of the Holy Prophet who migrated from Mecca and set up a composite city state in Madina with Muslims, Jews and pagan Arabs constituting one political community described as *Ummah Wahidah*. All communities were given full freedom to practice their religion and charged with responsibility to protect Madina from outside attack.

Many other Muslim leaders, besides Maulana Azad, who played an important role in freedom struggle and stood for united nationalism, were Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (*Sarhadi Gandhi*), Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr Ansari, Rafi Ahmad Qidwai and others. We must also mention the role of Ali Brothers *ie* Maulana Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali who play key role in Khilafat movement along with Mahatma Gandhi and also their mother Bi Amma.

It is obvious that Muslims and other minorities played very important roles in freedom movement and also opposing two-nation theory propounded by a small minority of Muslims belonging to upper class. Large number of Muslims belonging to artisan classes, poor peasantry and backward caste Muslims, particularly the All India Momin Conference vehemently opposed partition of the country. It would, therefore, be wrong to blame all Muslims for partition of the country. Vast number of Muslims made great sacrifices for the cause of freedom of their motherland.

Source: www.congressminority.org

Why Partition Failed

- Yuvraj Krishan*

Hubbul Watan Minul Iman (Love of the country is part of the faith)—An Arabic Saying

The roots of Partition lie in the two-nation theory. Jinnah and the Muslim League formulated the proposition that the Hindus and Muslims were two different nations whose mutual incompatibility made their peaceful co-existence impossible.

Jinnah did not take with him to Pakistan the Muslims for whose sake he had got India partitioned to create that homeland. In consequence, the problem of Muslim minority in India was not resolved by Partition.

After Partition, India and Pakistan have co-existed in a state of intense hostility. They have fought three wars, in 1947–49, 1965 and 1971. When they are not at a war with each other, they co-exist in a state of ‘intense’ cold war. In addition, the principal goal of Pakistan’s foreign policy has been the annexation of Kashmir only on the ground that it is a Muslim-majority area, geographically contiguous with Pakistan.

It justifies this policy on the basis of the two-nation theory disregarding the fact that the Pakistanis have not allowed Pakistan to become a homeland for the Indian Muslims.

India, after Partition and Independence, established a secular State. It adopted a constitution which guaranteed fundamental rights to all citizens irrespective of a person’s caste, creed or religion. Specifically, it guaranteed equality before law (Art. 14), prohibited discrimination on grounds of religion (Art.15), and guaranteed equality of opportunity in the matter of public employment (Art. 16). To the religious minorities it also guaranteed freedom to manage their religious affairs (Art. 26), and a right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice (Art. 30). It constitutionally guaranteed that a religious majority cannot overwhelm and religious minority. In short, India created political conditions which should have eliminated communal conflicts.

It is sad to reflect that communal conflict has spread to the States in South India which had been free from this virus prior to 1947 except for the Mopala uprising in Kerala in the twenties which, in the beginning, was essentially an ‘agrarian’ unrest and later took on a communal hue because the landlords were Hindu-Namboodiri Brahmins and the tenants were Muslims, and the low key conflict in Nizam’s Hyderabad. It is, therefore, natural to ask—why Partition failed? To understand the importance of this question, it is

worthwhile to repeat that Partition was effected at the cost of immense loss of life and property, enormous human suffering, and unprecedented mass migration of minorities across the Indo-Pakistan border.

Our analysis is that the basic reason for the failure of the secular Indian State to bring about communal harmony within India is that it was not purged of the staunch elements of the cult of separatism: the leadership of the Muslim community in India after Partition continued to be in the hands of the erstwhile Muslim leaders who had been active members of the Muslim League, and who had taken an oath of allegiance to Pakistan, and ideologues, the ulema, whose ideology is separatism. Both the political and religious leaders were staunch believers of the two-nation theory and zealously worked for Partition and the creation of Pakistan.

...the principal goal of Pakistan’s foreign policy has been the annexation of Kashmir only on the ground that it is a Muslim-majority area, geographically contiguous with Pakistan.

It is unfortunate that this fact has not been adequately realised. In fact, it would be seen from Chapter I ‘A Dialogue with Prime Minister Nehru’ that the author had ventured to suggest to the Prime Minister Nehru himself, as far back as 1948, that the continued presence of separatist elements in the country was not justified or in the country’s interest. They had willfully knowingly propagated the two-nation theory and conducted Godbblesian-like propaganda to make the myth of persecution of Muslims and Islam a ‘reality’. These Pre-Partition politicians and ideologues also continued to be the leaders of the Muslim community in the Post-Partition period. This, in our opinion, is the key to the understanding why Partition, without purging the Indian polity of such toxic elements and in spite of the establishment of the secular State, failed to eliminate the Hindu-Muslim conflict. The Indian polity was not purged of the toxin of separatism by Partition.

An illustrative list is given below of senior Muslim League leaders at the national level and of the relatively more well-known at the provincial level who continued to stay in India after Partition and most of whom joined the Indian National Congress (INC) which had been castigated by them as a hostile 'Hindu' party.

(a) UP: The Raja of Pirpur, the author of the famous (or infamous) Pirpur Report (died in India in 1957); Raja of Mahmudabad (Raja Mohd. Amir Ahmad Khan, a member of the All India Muslims League Working Committee and its Treasurer and a close friend of Jinnah); Nawab Mohd. Ismail Khan, Chairman of the Action Committee of the All India Muslim League for Achievement of Pakistan, a Member of the Constituent Assembly 1940–50 and a Member of Indian Parliament 1950–52 (died in India in 1958); Begum Aizaz Rasul, leader of the Muslim League Legislative Party in UP before Partition, a Member of the Constituent Assembly 1946–50, a Congress party MLA in UP Legislative Assembly after Independence of India, she became a minister in Congress Govt, in UP in 1969–70 and 1970–71.

Nafees-ul-Hasan, a prominent Muslim League leader, joined the Congress after Partition, became the Speaker of the UP Legislative Assembly and later Chairman of the UP Public Service Commission; Sir Jamshed Ali Khan, Nawab of Baghpat, an important Muslim League leader and a personal friend of Jinnah.

(b) Bihar: Tahir Mohd., a Muslim League member of the Bihar Provincial Assembly, 1946, was a Member of India's Constituent Assembly from 1946–50; became a Congress MP of the Lok Sabha during 1957–62, 1962–67 and 1971–77; Tajmul Hussain, a Member of Muslim League, was a member of the India's Constituent Assembly during 1946–50, a Congress Member of Parliament (MP) of Lok Sabha in 1950–52 and then of the Rajya Sabha in 1952; Syed Hossain Imam, President of the Provincial Muslim League Working Committee; attended the inauguration of Pakistan on 14th August, 1947 at Karachi; was a member of the Textile Control Board 1943–48; of the Indian Pay Commission during 1946–47; India's Company Law Committee from November 1950 to September 1951 when he migrated to Pakistan in September 1951, after his strenuous efforts to stay in India failed; Jaffar Imam joined the Muslim League in 1937, was Muslim League Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) in 1940 and 1946, joined the Congress party after Partition and became a Cabinet Minister in Bihar during 1963–67, died in India in 1979; Ghulam Sarwar, a member of the Muslim League before Partition, stayed in India after Partition, became a Minister in Bihar Government in 1977; Latifur Rehman Sardar Mohammad was a member of the Working Committee of the All India

Muslim League before Partition, after Partition, he joined the Congress and became a Congress MLA in 1952.

(c) Assam: Mohd. Saadullah, a staunch believer in the two-nation theory, was the Chief Minister of Assam before Partition. He was keen on the implementation of the Cabinet Mission Plan which included Assam in Group C (Muslim-majority areas), after Partition, Saadullah was a member of the Drafting Committee of India's Constituent Assembly, died in India in 1955; Mohd. Rafique, a member of the Muslim League since 1936, a Muslim League MLA of Assam in 1946, joined the Congress party after Partition; Moin-ul-Haque Choudhury was the General Secretary of All India Muslim Students Federation, Aligarh (the arsenal of Pakistan) 1944–47, became a Congress party MLA in Assam in 1952 and later a Congress State Cabinet minister, an MP in 1971 and a Congress Union Cabinet Minister in 1972.

India created political conditions which should have eliminated communal conflicts.

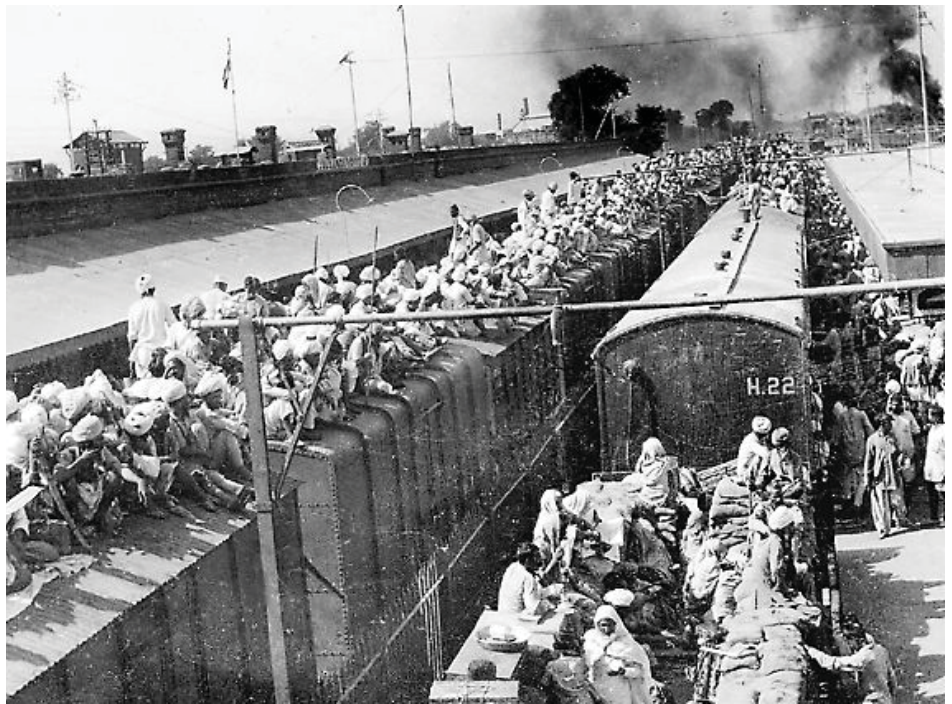
It needs to be recorded that even after Partition, a number of Muslim League leaders of Assam made efforts for the inclusion of certain areas of Assam in Pakistan. A deputation of Muslims from Cachar went to Karachi in November 1947 to plead with Jinnah to get Cachar and Goalpara districts included in Pakistan. Further, Abdul Hamid Khan, a Muslim League leader, started an agitation for the inclusion of Bengali speaking areas of Assam in East Pakistan.

(d) Bengal: Syed Badrudduja was a senior Muslim League leader of Bengal who was a staunch supporter of the Pakistan movement. He stayed back in India after Partition and continued to indulge in separatist, communal activities as before Partition. His activities were even noticed by Prime Minister Nehru. Badrudduja presided over a convention of Muslims in Aligarh in 1953 where he suggested the establishment of Muslim Jamaitul Musalman—the old Muslim League in new garb—to protect the culture, language and religion of the Muslim community. Badrudduja further advocated that the Muslims should join hands with the Anglo-Indians, Christians and tribal communities for protection of minority interests. In his letters to the Chief Ministers, Nehru described the Convention as “undesirable and vicious” and Badrudduja as “undesirable person”.

In a speech in Parliament on 28 April, 1966 Badrudduja denounced secularism “as a snare and a delusion... a fraud and a deception... hypocrisy... thy name is exploitation of minorities particularly of the religious

Muslim minority, spoliation and ruination of the Muslim minority...”

(e) Madras: (now Chennai): Abdul Hamid Khan, an MLA who supported the Pakistan resolution of 1940, declared that the creation of Pakistan was the best solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. As Chairman of the Reception Committee of the All India Muslim League’s 28th Session in Madras in 1941 he declared: “Hindu and Muslim social orders are based on two opposing principles and, therefore, need two homelands; after Partition, Abdul Hamid Khan joined the Congress party; M. Mohd. Ismail, a senior Muslim leader from Madras,



declared in 1940 that the Muslims in India were in the midst of jihad, that only Pakistan could save their civilisation and culture and enable them to live in peace and honour. At the Muslim League Legislators’ Convention held in Delhi in 1946 he declared: “the gulf between the two (Islam and Hinduism) was so wide that it was impossible to evolve a common nationality in India”. After Partition, Mohd. Ismail continued to stay in India and represented the Indian Muslim League in the Constituent Assembly and later in Parliament till 1971.

(f) Bhopal and Hyderabad: The role of the Muslims of the princely States, where the rulers were Muslims but the vast majority of the population was Hindu, was no different as they fully supported the creation of Pakistan. The correspondence between the Nawab of Bhopal and Mountbatten indicated that the Muslim population of the State wanted its ruler to accede to Pakistan after the lapse of Paramountcy on 15th August, 1947. Though a ruler of a princely State in the heart of India, the Nawab’s total commitment to the Muslim League and Pakistan is evident from the fact that in a letter to Wavell in August 1946, he threatened to abdicate if the Congress alone was allowed to form the interim government as this would, he felt, annihilate the Muslim. This, he emphasised, no “true Muslim” could accept. No wonder the Nawab of Bhopal also tried to persuade the rulers of the other princely States not to accede to India, to form a confederation outside the Indian Union and to establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan. Bhopal State was merged in the Union of India in 1949 and its Nawab, Hamidullah Khan, became a ‘privy purser’.

Likewise, the Nizam of Hyderabad worked for his State becoming a third minion (besides India and Pakistan)

in the British Commonwealth and gave a loan of Rs. 20 crores to Pakistan. In fact, the Ittehadul-Mussalmeen of Hyderabad and its militant wing, Razakars, under Kasim Razvi, with the blessings of the Nizam, worked for the creation of a ‘South Pakistan’ State in India similar to the East Pakistan. Every Razakar had to take an oath: “In the name of Allah, I hereby promise that I will fight to the last to maintain the supremacy of the Muslim power in the Deccan”. Justifiably, the British Resident of Hyderabad in July, 1947 felt that the Muslims of the State of Hyderabad would have felt outraged if the Nizam had acceded to the Union of India.

Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi of Hyderabad was a Razakar who opposed the accession of Hyderabad by India and resisted the integration of Hyderabad into the Indian Union in 1948. Today, he is a prominent leader of the Muslims and an MP. More importantly Kasim Razvi, the leader of the Razakars and President of the Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, Hyderabad, migrated to Pakistan in 1959 after his release from prison. There is, however, no information that nay substantial number of Razakars (they numbered 30,000 in January 1948 and their number increased to 1 to 5 lakh by July–August 1948), quit India after Hyderabad’s integration with India.

