

# BULLETIN

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## OF THE CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES (GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD)

### THE NEXT SIX MONTHS... IDEAL TIME FOR COURSE CORRECTION

In more ways than one the next 180 days are crucial for the nation. With the completion of elections in five states the countdown has begun for the general elections to be held in May 2014. The successful conduct of sixteen general elections from 1952 to 2014 and all other polls during the last sixty one years is a testimony to the faith of the people in the democratic process and to the integrity and efficiency with which every election has been conducted by the Election Commission of India and state election commissions. No ordinary achievement it is to manage smoothly and successfully such gigantic democratic exercises.

India's democracy, now in its 67th year, has ceased to be 'the role model for Asia and third world countries' it was in the first decade of independence. The time has come for Indian democracy to effect a major course correction and to discard the negative tags like —'a mere electoral democracy' and 'a functioning anarchy', giving way to more positive labels in tune with the aspirations and expectations of the people of India. The enfeeblement of the world's largest and most heterogeneous democracy is due to a number of factors, most notable among which is the rise of adversarial politics and decline of important institutions. Parliament, the backbone of parliamentary democracy, has sunk so low in public esteem that its debates and discussions, as and when they take place, make no impact on either the government or the society. As against more than 130 sessions a year during 1952-57, the number has come down to less than 80 during the last two decades. In the present parliament 30% of sitting members of Lok Sabha and 31% of Rajya Sabha MPs have criminal cases pending against them. Some state legislatures like those of Bihar with 58% and UP with 41% provide greater representation for 'the criminal elements'. Some of the functions of the legislature have been taken over by

the judiciary while the hyperactive electronic media daily enacts the roles of the prosecutor and judge as well, on issues big and small.

'The continuous coexistence of democracy and poverty' bodes ill for the future of Indian democracy. The conclusion is inescapable, if not harsh, that State and society appear to have become functional allies in perpetuating poverty through acts of omission and commission. The causal relationship between poverty, corruption and violence is a serious affliction that needs to be rectified with firmness and urgency. Poverty at birth triggers a vicious chain reaction resulting in backwardness in education, employment and life in general.

Coalition politics have created considerable space for power brokers and manipulators to distort the system to benefit vested interests. The paradigm shift in power from centripetal to centrifugal forces calls for new leadership skills to build national consensus on major issues. Paradoxically the democracy that was hailed as 'a grand coalition of all linguistic and religious groups which enjoy cultural autonomy' has failed to develop a coalition culture under successive coalition governments during the last two decades. The need of the hour is to generate national consensus on vital issues like elimination of corruption and poverty, improvement of educational standards and the creation of inexpensive and accessible health care system, especially for children, women and senior citizens. Conventions and customs, so vital for the stability and success of any democracy, should regain their importance in governance. They were respected during the first two decades which were aptly described as 'the faded golden years'. The reconstruction of Indian polity requires the recovery of that spirit and culture.

The system of parliamentary democracy becomes fragile if its conventions are not respected.  
Justice M.N.Venkatachaliah.

## **Manmohan's Colombo boycott will have long-term implications**

**Cmde. (Retd) C . Uday Bhaskar  
Former Director NMF & Ex Director IDSA**

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is not to attend the CHOGM summit scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka on Nov 15-17, and this imprudent decision with long-term implications for India's regional credibility has clearly been arrived at due to emotive domestic political compulsions. The strong sentiment expressed by the Tamil Nadu legislature urging Delhi to boycott the summit - a view shared by most Congress leaders with Tamil Nadu connections, has prevailed.

While a last-minute change of decision was being hoped for, (maybe Rahul Gandhi could have stepped in again?!), it is understood that while the prime minister himself was inclined to be part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) deliberations, since it is in keeping with his larger regional vision, the Congress party is deeply concerned that ignoring Tamil Nadu sentiments will have a very adverse impact on the general election in 2014. Regional parties hold the key to a stable coalition in Delhi, and the Congress, it is argued, can ill afford to alienate the Tamil parties – one of whom may well be a valuable electoral ally.

The constituency in favour of the prime minister not going to Sri Lanka also avers that Delhi cannot ignore the sentiments reflected in an all-party resolution of a state legislature, and that any unilateral step by the Centre would have an adverse impact on the spirit of federalism that India has sought to nurture.

While there is validity in the argument that some degree of consensus and harmonization between Delhi and the state governments on foreign policy matters is highly desirable, it may not always be possible to arrive at the same. Under such circumstances, it is imperative that the larger national interest guide the formulation and pursuit of the relevant policy. However, a review of the UPA II's regional policies indicates that a weak central government has allowed itself to be coerced into a situation wherein domestic and state specific political calculations have trumped the abiding strategic and regional politico-diplomatic consideration.

CHOGM and Sri Lanka is not an isolated case, and the nature of the India-Bangladesh relationship over the last four years is cause for similar concern. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) II has found itself constrained by the Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee, and both the river water sharing accord and the final settlement of the long-festering border enclaves issue remains suspended.

An objective review of both the Sri Lanka and Bangladesh examples is necessary, for this trend of allowing short-term political compulsions to muddy and distort foreign policy initiatives can have a very negative impact on India's profile over the next decade – which is critical for a variety of reasons.

It is nobody's case that the considerations of individual states should not be taken into account, or that they can be peremptorily overruled by Delhi. The need to arrive at a centre-state consensus is indeed at the heart of the Indian model of governance, and while there are many inadequacies and omissions in this area, where both the ruling party in Delhi and state governments are culpable, it merits repetition that the security and foreign policy domain should not become victim to this malaise.

The reason for avoiding such a trend becomes more urgent since it is reasonably evident that the next government in Delhi will be an uneasy and unwieldy coalition, led in all likelihood by a leader with little hands-on foreign policy experience.

Dr. Manmohan Singh is the last in a continuum of prime ministers going back to Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Narasimha Rao and Atal Bihari Vajpayee who had either years of experience or a strong political base, thereby enabling them to address foreign policy challenges with continuity and confidence.

Going back to Sri Lanka and the CHOGM summit, the reasons for urging the prime minister not to go, include the fact that the Mahinda Rajapaksa government has failed to deliver on its promise to redress the condition of its Tamil citizens and that the human rights violations in the campaign against the LTTE are tantamount to genocide. This is a view that has been expressed with considerable intensity across the Indian audio visual medium in recent days.

The self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times stronger than the self-sacrifice of millions of men  
who die in the act of killing others      Mahatma Gandhi

## THE NUCLEAR GENIE- 10

### Pakistan's Nuclear Walmart

Prof. M.N. Sastri

However, if it is a shared objective in both Chennai and Delhi that what matters finally is the welfare of the Sri Lankan Tamils, then by snubbing Colombo over CHOGM India would hardly be any closer to its objective. Ironically, this Indian snub would also weaken the position of the recently-elected provincial government in Sri Lanka's Northern Province led by C.V. Wigneswaran – the first step in redressing the political status of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

In all likelihood by embarrassing the Rajapaksa government over CHOGM, what Delhi would have achieved is no doubt a symbolic victory that will assuage domestic sentiment in Tamil Nadu; but at a substantive level, future engagement with Colombo will be that much more strained and bitter. This is the legacy that the next Indian government will inherit, and as is well-known, states have long institutional memories – as India knows all too well in its own dealing with major powers.

Sustained engagement with neighbours who adopt difficult policy postures is a cross that India will have to bear with stoicism and resolve. While regional policies will perforce have to be tailored case by case, the Vajpayee experience is worth recalling. Despite the enormity of the December 2001 terror attack on the Indian Parliament and the defiant posture adopted by Pakistan, the then National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government resumed its engagement with the Pervez Musharraf regime – albeit after some time, and a cost being incurred.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are far more constructive in their relations with India, and the long-term implications of succumbing to the immediate domestic political compulsion should have been objectively weighed. The Congress party and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ought to have pondered over the matter with appropriate urgency, prevailed upon Chennai and cut the prime minister some slack in his decision not to attend the CHOGM summit.

(Courtesy South Asia Monitor - updated on November 10,2013)



Pakistan's entry into the nuclear arena began with the constitution of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) in 1956 to enable the country to participate in the Atoms for Peace programme. The progress was slow till 1960 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Minister for Mineral and Natural Resources began taking active interest in the project by appointing Ishrat H. Usmani as the Chairman of the PAEC. Usmani established the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Sciences and Technology (PINSTECH) in Nilore, Islamabad Capital Territory, and sent hundreds of young scientists for training abroad. With a grant given by the US, a 5 MW light water research reactor began operating in 1965 at PINSTECH. Along with Abdus Salam, the Nobel Laureate Physicist, Usmani played active role in reaching an agreement in 1965 with GE Canada for building the country's first commercial nuclear power plant at Karachi. This 137 MWe plant, operated with heavy water moderated and natural uranium fuelled reactor, was commissioned in 1972. The Canadian Government also provided Pakistan a small heavy water production unit.

