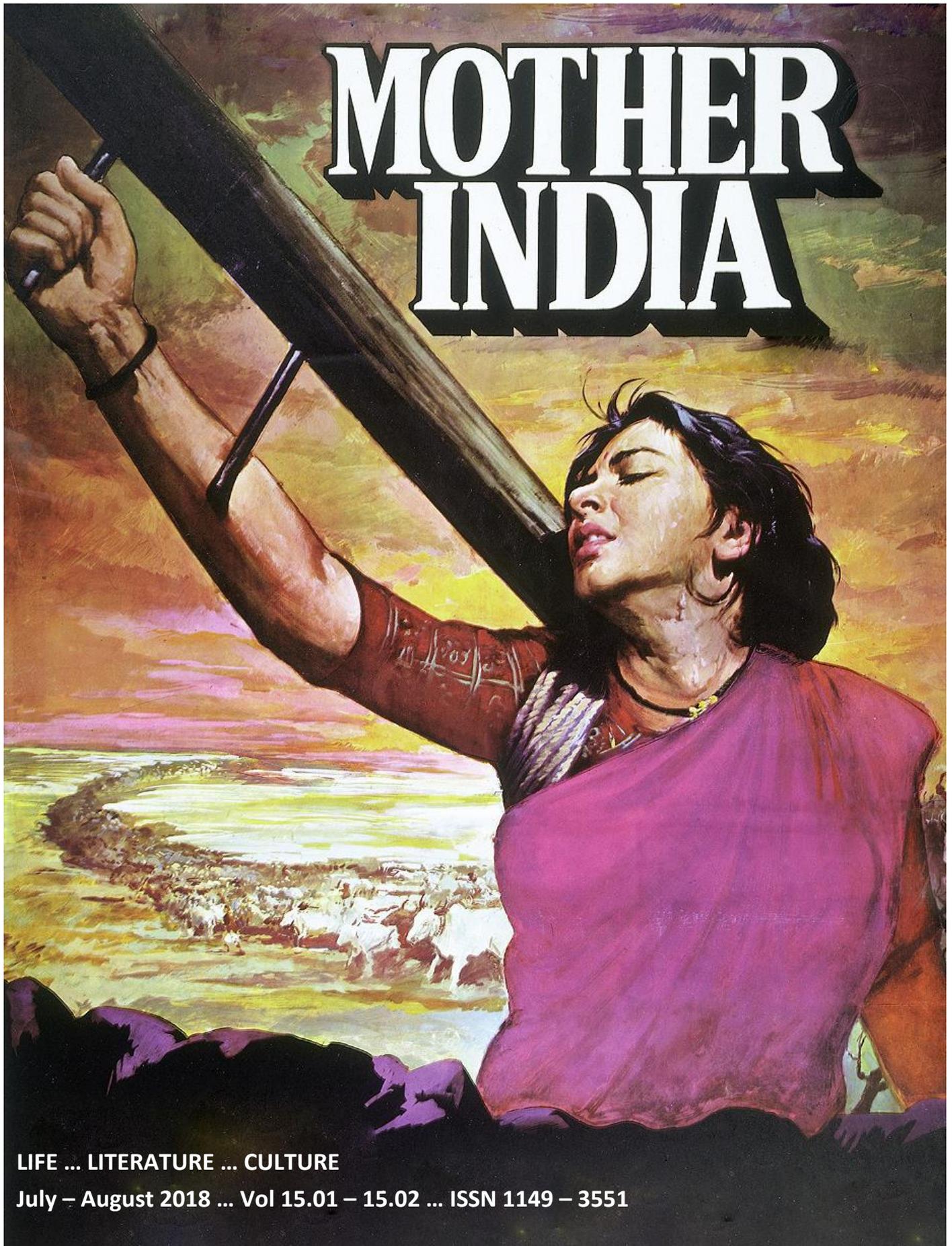


# Bhavan Australia



# MOTHER INDIA

LIFE ... LITERATURE ... CULTURE

July - August 2018 ... Vol 15.01 - 15.02 ... ISSN 1149 - 3551

## Words of Eternal Wisdom



Money is the worst discovery of human life. But it is the most trusted material to test human nature.

- *Buddha*

"Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today"

- *Mahatma Gandhi*

The *Dalai Lama*, when asked what surprised him most about humanity, said:

*"Man.*

*Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money.*

*Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health.*

*And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present;*

*the result being that he does not live in the present or the future;*

*he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived."*

"Corruption is a cancer, a cancer that eats away at a citizen's faith in democracy, diminishes the instinct for innovation and creativity."

—*Joe Biden*

"The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything."

- *Albert Einstein*

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

- *Abraham Lincoln*

*We have dedicated this issue to India on Her  
72<sup>nd</sup> Independence Anniversary.*

## **INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA**

*15th August 2018*



### **LEST WE FORGET**

Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr Rajendra Prasad pleaded with Mahatma Gandhi, as did everybody else in the Congress, to remain in Delhi to join in the celebrations on 15 August 1947, but he politely declined. The Mahatma said his presence was needed among the suffering people of Noakhali. On arriving in Calcutta, on his way to Noakhali he learnt that the city was once again in flames; there was recurrence of rioting and killing. He was prevailed upon to stay there for some time and provide his proverbial healing touch. He consented on the condition that Muslims in Noakhali should guarantee the safety of Hindus in that strife-stricken district. Likewise the Hindus in Bihar had to stand as guarantors of the safety of Muslims there. Or else he would not hesitate to sacrifice his life in order to bring this about. When some Hindus told him that his sympathies lay with the Muslims, he responded with tears in his eyes: “how can you ever think like this. I am proud to be a Hindu. I have lived and will die for Hinduism. Every fibre of my being is Hindu. To say that I do not care for Hindus is the worst travesty of truth.”

The Mahatma found the fire of hate was raging everywhere and he did not know how long it would take him to extinguish it but he had to extinguish it or it would engulf both India and Pakistan. Anti-social elements had run amuck, they were destroying the very basis of civilization. Under the League Ministry Hindus were earlier massacred and

then under the Congress Ministry Muslims were being done to death. The Mahatma beseeched the people of Calcutta to stop, what he called this "hot goondaism" and this senseless race of retaliation.

**"A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new...India discovers herself again." - Jawaharlal Nehru**

On August 15, 1947, India won its independence from the British rule, and that independence is celebrated every year, although in a much more subdued form than on Republic Day. The Independence Day of India is much more than commemorating the anniversary of India's free statehood. It is a moment of celebration, a day to pay tribute to the martyrs because of whose struggle and sacrifice we are breathing an air of freedom. "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom," said Jawaharlal Nehru about this, one of the most important days in the history of the Indian nation.

**Independence Day is acknowledged as a national holiday in India. This year, India will celebrate its 72 Independence Day.**

The preparations begin a month before Independence Day and the roads are given a larger-than-life appearance with ribbons and Indian flags. There are no parades or extravagant processions on Independence Day, but all over India, most institutions, both academic and governmental, hold a low-profile celebration in which the hoisting of the national flag is the key element.

However, the chief event is conducted in the capital city of India, New Delhi, at the Red Fort, where a large public gathering, mainly of dignitaries, is held. The Prime Minister hoists the tricolor at the cordons of the Red Fort, which receives a salutation of 21 guns. This is followed by the Prime Minister addressing the nation with his speech. The speech holds immense value as it marks a tribute to all those who sacrificed their lives during India's freedom struggle. It also highlights the accomplishments of the nation during the past year beside discussing major issues and suggesting steps for further growth.

On the eve of Independence Day, Delhi skyline gets dotted with numerous multicolored kites as people indulge in kite flying competitions cheering out loud, elevating the spirit of the day!

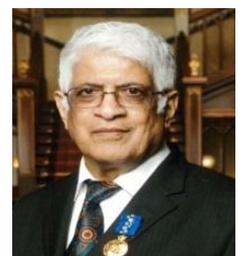
*Inspired by*

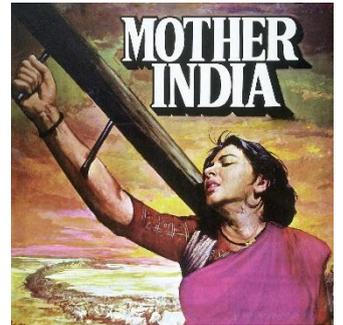
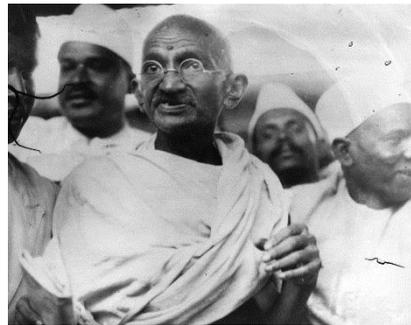
*Source: <http://journeymart.com>*

Gambhir Watts OAM



*President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia  
Organiser of Holi Mahotsav*





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## REMEMBERING GANDHI'S SALT MARCH



Since the late-1910s, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had been at the forefront of India's quest to shake off the yoke of British colonial domination, otherwise known as the "Raj." The thin and abstemious former lawyer had led civil disobedience against colonial policies, encouraged Indians to boycott British goods, and had served two years in prison on charges of sedition. Gandhi's philosophy of "satyagraha," which sought to reveal truth and confront injustice through nonviolence, had made him the most polarizing figure on the subcontinent. While the British regarded him with suspicion, Indians had begun calling him "Mahatma," or "great-souled."

When the Indian National Congress redoubled its efforts for independence in January 1930, many assumed Gandhi would stage his most ambitious satyagraha campaign to date. Yet rather than launching a frontal assault on more high profile injustices, Gandhi proposed to frame his protest around salt. As with many other commodities, Britain had kept India's salt trade under its thumb since the 19th century, forbidding natives from manufacturing or

selling the mineral and forcing them to buy it at high cost from British merchants. Since salt was a nutritional necessity in India's steamy climate, Gandhi saw the salt laws as an inexcusable evil. Many of Gandhi's comrades were initially skeptical. "We were bewildered and could not fit in a national struggle with common salt," remembered Jawaharlal Nehru, later India's first prime minister. Another colleague compared the proposed protest to striking a "fly" with a "sledgehammer," yet for Gandhi, the salt monopoly was a stark example of the ways the Raj unfairly imposed Britain's will on even the most basic aspects of Indian life. Its effects cut across religious and class differences, harming both Hindus and Muslims, rich and poor. On March 2, he penned a letter to British Viceroy Lord Irwin and made a series of requests, among them the repeal of the salt tax. If ignored, he promised to launch a satyagraha campaign. "My ambition," he wrote, "is no less than to convert the British people through nonviolence and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India."



*Gandhi leading the Salt March. (Credit: Central Press/Getty Images)*

Irwin offered no formal response, and at dawn on March 12, 1930, Gandhi put his plan into action. Clad in a homespun shawl and sandals and holding a wooden walking stick, he set off on foot from his ashram near Ahmedabad with several dozen companions and began an overland trek to the Arabian Sea town of Dandi. There, he planned to defy the salt tax by illegally harvesting the mineral from the beachside. The 60-year-old expected to be arrested or even beaten during the journey, but the British feared a public backlash and elected not to quash the march.

With Gandhi setting a brisk pace at its head, the column crossed the countryside at a rate of roughly 12 miles per day. Gandhi paused at dozens of villages along the route to address the masses and condemn both the Raj and the salt tax. He also encouraged government workers to embrace his philosophy of noncooperation by quitting their jobs. "What is government service worth, after all?" he asked during a stop at the city of Nadiad. "A government job gives you the power to tyrannize over others."

As Gandhi and his followers inched toward the western coastline, thousands of Indians joined their ranks, transforming the small cadre of protestors into a miles-long procession. The New York Times and other media outlets began following the walk's progress, quoting Gandhi as he denounced the salt tax as "monstrous" and chided the British for "being ashamed to arrest me." In addition to lambasting the Raj, Gandhi also used his speeches to lecture on the injustices of the Indian caste system, which labeled the lowest classes "untouchable" and deprived them of certain rights. Gandhi stunned

onlookers by bathing at an "untouchable" well at the village of Dabhan, and during another stop in Gajera, he refused to begin his speech until the untouchables were allowed to sit with the rest of the audience.



*Female members of the Indian Nation Congress during the Salt March. (Credit: Mansell/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images)*

Gandhi and his party finally arrived at Dandi on April 5, having walked 241 miles in the span of just 24 days. The following morning, thousands of journalists and supporters gathered to watch him commit his symbolic crime. After immersing himself in the sparkling waters of the Arabian Sea, he walked ashore where the beach's rich salt deposits rested. British officials had reportedly ground the salt into the sand in the hope of frustrating Gandhi's efforts, but he easily found a lump of salt-rich mud and held it aloft in triumph. "With this," he announced, "I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire."

Gandhi's transgression served as a signal for other Indians to join in what had become known as the "Salt Satyagraha." Over the next several weeks, supporters across the subcontinent flocked to the seaside to illegally harvest the mineral. Women took on a crucial role. Many boiled water to make salt, and others sold illicit salt in city markets or led pickets in front of liquor and foreign cloth shops. "It seemed as though a spring had suddenly been released," Nehru later said. Some 80,000 people were arrested in the spree of civil disobedience, and many were beaten by police.

Gandhi was taken into custody on May 5, after he announced his intention to lead a peaceful raid on a government salt works at Dharasana. But even with their leader behind bars, his followers pressed on. On May 21, some 2,500

marchers ignored warnings from police and made an unarmed advance on the Dharasana depot. American journalist Webb Miller was on the scene, and he later described what followed. “Suddenly,” he wrote, “at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers and rained blows on their heads...Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. They went down like ten-pins.” Miller’s harrowing account of the beatings circulated widely in the international media, and was even read aloud in the U.S.

*Gandhi picking up salt on the beach at Dandi on April*



5, 1930.

Congress. Winston Churchill—no great fan of Gandhi—would later admit that the protests and their aftermath had “inflicted such

humiliation and defiance as has not been known since the British first trod the soil of India.”

Gandhi remained in lockup until early 1931, but he emerged from prison more revered than ever before. Time Magazine named him its 1930 “Man of the Year,” and newspapers around the globe jumped at any opportunity to quote him or report on his exploits. British Viceroy Lord Irwin finally agreed to negotiate with him, and in March 1931, the two hammered out the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which ended the satyagraha in exchange for several concessions including the release of thousands of political prisoners. While the agreement largely maintained the Raj’s monopoly over salt, it gave Indians living on the coasts the right to produce the mineral from the sea.

Difficult days still lay ahead. Gandhi and his supporters would launch more protests in the 1930s and 40s and endure even more stints behind bars, and Indian independence would have to wait until 1947—only months before Gandhi was shot dead by a militant Hindu. But while the immediate political results of the Salt March were relatively minor, Gandhi’s satyagraha had nevertheless succeeded in his goal of “shaking the foundations of the British Empire.” The trek to the sea had galvanized Indian resistance to the Raj, and its international coverage had introduced the world to Gandhi and his followers’ astonishing commitment to nonviolence. Among others, Martin Luther King Jr. would later cite the Salt March as a crucial influence on his own philosophy of civil disobedience. Gandhi had sent a simple message by grasping a handful of salt on the beach at Dandi, and millions had answered his call.

Source: <https://www.history.com>



## HOW THE PARTITION OF INDIA HAPPENED – AND WHY ITS EFFECTS ARE STILL FELT TODAY



Mahatma Gandhi with Lord and Lady Mountbatten, 1947

“Partition” – the division of British India into the two separate states of India and Pakistan on August 14-15, 1947 – was the “last-minute” mechanism by which the British were able to secure agreement over how independence would take place. At the time, few people understood what Partition would entail or what its results would be, and the migration on the enormous scale that followed took the vast majority of contemporaries by surprise.

The main vehicle for nationalist activity was the Indian National Congress, whose best-known leaders included Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Even before the 1940s, it had long argued for a unitary state with a strong centre; even though Congress was ostensibly secular in its objectives, organisations

representing minority interests increasingly viewed this idea with suspicion, believing that it would entrench the political dominance of Hindus, who made up about 80% of the population.

At around 25% of its population, Muslims were British India’s largest religious minority. Under imperial rule, they had grown accustomed to having their minority status protected by a system of reserved legislative seats and separate electorates. The British system of political control hinged on identifying interest groups willing to collaborate, a governing style often described as “divide and rule”.

The prospect of losing this protection as independence drew closer worried more and more Muslims, first in parts of northern India, and then, after World War II, in the influential Muslim-majority provinces of Bengal and Punjab. In 1945-6, the All-India Muslim League,

led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, won a majority of Muslim votes in provincial elections. This strengthened the party's claim to speak for a substantial proportion of, but never all, the subcontinent's Muslims.

Then came World War II – and suddenly, the political stakes in India were considerably higher.

### **THE END OF THE RAJ**

When Britain took India into the war without consultation in 1939, Congress opposed it; large nationalist protests ensued, culminating in the 1942 Quit India movement, a mass movement against British rule. For their part in it, Gandhi and Nehru and thousands of Congress workers were imprisoned until 1945.

Meanwhile, the British wartime need for local allies gave the Muslim League an opening to offer its cooperation in exchange for future political safeguards. In March 1940, the Muslim League's "Pakistan" resolution called for the creation of "separate states" – plural, not singular – to accommodate Indian Muslims, whom it argued were a separate "nation".

Historians are still divided on whether this rather vague demand was purely a bargaining counter or a firm objective. But while it may have been intended to solve the minority issue, it ended up aggravating it instead.

After the war, Attlee's Labour government in London recognised that Britain's devastated economy could not cope with the cost of the over-extended empire. A Cabinet Mission was dispatched to India in early 1946, and Attlee described its mission in ambitious terms:

My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide; but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision.

An act of parliament proposed June 1948 as the deadline for the transfer of power. But the Mission failed to secure agreement over its proposed constitutional scheme, which recommended a loose federation; the idea was rejected by both Congress and the Muslim League, which vowed to agitate for "Pakistan" by any means possible.

All the while, communal violence was escalating. In August 1946, the Great Calcutta Killing left some 4,000 people dead and a further 100,000 homeless.

By March 1947, a new viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, arrived in Delhi with a mandate to find a speedy way of bringing the British Raj to an end. On June 3, he announced that independence would be brought forward to August that year, presenting politicians with an ultimatum that gave them little alternative but to agree to the creation of two separate states. Pakistan – its eastern and western wings separated by around 1,700 kilometres of Indian territory – celebrated independence on August 14 that year; India did so the following day. The new borders, which split the key provinces of the Punjab and Bengal in two, were officially approved on August 17. They had been drawn up by a Boundary Commission, led by British lawyer Cyril Radcliffe, who later admitted that he had relied on out-of-date maps and census materials.