Only the Muslim ruler of the State of Rampur in UP found it impractical to accede to Pakistan, in spite of pressure from Jinnah to do so. But the Muslim League of Rampur indulged in riots and arson against this decision of their ruler in August 1947. None of the managements or the functionaries of the Islamic seminaries and dargahs migrated to Pakistan after Partition. In fact, it is incomprehensible as to why the religious leaders and scholars, whose institutions

were located in the heart of India like Deoband in UP or deep down South like Gulbarga in Karnataka, supported the Pakistan movement and Partition when they knew that unlike individual politicians, there was no possibility of the institutions migrating to Pakistan after Partition.

While the political leadership in the Post-Partition period remained in the hands of those political leaders who had been the architects of Partition, the ulema, the religious intelligentsia, who formulated the ideology of the Muslim community, were fundamentalists who subscribed and continued to subscribe to the ideology of separatism.

Muslim political leaders and religious divines, theologians and jurists of Islamic law, zealously supported the two-nation theory and the cult of separatism and worked for the creation of Pakistan, the sacred homeland for the faithful—Muslims of the minority provinces—they eventually stayed put in the na-pak (unholy), land of Post-Partition India. It will be abundantly clear that most of the Pre-Partition Muslim League leaders, theologians and divines continued to be the leaders of the Muslim community in Post-Partition India: those who had worked zealously for the creation of Pakistan as a homeland for the ‘persecuted and oppressed’ Indian Muslims did not migrate to the new homeland. On the other hand, after Partition, most of them became ‘respectable’ members of the ruling political parties or continued as sectarian leaders of Indian Muslims as Members of Parliament (MPs) or Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) etc. or as managers of *madrasas* and *dargahs*.

There has been no public admission that the creation of Pakistan was a grave blunder or that Jinnah betrayed the Indian Muslims when he did not lead them to the promised homeland, nay abandoned them—truly speaking, Jinnah was for them the Pied Piper of Hamelin. On the other hand, after Independence, they have kept alive, nay even promoted this virus of separatism. The Muslim leadership in the Post-Partition period has continued to complain and propagate the idea that the Muslim minority is not being treated fairly and that they are being persecuted by institutions or agencies of the State and by the majority community.

Further, the political leadership has also tended to promote their distinctive identity as Muslims rather than as Indian citizens. In consequence, they have been vociferously voicing their grievances as Muslims and thus marginalizing and rendering ineffective nationalist Muslim leaders like Maulana Azad, Dr Zakir Hussain and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. In fact, the genuine grievances of the Muslim community about the educational backwardness and grinding poverty are common with the Dalits and non-creamy sections of the backward communities. But the grievances of

the Muslims have been projected, by their political leaders, as the grievances of the Muslim community and not of the poorer and depressed classes, of a religious community and not of a class.

Sahir Ludhianavi, an eminent Urdu poet, had migrated to Pakistan at the time of Partition; migration appeared to him at that time an escape and liberation from the land of *kufir* (infidelity). However, he soon got disillusioned by the Pakistani State and society and came back to India which welcomed him. Ludhianavi realised that for the evolution of an integrated Indian nation, it was essential that those who believed in the two-nation theory and worked for Partition must quit India. His couplet which, with due apologies we have slightly modified, is a profound testament of a historical verity: Why Partition failed?

Jinka do kaumon ka nara tha

Jinka maksad batwara tha

Wo log job jayenge is dharti se*

Tab ek honge sab Hindustani”.

(Those who were the champions of the two-nation theory; those whose objective was Partition, when these people leave this land, then all will be one as Indians).

*The words/lines of the couplet are author’s adaptation of the original.

Ludhianavi’s realisation was that purging of the two-nation ideologists and partitionists from this land was essential for the evolution of an integrated Indian nation. As this did not happen. Partition failed.

The original couplet of Ludhianvi is reproduced below:

Who waqt gaya, who daur gaya;

Jab do kaumon ka nara tha;

Weh log gaye is dharti se Jinka maksad batwara tha,

Ab ek hain sab Hindustani

Ab ek hain sab Hindustani

yeh jaanle saara jahaan!

* Yuvraj Krishan is a distinguished retd. IAS (Officer) whose book “Understanding Partition” is a popular Bhavan Publication.

Source: Bhavan’s Journal 15 August 2007

Indian Ocean Unity

- Shashi Tharoor*

What international association brings together 18 countries straddling three continents thousands of miles apart, united solely by their sharing of a common body of water?

That is a quiz question likely to stump the most devoted aficionado of global politics. It's the Indian Ocean Rim Countries' Association for Regional Cooperation, blessed with the unwieldy acronym IOR-ARC, perhaps the most extraordinary international grouping you've never heard of.

The Association manages to unite Australia and Iran, Singapore and India, Madagascar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and a dozen other states large and small—unlikely partners brought together by the fact that the Indian Ocean washes their shores. I've just come back (as India's new Minister of State for



Shashi Tharoor

Reunion, in the Indian Ocean, gives France observer status in IOR-ARC, and the French foreign ministry is considering seeking full membership).

For another, every one of Samuel Huntington's famously clashing civilizations finds a representative among its members, giving a common roof to the widest possible array of worldviews in their smallest imaginable combination (just 18 countries). When IOR-ARC meets, new windows are opened between countries separated by distance as well as politics.

Malaysians talk with Mauritians, Arabs with Australians, South Africans with Sri Lankans, and Iranians with Indonesians. The Indian Ocean serves as both a sea separating them and a bridge linking them together.

The potential of the organization is huge. There are opportunities to learn from one another, to share experiences, and to pool resources on such issues as blue-water fishing, maritime transport, and piracy (in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia, as well as in the straits of Malacca).

The Indian Ocean serves as both a sea separating them and a bridge linking them together.

But IOR-ARC doesn't have to confine itself to the water: it's the countries that are members, not just their coastlines. So everything from the development of tourism in the 18 countries to the transfer of science and technology is on the table. The poorer developing countries have new partners from which to receive educational scholarships for their young and training courses for their government officers. There is already talk of new projects in capacity building, agriculture, and the promotion of cultural cooperation.

This is not to imply that IOR-ARC has yet fulfilled its potential in the decade that it has existed. As often happens with brilliant ideas, the creative spark consumes itself in the act of creation, and IOR-ARC has been treading water, not having done enough to

Even Goldman Sachs can claim to have invented an inter-governmental body

External Affairs) from attending the Association's Ministerial Meeting in Sana'a, Yemen. Despite being accustomed to my eyes glazing over at the alphabet soup of international organizations I've encountered during a three-decade-long United Nations career, I find myself excited by the potential of IOR-ARC.

Regional associations have been created on a variety of premises: geographical, as with the African Union; geopolitical, as with the Organization of American States; economic and commercial, as with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or Mercosur; and security-driven, as with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). There are multi-continental ones too, like India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, which brings together India, Brazil, and South Africa, or the better-known Group of Eight (G-8).

Even Goldman Sachs can claim to have invented an inter-governmental body, since the (Brazil, Russia, India, China) "BRIC" concept coined by that Wall Street firm was recently institutionalized by a meeting of the heads of government of Brazil, Russia, India, and China in Yekaterinburg last month. But it's fair to say there's nothing quite like IOR-ARC in the annals of global diplomacy.

For one thing, there isn't another ocean on the planet that takes in Asia, Africa, and Oceania (and could embrace Europe, too, since the French department of

get beyond the declaratory phase that marks most new initiatives. The organization itself is lean to the point of emaciation, with just a half-dozen staff (including the gardener!) in its Mauritius Secretariat. The formula of pursuing work in an Academic Group, a Business Forum, and a Working Group on Trade and Investment has not yet brought either focus or drive to the parent body.

But such teething pains are inevitable in any new group, and the seeds of future cooperation have already been sown. Making a success of an association that unites large countries and small ones, island states and continental ones, Islamic republics, monarchies, and liberal democracies, and every race known to mankind, represents both a challenge and an opportunity.

This diversity of interests and capabilities can easily impede substantive cooperation, but it can also make such cooperation far more rewarding. In this diversity, we in India see immense possibilities, and in Sana'a we pledged ourselves to energizing and reviving this semi-dormant organization. The brotherhood of man is a tired cliché, but the neighborhood of an ocean is a refreshing new idea. The world as a whole stands to benefit if 18 littoral states can find common ground in the churning waters of a mighty ocean.

***Shashi Tharoor, a former UN Under Secretary General, is also the Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, India.**

Chairman of Dubai-based Afras Ventures Dr Shashi Tharoor was the official candidate of India for the succession to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2006, and came a close second out of seven contenders in the race.

Dr Tharoor is also the award-winning author of nine books, as well as hundreds of articles, op-eds and book reviews in a wide range of publications, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, the International Herald Tribune, Time, News week and The Times of India. He has served for two years as a Contributing Editor and occasional columnist for Newsweek International. Since April 2001 he has authored a fortnightly column in The Hindu and since January 2007 in The Times of India.

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Bhavan presents the Indian Experience at Wyong Rotary International Night

Poonam and Sunil at The Indian Experience, Tuggerah, put on a sumptuous and delicious evening of curries to complement the Wyong Rotary Indian International Evening as their Rotary Meeting last week.

Mr. Abbas Alvi from Bharatiya Vidya Bavan, the main Indian Cultural Organisation in Australia was the Guest Speaker, who came up from Sydney with his charming wife Farida and spoke on Indian food, culture, and developments both in India and Australia in a cross cultural sense.

The restaurant was filled for this special evening which was enlivened by a fascinating Power Point presentation from Mr. Alvi who is the Founder President of the Australia India Chamber of Commerce and, within his community, is well known as a poet, composer, musician, artist and writer. All of those who managed to get a booking have been clamouring for a repeat event.

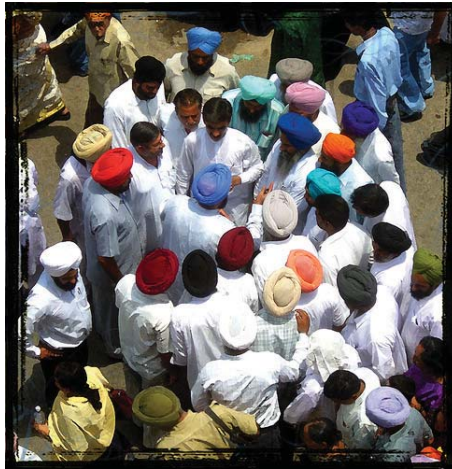
Past President Ellis Hopper presented Poonam and Sunil with a Certificate of Recognition and Thanks at the conclusion of the great evening.

Singhs Leading in Australia

- Manpreet Singh

The makers of the Bollywood flick “Singh is Kinng” may have known something about Australia when they chose to shoot the film here. In a case of real life taking a direct cue from the reel and according to the statistics obtained by SBS Radio’s Punjabi program, Singh is now one of the most common surnames in Australia and in some localities, it is the most common surname surpassing the traditionally common surnames like Smith, Jones, Williams and Brown. According to the latest figures released by Sensis (which creates the White Pages telephone directories around Australia), Singh is now the third most common surname in the state of Victoria (of which Melbourne is the capital). There are more than 4,300 phone listings of “Singhs” across the state, with almost 4,000 in Melbourne and its suburbs alone.

What’s more, there are over 9,300 Singhs listed in telephone directories around Australia; if we consider that each of these telephones belong to a household with an average of three–four people in the family, then we are talking about close to 40,000 people across Australia with the surname Singh. And this doesn’t even take into account an equal number of people (if not more) who write Singh as a middle name and are listed under a different surname! Putting all of that together, as



...and according to the statistics obtained by SBS Radio’s Punjabi program, Singh is now one of the most common surnames in Australia

well as a considerable number of people who may not be listed in the White Pages at all, then there could be close to 100,000 people in Australia with ‘Singh’ either as their middle name or surname! Surely that proves beyond doubt that Singh is truly becoming Kinng in the land Downunder.

Even more telling are the statistics from the Darebin area, situated in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. There are over 320 Singhs listed in the suburbs of Northcote, Thornbury, Preston, Reservoir, Bundoora, Alphington and Fairfield, making ‘Singh’ the most common surname in this area—there are almost 50% more Singhs than Smiths living in this area, and twice as many Singhs as there are Joneses, Browns, Williams’ and Wilsons. Amazingly, even as recently as five years ago, Singh wasn’t even among the top ten surnames of this area in 2004–05! Demonstrating a true multicultural demography in this area, the top ten surnames currently are—Singh, Smith, Nguyen, Jones, Brown, Williams, Wilson, Zhang, Wang (and Chen) and Li, respectively. Statewide in Victoria, Smith is still the most common surname, followed by Nguyen (a common Vietnamese surname pronounced phonetically as Nu-wen), and at number three is Singh. This is a clear reflection of the magnitude of migration of Punjabis into Australia, especially in Melbourne, and their predisposition to live close to each other in the suburbia.

Going by the statistics alone, its not the Joneses that you need to keep up with in Australia today; it’s the Singhs”! And more than anyone else, it’s the Smiths who need to watch out most, since they may well be outnumbered in the land of Oz too. As for the Singhs themselves, so far they didn’t need to stand up to be counted; the numbers are speaking for themselves. Surely, the next step from having the most common surname in Australia would be to becoming the most recognisable surname in the country—by contributing actively to public life, sport, academia, business and other fields. Through achievement alone can they give Australia a Song to Singh about.

Manpreet K Singh (Journalist)

Credits: SBS

The article had also appeared in the Hindustan Times, 22 July 2009

Who is an Indian

Amit Dasgupta *

Reprinted from Civil Society, a monthly magazine on Indian change leaders published from Delhi

Perhaps this is as good a time as any to ask the question: What is India? Who is an Indian? The British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, in his seminal speech titled *Why I am not a Christian*, had argued that his identity could not possibly be that of a Christian because he simply did not subscribe to several of the tenets that were so integral to being a Christian. Identity, in Russell's case of not being a Christian was an identity by negation; in other words, identifying what I am not and then, if what remains is what I can identify with, that is who I am. Identity by assertion and affirmation, on the other hand, is when there is no doubt as to who I am or what one's identity is.

In some cases, this is fairly easy. For instance, you and I would have no difficulty in acknowledging our identity as a son, a brother, a husband or as a father; professional and occupational identity is, similarly, non-problematic, for instance, the identity as a doctor or a chartered accountant, a village teacher or a professional diplomat.

But in other cases, this can get quite complicated. On a purely ideational level, the philosophical quest of 'Who am I?' has been the essence of most treatises; Hindu philosophy, for instance, would argue that I and all that is around me is maya or illusion; Buddhists, on the other hand, would argue that we are surrounded by suffering and that the essence of a true striver is to break out of this cycle of continuous and constant human suffering. On a more ideological level, on the other hand, is the identity of a person that of being anti-American if he is against the policies of President Bush? Are we, similarly, anti-Chinese if we are swayed by the philosophical writings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama?

