

Mahatma on India after Aug15,1947

The Father of the Nation was distressed to find free India drifting away from the path of non-violence and adherence to the high ideals of the freedom struggle. He proposed several measures for course correction. The Hindu's reports on 'the last two hundred days' of Gandhiji are of inestimable value. The following selected reports from The Hindu show how the Mahatma was busy till his last, helping the government with suggestions for solving several problems confronting the nation.

On education:

“The education through which our country has passed for over a century was designed for a particular purpose. To feed the interests of capitalism, the entire basis of economic life in India was changed by the foreigner. The city was made to be the centre of gravity, and not the village. The village was dethroned from its earlier state of supremacy. It was virtually converted into a slum, and kept as far removed from the city as possible. The country's economy was thus made lop-sided and the educational system made to serve it. If now we want to create a new India, our outlook must be changed altogether. We must build up a new Indian democracy inch by inch. It must spread in all parts of our economic, social and political life. The magnitude of this task requires the application of stout hearts working steadily, and on and on.” That, Gandhiji explained, was the larger, fundamental aspect of the problem.

(August 22, 1947)

The inner voice:

He referred to from time to time as a deep “inner voice” speaking quietly and intimately to him. This inner voice was his link to God as well – God as the truthful Sri Rama, trustful in whom Bapu possessed a never-failing talisman of powerful protection.

“When Ram Dhum was sung now, men in the audience responded and beat time rhythmically with the music, but very few women did so. Those with some spiritual experience know the power of Ram Dhum, the reciting of God Rama's name from the heart.”

Consolidating communal harmony:

“The brotherhood between the communities we are witnessing today will prove to be a passing show if we do not consolidate it by suitable action in the social and the political fields. If government officers and members of the public together undertake responsibility for constructive action and work whole-heartedly to create a secular state, then India will become the glory of the world.”

Gandhiji
(August 23, 1947)

Purpose of religion:

“We are in a mess, and created poison for ourselves. To safeguard Hinduism, one cannot treat as enemies the Muslims in India. My days in this world are numbered. Soon I shall be gone. Then you will realize that what I said was right. The same rule applies to Muslims. Islam will be dead if Muslims tolerate only Muslims. The same goes for Christianity and Christians. All the religions of the world are good, for they teach righteousness and friendship; those that teach enmity between man and man are not religions at all.”

Gandhiji
(December 19, 1947)

The Rama whom I adore is God Himself. He always was, is now and will be forever.

Mahatma Gandhi

On productivity:

“If the country’s production does not increase, and we go on increasing our expenditure, where shall we be? Let us first produce results. Let us all sit down and assess how much more of grain, cloth, industrial goods, etc. we have produced after Independence.”

Gandhiji
(December 20, 1947)

Discipline - the need of the hour:

“Yet, what are the strikes and varieties of lawlessness we see now, but a deferring of our strong and bright hope? These are symptoms of our weakness and sickness. Let labour realize its dignity and strength. Strength and dignity the man in the street also has. In a well-ordered democratic society, there should be no room, or occasion, for lawlessness or strikes. In such a society, there will be ample lawful means for vindicating justice. Violence veiled or unveiled, should be taboo for us. Strikes mean material loss to the whole of society, not excluding the strikers themselves. I also wonder if in our independent India we can be free of the fever of power politics, and the bid to be in power which afflicts the world, East and West.

Gandhiji
(January 28, 1948)

His sense of humour:

When adverse comment was raised about his walking up the flight of Buckingham Palace in London, clad in dhoti and shawl only to meet King George the Fifth, the self-lamprooning Babu chuckled and said: “Yes, they were all in plus-fours, and I compensated in my minus-fours.” Spontaneous wit-pistol-cracks like this delighted him enormously.

Mahatma’s spirit of sacrifice :

“Mahatma Gandhi realised that freedom could be won only by sacrifice, and not by entreaty. He took hold of ordinary men and women who were an incredible mixture of heroism and conceit, magnificent and meanness organised them and led an unarmed revolt against British rule. August 15th marked the successful end of that struggle. But all talk of India’s freedom is useless so long as men starve and go naked to the country, pining away in voiceless anguish. Gandhiji’s charkha is a symbol to warn us that we must redeem the common man from the evils of poverty and ignorance, disease and squalor.”

In one of those magnificent well-constructed periods he was noted for, Dr.Radhakrishnan concluded. “The price of partition has not yielded the expected communal peace. If the situation is not to worsen, if the two dominions are not to merit the ridicule of the world, if we wish to disappoint Mr.Winston Churchill and his friends, if we are to settle down as good neighbours, we must turn over a new page, remove from our hearts every trace of bitterness and resentment, and shake off that pride which prevents us from confessing our faults and makes us unwilling to open our hearts to one another. Friendship begets friendship. Gandhiji is doing his best to undo the effects of the poison instilled in men’s minds in recent years, or he will die in the process of making Hindus and Muslims live in peace. If Gandhiji has been able to rid himself of all rancor and hatred, to develop that flame of love which burns away all impurities, if he fears no evil even though he walks in the valley of the shadow of death, if he represents to us the eternal voice of hope, it is because he believes in the heritage of India, the power of the inward life of the spirit.

S. Radhakrishnan
(October 4, 1947)

Humility, reverence, compassion, forbearance, sacrifice and self-control are the qualities which reveal the outcome of true education.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

KASHMIR: A BLUNT REMINDER

Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd.)

Former Chief of Naval Staff
Ex-Chairman, National Maritime Foundation

The government's peremptory actions of abrogating Article 370 and bi-furcating the state of J&K into two Union Territories, have received an enthusiastic, if conditional, welcome. This decisive step comes after 72 years of 'strategic-paralysis' vis-a-vis the J&K imbroglio. Apart from the legal wrangling that is likely to follow, the final verdict regarding the wisdom of this crucial step must await the reaction of the Valley's people.

By themselves, these two actions symbolize, merely, the attainment of a long-cherished dream of the BJP; and unless underpinned by a well thought out and long-term strategy; may turn out to be futile and even counter-productive. A peep into Kashmir's history is instructive.

On 26th October 2019, it will be 72 years ago, since Maharaja Hari Singh, faced by a Pakistani tribal invasion, signed the Instrument of Accession bringing the State of J&K into the Dominion of India. The Pakistani hordes, heading for Srinagar airfield, providentially, lingered in Baramulla, en-route, to indulge in rapine and plunder; giving the Indian military time to pull off a minor miracle by airlifting enough troops to save the valley.

Our army and air force fought gallantly for 14 months, in difficult conditions, to push back the invasion. It was a combination of our own naiveté, coupled with the duplicity of the British military rump in the sub-continent that gave away Gilgit, Chitral and Swat, and thwarted Indian Army's plans for recovery of the critical Muzaffarabad-Kotli-Mirpur belt; which now constitute the Northern Areas and PoK respectively.

Having barely reconciled himself to a "truncated and moth-eaten" Pakistan, its founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah was bitterly disappointed at the turn of events in Kashmir. His 'two-nation theory' was debunked at the moment of Partition because there were more Muslims in India than in their putative new 'homeland'. Furthermore, unlike the victimized minorities in theocratic Pakistan, these Muslims were full and equal citizens of a secular democracy. And yet, for 72 years we

have allowed Pakistan to harass, intimidate and bleed us; on the specious grounds that as a Muslim-majority state, Kashmir belongs to them.

Having grown up in small towns of the Valley during the 1950s and 60s, the author has idyllic memories of Kashmir. While harmony prevailed between Kashmiris, of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh faith - they ate in each others' homes, and celebrated festivals together - it was clearly understood that Kashmir was not India. The average Kashmiri's attitude towards India remained ambivalent. India provided huge financial assistance to J&K; food, education, clothing and medicine were either free or heavily subsidized. Kashmiris accepted the largesse, but every evening tuned in to Radio Pakistan which never failed to play on their religious sentiments; spouting propaganda about Indian army's "atrocities" and harping on the Bharati occupation of Kashmir.

J&K flew its own flag and 'Prime Minister', Sheikh Abdullah, the state's tallest figure, and Nehru's friend, was the Sher-e-Kashmir. In 1953, accused of conspiring with the Americans to become 'King Abdullah' of independent Kashmir, he was arrested, and the Valley erupted in violence. I recall my father, then magistrate of Baramulla, coming home, bleeding from the head. There had been 'patharao', or stone-pelting in the old town, as agitators shouted anti-India slogans. The CRPF opened fire, and many were killed, before the Valley relapsed into sullen silence. Over the decades since 1953, little seems to have changed.

Ironically, the crores that India blindly poured into Kashmir were the biggest cause for resentment amongst the common man, because up to 95% of these funds went to line the pockets of politicians and compliant officials. The average Kashmiri farmer lived in abject poverty, and come winter, there would be an exodus of Kashmiri labourers all over North India. The corrupt politicians and incompetent administrators of Kashmir were perceived as Indian stooges and exploiters, and resentment mounted, as successive elections were seen to be blatantly rigged.

By simply throwing money at the problem, and backing the wrong dynasties to rule the state, New Delhi steadily alienated Kashmiris. Thus, instead of crafting a

A man who wants to be good and to do good in all circumstances, must not hold power.