### **TORN APART**

Partition triggered riots, mass casualties, and a colossal wave of migration. Millions of people moved to what they hoped would be safer territory, with Muslims heading towards Pakistan, and Hindus and Sikhs in the direction of India. As many as 14-16m people may have been eventually displaced, travelling on foot, in bullock carts and by train.

Estimates of the death toll post-Partition range from 200,000 to two million. Many were killed by members of other communities and sometimes their own families, as well as by the contagious diseases which swept through refugee camps. Women were often targeted as symbols of community honour, with up to 100,000 raped or abducted.

What can explain this intensely violent reaction? Many of the people concerned were very deeply attached not just to religious identity, but to territory, and Britain was reluctant to use its troops to maintain law and order. The situation was especially dangerous in Punjab, where weapons and demobilised soldiers were abundant.

Another unforeseen consequence of Partition was that Pakistan's population ended up more religiously homogeneous than originally

anticipated. The Muslim League's leaders had assumed that Pakistan would contain a sizeable non-Muslim population, whose presence would safeguard the position of Muslims remaining in India – but in West Pakistan, non-Muslim minorities comprised only 1.6% of the population by 1951, compared with 22% in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

**Decades later, tensions still run high.** EPA/Rahat Dar

And even though Pakistan was ostensibly created as a “homeland” for India's Muslim minority, not all Muslims even supported its formation, never mind migrated there: Muslims remained the largest minority group in independent India, making up around 10% of the population in 1951. Gandhi himself was assassinated in January 1948 by a Hindu nationalist extremist who blamed him for being too supportive of Muslims at the time of Partition.

Both states subsequently faced huge problems accommodating and rehabilitating post-Partition refugees, whose numbers swelled when the two states went to war over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir in

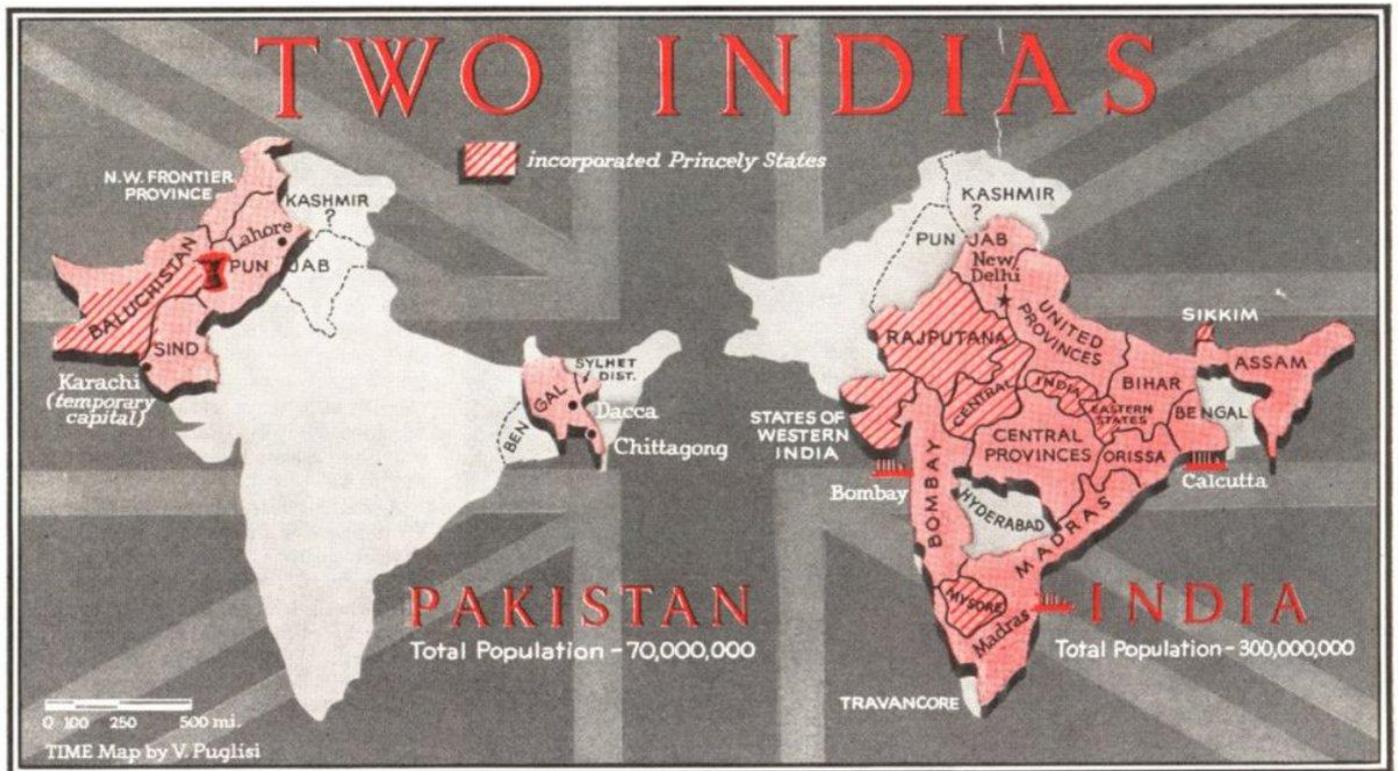
1947-8. Later bouts of communal tension generated further movement, with a trickle of people still migrating as late as the 1960s.

Today, the two countries' relationship is far from healthy. Kashmir remains a flashpoint; both countries are nuclear-armed. Indian Muslims are frequently suspected of harbouring loyalties towards Pakistan; non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan are increasingly vulnerable thanks to the so-called Islamisation of life there since the 1980s. Seven decades on, well over a billion people still live in the shadow of Partition.

*Source: <https://theconversation.com/how-the-partition-of-india-happened-and-why-its-effects-are-still-felt-today-81766>*



# HOW INDIA CELEBRATED ITS FIRST INDEPENDENCE DAY



By LILY ROTHMAN August 15, 2017

As India celebrates its Independence Day this Tuesday, the annual holiday will come with an added layer of meaning: This marks 70 years since the achievement of its hard-fought nationhood

British Crown rule in India dated all the way back to 1858, but by the 1940s — thanks largely to the work of Mohandas Gandhi — it was clear that, despite the many grand statements made to the contrary over the years, the system would not endure forever. Gandhi had become convinced that the U.K. would never willingly give India even partial self-rule, and began a civil-disobedience campaign to win independence through forceful passivity, though his peaceful efforts often inspired violence in others. “With each fast, each boycott, and each imprisonment (by a British Raj which feared to leave him free, feared even more that he would die on their hands and enrage all India), Gandhi came closer to his goal of a free India,” TIME reported in the lead-up to independence.

Finally, as Britain faced its own internal post-WWII problems and a changing of the guard in Parliament, Prime Minister Clement Attlee promised in early 1947 that the Raj would end by June of 1948.

**Bhavan Australia | July - August 2018**

The fateful date came sooner, on Aug. 15, 1947. On that day, by TIME’s count, a full one-fifth of all human beings alive suddenly became self-governing.

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On the eve of independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, about to become the first Prime Minister of India, received a procession of Hindu holy men at his home in Delhi. Then, he and other political leaders gathered in the Constituent Assembly Hall. “Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge,” Nehru told those present. “At the stroke of midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.”

And as the twelfth chime of midnight died out, a conch shell, traditional herald of the dawn, sounded raucously through the chamber. Members of the Constituent Assembly rose. Together they pledged themselves “at this solemn moment . . . to the service of India and her people. . . .” Nehru and Prasad struggled through the thousands of rejoicing Indians who had gathered outside to the Viceroy’s House (now called the Governor General’s House) where Viscount Mountbatten, who that day learned he would become an earl, awaited them. There, 32 minutes after Mountbatten had

ceased to be a Viceroy,\* Nehru and Prasad rather timidly, almost bashfully, told Mountbatten that India's Constituent Assembly had assumed power and would like him to be Governor General.

Delhi's thousands rejoiced. The town was gay, with orange, white and green. Bullocks' horns and horses' legs were painted in the new national colors, and silk merchants sold tri-colored saris. Triumphant light blazed everywhere. Even in the humble Bhangi (Untouchable) quarters, candles and oil' lamps flickered brightly in houses that had never before seen artificial light. The government wanted no one to be unhappy on India's Independence Day. Political prisoners, including Communists, were freed. All death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. The Government, closing all slaughterhouses, ordered that no animals be killed.

The people made it their day. After dawn half a million thronged the green expanse of the Grand Vista and parkways near the Government buildings of New Delhi. Wherever Lord and Lady Mountbatten went that day, their open carriage, drawn by six bay horses, was beset by happy, cheering Indians who swept aside police lines. A Briton received a popular ovation rarely given even to an Indian leader. "Mountbattenji ki jai [Victory to Mountbatten]," they roared, adding the affectionate and respectful suffix "ji" usually reserved for popular Indian leaders.

But Gandhi, the magazine noted, was conspicuously absent. As it became clear that the Raj was ending, questions of what it would mean to have an independent India had split those who pushed for independence. Among other divisions — over communism, conservatism and more — the most significant

was over whether the Muslim population would end up with a country of its own.

Under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, that nation would become Pakistan, though its borders remained uncertain even as the British departed.

As late as that June, Gandhi still held out hope — unsuccessfully — for a united India. Pakistan celebrated its Independence Day on Monday.

Rather than attend festivities in Delhi, Gandhi remained in Kolkata, appealing to the people for peace between Muslim and Hindu neighbors. And, according to TIME, the appeal briefly worked. Though partition would be accompanied by violence and a massive (often involuntary) migration of citizens from one nation to the other, for one day there was peace:

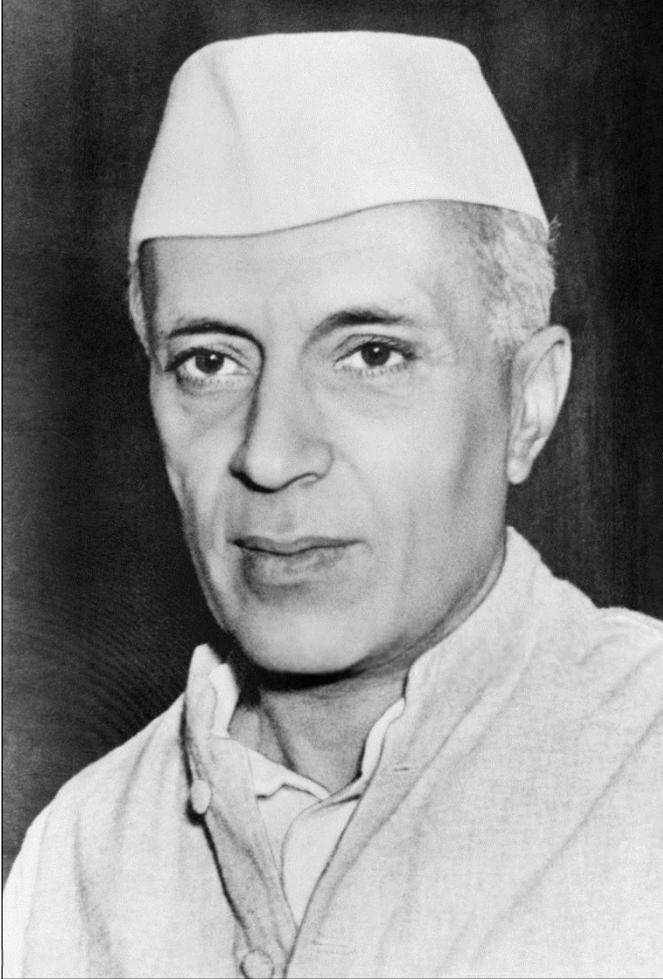


*"[On] Independence Day even Calcutta's violence turned to rejoicing. Moslems and Hindus danced together in the streets, were admitted to each others' mosques and temples. Moslems crowded round Gandhi's car to shake his hand, and sprinkled him with rosewater. For the disillusioned father of Indian independence, there might be some consolation in the rare cry he heard from Moslem lips: 'Mahatma Gandhi Zindabad' (Long Live Gandhi)."*

Source: <http://time.com/4891743/india-independence-1947/>

## TIME TO BUCK UP!

By P. N. Santhanagopal



*Jawaharlal Nehru*

Pandit Motilal Nehru, father of Jawaharlal Nehru was a man of great affluence and wealth. The Nehru family was elitist in most of their practices and English was spoken and encouraged. Motilal Nehru appointed English and Scottish teachers to supervise education of children at home. For higher education young Jawaharlal was sent to Harrow school and later to Cambridge University in London.

Jawaharlal Nehru however, was attracted to the ideas of Liberalism, Nationalism and particularly, Socialism. He was also deeply influenced by Marxist Philosophy. In his autobiography he confessed that the communist philosophy of life gave him comfort and hope. It attempted to explain the past and offered hope for the future. Nehru believed in a scientific approach to social problems. Besides, Marxism emphasized upon the techno economic forces which were appreciated by Nehru.

Nehru swam in a sea in which even fishes larger in size opted to respectfully dip their fins and

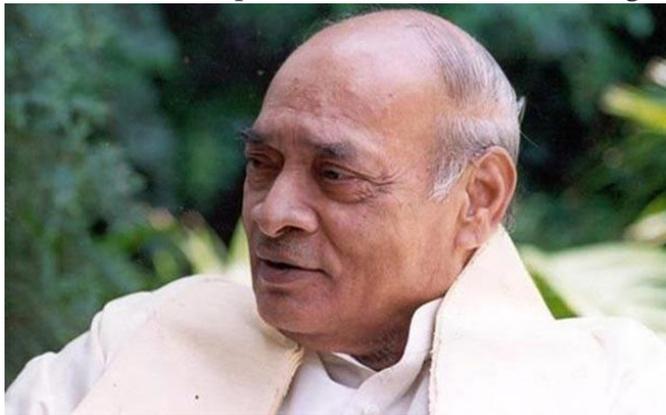
cluck in appreciation as he glided by. What happened during the Awadi session of Congress in 1954 was therefore a foregone conclusion. Nehru, who filled the entire canvass with his stature and influence made sure that the country was committed to move forward on the lines of socialistic pattern of society and this was happening at a time when cracks had begun to appear in the makeup of the mighty U.S.S.R (United States of Soviet Socialist Republic). China, which had emerged as yet another major country totally serving the communist ideology, on the other hand clung with a greater grip with the one-party alone concept while it adopted all the practices of capitalism. It grew economically in leaps and bounds, and its military strength also increased in direct proportion. United States of America which became the strongest country in the world after the soviet republic crumbled, expected the same thing would happen to China but it did not and continued to grow stronger both in economic might and military might. What is more, it also learnt to explode nuclear bombs. Now its arsenal has enough of them to obliterate all forms of life on Earth in a matter of hours. It has not happened only because there are more countries now with nuclear capabilities, including India, Pakistan, Russia and North Korea.

In 1991, India faced an economic crisis, which had its roots in 1985 when India began to face balance of payment problem as imports swelled leaving the country in a twin deficit: the Indian trade balance was in deficit at a time when the government was also running a large fiscal deficit. The situation had become quite serious. With India's foreign exchange reserves at 1.2 billion US dollars in January, 1991, and depleted by half by June, barely enough to last for roughly three weeks of essential imports, India was only weeks away from defaulting on its external balance of payment obligations.

Government of India's immediate response was to secure an emergency loan of 2.2 billion US dollars from the International Monetary Fund by pledging 67 tons of India's gold reserves as collateral security. The Reserve Bank of India had to airlift 47 tons of gold to Bank of England and 20 tons of gold to the

Union Bank of Switzerland to raise 600 million US dollars.

P. V. Narasimha Rao took over as Prime Minister and roped in Dr. Manmohan Singh,



who earlier was Governor of Reserve Bank of India, as his Finance Minister.

**P. V. Narasimha Rao**

The Narasimha Rao Government ushered in several reforms that were and still are, collectively termed as liberalism, in the Indian media.

The New York Times reported, "Mr. Rao who was sworn in as Prime Minister last week, has already sent a signal to the nation as well as the IMF that India faced no 'soft options' and must open the door to foreign investment, reduce red

tape that often cripples initiative, and streamline industrial policy. Mr. Rao made his comments to the nation on Saturday night."

The foreign reserves started to pick up with the onset of liberalization policies and peaked to 409.366 million US dollars as on December 31", 2017.

18 years after the incident, in 2009, India bought 200 metric tons of gold from the International Monetary Fund which was nearly three times the amount which India pawned to IMF in 1991. It should be noted here that the average Indian was slightly better off than the average Chinese in the initial years after independence. During the years that have passed by, China has been so successful that it now ranks as the second most important economy in the world. India has of course made what can be called good progress, but was and still is behind China.

For India the problem is that we must achieve and maintain unity in diversity while accommodating various languages and religions in a democratic set up. On the contrary, China, which is ruled with an iron hand by its communist party alone, is enabled to pursue a single goal with determination and force and



mobilise maximum resources to achieve its goals.

Chinese manufacturing grew at 9.5 per cent, twice as much as India's rate, from 1965-80. China also managed its agrarian reform better than India did.

When you compare the performances of Indian and Chinese economies, China has achieved faster growth of capital stock. With only a slight difference in the growth of employment, this translated into a more rapid growth of the capital intensity. The growth of total factory productivity has also been faster in China. Apparently, this has made it easier for labour to move out of agriculture and move into higher productivity sectors in China than in India.

***“When you compare the performances of Indian and Chinese economies, China has achieved faster growth of capital stock.”***

China has overtaken India in every area of economic endeavour in the last 35 years, except in computer software industry and agricultural research.

This does not mean that India has been crawling at the pace of the tortoise while China has been sprinting ahead the way the hare did. The fact remains that India has managed to reach a reasonable level of economic progress, despite the fact it could not have the advantages which China had as a single-party authoritarian regime and India is a democracy which has a multi-party, multi-language, multi-religion scenario. What is needed is a strategy that will enable India to accelerate its pace of progress. Its aim is not to compete but to remove poverty completely and by doing everything needed to improve quality of education while making it available to every citizen of the country. China, by bull-doing ahead has completely eradicated poverty and has improved quality of its educational base. The scientists and engineers

China has are all created by the prevailing educational system in China. Educational institutions in India of all categories have mushroomed but the quality of education has plummeted to very low levels. Of course there are exceptions which are few and woefully inadequate.

The cancer of political power has become entrenched and has permeated from the parliamentary level right down to the village Panchayati level. Sections of our people throughout the country are trading their votes in return for bribes in money and kind without batting an eyelid.

***“Educational institutions in India of all categories have mushroomed but the quality of education has plummeted to very low levels.”***

To expect that people by themselves will give up and reject the system is a pipe dream and if at all, a doubtful possibility. Politicians will never relax their grip over the means to their power.