Various factors influence identity or who I am. Nationality, for instance, provides identity, though the lines are not as clearly drawn, especially after the introduction of dual nationality and the identification of immigrant populations with their 'mother' country. For years, the 'little Italy' in the United States referred to enclaves where the Italian immigrant could live in the US and yet live 'the Italian way'. It is the same story with the Indians in the UK and in North America where they have made their own exclusive enclaves of sarees and curries. But, at a quite different level, identity is shaped by values. The core of Indianness does not, therefore, lie in the passport that we have but on what Indianness stands for and whether we



Hon Amit Dasgupta

subscribe to similar values. It needs recalling that Nazi Germany annihilated the Jews not because they were not German but despite being German they did not subscribe to the values that Hitler and the Third Reich advocated. Similarly, some Hindu fundamentalist groups in India have begun to argue that 'good' Indians are first and foremost Hindus and that the onus lies on the Muslims to 'prove' their loyalty and allegiance to India so as to qualify for being counted as Indians. I would argue that such a view strikes at the essence of what it is to be Indian, since it the plurality of India that embodies Indianness. In the words of the first Prime Minister of India, "Some kind of dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardization of externals or even of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged." Any challenge to this concept of the unity of India strikes, in my view, at the core of what is India and thus, to what it is to be an Indian.

Multiple identities are, of course, common place. I can be a Bengali from Kolkata, a Xavierian, a liberal who subscribes to socialist values, a civil servant and an Indian. None of these multiple identities need to be in conflict. After the creation of the European Union, being German or Dutch did not conflict with being European. But identities can come in conflict. For instance, working mothers have to play the delicate dance of trying to manage their professions with the responsibilities that accrue as a mother and a wife; when identities clash, a choice needs to be made on which identity takes precedence. But usually, multiple identities do indeed co-exist. The Jewish community in the United States, for instance, are American citizens and at the same time, the single strongest lobbyist group for strong and continued support to the state of Israel. In other words, identity provides a sense of affiliation and thus, the obligation of loyalty.

Where religion determines identity and thus, affiliation and loyalty, it lends itself to pliant use by religious and fundamentalist groups in shaping behavioural and thought patterns. As a result, radicalized religious groups are able to paint other religious communities with a sweeping negative brush to serve their narrow sectarian interests. However intellectually crude this might sound, it has, regrettably, wide-spread support. We are all well aware how post 9/11, western thinking was singularly motivated with a suspicion of Muslims, so much so that people with certain names found themselves at a serious disadvantage.

Can we then choose our identity and who we wish to be? Or, is our identity determined externally and thrust upon us? In other words, am I what I am because I chose to be who I am or, am I who you would like me to be? It is an established fact that peer groups and the dominant members of peer groups are a strong influence on identity. In all such cases, indoctrination results in identity creation. In other words, I become what is expected of me. Interestingly, this is one of the objectives of the globalization process: the creation of the familiar. Following 9/11, the process has only intensified because of the fear of the unknown, the stranger and the unfamiliar.

Francis Fukuyama challenged Marxist thought with his path-breaking essay *The End of History* by arguing that the collapse of the Berlin Wall and thus, the end of the Cold War, represented the triumph of Western values and ideals. According to him, globalization, as we know and experience it, had come to embody the embrace of Western consumerism and culture in hitherto 'closed cultures'. The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union were, accordingly, seen as the victory of Western liberalism and thought. The next logical step would be the globalization of this process, so that the us versus-them could finally be put to rest through the creation

of a global us. We would all, in other words, become clones of western liberal thought.

Historical evidence does not point towards such a process of colonization succeeding; rather the opposite appears to be the logical consequence. In other words, accelerated globalization of the western image would only accelerate the process of alienation and create the outsider. The French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, saw societal norms and mores as determining patterns of acceptable social behaviour; deviants were, thus, anomalies and aberrations. In the writings of the Existentialists, like Sartre, Camus, Kafka, Kierkegaard and others, the outsider (or the deviant) is portrayed as an individual acutely suffering from a sense of total disconnect with his surroundings. In Camus' *L'Etranger*, Mersault, the protagonist, has just received news of his mother's death; he demonstrates

If we were to abandon and deny pluralism, secularism and democracy, we would reject the very idea of what it is to be an Indian. Being Indian and becoming Indian is the embracing of this value structure

no feelings whatsoever: "Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday. I can't be sure." On the eve of his execution, Mersault falls asleep; neither life nor death holds any meaning for him. In Kafka's *The Trial*, the hero is arrested and executed without his ever knowing why. In Maxim Gorky's *Life of a Useless Man*, the protagonist strives, all his life, to be 'useful' to those around him without ever being successful; his only success is an act of committing suicide successfully; it is his ultimate success. When Marc Antony commits suicide in the Hollywood film *Cleopatra*, he refers to his suicide as 'the ultimate betrayal', me from myself. For most of us 'sane' people, these are all 'outsiders' or anomalies and aberrations. Fortunately, they can be isolated and referred to as 'the they' and not as 'us'. But, imagine for one moment if the outsider is not an individual but far greater in number. Would it be possible then to rubbish the outsider as an aberration and a statistic? I put it to you that if globalization is reduced to producing clones in the western image, large sections of the human race will get increasingly, and intolerantly, alienated. The us-versus-them syndrome will not get eradicated; rather it will get further accentuated and irrevocably so. Indeed, the anti-Muslim rhetoric post-9/11 has only played this out over the last few years. Recall also that after the 9/11 attacks, the first man to be killed in the US in a revenge attack was a Sikh, as he was mistaken for being a radical Muslim.

The situation in India is unfortunately increasingly echoing western sympathies, though in a different garb. Fundamentalist Hindu groups have begun to isolate the non-Hindu community. In a country that took pride in its plural character, it is a sad reflection that Muslims are said to feel unsafe in India. This is similar to the agony felt by the Sikh community following the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. In the case of both the Sikh and Muslim community, the reaction has been two fold. At one level, there has been the advocacy of a 'war against India' by militant religious groups but at another and highly influential level, there has been strong advocacy to shun violence and to seek a closer integration with Indian society. The highly respected Darool Uloom Deoband, for instance, recently introduced the path-breaking fatwa against terrorism condemning it as being un-Islamic. The popular Bollywood actor, Shah Rukh Khan, who is also a Muslim, spoke out on prime time TV on the need to follow the preachings of Allah rather than those of the mullah. These are all positive developments but they do raise the question: Is India's pluralism and hence, is Indianness at risk?



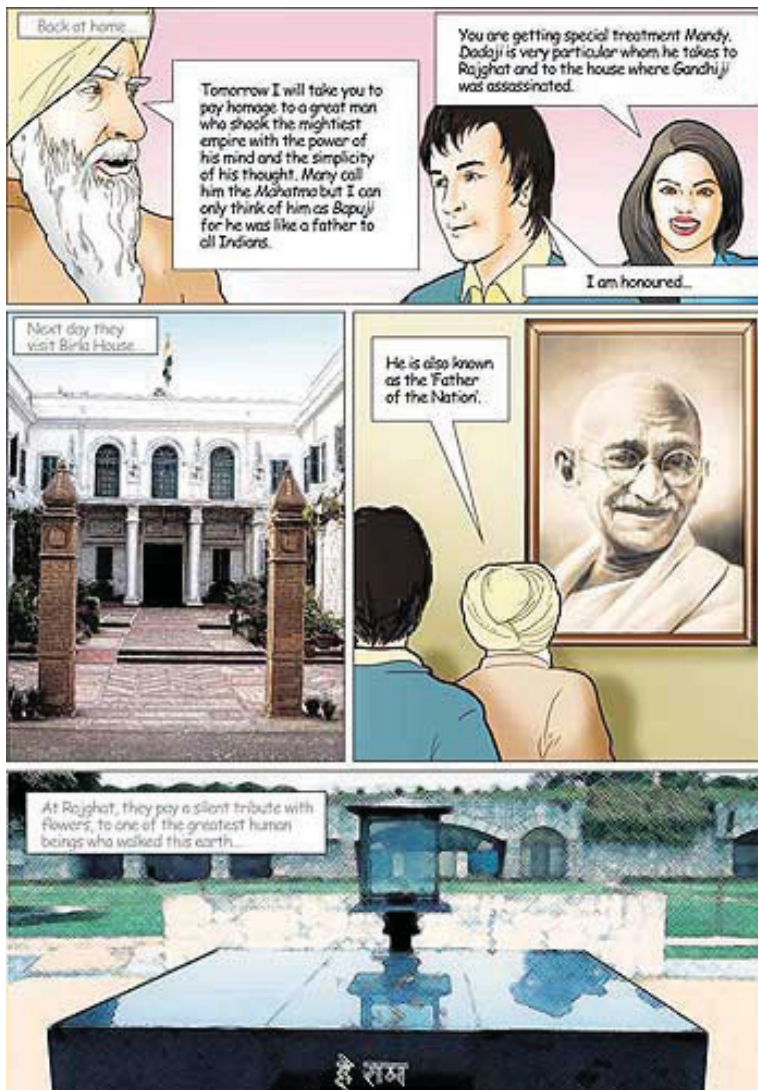
This brings me to my book *Indian by Choice*. The story is about Mandy, a second/third generation Indian-origin American, who disowns his Indian identity as Mandeep and adopts the American identity of Mandy. He chooses not to be Indian because he doesn't feel Indian. To be accepted by his peer groups and by/in American society, he needs to be Mandy. Brought up in Chicago, he is as American as they come—hot dogs, french fries, baseball and the love of all things American, especially blonde. He is, of course, no different from his clones who are in several other parts of the world—England and Australia, the Netherlands and Canada. They blend with their surroundings by assimilating the culture of their adopted home and denying their Indian roots and culture.

Mandy is required, under duress, to travel to India for a family wedding and despite his fears and his doubts, his distaste and abhorrence of all things Indian, he finds himself drawn into a world he does not quite expect. He learns to shed his stereotypical image of India. When it is time for him to return to Chicago, he finds that there is much about India that he simply did not know and a great deal that he would like to know more about. He increasingly reconciles with his suppressed identity and willingly makes the choice of

not denying his Indian roots; he becomes an Indian by choice and finally acknowledges Mandeep.

Choosing to remain Mandy, I believe, is as difficult as deciding to become Mandeep, because India is not easy. There has, for instance, been hugely premature euphoria about India among Indians. The refrain that 'India is shining' or that 'India has arrived' is now fairly prevalent. This has spawned a number of books on India with more or less the same theme. The overall functioning of the Indian economy is not a myth but then, as the Prime Minister of India has repeatedly cautioned, growth is only one side of the story. Deprivation and marginalization is acute and widespread in India. Similarly, it is also a fact that we are high on the corruption index and low on the index of social development. In as much as resurgent India impacts positively on identity by injecting a 'feel good' factor, stories of 'the other India' affect identity in a negative sense; to that extent, identity is co-related with image: How I am perceived is who I am.

Negative images are seen as part of Indianness and, thus, the making of the psyche of an Indian. Katharina and Sudhir Kakar in their book, *The Indians: Portrait of a People* and Pavan Varma in *Being Indian* have put together a menu of what all goes into the making of an Indian, none of which is particularly flattering. Basically, the 'image' of an Indian is essentially a negative one. We are hierarchy conscious, which means that we quickly figure out the pecking order and this determines our behaviour vis-a-vis 'the other'. We are a loud, talkative and argumentative people. We are touchy and sensitive about ourselves and our private lives but feel no qualms about probing the lives of others. We are religious and ritualistic and deeply obsessed with death. We like to relieve



postulate. For instance, ‘corrupt politician’ is as much a truism as ‘honest civil servant’ or ‘a policeman who upholds the law’ is a falsehood. At the same time, I have never heard the charge of corruption levied against Jawaharlal Nehru or Sardar Patel or Maulana Azad or any of the founding fathers of independent India. Similarly, the recently martyred officers Hemant Karkare, Ashok Kamte, Vijay Salaskar, Sandip Unnikrishnan and many others were known not only for their extreme courage but for their integrity and honesty. While some might see them as aberrations (‘the outsider’), I would suggest that they are increasingly becoming the norm.

Furthermore, singular characteristics falsely and simplistically suggest uniqueness in attributes. It may be recalled that Germans were, at one time, singularly identified for producing products that were akin to an international standard: the Mercedes Benz, for instance, was not simply a car; it was a standard that other cars aspired for. And yet, not long ago, it was the Mercedes Benz that was recalled globally for manufacturing defects. Similarly, to typify Indians as garrulous diminishes the talking abilities of Arabs, Latinos, Italians and several others. I would also add that referring to the strong family bonds that Indians are steadfastly proud of ignores the pride of place Italians and Hispanics, for instance, accord their family, especially the elders. In short, some of the characteristics that are mentioned as uniquely

ourselves in public and defecate beside railway lines. We are hugely self-centred and individualistic and so long as no harm befalls us or ours, we are largely unmoved by tragedy. For us, life goes on because *sab kuch chalta hai* (everything goes); we learn to adjust.

So, is this what or who we really are? Is this what adds up to the making of an Indian and one which gives us our identity?

In a country of over one billion people and more than a multitude of culturally driven behavioural patterns, is it possible to generalize and determine what goes into the making of an Indian? Bengalis, for instance, are distinctly different from Marathis, or more importantly, from Oriyas despite physical contiguity. Each is driven by his own distinctive cultural ethos. More interestingly, Marwari communities who have lived for generations in Kolkata and speak the language with native-like fluency, nevertheless retain all the characteristics that keep them apart and distinct from being dubbed Bengali. The Kakars, however, argue that singular Indianness is possible because common features that are integral to the making of the Indian identity and personae can indeed be identified.

At one level, many of us can identify with the Kakar

going into the making of the Indian identity tend largely to be catchy and simplistic and are, in fact, part of the identity of several other people. This does not, of course, mean that several Indians do not possess such characteristics but rather that the parts do not add up to the whole. Both Pavan Varma and the Kakars fall into the trap of falsely identifying generalities with singularity and thus, with identity.

In my view, Indianness as a defining attribute or characteristic of what provides for an Indian identity emerged only with the creation of a partitioned and independent India. The attributes prior to independence cannot be seen as defining Indianness because with partition, India—as a political and geographical entity—was sharply contrasted with Pakistan and with (the now) Bangladesh .

So what is the one single attribute that makes an Indian Indian?

To my mind, it is the belief in a plural, secular and democratic entity quite simply because, unlike Pakistan, India was not created on theocratic principles. Religion did not create India; yet, it was religion that divided and partitioned India. India is



Put simply, India is, and has always been, a concept, an idea and an ideal. If we can shape ourselves and our thinking in her mould, we would become Indian. But what is a nation if not for her people.

India too needs to be constructed so that she is what we make of her.

Joan Robinson, the economist, is reported to have once said that whatever one might think of India the he opposite is also true. I can only say that there is much to be corrected and set right in India. I would also like to say that this can be done if we decide to do it together. Gone are the days that we can say, it is not my job—it is

yours! Or that this part of India is mine because I can identify with it; the rest is not my India .

home to almost all the great religions of the world, including religious communities like the Bah'ais and the Ahmedias—who are banned and shunned in Pakistan. The transition of Bangladesh from East Pakistan has also not witnessed religious freedom or tolerance; indeed, Bangladesh too is a nation with a clearly defined single religious identity. As regards democracy, it is a historically established fact that while India has steadfastly remained democratic since independence, in the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh , non-democratic governance appears to be the norm.