Mahatma Gandhi

national strategy for winning over Kashmir, we created fertile ground in which Pakistan's ISI assiduously sowed the seeds of discord and sedition, till young Kashmiris started picking up Kalashnikovs.

India's maladroitness did not end here. A succession of Pakistani-orchestrated incidents, between 1963 and 1999, demonstrated the ineptness of our intelligence agencies and the complete strategic bankruptcy of New Delhi. This depressing sequence included: the theft of Prophet Mohammad's sacred relic, kidnapping of Rubayia Sayeed, seizure of Hazaratbal Shrine, capture and burning down of the Charar-e-Sharif shrine, persecution and expulsion of Kashmiri Pundits from the Valley, the Kargil incursions and hijacking of IC-814. Add to this, the self-inflicted wound of the rigged 1987 elections which triggered armed militancy in Kashmir.

This historical review is a blunt reminder that the Indian state has, since 1947, failed to learn anything from the past. We have refused to admit that neither money, nor the jackboot nor bullets can convince a Kashmiri that he is an Indian. If the Pulwama bomber was, indeed, a local, we desperately need to find a way to stop the radicalization of Kashmiri youth and their alienation from India.

Once the current restrictions in J&K are lifted, we should expect violence; from internal unrest, as well as external intervention. The state, while using all means to contain violence, has two alternatives to offer its Kashmiri citizens. Either, the prospect of an inclusive, open and liberal India, on the road to economic prosperity, and as different from Pakistan as possible. Or, an India, which will use all the force at its disposal to quell any signs of dissent.

In these troubled times, let us remember the sacrifice of 19-year old Kashmiri, hero; Maqbool Sherwani. In October 1947, Sherwani succeeded in delaying the advance of Pakistani tribals at Baramulla, giving valuable time to Indian troops landing in Srinagar. On discovering his subterfuge, the Pakistanis nailed Sherwani to a wooden cross and shot him. A grateful Indian army has erected a monument to him.

(*The Indian Express*)

A CURSE THAT THE VICTIM ALONE CAN FORESTALL

Prof. Manoj Das

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

Lately, a caring section of humanity appears concerned about a growing number of educated youths feeling "burnt out". Several studies are published but no convincing panacea to eradicate the evil.

In its recent session in Geneva (last week of May 2019) the World Health Organisation tended to classify burnout as a disease, but finally described it as an "Occupational phenomenon", "a syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed."

In Oxford Dictionary of Psychology, Prof. Andrew M. Colman defines "burnout" as "An acute stress disorder or reaction characterized by exhaustion resulting from overwork, with anxiety, fatigue, insomnia, depression and impairment of work performance." These basic disorders manifest in symptoms ranging from common depression to even an impulse for ending life. Often an average sufferer suspects some inscrutable malady in his system and submits to a macabre series of tests, specialists guesstimating phantom causes, in the process draining the patient's vitality and resources. Ironically, if the sufferer belongs to a superior order of mental culture, this creates an intellectual turmoil in him, causing psychosis.

Needless to say, the phenomenon is different from the sudden behavioural change of some people turning violent, a pervert upshot of career or even private frustrations. The "burnout" cases embrace a community of mostly youths who had consciously or unconsciously nurtured some worthwhile expectations from life – rather from themselves. In adolescence all of them had natural and spontaneous dreams and creative imagination; but unknown to them, such gifts were twisted or smothered to their ghosts; they reappeared as delusions, phantasms and mirages, thanks to the youth's over-indulgence in numerous contrived social media, during or beyond their tedious working hours. Their inner being cannot but revolt.

The loss of her soul by India will mean the loss of the hope of the aching, storm-tossed and hungry world.

Mahatma Gandhi

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The next most important reality to remember in this context is that every individual is an anatomical idealist. Indeed, even the most despicable human being is no exception. An example: till the middle of the 19th century a criminal class known as Thugs was a terror for travellers in central and eastern India. A Thug would accompany an unsuspecting pilgrim or a merchant and at an opportune moment throw around the prey's neck a yard of linen and tighten it at lightning speed, killing him instantly and ransacking his person. It was one determined policeman, W.H. Sleeman (1788 – 1856), who liquidated these gangs. One evening a captured gang-leader was asked, "Hope, you will spare a traveller once you realise that he carried nothing valuable; right?" The Thug almost revolted at such suspicion and stated, "Sahib, are we so mean that we will back out from duty simply because we had nothing to gain? If Providence had brought us together, we must apply our expertise!"

Or take another example. We read in the reminiscences of the late centenarian social reformer of Gujarat, Ravishankar Maharaj (Vyas) how once when he exhorted a young man to give up his hereditary practice of stealing, entering homes by digging holes on the wall, the fellow humbly said, "Maharaj, I'll give up, if you insist, but imagine how difficult it is to resist when the goddess Lakshmi, often buried as coins or jewellery, calls out to me to liberate her!" Can we dispute his idealism?

Let us examine the relevance of this factor of idealism in the context of our own dear country. Youths in pre-independent India were much more hard-working than today's. (The saving grace was they were intimate with Nature.) Rarely any relief came from the Sarkar even when there were terrible calamities. People had to labour till their last drop of sweat. But, barring negligible exceptions, even the most ignorant youth was guided by a conscious ideal, however small: he must serve his parents and elders and next, be useful to the kin and community. Labour inspired by an ideal does not exasperate. If thousands of youths who during the long range of our freedom struggle faced bullets and braved gallows but never felt burnt out, it was because of their lofty ideal.

The youths feeling burnt out today have a goal, but no ideal. The goal is to earn and enjoy. One can achieve this goal by satisfying one's bodily hunger, through success in enterprises by smart application of mind and satiating emotions through romance and enjoyment. But there is something more in us than the body, mind and emotions - that remains uncared for: our inner self or soul. That can be satisfied only if we hitch our works and occupation to the ideal of serving the truth - and no category of activity is beyond this scope. Truth is Divine and there is no activity beyond the jurisdiction of the Divine. It is simply an approach, a transformed attitude that makes all the difference. You work for your salary, yet the work becomes an offering to the Divine, for he dwells in everything. This link keeps one diligently honest, courageous and above greed, eliminating the possibility of any hidden guilt contributing to the process of burning out. It inspires love for the work. The time devoted to pleasure-seeking could be yet another fuel for the burning, for only an inner quietude, achieved through meditation on the purpose of life, a silent quest for the ultimate ideal, could bring true relaxation.

Process of this awareness must begin in one's infancy initiated by parents and continue at the early stages of learning – probably a far-fetched hope today! But no proxy for it!

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Eighteen years on, 9/11 marks the lack of closure to the war in Afghanistan

Cmde. (Retd.) C.Uday Bhaskar

Director of the Society for Policy Studies and
Former Director IDSA & NMF

A degree of policy fecklessness and political inconsistency characterises the last 18 years of the US-led global war on terror (GWOT), though the acronym is no longer in vogue.

The 18th anniversary of the tragedy of 9/11 was envisioned as heralding a triumphant closure to a long drawn out war under the leadership of US President Donald Trump. The war that began in

In Gandhi Indian humanity had reached its high watermark.

October 2001 has been bloody and has led to more than 2,400 American service personnel and about 900 NATO nations' soldiers losing their lives, along with thousands of hapless Afghan citizens. The number of local Afghans killed is imprecise but is estimated to be closer to 1,00,000.

Few US officials knew the details of the final "deal" between the White House and the Taliban but it was to be capped by a secret meeting between President Trump and the Taliban leaders on Sunday (September 8) in Camp David. It may be recalled that this venue outside the US capital hosted the historic 1978 secret peace accord between Egypt and Israel.

However, the triumphant closure to the war in Afghanistan was aborted through a series of tweets by President Trump on Saturday (September 7), who cited the killing of a US soldier by the Taliban in Kabul on Thursday (September 5), as the trigger for his abrupt change of policy.

A degree of policy fecklessness and political inconsistency characterises the last 18 years of the US-led global war on terror (GWOT), though the acronym is no longer in vogue. The enormity of 9/11 in September 2001 and the symbolism of the Twin Towers in New York collapsing had elicited near universal support and sympathy for the US at that time and it was expected that this level of global resolve would swiftly quarantine Al Qaeda and its Taliban support base in Afghanistan.

However, in a very imprudent change of objective and target by the White House, the first of many feckless policy lurches was effected when the US shifted its focus from Afghanistan to Iraq in early 2003. Very soon, precious human lives and considerable wealth were expended with little accountability or reasonably well-defined politico-military objectives. The US soldier paid with life and limb and the US citizen through tax dollars to support a war in distant lands that seemed to have no purpose or closure.

While there is palpable relief globally (barring in Pakistan) at the US-Taliban deal being aborted at the last minute, the ostensible reason for this decision — the death of one US soldier — is unconvincing

when thousands have already died in this war. US special representative Zalmay Khalilzad had spent months in shuttle diplomacy to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and Trump's determination to arrive at a "deal" was also linked to the US president's re-election campaign strategy for 2020. The fact that Washington was willing to accept the exclusion of the elected Ghani government in Kabul in the preparatory negotiations was seen as an indicator of the Trump team's resolve to seal the deal.