We must learn to live with the politicians whether we like it or not. But they can be made to act.

If a P. V. Narasimha Rao and a Manmohan Singh could take determined action to pull up the country by its bootstraps, and set in motion a momentum which enables the country to count itself as a major economic force today, why can't we do it all over again? Especially now, when we are a lot more capable, a lot more resourceful than in 1991?

What makes a racing horse among other racing horses a winning horse is, sometimes a distance of a fraction of an inch between the nose of the winning horse and the nose of the horse immediately behind it. A determined spurt of increase in speed and effort is all that is needed along with a will to make the effort. How did India become the most successful country in the world in the field of software? Our boys and girls who are much sought after throughout the world are all products of the system of

education which still prevails all over our country. If, with a determined effort we revamp and upgrade every school in our country from an elementary school in a remote village to the throbbing metros, throughout the country, they will transform our country making it the most prosperous and the strongest nation of the world within a few years.

We don't have to build more schools, colleges and institutions. We only have to make the existing ones into efficient ones, to begin with. The non-performing ones will wither away and vanish, making room for more of the performing ones. Another area where we can compete successfully is 'making In India', with a difference. We should make better things than those made by China and they can be as cheap as those made by China because in India, the cost of labour is equal to what prevails in China, or may be even less. Make everything from nails onwards but make better nails, or to be more precise, better nails than those made in China. We can pause no more. We must Do and Do It Now!

A determined effort to create conditions that will first wipe off poverty entirely from the country within the foreseeable future and revamp, reorganise and infuse efficiency and

quality in the entire educational scenario on a war footing is possible even with our totally corrupt political system.

We are getting closer to an election for the Lok Sabha. It is immaterial who wins the race. But the people should make it clear to the politicians that only the party or combination of parties that will set in motion measures that will provide the sort of education necessary for the coming generations to excel in every field of human endeavour and thereby establish our superiority in every corner of the world, will be acceptable to them.

The change must come from the people. If whatever is happening around us is not an illusion, then the four legs on which Indian democracy stands, namely legislature, judiciary, executive and the press, need to be nourished from their cell level and strengthened if we are to hand over a strong, safe and free country to our children and guarantee their future.

We can be sure of only one thing and that is, change which is happening all the time. If we have allowed ourselves to sink to abominable levels, we can also hope to rise once again to levels of excellence to which our ancient ancestors had once risen.

*Source: Bhavan's Journal, 20 June, 2018*



## CRISES IN INDIA

*Ramamurthy Prabhakaran*

Behind the facade of increasing affluence in India, created in most part by the growth of the IT industry, which in turn is mainly due to outsourcing from the West, a number of problems have been reaching crisis proportions. While the number of crorepatris has been increasing, rural poverty as well as urban slums have been growing alarmingly. Thousands of farmers have committed suicide every year since early 1990s, due to various causes including capricious monsoons, oppressive moneylenders, and neglect by the state and central governments which are preoccupied by the needs of the vocal urban population.

India has been clamouring for a seat at the world's economic giants' table, at the Nuclear Club and a Permanent Membership at the UN Security Council, despite being unable to feed its 1.2 billion people. Nearly half of the children 5 years or younger are malnourished, ironically, with hundreds of thousand tonnes of food grains rotting due to inadequate and improper storage facilities — seven decades after Independence! The Indian Supreme Court ordered the government in 2010 to distribute the food grains free to the poor rather than spoil them; the callous attitude of the

### SUPREME COURT



government was evident in the Honourable Agriculture Minister's casual interpretation that

the Supreme Court merely suggested the free distribution, which could not be implemented! The Supreme Court then said to the Additional Solicitor General, "Tell your Minister that free food distribution is our order — not a suggestion by us."

While the crises in India are many — so many that the nation itself appears to be in crisis — a select few are briefly discussed here.

**Heinous Human-Trafficking** The nation was shocked by the gang rape, beating, torture and eventual death of a 23-year-old female, referred to as 'Nirbhaya' on December 16th, 2012 in South Delhi. The incident horrified the country and served as a mirror for the society to realize how, after winning international acclaim for gaining Independence through non-violence, the social values have deteriorated. Since then, more such sex-crimes have occurred. The ineffectiveness of measures taken to curb the evil is evidenced by the more recent, increasing number of cases where even minors — and children — are sexually assaulted by gangs, killed and then burnt. We are quick to take offence when the followers of other religions show disrespect to our gods and goddesses. But are we showing respect to our own goddesses when young female children are brutalized?

What have the 'leaders' from the broad spectrum of political parties said about such crimes? 'Is it possible to have a policeman in every household'? 'Rapes happen accidentally'. 'Only an astrologer can predict rape'. 'Boys are boys, they make mistakes'. 'Films and foreign culture (jeans and T-shirts) are responsible for rapes'. 'Fashion and nudity are responsible'. 'Fastfood and chowmein lead to hormonal imbalance evoking an urge to indulge in such acts'. 'The rape of grown up girls and women might be understandable, but if someone does this to an infant, it is a heinous crime'. 'Introduce overcoats for girl students, operate special buses for them and ban mobile phones in schools'. The lawyer representing three of the Delhi gang-rape accused opined that the male companion of the 23-year-old victim was wholly responsible. A self-proclaimed godman said that the victim should have begged for forgiveness and cited the fraternity of man and called to

God for help; this 'godman' has recently been convicted of rape of a 15-year old girl in 2013! Human trafficking is a global problem. It is estimated that 35 million people are victims and the largest segment, 14 million, live a life of horrible bondage in the land of Goddesses Saraswathi, Lakshmi, Durga, and other devis! The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that of the vast majority of the victims exploited for sex, a sizable proportion are children. In many cases, traffickers lure children or young girls from poor parents in

***“Human trafficking  
is a global problem.***

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devis!”***

villages with the promise of well-paying jobs. The unsuspecting victims are taken to cities where their 'masters' (pimps) exploit them: the victims are sold (transferred for a fee) to others, made to work without pay as household maids, forced to marry strangers, forced into handed labour in the mining or agricultural industries or simply sold to brothels. Persistent poverty plaguing the countryside and gender imbalance due to sex-selective abortions (which are a result of the irrepressible dowry system) are major factors contributing to the problem. The criminal justice system in India is primitive and corrupt and is totally ineffective to handle the humongous problem. Only a pitifull small number of cases are handled every year; traffickers can bribe the law-enforcement officials who turn a blind eye. Under increasing pressure from foreign and domestic non-profit organizations, our country is being challenged to claim its place as a global power and the world's largest democracy by curbing and

eventually eliminating the flourishing modern slave trade. But unfortunately, misguided 'patriots' are trying to banish the foreign NGOs by accusing them of receiving foreign funds to tarnish the image of our country; it is indeed a classic case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater!

### **AWFUL AIR-POLLUTION**



The recent World Health Organization (WHO) report on global air pollution has some startling statistics. According to the report, 90 per cent of the world's population breathe polluted air. It is estimated that 7 million people die every year due to outdoor and indoor air pollution; out of this, 4.2 million deaths are attributed to outdoor air pollution and the rest to cooking with polluting fuels and defective technologies. Major sources of air pollution include the inefficient use and poor quality of fuels in households, industry, agriculture, power plants and transportation. Indiscriminate burning of waste and never-ending deforestation add to the problem.

Pollution in the air is characterized by the size of PM or 'particulate matter' (solid particles and liquid droplets) in the air that can cause problems by being inhaled as well as by reducing visibility. Air quality is usually monitored for PM 2.5 concentration, fine particles with diameters up to 2.5 microns. India, according to the recent WHO report, has the dubious distinction of having 14 out of the 15 most polluted cities in the world in terms of PM 2.5 concentrations, the worst being Kanpur with a PM 2.5 concentration of 173 micrograms per cubic metre, followed by Faridabad, Varanasi and Gaya. Other cities in India with very high levels of PM 2.5 pollutants are Delhi, Patna, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur. India's financial capital,

Mumbai, ranks the world's fourth most polluted megacity (population more than 10 million). Often Delhi and Beijing are compared due to their high air pollution levels and the mitigating efforts such as the odd-even road rationing plans. We have a national public health crisis; so far, the official attempts to reduce the pollution levels have been feeble and the public has shown little awareness and self-discipline needed to be effective.

### WOEFUL WATER-POLLUTION



Past conversations about our planet's most precious and dwindling resources have centered on fossil fuels. With alternative and renewable energy options already available or on the horizon, the conversation has now turned to a resource that is nominally abundant, covering two-thirds of Earth's surface, but whose supply in usable form is much less and is alarmingly dwindling: fresh water. With a population of 1.3 billion, expected to grow to 1.7 billion by 2050, India, with just 4 per cent of the world's fresh water — and much of it polluted, faces a desperate situation. Inevitably, regional disputes between states and global disputes with our neighbours on sharing rivers have cropped up. Corruption, indifference and incompetence on the part of politicians and irresponsibility on the part of the public have made water availability into a problem of alarming proportions and if not quickly solved, with disastrous consequences.

The causes of water pollution in our country are many: pesticide runoff from agricultural usage, heavy metal contamination from factories and mines that do not treat the waste water, 'religious' practices such as dumping cremated or partly cremated corpses in rivers, immersing painted images of gods in water bodies

(visarjan), dumping raw sewage or inadequately treated sewage from defective sewage treatment plants, etc. In 2013, the then Vice President of India, speaking at a Symposium organized by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), said that Indian cities produce nearly 40,000 million litres of sewage per day and a staggering 80 per cent of this sewage flows untreated into lakes, rivers and ponds!

Kanpur, India's fifth largest city, is known as the 'leather city'. Situated on the banks of the Ganges River, its tanneries release copious amounts of waste water into the river — 79 million gallons in 2013. Many of these tanneries do not have the requisite chromium recovery plants to treat the waste water; the chromium in the untreated effluents is toxic, posing health risks to humans in the form of lung cancer, kidney damage and liver failure. Government's punishment of the tanneries without chromium recovery plants — cutting off electric power supply — is sporadic and ineffective. In the coal districts of Singrauli (Madhya Pradesh) and Sonebhadra (Uttar Pradesh), coal mining, coal burning and heavy industries have polluted the largest human-made reservoir, Govind Ballabh Pant Sagar, and the Rihand river, a main tributary of Ganges, feeding it. Many villagers depending on this reservoir, especially children and the elderly, have become the victims of mercury poisoning; the harmful effects include brain damage, lack of coordination, seizures and tingling or burning sensations of the extremities.

There are many ways that can redress this situation. Sewage irrigation is being explored. On the one hand, it appears that even if heavy metal concentrations in sewage and sewage-irrigated soil are within safe limits, the vegetables grown under these conditions seem to concentrate the heavy metals to exceed the safe limits. On the other hand, water hyacinths and duckweeds seem to partially cleanse the sewage water to make it safe enough for sewage silviculture (growing trees for forests). Water pollution is caused when dhobis wash clothes in public water bodies. If the people causing pollution and those affected by pollution work together transparently, the problem can be mitigated. This was evident from the success of a project carried out in Bhopal city from 1995 to 2004; under this project, dhobis were relocated

to alternative sites downstream. Another successful approach was implemented in Meghalaya, which has a predominantly agrarian economy. In 2014, the Chief Minister announced that the state was doing away with chemical fertilizers; these fertilizers enter water bodies through surface runoff and cause

***“Water pollution is caused when dhobis wash clothes in public water bodies. If the people causing pollution and those affected by pollution work together transparently, the problem can be mitigated.”***

pollution and eutrophication (excessive richness of nutrients in a body of water causing dense growth of plant life and death of animal life from lack of oxygen). The use of bio-fertilizers, containing living micro-organisms, was encouraged as part of this effort, dubbed 'Mission Organic'.

A dangerous trend aggravating the problem is the misguided notion that economic growth can be accelerated by giving environmental clearance indiscriminately, waiving rules and regulations. The initiative to clean the Ganges was revived in 2011 under the 'National Mission for Clean Ganga' (NMCG). 'Namarni Ganga Program' is an 'Integrated Conservation Mission', approved as 'Flagship Program' by the Union Government in June 2014 with budget outlay of Rs. 20,000 crores for effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of India's holiest river, Ganges/Ganga. As of March 2018, it is reported that Rs. 4,254 crores have been spent; of the 193 projects envisioned, 24 of 64 entry-level schemes have been implemented. We can only hope that the pace will be accelerated and this river — and other water bodies — can be saved before it is too late.

Mahatma Gandhi has said, *"The earth, the air, the land and the water are not an inheritance from our forefathers but on loan from our children. So we have to hand over to them at least as it was handed over to us."* These sentiments echo similar ones by the Native Americans.

### **ETHICS-FREE EDUCATION**



While the top-tier educational institutions in India (Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institute of Science, National Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, and some private colleges and Institutes) rival the best educational institutions anywhere in the world, the number of seats available in those are very limited, compared to the very large number of aspirants. While the tier-two institutions are tolerable, those below are plagued by all kinds of irregularities. N. R. Narayana Murthy, co-founder of Infosys, delivering the D. V. Narasimha Rao Memorial Lecture, quoted the McKinsey Report according to which only 25 per cent of Indian engineering graduates are employable. Tens of thousands of Management graduates are churned out by the business schools in India, but according to a study by ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India) only 7 per cent are employable. The causes of the poor quality of higher education in India are varied and include profit-hungry managements, corruption, focus on rote-learning, shortage of qualified faculty, outmoded syllabi, and ease of permission from the government to start new colleges.

Medical education in India has its own problems. Recruiting companies routinely provide medical colleges with doctors to pose as full-time faculty to pass government inspections. Colleges round up healthy people

to pretend sickness, to demonstrate that teaching hospitals do have enough patients to give medical students clinical experience. Government records are said to show that since 2010, at least 69 Indian medical colleges and teaching hospitals have been investigated for improprieties such as rigging entrance exams, accepting bribes to admit students, etc. Paying bribes, often in the guise of 'donations', to gain admission to medical (and other) schools is widespread.

India has a shortage of (qualified) doctors, especially in rural areas. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi has been rated the best medical school in India. The Christian Medical College in Vellore is also top-ranked. But the admission acceptance rate in these two schools is less than at Harvard Medical School! While the number of government-run medical schools has been increasing, the number of private medical colleges has been rising at a faster rate to cope with the demand. Many of the private colleges have been started by businessmen and politicians without any experience, who are only interested in making money, with the result that 'the market has been flooded with doctors so poorly trained that they are little better than quacks' — according to the Medical Council of India (MCI). In India, private medical (and other) colleges and their governing bodies have been trading charges of corruption, inefficiency, red-tape, etc.

In recent years, cheating in exams has grown into a thriving industry. In some parts of India, the audacity and scale of cheating have become shocking, with the examiners complicit or helpless. Parents and friends of students have been photographed scaling the walls of exam halls to hand cheat sheets to the students inside; in 2015, Bihar made global headlines when such videos emerged. Question papers have been leaked — recently the CBSE class 10 mathematics paper and the class 12 economics paper were leaked — and a large number of students had to retake the examinations. Those in the lucrative business of cheating are called 'Cheating Mafia'. The social and financial pressures to pass the exams are intense; the quality of the educational institutions training these students is abysmal; even the good students cheat, to get high scores to get

admitted at very selective good colleges. Remedial measures taken by administrators include installing CCTV cameras, banning shoes and socks and posting police outside the examination centres.

***“The social and financial pressures to pass the exams are intense; the quality of the educational institutions training these students is abysmal; even the good students cheat, to get high scores to get admitted at very selective good colleges.”***

The credibility of the educational system can be judged from the statement of a 'topper' to a TV interviewer in 2016 that political science was the study of cooking!

Perhaps the most shocking scandal, known as 'Vyapam' scam, erupted in India recently. Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board (MPPEB), is popularly known by its Hindi acronym, 'Vyapam', (Vyaysayik Pariksha Mandal). It is an autonomous body of the State Government and is responsible for conducting several entrance tests, including those for recruitment in government jobs and admissions in educational institutions such as medical colleges. While there had been reports of irregularities since the mid-1990s, none had imagined the scale. The scam involved politicians, businessmen, senior officials, impersonators taking exams, middlemen, candidates, their parents and even a former education minister! More than 2000 people were arrested and many suspects died under mysterious circumstances. The case was transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) by the Supreme Court, in response to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL).

## PERVERTED POLITICIANS



An 'Honest politician' is an oxymoron because all politicians are crooks — according to most people in most countries. Milan Vaishnav of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in his book, *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics*, systematically tracks the astounding political success of India's accused murderers, blackmailers, thieves and kidnappers. Based on his analysis, he concludes that Indian politicians who have been charged with or convicted of serious offences are three times more likely to win parliamentary elections than those who have no charges pending against them.

In the State Assemblies and the central Lok Sabha, the number of members having criminal charges against them shows an increasing trend. In the May 2018 Karnataka elections, 77 (35 per cent) of 221 MLAs had criminal records, according to an analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). Of these, 54 had 'serious' criminal cases such as murder, kidnapping, etc. All the political parties have their fair share. From 20 per cent of MLAs in

***“Indian politicians who have been charged with or convicted of serious offences are three times more likely to win parliamentary elections than those who have no charges pending against them.”***



**Milan Vaishnav**

2008, to 34 per cent in 2013, to 35 per cent in 2018, the number of MLAs facing criminal charges shows an increasing trend.

Other State Assemblies show a similar pattern. In the October-November 2015 Assembly elections in Bihar, 30 per cent of the 583 candidates declared that they faced criminal charges. Out of them 22 per cent faced 'serious' criminal charges like murder, attempt to murder, communal disharmony, kidnapping and crimes against women. Each political party had its own share of these dubious characters. Richer candidates had a better chance to get a party 'ticket' as elections are very expensive and bribing voters is common.

In 2004, 24 per cent of the Lok Sabha MPs had criminal cases against them. Of these, half had 'serious' criminal cases. In 2009, 30 per cent of the Lok Sabha MPs had criminal cases against them. Of those, half had 'serious' criminal cases. In 2014, 33 per cent of the Lok Sabha MPs had criminal cases against them. Two-thirds of these MPs had 'serious' criminal cases. Going by these statistics, the general election of 2014 saw the highest number of politicians with criminal records being elected to the Indian Parliament. As many as 82 per cent of the new MPs have declared assets worth over Rs. one crore each, making it the richest Lok Sabha, as compared to 2009 (58 per cent) and 2004 (30 per cent)!