Thus, if we were to abandon and deny pluralism, secularism and democracy, we would reject the very idea of what it is to be an Indian. Being Indian and becoming Indian is the embracing of this value structure. Rejecting it is the rejection of Indianness.

At an erudite academic conference, I recently heard that the phrase 'unity in diversity' described as a cliché. I do not think it is, though I do believe that there are serious challenges to this concept. I would submit that these challenges of religious bigotry are aberrations and anomalies because to my mind, the core of Indianness lies in the belief of religious harmony and thus, of the unity in diversity.

For me, India's diversity is unique especially because of the scale and intensity of such diversity. North to South, East to West, she is neither static nor predictable. Change reflects her soaring spirit and is the essence of her eternal identity. Landscapes, customs, clothing, language, cuisine, even the Gods, differ from place to place. She is like the colours of the peacock's feather: brilliant and distinct and yet, no colour can be separated from the other for they are interwoven like magic. She is not the mosaic or the melting pot. She is the Divine Peacock. She is the Perennial Tree that gives shelter but with roots above and branches below. She is Mystery and Allure. She is home. She is the contemporary and the classical, the modern and the traditional. She is change and continuity. She is the eternal here and now. She is you. She is me. She is everybody. She is the journey to our soul.

It is for all this that I am an Indian.

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What India means to Me

-John Spiers

It is not because India is a secular state that there is toleration of all faiths here; Indians have always been tolerant. Not because they were secular, but because they were truly non-secular, truly spiritual.

I came to this country when I was 23, and an idealist, in full accord with India's aspirations for self-government.

I was brought up in a working class family in cold mountainous Scotland, a country physically as different from India as you can imagine. I remember as a child crying because of the bitterness of the freezing weather, the ice and snow. The very thought of a land of sunshine made me try my hardest to get there as soon as I could. But why India? You may ask. There are so many warm countries under the sun—Mexico, Malaya, the South Sea Islands, Africa, Brazil, and so on. Well, India has always endeared itself as a name of wonder to the European.

My father had been a soldier for years in India, and so had his friends. So, as a child, I heard much about India. And then during my school days, when I began to explore the books that interested me on ancient civilizations, like those of ancient Egypt and Babylon

India has always endeared itself as a name of wonder to the European.

and Greece, I found myself drawn to the source-land of the Orient, to India. And so, at the age of fourteen or so, I was reading all I could find on India. I remember the first reading the *Bhagavad Gita* and I remember too, reading the poetry of Mrs Sarojini Naidu. I wonder how many Indians at that age take such an interest in these things.

I wonder whether they know about Mrs Naidu. I was stirred on reading her verses on India. It is strange how little one sees of Mrs Naidu's poetry on the bookstalls. She is in oblivion like many other great stalwarts of the India of my time.

There was an active branch of the Theosophical Society in my hometown, Perth. When I found that their main interest was India, both in regard to their doctrines as well as politically, through Mrs Annie Besant's activities—another undeservedly forgotten heroine of those days—I joined the Society and had a great enlargement of contact through their version of India.

My immediate problem of getting to India was that I wanted to participate in the Independence movement. Here Providence was kind in finding me a sympathetic lady who became to me a second mother. We shared our ideals and so we both arrived at Bombay (now Mumbai) in April 1930 at the height of the salt *satyagraha* campaign. I was on the black books of the authorities who searched my luggage for hours, and in the years that followed there were always two CIDs (Criminal Investigation Department officials) on my trail.

But I was overjoyed to be in India, and although the summer heat was overpowering, it was fully compensated for by the riotous colour of flamboyant flowers—pink *cassias* and the brilliant red of the *gulmohurs*.

As this is not a history of the last 40 years, nor an autobiography, I will skip my adventures with the Congress, and my meeting with so many famous Indians. I want to hurry on to the real India that I have come to understand far away from all immediate politics and passing events.

Many great lovers of India have never visited this land—great Sanskrit scholars like Max Mueller, poets like Goethe, philosophers like Emerson and Schopenhauer. I would boldly say that some of them seemed to know more about India, the spirit of the land, with their insight and adoption, than many Indians seem to do.

I agree with Max Mueller. In its eternal perennial aspect, India is not a geographical region in space. It is a state of mind. What is this state of mind, this mental climate which is conjured up at least overseas when the name India is spoken in the world? It is the aspect of the wonderful, the awe-inspiring, the *ascharya* that you find in the fourth *Kanda* of the *Kena Upanishad* as well as in the *Gita* (ii. 2), where it refers to the Absolute and to absolutist teaching:

“As wonder one person This (Absolute) sees;

And also a Wonder another one speaks;

Of this as a Wonder another one hears;

Yet even though hearing none knows this at all!”

This transporting *bhava* or mood or state of mind is the same as what Rudolf Otto described many years ago in his book *Das Heilige* as the numinous. It is the transcendental mood, the sense of the contemplative, of that deep realm of understanding which needs nothing of the external world. And that, to me is why India both as a land and as an evocative image has lived on, no matter under what external conditions she has endured, slavery or freedom in the outside sense.

And there is truth here, for all the ancient civilizations have toppled and only their ruins exist, but somehow India persists. The secret here lies in Indian Ideals.

Where the Ideal meets the actual, and in case you think this is a poet's dream, I must say that this is not just a fancy. The Ideal touches the actual in India.

Let me take two examples—religious toleration and non-killing for food or vegetarianism. And although both can be exaggerated, they are of rare value in the world and represent something almost uniquely Indian and due to her noblest sons having “plunged in thought” as Arnold wrote.

These things make India a holy land—where all religious faiths are respected and where animals can live without being killed, hunted and poisoned.

India, and down South especially, is the only place in the entire world, where you find millions of people who do not kill to eat, not only by tradition, but also by choice. It is not only Buddhists and Jainas and Brahmins. The *Tirukkural* praises non-killing and says in a memorable verse that the whole of nature worships with folded hands he who does not kill to eat.

As the Constitution of UNESCO states: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

It is not just mere tradition, there is a true reverence for life.

I only want to say it is a philosophic concept due to the state of mind which is India. But perhaps for mankind in general, the greatest lesson that India's state of mind has brought down to actuality is the lesson of tolerance for all faiths. This is a rare spectacle in the world, even today where not only faiths clash but ideologies.

As the Constitution of UNESCO states: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

Of these defences of peace I say that one of the

greatest is this toleration of all faiths, all beliefs, all ideologies. India means this to me also.

I find political leaders today, people who should know better, taking the credit for toleration in India on the Indian Constitution which makes India a secular state.



Surely it is not because India is a secular state that there is toleration of all faiths here; Indians have always been tolerant.

Not because they were secular, but because they were truly non-secular, truly spiritual.

For an intolerant person cannot be called spiritual. But Europe, the Middle East and Pakistan need to be secularized, need secular legislation to protect those who hold faiths other than the major ones.

In India it is wonderful to enter Indian homes and to see in many a household shrine, full respect given to all the great religious figures, and not only Hindu idols, but the figures of Jesus as well, and a text from Islam. One does not find this generosity of spirit in Christian and Islamic countries. Here temple and mosque and church are often side by side and there is complete liberality and non-interference.

The Holy Office would never tolerate a *Siva* temple or a shrine to *Krishna* or *Hanuman* within the Vatican City or even in Rome.

And that is the test, and that is the glory of India that these people have achieved this great defence of peace.

Instead of weakening their sense of religion, it is strengthened and becomes a philosophic way of life. India means to me this wonderful forbearing spirit which breathes a principle which is universal. This appeals immediately to all the intelligent people of other lands.

Source: Bhavan's Journal 15 August 2003

What India means to Me

What India means to me was a topic given to some of the eminent figures in Sydney. The topic has attracted an overwhelming response.

Before visiting India for the first time in 1983 a wise person told me, “Externally, there will be things in India that you will not appreciate, that will be difficult to digest, but be patient, be understanding, look beyond that, look closely, and gradually you will see, you will experience, and you will appreciate the real beauty of India”. I followed that advice, and now, after many trips to India, I think I can describe India in one word—subtlety. Here is a civilization that does not need, after thousands of years of development, to be in a hurry, to be restless, to be aggressive. Yes, there is tremendous hustle and bustle and honking of horns and loud music, but look closely, and you will detect a calm, methodical demeanour among the people in the midst of this tumult. But all this counts for nothing when in the presence of a living treasure of India, Her Saints, to gaze into their fathomless eyes, to imbibe the peace that surrounds them, to feel that deep within us, in that eternal calm, all was, is and will be well with us and the Universe. How much that has meant to me!

- Robert Grant | Manager, Ramakrishna Sarada Vedanta Society of NSW

My search for a spiritual mentor began in the early 1970's but it was not until 1974 when I met Swami Ranganathananda, who was visiting Sydney and giving a series of lectures and classes on Vedanta philosophy, that I knew my search had ended. Here was a spiritual giant, an extraordinary human being, whose teachings and presence were to be treasured. I became one of his dedicated students and continue to remain so.

His annual visits to Australia and extensive lecture tours world-wide, covering 50 countries, was an inspiration to all who heard his eloquent oratory. He expressed with spiritual brilliance the message of Vedanta in a language that was easily understood and gave us a philosophy for living with its emphasis on human excellence and character building. This was a time when Westerners hungered for a belief system which offered a scientific, intelligent, less violent and experiential philosophy, one that offered answers to individual and world problems, as well as hope for the future, heralding a new and more humane world. From 1974 onwards the number of Australians embracing Eastern religion as a philosophical basis for living would increase enormously and become the fastest growing of any non-Christian religion.

I sincerely believe the spiritual rejuvenation of the West has come from India's Vedantic heritage which offers a religious philosophy that is non-dogmatic, humanistic, universal and profoundly spiritual, thus, building a bridge uniting East and West.

{Swami Ranganathananda was the late 13th International President of the Ramakrishna Mission and Order of Monks (OM) and the author of many books and had earned the honorary title of the second Vivekananda.}

- Yvonne Malykke | Founding member of the first Ramakrishna Vedanta Society in Australia 1974
Founder, editor and feature writer for the Australian journal “Cosmos”

To me India is a beautiful country, rich and diverse in its culture, people, and actions. From cricket, to Bollywood, a highly educated workforce, mutual business opportunities, the world's largest democracy, and teachings of great people like Gandhi, India never ceases to amaze me on how much it has to offer. Through my involvement with India over the years, I have had the opportunity to create wonderful friendships, business contacts, and positive experiences, which has allowed me to develop both personally, and professionally.

India's welcoming attitude, peaceful nature, and its ability to both teach and learn, provide a great role model for all. The positive spirit that overwhelmingly resides within its people, despite the adversity and hardship it has had to face including natural disasters, terrorism, and poverty, shows an inner strength that inspires me daily. Many years ago, I was taught that India is about relationships and the relationships I have developed with the country and community over the years has made me a better person for it. I look forward to the continuing association, and experiences, for many years to come.

- Robert de Lorenzo | Director Offshore Enterprise Office | Westpac Banking Corp.

As I've never been there, India began in my imagination and has been nourished by its writers. It's there in the wry humour and consoling humanity R.K. Narayan's *Malgudi* and the bitter elegy of Aravind Adiga's *White Tiger* and novels like these have constructed a multi-faceted picture of the world of India. That imagination has been fed and made real by cricket: the sinuous and subtle web of spin of the incomparable Bedi, Chandrasekar and Prasanna and the easy elegance of batsmen such as Vengsarkar have been steeled and tempered by the realism and dedication which have made the contemporary Indian team such a force in world cricket. My sense, though, is that there are many Indians, all of them real and all of them offering their own essence, from the high-tech glitter of Bangalore (now *Bangaluru*) to the magnificent anachronism of the Kolkata tramway system. And, of course, the food. It all started a quarter of a century ago watching Madhur Jaffrey cooking on BBC television in the depths of an English winter. How good *aloo gosht* tasted as the dark closed in. So, I'll make my own visit one day and sit under a sandalwood tree in Mysore and maybe even share some *kulfi* with V.V.S. Laxman, if he'll catch the train down from Hyderabad.

- Warwick Franks | Journalist

India is a country I consider most holy and yet paradoxically, also a land of extremes. This was apparent to me on my very first visit in 1991 and I was acutely touched by the full spectrum, ranging from extreme poverty—heartbreaking and ugly—to extreme wealth—splendiferous and beautiful. As my visits to India are always a spiritual pilgrimage rather than a tourist pursuit, I am ever aware of India as the birthplace of *Sat Sanatan Dharma*. It is the land where for millennia, holy incarnations have lived and worked for the benefit of all humanity, revealing the path to ultimate freedom from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. On each visit to India, I feel it a unique and valuable experience to dwell in a country where spirituality permeates all aspects of daily life in full and open expression, no matter what one's faith or creed. It is always a deeply moving experience to visit this kaleidoscope of a country where every human expression is visible, no less experienced, and to rest assured that the spiritual teachings as expressed by the *Ashrams* of numerous great lineages of past and present Holy incarnations and Saints, will guide us on our individual human journey. Mother Earth has only one Great Barrier Reef, one Amazon Rainforest, one Mount Everest and one only country with the spiritual heritage of India. This is what India means to me.

- Bhakti Johnson | National Coordinator for The Australian Association of Yoga (AAY) in Daily Life

India means the world to me even though our existence there had gone through lot of turmoil by creation of Pakistan. Indian History has been so, for many millenniums. India is the earliest multicultural, multi-faith multicoloured society on earth. It has accepted all kinds of people through the ages, whether they came as asylum seekers or invaders or for trade or business, and settled there. I am proud of my roots in India even though there are lots of conflicts. It is the natural consequence of huge variety of human beings with differences of opinions, of belief systems, of traditions etc. Indian values are, respecting humane values in all. All are welcome except evil of violence. Indian background has indelible stamp on me which attracts me to Indian diaspora which ever country I visit. Everywhere they have earned good name. Australia is my home since the last 37 years and I love it but I visit India each year to charge my batteries for the future.

It is a delight to see the progress India is making. Sadly it is being neutralised by growing population. It hurts me to see that poverty is still endemic there and I never miss an opportunity to go and talk to very deprived and needy people. I learn from them what contentment and acceptance means. Their children are happily playing with each other as in "Slum dog", in spite of the evil of adult greed taking advantage of their innocence. Wonder how? It is India!

- Mina Singh Batra | Executive Member "United Nations Association of Australia (NSW) and Adviser (UN Conventions)—National Council of Women (NSW)

When we grow up in India, we take it for granted everything that India has to offer—be it religious value, family support or strong cultural aspects. But when I migrated to Australia at a very young age, I started feeling strongly as an Indian than I would ever have felt in India. Soon you realize you are a little ambassador of India. You proudly carry the values of India and try to implant into a country that you chose to live. For instance, I migrated to Oz about 35 years ago there were not many from Indian subcontinent. Obviously you miss the people of your country, leave alone people who can speak your own language. The sky scrapper buildings, beautiful parklands and beaches in Sydney have profound impact in the initial stages. But soon you realize conspicuous absence of Temples, when you see only Churches and Mosques around. There is a strong inner drive to build a Temple in this land. It appears as a daunting task even to think that such a thing can be a possibility here. But now we have the biggest Hindu Temple in the southern hemisphere here.