Why, then, was this deal with the Taliban called off at the last minute? Many reasons are being advanced, including sharp differences between the US National Security Adviser John Bolton and the State Department and those perceived to have Trump's ear. The considered opposition to a dubious and hasty deal was also evidenced in the manner that former US diplomats, who had served in Kabul, released a joint statement (September 3) titled: "US-Taliban Negotiations: How to Avoid Rushing to Failure".

The nine signatories (James Dobbins, Robert P Finn, Ronald E Neumann, William Wood, John Negroponte, Earl Anthony Wayne, Ryan Crocker, James Cunningham, and Hugo Llorens) make a persuasive case for US policy to be pursued with caution and conclude: "It is critical that the United States make clear that full withdrawal will not occur on fixed dates but will, on the contrary, require conclusion of a real and clearly defined peace."

An abiding and sustainable peace agreement has remained elusive in Afghanistan and this is a reflection of the deep fault-lines in a predominantly tribal society that has been ravaged by great power rivalry, regional perfidy and internal ethno-linguistic fissures. The 1979 Soviet occupation of Afghanistan during the Cold War and the cynical stoking of religious fervour by the US-Pakistan nexus enabled the rise of the Afghan mujahideen — evocatively captured in the image of an Osama bin Laden-like figure holding aloft a Kalashnikov rifle in one hand and the Koran in the other.

This marked the beginning of the political endorsement of jihadi violence that later morphed

'When you had taken your leave, I found God's footprints on my floor.' Rabindranath Tagore
to Mahatma Gandhi

into terrorism. It was visible in the pattern of attacks on US assets in the early 1990s that provoked then US President Bill Clinton to use Tomahawk cruise missiles against terror camps in Afghanistan — but to little avail.

It merits recall that the radical ideology which triggered 9/11 and associated with Al Qaeda preceded September 2001 and India was also scarred by this Islamic terror virus in the early 1990s. The ignominy of India having to release terror suspect Masood Azhar in December 1999, who found shelter in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, is a stark reminder of the security challenge that later transmuted into the attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001.

The return of the Taliban may have been averted for now but the road ahead for the hapless yet stoic Afghan citizen remains dark and dangerous. Will US policy be unveiled in the next Trump tweet?

(*Indian Express*, September 11, 2019 under the title ‘An elusive peace’.)

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Politics of Memory : Hyderabad-400 – I

Dr.R.V. Vaidyanatha Ayyar, I.A.S.(Retd)
Former Secretary, HRD, Govt of India &
Prof. IIM, Bengaluru

In January 1990, Chief Minister Channa Reddy decided that the Government should celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of Hyderabad in 1691. Soon thereafter, convened a meeting to discuss the modalities of organising the celebrations. It was a big jamboree, and there were suggestions galore as to how the Celebration should be organised, and two competing visions were articulated, one developmental and another historical. The developmental vision was articulated, among others, by H.S.Brahma, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad, and later Chief Election Commissioner of India. He suggested that the Celebration should be used as an occasion to transform and showcase the city the way

Delhi was for the Asian Games (1982). An officer ingeniously suggested that the Central Government should be requested to provide four hundred crore rupees for the celebrations at the rate of a crore of rupees for each of the four hundred years. The historical vision was articulated by Mohan Lal Nigam, who still holds the record for being the longest serving Director, Salar Jung Museum, and Narendra Luther, an IAS officer who hailed from Rawalpindi and arrived first in Hyderabad in 1959, and who like many persons who migrated to Hyderabad from the North was much taken by Hyderabad and its culture. Luther was approaching superannuation and in retrospect was on the verge of launching his second career as a chronicler of Hyderabad’s past. He was then working on the life and times of Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah, the purported founder of the Hyderabad city and the builder of Charminar which is to Hyderabad what Eiffel Tower is to Paris. Though there were subtle shades of difference in the suggestions of Nigam and Luther, they wanted the Celebration to be an occasion to pay tribute to the distinctive Hyderabad culture which purportedly prevailed in the Hyderabad State before it was integrated with the Indian Union and which disappeared after the reorganisation of the States in 1956, and Hyderabad was swamped by large scale migration of people from Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema, regions of the erstwhile State of Andhra which was merged with the Telengana region of Hyderabad State to form the State of Andhra Pradesh. The hallmarks of that distinctive culture were purportedly the social graces of a natural aristocracy, a zest for good food and good living, and a cultural synthesis on several planes- of North and South, of Hindus and Muslims, and of peoples speaking Urdu, Kannada, Tamil, and Telugu. The imagery of Hyderabad that was popular among those who nostalgically looked back to the Old Order was that of a city which was the capital of an Islamic State where communal harmony prevailed and non-Muslims held high positions, and which was the abode of a graceful, composite culture. The founding of Hyderabad itself was allegedly a testimony to the Hindu-Muslim amity which prevailed in the Nizam’s Dominions. Legend has it that Quli Qutub Shah fell in love with Bhagamati,

No service of his could have been greater than what he has performed in the past four months when, in a dissolving world, he has been like a rock of purpose and a light-house of truth. Because of the bright flame, we cannot lose faith in the destiny of India and her people.

Jawaharlal Nehru (December 14, 1947)

a Hindu girl, and built a new capital Bhagnagar near Shalibanda where Bhagmati lived. It was Bhagnagar which evolved into Hyderabad. Luther wanted the celebrations to commemorate the founding of the city and its founder and celebrate the composite culture of Old Hyderabad. He suggested that old Hyderabad's old-world charm should be showcased through projects like sound and light programmes at the Golconda Fort and Qutub Shahi tombs and organising typical Hyderabad Mughalai chowki dinners at the Qutub Shahi tombs. Nigam stuck a slightly different note. He did not want the celebration to be centred on individuals; instead the cosmopolitan character of Hyderabad culture should be celebrated. Each of the communities which migrated to the Hyderabad city during Nizam's rule such as Kayasths and Tamils should be made to feel that it was their celebration. It was only later that I came to know why Nigam did not want too much focus on individuals; the legend associated with the founding of Hyderabad itself was shrouded in controversy with historians sharply divided over the fact whether Bhagmati did indeed exist or was a figment of imagination. According to the sceptics of the Bhagmati legend, the original name of the city Bhagnagar stood for the city of Bhagh (gardens). Irrespective of the authenticity of the Bhagmati legend those who extolled Old Hyderabad strongly believed that Muslims and Hindus living together in harmony was a distinguishing feature of the Old Oder. The most effusive expression of that belief was Ode to H.H. The Nizam Of Hyderabad authored by young Sarojini Naidu who grew in Old Hyderabad

Deign, Prince, my tribute to receive,
 This lyric offering to your name, ...
 Beneath whose sway concordant dwell
 The peoples whom your laws embrace,
 In brotherhood of diverse creeds,
 And harmony of diverse race...
 So may the lustre of your days
 Outshine the deeds Firdusi sang
 Your name within a nation's prayer
 Your music on a nation's tongue.
 It was only appropriate that Channa Reddy was

the Chief Minister when the idea of celebrating the founding of Hyderabad was mooted for of all the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, he was the only quintessential Hyderabad and was the very epitome of the old feudal order of Nizam's Dominions. He grew up in the 1930s and 1940s, late evening of Nizam's rule. He was a medical graduate of Osmania University which was unique among Indian universities in imparting instruction in an Indian language, namely, Urdu, and like most educated persons who grew up in Old Hyderabad he was very proficient in Urdu. His distinction lay in being equally proficient in English, Telugu, and Hindi, and being a great orator in all the languages he knew. In his long career of thirty-seven years, Channa Reddy and N.T.Rama Rao (NTR) were the only two chief ministers with whom K had considerable interaction; both were extremely self-willed, mercurial, highly colourful personalities who could elicit fierce loyalties among some, and deep hatred among some others. In his concluding remarks at the meeting he convened to discuss the Organization of the Celebration, Channa Reddy observed that old Hyderabadis had a feeling of being neglected in Andhra Pradesh, and that the Celebration should be used as an occasion to assuage their feelings. It was only appropriate that he made that observation for he had opposed the 'shot gun marriage' of Telangana with the erstwhile Andhra State to form Andhra Pradesh, and had led the Telangana agitation in 1969, a volcanic eruption of the bitterness of Telangana people at being swamped by the political and economic power of leaders and businessmen hailing from the erstwhile Andhra State, and the consequential demand for Telangana being a State of its own. No one who had been a member of the elite of old Hyderabad could fail to rue the disappearance of the old cityscape, the transmutation of the city's character, and the city being dominated by nouveaux riches from elsewhere. Hyderabad was fast becoming an Andhra city like Vijayawada or Visakhapatnam, and symbolic of the transformation was the Tank Bund where statues of Andhra celebrities were erected by the NTR Government; few of them were from the Telangana region. After he made his concluding observation, Channa Reddy announced the formation

Bapu gave life to a dead country. Ba lent him a helping hand. Let the picture of both of them be constantly before our eyes.

of a group to plan the Celebration. Nothing came out of the group in the seven months I spent with the State Government before I left for the Central Government; another three months later, in December 1990, Channa Reddy resigned his office because of violent communal riots in the old city of Hyderabad which it was widely believed were triggered by his rivals in his own party with a view to unseat him. The Celebration never took off, giving rise to the limerick:

In London, L.A, Jeddah and Kuwait,
They've celebrated Hyderabad's anniversary fete.
But here in A.P.,
Not even a tea,
Come on politicians, let us set a date.