## CANCER OF CORRUPTION

'Transparency International' is a Berlin-based international, non-profit, non-governmental

organization. It was founded in 1993 and its goal is to combat global corruption. According to this organization's 'global corruption perception index' for 2017, India was ranked 81<sup>st</sup> among 180 countries in terms of perceived levels of public sector corruption. In 2016, India ranked 79<sup>th</sup> among 176 countries. The index uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. India's score in 2015 was 38 and in the latest ranking it was 40. Among 16 Asia Pacific countries surveyed by Transparency International, India had the highest bribery rate. Nearly 70 per cent of the Indians had to pay a bribe to access public services. Philippines, India and Maldives were identified as the worst regional offenders in threats to and murder of journalists, opposition leaders, activists and members of law enforcement and watchdog agencies.

***“Among 16 Asia Pacific countries surveyed by Transparency International, India had the highest bribery rate. Nearly 70 per cent of the Indians had to pay a bribe to access public services.”***

Corruption is so rampant in our country that the public has become cynical and desensitized. But still, some notable cases can be singled out:

1. The 2010 Commonwealth Games, plagued by shoddy construction, fake certificates approving substandard work, cost overruns, illegal cash transfers, etc.
2. The 2G Spectrum Scam, involving ministers from coalition parties, resulting in loss of several crores of rupees.
3. The 5-Band Scam, involving the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and a private business.
4. The Adarsh Housing Society Scam, in which flats meant for war-widows were

misappropriated by Army officers, Navy officers and government officials.

5. Former State High Court Chief Justice (Karnataka) and former Supreme Court Chief Justice (Justice K. G. Balakrishnan) investigated for corruption.
  6. The continuing saga of 'Denotification' scandal in Karnataka under the governance of several chief ministers.
  7. Illegal mining scandals in several states, especially in Karnataka by former ministers.
  8. Charges of financial irregularities by even a former President of India (Pratibha Patil).
  9. Corruption charges against a former Central Vigilance Commissioner (P. J. Thomas) whose appointment to that position had to be struck down by the Supreme Court!
  10. Financial fraud of banks by the billionaires Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya; the more serious scandal of these two high-profile suspects being allowed to leave the country.
- These and innumerable other cases, time and again, illustrate how the rich and powerful continue to flout the laws with impunity; the notorious delays in the legal proceedings prevent these culprits from being punished. The United Nations Convention against Corruption was adopted by the UN General Assembly on October 31, 2003. India affixed its signature on December 9, 2005 and reluctantly ratified only on May 12, 2011. This delay in ratification can only be seen as foot-dragging, especially as recovery of assets stashed abroad is stated explicitly as a fundamental principle of the Convention. It is an open secret that many Indians, with a broad spectrum of political affiliations have stashed their illegally acquired wealth in foreign countries.



## HOPE FOR HUMANITY?

Corrupt politicians, officials and citizens appear to agree with famed theoretical physicist and cosmologist, the late Stephen Hawking that there is no God and Heaven is a 'fairy story'; they seem to be unaware of Hawking's advice that "We should all fulfill our potential on Earth by making good use of our lives," and that "We should seek the greatest value of our action." All religions emphasize Truth, Justice and Purity in thoughts, words and actions. In Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4, verse 7, Krishna says:

***“Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and a rise of unrighteousness, I manifest Myself.”***

And in the very next verse:

***“For the protection of the righteous and the virtuous, and for the destruction of the wicked, I manifest Myself again and again.”***

So, if we are disgusted with the corruption around us, are we to merely wait for God to

appear and solve all our problems? How do we qualify to be protected by being righteous and virtuous? We can do so by not taking part in the evil around us and by playing an active role in fighting the evil of corruption. What is the use of going to Temples and performing religious rituals if we do not practise the basic tenets?

Seven decades after gaining independence from our colonial rulers, we are witnessing the sorry spectacle of every community competing to be classified as a Scheduled Caste (SC) or Other Backward Class (OBC) so that they can get 'reservation' in college seats, jobs, etc. The early euphoria of the 1950s turned to complacency in the 1960s and 1970s, then cynicism in the 1980s and 1990s and outright despair and helplessness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How have we descended into this moral abyss? How have we joined a host of other former colonies and become a 'Republic' that has overthrown the rule of foreigners, only to suffer under corrupt governance under our own scumbags? Should we be subjugated and ruled again by a foreign power so that we can struggle for Independence all over again and recapture the early euphoria and use that momentum to create a righteous and honourable Nation.

*Source: Bhavan's Journal, 30 June, 2018*



# HOW MUCH MORE MONEY



*Dr. Narayan Hegde*

## **MONEY IS ESSENTIAL**

Money is essential for our survival. Today, we are in a materialistic world, where we need money to meet our basic needs. International wars are fought for wealth. Billions of dollars are invested in research to invent new technologies, which can increase earnings. People want power to earn more money and use money to acquire power and fame. This is a never ending process unless we put a pause and rethink! Why do we need money and how much more?

Money we earn should be to meet our basic needs. It should bring us happiness. Accumulation of money may bring prosperity but not necessarily happiness. This is what we experience every day.

## **HAPPINESS OF THE PEANUT VENDOR**

There was an illiterate couple who migrated to a city in search of livelihood. They lived in a small thatched hut. The husband used to sell peanuts in front of a school, while the wife worked as a part time domestic help in the adjoining bungalow of a businessman. The peanut vendor bought peanuts worth Rs.50 from the wholesale market everyday and sold it at a profit of around 50 to 60 rupees by afternoon. He kept the principal amount as working capital and spent most of the profit to meet the daily household expenses. The couple

had enough time in the evening to go together for shopping and to relax in the nearby park. His wife often shared her joy with the wife of the businessman.

One day, the businessman's wife complained to her husband that inspite of their wealth, she was unhappy as they had no time for each other, whereas the poor couple led a happy life. The businessman called the peanut vendor and enquired about his business. He suggested that he could develop his business further to meet his future needs and also promised to help him financially if needed. The peanut vendor was impressed and next day, he bought a larger quantity of peanuts. He earned more, although he had to spend more time in selling the peanuts. In the evening, the businessman asked the vendor about the profit for the day. Showing a bundle of notes, the happy vendor informed that it was Rs. 90. "Oh, you are just short of Rs. 10 to convert these notes into a 100 rupee note, which can be kept as reserve for the future. Why don't you sell a little more tomorrow and ensure that the profit will be at least Rs.100 everyday?" suggested the businessman. The vendor liked the idea. He also started selling lemon drops and some other items. In a few days, the daily profit increased from Rs.95 to Rs.175. He was happy to have a hundred rupee note for keeping

aside, but felt that with an additional profit of Rs.25, he could save two hundred rupees instead of one hundred rupees. So he decided to sell his products in the evening as well, in a busy market place. He continued to earn more money. After a few weeks, the businessman asked his wife to check how the vendor's family was faring. The vendor's wife complained to the lady that her husband was so busy with his work that he had no time to relax and give company to his family. This story has two messages. Firstly, with determination, we can achieve our goals. The other message is that too much of greed can snatch away our happiness. So we should set our goals high and work hard, but keep a control on our greed. After reaching a stage of earning, we should be prepared to make best use of the wealth we have, instead of longing for more.

We meet many people who are like this peanut vendor, keeping very busy from morning to evening, for making more money. Many of them have risen from scratch. However, their levels of happiness are different because they have different goals and frame of mind. We should decide what we want. However, earning through honest, hard work will always keep a smile on our faces.

### **PLEASURE OF SPENDING MONEY**

There are many people who value other things more than money. Recently a young lady, Anita had come for an interview in search background in social science. Impressed with her manners and polished English, I asked about her family background. She was an orphan. She had lost her mother at the tender age of three and her father had deserted the family earlier. Her relatives had placed her in an orphanage in Pune. With support from various donors, she completed her post-graduation and received a prestigious fellowship for two years. This enabled her to make huge savings. I became curious to know how she wanted to use this amount. She proudly mentioned that she had been supporting the higher education of another orphan. I was taken aback! I remembered another incident which I had experienced many years earlier.

***“We should set  
our goals high and***

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A distant relative used to come sometimes and stay in our ancestral house. He was a pleasant person loved by all our family members. In the early 80's when I had just started my career, he called me up and told me that he had to come to Mumbai with his grandson who was not keeping well. The doctors had detected a defect in his heart which required immediate surgery, and would cost one lakh rupees. The old man was dejected. It was beyond his capacity to raise this money. I discussed with some of my relatives but none of us had that much money to help him.

After a few days, the boy returned to his native place with his grandfather. A year later, he passed away. Today, the boy is forgotten by many. His grandfather is also no more. But the sight of the old grandfather and the young grandchild returning to their village helplessly still haunts me.

Such incidents take place everyday in our society. The poor live without a voice and die without a cry. It may not be easy to solve the problems of everyone. Nevertheless, there are people like Anita, who do take such brave steps to go out of their way with greater ease. If all of us can do a little bit, the world would be a better place to live in.

### **WHAT YOU GIVE TO OTHERS WILL BENEFIT YOU**

A philosopher had said 'whatever you give to others is for you and whatever you preserve for yourself is for others'. Those who receive a favour from us either in cash, kind or service, will remember our good deeds and will try to help us in whatever way they can. They will respect and love us. Whatever we have

preserved for ourselves will remain idle with us. It is only after our death, that our kith and kin will enjoy it. So these assets are not useful to the owner, but to others. Same is the case with misers, who want to live and enjoy at the cost of others, while saving their own money.

***“Whatever way they can. They will respect and love us. Whatever we have preserved for ourselves will remain idle with us. It is only after our death, that our kith and kin will enjoy it. So these assets are not useful to the owner, but to others.”***

When they don't spend even for their basic needs, luxury becomes a distant dream! When they go out for dinner, they crave for food as if they have not eaten for weeks! They derive happiness by counting their money everyday! Finally, all that accumulated money goes to their children or relatives, who literally criticize them for not sparing the money when they were in need of it!

I know of a retired person who saved over Rs.20 lakhs during his service. He kept his money in fixed deposits, jointly with his wife as a security for old age, particularly to meet unforeseen medical expenditures. He had two sons, who were educated, married and well settled. During a casual conversation the old couple informed their sons that each of them would get Rs.10 lakhs after their death. The sons were very happy and shared this good news with their wives. After sometime, one of the sons wanted to buy a bigger house and take a loan from the bank. He remembered the money kept in fixed deposits. He discussed with his brother about the possibility of getting his share immediately. He argued that since their father was getting a good pension and both of them were there to

take care of their emergencies, keeping this amount in a fixed deposit was not necessary. So, the brothers decided to indirectly ask their father to give them their share right away. Their father was reluctant and the atmosphere turned a bit unpleasant. The money which was meant for happiness brought bitterness, due to undue temptation.

There was another incident where the father sent all his savings to his only son, who was raising a loan to buy a house in a city where he worked. Later when the father became old and lonely, having lost his wife, the son insisted that he come and stay with him and his family in the city. The father went only to return to his village soon as the family members started neglecting him. He felt insecure. Fortunately, his daughters took good care of him without any expectations. Money is essential for living, but needs to be managed with care.

#### **MONEY IS NOT A MEASURE OF HAPPINESS**

Craving for more money can lead to greed. Children generally compare themselves with others and want to maintain the same status as their rich friends. Many parents yield to their pressure. One day, my friend's son told his father that two of his close friends owned two cars. Their fathers were leading doctors in the town. My friend told his son that as the doctors earned well, they could afford to maintain cars and drivers, whereas with his fixed salary, it was not possible. He further explained that with high merit and good work, they had become good doctors and so it was time for them to enjoy life. The boy was disturbed. It took him a few days to accept this reality. Since then, he stopped comparing himself with his friends. He was able to understand the limitations of his parents. This helped him to do well in his studies.

In another case, the only son of well-placed working parents was pampered beyond limits. He had abundant pocket money and his friends made good use of this opportunity. Finally he could not even complete his graduation. He became addicted to alcohol, tobacco and also started stealing money. He turned out to be a liability for the family. The message is, if money is not utilized properly, it can become a curse. It can spoil us and our children. It can build a massive ego, disturb our sleep, create enemies,

attract thieves and pose a threat to our life. Money is certainly necessary to meet our needs and to live with dignity. But accumulated wealth is not the parameter to measure our success and happiness.

If someone is trying to earn more money by shortcuts and illegal means, the wealth may not give him all the anticipated pleasure. A businessman, in the process of earning more money, may cheat the public or avoid paying taxes. So money pours in without genuine struggle. When children realise that their father is making quick money, they spend lavishly and develop bad habits. Even in case of children who are not spoiled, think what kind of message they will get from such parents?

***“If someone is trying to earn more money by shortcuts and illegal means, the wealth may not give him all the anticipated pleasure.”***

How can you expect a child to be decent if the parents have bad habits?

This does not happen in families where money is earned by hard means. The entire family understands the value of money. They appreciate hard work, quality and decency. Naturally, they develop a tendency of helping others and showing respect towards others.

Fate of the Richest

Recently, there was a news report about the wealthiest people in SA during the 1920s. In 1923, the most successful and wealthiest persons were the following:

- President of the largest steel company
- President of the largest gas company
- President of the New York Stock Exchange
- Greatest Wheat supplier
- President of Bank of International Settlement
- Great Bear of Wall Street

They were young, famous and highly successful in their professions. They had found a secret of making money. More than 55 years later, these

famous men were traced to reveal their current status. The president of the largest steel company, Charles Schwab died a pauper. The president of the largest gas company, Howard Hobson turned insane. The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney was released from prison to die at home. The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cutten, died penniless. The president of the Bank of International Settlement Leon Fraser shot himself dead. The Great Bear of Wall Street Jessie Livermore committed suicide.

In 1923, there was one less famous person, Gene Sarazan who won the US Open Golf Championship. After 55 years, he continued to play golf! Life is a long journey. Glamorous positions and a high financial status may not sustain for long, but our good deeds Rajat Gupta will go a long way. Hence, sustaining happiness should be the parameter for judging the success of our career.



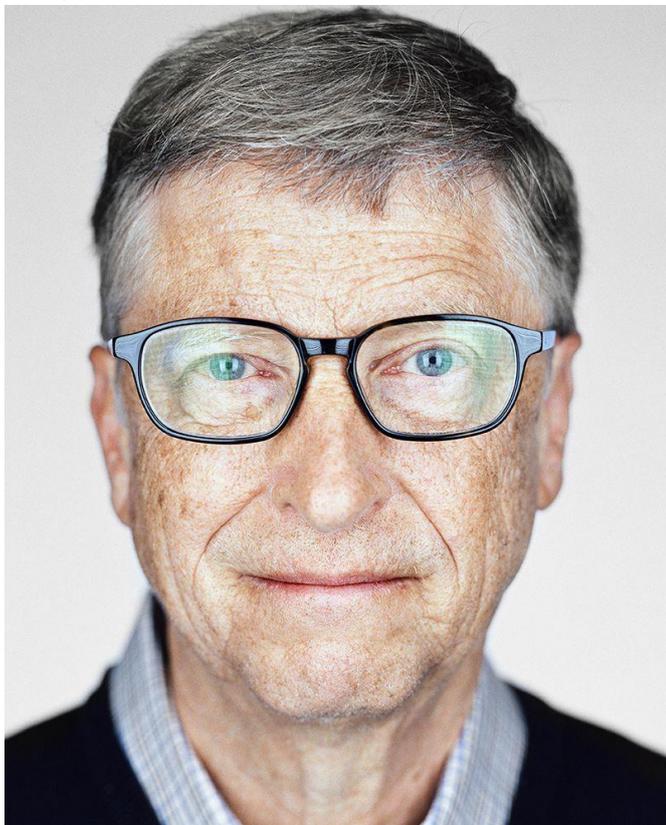
**Rajat Gupta**

Rajat Gupta, the dream man of United States, grew up as an orphan in India. He got himself educated as a Financial Expert, excelled in his career, went to United States, worked hard to handle many challenges and finally rose to the position of CEO of a leading financial service company. He had everything — wealth, health, fame and family. Gupta was on the board of several prestigious companies and Chairman of the leading business school in India. He was a role model for all young aspiring Indians and Americans.

Among many of his acquaintances, there was another financial expert, who was also the founder of a hedge fund in the USA. This so-called expert who was also from India, had duped several investors in India, taking

advantage of his political connections and had escaped to USA. He started similar unfair practices in USA for making quick money. Realising the enormous strength and power of Gupta, the hedge fund manager developed friendship with Gupta and started extracting vital information about various companies from him for trading of shares. After a few years, the hedge fund manager was caught and awarded lifetime imprisonment for amassing huge wealth through illegal trading. During the process of investigation, Gupta was also found guilty of passing on inside information. He was forced to resign from all his positions. The US court found him guilty and awarded him 3 years of imprisonment. This well educated, intelligent and rich person, Gupta, with decades of trustworthiness and integrity, in a weak moment, yielded to a crook! This was enough for his downfall. Sadly, it is lack of control over the mind which can ruin us. The message is that it is not enough to have formal university degrees. We must also have adequate moral education to retain the status and fame earned by us.

#### **WORTH OF WEALTH**



*Bill Gates*

Money comes and goes. In spite of huge earnings, even rich people encounter financial crisis. Nevertheless, even leading personalities

use wealth as the parameter for measuring success. Once at a public speech, an eminent person stated, "Today the younger Bill Gates generation is attracted more towards Bill Gates than Mahatma Gandhi. It is Bill Gates who has become the role model for becoming rich." That was the time when the stock price of his company had reached its peak and he was declared the richest person in the world.

***“Money comes and goes. Despite huge earnings, even rich people encounter financial crisis. Nevertheless, even leading personalities use wealth as the parameter for measuring success.”***

However, after knowing the fate of some of the richest people in the world, I felt that this statement was in poor taste. It is very easy to be carried away by wealth. After five years to my great surprise, the same person was lecturing on Gandhian economics and values, probably after realising his short-sighted vision for which there were no listeners.

No doubt, wealth gives us an opportunity to spend lavishly. The wealth we earn and accumulate will be really valuable when it is used for a worthy cause. Such generous deeds not only help the recipients, but also the donors to build their self-esteem, which is an important source of happiness. We can do a lot of charity, help the poor or treat sick people, educate poor children, apart from investing in big business. As you sow, so shall you reap. If we have invested in good deeds, we are bound to be remembered by society even after our death. If this wealth is spent for our own use and comforts, society then forgets our presence, even when we are alive.

Mahatma Gandhi sacrificed his lucrative profession, his comforts Mahatma Gandhi and his family life for the country. He is still a role model for the new generation. Only time will

prove it. It is not easy for everyone to become a Mahatma Gandhi or a billionaire. Everyone is not a social worker or philanthropist. But we can try to become good human beings and imbibe good qualities of great people, for our own happiness.

Another noble person whom I have admired for over 40 years was late Arvind Mafatlal. When I first met him in 1974, he was the Chairman of the third largest and richest group of companies in India. But, Aravindbhai was a different person. While assigning corporate responsibilities to his family members and senior executives, he spent considerable amount of his time on philanthropic activities and provided a lot of support for needy causes across the country. Simultaneously, he kept himself updated with the business.