Bhutto became Foreign Minister in 1963. But he continued to take active interest in the nuclear programme. By 1964 it became certain that China was on the brink of conducting a nuclear weapon test. Bhabha and some political leaders also began actively lobbying that India should follow suit. Marshal Ayub Khan, Pakistan's President and Bhutto went to Beijing and met Chou En-Lai for support in Pakistan's nuclear quest. Following this visit and the Indo-Pakistan conflict, Bhutto, in mid-1965 bared Pakistan's nuclear ambitions to match India's nuclear capability by declaring, "Pakistan will fight for a thousand years. If India builds the bomb, Pakistan will eat grass, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own. We have no other choice." To put his words into practice Bhutto however had to wait till 1972 when he became Prime Minister after Pakistan's crushing defeat in the Indo-Pak War, which led to the break-up of Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh. Shortly after assuming power Bhutto convened a meeting of scientists on January

24, 1972 at Multan where he explained his keenness to pursue the nuclear weapons project. Abdus Salam, who was actively associated with the organization of the PAEC, did not appear favourable to the project. Usmani, the Chairman of PAEC also did not support on the ground that Pakistan lacked the technology and infrastructure for the programme. Bhutto replaced Usmani with Munir Ahmad Khan as the Chairman. Munir Khan, an alumnus of Argonne National Laboratory (a constituent of the US Manhattan Project) underwent training in several institutions engaged in nuclear technology. In 1958 he joined the IAEA and worked as the Head of the Reactor Engineering and Nuclear Fuel Cycle. In the IAEA circles he was known as the "Reactor Khan". During his stint with the IAEA he used to brief Bhutto and President Ayub Khan on India's nuclear weapons programme. He impressed on Ayub Khan that Pakistan should also acquire nuclear weapons capability. For the next 19 years Munir Khan as the Chairman of the PAEC vigorously pursued Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme.

The primary requirement for nuclear weapons production is the availability of plutonium or enriched uranium. Pakistan initially chose plutonium as the key ingredient to be secured through the processing of the spent nuclear fuel from the Karachi plant. It entered into a contract with British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. for the design and erection at PINSTECH, of a pilot plant for fuel reprocessing with a capacity of separating up to 360g of fuel a year. This was followed by a contract with the French corporation Saint-Gobain Techniques Nouvelles (SGN) for a large-scale reprocessing plant at Chashma, with capability to produce plutonium by reprocessing 100 tons of spent fuel per year. The contract, which did not include significant safeguards against the diversion of plutonium for weapons use, was aborted in 1979 under US pressure. But with the blue prints already in the hands of the PAEC, the plant construction was reportedly completed later with assistance from China.

Bhutto secured financial support from Libya and Saudi Arabia and Iran for Pakistan's weapons programme. Addressing the Organization of Islamic countries in Lahore in 1974 Bhutto declared that Pakistan's bomb would be an "Islamic bomb" and

could be the foundation for Islamic countries acquiring strategic military capacity to counter other nuclear weapons states, thus signaling Pakistan's willingness to supply nuclear materials and know-how to other Islamic states.

India conducted in May 1974 its nuclear test for peaceful purposes. With the consequential imposition of greater restrictions on nuclear exports to all nations, Pakistan too suffered a setback in its efforts to extract plutonium from spent nuclear fuel. It was therefore forced to switch over from plutonium to enriched uranium as the material for its weapons programme. Under the leadership of S. Bashiruddin Mahmood work began on a pilot plant for uranium enrichment using the centrifuge technique. The PAEC actively began hunting around for equipment and materials for uranium enrichment as well as plutonium reprocessing.

At this stage a new actor, Abdul Qadir Khan, entered the scene. Khan, who was born in Bhopal, immigrated to Pakistan. Educated in Germany and Belgium in metallurgical engineering he joined the Anglo-Dutch-German centrifuge partnership company URENCO in 1972. In 1974 he wrote to Bhutto expressing his keenness to work for Pakistan. In December 1975 he left suddenly for Pakistan taking with him copied blue prints of centrifuges and other technical details as well as a list of 100 companies that supplied the centrifuge parts and materials and joined PAEC. After a brief stint in the PAEC he moved to Kahuta where, within two years, he assembled a working prototype of centrifuge for enrichment of uranium. He replaced Bashiruddin Mahmood as the Director of the enrichment project, which was renamed as Engineering Research Laboratories (ERL). By 1978 the ERL succeeded in producing Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU). General Zia-ul-Haq who by then became Pakistan's military ruler, renamed in 1981 the ERL at Kahuta as Khan Research Laboratories in recognition of Khan's contributions to the development of the project. A Dutch court convicted Khan in 1983 and sentenced him to four years in prison on charges of nuclear espionage. But on appeal the sentence was overturned on technical grounds.

The Kahuta enrichment plant, which employed 7,000 people including 2,000 scientists, achieved its

While I am for the public sector growing, I do not understand or appreciate the condemnation of the private sector.  
4 While the public sector must obviously grow, the private sector is not something unimportant. Jawaharlal Nehru

full production level in 1986 with a production capacity of 45-100 kg of HEU per year, enough for 3 to 7 nuclear weapons. By 1992, Kahuta unit was believed to have operated about 3,000 centrifuges. Currently their number is reported to have increased considerably. A second enrichment plant was built at Golra. Pakistan's current production of HEU is put at 110 kg per year. By the end of 2000 Pakistan is believed to have produced 800 kg of HEU (excluding the quantity used for the 1998 tests) enough for about 50 nuclear weapons.

Khan was able to achieve this task in a short time, by taking advantage of his "long stay in Europe and intimate knowledge of various countries and their manufacturing firms." According to Khan, "The European firms were eager to do business with us. They literally begged us to buy their equipment." He further boasted "A country which could not make sewing needles was embarking on one of the most difficult technologies. We devised a strategy whereby we go all out to buy everything that we needed in the open market." The ploys adopted to circumvent the nuclear export control regimes of various states included

- Use of Pakistan embassies abroad,
- Paying above market prices,
- Keeping one step ahead of export controls,
- Hiding a critical component in a long list of useless material,
- Buying a sample as well as the method to reproduce it,
- Using multiple connections and buyers to look for a given item,
- Using front companies,
- Falsifying the end user,
- Using multiple intermediaries,
- Enlisting the help of friendly countries,
- Taking the help of Pakistani-born foreign nationals, and Capitalizing personal connections.

While the enrichment route became the visible part of its weapons quest, Pakistan also directed its efforts to activate its plutonium strategy, which earlier

suffered a setback after Germany cancelled its contract for a heavy water production plant; Canada stopped supply of nuclear fuel and the French firm St. Gobain withdrew from the construction of the reprocessing plant at Chashma. But the activity was revived in 80s with the commissioning of a heavy water facility supplied by Belgium, and the completion of the pilot plant for plutonium reprocessing at PINSTECH with China's help. This period also saw the signing of a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement between China and Pakistan. A heavy water-moderated 50MW reactor with capacity to produce about 10-15 kg of plutonium per year and tritium (for hydrogen bomb), an additional reactor and heavy water facility were built at Khushab with Chinese assistance. With the commissioning of the reprocessing plant at Chashma, Pakistan was able to significantly increase its plutonium production for weapons.

As early as 1974 the PAEC initiated the programme of developing the design for a plutonium-based nuclear weapon. The first successful cold test of a nuclear device without nuclear fuel was conducted in 1983. A second test followed soon after. A nuclear weapon design small enough to be carried by aircraft was developed and tested in 1987. It is believed that a China conducted a nuclear weapon test for Pakistan at its Lop Nor test site on May 26, 1990. Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan addressing a political rally said, "Let me tell you that we (Pakistan) have atomic bombs..... Pakistan's nuclear capability is now an established fact. Whatever we have, we have a right to keep it." Following the five underground nuclear tests carried out by India on May 11 and 13, 1998, Pakistan carried out an equal number of tests at the Chaghi nuclear test site on May 28 and a sixth test on May 30, 1998. Pakistan's Foreign Office termed it as "Pakistan's Finest Hour." Announcing the May 28 tests Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif declared, "Today we have settled a score and have carried out five successful nuclear tests." The PAEC claimed that the five tests on May 28 had a yield of up to 40 kilotons while the sixth test on May 30 had a yield of 12 kilotons. But American reports indicated lower yields of 9-12 and 4-6 kilotons respectively.

Apart from the geopolitical issues arising from Pakistan's nuclear capability, a matter of great concern

has been the nuclear proliferation activities pursued by A Q Khan. Ever since he joined the PAEC Khan, with the impressive progress achieved under his leadership, enjoyed a remarkable degree of power and autonomy under successive heads of state, especially President Zia. Buoyed up by the approbation that followed, Khan turned into an undercover salesman of uranium and enrichment equipment to a number of countries, which included China, North Korea, Iran, Libya and possibly Iraq. He began ordering twice the number of components necessary for the Pakistani programme and sold the surplus to several countries through his network. Offices were opened in East Africa for buying uranium from Niger. Designs and technology for centrifuges for uranium enrichment were provided to Iran as well as training to Iranian scientists. Agreement was entered into with North Korea for missile cooperation in exchange for enrichment technology. A centralized "one stop shop", dubbed as "Nuclear Walmart", was set up at Dubai under the name Gulf Technical Industries that offered technical advice, parts and customer support. The Khan Research Laboratories even had brought out "coloured brochures advertising centrifuges and other components" for the prospective clients. In October 2003 a German ship heading to Gaddafi's Libya was caught carrying a clandestine consignment of centrifuges manufactured at Khan's initiative by a company in Malaysia with financial assistance of a Sri Lankan Muslim, B S A Tahir. Following this incident Libya gave up all nuclear related activities. There were also reports of "stunning degree of proliferation between Islamabad and Beijing." Jim Walsh, Director of the Atom Project at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government observed, "Pakistan is absolutely the biggest and the most important illicit exporter of nuclear technology in the history of nuclear age."