What the limerick writer failed to recognise was that AP was not London or Jeddah, and that in Andhra Pradesh the Celebration was enmeshed with the politics of memory. Not everyone was nostalgic about the Old Hyderabad Culture and had a deep urge to celebrate it. The Celebration was deemed irrelevant by the new denizens of Hyderabad who migrated from the districts of the erstwhile Andhra State in large numbers, constituted a substantial segment of the city's population, dominated the State's politics, and could not relate themselves to Old Hyderabad. Even among those who could relate to Old Hyderabad there were many who had a horrific memory of the Old Order. They were opposed to a Celebration which in their view sought to glorify a mythical romantic past of Hyderabad that conveniently concealed the reality that the Old Hyderabad State was dominated by a feudal, backward, self-serving elite, that it was a Muslim State in which Muslims were more equal than others, and oppressed the languages and culture of the majority of its subjects. In their view, the so-called cosmopolitan Hyderabad culture was not cosmopolitan at all; it was exclusionist. The State Reorganisation Commission which pondered a great deal over the question whether the Hyderabad State (as Nizam's Dominions were called after merger with the Indian Union) had any distinctive features to justify its continuance as a State instead of being trifurcated on linguistic lines was not 'impressed by the claim that during the last two hundred years a

specific Deccani culture has developed in the whole area and that this culture is a major contribution to the unity of India. The common culture of Hyderabad, like the unity of the State, is something that had been imposed from above. It is apparent, if at all, only in important towns and in no way represents a common pattern of living among the people of Hyderabad'.

(To be concluded)

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THE RENUNCIATE IDEAL IN MANIMEKALAI

Dr.(Mrs) Prema Nandakumar

The original name for the epic poem, Manimekalai, was Manimekalai Thuravu, (Manimekalai's Renunciation). Thus, the author, Seethalai Sathanar made it clear to his contemporary audience 2000 years ago that the epic poem would be about the ideal of renunciation, as Manimekalai is the heroine. So when did the idea of renouncing the world and becoming a monk or nun enter the Indian scene?

If we take the Vedic stream, it is obvious that the ancients did speak of renunciation (sannyasa). According to them, life had four major steps: Brahmacharya(student), grihastha (householder), vanaprastha (retirement from worldly duties) and sannyasa (renouncing the world). However, there were no sannyasins in ancient India. There were rishis living in forest ashramas but they were no sannyasins. They were happily married, had children and were generally associated with teaching, performing Vedic rituals for yagas and yagnas and giving advice to royalty if consulted.

Even the post-Grihastha life of Vanaprastha was no renunciation of family ties. We have the example of Dhritarashtra going with his wife Gandhari to the forest after the loss of all his sons in the Kurukshetra war. Since no sannyasins (as we have come to recognize them) are found in the epic histories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the sannyasi ideal must have crystallized, perhaps, three millennia back.

In my considered opinion there has been nothing, not even independence, which is so truly wonderful as his victory over evil in Calcutta.

Rajaji

The renunciates subsisted on food received from householders; this means they lived near habitations like villages. And they wandered from place to place worshipping in various temples, bathing in holy rivers and discussing the philosophical concepts imbedded in the Upanishads, the Brahma sutras and the like. It is these sannyasins of the Vedic stream that Adi Sankara seems to have gathered and given them a stretchable kind of identity under ten denominations. In this way these monks were to be known by the term appended to their names: like Bharati and Saraswati.

However, Adi Sankara himself came on the scene when the flag of Buddhism was flying high. It has been felt in many quarters that his mayavada was itself an inspired idea to defeat the Buddhist philosophers who spoke of no god but only the condition of Nibbana (Nirvana) which assured one of freedom from the cycle of births and its attendant sorrows. Nibbana itself was not an after-life but closer to the idea of nothingness (Soonya). With this philosophy on hand, and the promise of freedom from the birth-cycle, the Buddhists looked upon favourably at the life of a monk, the self-denial preparing him for the denial of the self itself when attaining nibbana. Perhaps the renunciate ideal was there much earlier than Gautama Buddha, for there were earlier Buddhas too. Thus with the renunciates of the Vedic stream and the non-Vedic stream (as the Jains also looked upon a life of renunciation highly), India has been a rich area for the ideal.

Renunciation, yes. But the monks and nuns did not totally eliminate life. Since they depended on the householder, there had to be interactions. This naturally kept them abreast of the society's many problems. The renunciates were teachers; they were also facilitators for good works. People in power or people with money respected them and followed their advice, for generally they were looked upon with respect for leaving worldly snares. The society knew that they could give a direction to them too. There were occasional cases of misbehaviour as has been caustically noted by the Pallava King

Mahendravarman, in his *Matta VilasaPrahasana* (7th century). But generally the Buddhist contribution to India's culture is immense. For instance, their service as educationists is remembered to this day. D. Amarasiri Weeraratne has listed six major universities run by Buddhists in India's past: Nalanda (described in detail by Hieun Tsang, a contemporary traveller from China), Vikramasila, Odantapuri, Jagadalala, Somapura and Vallabhi. Naturally the Buddhist sannyasins who taught in these educational institutions loved the people and loved the land and did their best to help both. And so were the monks of all religions. The "Sannyasi Rebellion" which would later give us the brilliant picture of heroic sannyasis in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Ananda Math* is an instance of the way of the sannyasin becoming part of the very nerves of India.

Hence, it is not surprising that Buddhist literature gives a high place to the renunciate ideal. It was that ideal which blossomed into Seethalai Sathanar's epic *Manimekalai*, the immortal story of a Buddhist nun. Nor need it surprise us that this solitary Buddhist epic in Tamil, indeed in any of the Dravidian languages, is centred around a nun and not a monk. Women taking to renunciation happened during the lifetime of Buddha himself. We are given to understand that Buddha's foster-mother Mahaprajapati Gautami requested him to give a chance to women also to become renunciates and work for the good of the land and the people. Buddha assented and ordained her as the first nun. The ancient Buddhist work, *Theri Gatha* has poems of advice by elderly nuns who teach the way of enlightenment to their charges. When Buddha acceded to Mahaprajapati's plea, he added some severe vows in addition to those laid down for monks. Apparently the women took up the challenge; and through the intervening millennia, the variations caused by climate and country and the innumerable varieties of human capabilities, the Buddhist ideal of women renunciates has survived to this day. Mahaprajapati's request itself may have been due to men taking to sannyasa in increasing numbers attracted by the path opened by the Buddha and the male population declining further due

To be true, to be simple, to be pure and gentle of heart, to remain cheerful and contented in sorrow and danger, to love life and not to fear death, to serve the Spirit and not to be haunted by the spirits of the dead, nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world first began.

S.Radhakrishnan

to internecine wars which were common at that time. A sangha for women would assure them of safety and working together, a healthy way to forget their own loss of duties pertaining to a housewife.

Thus, quite early in the history of Buddhism, the renunciate ideal was taken up by women as well. What great sacrifices were made by the women monks,-- the sravikas, the bhikshunis -- where are the footfalls to be noted? A few names do appear -- Ashoka's daughter Sanghamitra, Khema, Patachara.. There must have been innumerable instances of self-sacrificing sravikas trying to ameliorate the condition of the common man. In this context, taking up Manimekalai as a renunciate and tracing her pre--renunciation days as described by Seethalai Sathanar has a special importance. Especially at a time when, at last, people are taking an increased interest in the women renunciates of Buddhism then and now in seminars and conferences.

It may be pointed out here that unlike the other non-Vedic Jainism, Buddhism sees no difference in the possibilities of a woman getting enlightenment same as man. The Lotus Sutra says that compassion is a natural trait of the human being. Mahaprajapati's request for ordination of women was also based on common sense. While Buddhism stresses the importance of karuna, it so happens that women, by nature, have been specially blessed with that quality in abundance. Indeed, motherhood transcends the physical act of giving birth to a child. Motherhood is holy as we have known all the time. Is not Mother Sarada Devi the mother of all, one who constantly worried about her children (the sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Order) getting good food and comfortable lodging even as they toiled in sun and rain? From the very beginning, the order of nuns must have had a marked presence as images of kindness and maternal love. Their total absorption in their work must have been an enviable (and is, perhaps so today as well, in the order which has spread all over the world) chapter in the history of Buddhism, though we do sadly miss detailed chronicling of their work.

Again, an allied thought that comes to us is the

sorrows, the disappointments, the vagaries of fate and the rest that may have prompted some very talented women to enter the Buddhist order of nuns. Of this too, we have no detailed recordings. Fortunately, the Tamil epic Manimekalai, written 2000 years ago adequately fills this lacuna by presenting a heroine who turns away from the dreams of love and married life and engages herself in bringing succour to suffering men and women. In the course of the telling, Seethalai Sathanar unveils the why and wherefore of the Buddhist renunciate ideal that gave final refuge to women.