In the late 1960s, when he went to Orissa to provide relief during a cyclone, he met a saint, Shri Ranchoddasji, popularly known as Gurudev and was impressed with his services at the relief camps. This proved to be the turning point in his life. Since then, Aravindbhai became a completely changed person and took up charity as his priority. He supported several needy projects. He did not lose his composure when the textile industries in the country turned sick, resulting in the Mafatlal Group losing their premier position in the corporate sector.

In the early 2000, when there was a super cyclone in Orissa, he stayed in the relief camp for several weeks to help the people in distress, using his own resources. He lived a contented life till his demise in 2011 and never showed any signs of depression. This was because Aravindbhai had learnt to exercise control over the mind, curb desires and focus on philanthropy instead of on business. He enjoyed his position as a social worker and philanthropist rather than an industrialist. This practice (sadhana) of reorienting the mind and controlling the desires, is the key to happiness. Whenever we crave for more money and more comforts, our expectations rise further and we feel more disappointed, when we fail to get them. One way to get consolation is to take a walk on a busy road, probably near the railway station or a busy market and watch people with different problems. You see children begging on the street, a smart young boy offering to polish the shoes or children cleaning the tables in small restaurants, staying away from their parents under the custody of anti-social elements, young destitute women begging with folded hands with a few malnourished children clinging to them. What is the life for them? Why should they lead such miserable lives when we enjoy all the comforts? When we see them, we realise how fortunate we are!

*Source: Bhavan's Journal, June 30, 2018*



# INDIAN MUSLIMS: WHERE HAVE THEY GONE WRONG?

From "Indian Muslims: Where have they gone wrong?"

Foreword

By M.J. Akbar



At what point in the last thousand years did Indian Muslims become a minority? The question is obviously rhetorical. Muslims have never been in a majority on the Indian subcontinent; even before partition they were less than 30% of the population. But did Indian Muslims see themselves as a minority during the Mughal empire, which was finally buried in the rubble of the uprising of 1857? And even 90 years later, in 1947, did Hyderabad's Muslims see themselves as a minority as long as the Nizam of Hyderabad had sovereignty? No. A minority therefore is not a function of numbers, but a definition of empowerment. As long as Muslims felt that were an important, and even decisive, element of the ruling they did not feel that they were a minority, a term that implicitly condemns a community to the margins. Even a Badshah that wobbled was better than no Badshah at all.

This simple observation exposes the flaw in the dialectic that has controlled the debate about

Indian Muslim politics after 1857. Numbers became the means test, ignoring the reality that a modern democracy is controlled by a series of subsets and interests, including region, language, sectional loyalties and economic class. Islam came to India long before Muslim rulers arrived. The faith reached our country in the seventh century, through seafarers and traders in both the south and the north, and merged into the cultural landscape, adopting without controversy, local languages, and adapting without fuss, many of the indigenous lifestyle habits. There was nothing particularly unique in this. When the Persians accepted Islam within a few years of Prophet Muhammad's death, they did not change their language to Arabic; and when Indonesians became Muslims many hundreds of years later, they did not jettison their language or culture either. Nor were they expected to. Ibn Batuta, who left Tangier in 1325 and returned 29 years and 75,000 miles later, keeps a poker face when

he describes the Muslims of the Maldives: "The people of the Maldive Islands are upright and pious, sound in belief and sincere in thought; their bodies are weak, they are unused to fighting, and their armour is prayer. Once when I ordered a thief's hand to be cut off, a number of those in the room fainted. In each island of theirs there are beautiful mosques, and most of their buildings are made of wood." And then adds, with a hint of the censorious Qadi: "Their womenfolk do not cover their hands, not even their queen does so, and they comb their hair and gather it at one side. Most of them wear only an apron from their waists to the ground, the rest of their bodies being uncovered. When I held the Qadiship there, I tried to put an end to this practice and ordered them to wear clothes, but I met with no success." He notes with wonder that their ruler was a woman, called Khadija. This might be an extreme case, but it also underlines the fact that local cultures easily absorbed Islam without treating it as a 'foreign faith. The missionaries who lived the message, and through their example and teaching spread the faith, knew that if Allah had created all mankind then He did not place one culture or colour or region above the other: all were equal before Him. If there was a difference, it was between those who had accepted the revelation through the Prophet and those who had not: the latter might be considered unfortunate, but they could not be considered inferior. And so in 14th century Bihar, Sharafuddin Ahmad ibn Yahya Maneri saw nothing wrong with vermilion; and in 18th century Sindh, the mystic poet-divine Shah Abdul Latif could celebrate his love for yogis in his poem Ramkali. These are not random examples. They are metaphors that illustrate a substantive truth. Muslims seized power in Delhi some 500 years after Muslims came to India. The history of those first five centuries has been buried under ignorance (understandable, for there are few records of that period), indifference, and the depressing fact that history is generally the record of kings and conquests. The first Muslim armies arrived on the subcontinent in 711, in the same year that Arabs entered Spain. But while there was an earthquake in Europe whose tremors have not ceased, the Arab evasion of India did not travel much beyond the sands of Sind. Mahmud of

Ghazni was a plundering meteor that devastated its route map. It was not until the Turkish clans began to dominate the world of Muslims that what is known as Muslim rule came to India. In the Turkish regiments played a critical part in the reconquest of Jerusalem under the leadership of the Kurd, Saladin, in 1187. By Saladin had defeated the third crusade, led by Richard II and in the east, that very year, Prithviraj fell to a successor of Muhammad Ghori. But the Delhi Sultanate was established under the general Qutbuddin Aibak. (once a slave of the Qazi of before being purchased and freed by Ghori). By 1194, Ghori and Aibak had defeated Jaichand as well at Chandwar in Etawah, on the banks of the Jamuna, and then marched into Gujarat; by 1199, the Muslims had taken Bihar and Bengal as well. That was the broad pattern of Muslim empires ruled from either Agra or Delhi, through highs and lows, till the death of Aurangzeb in 1706. By the time the Mughal dynasty died in 1857, the empire had been reduced to a mockery: as the phrase went, the empire of Shah Alam stretched from Lai Qila to Palam. More than pride was wounded by that phrase. The portrait of the Indian Muslim is best drawn not by the hand of kings but by the lines of poets. The work of four great Urdu poets is each a portrait of what might be called the swivel points of this history: Amir Khusrau, Mirza Ghalib, Akbar Allahabadi and Sir Muhammad Iqbal. Khusrau (born in Patiyali in 1253, died in Delhi in 1325 in sorrow at the death of his pit Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya) is the laughing sufi, the poet who defined the identity of the Indian Muslim as both an Indian and a Muslim. His deep devotion to Hazrat Nizamuddin was a quality that merged seamlessly into the larger Indian consciousness. His *geet* and *qawwali* belonged to the genius of the land, and although a Turk by descent, he proudly claimed that the music of India had made him an Indian. This is important, and defines the relationship between Muslims and the land they made their own: it was not the sword that kept them in India, but the soil and the song. He consciously rejected Persian and gloried in the images and words of India. "I am an Indian Turk," he said, "and my answers are in Hindwi." Professor M. Mujeeb notes in his seminal work *The India; Muslims*: "In one of his historical mathnands, the Nuh Sipahr, or the

Nine Skies. Khusrau has devoted a whole section, The Third Sky, to the description and praise of India and Indians. He likens India to Paradise, and shows that because of its fruits, flowers and climate, it is better than any other country. The Indians excel in science and wisdom; they are inventors of numerals, the creators of the Panthatantra, the great book of worldly wisdom that has been translated into Persian, Turkish, Arabic and Dari; their music surpasses the music of any other country."

As a court poet he had to often write like a courtier, but he is not remembered for his panegyrics or his politics. The story (which I found in Aitzaz Ahsan's excellent *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan*) might be apocryphal, but there is poetic truth in it. Khusrau was travelling, and asked some girls drawing water from a well to give him some to quench his thirst. They teased him, saying they would give him water only if he managed to use *charkha, kutta, dhol* and *kheer* in the same verse. It would require some genius to link a wheel, a dog, a drum and a sweet. Khusrau's response was instant:

*Kheer pakaijatanon se,  
Charkha diya jala,  
Aya kutta kha gaga  
Tu baithi dhol raja.*

[You cooked *kheer* with so much effort, and burnt your wheel as fuel; a dog came and ate it up, now sit and beat your drum!]

If Khusrau sparkled with the energy of a new fire, then Asadullah Khan Ghalib (born in Agra in 1797 and died in Delhi 1869) was the philosopher searching for the mysteries of a dying flame. From Ghalib emerges the poetry of loss; he epitomizes the questions and uncertainty that overtake Muslims as their complacency is destroyed by the havoc of Nadir Shah and the rise of the British flag over Bengal, Awadh and finally Delhi. For a Dilliwallah the pain is intensified by proximity: the subject bears the shame of a court that has become shameless. The ornplacency of the lethargic debauch Muhammad Shah Rangeela has come legendary: when he received word that the Persian invader was heading towards the gates of Delhi he told the messenger, *Hinuz birau! Hinuz Dilli dur ast!* (Go away, Delhi is too far!)" [It was doubly bitter that Rangeela should have used a phrase made famous by Khusrau's pir Hazrat Nizamuddin when he reprimanded a conquering emperor].

Ghalib admired his great predecessor Mir Taqi Mir and was familiar with Mir's lament on the massacre of Delhi's Muslims and Hindus by Nadir Shah in 1739:

*Dilli jo ek shahar tha aalam mein intikhab*



*Rahte thhe muntakhib hi japan rozggar ke*

*Us ko falak ne loot ke weeran kar diya*

*Ham rahne wale hain usi ujre dayar ke.*

[Delhi once was a city without parallel, in which the best and brightest lived. Fate has looted and desolated that city; I am a citizen of that ruin.]

Ghalib, close to the court of the last Mughal, Bahadur Shah Zafar, knows of the humiliations through which this dynasty has lived. Perhaps the most famous such incident is the blinding of Shah Alam by the ruler of Najibabad, Ghulam Qadir Rohilla, in 1788, just eight years before Ghalib was born. Rohilla seized the Mughal palace, and ordered the terrified emperor to open up his hidden treasure. When the emperor pleaded that there was none, Rohilla threatened to blind him. These eyes had done nothing for 60 years, cried Shah Alam, except read the Quran. Rohilla planted his foot on the sovereign's breast and gouged out the royal eyes. The same Ghulam Qadir enjoyed what was known as the Raqs-e-Bismil, or the dance of death. The victim would be brought before him, and his neck severed with the clean cut of a sword. A red hot iron tray would then be placed on the severed neck; the heat would keep the blood circulation going for a bit during which the body would twitch in paroxysms, to the delight of the Rohilla. And when he asked the princesses of the palace to dance before him, he pretended to fall asleep while a dagger was kept invitingly close. He waited for some princess to try and avenge her insult, but no one dared. The House of Timur had lost its soul.

Ghalib's theme is the romance of loss; and his wondrous verses etch the anguish of Muslims who must witness the end of their age. would have been a prophet, sang Ghalib, were I not a drunkard:

*Yeh masaail-e-tasawwirfoeb tera bayaan Ghalib,*

*Tighe ham wall samajhte jo na baada kbwar bota.*

[Your matter is mystic, your style inimitable, Ghalib; I would have called you a prophet, were you not so fond of wine.]

To what level had glory sunk? Ghalib bore his famous debts and poverty with a poet's shrug, but when he had to beg for a pension it seared him.

*Ghalib wazifa-kbwar ho, do shah ko dua*

*Woh din (ore ke kabte thhe naukar nahin boon main.*

[Ghalib, you are a seeker of pensions, pray for the king; gone are the days when you proudly said that you were not a servant.]

All is lost, including love; even union is beyond the reach of his destiny.

*Yaar se ched chali jaaye, Asad,*

*Gar nahin waasl to hasrat hi sabi.*

[Keep on teasing your love, Asad; if there is no union, at least there is longing.]

There are two answers to pain. One is humanism, the other is wit. Ghalib was a believer (a devotee of Hazrat Ali) with a sense of humour and a deeper understanding of the niceties of temptation. (When, after the 1857 uprising, the British magistrate asked if he was a Muslim, Ghalib, tongue firmly in cheek, answered that he was half a Muslim: he drank wine, but did not eat pork.) His loss is heightened by the beauty with which he describes despair. The individual is also a metaphor for the community.

*Muhabbat mein nahin hai farq jeene aur marne ka*

*Usi ko dekh karjeete hain jis kafir pc dam nikle.*

*Kahan maikhana ka darwaza, Ghalib, our kahan waaiz,*

*Par itna jaante bain, kal mob jaata tha ke ham nikle.*

[There is no difference between life and death in love; after all, I live only to see the infidel I would die for.]

Where is the door of the tavern, Ghalib, and where the preacher, but this I know, yesterday he was leaving the tavern door when I entered.]

Ghalib held a prism to the glory and anguish of centuries, and searched for solace in amnesia: *Hue mar ke hamfa ruswa, hue kyon na gharq-e-darja,*

*Na kabhijanaaa na koi mazaar hota.*

When I left with my death, why didn't I drown in a river; there would then have been neither funeral nor a grave.]

If Ghalib was a prism, Akbar Allahabadi was a mirror. Appropriately, he would become known as Lisan al-As; or the Voice of His Time. Akbar was born in 1846, when Ghalib was still alive; he died in 1921, at the very height of a Hindu-Muslim upsurge led by Mahatma Gandhi that shook the confidence of the British empire. His life traversed an important arc of Indian history, from the defeat of 1857 to the rise of Gandhi. 1857 speeded up the transition of the Indian

Muslim mind. The last illusions were embalmed in nostalgia, as efforts began to find a fresh critique. Akbar borrowed wit from the traditions of Urdu poetry and pushed it towards satire. He understood a basic demand of his technique: before you laugh at others, you must laugh at yourself. He looked for some solution between the bigotry, hypocrisy and ignorant arrogance of the traditional Muslim cleric, and the Muslim peacock in English plumes. He searched for the future in the debris of self-destruction. He was not an ideologue or a theoretician, but his sharp brilliance exposed the duplicity and injustice of imperialism, and the subservience of its fellow travellers. (Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, founder of Aligarh Muslim University and leader of the pro-British movement, did not escape his satire.) He was always ready to acknowledge his own dilemma, because his own career made him a functionary of the Raj. His first job was as a clerk in the construction company that built the bridge over the Jumna in Allahabad, but he soon tired of such menial activity and applied for a job as copyist in a court, got it, learnt English and quickly rose to become revenue officer. Seeking better society, he then studied law and became a successful lawyer. The powers named him to the bench and by the time he retired in 1903 he was a judge in the Small Causes Court. He was not as boring as such a biodata suggests: he spent happily on courtesans, and at least one of his poems on the joys of drinking is part of popular music to this day.

*[Hangama hai kyon baipa, thodi sijo pee li hai,  
Daaka to nahin daala, chori to nahin ki bai.*

Why is there such a fuss when I have drunk just a little? I have not committed a dacoity, or stolen anything. Rarely has a ghazal had as perfect a last line: *But ham ko kahe qaafir, Allah ki marzi hai.* The idol has called me an infidel — such is the will of Allah.] When he became a pensioner he described himself as a kept mistress of the government.

The point of course was to survive under British rule without losing either one's Indian or Islamic identity or hope for a different future. In this, he epitomized the Indian Muslim of his age. Professor Mohammad Mujeeb, vice-chancellor of Jamia. Millia and author of the definitive *The Indian Muslims* (George Allan and Unwin, London, 1967), an admitted fan of

Allahabadi, deserves to be quoted at some length on the dilemma of a person "who's neither Englishman nor coolie":

"The two all-important issues during Akbar's lifetime were: what policy should the Indian Muslim follow in the existing political situation, and how should they maintain their cultural and religious identity amidst the tumultuous forces let loose by the civilization of the West. Akbar's usual term for the Indian Muslim, when he is judging him as a preacher, is shaikh or shaikhji, and there is hardly any aspect of this shaikh's life on which he does not throw light. Very rarely is there any nostalgia for the immediate or distant past, but to make the Indian Muslim's position clear he had to say :

*The master is turned slave, such is the will of fate:*

*The owner of the palace is now keeper of the gate.*

He was too realistic to take refuge in apologetics, and recite to the 'keeper of the gate' the glories of those ancestors of his who lorded it in the palace."

If Akbar Allahabadi served the English without too much remorse, he also satirized Englishness remorselessly. The threat to Indians, both Hindu and Muslim, was not only from English rule but also from Western culture.

*Kahan ke Muslim, kahan ke Hindu, bhulai hai sabne agli rasmein*

*Aqeede sab ke hain teen-tehrah, na Gyanvi hai na Ashtmi hai.*

[Where is the Muslim, where is the Hindu — both have forgotten their rituals; belief has been scattered, there is neither the 11th nor the 8th (days observed by Muslims and Hindus.) And: *Bahut honge mughanni naghma-e-taglia'-e-Europe ke,*

*Magar be jor honge, is liye be-tal-o-sur honge.*

[There will be many who will imitate the songs of Europe, but that will be cacophony, not music.]

Even Allah was being forgotten. Perhaps his most famous couplet, often used in conversation among those who know Urdu, hits home with the terrible force of laughter:

*Rageebon ne likhwai hai ja ja ke thane mein,  
Ke Akbar naam leta hai Khuda ka is zamane mein.*

[Rivals have gone again and again to the police to file complaints that Akbar takes the name of God in this age.]

He himself is a believer, like Ghalib, despite his errant ways, as this powerful and philosophical verse indicates:

*Har zarra chamakta hai anzvar-e-Ilahl se  
Har scans yeh kahti hal, ham hai tau Khuda bhi  
hai.*

[Every grain sparkles with the majesty of Allah, every breath of ours says that we are because He is.]

He could laugh at himself:

*Tayyar thhe nimaazpe hum sun ke zikr-e-boor,  
jalwa baton ka dekh ke neeyat badal gayi\*.*

[I was ready for prayer when I heard of the houri; alas, the sight of idols changed my mind.]

But he was merciless towards the hypocrisy of

Muslim priests who invited derision by their behaviour. He might not have the lyricism of Daagh Dehvi [Waaizsharah peene de majid mein baith kar, Ya woh jagah bata de jagan Kbuda na ho. Priest, let me drink inside the mosque, or tell



me a place where God does not exist] but the earthy wit sent the message home:

*Mujh ko khush aati hai masti, Shaikhji ko  
farbahi,*

*Main hoon peene ke liye aur wob hain khane ke  
liye.*

[I am happy when delirious, the Shaikh when he is fat; I was born to drink, and he was born for gluttony.]