We have given the best opportunity for our children to learn Indian classical dance, as the drive come from reinstating Indian art form in the minds of the next generation. I personally doubt that I would have made them to learn *Bharat Natyam*, if I were living in India. Similarly when we climb the ladder in our chosen career, we have so many hurdles and impediments. But it is the Indian sense of tolerance which made us to digest and get over and win at the end. We feel proud when India wins cricket or when India is identified as the economic power house along side with China. Every small step you take forward means a giant leap for Indian kind.

- Dr Vijay Kumar | Scientist

Over 30 percent of Hornsby Shire's residents were born overseas, of which about 3,000 residents were born in India. The influence of the Indian community can be felt throughout the shire and this is set to grow in the future. Australia and India have much in common, largely due to the strong British influence in the recent development of both countries. The strong but friendly rivalry Australia and India enjoy on the cricket field is possibly the best example of this. My first experience of India came when I travelled there just under a year ago. The size of the country is indeed daunting, as is the diversity of its culture. Indian hospitality is as generous as it is unique. The memories of this trip will be treasured by me for many years to come. The continued rise in India's economic, political and cultural status will mean that the country continues to have a major influence on the rest of the world into the future. This influence will be greatly felt in Australia through our close economic and cultural ties. Hornsby Shire is fortunate to be home to a significant and fast-growing Indian community which greatly enriches the wider community.

- Nick Berman | Lord Mayor of Hornsby

I would rather rephrase it to 'What I can do for India' so that India, the nation, as espoused in the minds of the founding fathers can bear fruition. India is a way of life; India is a culture that draws upon a legacy that is 5000 years old, multi-racial, multi-linguistic, multi-religious entity which professes unity in diversity. India is the largest blossom of democracy, a nation that has never led her army across her boundaries, but has conquered like no other nation has. Once the crown of British Empire on which the Sun never set, India is also the embodiment of the spirit of non-violence. What India means to me?: India is my mother, India is every breath I take, India is my life, INDIA is ME. INDIA is also a dream. A dream that I see in a million young eyes. A dream of a strong vibrant nation, where discrimination is an unknown word, where all are born free and have access to education & health. A nation that is in term with her soul—a nation that is morally resolute in her integrity, fearless on the face of adversity, united in fraternity.

- Arun Kumar Jagatramka | Chairman, Director India NRE Minerals Pty Ltd

I write regularly for The Indian Down Under, published in Sydney since 1987. Aptly, some Australians call me "the Indian down-under". And that is what I am, an Indian and an Australian. Born and educated in India, I have lived longer in Australia than in India. I learnt high ideals and principles from my parents, siblings and teachers while I was growing up in India and try to pass on these high values to my sons. What India means to me? India is my Mother, irreplaceable, while Australia is my Mate. When I hear old songs of K.L. Saigal, Pankaj Mallik and Talat Mehmood, I mentally fly to India without buying a plane ticket! I remember the first movie I had seen in India, Shakuntala, the first time I had pedalled a bicycle and the first cricket Test Match witnessed at Brabourne Stadium, Bombay (now Mumbai). To sum up:

Childhood memories, savouring bhelpuri at Chowpati,
Crowds everywhere, hawkers on streets, opulence and poverty,
Family closeness, music nostalgia, cricket and friends aplenty,
This is what India means to me.

- Kersi Meher-Homji | Research Scientist in Virology | Author of 12 research papers and 12 cricket books

India emphasizes family integrity, family loyalty, and family unity. For me the Indian family is strong, stable, close, resilient, and enduring which is the most important institution that has survived through the ages? The mesmerising Indian music comforts me as the origins are deeply spiritual and therefore of particular meaning. Although the Indian mouth watering fabulous cuisines are popular worldwide, my wife's Indian cooking doesn't match any other cuisine I've tasted. Holi is known as the festival of colours, friendship and harmony, which is eagerly awaited throughout the year. Hola Mahalla of Anandpur Sahib attracts the attention of northern India and is celebrated with great fervour.

I admire Taj Mahal of Agra, fresh coconut of Chowpatty beach, glamour of Bollywood, bargains of New Delhi markets, silk of Mysore and tropical beaches of Goa. Unlike some historical sacred sites, my heart rests at the Golden Temple of Amritsar which is as alive with religious fervour and sacredness as it ever was, and visitors are welcomed to join in the experience. Although the building itself is of tremendous historical and architectural interest, it is the Golden Temple's great spiritual meaning for Sikh believers (and others) that is most memorable. India is a country of my birth and I admire many aspects of its beauty, nature and different religions.

- Harmohan Singh Walia

India is a fantastic inspiration to me. What's in a name? In this case, everything. India has inspired me to appreciate the fundamentals of human existence. An amazing creation of diversity in terms of culture, people and religious belief, so different and yet bound together by a single thread of humanity. The ultimate experiment in human existence. India is extraordinary. And what makes her so extraordinary—Her People. Their contribution to science, arts and commerce over centuries remains unsurpassed. For a country that has enriched the world, are we arrogant, pompous and swollen with pride?—No. On the contrary we are humble and modest. Our greatness lies in our simplicity. It is this that inspires me the most. India inspires me to bring out the best in me, not just at work but at home. Not just with colleagues but with friends. Not just with elders but with youngsters. She also inspires me to recognise the best in others, to recognise their finest qualities, to rejoice when they succeed and comfort them when they fail. India will always continue to inspire me, as the famous saying goes, 'you can take a Man out of India but you can't take India out of a Man'.

- Rajesh Katakdhond | MBA (Marketing) is a management professional who has worked for large MNCs

Although I was born and brought up in Pakistan, I am sure nearly everyone would agree that is more or less the same as being brought up in India. Both the countries share a lot of core values. And why do I say that? I have several Indian and Pakistani born friends, and all of them agree that they were brought up with very similar values. And it is these very values that bond us all Pakistanis and Indians together. So what are these values that I am talking about, and how we apply them while living in Australia. We call anyone older than us either Uncle or Aunty, even if they are complete strangers. For example, any friend's parents automatically become Uncle and Aunty. This is our way of showing respect to those who are far more experienced in life than us. Also, we never raise our voice in the presence of any adults, no matter who they are. We give extra respect to teachers who we either address by Sir or Miss. This is the case even if we meet our former teachers, and still we prefer to call them by either Sir or miss, never by their name directly. We feel uncomfortable calling our teachers by their first names, because according to the values we have been brought up with, that is extremely rude. This list would go on, but it is sufficient to say that the identity of Indian descent we brought with us is deeply embedded in our values which we cherish, and will hold onto forever.

- Hadi | Young Student, his father was born in India but he himself was born in Pakistan

I was born in India. *Bharat Mata* has made me what I am today. The rich culture is a boon to the mankind. The traditions, respect for the elders, faith in God & the guru has shaped the destiny of the great Indian nation. The tenacity, grit & faith in the heritage have propelled *Bharat* to this Status amongst the nations of the world today. Diversity of religions, languages & customs has been fused together to bring multiculturalism. This has given strength to India. Australia can gain plenty from India both in technology, science & commerce. With a GDP of about 7% when the world economies are in recession tells the world about INDIA. I look to India for guidance, *Bhagwat Geeta*, *Ramayan* & *Bhavan's* treatises bring me the strength I need. Bharat means a lot, definitely a lot to me & I pray to God to give me a rebirth in India. To get birth in India is the best.

- Dilip Chopra | Councillor

To me, my motherland India is a nation and an idea too... serene and a bit mysterious... where I first opened my eyes; grew up; had my education; discovered religious and spiritual self and this is the place which taught me how to be a true me. When I think about India, thoughts come drenched with patriotism as well as with its serious problems. It's like looking through a kaleidoscope. A system where for every rule, there are two loopholes and three palms are to be greased. The land that once nurtured *ahimsa* and *dharma* has social fabric so thin that it wets itself in blood at the slightest provocation.

But despite the problems of poverty, cast system, corruption, communalism, India shines with its spiritualism, its history; its multi layered culture, its warmth and advanced state-of-the-art and cutting edge technology and with its colourful, musical Bollywood. India makes us proud and continues to evoke world's interest too. Rich

or poor, one is always proud of their own mother. For me, it's like that. It is my mother India who gave me opportunities to excel and call Australia my new home. No matter what, there will be always a part of India within me. I value my inheritance and am proud of it. India's triumphs bring joy to my heart and India's pain echoes within me.

- Anita Barar, SBS Radio

My pre-school years were spent in the idyllic state of Arunachal Pradesh where I was born amongst the hills, forests, rivers and the beautiful and hardy people of the state. After a year of school in Imphal my brothers and I were sent to our grandparents in Allahabad for schooling. Here we started knowing the Bengali culture. We shocked our relatives by our dislike of the mother of Bengali sweets *Rosogollas* but soon started loving Bengali cuisines. We started speaking Bengali quite well at home and Hindi or English outside.

Visits to Kolkata were exciting times. But felt Durga Pooja in Allahabad was more fun, guavas the tastiest, freshly roasted peanuts during winter evenings the best, and mangoes in summers unbeatable to the chagrin of my cousins in Kolkata. In different times I considered myself a Bengali—Arunachali, UPite, Bihari (five years schooling) depending on where I was living. Upon entering office life I identified myself with the cities where I worked. Many of the regional festivities and cuisines have now become a part of our family life. Each of these places have left a special place in my heart. The multicultural thing is so integral in India that now when it is talked about I find it odd. Being born in independent India my friends and I feel uplifted in the successes of our country and dismayed when it fails as if it was our own. So to me my identities were many but one which was always constant was that I am an Indian and that's what mattered. The sum total of my life is what India means to me.

- Sujay Banarji | CEO, New India Assurance Co Ltd

A Cup Half Full....

A Sea of Humanity

In the Warmth of a Smile;

The Serenity of Sages

Amidst the Fire of Ambition;

The Will to Succeed

And not wreck another's Dream;

Intellect to light up

The map of Destiny;

Child like Simplicity

Comes naturally to many

Alongside Respect for the Elderly,

As the Past fuels a Successful Future

Entwining itself in a Nation,

With a Cup always Half Full;

This is my INDIA!

- Sheba Nandkeolyar | Asian Business Strategist & Managing Director, Multicultural Connexions

On my day-1 in Australia in the mid seventies I was reborn as a *dwija* from the stark contrast between India and Australia. I opened my eyes and saw 'conformity' written in the air - a bit 'military' yet likeable. In my early years at University of New South Wales (UNSW), fellow college residents reflected both the population at large and those who descended from Babel Tower, to celebrate life's common dance. Unable to surrender their own rhyme and rhythm they declared 'conformity' unreasonable. If I felt out-of-step with expectation, I asked for a forgiveness that was granted and even respected on the same platform of humanity that I shared with the nation. Yet for me Australia remained a foreign land until Paul Keating called for its 'cultural uniformity' transcribed into 'secular multiculturalism' much of which was abused along the way

as ‘diversity without centrality’. Keating was voted out and I became truly an Australian. By then the image of *Shiva-Kali* (I knew as a Bengali child) has emerged in me as Kali, the ever-changing Nature, endowed with endless diversities, emanating from ‘*Shiva*’: the eternal principle of truth and joyful beauty. I long for this consciousness from day-1 of my next birth.

**- Dr Ashit Mohan Maitra | (Formerly a Principal Research Scientist
CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) Division of Energy Technology,
North Ryde, NSW 2113)**

I left the shores of India many years ago, in my very early twenties, when I first went to Europe, where I spent 12 years and then came Australia 25 years ago. During all that time, I nurtured deep, nostalgic feelings for India. A few years ago, I was invited to a Citizenship Ceremony, where the then Governor General, Michael Jefferies was the chief guest. After the Ceremony, I was invited to an adjoining room to partake the traditional Lamingtons and coffee along with the GG and other dignitaries. Since the Indian cricket team was touring Australia at that time, the GG strode straight across to me and asked, “Who do you go for in cricket?”

I replied, “Your Excellency, My heart goes for India where I was born, my head goes for Australia which is my adopted country but I go for the winning team!” There was loud laughter and perceptible good will prevailed all round. This, in essence, is what India means to me and this feeling has been inculcated in by my wife and myself in to our sons also, being reinforced by frequent visits to India and close relationship with our people back home.

**- Lalli Sethuram | Chairman, Blacktown Migrant Resources Centre (MRC) & Director, Millennium
Foundation**

The close familial values hardwired into the DNA of virtually every Indian ensures that one associates India first and foremost with the family back home. There is a magnetic attraction—one almost needs a fix of India every few months, as one pines for the chaos, the crowds and the colour. The heat and dust, the food and the friends, the smells, sights and sounds. The blind faith, devotion, spirituality and the belief in karma. The magnificent, ancient monuments which reek of class and a civilisation which was eons ahead of its contemporaries. And, oh yes, the sublime classical music and the esoteric dance forms.

I take great pride in my Indianness as I believe we are generously and uniquely imbibed with culture, tradition, and civility. 21 years after leaving the *Matrubhoomi*, I unfailingly cry whenever I hear “*Jana Gana Mana*” or even the Raj Kapoor song “*Jis Desh me Ganga Behtey Hain*”. I cry wistfully every time I see the Taj Mahal (even in photos or on TV!). I cry whenever I read about Bapu and his wisdom.

I guess you can take the cry-baby out of India but you cannot take India out of the cry-baby?

India means so much to me that just writing all this has made me homesick.

Nothing an Alphonso Mango can’t cure!

- Darshak Mehta | LBW Trust

I was born and brought up and educated in India and, therefore, I am an Indian, a proud one at that. I am a proud Indian because I belong to a land which has, over time, spread the importance of practicing the noble virtues of mankind like truth, honesty, love and compassion. I feel proud to have been born in a land which has given birth to some of the greatest human beings the World has seen. Therefore India is my beloved motherland immaterial of the fact that I now live outside the country of my origin.

My India’s culture dates back to 500 BC which means it is more than 2,500 years old and, therefore, one of the oldest and time tested rich cultural heritages of the World. It is a matter of pride for all Indians that in spite of onslaught of external forces on our culture, not a dent has been inflicted on my country’s culture and is still a beacon of hope for this troubled World. I am sure India will conquer the World not through the use of modern weapons of mass destruction but by the propagation of the Gandhian principles of non-violence, love, peace and unity. Therefore, I have every reason to be proud of my country, INDIA.

- Raj Natarajan | Immediate Past President—United Indian Association (UIA)

It is the land my parents were born

It is the land me & all my family were born

It is the land of the Holy Rivers

It is the land of Mahatma Gandhiji

It is the land of Adi Sankara who preached Sanatan Dharma

It is the land of Lord Krishna & Lord Rama

It is the land of Taj Mahal

It is the land of history & culture, arts & sciences

It is the land of true multiculturalism & faiths

It is the land of hope for the future

THAT'S WHY I LOVE MY INDIA!

- By Vish Viswanathan | President, FAIA (Federation of Australian Indian Association Inc.)