Manimekalai is the daughter of Madhavi and Kovalan. Madhavi is a danseuse, young, beautiful and talented when her arangetram (the first public appearance) takes place in the palace of Poompuhar (Kaverip-poompattinam). The pleased king gifts her with a rare pearl necklace which the young merchant Kovalan buys and thus gets the privilege of being her paramour. After some time spent in the joy of togetherness, they separate. Kovalan returns to his impoverished home, goes to Madurai with his wife Kannaki to begin a new life and gets killed. But that is another story.

Madhavi gives birth to Kovalan's daughter whom she names Manimekalai, and herself takes to a nun's life. Manimekalai grows up to be a lovely girl, an expert in dancing and also in her studies. (It may be pointed out here that the courtesans of ancient Tamil Nadu were actually brilliant students of art, literature and, of course, dance and music. Though Madhavi brings her up with no intention of actually allowing her to become a courtesan, Madhavi's mother Chitrapati has other ideas. In the meantime Manimekalai falls in love with the Chola Prince, Udayakumaran, who desires her as Madhavi's mother Chitrapati has stoked the fires of lust in the young man.

However, one day, by chance Manimekalai hears Udayakumaran tell her friend Sutamati that Manimekalai is, after all, a courtesan. And he has his own ways of getting her into his control with the help of the sympathetic Chitrapati. After he leaves the

The example of his life, his search for Truth, his humility, his selflessness, his granite integrity and what he taught and practised and accomplished were bound to leave an indelible imprint on his earth. William L. Shirer

place, Manimekalai tells Sutamati words that indicate the first movement in her mind about renunciation:

“In words censorious he spoke of me
As unchaste, with no penance, unguarded,
A woman for sale, and would possess me.
Yet my mind followed the stranger’s footsteps.
Mother! Is this the nature of desire?
If so, may it be destroyed forever!”

For the true renunciate at heart, there is no looking back! Hence renunciation for Manimekalai begins at this very moment. It is another young girl that we see now, who is unfazed in the most trying circumstances. Even when she is accused by the queen of causing Udayakumaran’s death and is subjected to tortures, she is neither afraid nor angry. She is patient, she is compassionate:

“Did you cry for the body? Or for his life?
If it was for the body who were they
Who burnt him at the crematorium?
If it was for the life, you cannot know
Where it is reborn according to its past deeds.
If you have loved the life, then must you love,
Every living thing, O gracious lady!”

Thus in one stroke the seminal message of the Buddha’s life is buried deep in our psyche. No one is a stranger in this world and all living beings are bound to each other; and so learn to love the phenomenal reality and when the ordained time comes (as outlined in your own past karma as also your present good deeds), there is a natural move to the final state of Nirvana. Manimekalai has thus several revelations of the ideal Buddhist insinuated throughout the telling of the epic.

In keeping with the trend of Buddhist Jataka tales and other mythology, the epic has several miracles too. But renunciation remains the base of the poem. Aravana Adikal remains the role-model for renunciates, full of knowledge and bringing comfort to the tortured heart which has lost the sense of direction in life. But, the renunciate ideal which is placed before us is not the going away to forests for meditation and choosing

a frugal life. The heroine Manimekalai symbolises an active participation in everyday life to achieve perfection by following a particular virtue. This takes us to the doctrine of Prajna Paramita associated with Mahayana Buddhism.

However, in Manimekalai, we are as yet quite early in the formation of Buddhist canons. Since Hinayana seems to have developed within five hundred years of Buddha’s manifestation, it would be appropriate to see the epic as being influenced by Hinayana and not by Mahayana texts which would be written and finalised much later.

Though it was easy to talk of Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism in the early decades of the last century, it is increasingly felt that Hinayana (the smaller vehicle) is best referred to as Sravaka Way. The ideal placed before us by Sravakavada (Hinayana) is the “way of the disciple”. A sravaka is a distinguished disciple of the Buddha Way, and Manimekalai is one, a Sravika. It would be appropriate to point out here that Seethalai Sathanar was writing Manimekalai as a clear document to help the spread of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu. We are still in the very early days of Buddhism here, for there are no images of Buddha used for worship. A lotus with the imprint of Buddha’s feet is all we see whether in the mythic isle of Manipallavam or the renowned Pallava capital of Kanchipuram. The prayers too speak of Buddha’s deeds, not figure. Thus Manimekalai at the Paada Padma Peethika in Manipallavam:

“O hero who has defeated Cupid!
One who chased away the enemies of life!
Striving for ever for the good of others,
You have denied for yourself the heavens.
The state far beyond the reach of man’s mind,
Is yours: you give us the wisdom-sight....”

After the initial breeze of love and renouncing it because of Udayakumaran’s words, Manimekalai moves on unswervingly in her role as a devotee, a disciple of Buddha. When she receives the Nectar-Vessel (Amuda Surabhi), she quietly engages herself in bringing succour to the suffering and helpless people,

Tagore, Gandhi, Radhakrishnan and Nehru were a galaxy representing the spiritual, moral, literary, philosophical and political panorama of modern India.

verily a perfect image of compassion. We see her in Kanchipuram as a perfect renunciate, a compassionate mother of unnumbered people coming to her drawn by her call:

“She placed on the lotus Seat the nectar pot
That was medicine to the hunger-sickness
And pronounced: ‘Welcome, all living beings!’
Hearing the words of the lovely girl
Folks speaking eighteen languages came there
Among them the blind, the deaf and the lame;
Guardianless people, the dumb, the sick;
Ascetics and people ill with hunger;
People who had grown poor through idleness;
Ten thousand varieties of animals;
Thus classes of living things gathered.
Like life-giving physic for those who ate,
Like the result of giving alms to ascetics,
Like the yield when the seed is sown with thought
To water, earth, season and work in fields,
Like rains that fall to help the earth’s increase,
Was the maid compared and thanked by people
Whose hunger-sickness had been cured by her.”

True to her chosen discipline of being a disciple, along with her acts of compassion, she also learns of the various philosophies floating around. She goes to Vanji city and moves by turn with logicians, Saivites, Brahmavadins, Vaishnavites, Vedic philosophers, Ajivakas, Nirgranthas, Sankhyas, Vaiseshikas and Bhutavadins, and lends a patient ear to them all. In the end, she gently points out her dissatisfaction with their views and says that to arrive at Truth, one has to lay good stress on inference. “How do you recognise your parents / in this world, if not through inference?” But she does not wish to dispute any of the philosophers. Of what use would it be? She has found her Way, and that is enough. Why engage in dry polemics? He teaches her of what is eternal and what is non-eternal. Thus does she remain firm in her chosen path of Buddha-dharma.

In the final canto (significantly titled ‘The Maiden’s Askesis’) we see Manimekalai surrendering all (indicating her having taken the vows of a renunciate) and bowing at the feet of Aravana Adigal seeking enlightenment. He speaks to her of the Buddha and

the many Buddhas who had come earlier, how their wisdom-drenched words show us the Way, how to break the circle formed by the chain of births: and finally, Aravana Adigal says:

“Give up illusion by reading scriptures
By meditation, contemplation, and
Realisation. Be freed from mental
From mental darkness by these four.”

The title of the final canto is significant because such indeed is the central tenet of Hinayana. Compassion, acts of humanism to help people in distress, but the aim of the sravika is to overcome Birth and thus cut off the cycle of births and attain Nirvana. Unlike the Bodhisattva ideal of Mahayana, here is a difference in the path taken by the Sravika. It is in keeping with the ideal of compassion that one gives a thought to the problem of others and seeks to help them, but a time comes for a definite withdrawal from such involvements. The time comes on its own to give a thought for oneself too and get free from human bondage! The lamp of knowledge is thus lit in her by her teacher Aravana Adikal. Accordingly Manimekalai withdraws into silent meditation and other austerities, having taken refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

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A Moment In Time

Dr. Uday Balakrishnan

Indian Postal Service (Retd.)

Former Member Postal Services Board and

Chairman Investment Board

Over the last several years, I have crisscrossed India by road, often spending time in small towns and villages. These journeys, far removed from the many I have under taken in my career, reconnected me to a country that has dramatically changed, mostly for the better, since my retirement nearly a decade back.

Many of my foreign friends after travelling through India have marvelled at its complexity and astonishing cohesiveness. Long-conditioned by

Data is the fuel of modern economy, a valuable commodity that can be bought and sold, and a strategic resource for nations.

Nandan Nilekani

dismal reports of rape and murder in the media, once in India, they quickly came to appreciate a country of unexpected improvisations and unfathomable resilience.

Since the days of Megasthenese, Fa Hien and Huen Tsang, accounts of observant foreigners have enabled us to see our own country in perspective. Among medieval travellers Al Beruni, Ibn Batutta, as well as Marco Polo introduced India to their worlds as a civilized land of noteworthy wisdom and charm as well as several amusing eccentricities.

There isn't another place in the world where so many live in such peace. Check this out by drawing a circle encompassing 1.3 billion people anywhere else in the world and you'll know what I mean. While economic opportunities may lure India to foreign climes almost no one from India has had to flee the country out of fear of persecution of any kind.

In his thoughtful book, *A Strange Kind of Paradise- India through Foreign Eyes*, Sam Miller formerly with the BBC observed, "We all have our patchwork ideas of India." My own is that of an India that is at once varied and not anywhere as bad as it is being made out to be.