In the end there is resignation:

*Tumhen is inquilab-e-dahar ka kya gham hal ai  
Akbar*

*Bahut nazdik hairs woh din na turn honge na  
ham honge.*

[Why are you worried about this revolution, Akbar; soon enough neither you nor I will exist.]

"If Akbar attempted any systematic thinking, it was in relation to imperialism and imperialist policy in India," writes Mujeeb. "There could be no question of equality between the dispossessed Muslims and the English rulers of the land, even if Sir Sayyid and his group eved some apparent success socially and a few score Muslims found employment under the government. In fact, this made the position of an Muslims worse. In a bitter vein, Akbar says he can see nothing which to congratulate the performing monkey; if at all, the trainer be complimented. The poet could create the impression that he was indifferent to the fate of the Indian people as a whole. But that would be far from the truth. He deplored Pan-Islamism; he was sure that the Muslims could not make a separate deal with the British; he ridiculed the

illusions and the essentially servile attitude on which Muslim politics was based. He thought it absurd and painful that Muslims should make merry over the reverses suffered by the national movement

because it was preponderantly Hindu."

But by the time he died he had lost the argument, for Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became party to the politics of Pan-Islamism in 1919 and Mohammad Ali jinnah picked, between 1936 and 1940, the strands of separatism that he had himself so vehemently rejected all his life. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938) is the only one of the four poets to have received a formal west-influenced education. The nation and his community were his abiding concerns, and it is not surprising that in the last stage of his life, the two streams began to interlap and then merge. If Akbar Allahabadi wrote to Muslims, then Iqbal wrote as a Muslim: he did not possess the poet's right to flirt between conviction and reality. He was intensely political, and is

therefore a legitimate representative of the last phase of Indian Muslim evolution before partition. He was sentinel, guardian, preacher, visionary, judge, revolutionary and Cassandra as and when he felt that the moment suited a particular role. Each face of his personality, each facet of his thought was equally intense.

Witness:

*Watan ki fiqr kar nadaan museebat aane wali hai,*

*Teri barbadiyon ke mashware bait; aasmanon mein.*

And

*Na sanilhoge to mit jaoge ai Hindustamvalo Tumhari dastan tak bhi na hogi dastanon mein.*

[Worry about the nation, innocent; trouble lies ahead — your destruction is written in the skies.

The second couplet says :

If you do not understand, Indians, you will be destroyed, and your history will not find a mention in history books.]

But he was also the poet who could sing:

*Pattbar ki moor atop mein sal,\* hai in Khuda hai Kbaq-e watan ka mighko bar Barra devata hal.*

[You see God in idols of stone; I see God in every particle of my country's dust.]

This was stern lyricism but reflected perfectly the tumult of the age. For the aesthete, Iqbal has much to offer; for the thinker perhaps more. But the Muslim gam, turned him into a leader because of his seminal, and most famous verse-sermons (I use 'sermon' in the best sense of the word), *Shikwa* (The Complaint) and *jawab-e-Shikwa* (Answer to the Complaint). The complaint is by a believer to Allah: Why have You forsaken your faithful?

The question throbs with a number of overlapping realities: low self-esteem in an age of defeat; loss of both political and economic power; bewilderment; an inability to discover an intellectual dialectic or scientific illumination for resurgence; the humiliation of descent from invincibility to impotence; and finally a slightly pathetic dependence on the Almighty as the only answer to helplessness. The last two great Muslim (Muslim, not Islamic) empires were the Mughal and the Ottoman. Within the space of 60 years, both were destroyed by British imperialism (which many Muslims and Christians also saw a continuation of the conflict between Islam and Christianity). Iqbal was at his most prolific in this period, and was

as deeply affected the loss at home as by the visible decline and eventual fall of the Ottomans. *Shikwa* was read out with Bulgarian/Slav armies hreatening Istanbul. The impact of the defeat of the Caliph, and the consequent occupation of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina by e:British, on Indian politics is well known.

Allah's answer is simple, but stretches a long way into the flux of Muslim consciousness: I have not forsaken you, says Allah, you have forsaken Me. The faithful have lost their faith; they are embarrassed by prayer and the Holy Quran, rather than proud of it. Elsewhere, Iqbal formulates his own answer to the complaint, in a line that has also become part of the language: *Khudi ko kar buland itna ke har taqdeer se pehle Khuda bande se yeh pooche bata teri ra,'a kya hai* [Make your self-will so strong that before writing your destiny, God asks you what you want written]. Between the question and the answer, Iqbal told the qaum what it wanted to hear. The tragedy was that the answer proved to be rhetorical rather than substantial. It should have created an upsurge for reform and renaissance. Instead it was diverted into a political demand for a chimera — a separate homeland that, implicitly, Allah would personally nurture.

The strength of *Shikwa* also lies in the power of poetry, and Iqbal's ability to lend an almost magical quality to the history of Muslims. I quote a few verses to illustrate:

*Ai Khudal Shikwa-e-arbab-e wafa bhi sun le Khu Bare-hard se thorct sa gila bhi sun le.*

[o Lord! Listen to a few complaints from your faithful, among the choir of hymns that You always hear.]

*Thhe hameen ek tere maarika aaraon mein! Khuski\_yon mein kabhi larhte, kabhi daryaon mein*

*Dee aamnein kabhi Europe ke kalisizaon mein Kabhi Africa ke tapte hue saharaon mein*

*Shaan aankhon mein najachfi thijahadaaron ki Kalma parhte thhe ham thaon mein talwaron ki.*

[We fought every battle for you; on desert, on sea; we gave the call to prayer in Europe's churches and on the burning sands of Africa. The world envied your glory, while we recited the *kalima* under the shade of swords.]

There is much more in this inspirational vein, but one verse will suffice:

*Aa gya airs larhai mein agar waqt-e-namaaz  
Qibla rli ho ke .zameein-bose Irani qaum-e-  
Hijaaz*

*Ek hi saf mein khare ho gay Mahmud-ayaz*

*Na koi bands raha na koi Banda-namaz.*

*Banda-wa-sahab-wa-muhtaj-wa-ghani ek huey  
Teri sarkar mein pahunche to sabhi ek huey.*  
When in the midst of battle came the time for prayer, we the community of Hijaz turned towards Mecca and kissed the ground in prayer. In one line stood all, there was no ruler and no slave before you. Great, meek, mighty or rich, we were all equal before You.]

One line in the *Jawab* sums up Allah's reply to the complaint: *Jalwa-e-Tier to matyood hai, Moosa hi nahin* [The miracle of Mount Sinai is still there, but where is a Moses?]. The argument is clear: it was the glory of belief that brought glory in the past. All that the Muslims now did was wring their hands and wallow in self-pity (*Haath pe haath share muntazar-e farad ho!*). The description of decay is scathing, the admonition scalding. But then the mood turns, and Allah becomes both forgiving as well as inspirational: He returns to the Muslim, as it were, on condition that the Muslim returns to Him. The last verse is the promise of renewal: *Aqi hai teri sapor, ishq hai shamsheer teri Mere dames& Khilafat haijahangir ten. Masiwallah ke liye aag hai taqbeer ten Tu Mussalman hai to taqdeer hai tadbeer teri. Ki Muhammad se wafa hi ne to hum tere hairs Yeh jahan cheez hai kyal Loh-wa-qalam tere hain!*

[Intellect, reason and compassion are your sword; My servant! The world is your Caliphate. 'God is Great!' is your inspiration; you are a Muslim, your fate is your fortune. Be true to Muhammad, and I will be true to you. This world is a mere nothing unseen worlds are yours!]

It was a call for Muslims to turn to religion; instead they turned to religiosity.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan is justly praised for his great achievements, particularly in founding Aligarh Muslim University; but his understanding of modern political institutions and power was less than adequate. In the last two decades of the 19th century he introduced the specious argument of numbers: since Muslims were a quarter of the population they would always be subservient to Hindus. Such was the lack of confidence in the community

(recall Iqbal's hand-wringing self-pity) that the argument took root. It was almost as if Muslims began to pride themselves in their new inferiority complex.

But Sir Sayyid was not immediately successful. Religiosity was given legitimacy by Mahatma Gandhi when he argued that there could be no politics without religion and was wildly cheered by leaders like the Ali brothers who wanted to



mobilize Muslims through a religious discourse. The collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate after the first world war and the occupation of Mecca and Medina by the British provided the opportunity; Gandhi lit the fuse. It was Jinnah, who had rejected separate electorates and refused to participate in the first Muslim League delegation to the Viceroy in 1906, who tried to warn against the dangers of such a combustible combination. As he told Durga Das (*India from Cugpn to Nehru*) after the Nagpur session in December 1920: "Well, young man, I will have nothing to do with this pseudo-religious approach to politics. I part company with the Congress and Gandhi. I do not believe in working up mob hysteria."

That belief was to change after some 15 years. Why? That remains a mystery, but jinnah of course went on to turn a minority complex into a separate nation.

Dr. Rafiq Zakaria has been blessed by the Chinese curse: 'May you live in interesting times.' He was born a little after jinnah left the Congress, and was a young man when he saw his country being riven apart by slogans of hatred.

As an Indian and a Muslim he remained loyal to both his nation and his faith. But his life has been lived in the shadow of anguish; everything that could go wrong with Indian Muslims did go wrong. He feels for the community with the ardour of an Iqbal, but his diagnosis and his prescription are different. This might be called the next stage of the evolutionary process of history, but it takes a leader to see a way through a maze as complicated as the one in which Muslims are trapped. There are few corridors of this maze that Dr. Zakaria has not traversed. He is passionate, compassionate and dispassionate. The most remarkable quality that he brings is the power of a clear mind. He is not weighed down by hidden guilt; and he seeks nothing but the good of his people. There is no Indian Muslim today, writing in English, who commands the kind of respect that he does from both the community as well as the nation of which the community is an integral part. I have used the image of a prism for Ghalib and a mirror for Akbar Allahabadi. This book is a chandelier, each aspect of the Indian Muslim experience sparking both individually and

collectively. To read it is to walk through endless illumination.

*Akbar Allahabadi*

The central question of this book is: Where have Indian Muslims gone wrong? Dr. Zakaria does not shy away from the answer: Whenever they have forgotten their Indian roots. Perhaps the last word should be left to Akbar Allahabadi:

*Paamal fain magar hairs sabit kadam wafa main  
Hum mist-e-sang-e-dar kqy is aastaan par hain*  
[Though crushed, we are firm in our loyalty; we are like a rock at the threshold of our country.]

Source: "Indian Muslims:  
Where have they gone wrong?"  
By Rafiq Zakaria  
Bhavan's Book University



# BUDDHA, THE HUMANIST

By Dr. Shri Nath Sahai

## THE IMPERMANENCE

Cap Sogyal Rinpoche, a renowned interpreter of Buddhism has delineated on the importance of life in his famous book *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. He asks himself, "Why is it that everything changes?" And he gets the answer, "That is how life is."

But our ignorance, non-acceptance of this truth lands us into grief and distress. Buddha said, "Existence of ours is as transient as autumn clouds. To

watch the birth and death of beings is like looking at the movements of a dance. A lifetime is like a flash of lightning in the sky, rushing by like a torrent down a steep mountain."

And equally so, whatsoever is saved, collected, gathered and self-possessed is subjected to destruction, extinction and annihilation — be it kingdom, wealth or fame, it will get exhausted and disappear.

A moral that comes out of this phenomenon of impermanence is that when everything is so ephemeral, none should run after a flying object. But man ignorantly declines to comprehend and accept the underlying truth of this phenomenon, and this is the inherent cause of his suffering.

As there is nothing like 'mine' in this world, Buddha was all for laying down his life for people and work for the good of all; so much so that he never mediated even for his personal

salvation by going to any high mountain-hill or a deep forest. Not believing in a personal god or a personal soul too, he rather, as an agnostic never cared to know about them. His reflection and resolve was just to help and serve mankind as a whole. A man of message, Buddha felt that 'the world was burning and that he must find a way out' to save humanity.

## TEACHING

To this end, Buddha, prescribed certain basic precepts. He put forth four easy maxims:

- (i) *keeping good company,*
- (ii) *observing virtue,*
- (iii) *hearing the law,*
- (iv) *seeking enlightenment by reflection.*

He asks who is a good man? Gets the answer: One who is religious, and religious means agreeing with the truth. A strong man is characterized as the patient man; a calm person, clean and enduring, having conquered the

self and all its pettiness. And a wise man is one who has attained insight of his own being, living a true and selfless life. As rules of restrictions he resolved not to destroy life, not to take that which is not given, not to tell a lie, not to commit adultery and not to become intoxicated. His teachings look simple and are quite absorbing as they help develop and elevate one's life and living.

To make a work good, Buddha assigned ten commandments He said, three sins of body are: theft, murder and adultery; four sins of tongue are: idle talk, lying, slander and abuse: and three



sins of mind are error, hatred and covetousness. He mentioned that an unreasoning mind simply give evil. Even when abused by some person you should not react. Ultimately, he said abuse would return to that person only like an unaccepted present. If a man does wrong to you protect him by your ungrudging love. The fragrance of benevolence would come to you and evil would go to him.

### **THE KARMA**

Logically arrived at, Buddha's doctrine lays core emphasis on Karma. That all results are the result of cause and condition, as it happens in everyday life. And one has to encounter the concept of Karma. That, life itself is confrontation. The new born baby is not prepared for anything, it simply awaits the confrontation. Metal is not meant for rusting. Iron itself creates the rust, gets rusted, and, thereby, slowly it gets consumed by the rust of its own creation. Similarly, a wrong-doer, sinner, by his own doing and deeds, lands himself in misery, a life full of sufferings.

Emancipation of Low Caste

Buddha negates caste. His definition of 'outcaste' is not related to one's birth. He says one does not become an outcaste by one does not become a Brahman too. It is only by deeds that one becomes an outcaste, or a Brahman. That, 'an outcaste is the man who is angry and bears hatred; the man who is wicked and hypocritical, he who embraces error and is full of deceit'. That was why, Prakriti, a girl of humble Matanga caste was blessed as a noble woman from whom even the Brahman would learn a lesson: even though she belonged to a very low caste.

***“Buddha negates caste. His definition of 'outcaste' is not related to one's birth. He says one does not become an outcaste by birth. And likewise, simply by birth one does not***

***become a Brahman too. It is only by deeds that one becomes an outcaste, or a Brahman.”***

Buddha opened the door of his monastic order to the 'despised' Shudras. For him, act, deed and reality of life of man was more important, basic and foremost. If the person lives the life of a true monk, he too can attain perfection (Nirvana), regardless of his caste. And such a monk deserves equal right to be a priest; like any other monk from the upper castes, despite his being from a Shudra caste said Buddha. Disapproving and wiping out caste barrier, he granted and bestowed upon the low caste a status of equality to observe spirituality and reach the height of priesthood; demolishing the sole right of Brahman to occupy this position. Buddha does this all out of his inner concern and compassion for the misery and pain of the so called Shudra caste.



And Vivekananda too, adoring such a concern of Buddha for the low caste, followed his path and opened the door of his monastic order for all castes. He granted the right of priesthood to the Shudra. He says, the same divinity exists 'at

the core' in all men and women and the caste discrimination, is just man made.

***“Vivekananda too, adoring such a concern of Buddha for the low caste, followed his path and opened the door of his monastic order for all the castes.”***

His force and stress is on 'service', initiating the upper class of society to lift up the class below, eschewing any animosity and conflict.

Gandhi also believed, Varna had nothing to do with caste. The four divisions: Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra define man's job, duties, but not privileges. He says, "it is, I hold, against the genius of Hinduism to arrogate to oneself a higher status, or assign to another a low status." Gandhi further adds, "This (division) does not mean that Brahman is absolved from bodily labour. There is nothing, again to prevent a Shudra from acquiring all the knowledge he wishes." Thus, while supporting the Varna system, Gandhi believed there was no room for assuming any superior rank or grade

by any of the Varna, over the other; or holding any notion or dogma of untouchability.

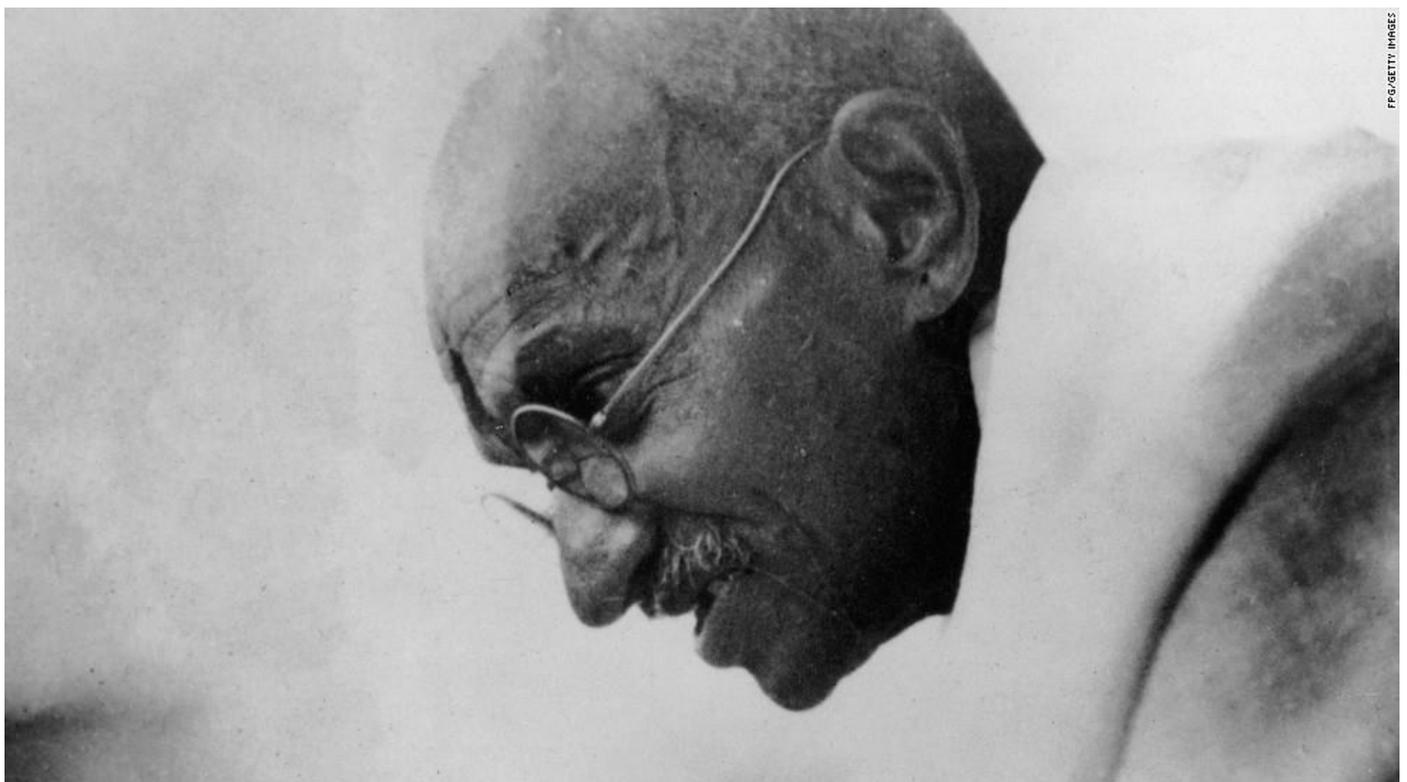
***“Gandhi also believed, Varna had nothing to do with caste. The four divisions: Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra define man's job, duties, but not privileges.”***

Thus, all these three great men negated caste as a factor in dividing society as high or low. They explained and accorded equal compassion for the deliverance and rehabilitation of the so called low caste.