I have a vision for India by year 2020. I wish to see India in UN Security Council with full responsibilities as China currently has. I wish to see India as a country which is self-sufficient in its energy supply and Australia helping India by doing Uranium trade with it. I wish to see a rapid evolution in the political behavior in India whereby the regionalism and casteism getting irrelevant in India, more educated people getting into the politics, political parties denying tickets to people with criminal backgrounds and national priorities getting much more importance than the parochial ones. I want to see the growth of two party system in India with only minor role for the regional parties. I have a vision of India with more than 10% GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth with very little unemployment. I wish to see a caring India where social values are given lot of importance and where poor people are not neglected. Money should not be everything. As far as Indian Australians are concerned, I wish to see us uniting as Indians first and not over-playing the regional politics. I wish to see Indian Australians playing significant roles in the political system in Australia.

- Dr Yadu Singh | Secretary, Australian Indian Medical Association (AIMA)

Noted Historian, Eric Hobsbawm once said, "What makes a Nation is the past. What justifies one Nation against others is the past". India's ancient civilization which is almost 10,000 years old vouches this remark. To me India, my Motherland, is supreme, an "Economic Superpower in the Making". India's footprint is already marked on the Information Superhighway, Anti Ballistic Missile Shield in line of "Star War" saga through indigenous technology—third in the world, and historic Moon Odyssey in planting her Tri-colour on the Moon through *Chandrayan-I*. India is now a space power, the fourth nation in the world after US, Russia and the ESA (European Space Agency).

India has come out from the shadow of history to the sunlight of tomorrow. It is now the fastest growing economy in the world holding the rank of world's fourth largest GDP in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). It is the world's largest democracy. It maintains third largest military force in the world. Almost half of its population is below 20 reflecting the young spirit of the nation. It lacks wealth but not suffers from intellectual poverty.

That the energy is critical to national security is self-evident. Energy security is the fuel to power the economic engine of a nation. India's thirst for energy will be quenched by its signing the nuclear deal with US in form of 123 Agreement. As of 2009, India is placed ninth in the world in terms of operational number of nuclear power reactor. India is shining. I see no reason why India will not take her rightful place on the high table of world power with such a spiritual heritage and well-educated population. Only time will tell...

- Dr Som Majumdar | JP

For me India is the journey.

It is the destination

It is the solace

It is the warmth

It is the joy

It is the agony

It is the irony

It is the ecstasy

It is the longing

It is the bell of a temple that rings at the time of Goraj with a crimson backdrop

It is my mother's lap

It is my father's shoulder

It is where my forefathers started their final journeys

It is where I would want my remains to be immersed into the soil

After leaving my fingerprints on the hearts of my loved ones.

- Bhavin Raval | Swami Narayan (BAPS) Temple, Sydney

In my view India is not only a motherland for me, but also a teacher who taught how peaceful the hard way of truth is, the one which we need to adhere till the end of the life. It is a fertile land which sprouts the seeds of love in human beings but acceptance of this essence depends on the view and way of observation of the seeker. India has a rich culture and to be an Indian is like a divine gift for me. The memories related to India from my childhood to youth are the most memorable days of my life. I am proud to be a part of that culture which has its roots been expanding for the past 3000 years. A multi-cultured society that has an equal respect to each individual's culture and beliefs.

- Jasbir Kaur

INDIA... a land where I was born... a land that holds my precious childhood and adolescence... a land that holds my family and friends... a land which I call home! Nothing compares to the variety, colour and festivities that you will find there. Each state there is like a country within itself with different culture, food, language, festivals, etc. One can find a unique blend of culture and modernism. Yes, there are villages with lower infrastructures but I want to believe that it is improving and I have seen the progress in some villages I visited this time. INDIA for me is like the corner or room in your house which you call your you're your special spot inside your house where you are so comfortable however it is... I don't know what it is that makes it so special... may be it is the family or the friends but whatever it is I am in love with the total package called INDIA!

- Veena Sashikumar

India, its culture and its peoples mean more to me than I could express in a book or two. My infatuation started when I visited the Theosophical Society headquarters in what was then Madras way back in 1952.

Across the road from the compound was a cultural centre where I could watch students learning dancing, music and drumming, and the splendour went deep into my soul and along with the darshanas, myths and legends, has flowered there undaunted for 57 years.

It is strange that while I became an instant Indian all the young men I met were trying to be as Westernized as possible. When we went out together it must have been a sight that amused or surprised many – they with their long trousers, shirt and tie; maybe even shoes and socks, and me in chapals, kurta and dhoti. It was the beginnings of a fusion that is now in full swing.

Indian culture, philosophy, and religion has given me the learning, wisdom and catholic world-view I could not find in my own culture. I am deeply grateful. *Jai Hind!*

- Russell Atkinson

India to me is like a huge garland, made up of a wide variety of bright and blooming flowers that are strung together by an invisible thread, the invisibility of the holding thread being a mystery to the world. The garland has remained firm, fresh and elegant for centuries, the only thing that keeps changing at times, is some kind of a floral rearrangement. The individual flowers, with their rich ancestry, are each a piece of beauty on their own and today they can be seen blossoming in different corners of the world; however it's the garland that has always drawn the primary admiration. With over one billion flowers in it, the garland today is obviously heavy but sturdy. Its unique fragrance draws visitors' like bees to scented flowers, the kaleidoscope of colours seduces the onlookers and the price tag marked on it makes it unaffordable, even for the wealthiest.

Unfortunately there are some evils around, to tear up the wreath into pieces, but its guardians are strong enough to protect its integrity. It makes me feel proud to be a flower of that dazzling garland.

- Sandip Hor

India! Simply marvellous, great, the world capital of spiritualism. India means much to me. The land of great rishis, sadhus, Gods, religions, spiritualism, people of different cultures, varieties, languages and simply varieties in everything. It is just impossible for a person to feel, realise and absorb India especially when he is not in India. I have realised importance of India only when I moved away from India. The feeling of ownness, family values, rituals, festivals, gaiety just went missing when I left India and landed here in Sydney. The morning hustle bustle, the crowd, sweets, friends are simply being missed too much by me that it is really difficult to compensate for all of them. India has become so much absorbed in me that it is just impossible to take India out of me and especially when I am physically away from it. It is simply difficult for me to forget the years that I spent in India, the childhood, schooling, professional life and simply the life. India means too much to me.

- Parveen, Bhavan Australia

The first introduction to India that I got as a child was from the pages of *Ramayana* that I read regularly in our village *Ramlila Kuti* in Fiji. In my youth these were supplemented by images from Bollywood movies. Later on, during my graduate and post graduate study days in London, I was exposed to negative stereotypes of India, mainly as land of beggars and snake charmers.

Somehow, I did not believe that a country which has thousands of years of unbroken history that boasted of many golden periods can be reduced to land of beggars and snake charmers. In 1994 I decided to visit India for the first time, not only to discover India, but also to discover my ancestral villages in India. Since then I have visited India on almost annual basis, having opportunity not only to discover India's enormous wealth and beauty, but also my paternal grandmother's village. Having walked on the grounds that my *aaji* had once walked, today I feel connected to India. Living in exile away from my home in Fiji, India is my spiritual home, my *matrubhumi*, that none one can ever take away from me. I feel very much a part of India's growing stature as one of the leading nations of the world.

- Satish Rai

India is my photo gallery of memories and experiences. It represents what I mostly like about it and few dislikes. It reminds me that as a child playing on and climbing the guava tree in the garden of our house was great fun. Some times I use to climb the roof of house through it. India in form of my parents, friends, my school attract me like a magnet attracting iron. I visit India many times in my thoughts or at least once in 3 years physically. I thank India for my education, opportunity to travel and experience variety of life. I am also grateful to my teachers and many others who selflessly shaped my life. I hated the feeling of leaving a city while transfer in India. The sadness was due to parting with very good friends whom I once did not know.

I love India and represent India wherever I go. I love Indian food, music and literature. My city Jamshedpur is like a big family with people of all parts of India working and helping each other. The explorer in me brought me to Sydney, Australia. I call Sydney home.

- Shashi Baranwal

India for me is much more than a country. It is a living, dynamic part of my identity; it is my spiritual and ethical centre; it is my home. India captures both the darkness of our fears and the colours of our dreams. Amidst the abject poverty of the slums reside the aspirations of an eternally optimistic nation. Behind a veil of corruption lies the generosity and hospitality of a welcoming people. Within the tempest of riots survives a quiet commitment to the Gandhian ideals of truth, love and compassion. India is more than the majesty of the Taj Mahal, the melodrama of Bollywood, the strokeplay of our cricketers. India is the story of its people; a story punctuated with the sacrifices of our forefathers, and defined by our struggle for independence. India is to me a narrative bursting with our grand successes, darkened by our occasional failures and propelled by succeeding generations. However, it is an incomplete narrative waiting, patiently, for us to contribute our chapter.

- Bibhu Aggarwal, Script Writer, *Gandhi: The Power of One*

The Australia India Relationship: Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

- Neville J Roach AO*

Address to IIT Association of Australia (IITAA)

I am delighted and honoured to have been asked by IITAA to speak to you this evening. IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) has become one of the most admired brands in the world and IITians are recognised for their achievement and leadership around the world.

I have been here to promote stronger links between the country of my birth and my adopted country. So I hope that you will find my remarks tonight of some interest.

That there have been so many major developments, both good and bad, affecting the Australia-India relationship.

Year 2008 was itself extremely significant, for it was then that the Nuclear Suppliers Group agreed to allow its members to engage in nuclear trade with India. While this decision didn't and mean that Australia would export uranium to India. It was a highly significant step forward for the Australia-India relationship. Australia has been one of the most strident critics of India after the 1998 nuclear tests. Australia's vote in favour of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) resolution—though it could have just abstained—shows how far the Australia-India relationship had progressed in the past decade. Other major developments in the past 9 months include the re-election of the Congress-led Government in India, India's victory in Test cricket, and, more recently, the Indian student issue and the appointment of Peter Varghese, an Australian of Indian origin and one of Australia's seniormost public servants, as High Commissioner to India.

I would like to briefly cover how much has changed in Australia-India relations since I first came here in 1961. Although Australia had a White Australia policy then, neither my wife, Gladys, nor I experienced any prejudice. The White Australia policy was, by definition, racist. But the discrimination only applied to immigration. Within Australia, the attitude to Indians, the few of us who were here, was very friendly. It's still relatively easy in Australia to gain access to the highest levels of Government and business.

Australians, generally, had an affection for India, but, at a political level, relations with India were lukewarm at best. Australia was already locked into



Neville Roach

the US alliance and, because Pakistan had joined defence pacts with the US, while India had chosen non-alignment, Australia tended to support Pakistan as an ally, which India was not. At the time, Australia accepted the Dulles doctrine, "if you are not with us, you are against us". But the overall reality was that neither India nor Australia regarded each other as very important.

Australia-India relations continued to be a low key affair for a long time. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war did make a difference. Australia and India were no longer on opposite sides. The total dismantling of the White Australia policy by the Whitlam government in the early 70s saw the beginning of migration from India, in small numbers at first, increasing gradually through the 80s and 90s and then rapidly in this decade.

But the real turning point in relations came in the late 90s when India's rapid economic growth following the Manmohan Singh reforms of 1991 resulted in a massive growth of exports from Australia to India worth billions of dollars.

The other major development affecting Australia-India relations has been the phenomenal growth of Indians coming to Australia. In 2007–08, India was the single largest source country for migrants, under the General Skilled Migration category, ahead of China and even

the United Kingdom! India has now become one of the most important countries for Australia, a reality that was recognised at Kevin Rudd's 2020 Summit, a landmark event that I was honoured to be invited to last year. In preparing for the Summit, I decided that, if one was to make any impact at all, one had to focus on one issue only. I chose the Australian-India relationship. I summarised my input as follows:

Substantially stronger links with India will greatly benefit Australia's future security and prosperity. India, a stable democracy, is critical to the stability of the Indian Ocean rim. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) says, "By 2050, India could be the third largest economy in the world by a significant margin. India will increasingly supply our greatest need, skilled human resources. An India-focused program starting now, covering security, trade, investment, the development of India-related skills and migration attraction, will make the biggest difference."

The stream I was allocated to was, "Australia's future security and prosperity in a rapidly changing region and world". As the only Indian Australian among the 100 delegates in this stream, I made it my responsibility to push hard for India to be given 'top tier' focus. It was no easy task, but the outcomes were remarkably positive. Clearly there is a lot of goodwill towards India in the Australian community. A key recommendation that made it to the report delivered to the Prime Minister was the need for closer engagement with four major regional economies: the US, Japan, China and India. I am sure this is the first time at a national event that India was placed in the top priority group, in the same bracket as the US, China and Japan.

As practical steps to engage with the Four Majors, we made two specific recommendations:

The first was to establish a regional energy security forum including all four majors and Australia. Given how critical energy security is for China, Japan and India, and how closely it is linked to the dominant issue of our time, climate change, the strategic importance of this Forum cannot be overstated. Making it happen could be one of Australia's greatest ever contributions to our region and the world and guarantee our own security and prosperity. It is worth pointing out that the vehicle we recommended for the Energy Security Forum was Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) + 3 + 3. This was specifically chosen because it is the only regional grouping which includes both Australia and India. Interestingly, the USA is not part of this group, perhaps another sign of Australians wanting to engage more closely and independently with Asia!

The second recommendation was to establish and

fund four studies institutes/centres covering the US, Japan, China and India. If this recommendation is implemented, Indian studies will be the biggest beneficiary precisely because it has been the most neglected—so a major Australia-India Institute would represent a giant leap forward in our in-depth knowledge and understanding of India and this will contribute significantly to stronger and more meaningful Australia-India relations. In this connection, while the 2020 Summit recommendations were clearly directed to the Australian Government and community, we Indians should also work closely with the Indian Diplomatic Missions in Australia to achieve outcomes that benefit both countries. We should seek guidance from the Indian High Commissioner and the Consul General on how best to get as much support as possible from India for all the proposed India-related initiatives. As an example, I believe we should approach the Government of India and major Indian corporations and academic institutions and seek their encouragement and material support for the establishment of the propose Indian Studies Centre.

Looking at Asia more generally, we recommended, a comprehensive, cross-agency, national strategic plan for a major reinvigoration of Asia literacy in Australia, to enhance our global engagement in trade, security and people to people exchanges. Although not specifically stated, the clear understanding was that, for Australia to maximise the benefit we derive from the Indian opportunity, we would need to ensure that India-literacy and Indian languages, especially Hindi, were specifically included in the Asia-literacy drive.

Unfortunately, thanks to the Global Financial Crisis, the momentum built by the 2020 summit has largely been lost. The Government's response was only delivered in April this year and only nine out of the many recommendations have been accepted. While this is very disappointing, it doesn't mean that we should lose heart, let alone give up. India is now so important to Australia that it is inevitable that Australia will keep giving more and more priority to our bilateral its relationship. India too will treat Australia seriously, both as a major and reliable supplier of raw materials that India needs to meet the demands of its growing economy, and also because the number of Indians living in Australia is now substantial and growing rapidly and their welfare is a matter of significant concern for the Government of India, as the current student issue has highlighted.