All this activity would not have been possible without the complicity of Pakistan's bureaucracy and military. Pakistan however insisted that proliferation was a rogue operation by Khan and the government or military had nothing to do with it. Interestingly Khan on one occasion disclosed that General Jehagir Karamat (Chief of Army Staff, 1996-88 and Ambassador to US, 2004-06) "took US \$ three million through me from the North Koreans and asked me to

give them some drawings and machines." The US, which also knew about these clandestine activities preferred to close its eyes on geopolitical considerations in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The New York Twin Tower destruction in September 2001 however proved Khan's Nemesis. Under pressure from the US, President Musharraf stripped Khan of all responsibilities. Fearing further harassment to self and family, Khan, in a letter of December 2003, asked his Dutch wife Hendrina to take a "tough stand "if the Pakistani Establishment played any mischief with him." He also wrote, "The bastards first used us and are now playing dirty games with us." Pakistani intelligence got wind of this letter and forced him to appear over TV on February 5, 2004 and publicly take the blame for the proliferation activities. President Musharraf extended official pardon to Khan and sent him into retirement. The Time Magazine in its Feb 14, 2005 issue described Khan as "The Merchant of Menace." According to some sources though Khan has been removed from the Khan Research Laboratories, his illicit network of suppliers and middlemen which is global in scope is still believed to be active.

Khan retracted on his February 5, 2004 confession and said that he was pressurized to acknowledge that he had run a proliferation network. In an On Line interview to SPIEGEL on June 28, 2012 he said, "I feel stabbed in the back by the very people who benefitted most from my work, i.e. the Army." He further said, "I still believe that I did Pakistan a favour. Nuclear weapons are a means of ensuring peace by using as a tit-a-tat. I am convinced that there will never be another war between India and Pakistan as a consequence thereof." In another interview he gave in September 2012, Khan claimed that he had transferred nuclear technology to "two countries" on the orders of the then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Though he did not name the two countries they are believed to be Libya and North Korea.

The most disturbing aspect is the control and safety of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. In theory the Prime Minister of Pakistan, as the Chairman of Nuclear Command Authority, handles the Command and

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Control of the country's nuclear arsenal and related organizations, but it is Pakistan's Islamized army top brass which has the final say about employing the nuclear option.

The Atlantic Journal in an article 'The Ally from Hell' (December 2011) observed, "Pakistan, an unstable and violent country located in the epicenter of Global Jihad, might not be the safest place on earth to warehouse hundred plus nuclear weapons." There have been terrorist attacks on Pakistan's military establishments, especially with insider support. Some military establishments targeted include Army General Headquarters (October 2009), Naval Base at Mehran (May 2011) and Air Base at Kamra (August 2012). It is feared that through such tactics terrorist groups could gain direct access to nuclear storage bunkers with serious consequences. A Washington Post report (TOI, September 4, 2013) says that The US has ramped up its surveillance of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.



## **Challenges Faced by Financial Markets** *Some Random Reflections*

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(Lecture delivered at GVP School of Management Studies on November 6, 2013)

It is a great pleasure and honour to be invited as a chief guest for this seminar. I am grateful to the organizers, GVP of School of Management Studies.

Banking and financial services are the lifeline of any modern economy, though they do not produce any physical output. At the same time no physical output can be produced without them. The banking sector has travelled a long and sometimes turbulent path from money changers to mercantile banking to modern day banking and financial services with separate markets for various financial needs. The recent global financial crisis has brought many issues which were hitherto wittingly or wittingly not discussed. The crisis has thrown up many challenges. The macro-economic theory did not predict the crisis. Economics is supposed to be a science. This supposition of being a science sometimes borders on

arrogance. As a result many economic policy prescriptions are stated as Gospel truths. The test of any science is its ability to predict and explain. The economic science failed to predict the crisis. However, let me use the same science to explain the reasons for its failure to predict. There is so much literature giving various explanations on the recent crisis. I am not going into the merits or demerits of such explanations. However, I would like to reiterate some economic principles that need to be kept in mind with regard to proper functioning of the financial institutions.

Before I deal with these economic principles, let me contextualize these issues. There is an unequivocal political consensus regarding globalization of the Indian economy. The opportunities and challenges in store for the banking sector and other financial institutions are concomitant with the globalization process. The nature and the character of our financial institutions is going to be heavily influenced by the global practices. It is in this context, the following would be relevant.

### **Information asymmetry**

There is a strong belief in some quarters that the financial markets are self-regulatory. However, the history of financial institutions has recorded many a bubbles. We have also witnessed when these bubbles busted the economic and social consequence are disastrous. Markets are efficient only when there is perfect information. Imperfect and asymmetric information make the markets inefficient. Adam Smith's invisible hand is invisible because it is not there. For instance, someone offered the same product at a lower price would not attract the entire market, as assumed in the conventional theory, simply because not everyone would know about it. Sometimes, the information is given as a legal compliance, but it is given in such a way that it would be impossible to decipher.

Markets, in which information problems are important, are likely to be marked by agency problems. The people making decisions may not fully reflect the interest of those on whose behalf they are supposed to be acting. Managers need not always maximize the shareholder value, let alone social interests. These

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It is true that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. But it is equally true, in an even deeper sense, that eternal responsibility is also part of the price of liberty. Nani Palkhivala

issues are of particular relevance to financial markets, precisely because information is the heart of financial markets. They are supposed to allocate scarce capital resources and manage risk. But what makes these tasks difficult and interesting given the information imperfections is ascertaining the returns and risks associated with different assets and determining which risks are best suited for different individuals. In recent crisis the US financial markets did an abysmal job in this regard. It was criminal negligence of duty. The failures were not, however, that of a single bank, or an isolated banker. They were systemic, suggesting that the problems that gave rise to them were systemic, as indeed they were.

Further, the reason that we care so much about failures in the financial system (or even of a single large bank) is that there are systemic consequences—there are large externalities on the rest of the economy. The private gains are disproportionately appropriated by few individuals whereas the costs are borne by the society through tax payer's money.

#### **Incentive structure in the banking sector**

There are also problems with incentive structure of the banking sector. Anyone looking at the incentive structures facing banks and bankers should have understood that they had incentives to engage in excessive risk taking and short sighted behaviour. They acted as any economist should have predicted that they would.

Even if there had not been such perverse incentive structures, those in the financial sector have often been prone to irrational exuberance. History was replete of instances of such irrational exuberance. What distinguishes banks from other institutions is that in this sector, irrational exuberance has systemic consequences—there are large externalities. Bankers with irrational exuberance are gambling with other people's money,

But the problems go deeper. Bank managers and industry leaders often seem to show remarkable ignorance of some of the basic principles of risk—including the Modigliani-Miller theorem, which asserts that increasing leverage doesn't increase market value—it doesn't create wealth, it simply shifts more risk upon the residual equity base. Of course, there

could be an increase in value because of market imperfections, either because (a) market participants are irrational, and don't fully understand the increased risk imposed on equity; (b) shareholders as a whole may gain because of the shift of risk to the government, which may result in "bail-out subsidy"; or (c) distortions in the tax code.

Thus, the widely held notion in the banking community that increased capital requirements (say under Basel III) will increase the cost of borrowing either reflects a profound misunderstanding of risk among those in the banking community; and/or their understandable desire to increase the subsidy the sector gets from the public, disguising this in terms of the benefits to their customers.

This implies that there should be strong regulations on the incentive structures of banks—it is not just the size of the bonuses that should be of concern, but the design. Higher deposit insurance fees levied on banks engaged in higher levels of risk taking might also discourage excessive risk taking, offsetting the implicit subsidy associated with government bailouts. But because of pervasive irrationalities, we cannot rely on incentive structures to curb excessive risk taking. There have to be strong restrictions on the risk taking, including the degree of leverage. Excessively rapid expansion of a bank's assets, particularly within a given area, is almost a sure sign of excessive risk taking. There is a need for some speed breakers. The costs of such restriction say a slight postponement of perhaps some socially profitable lending is far less than the benefit of avoiding the kind of financial collapses that have occurred repeatedly.

However, this problem is not very severe with Indian banking system. The exposure limits set by the Apex body has to large extent minimised this damage. At the same time, the recent increase in the NPV (Non-performing assets) in infrastructure sector has brought this aspect into focus. The public sector banks in India have been careful with risk as they come under CVC (Central Vigilance Commission). To a large extent they erred on the right side rather than on the wrong side. Sometimes, they have been too conservative even on the risk assessment.

## Financial Contagion

Banks have an incentive to become too big, too intertwined, and too correlated to fail. Financial institutions which are too big to fail, too interconnected to fail, or too correlated to fail have an incentive to gamble. If they win, they walk off with the profits and if they lose the public picks up the losses. But the problems are deeper. The private returns to growth in size and to interconnectedness exceed by a large measure the social returns (which may, in fact, be negative.)

One aspect of “correlated” risk taking is the herding behaviour that marks credit bubbles. Such irrational bubbles are a major source of macroeconomic volatility. In the past, regulation has typically focused on the safety and soundness of individual banks, but once we recognize the central role of the correlated behaviour of banks in causing macroeconomic fluctuations, we have to ask how we can design a regulatory structure to reduce the scope and severity of such finance induced fluctuations.

Reducing the risk of “too correlated to fail” is more complex, and requires ensuring a diversity of financial institutions, with different ownership, incentives, and objectives. This argues strongly against the universal bank model. While more specialized financial institutions may face a greater risk of bankruptcy, the risk of systemic failure is greater where all banks are universal banks, and the social costs of systemic failure is an order of magnitude greater than the costs of the failure of individual institutions. (Much of that cost can be handled through diversification of the ownership shares.)

## Investor Protection

In most countries, many small and medium investors that participate in the financial sector are poorly educated and less informed about the nuances of working of the financial sector. There is a tendency on the part of some to take advantage of this ignorance. They engage in deceptive practices, market manipulation and fraudulent practices with even seemingly sophisticated customers. They have demonstrated a remarkable level of moral turpitude. This has contributed not only to creating high levels of inequality—moving money from the bottom and

middle of the pyramid to the top—but also to a lack of trust in markets and the market economy. Markets cannot function well without such trust. This is another way in which the financial institutions have exhibited enormous adverse externalities. More generally, there are large costs to the sector's rent seeking activities.