India is an unlikely survivor, managing to hold itself together through the kind of challenges that destroyed the USSR, or created the most intrusively monitored society in human history - China. It has weathered many a crisis through its existence only to emerge stronger every time. In under a quarter of a century, it has eliminated polio, achieved agricultural self-sufficiency and established a public distribution system that reaches all its parts.

The Nobel laureate VS Naipaul's *India- A Million Mutinies Now*, brilliantly captures how a country he had given up for lost in his previous work, *An Area of Darkness*, was pulling itself up by its bootstraps into modernity. It took someone as acutely perceptive and observant as Naipaul to notice how the strengths of a country, quietly accumulated over time and through the silent work of millions over decades are now coming into play.

The marketplace for ideas Joel Mokyr talks of in his book *'A Culture of Growth,*' is strongly in evidence in today's India in congruously giving substance to one of Mao's famous exhortations to let 'a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend.' It is also, as the well-known economist and columnist, Swaminathan Anklesaria Iyer observed, 'a more sensitive country today not a more intolerant one.'

India remains inequal and corrupt. Its environmental challenges are massive, and it struggles to give a fair deal to its teeming young. Its political system appears to struggle with its founding principles and an enlightened constitution. However, there are more reasons to hope than despair. Amidst all the seeming chaos, a country and a people are pulling themselves up by their bootstraps allowing people from most modest of backgrounds to rise to the top - amongst them judges, prime ministers, presidents, scientists and sportspersons.

Wonderful as it is, India derives its strength from its many pluralisms. It revels in its many diversities. Its constitution reflects the country. Tamper with that long enough and India will cease to exist and that would be a pity indeed, for it would bring to a close the grandest experiment in history in bringing diverse peoples together.

* * *

Encounters with V.I. Lenin Equality cannot be founded on the bedrock of Tyranny

Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty

Member, Governing Board,

Auroville Foundation

Former Vice Chancellor,

Central University of Orissa and Former Prof. and
Head, Department of English, University of Hyderabad

In popular parlance, the words 'anarchist' and 'anarchism' generally carry pejorative connotations suggesting a tendency towards lawlessness and bedlam. However, a close look at the Anarchist Movement, especially in the European context during the late 19th

Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. One can find it, be fortified by it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it.

and early 20th Century, reveals a different tale worth noting. An early movement for social change that was deep rooted in the European soil during this period, and whose history has not received due attention, was philosophical and political Anarchism of different hues. The proponents of anarchism were idealists who travelled far and wide. Iconoclastic in approach; many of them sought a radical break from the status quo. Wrongly treated in many quarters as nihilists, a great many of them believed that radical social interventions could usher in a more perfect social order. I shall mention two examples for my purpose: two that were dramatic and heroic in character and both have been largely eclipsed from history.

Peter Kropotkin's Letter to V.I. Lenin: Protect Freedom

Writing from Dmitrov, Moscow province, on 21 December, 1920, the veteran anarchist Peter Kropotkin, now neglected, ailing and forlorn, expressed his sense of dismay about the way the Bolshevik Revolution was going. Once a sympathizer to the Bolshevik Cause because he believed it would usher in the cooperative Socialism, now completely disillusioned, he wrote to the architect of the October Revolution with a sense of anguish and indignation:

Respected Vladimir Illich,

An announcement has been placed in *Izvestia* and in *Pravda* which makes known the decision of the Soviet government to seize as hostages SRs [Social Revolutionary party members] from the Savinkov groups, White Guards of the nationalist and tactical center, and Wrangel officers; and, in case of an [assassination] attempt on the leaders of the soviets, to "mercilessly exterminate" these hostages.

Is there really no one around you to remind your comrades and to persuade them that such measures represent a return to the worst period of the Middle Ages and religious wars, and are undeserving of people who have taken it upon themselves to create a future society on communist principles? Whoever holds dear the future of communism cannot embark upon such measures.

It is possible that no one has explained what a hostage really is? A hostage is imprisoned not as punishment for some crime. He is held in order to blackmail the enemy with his death. "If you kill one of ours, we will kill one of yours." But is this not the same thing as leading a man to the scaffold each morning and taking him back, saying: "Wait awhile, not today..."

And don't your comrades understand that this is tantamount to a restoration of torture for the hostages and their families.

I hope no one will tell me that people in power also do not lead easy lives. Nowadays even among kings there are those who regard the possibility of assassination as an "occupational hazard...."

Even kings and popes have rejected such barbaric means of self-defense as the taking of hostages. How can apostles of a new life and architects of a new social order have recourse to such means of defense against enemies?

Why, then, push the revolution on a path leading to its destruction, primarily because of defects which are not at all inherent in socialism or communism, but represent the survival of the old order and old disturbances, of an unlimited, omnivorous authority?

P. Kropotkin

Kropotkin's letter to Lenin here underlines the idea of progress and modernity to be crafted by the October Revolution. Tragically, the ideals of the Revolution, as the anarchist saw, failed at the inception itself; despite the professed internationalism of the movement. Its faith in the desire to reach out to other people and other nations in terms of the ideals, beginning with the Soviets themselves, was further undermined by the failure of the mission of Emma Goldman who was one of Kropotkin's close followers, and a committed socialist who spoke in favor of the Russian Revolution in the West.

Betrayal of the Russian Revolution: Emma Goldman's Meeting with Lenin

In July 1922, writing the Preface to her book *My*

All modern revolutions have ended in a reinforcement of the power of the State.

Albert Camus

Disillusionment in Russia, Emma Goldman recalled in Berlin:

The decision to record experiences, observations, and reactions during my stay in Russia I had made long before I thought of leaving that country. In fact, that was my main reason for departing from that tragically heroic land. The strongest of us are loath to give up a long cherished dream. I had come to Russia possessed by the hope that I should find a new-born country, with its people wholly consecrated to the great, though very difficult, task of revolutionary reconstruction. And I had fervently hoped that I might become an active part of the inspiring work. I found reality in Russia grotesque, totally unlike the great ideal that had borne me upon the crest of high hope to the land of promise. It required fifteen long months before I could get my bearings. Each day, each week, each month added new links to the fatal chain that pulled down my cherished edifice. I fought desperately against the disillusionment... Unable and unwilling to become a cog in that sinister machine, and aware that I could be of no practical use to Russia and her people, I decided to leave the country....

The key point in Goldman's narrative was clearly her meeting with Lenin. The realization that the Revolution was not going the right way caused in her consternation since she had great hopes from the Bolsheviks....After all, the spread of the Revolution was an article of faith with the Bolsheviks, as indeed all other brands of revolutionaries: socialist, anarcho-syndicalists and communists. Goldman recalls with a heavy heart about the 'betrayal' of the Revolution in Russia:

The interview with Lenin was arranged by Balabanova...I broached the subject of the Anarchists in Russia. I showed him a letter I had received from Martens, the Soviet representative in America...Since my arrival I found scores of Anarchists in prison and their press suppressed. I explained that I could not think of working with the Soviet Government so long as my comrades were in prison for

opinion's sake. I also told him of the resolutions of the Moscow Anarchist Conference.

He listened patiently and promised to bring the matter to the attention of his party. "But as to free speech," he remarked, "that is, of course, a bourgeois notion. There can be no free speech in a revolutionary period. We have the peasantry against us because we can give them nothing in return for their bread. We will have them on our side when we have something to exchange

Free speech, free press, the spiritual achievements of centuries, what were they to this man? A Puritan, he was sure his scheme alone could redeem Russia. Those who served his plans were right; the others could not be tolerated. (A shrewd Asiatic, this Lenin) He knows how to play on the weak sides of men by flattery, rewards, [and] medals. I left convinced that his approach to people was purely utilitarian, for the use he could get out of them for his scheme. And his scheme was it the Revolution?

In the passage above, Goldman sees the failure of her project and rues the role of the Bolshevik party in subverting the Revolution, a fact that would be denied by Marxist sympathizers. It has to be noted that although a number of left leaning writers like George Orwell, Andre Gide and Arthur Koestler spoke against Stalinism in later years, they hardly touched the writings of Peter Kropotkin or Emma Goldman. It is as though there has been a curtain of silence over this chapter of the Russian history. Ironically, some of the key figures like Leon Trotsky that were responsible for brutality during the early days of the Revolution later became victims themselves in the hands of Stalin.

Is freedom a bourgeois privilege? Could it have a place in the hurly burly of revolutionary action? What could revolutionary leadership possibly mean? How can this leadership champion the interests of the masses in a truly democratic manner without attracting the charges of absolutism? Such questions without easy answers will always remain central to anarchist thought and philosophy. They were important to both Kropotkin and Goldman. If only the world remembered their legacy!

The major cause of traffic accidents is that men put into their cars as much ego as petrol.

Pierre Daninos

GANDHIAN JOURNALISM – I

Dr. R. Sampath

Former Chief of Bureau, The Hindu
Visakhapatnam

Mahatma Gandhi was a phenomenon of not only Indian politics but also of the Indian ethos, thanks to his efforts at spiritualising politics and administration. As Jawaharlal Nehru remarked, Gandhiji's arrival on the political scene, after his successful experiment with non-violent civil disobedience – he christened it 'Satyagraha' – in South Africa, was like a whiff of fresh air. It looked as though the country was waiting for him to take up the leadership of the battle for freedom. His story thereafter became the history of India's freedom struggle.