Although both sides have a vested interest in closer relations, I have long believed that Australia needs India much more than India needs Australia. So, in my view, it is Australia that needs to make the greater effort to strengthen the relationship. Speaking as an

Australian of Indian origin, our challenge is to keep pushing the Australian Government to treat India as a top tier country. We should then help and advise the Australian Government to influence the Indian Government to give Australia similar importance. This is a special responsibility of the leaders of the Indian community in Australia. All IITians, who belong to one of India's most elite group, should see themselves as community leaders. I urge IITAA to play a much more active leadership role in Australia.

Let's now discuss some of the big issues facing the Australia-India relationship:

1. Uranium

While this is a very high profile issue, I honestly think it is one of the easiest to resolve and am sure it is only a matter of time before it is resolved. As I said earlier, Australia's support for India at the NSG was the crucial step forward. It has long been Labor Party policy that Australia should only export uranium to countries that have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT or NPT). Logically, one would expect that this would mean Australia would oppose the proposition that NSG members be allowed to resume trade in nuclear technology and resources, including uranium, with India, even though India continued to be a non-signatory of the NPT.

I know this was of great concern to the Indian Government, especially because the NSG is a consensus-based organisation. So every member, including Australia, has effective veto power. Significant efforts were therefore made by India's High Commissioner, Special Minister for State and External Affairs Minister to win Australian support at the NSG. Their efforts were so successful that Australia didn't just abstain from voting, but actually voted in support of the resolution. It did so, while still maintaining its own policy not to export uranium itself to India. This means that, while choosing not to get the benefits of supplying uranium to India itself, Australia agreed to allow other countries to do so. I don't think one could get a better example of the Australian Government's goodwill towards India. For a Labor Government, it was a huge and courageous decision.

Looking ahead, I don't think we will see a change of policy in this term of Parliament. The Labor Party needs time to modify its long and sincerely held policy. I am confident that this will happen in the next Parliamentary term. This means we can expect that uranium exports to India will start in 2–3 years. And it will have bipartisan support because the Coalition is already in favour of it.

2. Climate Change

This is a major global survival issue and of special importance to both Australia and India.

For Australia, the challenge is how to drastically reduce its carbon emissions in a way that does not cause politically unacceptable damage its economy, developing renewable energy technologies and finding solutions such as carbon capture and sequestration, so-called 'clean coal'—that would protect Australia's massive coal exports. India has also to find new technologies that will enable it to limit its carbon emissions without slowing down its economic growth. India's energy requirements dictate the continued significant use of coal— so it too needs 'clean coal'. These common priorities should encourage strong collaboration between both countries in Research and Development.

Australia can and should play an understanding and constructive role on this issue, seeking to influence India rather than making unreasonable demands. Lifting the ban on uranium exports will place Australia in a very influential position in this regard.

3. Cricket

Cricket is the prism that colours the views that the majority of Indians have about Australia. This perspective can be excessively good—the Australian cricket team is generally admired for its strength, talent and track record—or excessively bad—the behaviour of Australian cricketers frequently leaves a very bad impression, with many Indians thinking that Australians generally behave in the same way as their cricket team. The Test series in Australia in 2008, especially the infamous Sydney Test brought things to a boil to the point that diplomats and governments of both countries became seriously worried and worked hard to calm things down.

Australia remains the most successful cricket team in the world. While India's performances have not reached a similar dominance, its team has a lot of talent and somehow produces its best against the Australians. No wonder that Australia-India games have been among the most keenly fought and exciting contests in the past decade.

Of course, apart from being a great game, cricket is now also a massive business. And when it comes to the most important aspect of business, making money, India is unquestionably where the money is. The amazing success of the Indian Premier League (IPL), whether played in India, or, as happened this year, in South Africa, has proven this beyond any doubt. But here too, the part played by Australia should not be underestimated. While many countries have been

involved in the IPL, Australian cricketers, coaches, physios, managers have unquestionably had more impact than those from any other nation—further proof of the alchemy of the Australia-India combination.

Given the importance of cricket to the bilateral relationship and the game itself, I think it's critical that the fault lines that the 2008 series exposed are fixed and fixed soon. The solution is not for each team to give as good as it gets. This may work, but it can only cause a downward spiral to disaster. The answer is to lift standards of behaviour back to the sportsmanship that was always the hallmark of the game. This is the responsibility of the governing bodies of both countries, Cricket Australia and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), who should work together to stamp out boorish behaviour on the cricket field by adopting a zero tolerance approach to abuse, incessant sledging and intimidation of umpires.

4. ICT Services, Outsourcing, Offshoring and 457 Visas

Apart from cricket, the other business where India has become a global powerhouse is Information and Communications Technology or ICT. Over the past two decades, India has become a dominant supplier of ICT services. This is not just a matter of lower cost, although, by pioneering the global delivery model, the Indian ICT industry is extremely cost competitive. The underlying reasons for India's success are the abundance of highly skilled resources, exceptional energy and commitment and world class management and entrepreneurial capability.

While Australia has a very good track record in the early adoption and innovative application of leading edge technology, we are limited by our lack of sufficient skilled resources. This reality tends to be overlooked in times like the present, when unemployment is increasing. However, even in an economic slowdown, there are and will always be some skills in short supply. This is the natural outcome of having a very small population. With regard to skills, our critical strategic challenge is not unemployment, but the reliable availability of sufficient skills. We are, fortunately, a country of migrants and are able to attract skilled migrants from around the world as permanent migrants or on a temporary basis through long term 457 visas.

This certainly helps alleviate our skills shortage problems to a significant extent, but we still have endemic problems of getting the right skills, in sufficient quantity and at the right time. This can delay implementation or enhancement of systems and the benefits of business growth and improved productivity that they would produce. Offshoring is an excellent solution to this underlying problem and,

when it comes to offshoring, no country has more to offer than India.

Australia's needs and India's ability to help meet them would seem to be the perfect foundation for a win-win partnership. Yet, although many large corporations, such as Telstra, National Australia Bank, Qantas, Woolworths, have used offshoring very successfully, the reality is that Australia hasn't embraced offshoring as much as other developed countries, especially those in North America and Europe have done. One reason is that Australia has been a lower cost country than the US or Europe—so the cost savings have been somewhat smaller here. But the main reason why offshoring still lags here is an underlying culture of protectionism that prevails within both the government as well as the business sector. In fact, there have been strong rumours recently that some major banks have shelved offshoring projects because of high level pressure from the Australian Government.

I strongly believe that the Australian attitude to offshoring needs to change both because offshoring makes very good business sense, but also because there is no justification for protectionism, especially in relation to India. Australia enjoys a massive balance of trade surplus with India—\$13.8 billion in exports as against just \$1.5 billion in imports. More significantly, Australia exports \$2 billion in services to India, while services imports from India, including offshoring, amount to a mere \$500 million. Although India has not threatened protectionism to reduce its balance of trade deficit with Australia, Australia's negative attitude to offshoring is clearly inequitable and runs the risk of seriously souring trade relations and the negotiations to establish an Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India.

A separate but related issue that I would like to mention in passing is a recent tightening of immigration rules and administration in relation to long-term temporary business entry under the 457 visa. Indian ICT companies have been experiencing longer lead times in visa processing, more aggressive auditing by the Department of Immigration. From September, new rules are being introduced for 457 visa holders to be paid market-based salaries which could introduce a level of complexity and red tape that will lead to greater delays and more bureaucratic intervention. Here too, the primary motivation is protectionist and will make it harder for Indian ICT companies to be competitive and to meet their delivery schedules. In turn, Australian customers will be the losers as they will have to pay more for skilled resources and will not be able to access urgently required resources when they need them. I am sure the Indian Government will take a very strong line on both the 457 issue and the negative attitude to offshoring during their FTA trade negotiations with Australia. I hope the Australian

Government will respond positively and abandon the trend towards increased protectionism. This is in Australia's interest, both to improve our own competitiveness and to protect and expand bilateral trade with India.

5. Overseas Students

The relationship issue that is clearly top of mind today in both India and Australia is the safety of Indian students studying here. The matter is so complex that it calls for numerous corrective actions. It is important, therefore, to prioritise the problems in terms of impact and urgency and to address them systematically in order of priority.

It is very encouraging that the police forces in both States where the most incidents have occurred, namely Victoria and New South Wales (NSW), are now taking the matter very seriously. Their earlier reaction, which seemed to downplay the seriousness of the attacks, had a very negative impact on the students as well as the wider Indian community in Australia, leading to large demonstrations. My strong personal impression is that things have already improved considerably, although one can only be sure of this when reliable statistics become available. It's very important, however, that the police continue to give special focus to the safety issue. Winning back the hearts and minds of the Indian students will take some time and any perception of complacency could see a return to the recent volatile atmosphere. It's also essential for constructive advice to be given to the Indian students, who should be encouraged to do whatever they can to adopt prudential safeguards to make themselves less of a target. It's a pity that the language used by the police in this regard—*eg* referring to the students as 'soft targets'—was open to the interpretation that they were 'blaming the victim' and/or 'condoning the violence'. While this reaction is, in my view, unfair, in the emotionally charged atmosphere of the past few weeks, it is hardly surprising.

While safety is the highest and most urgent priority, we also need to pay attention to the underlying problems that have been responsible for the whole student issue to flare up. Unless these are addressed systematically, tensions will remain, student grievances will continue and safety could become an issue again. If this happens, attitudes between the Indian community and the wider Australian community will become increasingly negative and the Australia-India relationship will suffer long-term damage. The underlying problems require attention in both Australia and India.

a) Racism

We Australians should have the honesty, courage and commonsense to accept that some of the attacks

probably included a racial element. All complaints of racist behaviour should be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

b) Unhealthy Nexus between Education of Overseas Students and Immigration

The prolonged boom of the Australian economy resulted in a huge growth of demand for skilled workers that resulted in severe shortages of skilled labour, including those with Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications in trades like hairdressing and hospitality. To alleviate these shortages and the negative impact they would have on the economy, the immigration tap was opened to record levels. Many entrepreneurs saw this as a huge opportunity and started private colleges, offering training in areas of skill that were deemed by the immigration department as being in short supply. Compared to universities or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Institutes, the courses many of these new colleges offered were easier to get into and the time it took to gain qualifications from them was much shorter. Unsurprisingly, the number of overseas students, especially those more interested in migration than education, exploded. India became the biggest source of such students.

These dramatic developments have had many unfortunate consequences for Indian students who came here to study at private colleges. As migration was their primary objective, all they wanted was a piece of paper which certified that they were qualified in one of the trades on the immigration list. They were not really interested in being educated. So they became prime candidates for exploitation by:

- agents in India who charged them for their services and made false promises.
- colleges in Australia that charged them very high fees; offered them quality education, but failed to deliver; and charged them extra or asked for special favours to obtain their diploma or certificate.
- employers (often linked to the colleges), who paid them no or very low wages, on the grounds that they were getting course-related work experience.
- landlords, who charged exorbitant rentals and provided crowded shared accommodation.

All these developments need careful consideration. Urgent reform and strict monitoring of private education service providers and their agents in both Australia and India is probably the most significant

step that can be taken to eliminate a high percentage of the problems faced by overseas students in Australia.

c) Highly Emotive and Disproportionate Reaction in India, especially by the Media

While the student issue is serious and many corrective actions are required, the reaction in India has been well over the top. Fed by a raucous media, who sensationalised the issue to an almost hysterical level, many people in India formed the impression that there had been widespread violence against the Indian community at large, and that everyone of Indian origin was at risk.

The serious gap between reality and the media coverage in India runs the risk of doing long-term damage to the way Australia is perceived in India. It is, therefore, essential to restore some sense of balance before the negative image of Australia becomes entrenched. Of course, it is essential that Australian Governments and the Australian media have the honesty and commonsense to acknowledge that some of the attacks had a racial element. But it is also important that the wildly exaggerated stories are rebutted and replaced with a more realistic portrayal of Australia as a country which welcomes Indian migrants and students and where people of Indian origin can and do live confidently and successfully and with a high level of safety.

In closing, I would once again like to make a special plea to the leaders of the Indian community in Australia, among whom I count every IITian. You have a special responsibility to actively promote and support initiatives that can strengthen Australia-India relations. This includes the India-related 2020 recommendations and the measures that are needed to address the issues that Indian students currently face. To do this effectively, you need to work together with other community leaders to develop a common united position on key issues. A united community has a much greater chance of success than if we all selfishly push our own petty barrows. For example, when it comes to language study in schools, we are most likely to succeed if, in the first instance, the whole Indian community supports the introduction

of Hindi in the regular school time-table instead of each regional language group pushing for its own. Competitive proposals for other languages will only give the authorities an excuse to do nothing on the grounds that the Indian community is itself disunited on the issue.

To increase our influence in Australia, we also need to become Australia literate and engaged. So please develop a positive attitude to Australia. Do not be over-critical. Whatever its imperfections, never forget that Australia is a wonderful, democratic and multicultural nation, which has welcomed and given us migrants a real opportunity to succeed. Enjoy living in Australia. Do not restrict your social interaction to other Indians only. To enjoy multicultural Australia, you must mix more widely, especially with members of the majority community. Develop an interest in Australian culture, history, politics and sport. Engage in the social and political life of Australia. Contribute to this society through philanthropy and volunteering. If you plan to live here permanently, show your commitment to Australia by becoming an Australian citizen. Thanks to the introduction of the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI), you do not have to give up your Indian citizenship completely as I had to do—so the decision should be easier. Become actively engaged in the political life of the country; join a political party, run for office. Become an ambassador for Australia in India. The good thing of being part of a free country is that you can be a good Australian without having to ever sacrifice the slightest bit of your love for India or of your Indian-ness. And, of course, without ever having to stop barracking for India in cricket!

*Neville J Roach AO, the recipient of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (Overseas Indian Honour Award) from the President of India in January 2008, is Chairman of the Smart Services CRC. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2000 for service to business especially the ICT industry and for his contribution to the development of Australian Multiculturalism. He has been associated with many organisations of repute, IBM Australia, Fujitsu Limited, Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) etc.

“ The fundamental principle of all economic activity, is no man you transact with shall lose...then you shall not.”(Arthashastra)

The Bond: Indo-Aus Cultural Heritage

- Vinod Dancil*

The cultural heritage of India, whether it is the Taj Mahal, the bronzes from Chennai, Carnatic music from the deep South or a sitar recital by one of India's maestro's is often what is at the forefront of people's imaginations when they think of India. The food, sight, smells and vibrancy is an intricate part of India and this tangible and intangible cultural aura is what has made India special and fascinated many international visitors.