The development of financial sector is not an end in itself. It is a facilitator to an expanding commodity production. When we look into the prospects and challenges of financial sector this relationship of ends and means has to be kept in mind. The financial returns and economic value need to be balanced in the long-run, though there may be a divergence in the short-run.

I wish you fruitful deliberations during these two days and your conclusions would make a positive contribution to a healthy development of the financial sector resulting in expanded commodity production. This would help us in bringing inclusive growth with reduced unemployment and low levels of inflation.



## THE RAJYA SABHA: To ABOLISH or to RE-ORIENT ? -II

Prof R.L. M.Patil

*(Member Karnataka State Higher Education Council, Bangalore. Retd. Professor of Political Science, Bangalore University who held Dr Zakir Husain Chair in Mysore University and Sir Ratan Tata Professorship at ISEC, Bangalore. )*

Now that we can assess the working of the Constitution, especially with respect to federalism, it is hoped that the Rajya Sabha's role and functions could be subjected to an in- depth review. A near-hundred old legislative appendix which hardly fulfils a federal requirement, could be cut out altogether, without affecting the efficacy of the Union Parliament. Or else, it would be prudent to consider re-orienting the institution towards the achievement of a true-blooded federation as well as full-flowering of democratic system. In this latter option, it would be worthwhile to redefine the composition and functions of the present Rajya Sabha on the following lines, subject to modifications after a full debate.

The real purpose of books is to trap the mind into doing its own thinking.

Christopher Morely

Firstly, the members of the Rajya Sabha should be named by the constituent states and Union Territories. Big or small all states should send equal number of members (Two, for instance for states and one for UTs). They should be replaceable by a new set of people whenever there is a change in the governments of states. Further, their functioning should be in accordance with the wishes of the states.

Secondly, the President of India should be required to obtain the approval of the Rajya Sabha before or after the dismissal of a State Government and imposition of the President's Rule in that state. The appointment of Governors should also be done by the President in consultation with the Rajya Sabha. The federal Officer/ posts of importance like the Chief Justice & Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, Auditor-General, Chairman & Members of the Election Commission, Finance Commission, Planning Commission, U.P.S.C, U.G.C., etc., should be made by the President of India only after the Rajya Sabha endorses his recommendations. This is a time-honored Constitutional practice in the U.S.

The Rajya Sabha need not be burdened with the duplication of work being done by the Lok Sabha. In the matters of legislation, executive, administration or finance if there is a significant impact upon the states, the centre should be obliged to seek the approval mandatorily from the Rajya Sabha, as in Germany for example.

Many myths have come up in connexion with making of the Constitution of India. One of them is that it is a totally new Constitution drawn up after a prolonged discussion among the popularly elected members of the Constituent Assembly. In fact, the 1949 Constitution appears to be a continuation of the Government of India Act 1935, even as Dr B.R.Ambedkar liked it. A few additions like the Fundamental rights and Directive Principles were added to it, which were not there in the 1935 Act. Many provisions crept into the final text of the Constitution without ever being discussed or raised in the constituent Assembly like the Treaty-making power of the centre or the Inter-state council. The Rajya Sabha or the Council of States as a successor to the Council of State under the Government of India Acts 1919 and

1935, was another instance of institutional survival on account mostly of absentmindedness of the rulers of the state. It is better to re-orient it and make it serve the immanent interest of federalism and democracy before it becomes an object of ridicule.

(Concluded)



## **Violence against women UN's two week campaign to end it**

Following UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's appeal, a seminar on Gender Sensitization to mark the International day for Elimination of Violence against women was organized by Visakhapatnam Port Trust with its deputy chairman G.V.L. Satya Kumar as the chief guest on November 25. Secretary General-Ban ki-moon's appeal said:"I welcome the chorus of voices calling for an end to the violence that affects an estimated one in three women in her lifetime. I applaud leaders who are helping to enact and enforce laws and change mindsets. And I pay tribute to all those heroes around the world who help victims to heal and to become agents of change." November 25 is called the Orange Day and " this year, the UNITE Campaign is extending Orange Day to 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence " ending on December 10, the Human Rights Day. Andhra University's English Professor Prasanna Sree focused on gender injustice against poor and Girijan women while advocate Suguna called for round the clock vigilance at home and outside. Advocate Muralidhar explained how Constitution has empowered women with rights that can be protected by approaching courts of law. Centre for Policy Director A.Prasanna Kumar referred to prevalence of such obnoxious practices as clitoridectomy and bride burning and the tragic fact that 70% of women suffer from violence in some form or the other.

Some of the facts released by the UN are:

### **Why This International Day?**

- Violence against women is a human rights violation
- Violence against women is a consequence of

discrimination against women, in law and also in practice, and of persisting inequalities between men and women

- Violence against women impacts on, and impedes, progress in many areas, including poverty eradication, combating HIV/AIDS, and peace and security
- Violence against women and girls is not inevitable. Prevention is possible and essential
- Violence against women continues to be a global pandemic. Up to 70 per cent of women experience violence in their lifetime.

### Facts and Figures

- Up to 70 per cent of women experience violence in their lifetime.
- Between 500,000 to 2 million people are trafficked annually into situations including prostitution, forced labour, slavery or servitude, according to estimates. Women and girls account for about 80 per cent of the detected victims
- It is estimated that more than 130 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM/C, mainly in Africa and some Middle Eastern countries.
- The cost of intimate partner violence in the United States alone exceeds \$5.8 billion per year: \$4.1 billion is for direct medical and health care services, while productivity losses account for nearly \$1.8 billion.

### Orange the World in 16 days

The Secretary General's Campaign UNITE to End Violence Against Women has proclaimed the 25th of each month Orange Day. Among other actions, the Orange Day invites us to wear something orange to highlight its calls for the eradication of violence against women without reservation, equivocation or delay.

This year, the UNITE Campaign is extending Orange Day to 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, starting November 25, International Day to End Violence Against Women, through December 10, Human Rights Day.

The date of November 25 was chosen to commemorate the Mirabal sisters, three political activists Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961) ordered brutally assassinated in 1960.

"Violence has been the inseparable twin of materialism," it is said. "According to CBI there are more than 3 million prostituted girls. They live in absolute terror. They are raped by nine or ten men every night. Many of them are between the ages of nine and thirteen. They die by the time they reach their thirties." ( Ruchira Gupta-Seminar May 2011)

Women continue to be discriminated at all levels. At the global level women account for 66% of the work turned out though their share in income is only 10% and they enjoy only 1% of the property. 70% of world's 1.3 billion poor people are women. 2/3 of the 1 billion illiterate people are women and 75% of the world's refugees are women and children. Two million girls suffer every year genital mutilation. 20% of women are victims of domestic violence. Over 1600 women die every day from causes relating to pregnancy and childbirth. Over 15000 girls are annually sold in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh for kidney sale and flesh trade. The main obstacles to gender justice are identified as poverty, illiteracy, alcoholism, female feticide, clitoridectomy and domestic violence. Asymmetries in work culture exist as men's work is more valued than women's while men enjoy higher social status. As former Director – General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, said: "Women you have brought with you a new song. But we did not let you speak out although yours is the voice of half the earth"

### Legend of The Mysterious Fruit

Prof. Manoj Das

( A Seer among scholars the venerable Prof Manoj Das who lives in Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, has graciously permitted the publication of this essay from his book *My Little India* )

Professor Nigam said in a murmur as we sat down on a rock overlooking the river Sipra and gazing at a serene sunset, not far from the Bhartrihari Cave. 'Under our feet lies ignored and almost forgotten the legendary Ujjain. A systematic excavation could probably bring to light a wonderful civilization, but...'

The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I had no difficulty in appreciating his 'but'. There were as many important mythological and historic sites in India as there are modern ones. So many adventures in exploration - at Toshali, the site of the Kalinga War, at Pumpuhar, the backdrop of the great Tamil work *Silappadikaram*, and even Dwaraka, the city founded by Krishna, were abandoned or suspended at early stages because of lack of resource.

I agreed with the professor that explorations at Ujjain might yield a diamond mine of knowledge of several phases of the past. It had been associated, apart from mythological figures like Krishna, Sandipani and Sudama, and legendary characters like Vikramaditya and the *Navaratna* or the "nine gems" of his court - Kalidasa the great poet and dramatist, Dhanvantari, the physician, Kshapanka, Sanku, Ghatakarpara and Vetalabhatta, all poets, Varahamihira the astronomer, Amarasimha the lexicographer, Vararuchi the litterateur and grammarian - with historical personages like Ashoka who ruled the province as the viceroy of his father Vindusar, and Chandragupta who shifted his capital from Pataliputra to Avantika - as Ujjain was then known.

Historians dispute one another regarding the time of these remarkable brothers, Bhartrihari and Vikramaditya, but folklore traces them to A.D. 1st century. And this is what the legend has to say about Bhartrihari:

The young king, who was also a gifted poet, enjoyed life, as is evident from his *Sringara Satakam* or a century of couplets glorifying love:

*Is there a heart that girls cannot subdue*

*When they walk like swans, their bangles jingling,*

*their girdles tinkling, their anklets jangling,*

*and their eyes like those of deer glance frank but timid?*  
(Translated by A.L. Basham)

But he was an efficient and compassionate ruler too, loved by all. One day, while he was in his court, a hermit who lived in a cave in the nearby forest, appeared before him unexpectedly. Famous for his occult powers, he was nonetheless notorious for his short temper. He led the king into privacy and offered

him a fruit the kind of which the king had never known.

'Don't try to identify it,' said the Yogi, 'for this is no ordinary fruit but one rich with the power of my *askesis* - an experiment which became a complete success. Whoever eats it would be endowed with a long and ever-youthful life. As I see it, you alone deserve it. Eat the fruit and be happy and let your subjects benefit by your sound rule.'