Like the Indian nation, Indian journalism, too, it seemed, was waiting for the Mahatma's arrival. On the arena of Indian journalism, Gandhiji carved a niche for himself in that he became a trend-setter in inculcating ethical values not only to the Indian people but also the newspaper editors of his time. In the words of M. Chalapathi Rau, the celebrated editor of the 'National Herald', "Gandhi's emergence as the leader, who shaped the nationalist movement, had a decisive influence over all developments in the country and had its effect on the evolution of the press also. The creed of nationalism was not new but there was a new note of defiance and sacrifice." Though he claimed journalism was not his profession – he wrote so in the August 18, 1946, issue of 'Harijan' – Gandhiji was not new to journalism. During his stay in South Africa, he launched 'Indian Opinion' weekly in 1903, supported by Madanjit Vyavaharik and Mansukhlal Hiralal Nazar. It also had its Hindustani, Gujarati and Tamil versions and espoused the cause of the Indian community living in that British colony. In 1919, "Gandhi possessed what he had hoped for from the moment of his return to India (from South Africa): vehicles to communicate his message". ['Mohandas – A True Story of a Man, His People and an Empire' by Rajmohan Gandhi, Penguin Books, 2006]. They were 'Young India' (English weekly from Bombay) and 'Navajivan' (Gujarati monthly from Ahmedabad). These journals were brought out

by Umar Sobhani, Shankarlal Banker and Indulal Yagnik, who were also associated with the nationalist daily, 'Bombay Chronicle'. "At the end of April, in one of the (British) Raj's drastic measures, (Benjamin Guy) Horniman, the British editor of the 'Chronicle', was deported, and the paper's publication had to be suspended. In response, Sobhani, Banker and Yagnik requested Gandhi to take over the editorship of 'Young India' and 'Navajivan' and with their help bring out 'Young India' twice a week and 'Navajivan' every week. Gandhi agreed, and on 7 May 1919 the first number of 'Young India' New Series came out. When, soon, the 'Chronicle' resumed publication, 'Young India' reverted to being a weekly, but now published, for Gandhi's convenience, in Ahmedabad, along with 'Navajivan', which first appeared as a weekly on 7 September."

One of the close associates of Gandhiji, C. Rajagopalachari (a.k.a. C.R. or Rajaji), who was Free India's last Governor-General, while paying his tributes to the Mahatma on the occasion of his birth centenary, remarked: "Gandhiji had the alchemy to shape men out of clay." As the greatest journalist – one can call him the greatest communicator – of all time, Gandhiji had shaped many a nationalist editor to serve the cause of Truth and the freedom movement. He was indeed a role model for many a journalist-in-the-making in his days. Almost all his political associates like Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya, Abul Kalam Azad, Sadhu Vaswani, Jairamdas Daultatram, Andhra Kesari Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu and Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramayya were either publishing or editing journals of their own inspired and encouraged by Gandhiji.

Prakasam published 'Swarajya' English daily from Madras with Khasa Subba Rao as editor. The daily became a training ground for many later day editors. Prakasam almost became a pauper by spending all his riches earned as a well known barrister of Madras, on the paper and sustaining the freedom struggle.

Pattabhi Sitaramayya founded the 'Janmabhoomi', an English journal, from Masulipatam (now Machilipatnam), his native town, in 1919. "This paper was run by Pattabhi for over eleven years. During the years when Pattabhi, as a supporter of

Knowledge is the most democratic source of power.

Alvin Toffler

Gandhi, opposed the Swarajists tooth and nail, the 'Janmabhoomi' voiced his views. Through its columns he not only 'exposed the fallacies' of the Swarajists but interpreted Gandhi and his philosophy. It did not take the paper long to get into the notice of the Government which demanded security from the Kistna Swadeshi Press where it was printed. In its quality, the 'Janmabhoomi' was compared to Mohammed Ali's 'Comrade'. To the youth of those days, it served as a source of inspiration. 'It gave definite shape to my journalistic leanings and fired my youthful ambitions. It was my mental pabulum week after week,' wrote Kunduri Iswara Dutt. To the younger politicians also, it appealed." Says Ayyagari Prasanna Kumar : "That Pattabhi made a mark as a journalist was evident from the fact that Motilal Nehru offered him the editorship of 'The Independent' (when Pattabhi closed down the paper unable to sustain the losses incurred). Pattabhi did not accept the offer as he was unwilling to leave Masulipatam. He also rejected the offer of editorship of the 'Bombay Chronicle'."

Rajaji himself edited a Tamil monthly, 'Vimochanam' (liberation), though for a short time, exclusively aimed at propagating the cause of Prohibition of the drink evil. One of Rajaji's disciples, Kalki Krishnamurthy, who was also an eminent editor, used to wonder how to run a journal that was totally devoted to Prohibition, and told his master that it was an impossible task. "Perhaps, we can link other constructive programmes like Khadi development, campaign against untouchability, etc.," he opined. But Rajaji showed his mettle to Kalki by bringing out issue after issue of the magazine with a lot of features on Prohibition.

According to Kotamraju Rama Rao, one of the doyens of Indian newspaper editors of the twentieth century, "Gandhi gave men of his time an extra dimension to life, a special zest for work. We of the press particularly lived in his reflected effulgence. To the newspapers he lent prestige and importance as the media of his message, as the vehicles of inspiration and as the recorders of his operations in the field, as well as of his vital counsels in conference, cabinet and committees."

Gandhian journalism emerged from the values and philosophy practised and propagated by the Mahatma in his life through his publications, viz. 'Indian Opinion', 'Harijan' and 'Young India'. "With courage and conviction, Gandhiji applied the principles in his life and also in journalism and could bravely write his quest for truth or experiments with truth in the modern era, narrating his experiences while boldly facing the poignant situations to achieve his goals. Essentially, he believed that newspapers should have values when they were launched with a view to serving the people."

A robust believer in ethical values, Gandhiji would not compromise on anything impinging on Truth. It has to be told even if it is bitter. He would often say that objectivity should be the watchword of any journalist. He quoted the following Upanishadic statements (reproduced from 'Gandhi, the Writer' by Bhabani Bhattacharya) in his writings in the 'Indian Opinion', which he edited in South Africa:

--Truth alone prevails and not untruth. Truth is the pathway which learned men tread. It is by this path that the sages, satiated in their desires have obtained salvation in Him who is the infinite ocean of Truth. (Mundaka Upanishad)

--Speak the Truth, observe duty, do not swerve from Truth. (Taittiriya Upanishad)

--Speech rests on Truth; everything rests on Truth. Therefore, they call Truth the highest. (Mahanarayana Upanishad)

--There is no duty higher than Truth and no sin more heinous than untruth. Indeed Truth is the very foundation of Righteousness. Truth and mercy are immemorial characteristics of a king's conduct. Hence royal rule is in its essence truth. On truth the world is based. Both sages and gods have esteemed truth. The man who speaks truth in this world attains the highest imperishable state. Men shrink with fear and horror from a liar as from a serpent. In this world the chief element in virtue is Truth. It is called the basis of everything. Truth is lord in the world, virtue always rests on Truth. All things are founded on Truth; nothing is higher than it. Truthfulness, equability, self-control, absence of self-display, forgiveness, modesty,

endurance, absence of envy, charity, a noble well-wishing towards others, self-possession, compassion and harmlessness – surely these are the thirteen forms of Truth. (Mahabharata, Shanti Parva)

By adhering to truth, the journalist would become objective, Gandhiji would say. He was not happy with the way reporting of speeches in newspapers as he felt they were defective. “There are very few who can write down a speech verbatim, while it is being delivered or afterwards from memory. This results in much distortion and interpolation. The best rule would be to send the proof of the reported speech to the speaker for correction and publish its own report of the speech only if the speaker doesn’t revise the proof sent to him.” In other words, Gandhiji gave greater importance to objectivity in reporting of a speech or an event. He was against interpretative reporting since it betrayed the individual reporter’s value judgment which could go wrong. Here Gandhiji echoes the sentiment of the great editor of the ‘Manchester Guardian’ C.P. Scot, who declared “Facts are sacred. Comment is free.” It was Gandhiji’s maxim that by being objective, the journalist enhanced the credibility of the newspaper or journal which employed him.

While admitting that he was not a journalist by profession – on the contrary, Gandhiji entered the field of journalism as duck takes to water – he did realize the power of the press. In fact, “Gandhiji used the power of journalism to accentuate his leadership” (‘The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya’ by V.P. Verma; published by Lakshminarain Agarwal, Agra, 1965). Explaining the objectives of newspapers, he wrote in ‘Indian Opinion’: “In the very first month of ‘Indian Opinion’, I realised that the sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper press is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised

from within. If this line of reasoning is correct, how many of the journals in world would stand the test? But who would stop those that are useless? And who should be the judge? The useful and the useless must, like good and evil generally, go on together, and man must make his choice.”