With the Indian economy booming and the growing international interest on India as a business destination, it is important that the Indian cultural industry continues as an important aspect of incredible India. This includes both the tangible which includes all the monuments and museum collections as well as the intangible which includes the music, stories and practices. The cultural industry is one of the major employers in India and contributes significantly to the Indian economy. With India making such



skilled specialists in conservation practice, including: building conservation, cultural tourism and heritage promotion, education, collections conservation, heritage identification for urban planning purposes, specialised design for art storage museums and laboratories associated with conserving moveable heritage, exhibition development, archaeology, historical research, and conservation management. AusHeritage has been instrumental in building people to people linkages between heritage practitioners in the two countries as well as developing frameworks that can assist in implementing specific projects. AusHeritage signed a Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) on cultural heritage collaboration with Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) in the presence of the then Australian Foreign Minister Mr Alexander Downer. It is becoming a major force in presenting and sharing the skills and achievements gained in Australia with other communities. Valuable experience is also being brought back for implementation in Australia.



rapid progress in key new industry sectors such as Information Technology (IT), a vibrant cultural Industry is important in nurturing creativity. India's current rapid pace of development is producing benefits for many aspects of Indian life, however if not adequately managed could be a threat for some of the cultural aspects.

For over fifteen years, Australian cultural organisations have been working very closely with India on cultural heritage initiatives especially under the umbrella of AusHeritage (Australian international network for cultural heritage services). The core "AusHeritage" organisation represents 40 members comprised of universities, national and state collecting institutions, private architectural firms, and private and government conservation services. The network represents highly

AusHeritage has conducted many capacity building workshops on collections conservation, disaster preparedness, architectural conservation, site management and collections management with many key Indian heritage organisations including the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), INTACH and most major museums and University heritage programs. AusHeritage members have also provided technical assistance in designing an international gallery for the Prince of Wales Museum in India as well as work with INTACH in developing a conservation management plan. AusHeritage recently implemented a capacity building initiative for the North East Indian states. Australian Museums and Galleries are regularly borrowing Indian artefacts for major exhibitions and an Australian indigenous exhibition recently travelled to Delhi and Jaipur. Following a request from Indian



Vinod Daneil

officials, the Australian Museum in Sydney had also repatriated 31 objects back to the Government Museum in Chennai. AusHeritage is currently developing new cultural heritage initiatives focussed on Kolkata. The Australia India Council (Department

for Foreign Affairs and Trade) has been instrumental in providing seed funding for delivering a number of these initiatives and thereby furthering the Australia India relationship.

Over the past 12 years more than 25 senior Australian heritage practitioners from over twenty major Australian heritage organisations have had close interactions with heritage counterparts in India. These repeated interactions have included both visits by Australian professionals to India as well as Indian professionals to Australia. The relationships established and the appreciation of mutual needs are currently being translated into a number of broader projects including possible development of a heritage centre in India, implementation of a cultural mapping program and continued assistance for a number of key collecting institutions in India.

***Vinod Daneil, Chairman, AusHeritage**

A major part of this article is a reproduction of an earlier article published by AIBC.

AusHeritage acknowledges the ongoing support from the Australia India Council (DFAT) towards its activities in India

International Students and Human Rights—An appeal to all Human Rights Groups/Lobbyists

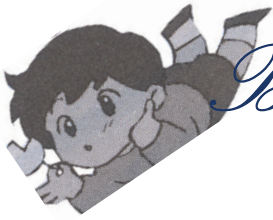
In Australia the number of international students is increasing exponentially. At any one time there are more than 90,000 international students in the Australian universities and institutions. The revenue from these foreign students runs into over \$7 billions.

These students end up belonging to no one and have no where to go for their grievances. Their nightmarish problems tantamount to denial of the basic human rights:

- In the first and foremost their exploitation commences by the unscrupulous immigration agents most of whom have established representations in the target countries.
- Exploitation continues once they reach Australia especially by the unregulated private educational institutions—Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).
- Accommodation related matters generate a host of issues including the abysmal quality and the inhumanly treatment at the hands of the accommodation providers.
- Many of these RTOs have set up commercial organisations like restaurants, hairdressing saloons, beauty parlours etc to employ the gullible and ignorant foreign students for work experience without making any payments or paying them at ridiculous rates—in most cases less than fifty percent of the award rates.
- The female students face additional exploitation—forced prostitution.
- Some of the state governments deny these foreign students the same concessions/benefits enjoyed by the Australian students.
- And a host of other issues.

I consider the international students as the worst victims of the denial of the basic human rights and appeal all Human Rights groups/lobbyists to come forward to their rescue.

Gambhir Watts
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia



Bhavan's Children Section

An Instinct for Geometry

New research has shown that even if you've never learned the difference between triangles, rectangles and trapeziums, you can still recognise the basic concepts of geometry.

Anthropologist Pierre Pica studies the Mundurucus of the Amazon forests. They live in a remote region, have little or no schooling and no experience with maps. Their language has no reference to geometrical shapes or concepts.

Pica gave a group of Munduruku men, women and children a non-verbal geometry test. Each of them was shown 43 sets of six images and asked to point the odd one out—that image which did not follow the same basic aspect of geometry illustrated in the other five.

Amazingly, the villagers got about two-thirds of the answers right. Both the children and adults did as well as the 26 US children, the researchers also tested, but not as well as educated US adults. Both groups even found the same questions difficult.



KOH-I-NOOR



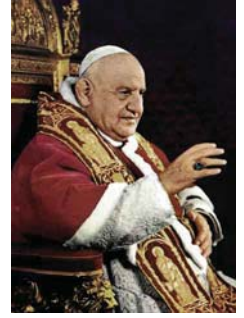
Weighing a whopping 105 carat (21.6 grams), the Koh-i-noor was once the largest diamond in the world. Koh-i-noor in Persian-Urdu means *a mountain of light*. It originated in India and was the subject of many wars between Persians and Indians over the years. In 1877, it was seized by the then British PM and was presented to Queen Victoria. It has been a part of the British Crown Jewels ever since then and is today housed in the Tower of London, where thousands of tourists see it every year. The Koh-i-noor has a strange legend attached to it. It is believed that it will bring death to any male who owns or wears it but the female owners will be blessed with good luck!

Source: Bhavan's Journal July 31 2009



Truth is the Mother of Prosperity H.H. Pope John XXIII

The source and root of all the evils which affect individuals, peoples and nations with a kind of poison and confuse the minds of many is this: ignorance of the truth; and not only ignorance, but at times a contempt for, and a deliberate turning away from it. This is the source of all manner of errors which, like contagious diseases, pass deep into the minds and the very bloodstream of human society, and turn everything upside down with serious damage to all individuals and to the whole human race. Yet God endowed us with a mind capable of grasping natural truth. If we follow it, we follow God Himself, its Creator and the Guide and Lawgiver of our life.



All discord, disagreement and dispute have their origin in these sources, namely, the truth not known, or what is worse, the truth examined and understood, but rejected either for the sake of advantages and benefits which the erroneous theories are often expected to produce, or on account of that perverted blindness by which men too easily seek justification for their vices and evil deeds.

A sincere love of truth, then, is essential for all, if they wish to attain that harmony and peace from which can arise true prosperity, whether of individuals or of whole peoples.

Gandhian Philosophy and Upanishadic Thought Prof. K. Seshadri

Gandhiji's philosophy has been summed up in two words—Truth and Non-violence, of which Truth provides the primary basis. Truth is the goal, the end, the consummation. Non-violence is the means, the method and the discipline. That gives the gist of his philosophy, in its moral no less than its metaphysical aspect. Truth is not merely a norm of thought or judgement. Its significance is more than logical or epistemological. The essence of Reality in its ultimate analysis is Truth. Truth is God. The foundation of all Being as well as the goal of all Becoming is Truth. This philosophy is in perfect accord with the teaching of the Upanishads, that is, with the traditional teaching of India's original thinkers. The Upanishadic quest was for a permanent unchanging substratum of reality underlying all change and impermanence, and the seers of ancient India had an immediate intuitive perception of it as the Brahman. Gandhiji declared, "I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing power or Spirit is God".

A Romance of Coins in Ancient India Prof. U. Venkatakrishna Rao

The word 'pecu' in old Latin, cognate with Sanskrit 'Pashu' from which the English word pecuniary is derived, suggests that cows were first used as money and the value of things was determined in terms of so many cows. Similarly the word "Salary" indicates that salt was used for barter in ancient countries and salaries were disbursed also in salt. Solarium in Latin connoted money paid to soldiers to buy salt. Sher Shah (1540-1545 A.D.), famous by his laying out high-roads with trees on both sides and more particularly by his revenue settlements, standardised his silver rupee by making it weigh 178 grains or one tola. He was also responsible for a copper coinage with daam weighting about 330 grains as the smallest coin unit. Akbar, the Great Moghal Emperor, perfected both the revenue system and what is more important for us, the coinage system also. Taveraier records that in his time in the 17th century the rupee was worth anything from 46 to 56 pice according to the distance from the mines.

Indian Cultural Awards 2009



Entries for the Bhavan's Indian Cultural Awards 2009 are open & will close on 31 August 2009.

The Awards Ceremony will be conferred at a special dinner on 14 November 2009

The categories for the Awards are :

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Classical Dance School | Orchestra Group |
| Community Service (Organisation) | Singer (Female) |
| Singer (Male) | Community Service (Individual) |
| Community Service (Senior Citizen) | Dancer (Male) |
| Staged Group Performance | Visual Artist (Female) |
| Dancer (Female) | Folk Dancing School |
| Visual Artist (Male) | Documentary Film |
| Special Achievement | Actor |

The awards will recognise the achievements of individuals and community groups in various fields such as performing arts, community service and documentary films.

Download nomination form from www.bhavanaustralia.org

Applications must be sent to :

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

GPO Box 4098

Sydney NSW 2001

Ph: 1300 BHAVAN (1300 242 826)

info@bhavanaustralia.org

Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan
AUSTRALIA
www.bhavanaustralia.org



WORLD/POP IS HERE

Like the River

MKF Live at Sydney Opera House



INTERNATIONAL DEBUT RELEASE

MKF

This Australian band is a glorious combination of free spirited musicians who believe in identical virtues and principles. It surely was luck that brought them together on Australian soil and the combined intention of making something unique, understanding of the value of contribution of a never before heard sound and crafting a new Genre is what glued it all together. The band is conceptualized by legendary singer/songwriter Mahmood Khan known for his International Multi platinum album with Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and 14 years of sound engineering and producing Funk, Rap and R&B records in Los Angeles. Mahmood is also the songwriter and the lead vocalist making this band the first ever Eastern vocal driven Western sound.

SOUND

Elements of Gypsy, Funk, Pop and World can be heard in the overall sound.

GENRE

Very few musicians have the opportunity to invent a new genre. MKF is blazing a trail in the new WORLD/POP field.

THIS IS NEW FOLKS!! COME BE A PART OF MUSIC HISTORY

LYRICS

The lyrics talk about the uncovering of life's mysteries, all the emotion experience gives birth to, dealings with fear, friendship with hope, association with courage, manifestation of inspiration, blessings of luck and unity with the higher source in English and Urdu languages.

Announcing 'finally home' concert series

Sept 22nd - Sydney Opera House

Dec 18th - Sydney Opera House

More dates & venues to be announced soon.

Single 'Like the River' goes to Australian Radio August 31ST

www.songsarepeople.com www.mkfworld.com



USE OF THE NAME AND LOGO OF THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE IS UNDER LICENCE FROM THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE TRUST



Songs are people Suite 100, 515 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 02 9264 1313 fax: 9267 9005

Holy & Wise

Ekam Sadvipra Babudha Vadanti - That is one whom the learned call differently - Vedanta



For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them. - Aristotle

Tens of thousands of bones will become ashes when one general achieves his fame. - Chinese Proverb

If it is man's privilege to be independent, it is equally his duty to be inter-dependent.

– Mahatma Gandhi

Kulapativani

Trees: Our Nation's Wealth

The Vanamahotsava is a great National Festival. On this day we revive the memories of our great and ancient forests—*Nandavana*, *Vrindavana* and *Naimisharanya*-which were the richest possessions of *Aryavarta*, now part of Uttar Pradesh.

It was to arouse mass consciousness regarding the significance of trees and to revive an adoration for these silent sentinels mounting guard on Mother Earth that I thought of the Vanamahotsava.

It has in fact done so. Our target of a crore of trees was exceeded, and over three crore trees were planted. I have been repeatedly asked, 'how many of these trees have survived?' True, the number of survivals is not very large. It is estimated that for every five saplings planted one at least will live to grow into a tree. Our great task is to teach the man who plants a tree to adopt it as a child and rear it as such; this has to be a part of the national education. Vanamahotsava alone will inculcate this habit in the nation. The value of such national movements lies not in what is achieved in a single year, but in its cumulative effect over a series of years. It is forest-mindedness which matters in the long run, not the number of trees actually planted.

The Vanamahotsava has been initiated in Pakistan, and in some of the Middle East countries and a representative of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) who has been here said that this is a scheme which he would like to be fostered by the (FAO) FAO itself so that the whole world can take up this important question.

The Test of Bhavan's Right to Exist

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

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

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



Bhavan Munshi

Views of Partition

Two new countries were created after the end of British rule in India in August 1947. Punjab was divided to create West Pakistan and Bengal was divided to form East Pakistan. In 1971 East Pakistan separated to become Bangladesh. The break-up of India along religious lines resulted in the movement of about 14.5 million people—Muslims going to Pakistan from India and Hindus and Sikhs going in the opposite direction. The newly formed governments were not equipped to deal with such a massive migration—one of the largest of its kind in the world—and there was huge violence on both sides of the border. The upheaval resulted in a breakdown of law and order: estimates of casualties vary, from between 200,000 up to a million people. Around 12 million people were left homeless and thousands were raped.

Different Views

There have been many books written about the partition from different historians, both British and Indian. Many of these have focused on the main politicians and political leaders of the time involved in making decisions. These accounts have drawn on primary sources such as official government records and private papers of people. Some historians have suggested that Britain was forced to act speedily because of the breakdown of law and order, and that matters would have got worse the longer they remained. It was also argued at the time that Britain had limited resources after World War II. However, others have accused Britain of pulling out of India too quickly. Critics say that they failed to come up with a proper map of the border, and failed to plan for the huge migration. Recent studies have begun to focus on people's experiences and perceptions of the partition, in particular the massive violence that surrounded it. Some historians have compared the experiences of different groups of people through interviews. Other important sources that historians have used to explore partition are books and films. These often show the hidden stories of violence and the voices that are often not heard in official histories.

The Leaders?

Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Lord Louis Mountbatten

Countdown to Partition

| Date | Event |
|----------------|---|
| 1858 | India comes under direct rule of the British crown after failed Indian mutiny |
| 1885 | Indian National Congress formed |
| 1906 | Muslim League formed to safeguard Muslim interests |
| 1920 | Nationalist figurehead Mahatma Gandhi launches anti-British civil disobedience campaign |
| 1930 | Alama Iqbal proposes the two-nation theory |
| 1933 | Then name Pakistan is proposed |
| 1940 | Jinnah calls for a separate Muslim state |
| 1942-43 | Congress launches "Quit India" movement |
| 1943 | Muslim League supports "Divide and Quit!" plan |
| June 1947 | Mountbatten Partition Plan approved |
| July 1947 | India Independence Act passed in Britain |
| August 15 1947 | Separate states of Pakistan and India are created |
| 1947-48 | Hundreds of thousands die in widespread communal bloodshed after partition |