The Yogi left as unceremoniously as he had arrived.

The king stood delighted - but for a different reason. He loved his youngest queen more than anything else on earth - and was sure that she too loved him with equal intensity. He had, of course, bestowed on her all the imaginable items of luxury but, he wondered if he couldn't give her something unique, something which no lover had ever been able to give his beloved.

He could - at last! He would happily forgo the prospect of a long and youthful life for himself, for the sake of the queen acquiring that marvellous destiny.

King Bhartrihari at once entered the youngest queen's apartment and passed on to her the miraculous fruit along with its secrets. Satisfied that he had proved his love beyond any doubt, he almost forgot about it.

Three days passed.

The king was returning to his palace after a leisurely ride along the banks of the Sipra at sundown when a veiled woman signed him to stop. That was a spot between the forest and the city and there was no other soul in the vicinity.

The king dismounted from his horse and the woman unveiled her face. The king was pleasantly surprised, for she was the foremost courtesan of the city - a highly gifted danseuse.

'My lord, I wish to hand over a gift to you - but on condition that you must not ask me any question about it,' she said pleadingly.

Intrigued, the king could display only an uncertain smile. The courtesan brought out a fruit and pushed it into the king's hand.

'Whoever eats it would be blessed with a long, youthful life. There is none in my knowledge who could deserve it more than you, my lord!' she said.

The lady drew the veil on her face and walked away briskly without giving the king a chance to find out anything more about the surprise gift.

He gazed at the thing for long. It was unmistakably the very fruit given him by the hermit.

Bewildered, he turned and proceeded to the royal rest-house in the forest and summoned his Kotwal - the chief of the royal intelligence service. After narrating his puzzle to him, he said, 'I must know in detail, as soon as possible, the process through which the fruit came back to the starting point of its movement - that is myself.'

The Kotwal perhaps already knew much. In any case he presented his foolproof report within twenty-four hours, the substance of which was: just as the king loved his youngest queen most, the youngest queen loved a young noble most and had been anxious to prove her love through some uncommon gesture. The opportunity came when she received the wonder fruit. She lost no time in making a gift of it to her beloved.

It so happened that while the queen was madly in love with the young noble, the latter was enamoured of the courtesan and to prove his love for her, presented the fruit to the courtesan at the earliest opportunity. The prudent courtesan, however, had no illusion about herself or her vocation and had no fancy for a prolonged youth. King Bhartrihari was her objective choice for enjoying the fruit's efficacy.

Unlike the king of the Arabian Nights who, not content with beheading his faithless wife, would marry a girl in the evening only to behead her the next morning, the stunned Bhartrihari was left with only one question to brood over. Had he died four days ago, he would have died with the belief that his queen loved him as much as he loved her, that is to say, he would have died without knowing the truth. Truth, in this case, was a chance discovery for him. Alas, can one ever know the truth behind even the usual happenings in life, with the help of the normal wit and intelligence at one's disposal? And, if truth can prove so elusive

even in small things, how much difficult it must be to grasp the ultimate Truth!

He called his younger brother, Vikram, and his ministers and nobles to his forest rest-house and crowned Vikram the king. He then left them as an ascetic, for meditating on the enigma that is Truth. From Ujjain he went to Varanasi and several other places, living in a cave at Haridwar for twelve years, practising Yoga under the great guru of the Natha sect, Gorakhnath.

'How fascinating, though a legend!' I commented.

'There is an area where history and legends are inextricably merged. It is almost impossible to shift one from the other. Sage Sandipani, the teacher of Krishna, belongs to the lore of mythology. But his family stream has continued to flow, uninterrupted and undisputed, to this day, the present scion of it being Pandit Suryanarayan Vyas, the celebrated scholar. Where do we draw a line between myths and history in this case?' asked Prof. Nigam, adding mildly, 'And I wonder if that is necessary.' He almost echoed my thought.

The region abounding in rocks and bushes we surveyed, had probably been a stretch of forest during the era of Bhartrihari. The original caves as well as the habitations which must have grown around the caves appeared to have been buried under layers of earth deposited by floods.

The sun was disappearing on the far horizon across the timeless city. The fusion of light and darkness in the twilight was as soothing and significant as the fusion of myths and history at Ujjain.



## **AMID THE LEAVES THE INMATE VOICES CALLED- II**

**Dr.Mrs.Prema Nandakumar**

One of his statements that has charmed me no end refers to his habit of taking in the whole of a book and not harping upon individual words and phrases as writers of bazaar notes do. They may present the body but they lose the life-spirit. As he said on 29th December, 1938:

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.

Aldous Huxley

“Once I was giving a lecture on Southey’s ‘Life of Nelson’. My lecture was not in agreement with the notes. So the students remarked that it was not at all like what is found in the notes. I replied that: ‘I have not read the notes -- in any case they are all rubbish!’ I could never go to the minute details. I read and left my mind to do what it could. That’s why I could never become a Scholar.”

I guess this attitude helped me keep my love of English literature undimmed during all these decades. The text has been my joy. Sri Aurobindo read voraciously and Dinendra Kumar Roy who was with Sri Aurobindo in Baroda has said that he saw all the poets from Chaucer to Swinburne in his library. It must have contained the literature preceding Chaucer too. With his passion for the classics, he would have had books on Old English literature also in his Baroda library. For he spent lavishly on books which seems to have been his solitary luxury in those days.

Whenever I have come to **The Future Poetry** and read his references to the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic element in English literature, I have simply spent sometime with a text of those times. So it has been whenever I see the mention of a familiar name from that literature in all his writings: Chaucer, Marlowe, Rossetti or Morris. This has been a luxury indeed! I used to wonder sometimes at this habit of repeatedly going back to such writings when they have nothing to do with my work on hand and positively do hamper my deadlines. That is, till suddenly a line in **Savitri** brought me illumination one day.

“Hidden in the forest’s bosom of loneliness  
Amid the leaves the inmate voices called,  
Sweet like desires enamoured and unseen,  
Cry answering to low insistent cry.  
Behind slept emerald dumb remotenesses,  
Haunt of a Nature passionate, veiled, denied  
To all but her own vision lost and wild.  
Earth in this beautiful refuge free from cares  
Murmured to the soul a song of strength and  
peace.”

This is the introduction to the forest where Satyavan has spent his childhood, boyhood and youth. Savitri’s chariot is passing through the area and we have this splendid description. The unseen inmates

were welcoming her to come, see and stay. Who wants to leave a place that gives you a feeling of absolute peace, comfort, the adventure of quiet imagination, the rainbow hues of loving togetherness?

Browsing in my library I have often felt the same way, the silent call of a book. So many inmate voices! Many had been handled by my father long before I was born. Some very precious volumes too: the books which carry the divine signatures of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother given to my parents at various times: To Srinivasa; to Padmasani. And all those books given to me by my father at various times, the earliest dated 1944!

Perhaps this immersion in English literature has made me feel absolutely at home with the writings of Sri Aurobindo. I find delight in well-wrought phrases and Sri Aurobindo never fails to surprise me in his regard. Have I understood all that he has written? Certainly not. I am, after all, a human being with limitations. But the sheer pleasure of reading him! Ah, yes, it is good that my basic grounding was in English literature.

The entry into that field was quite harsh. It was alien territory in all respects. Like ancient Tamil of the Sangam Age, the Old English period traverses the same time scale, 500 B.C. to 2nd century A.D. And like Sangam Tamil, Old English sounds like another language. Even the script has variations. For both, written records come much later. In the beginning, it was quite a pain to attend the Old English classes. We had come to the discipline hoping for an absolutely lovely time reading novels (!) as already various serials like Classics Retold had charmed us. Nor were we strangers to English poetry. The Golden Treasury was a beloved companion for the aspiring teenager in those days. But here the Professor was spreading several tough nuts for us to crack, including the epic poem **Beowulf**.

Hwæt! We Gardena in geardagum,  
þeodcýninga, þrym gefrunon,  
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.  
Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum ...\*

This is not English, our minds rebelled. But we plodded through the words for there was no choice.

I am about fifty-fifty on believing in God. For most of my life, I’ve felt that there must be more to our existence than meets the eye. Steve Jobs

There was also a temptation. Papers on Old English, Middle English and the History of the English Language could help us score marks as in mathematics. Memory power was important too. But once the coveted degree was in my hands, promptly I forgot the originals. But the story of heroism, the battle between Beowulf and the sea-monster Grendel and some of the kennings have continued to walk with me down the decades. Scyld, the heroic king had wanted a sea-burial. When he dies, he is placed in a boat which is set adrift in the sea. As I was living in a coastal town at that time, the scenery would come back to me as I stared at the Bay of Bengal in the evenings. Scyld's son was the hero Beowulf. It is an incomplete epic, though.

Old English literature is mostly about battle heroism and the pain of war, loss and death. Even later poems (5th, 6th centuries) can overwhelm us by sheer melancholy. 'The Battle of Maldon' was a prescribed text and we learnt about the horrifying Viking invasions of Britain which were repeated, and our Professor helpfully linked it to the repeated invasions of Mahmud of Gazni who plundered India. Athelgar, Godric, Godwig, Wulfstan, Aethelred the Unready and Brihtnoth became familiar names. Brihtnoth was of course the heroic warrior who challenged the invading Vikings, avaricious for Anglo-Saxon riches:

"Thou messenger of the seamen, back with thy message.  
Tell to thy people, these far more hateful tidings,  
There stands here a good earl in the midst of his men,  
Who will this country ever defend,  
The kingdom of Aethelred, mine overlord,  
The folk and the ground - but they shall fall,  
The foemen in the fight; too shameful methinks  
That ye with our tribute, to ship should be gone  
Without a blow struck - now that ye have thus far  
Made your incoming into our land.  
Nor shall ye so softly carry off our riches.  
Sooner shall point and edge reconcile us,  
Grim warplay indeed - before we give tribute."