Gandhiji was dead set against the reliance of news journals on advertisements for revenue generation. He was of the firm opinion that a newspaper should sustain itself by only readers’ support. He went to the extent of saying that advertisements would only mar a newspaper’s credibility. “If it is not self-supporting, I should conclude that there is inefficient management or editing, or that there is no public demand for such a paper,” he wrote in ‘Young India’ (‘Indian Journalism’ by Nadig Krishnamurthy). Gandhiji shunned offers of advertisements and did not allow his journals like ‘Indian Opinion’, ‘Young India’ and ‘Harijan’ to accept any publicity material with a commercial motive. When Gandhiji launched the ‘Harijan Bandhu’, the Hindustani version of the parent journal, he felt the need for more paper to print the weekly in view of its larger circulation than the English journal. “Once he wrote a letter to Sir Edward Benthall, managing director of the Titaghur Paper Mills, asking him to give paper free of cost for the Hindi edition. Sir Edward was not ready to make a gift of the paper but promised to give advertisements in the journal, so that Gandhiji could buy enough paper for the newspaper. Gandhiji said that the ‘Harijan’ would mention that the paper was a gift from Titaghur Paper Mills and that itself would be a good advertisement. (In modern days this is akin to sponsorship of space in newspapers and prime time on television). Benthall was not agreeable to such an acknowledgement. He insisted on a direct advertisement. But the ‘Harijan’ had decided not to take advertisements for pecuniary interests.”

(To be continued)

* * *

INDIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Shri Khushwant Singh

*(Lecture delivered at the Centre for Policy Studies on
November 15, 1999)*

When India attained Independence in 1947 not many people believed that the Indian democracy would last long. They thought that the caste disparities and illiteracy in India would not allow democracy to survive and it would last as long as Gandhi and Nehru were there. But India still continues to remain a democratic country as the Gandhi-Nehru impact on India is very strong. India remained one country despite caste disparities and pressures from all sides. The problem of Nagaland from North-East, the demand for separate state 'Khalistan' from North-West Frontier and such other problems could have divided the country, but it has remained one. Similarly, even with the three wars India fought with its neighbours after Independence, there was no internal threat to overthrow the government. The strong sense of Indianness made its people to stand as one united country. Despite several divisive forces working against the nation and with all its disparities of all kinds, Indians demonstrated their solidarity unlike the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia. The unity in diversity is the positive aspect of India.

However, the negative aspect is also there in India. It is one among the top ten of the poorest countries of the world and also tops in illiteracy and corruption. The challenges that Indians have to face in the new millennium are the fight against poverty, ignorance and corruption. Though there is not much of hope to overcome these challenges as they are acute, solutions need to be searched for. One has to bestow top priority to solve the problems such as population explosion, environmental degradation, religious fundamentalism and political instability.

Population Explosion:

Some serious action needs to be taken to check

population. The rate of growth of population is suicidal. Panditji pooh-pooled it and Mrs. Gandhi till later part of her rule did not take initiatives to check population. The State of Andhra Pradesh produced a President with 9 children and a Prime Minister who had 8 children. The ex-Chief Minister of Bihar, Laloo Prasad Yadav boasts of a family of 9. Time has come to take stringent steps to control population explosion. Legislation has to be introduced for compulsory family planning and any couple who have more than two children should be banned to hold any public office and lose the right to vote. As a Member of Parliament, I made the list of M.Ps and the number of children they had. If my proposal were to be accepted, both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha would have been reduced to one-third of their size. There was much laughter for this proposal but nothing happened later. Legislation to this effect should be passed as soon as possible and even the couple at the time of their marriage should be asked to take an oath that they will not have more than two children.

Environmental Degradation:

We are losing our green cover. Forests are disappearing and effluents flow in full swing in all the rivers and lakes. Ganga and Yamuna also are full of filth and the cleansing programme of Ganga initiated by Rajiv Gandhi has not changed the position to anything better. The present afforestation programmes (Vanamahotsavas) are occasions for politicians to show themselves in T.V. with the cameras and mikes on and thereafter nothing happens and the saplings die. It is high time now to pass legislation for a total ban on felling of trees and every school and college must have environmental education as a part of its curriculum. There should also be a ban on cremation of the dead as it consumes thousands of tonnes of wood and should instead switch over to 'burial' as we do not have enough electric or gas power crematoriums. Hindus and Sikhs are the two communities who cremate their dead and to ban this, religious leaders should cooperate as there

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Martin Luther King Jr

is nothing in the religion that stops the burial of the dead. Leaders like M.G. Ramachandran and Swami Chinmayananda were all buried and their examples should inspire us to stop this wasting of precious fuel and territory. Religion could play an important role in improving our environmental conditions. Every dead person should be buried without erecting monuments; instead planting a tree in memory of the dead can reverse the process of degradation of the environment.

Religious Fundamentalism:

Religion should play a positive role, but not a negative role as is seen in these days. A change in the value system is required. One should not spend time on 'time wasting' rituals and by going round the temples and Gurudwaras on pilgrimage for months which of late have become dens of vice. What kind of spirituality is that when it serves no social purpose? In the name of meditation, the vested interests are perpetuating religion. If one wants peace of mind or one is disturbed, one can as well go to sleep as nothing creative can be produced when one is disturbed. Imposing religiosity on others is not good and that is what we do when we use loud- speakers, spreading religion. Radical change of attitude towards religion should come forth as our value system has closed down to earth.

Political Instability:

The present form of our democracy is not working efficiently. We had innumerable elections and elections for almost every two years are seen. In the last elections, we have seen men like Manmohan Singh, the ablest, the most experienced, and most humble losing and people like Phoolan Devi have won, which shows that the way in which our democracy is functioning. It is now time to switch over to Presidential form of government from the present parliamentary democracy. The President is to be chosen directly for a period of 5 years or so and his cabinet need not be formed from the elected people,

instead could be chosen from the technocrats, who are able and answerable to the people. There is also growing public opinion to change the Constitution to this effect.

The leadership is also under crisis. Pandit Nehru laid foundation for the prosperity of our country. One trouble was that no one was able to say anything against and what he said was gospel and he was allowed to become headstrong. After Nehru we had poor leadership and consequently after him, all the institutions of democracy have been destroyed systematically one after the other. Corruption grew high as is seen in all leaders. What do we expect in the future after looking at bribing of M.Ps. to hold in power, Bofors from one end and Jharkhand Movement, at the other end. The leadership should set an example and in Mr. Vajpayee we find the same but people round him influence him to do wrong things India should essentially remain a secular state and must always protect the interests of the minorities and the government should be bold enough to say that no one is going to touch the places of worship. There should be total ban on raising worshipping places such as temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras as we have enough of them. Hereafter no site is to be allotted for places for worship. 'Saying not in the agenda' is not good and the secular fabric of the country should not be destroyed by religious fundamentalism.

I end this lecture with a prayer displayed of all places in an army mess in Pakistan where they break all the rules of democracy.

“God give us men
Men whom the lust of office does not kill
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy
Men who possess opinions and will
Men of honour and men who will not lie.”

* * *

The leading figures on the world stage today practice a brutal smash-mouth politics, a personalized authoritarianism.

Gideon Rose

“Abuse of power is a new challenge for India”

(Newspaper report on a panel discussion on ‘Union-State Relations – Combating New Challenges’. Dr.E.A.S.Sarma, I.A.S.(Retd.), Former Union Energy Secretary and Founder Convener, Forum for Better Visakha and Prof. (Mrs.) S.Sumitra, Principal, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar College of Law, Andhra University were among those who participated in the discussion on August 20, 2019 organised by Centre for Policy Studies and Visakhapatnam Public Library)

The collapse of professional autonomy and abuse of authority by the power that be are the new challenges to India’s federal polity, said former bureaucrat E.A.S. Sarma. Addressing a meeting jointly organised by Centre for Policy Studies and Visakhapatnam Public Library, he deplored the ‘weakening of important institutions such

as CBI and Election Commission of India’ saying that ‘it would lead to political instability.’

Prof. S.Sumitra, Principal of Dr.B.R.ambedkar College of Law, Andhra University traced the evolution of federalism in India from the Government of India Act (1935) introduced by the Britishers and how free India has evolved into a semi-federal State with strong unitary bias.

Introducing the theme of the discussion, A.Prasanna Kumar of Centre for Policy Studies narrated the nature of federalism in India that the framers of the Constitution opted for and the inherent asymmetry of the system in view of the vast diversity of the largest democracy in the world. Secretary D.S.Varma welcomed and Dr.Ramesh Ramanadham proposed a vote of thanks.

(The Hindu, August 21, 2019)

Centre for Policy Studies completes 24 years and its Bulletin 23 years today. CPS offers its grateful thanks to its well wishers, contributors of articles and readers of the Bulletin for their generous support and cooperation.



CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

Dwarakamayi, 50-52-19, T.P.T. Colony, Seethammadhara, Visakhapatnam - 530013.

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Edited and published by A. Prasanna Kumar
Website : www.centreforpolycystudiesvizag.com
Email: ayyagariprasannakumar@gmail.com and
printed at Sathyam Offset Imprints Ph : 984 999 6538

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BTC HOUSE, 5TH LANE
CHANDRAMOULINAGAR
GUNTUR – 522 007, INDIA

TEL: 91-863-2357615/6

FAX : 91-863-2351343

E-Mmail: murtybsk@bommidalainternational.com

Website: www.bommidalainternational.com