#### **THE IMPACT**

Buddhist impact on India is perceivable, though at one stage, Buddhism had almost died out from this country. Yet today, the Buddhist countries the world over recognise India as the Land of Buddha — the sacred place of enlightenment and salvation.

*Source: Bhavan's Journal, 30 June, 2018*



FFG/GETTY IMAGES

# SEVENTY FACTS TO MARK THE ANNIVERSARY OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE



1. Partition is the dividing line struck to divide India and create the Muslim nation of Pakistan which then included what is now Bangladesh.
2. The decision to divide India came against the backdrop of the Second World War and the drive for Indian independence – the Crown was losing control of its jewel. On 20 February 1947 British prime minister Clement Attlee announced British rule would end before June 1948.
3. Nobody really knows why it happened so quickly – Lord Louis Mountbatten, who had arrived just months before to serve as Britain's last viceroy, decided in June 1947 that power would be transferred within a couple of months – 10 months earlier than expected. It's thought that the hurry might have been to force the two groups taking part in negotiations to sort themselves out.
4. Both India and Pakistan became new, independent states in August 1947. Pakistan celebrates its independence day on 14 August, a day before India – this timing allowed Lord Mountbatten to attend both ceremonies.
5. On the night of 14 August 1947 – as a nation was being split into two – Lord Mountbatten was reportedly enjoying a screening of the Bob Hope film *My Favourite Brunette*.
6. Mounbatten was far from the first viceroy to keep to eccentric habits as India was headed for chaos. Lord Linlithgow, who served in the job from 1936 to 1943, liked to walk into dinner each evening to a band playing “The Roast Beef of Old England”, an especially unusual choice in a country that venerates the cow.
7. It took until two days after Partition – 17 August – for the borders of Pakistan to be drawn up and established.
8. When those borders arrived, they were as divisive as they might appear. Following work by a British-led commission, the Radcliffe Line was drawn on a map – though it was supposed to split the country in such a way as to keep Muslims in Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs in India, it crudely cut communities in two and forced families across borders.

9. In 1941 Karachi was nearly half Hindu – by the end of that decade, almost all of those people had fled. Delhi was designated the capital of India but one one-third Muslim. This soon changed too as Muslims left.
10. That displacement and movement led to horrific outbreaks of violence and death. Governments hadn't been equipped to cope with them, and in large parts of both countries the entire population of certain religions were wiped out.
11. British soldiers were stationed in the country but were told not to do anything except act to save British lives.
12. The effects are still being felt today. The border is still difficult to cross, and families are left either side of it with no way of reuniting.
13. For all that, the Muslim population of India is still huge, at 160 million people. That makes India the place with the third largest population of Muslims, after Indonesia and Pakistan.
14. And the lines are still unclear. Both countries claim the Himalayan region of Kashmir, for instance.
15. The dispute over Kashmir adds tension to the relationship between the two states. They have fought three wars since 1947.
16. Those wars are especially worrying nowadays, given the fact that both countries have nuclear weapons.
17. And the borders are still being contested in such wars. In 1971 the two countries fought over East Pakistan, which seceded to become Bangladesh.
18. All of that work to decide where the countries would be split was done by Cyril Radcliffe, a British lawyer who hadn't actually been to India before the Partition process began.
19. He is one of the central controversial figures of Partition but he just drew a line – behind it was the political impetus led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, hailed as a hero in Pakistan, the country he created, but a villain in India.
20. Partition was shocking in its specifics, with individual families being torn apart and separated. But it is shocking in its sheer scale, too: more than 10 million people were displaced during the transition, making it easily one of the biggest movements of people in history.
21. Up to two million people died during the move. Many of them simply went missing – including huge numbers of people who left western India but never knowingly arrived in Pakistan.
22. The movement of communities, especially in Punjab and Bengal, led to numerous other crimes. People were kidnapped, forced to convert and killed, and tens of thousands of women were subjected to sexual violence and murder.
23. Partition didn't happen immediately, at least not in clear ways. For instance, until 1948 Pakistan used Indian bank notes, which had the name of the country stamped over them. The Pakistani rupee arrived in 1948.
24. The Indian tricolour represents courage, truth and peace, and faith and chivalry. Its spinning wheel logo was replaced after Partition by the ashoka chakra, a wheel-of-life design connected to the Buddhist dharma chakra.
25. India's other major symbol, the Bengal tiger, was once seen throughout the country. But they are gradually dying out, and there are now fewer than 4,000 of them left in the wild.
26. British filmmaker Gurinder Chadha, whose own family was affected by Partition, examined its painful effects this year in her film *Viceroy's House*, which was released in March. Chadha's film leaps into the midst of this conflict when Mountbatten was tasked with ensuring a smooth transfer of imperial power.
27. India makes more than 1,100 films per year – twice as many as Hollywood. And though Bollywood is famous, it's only a small amount of that total: it refers specifically to Mumbai's Hindi film industry, which only makes about 200 films a year. Its immense output makes it the world's most productive film industry.
28. The first Indian to win an Academy Award was Bhanu Athaiya in 1983, for designing the costumes in Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*. Ravi Shankar was nominated that same year for the film's score, but did not win. Satyajit Ray, director of 1955's *Pather*

- Panchali is the only Indian to have received an Honorary Academy Award.
29. The “ravanahatha” is a musical instrument believed by some to be the ancestor to the violin. Its sound box is usually either a gourd, a halved coconut shell or a hollowed-out cylinder of wood, with a membrane of stretched goat or other hide. The neck is then produced out wood or bamboo, with the strings created out of gut, hair or steel.
  30. India’s theatre tradition goes back at least 5,000 years starting out in narrative form comprised of its main elements, singing and dancing. The plots were initially based on history, folk tales and legends with the emphasis placed on visual representation as opposed to vocal. Its representation of the ‘epic’ is what Bertolt Brecht used to evolve his own creative theories surrounding the art form.
  31. The highest-grossing Indian film of all time is the Disney-produced Dangal, a 2016 biographical sports drama directed by Nitesh Tiwari. The film stars Aamir Khan as an amateur wrestler who trains his daughters to become Commonwealth Games medallists. It’s the fifth highest grossing non-English film of all time with takings of around £240m.
  32. Television was first introduced into India in September 1959. There was only one national channel for more than 30 years: DD National. This was part of the All India Radio studio in Delhi – where it stayed until 1965 – and began life as an experimental telecast with just a small transmitter and makeshift studio. It began regular transmission as DD1 Channel in 1982.
  33. The people of India are the world’s biggest bookworms, reading on average 10.42 hours a week, almost twice as much time as the average Briton. As a result, Indians spend far less time watching TV and listening to radio.
  34. Over half the books sold in India are in English, making the country the second-largest marketplace for books in English in the world, second only to the US.
  35. Overall, India is the sixth-largest book market in the world – it’s worth more than £3bn.
  36. During the 1800s Indians used theatre as a means to protest the colonial rule. In 1876 the British Raj implemented the Dramatic Performances Act which dictated that each play would have to meet certain criteria set out by the government, the main one being that they didn’t excite feelings of disaffection towards the law. Even after Independence, India partially kept the law, the new government keeping some control over the performing arts. However, come 1993, the act was labelled obsolete.
  37. India’s first election took place in 1952 under the auspices of an Electoral Commission that was established just two years after independence.
  38. It was a progressive election, encouraged by its first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. He made sure that the election happened as early as possible – and that it didn’t use systems like the electoral college or exclude women or poor voters.
  39. That was a tough ask: the size of the electorate was 176 million. To allow all of those people to vote, the country had to build 224,000 polling booths, fitted out with a total of two million steel boxes.
  40. Now the electorate is four and a half times as big, with 814 million people getting a chance to vote. And there are 1.2 billion people in the country in total, who live in 29 states and seven union territories.
  41. More of those people have access to a phone than they do a toilet.
  42. Between them, they speak 22 official languages – though the national languages are Hindi and English – and hundreds of dialects.
  43. India marks six seasons: summer, autumn, winter and spring, but also the summer monsoon and winter monsoon.
  44. Cricket is the country’s most popular support, after it was introduced during British rule. But it’s not officially the national sport – which is actually hockey.
  45. The national fruit of India is the mango. (And it’s also the national fruit of Pakistan, as well as being the national tree of Bangladesh.)
  46. The national bird of India is the Indian peacock. It was chosen in 1963.

47. The country even has its own national microbe. It's the lactobacillus delbrueckii, and was picked in 2012 during a biodiversity conference that was held in Hyderabad. It was picked out by schoolchildren.
48. India uses the Rupee as its national currency, issued by the Reserve Bank of India. The symbol, which looks like the letter "R" is derived from the Devanagari consonant "र" , but Latin letter was adopted in 2010.
49. The Indian economy is 27 times larger than it was at the time of Partition in 1947.
50. India's average annual GDP growth rate since 2006 has been 7 per cent.
51. There were 420 million people in India prior to in 1946. That fell to 350 million at Partition. Today there are 1.3 billion.
52. A sixth of Indians – 218 million people – are estimated to live in extreme poverty today.
53. India has more individual people in extreme poverty than in China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia combined.
54. Indian GDP per capita (at Purchasing Power Parity) in 2016 was \$4,900 – 12 per cent of the UK's GDP per capita.
55. The dollar-value of the Indian economy this year is \$2.25 trillion. It is expected by the IMF to overtake the dollar value of the UK economy in 2018.
56. India is the world's biggest tea producer. (Tea is also by a long way its most popular drink.)
57. It may be no surprise that the country produces 70 per cent of the world's spices.
58. London has more Indian restaurants than even the biggest Indian cities.
59. India is the most vegetarian place in the world, with the fewest meat-eaters.
60. Despite being so large, all of India uses a single timezone.
61. India's rail network is the fourth largest in the world with more than a million employees.
62. The country has the world's second-biggest road network – only the US's is larger.
63. Exhaust fumes make New Delhi's air the most polluted in the world. Just breathing it for one day during Diwali is reportedly like smoking 113 cigarettes.
64. India has the most post offices in the world: nearly 155,000, including a floating post office on Dal Lake in Srinagar.
65. The country is known for the heights it has climbed in international cricket. India's Himachal Pradesh region is home to Chail, a hill station that was once the summer retreat of the Maharaja of Patiala. There sits the highest cricket ground in the world, at 2,250 metres. Howzat!
66. And that's not the only claim that India has to being very, very tall. Khardung La – a pass that can be found in the state of Jammu and Kashmir – is also said to be the tallest motorable road in the world. But unfortunately that doesn't appear to be true: satellite observations show the pass to be slightly less high than previously thought, and that another Indian road might in fact be the tallest one.
67. India is home to the man with the world's biggest family, Ziona Chana, with around 180 people, including 39 wives and 94 children.
68. The game today known as snakes and ladders began in India, and was originally called moksha patam. Inside its rules can be seen some of the philosophies that are part of Indian thought to this day, particularly in its emphasis on destiny and karma. (When it was imported into England, the Victorians changed some of the virtues and vices to suit what they suggested were more western values.)
69. Played around the 7th century AD, the Indian game chaturanga is regarded as the precursor to chess.
70. The "Kumbh Mela" is a huge Hindu religious festival that's held every 12 years in India. It is regularly referred to as the biggest gathering of people in the world, though it can be very difficult to actually work out the size of such a huge gathering.

Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/>

# HOW TO RAISE KIDS WHO AREN'T SPOILED



*By Ron Lieber*

How can parents help kids have a healthy relationship to money? It starts with overcoming shyness and discomfort about financial issues.

All parents want their kids to have the skills they need to thrive in the world. But, while most parents feel comfortable talking about the importance of safety, health, schoolwork, and relationships, when it comes to the importance of money, many fall silent. In fact, most parents feel more comfortable talking about sex with their kids than about how much money they make.

Perhaps that's because money can bring up extremely strong emotions. How much we have or don't have, and how our income compares to that of others, can be a source of shame—whether we perceive ourselves as having too much or too little. Parents often find themselves fighting over finances, leaving the impression on kids that money causes conflict. Nobody is dispassionate about money, and parents are certainly not calm and rational about their kids, either. This potent mix often makes it hard for parents to talk openly and honestly with their children.

In my role as the personal finance columnist for *The New York Times*, parents often ask me for advice. For people living paycheck to paycheck, talking about money is often a necessity. Those with the biggest incomes, meanwhile, sometimes struggle the most with how to approach the topic, not knowing how to explain to their kids why they have means while others don't, or why they want to set certain limits around spending when their kids know that they don't actually need to.

As a parent myself, I know that these issues can get thorny. But if we want our children to have a healthy relationship to money—and not become spoiled or entitled or materialistic or left totally unaware of its importance—we need to overcome our own shyness and discomfort and give them some straight answers to their many questions.

In my new book, *The Opposite of Spoiled: Raising Kids Who Are Grounded, Generous, and Smart About Money*, I write about where parents get stuck and how they can do a better job of teaching their kids about money. Here are some tips I have for parents, based on my book.

1. *Talk about money and your values around money*

Kids are curious about money and want to know more about it. They are bound to ask questions that may be difficult to answer. But, evading the topic or lying about it isn't a good solution. If we parents want our kids to understand how money works, we need to talk to them openly and honestly about it...though not necessarily in the way we think.



© *Tearsa Joy Hammock, San Francisco Public Press*

In my years of research on the topic, I've determined that, when kids ask parents about money, it's best to respond by first asking: Why do you ask? Responding this way allows us to get at a child's actual underlying question or concern. For example, children who ask "Are we rich?" aren't necessarily asking for your salary level. They may have heard that another family purchased a new car and be wondering if you could afford one, too. Or, they may have seen a homeless person and be wondering if your family could end up on the street. Knowing a child's actual concern and where it comes from gives parents a chance to respond appropriately. As kids get older, they will have more pointed questions, and we parents should be ready to answer them. It's important for us to share information about family finances and what it actually costs to pay for things that the family has and does. Try looking for opportunities to discuss larger questions about money, like, how much is enough? And, What should we spend so that we have all of the things we need and enough of what we want (or want to do) to make us as happy as possible?

Talking about how your family handles financial decisions will help kids understand how money works and the values you have around saving and spending it. This will encourage them to grow into young adults with perspective—people with a healthy definition of "enough"

that is unique to them and isn't based on what everyone else has or does.

## 2. *Give children money to manage on their own* **MORE ON KIDS, ENTITLEMENT, AND GRATITUDE**

Allowance helps kids learn to save and spend money, a skill they don't get to practice in very many other ways as they grow up. And since they are at a time in their lives when the stakes are pretty low, the inevitable mistakes won't matter so much. Plus, one of the primary virtues of allowance is learning patience, delayed gratification and the value of self-control.

It's the rare study that tracks the same group of children well into adulthood, but a 2011 study out of New Zealand followed 1,000 people from birth to the age of 32. By that age, it was clear that those who had poor self-control as children were less likely to save money, have a retirement account, and own homes or stocks as adults than others with more self-control. Lack of self-control was even more predictive of money problems than their social class as kids or their IQ.

Once you decide on giving your kids an allowance and how much it should be, you'll need a system for tracking and storing the money. In my family, we divide the allowance into three clear plastic containers: One each for spending, giving and saving. Splitting the money introduces kids to the idea that some money is for spending soon, some we give to people who may need it more than we do, and some is to keep for when we need or want something later.

Some parents will give their kids bigger or smaller allowances; some will rule out items that their children cannot buy—such as candy—even if they have the money. Though there's no right answer, it's great to aim for consistent rules and to follow them. Once the rules are understood, though, there is nothing like putting kids in charge and letting them learn from their mistakes.

## 3. *Teach kids to spend wisely*

Thrift is an odd word, often synonymous with cheap. But, the root word of thrift is thrive. Our goal as parents shouldn't be to promote the stingy type of thrift or the resolute version that previous generations of Americans turned to

only when the economy or war shortages demanded it. Instead, we can aim for three things: Setting some spending guidelines to lean on, modeling a few sensible tactics for our children, and adopting family rituals that make spending fun—but only on things that have real value and meaning.

Every new generation of parents is astounded and alarmed when confronting the goods and experiences available to their own children. But there's something about the always-on, instant-access nature of so much of life in recent years that really does seem fundamentally different. Our culture of consumption can make it challenging for parents to navigate kids away from materialism and toward more strategic spending or cultivating more satisfaction with what they already have.

Yet, multiple studies have shown that materialism is correlated with higher levels of depression and anxiety and a range of ills from backaches to drug use. So, we want to deploy whatever tactics we can to keep kids from becoming materialistic. This might include keeping them away from commercial television—or making a sport of poking fun at the advertising that surrounds us—and not giving in when kids pressure us to buy stuff for them because “everyone else has one.”

It's a good idea to teach kids about value and getting the most for your money, too—whether it's buying specific items or spending money on an experience. Research shows that spending on experiences tends to bring more happiness than spending on goods, and we can talk to kids about testing this idea out themselves. Have them check in with you months after a purchase to report how much they still use and enjoy what they've bought. Often, this teaches them that the pleasure of a purchase is fleeting, while a pleasurable experience lingers longer in their memories.

#### *4. Put kids to work*

All kids should have chores at home—even young kids. Why? Because it helps them to build confidence and sharing the labor of maintaining a home reminds them that we're all in this family thing together.

It's all too easy to default to the assumption that it's more trouble to teach kids how to perform household tasks than to just do them ourselves.

But in doing so we send clear, strong messages: We expect little of you, and you're living mostly for yourself. Giving kids reasonable chores to do will teach them that they are an important part of the family and will help them to develop a sense of competence and responsibility.

I personally don't like to tie getting an allowance to fulfilling household chores, as I feel kids ought to contribute to the family regardless of compensation. But, when kids get older, encouraging them to work outside of the home for money can be a great experience. What our kids learn from paid employment is a work ethic—that loose phrase that captures the ability to listen, exert ourselves, cooperate with others, do our best, and stick to a task until we've done it right. They should do it at least one summer during high school. Or perhaps more: Some parents require their children to pay for a portion of their first year in college, even if the parents could write a check for it easily.