So why should we be surprised that the seeds of patriotism had been sown in Sri Aurobindo's heart even when he was in England, studying such books? However, battle heroism is not all about these Anglo-Saxon recordings. There are also the earliest

references to the coming of Christianity, the change from the terrifying gods of Norse mythology like Thor to the beckoning love of Jesus Christ's message. 'The Dream of the Rood' was another prescribed poem. It was amazing to know that part of the poem had been carved on a wooden pillar known as the Ruthwell Cross but it was pulled down during a Protestant revolt. Who was the author? Caedmon? Cynewulf? What does it matter who the author was? The poem is the reality and is a wonderful introduction to the art of personification.

The poet has a dream in which he comes across the Cross on which Jesus Christ had been nailed. Encrusted with precious gems as also stained by blood the Cross speaks to the poet of the last hours of Jesus. It was originally a tree which was cut down to make the Cross crucify Jesus. It had shared the pain of being nailed with Jesus and had been mocked by the onlookers. Later, just as Jesus is now praised by all, the Cross too has gained a very high position. It is now decorated with gems to celebrate it.

"Now the time has come  
That I will be honoured far and wide  
By men over the earth and all this glorious creation;  
They will pray to this beacon. On me the Son of God  
Suffered for a while; because of that I am glorious  
now,  
Towering under the heavens, and I am able to heal  
Each one of those who is in awe of me.  
Formerly I was made the hardest of punishments,  
Most hateful to the people, before I opened for them,  
For the voice-bearers, the true way of life.  
Listen, the lord of glory, the guardian of the kingdom  
of heaven,  
Then honoured me over the forest trees,  
Just as he, almighty God, also honoured  
His mother, Mary herself, for all men  
Over all womankind."

I studied Old English between 1954-57. That was a time when we did not (or could not) even consider writings by Americans or Africans or Canadians or Indians writing in English as 'English literature'. The austere Professor K. Viswanadham saw to it that we did not let our attention wander away, as he painstakingly went through the syllabus. There

were good moments of laughter when he explained a few Old English “riddles” and drew our attention to “naivam chindanthi sastraani” sloka in the Gita when explaining one of them:

“A noble guest of great lineage dwells  
In the house of man. Grim hunger  
Cannot harm him, nor feverish thirst,  
Nor age, nor illness. If the servant  
Of the guest who rules, serves well  
On the journey, they will find together  
Bliss and well-being, a feast of fate;  
If the slave will not as a brother be ruled  
By a lord he should fear and follow  
Then both will suffer and sire a family  
Of sorrows when, springing from the world,  
They leave the bright bosom of one kinswoman,  
Mother and sister, who nourished them.  
Let the man who knows noble words  
Say what the guest and servant are called.”

So apt an image to explain the relationship of the body and the soul! I salute the Professor who made the distant Anglo-Saxon poem come so close to our own religious experience.

\*... “Lo! the Spear-Danes’ glory through splendid achievements

The folk-kings’ former fame we have heard of,  
How princes displayed then their prowess-in-battle.  
Oft Scyld the Scefing from scathers in numbers  
(Translated by Lesslie Hall)

(Courtesy: *Mother India* Pandicheery September, 2013)

(Concluded)



## Emotional Secrets in Musical Constructs

**Dr. T.V. Sairam I.R.S., (Retd)**  
President, Nada Centre for Music Therapy

Emotion plays an important role in our music appreciation. It is the emotion in music which makes it attractive and habit-forming for the listeners. The emotion in music is also known to heal its listeners from their various mental problems and deficiencies for centuries. Right from the days of Plato, music is

known for its healing role, though only of late – from the world war aftermaths, music has turned into an exclusive discipline called ‘music therapy’.

When we talk of emotion, we all know that music may sound joyful, sad or angry depending on its contents and tempo. For the purpose of this article, we would analyse the sadness in a musical structure. Let us take the piano music to understand this aspect of music which emits sadness.

### Secret of Sadness found in Music:

The Western world for very long time that it is the intervals that decide the impact of music. We have three forms: major chords, minor chords and also diminished chords which affect our emotional experience. For instance sadness is reflected in minor chords of the piano. They are usually termed as the “melancholic cousins of the major chords”. The minor chords are long known for their tonal impact. They sound quite sad even as you practise these chords in your piano or guitar! They sound introvert and mellow as compared to the major chords. The great composers of the western world have therefore, made use of their emotional impact and produced innumerable masterpieces which are the sweetest songs that tell of saddest thoughts. Further, it is the minor third intervals in the minor chords that sound more introvert and mellow.

Theoretically, every major chord is built out of a major third and a small third. The minor chords are built the other way round. They are formed by a minor 3rd and a major 3rd on top of it. So, you basically switch the order of the major chords to create the required sobriety! For instance, C Major is constituted by C, E and G, whereas C Minor is formed by C, Eb and G so as to add a tinge of melancholy!

Apart from this, we also have in the western system, what we call as “diminished chord” which also enhances such a mood-changing impact. For instance, let us again take the example of C Major. When we intentionally diminish both the middle note of the chord (E in C major) and the upper note the chord (G in C Major) in half a tone, we form a diminished chord. The result of this effort by pianists is that they are able to create the unstable chord, containing lots of tension which can easily affect the listener’s mind.

Thyagaraja was a Gandhi of music, a genius gaining ground in an Indian artistic domain which impelled people’s lives inspiringly. William.L.Jackson

Thus C Diminished chord is formed by C-Eb and Gb, that is two small 3rds (Eb and Gb) close to each other, producing intense feelings.

Now what is the impact of sad songs? Firstly, they provoke intense feelings, triggering memory, making the listener nostalgic. It should be remembered that the sad songs do not create just sadness, but sadness with certain beauty that can be savoured or relished by its listeners! This helps listeners to a pleasant simulation of thought feelings, which remain inexpressible. Following the law called “similia”, which stands for the concept, like cures like, it is the sad tinge in music that works as a cure for those who are saddened by events and relationships. A feeling of consolation as someone is undergoing the same sense of isolation and tension is guaranteed by such musical forms. They also help in unburdening the unwanted emotional baggage in the listener’s personality. Though there are millions of songs which can be grouped as ‘sad songs’, one of the recent ones I admired was Rahat Fateh Ali’s ‘Saaiyaan mere’. Minor scales are also thus known for their impact in Indian music. However Indian classical music places less emphasis on the use of minor chords and instead it is the right combination of tones (or semi-tones) that can infuse melancholy to a particular raga. Ragas like Asavari and Subhapanthuvarali are the burning examples of ragas that express melancholy. Ragas like Charukesi, Hindolam (Malkauns), Jagan Mohini, Kapi, Kharaharapriya, Madhuvanti, Marga Hindolam, Mayamalavagowla, Nadanamakriya, Purvikalyani, Revati, Ritigowla, Shivranjani, Sriranjani etc have been successfully tested by the volunteers of Nada Centre for Music Therapy, a pioneering organization devoted to popularizing music therapy in India on the survivors of major calamities in India such as tsunami and cloudbursts in recent years.

### **Joy in Music**

We all know that the physical state of joy reflects thrill or faster heartbeats. Lot of exuberance and extrovert characteristics in the happy man’s personality. All these are reflected in music which give joy to us. Fast paced, peppy music or those which mimic squeals or shouts with joyful lyrics and played or sung

in higher volumes are the typical music that reflect joyful moods and create the same in its listeners. Among the contemporary artistes, one can find joyful beats and rhythms in Calvin Harris (Feat- Ne-Yo- Let’s Go number for instance). In carnatic ragas, we have Bhupalam and Bowli which depict moods of the morning – fresh and joyful to enter into a new wakening! Brindavana Saranga depicts the moods of midday- laced with joy, peace, devotion and majesty – a recipe for being happy and healthy! Chandrakauns, Desh, Gauri Manohari, Hamsa Nandi, Kanada, Kadanakudoohalam, Nagaswarali, are the other beautiful Indian ragas, which are capable of infusing joy and peace to its listeners.

### **Angry Tunes and Songs**

Anger in music is reflected through the “diminished” chords which we had mentioned earlier. By diminishing the stable notes and making them unstable and tense, the musician is able to create certain sense of instability in the minds of the listeners as well. The same “similia” principle works here too. The people who are prone to anger are attracted to such tunes, which like joyful ones are also fast-paced. They are however more ‘growling’ than ‘singing’! They depict distorted voices and shrill screaming which produce fear or hatred in listeners. Percussion of this kind of music also produces a feeling of venting pent-up anger. The odd sounds of this music as in many a metal genre of music do produce such impact which help many of its listeners –especially the younger ones- overcome the lurking anger and frustrations, caused by high expectations in life and from people around. Modern lyrics such as “Break you” by Lamb of Gods in Heavy Metal format and verses such as “you taught me hate, I’ll teach you fear” etc feed the medicine of anger to those who are already angry. This helps them pleasantly overcome their anger and disgust. Coming to the Carnatic ragas, Abheri, Atana, Bhairav and a host of other ragas, which reflect anger or disgust or ridicule can be used for healing similar feelings in patients. While doing so, it is advisable to incorporate fast or irregular tempo which reflects the physical aspects of anger. Nada Centre for Music Therapy, a pioneering organization devoted to music

therapy in India since 2004, has done intense research experiments on ragas such as *Chakravakam*, *Devagandhari*, *Panthuvarali*, *Punnagavarali* and *Shanmukhapriya* to study their beneficial impact on the anger-prone people.



## Dialogue & Discussion

**Shri. V. Bhaskar Rao**

Chief Manager, Training(Retd),Bank of Baroda  
Author of *Musings of Barefoot Bankers*

Prof. Bohm traces dialogue to ancient Greece. I believe that in the upanishadic days our rishis had used dialogue form in their discourses. On the other hand discussion which has the same root as concussion means breaking things. In a discussion everybody presents different view-points breaking and analysing.

According to David Bohm dialogue is stream of meaning, flow of meaning; Its flow is like that of a river. At first it begins with a trickle, then as other streams of thoughts merge, overcoming every obstacle it meets on its journey to the ocean of meaning. The obstacles that come in the way of people are the habitual defences, avoidance, compromises, denials or withholding.

Consensus is not its goal. What is significant is that something new emerges. Probably on rare occasions we too have had dialogues without knowing it. What is true is that it is very rare and not recognised even when it happens. In a world of strife where hatred waxes, dialogue wanes. Where prejudice and malice rule dialogue flies.

What Bohm thought was that if we create necessary and sufficient conditions dialogue can flourish. In dialogue the tacit knowledge becomes explicit ! They raise the consciousness of participants. All are equals, spirit of inquiry & suspending assumptions are the necessary and sufficient conditions.

This being so there is a difficulty we face in our face to face encounters: the fragmentation. The whole world is many shades merging into one, but we select

certain things, first, for convenience; then we give this separation great importance.

### SUSPENDING ASSUMPTIONS

Bohm says that people will bring to the group their assumptions. As they continue talking their assumptions will come up. Nine Tenth of our assumptions which are of things (or events), of ideas or of people are submerged in the subconscious. They need to be surfaced.

Then what is called for, says Bohm, is to suspend them so that you neither carry out nor suppress them; you don't judge them as good or bad ; you hold it back, reflect back, to create a mirror so that you can see the result of your thought. What is required then is that we notice the connection between the thought going on in the dialogue, the feelings in the body, and the emotions. Everybody is much in the same boat, except that they are on the opposite side.

### PARTICIPATORY & REFLECTIVE OPENNESS

In a dialogue all members, ideally, have to have a say. In the current parliamentary system very few members seem to participate in discussions and debate. Few articulate their views. Most do not voice their views and the rest make noise to disrupt the proceedings.

The youth learn pretty little observing the proceedings in the Parliament

David Bohm used the terms 'partaking and taking part' similar to pot-luck dinner to which every family 'takes part' by bringing their own favourite dish or one allotted to them. When all dishes are pooled everybody 'part takes' at least tasting some others dishes. You will notice someone persuading the others enjoy the pride of their contribution. Some who have no time or afraid of making contribution buy something outside and cannot claim any specialty. Same is the case at a discussion table as with dinner table.

### CHALLENGE OR FASCINATION

Whenever someone comes up with an assumption different from that of yours, you feel challenged and hence start defending. Instead if you are open and receptive, you may be fascinated with

Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of cancer cell.

Edward Abbey

it. You can elicit more and more information. You may begin asking questions with genuine curiosity of a child.

### **BALANCING INQUIRY AND ADVOCACY**

When you ask questions in this manner to elicit information, you also help the other person, not to defend, but make internal search, making him aware of his tacit knowledge and bring it out. Helping each other in this fashion entire group learns. The group can in turn put together all these explicit pieces of information and may advocate for a decision or action.

### **Creative Atmosphere**

The sum of collective assumptions and shared meaning will change the climate, psychological and even physical. The cool enquiry which is dialogue will create right atmosphere for creativity. Here is an example: Carl Simonton, a radiologist and Fritjof Capra concluded their two day dialogue thus:

Capra : It is completely new and fascinating idea for me ....

Carl : It is really new to me, too. I had never verbalised it before....

### **SUMMING UP**

SPIRAL acronym sums up; Suspending assumptions, Participatory openness, Inquiry (spirit of), Reflective openness, Advocacy and Listening.



## **Book Review: An Uncertain Glory India and its Contradictions**

**Jean Dreze & Amartya Sen**

ALLEN LANE an imprint of PENGUIN BOOKS pp 434,  
UK £ 20.00,

Released in August this year, the eagerly awaited work of Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen has received wide attention and acclaim from both academia and media. At a time when public discourse centres round the question whether India can recover from the present slowdown in growth rate and catch up with other economically advancing nations the book does offer a comprehensive profile of the state of the economy and polity, the main reasons for India's failure to solve

chronic problems and a way out of the present gloom. That Dreze and Sen are eminently qualified to write on the complex subject does not need particular mention. Over the years they have written prolifically, offering insightful observations which are constantly referred to at seminars and in media debates.

Amartya Sen himself replied interestingly when a girl student asked him on an interactive programme telecast some months ago by a leading news channel in India whether he would be a pessimist or an optimist about India's economic future: "An optimist by hope and a pessimist by experience." The book's title says it all. Glory is uncertain in a land of contradictions. How India comes out of the present crisis and regime of uncertainty is the real challenge. The distinguished authors suggest that democratic India requires "significant policy rethinking by the government and clearer public understanding of the abysmal extent of the social and economic deprivations in the country."

Written with meticulous care and precision this volume of 434 pages has ten chapters, with 145 pages allotted to Statistical Appendix, Notes, References, Name Index and Subject Index. "An overarching theme of this book," write the authors "is the necessity for the lives, needs, rights and demands of underprivileged people to command greater attention in public discussion and policy making, and in democratic politics."

The question mark at the end of the title of the very first chapter A New India? conveys the many challenges confronting the Indian state. Notable among them is India "climbing up the ladder of per capita income while slipping down the slope of social indicators." The task for everyone "is not so much to find a new India, but to contribute to making one" say the authors. The second chapter titled 'Integrating Growth and Development' explains the relation between growth and development, their differences and complementarity and examines major concerns such as 'jobless growth,' the dissonance between India's performance measured in terms of incomes, on the one hand, and the progress of living standards, the sharp disparities, the lack of accountability in running the economy, particularly the delivery systems. The chapter that follows offers a comparative perspective and reveals how India ranks behind

countries with lower growth rate on the development scale. On Accountability and Corruption the authors suggest that public sectors should be developed and power sector drastically reformed. Corruption thrives because of 'informational darkness and high levels of social tolerance.' . The authors, however, concede that there is no 'magic bullet' to end corruption and lack of accountability. Among the suggestions made to tackle the cancer of corruption is the potential deterrent of 'naming and shaming.'

In a severe indictment of school education, the authors observe that private schools "can be very extractive money making machines with modest educational offerings' and they 'do not seem to be doing much better than government schools.' The asymmetry between private and public schools is a serious matter that should be addressed by policy makers. India's health care crisis is another instance of the failure of state policy. Pointed references are made to India's low status on the development scale, especially in the fields of education and health care, despite high growth rate. For instance Bangladesh with less than half of India's growth rate ranks higher than India in life expectancy, lower child mortality and representation of women in Parliament.

The 'grip of inequality' caused by the social system is acute, reminding us of B.R. Ambedkar's words: "The caste system is not merely a division of labour. It is division of labourers." Gender inequality needs to be ended through 'willingness, ability and courage to challenge the dominance of received and entrenched norms.' The gap between the haves and have nots is 'not just rhetorical cliché' but a real challenge 'for the pursuit of equity in India.' Still 'the resonance of democratic principles is high among the underprivileged' an observation that revalidates Rajni Kothari's famous comment that it is the poor and underprivileged who have kept democracy alive in India.

The references to public policy and spending priorities reveal the real contradictions in policy formulation and bias of the government in favour of the elite classes. The subsidies on petroleum and fertilizer amount to more than four times of what the government spends on health care. Regressive

subsidies like those for power sector benefit more the rich farmers and landowners more than the poor farmers. While subsidies on food for the poor costing Rs27,000 crores were criticized as high, 'the acceptance without a murmur of the sacrifice of Rs 57,000 crores for keeping gold and diamond imports out of the tax net' reflects the nature of academic debates and public discourse in India!

The Indian media consisting of 86,000 newspapers reaching out to over 370 million and 831 TV channels is a force to reckon with. But its failure to focus adequately on Indian society's disparities and inequalities and 'partiality in favour of rich and powerful' classes in its news coverage and analysis reflects again the dominance of the privileged classes.

Among the solutions offered are comprehensive programmes of economic equality and social security, and the development of the physical and social infrastructure necessary for correcting the imbalances and disparities. Higher growth must be accompanied by more participatory growth for better utilization of resources, suggest the authors. India, they point out, has failed to draw lessons from the 'Asian experience'. Like the elite classes the less privileged classes also need to be 'impatient' and begin to assert their own strengths. Indian democracy, agree Dreze and Sen, offers scope enough 'for removing blind spots and turning them into lively social issues, which is the first step towards remedying them.'

This is an unputdownable work that is both illuminating and thought-provoking, not only for those engaged in policy formulation, teaching and research but for all those concerned about India's future. The failures, mostly, are those of the government. Public apathy has also contributed to the entrenchment of social disparity and economic inequality. Participatory democracy and growth require constant vigilance and alertness on the part of the people to check governmental acts of omission and commission.

The adage that people get the government they deserve comes to mind on completion of reading this scholarly work. One is reminded of Swami Vivekananda's words that Indians who claim to follow Bhagavad Gita that preaches neutrality towards fruits of work are, in fact, neutral towards work itself! On

his return from the historic tour of America the wandering monk was asked to compare Americans with Indians. 'Americans are collectively good; while Indians are individually good,' replied Vivekananda. All this is not to suggest that India needs to learn from or emulate the US or Western or Asian nations. Our concern is about why India that always produces great men and women, has failed to become a great nation. Never has there been a doubt India's civilizational greatness. The uncertainty is about democratic India's future glory. So near yet so far!