#### *5. Teach kids the importance of giving*

Parents have an essential role to play in modeling generosity, and researchers have shown that if parents give, kids tend to as well. If you haven't primed the pump of generosity with your kids by talking to them about your charitable giving, you're not alone—many Americans don't. But, giving, like everything else that we do with money, shouldn't simply happen without comment.

Correcting this is easy enough, and there are at least three ways to explain why giving money to help other people is a good thing to do. One way to describe it is as a sort of duty: families who have more than they need ought to give something so that others who have less can afford things they need. Older children might appreciate the second explanation, which is a self-interested one: research on happiness shows that the amount we give away is a great predictor of how happy we are. In fact, it's as strong a predictor of happiness as our income is. Finally, there's this point to make: Communities are stronger when people know they can rely on one another.

Like most conversations with kids about money, we don't need to have this one all that often. But we could probably start talking about giving earlier, as children are hardwired for the

happiness-making part of generosity starting at a very early age. Try allocating part of their kids' allowance for giving and include their kids in decision-making around charitable giving. It's a great way to get children's minds thinking about what's important to them and how they can contribute to the causes they believe in.

#### 6. Practice gratitude

Beyond our general tendency to avoid conversations about money, it can be difficult to step back and recognize our own good fortune. Many parents avoid talking to their kids about their socio-economic status because they believe that children don't notice class differences until they're teenagers. But even very young children have a basic sense of what the words "rich" and "poor" mean. And, as we're sorting out our own complicated feelings about the differences between our social class and that of the people we know, our kids are jumping to conclusions. They may not come to the right ones if we're not engaging them in conversation. It's important for kids to not only understand socioeconomic issues but to learn to appreciate all they have in life. Scholars who study happiness have measured gratitude levels in children and found strong correlations between gratitude and higher grades, levels of life

satisfaction and social integration. There's also a link between gratitude and lower levels of envy and depression.

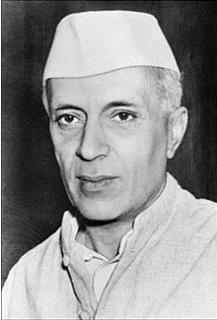
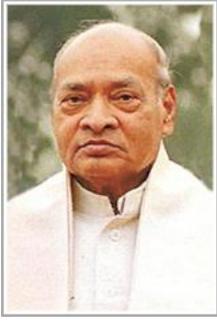
So, how best to foster a culture of family gratitude? One way is to establish a grace-saying ritual around the dinner table—one in which you express gratitude for the food, for each other, or anything else that comes to mind. Another is to purposefully turn to the outside world and recognize that not everyone has what you have. Engaging in volunteer work or simply participating in an afterschool activity with kids from different social worlds can help kids get some perspective on what they have and help them feel a sense of gratitude.

While these tips aren't foolproof, parents who follow them have a better chance of raising children with a wise relationship to money. It's up to all of us to make sure our children understand our values and know how to save, spend, or give away money in a way that is consistent with those values. If we all approached the topic with more honesty and openness, we might avoid a future where children end up either crippled by debt or thinking that everything should come to them on a silver platter. Personally, that's the world I would rather live in.

Source: <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>



## PERSONS OF THE MONTH: INDIA

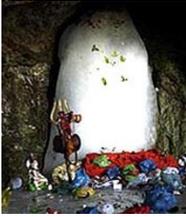
<p>Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru (14 November 1889 - 27 May 1964)</p>		<p>The first prime Minister of India ruled a chaotic newborn country right from its independence in 1947 until his death in 1964. Nehru's legacy is that of an extremely liberal, socialist and secular leader, who under the apprenticeship of Mahatma Gandhi, firmly put India on the course in which it runs today. Nehru was a man of letters and is also credited with creating the Planning Commission of India.</p>
<p>Sonia Gandhi 9 December 1946 (age 71 years)</p>		<p>Sonia Gandhi is about to complete 15 years as the President of the Indian National Congress Party. Keeping the grand old party of India under check and voicing her opinions ever so often on the state of the affairs in the country. Sonia Gandhi's legacy will never be fully known unless somebody spills the beans on how much influence she actually wields in government decisions.</p>
<p>Manmohan Singh 26 September 1932 (age 85 years)</p>		<p>Manmohan Singh may be a much-reviled figure today but no one deny his contribution in lifting the country out of an economic morass in 1991 by opening up the economy. The transformation from socialism and capitalism was a long time coming and Manmohan ensured that the transition went off smoothly. Under his leadership, India achieved the US \$ 1 trillion economy milestone.</p>
<p>P. V. Narasimha Rao (28 June 1921 - 23 December 2004)</p>		<p>Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister when Manmohan Singh opened up the economy in 1991, a role for which he is known as the Father of Indian Economic Reforms. He also introduced computer based trading system of the National Stock Exchange in 1994 and encouraged FDI inflows into the country to revive its flagging economy. He also took important decisions that strengthened the internal security of the country. An astute politician, he passed several important laws through a mixture of cunning and guile even though he headed a minority government.</p>
<p>Jayaprakash Narayan</p>		<p>Jayaprakash Narayan has been an important leader who first came into prominence for opposing Indira Gandhi at the height of her powers. In 1974, he called for a peaceful Total Revolution after leading a students' movement in Bihar. Although he never became a force to reckon with within politics, Narayan was the first leader who commanded huge crowds for his political stands, a position that was taken over by Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal recently.</p>

Detailed profiles of these personalities are available in Bhavan's Journals.

## PERSONS OF THE MONTH: WORLD

<p>Winston Churchill (30 November 1874 – 24 January 1965)</p>		<p>was a British politician, army officer, and writer, who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. As Prime Minister, Churchill led Britain to victory in the Second World War. Churchill represented five constituencies during his career as Member of Parliament (MP). Ideologically an economic liberal and British imperialist, he began and ended his parliamentary career as a member of the Conservative Party, which he led from 1940 to 1955, but for twenty years from 1904 he was a prominent member of the Liberal Party.</p>
<p>Margaret Thatcher )</p>		<p>A woman with high standards and a short temper, Margaret Thatcher was not known as Britain's Iron Lady for nothing. After working as both a chemist and a barrister and having two children, Thatcher saw her long-held political ambitions realized in 1959 when she became a Member of Parliament in the Conservative Party. Twenty years later, she found herself Prime Minister. Serving from 1979 to 1990, she was Europe's first female Prime Minister and the only British Prime Minister to serve three consecutive terms.</p>
<p>Queen Victoria</p>		<p>Great Britain expanded in nearly every way during Queen Victoria's 64 years and seven months on the throne. It is her name with which we now associate the country's 19th century cultural, social, economic, political, scientific, industrial, technological, military and colonial dominance. During the Victorian Era, the United Kingdom saw its power and influence spread to the far reaches of the Earth, including to its colonial-crown jewel, India (which gave the queen an additional title — the Empress of India).</p>
<p>Vladimir Lenin</p>		<p>After peasant uprisings toppled Tsar Nicolas II, Vladimir Lenin returned to Russia from exile in 1917 to stage the greatest coup of the 20th century. Inspired by the writings of Marx and Engels and a desire to be at the "vanguard of the proletariat," Lenin spearheaded the Bolshevik Revolution, ousting the Provisional Government that had replaced the monarchy to establish what would eventually become the Soviet Union — the progenitor of modern day Communist states.</p>

## FESTIVALS OF THE MONTH: INDIA

<p>Amarnath Yatra (June 28 - August 26 2018)</p>		<p>The famous Amarnath cave temple, one of the top caves in India, houses a Shiva lingam made out of ice. It's one of the toughest pilgrimages in India to visit it. Pilgrims must battle inclement weather, which makes the track slippery and dangerous, as well as very high altitude.</p>
<p>Beh Deinkhlam (July 3, 2018)</p>		<p>The most important festival of the Pnar tribe of Meghalaya, Beh Deinkhlam is celebrated after agricultural sowing is over. Khlam means plague and beh dien means to drive away with sticks. Hence, the festival is held to drive away and negative forces that may affect the crop. The festivities take place over three days, and culminate with procession of chariots and ceremonial tree trunks (khnongs) to a sacred pool full of water.</p>
<p>Puri Rath Yatra (July 14 - 26, 2018)</p>		<p>The exuberant 12 day Rath Yatra festival sees Lord Jagannath (a reincarnation of Lords Vishnu and Krishna), along with and his elder brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra, venture out of their abode in Puri's Jagannath Temple. The gods are transported on massive towering chariots.</p>
<p>Njangattiri Aanayoottu (Elephant Feeding Ritual) (July 20, 2018)</p>		<p>Visit Ladakh before the peak season starts to catch the Yuru Kabgyat festival at Lamayuru Monastery, the oldest monastery in the region. Two days of sacred masked dances and other rituals take place against a spectacular setting atop a steep hill. Music is a big part of the festival with monks playing cymbals, drums, and wind instruments.</p>
<p>Independence Day (August 15, Annually)</p>		<p>India celebrates the nation's independence from British rule on 15 August 1947. Most of the festivities take place around the Red Fort in Delhi. There's a flag hoisting ceremony, kite flying, and cultural programs. Extra special, extended arrangements are expected to be made this year, as it's India's 70th Independence Day.</p>
<p>Jhapan Mela (August 17, 2018)</p>		<p>Snake festival, Jhapan means a stage set up to exhibit tricks with snakes. And that's exactly what happens at the Jhapan Mela. Snake charmers, called Jhampanias, bring king cobras and other snakes in cane baskets and perform astonishing acts with them. The festival, which is largely of tribal origin, is celebrated in honor of the serpent Goddess Manasa, the daughter of Lord Shiva. She's worshiped for good rainfall and fertile land. It takes place on the last day of the Bengali month of Shraban/Shravan (mid August).</p>

## FESTIVALS OF THE MONTH: AUSTRALIA

<p>Humpback whale watching season starts in Queensland (July 2018)</p>		<p>The whale-watching capital of Australia, Hervey Bay, is a popular spot for our biggest coastal visitors, the humpback whales from June to November. More than 7,000 whales holiday in the Fraser Coast on their 5,000km migration from Antarctica to teach their baby calves sweet skills like breaching, spy hopping, tummy flashes and plenty of other survival tools.</p>
<p>GOLD COAST MARATHON (30 Jun - 1 July 2018)</p>		<p>Run for the good times at the 41st Gold Coast Marathon held Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 July 2019 on the beautiful Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia.</p>
<p>FESTIVAL OF VOICES TAS (29 Jun to 15 Jul 2018)</p>		<p>Bringing together international, national and local artists and workshop leaders, choirs and audiences in a celebration of song across all genres. Opening on the stunning East Coast, and closing with a spectacular Finale Concert in Hobart, and in between massed choirs, cabaret and contemporary performances, family and pop up events.</p>
<p>MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (2 - 19 August 2018)</p>		<p>MIFF is a not-for-profit organisation that has been continuously running since 1952, making it the leading film festival in Australia and one of the world's oldest film festivals, alongside Cannes and Berlin. Presenting a curated global program of innovative screen experiences and the world's largest showcase of exceptional Australian filmmaking, MIFF is an accessible, iconic cultural event that provides transformative experiences for audiences and filmmakers alike.</p>
<p>AUSTRALIAN FESTIVAL OF CHAMBER MUSIC (27 Jul - 5 August 2018)</p>		<p>The Australian Festival of Chamber Music is a friendly, unique and internationally acclaimed event presenting a 10 day program of over 30 concerts and special events. Experience the world's finest chamber musicians performing in various combinations exclusively in the tropical winter warmth of Townsville, North Queensland.</p>
<p>MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL (24 Aug to 2 Sep 2018)</p>		<p>This year's festival will open with a gala celebration featuring previously announced guest Andrew WK, alongside musical performances by gay and lesbian youth chorus shOUT Choir, child soldier turned rap icon Fabrice Manirakiza, soul singer Mojo Juju, and kids author Andy Griffiths, who will perform a DJ set.</p>

## **SAGE SPEAKS**

### **LOVE THE POOREST OF THE POOR**

There is in the heart of our young people that deep longing to show the joy of service. So let us be praying, in our family, and through prayer we will be able to help each other to grow in holiness. Holiness is not the luxury of a few. It is easy to become holy if we love one another as God loves each one of us.

I will pray for all of you that we may all grow together in the joy of loving and you also pray for me as also for my sisters who are serving the poorest of the poor, that we may do God's work, that we may continue doing it with great love so that God's grace is with us and we share the joy of loving by giving love and tender care to the poorest of the poor. God bless you.



Many people think, especially in the West, that having money makes you happy. I think it must be harder to be happy if you are wealthy because you may find it difficult to see God: you'll have too many other things to think about. However, if God has given you this gift of wealth, then use it for His purpose help others, help the poor, create jobs, give work to others. Don't waste your wealth. Having food, a home, dignity, freedom, health, and an education are all of God's gifts too, which is why we must help those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

- *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

## HOW TO BEAT THE HIGH COST OF LIVING

*Edwin Flatto*

The secret of arriving at that elusive state known as financial independence is not based on how much one earns, but on how much one can save. The average person, living conventionally on a typical medium income could easily save several thousand dollars a year by eliminating unwholesome, unnecessary and undesirable expenditures in his living and eating habits. By ridding himself of these wasteful habits he need not lower his standard of living. For instance, if a person lives in accordance with Nature's laws, his medical expense should equal zero. Drug expenses should also be made to vanish. Expenses for synthetic vitamins, 'tonics' and stimulants ditto. Certainly the tremendous sums wantonly wasted by the average citizen for liquor, 'cocktails' and beer can all be profitably eliminated from the family budget. The vast sums of money literally burnt up yearly by cigarette, cigar and pipe smoking all represent sheer wasteful uses of capital. Candy, white sugar products, 'soft drinks', soda water, etc., are all examples of items that should be eliminated from the family diet. The avoidance of these foodless foods will immeasurably help to eliminate dental and medical bills.

Meat and meat products are by far the most expensive food items in the family budget. From a nutritional stand-point, their protein content can easily be replaced by other more economical foodstuffs, such as nuts, which can supply all needed proteins at a much lower cost. The average person rides his automobile or public transportation too much for short distances which could easily be accomplished by walking or bicycle riding. (This would immeasurably improve the public health if bicycle riding were in vogue here as in the Scandinavian countries.) I could go on and on with examples, but I re-emphasise, that none of these economy measures

will actually reduce a person's standard of living in a real deep sense. On the contrary, it will raise it, while permitting him to save thousands of dollars. Likewise, the enjoyment of living need not be curtailed by eliminating these vices. There are many hobbies or recreations which cost nothing yet enrich a person's life. Gardening, for instance, or growing a part of one's food supply, can not only save several hundred dollars a year, but can bring immeasurable pleasure and satisfaction. Community concerts, your Public Library, City Museums, your National Parks and Forests, the cultivation of warm friendships, can all be the richest yet least expensive pleasures in life.

Few people understand what 'retirement' really implies. They believe 'retirement' and 'idleness' are synonymous terms. In truth, retirement can mean doing the type of work one chooses to do or enjoys doing rather than working merely for pay. Of course, it requires a certain amount of planning and self-restraint during one's productive years to be able to resist the innumerable temptations along the way. But the tread-mill, or the mechanical bunny chasing type of existence can all be forgotten. A modicum of intelligence and applied self-control is all that is required. It's up to you.

Good Luck!

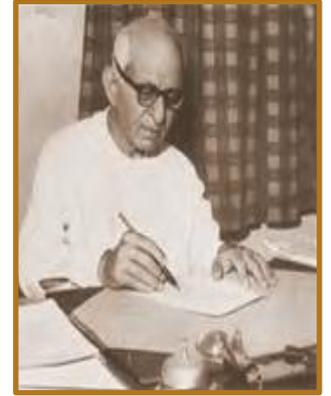
*From Bhavan's Journal, June 2, 1968  
Reprinted in Bhavan's Journal June 15, 2018*

The logo for 'Flash Back' features a large, stylized, reddish-brown letter 'F' followed by the words 'lash Back' in a black, lowercase, serif font.

# Kulapativani

## Students Bring Sunshine

True service, apart from great national crisis where the student must render every assistance, is to bring sunshine in whatever sphere he moves in. It is as great a service as any man can render. An ailing sister in the house; a lonely mother who needs company; an unfortunate neighbour who needs aid; a passer-by who is in distress; a victim of crime as you go along the street; some unfortunate who is being sacrificed at the altar of a social, economic or communal evil; a riot where the innocent requires protection even at the cost of life; a city without sweepers which wants volunteers for scavenging; a great occasion to be organised which needs service; a village needing education for social welfare; a night class where the poor have to be taught; — these are spheres of service in which every student can bring not only help but sunshine.



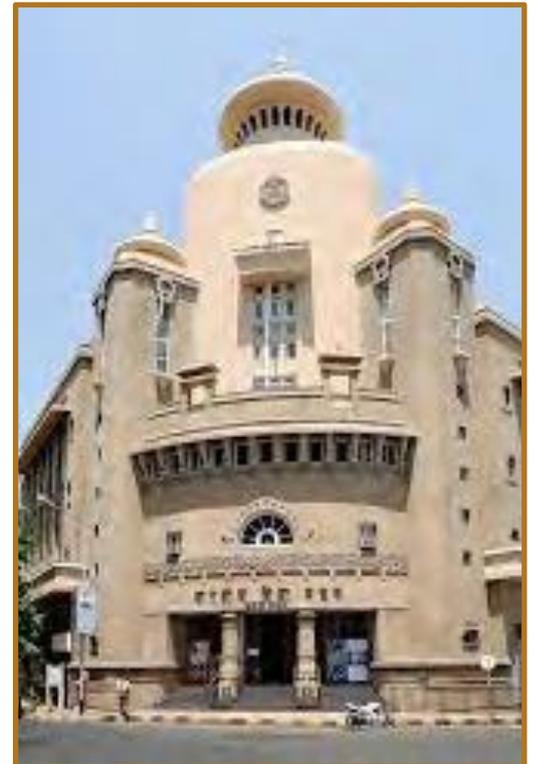
**Dr K.M. Munshi**  
Founder, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

## The Test of Bhavan's Right to Exist

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

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

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



*Reader.com*



## *We seek Support for Bhavan Australia's Building Project!*

Note: *We invite frank opinion from our readers.*

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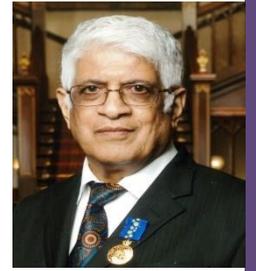
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