A. Prasanna Kumar



## 'ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE NEED OF THE HOUR'

( Newspaper report on a seminar on **Governance and Accountability**, organized by Centre for Policy Studies on October 25, 2013)

VISAKHAPATNAM: Governance is a very comprehensive term. But we only talk about governance from the perspective of the higher sections of society, but ignore the lower classes, according to former Union Energy Secretary EAS Sarma. Speaking on the topic 'Governance and Accountability' at a meeting organised by the Centre for Policy Studies at the Visakhapatnam Public Library on Friday, Mr. Sarma spoke on the need to use the Right to Information Act effectively in order to bring accountability in governance. "If you demand accountability, it will come. But today, there are very few who speak about it," he said. S. Vasudeva Rao, Chief Vigilance Officer, Dredging Corporation of India, spoke on the relationship between the Minister and the Civil Servant, and the need to redefine it. "The framework of accountability must be defined and enforced. Governance and accountability are not two words. The time has come for it to become one for accountable governance," he said. A. Prasanna Kumar, former AU Rector and Director of Centre for Policy Studies, said accountability means answerability. There are two major problems in India - the first being that of corruption of institutions, the second and worse problem is the institutionalisation of corruption, he added. Quoting Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, he said the level of tolerance among

people in India was very high and hence corruption exists. "You are not tolerating corruption, but you are justifying it," Prof. Kumar said. Former Mayor D.V. Subba Rao was present.

(Courtesy: *The Hindu* October 26, 2013)



## 'PCPIR POSES THREAT TO ANCIENT SITES: INTACH MEMBER'

( Newspaper report on a lecture on **Heritage in Peril -urgent need for wakeup call** by Mrs. Rani Sarma, organized by Centre for Policy Studies on November 8, 2013)

VISAKHAPATNAM: What has survived over the last 2,000 years may get erased soon. The AP Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR), expected to come up in the Visakhapatnam-Kakinada belt, may ravage some of the most ancient Buddhist sites, according to E. Rani Sarma, member of INTACH, Visakhapatnam Chapter. Speaking at a seminar on heritage, Ms. Sarma said that there were much more unexplored and unrecorded Buddhist sites in and around Visakhapatnam than the 12 mentioned in the official records. "We only know and talk about the few sites like Bavikonda, Thotlakonda, Pavuralakonda, and Bojnnakonda that are identified by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. But there are many more sites within the PCPIR zone that are now under threat. These include Rakasi Metta on the river Varaha, which was excavated and discovered 60 years ago and Roman coins were also found in the spot. But now, nobody knows where the coins are," said Ms. Sarma. Oldest site Among the other lesser known Buddhist sites in the region, Bhuvikonda is said to be the oldest and Veeralametta is a much bigger site than Thotlakonda. Unless these sites were properly explored and documented in official records, it would be difficult to preserve them. Charting out the correlation between spread of Buddhism and trade, she said that Buddhism and trade in India always had a symbiotic relationship. The early supporters of Buddhism were the traders. Since the traders followed certain routes, Buddhist sites were found in those regions, she added. Interestingly, the maximum trade happened between India and Rome and the epicenter

Envy is the most stupid of vices for there is no single advantage to be gained from it.

Balzac

of trade was South India. "There are circumstantial evidences that Visakhapatnam was an ancient trading centre. The Buddhist settlements used to be in small hills where people used to live. Hence, this region has so many Buddhist sites," Ms. Sarma said. Pointing out that the effects of the AP PCPIR would not be limited to Buddhist sites alone, she said there were many ancient temples in the region that! were likely to be disturbed due to the project. "The Buddhist site of Pellikonda was severely ravaged when the steel plant was developed. What remains now is a heavily disturbed site. Unless the effects of industrial development on archaeological sites are studied in detail, we may soon lose these rich traces of our past," Ms, Sarma said.

(Courtesy: *The Hindu* November 9, 2013)



## SRI RAMA - I

**Sri. C. Sivasankaram**

For every Indian the name 'Rama' denotes Sri Rama the prize-son of Dasaratha of Raghu dynasty. Kausalya bore him to Dasaratha. At that time there flourished another Rama whose name was prefixed by *parusu*. Parusurama was contemporary of Sri Rama. The latter was beneficiary of the Avataric powers of Parasurama who after transmitting his powers to Sri Rama, the secular world to the spiritual world, yielding place to Rama to fulfill his *avataric* mission. The ten Avatars of Hindu pantheon include these two Avatars. Around Dasaratharama is woven a grand epic called *Srimad Ramayana* with Valmiki as its author. It is popularly reputed with another sub title *Sitayah Charitam* or *Sitayana*. Narada, the divine minstrel, narrated the story of Rama to Valmiki. The genius of Valmiki developed meticulously the story as told by Narada. It is the first and the foremost epic of its kind in the annals of world literature. "Probably no work of world literature, secular in its origin, has ever produced so profound an influence on the life and thought of a people as the *Ramayana*," wrote Professor Macdonell a versatile indologist.

Valmiki composed *Ramayana* with considerable accent on Sita as selfless and faithful wife. Sita is one and the only secular character that passed through

the blazing fire of self-purification. She came out successful in every test of her honour. Sri Rama is an obdurate adherent of Dharma. Sri Rama incurred the wrath of Tara following the death of her husband Vali at Rama's hands. She cursed him to pass through terrible periods of privation and isolation from Sita as price for his unjust killing of Vali. Sri Rama is in want of milk of generosity when he sentenced Sita to immolate herself to prove her chastity.

In this doctrinaire application and enforcement of Dharma by Sri Rama, Sita emerged unscathed and won conspicuous place of Bharat which no other *pativrata* had attained. There are texts extant to present Sita in default when she abused Lakshmana and had in hand a fan whereupon the name of Ravana is inscribed. This fan held by Sita unwittingly provoked in Sri Rama suspicion with regard to her chastity. Her chastity is sterling and above board. This unsavoury incident of fan where upon Ravana's name is written in bold letters occurred when Sita with face beaming with joy tried to go near Sri Rama after Ravana Vadha. Rama warned Sita not to step forward; desired fire trial once again before he accepted her as unblemished Dharmapatni to share his life as queen of Ayodhya. As she has been *Janaki the daughter of Janaka* and Sita the daughter of earth (Aditi) she offered herself to Fire chanting the divine name of Sri Rama who is her alter ego, soul and heart. Out of the fire test she emerged, charged with enhanced purity. She looked like the just blossomed lotus on the caressing touch of baby sun. Fire-God accompanied her to express his testimony to Sita's purity and piety before Sri Rama who accomplished his avatar's main end, the removal of Ravana from the surface of earth who is the mother of Sita. When Sita joined Sri Rama, earth and heaven joined together.

The dwarf hunchback Mandhara nourished grouse against Rama who used to tease her roughly as a boy in his early teens. Things done in a lighter vein also will one day work against the doer. Mandhara is the loyal maid-servant of Kaikeyi the beloved third wife of Dasaratha. The moments of physical joy Dasaratha experienced in the warm company of Kaikeyi saw him behave in her presence like one enslaved to

News is to the mind what sugar is to the body: appetizing, easy to digest and highly destructive in the long run.

pleasures of flesh. Mandhara's hour to seek punishment for Rama's childish behavior has arrived. Preparations are afoot for Sri Rama's coronation. She had to slacken her thirst for revenge against Sri Rama. She had to drive a wedge between Kaikeyi and Dasaratha to seek measures for coronation of Bharata the son of Kaikeyi so that once for all Sri Rama loses his just right to the throne of Ayodhya. She maintained cordial relations with Kaikeyi the regal beloved of the king. To begin with she chided Kaikeyi, goaded her to read the writing on the wall. She abetted her, found fault with her passivity while Ayodhya was burning. Time missed, Fate of Bharata sealed, Rama installed as prince apparent Bharata would have to play second fiddle to Sri Rama! Mandhara left no stone unturned in her sacrilegious effort to thwart the coronation proceedings. She succeeded in her ulterior plot. Sri Rama the peerless purushottama, as Sita styled him, receded to forest not at *the behest of his father*. Purushothama he is in name and deed. Self-sentenced, in keeping with the definition of the epithet (purushothama) Sri Rama proceeded to the forest along with Sita the *Sahadharmacharini* and Lakshmana the brother born to follow him in all walks of life as inseparable shadow.

In Sri Rama we get the model to be followed in our different and difficult situations. Rama is a match-

less amalgam of duty and self sacrifice compassion and commitment. He is further an embodiment of Aryan ideals such as stern discipline. Supreme regard for Truth, love of adventure and adherence to yuga Dharma undiluted. In him is portrayed the singular combination of a faithful and dutiful son, an affectionate brother, a loving husband, stern, ruthless hero and above all an ideal king with heart surrendered to the good of his subjects.

Sri Rama of Valmiki is a refined, morally evolved man committed to perfect understanding of the religion of the land. Sri Rama is aware that he descended on earth to serve a purpose, a need so far over looked. It is the human task of eliminating evil elements bent upon eliminating ethically advanced mankind. It is a crusade between good and its opposite. Rama uttered here and there that he was walking the earth as an actor (Sailusaiva). This does not mean that he was not a man afflicted with mundane weaknesses. Adwaita Vedanta to which civilized humanity is wedded time and again harps on the divinity of man. Rama descended to fulfill a long-felt cause, the cause of reinstating Sanatana dharma. Its main duty is to soundly raise the citadel of equality not through the destruction of the human in man but through the restoration of that which absconded from the precincts of the world. (to be continued)

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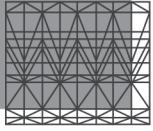
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