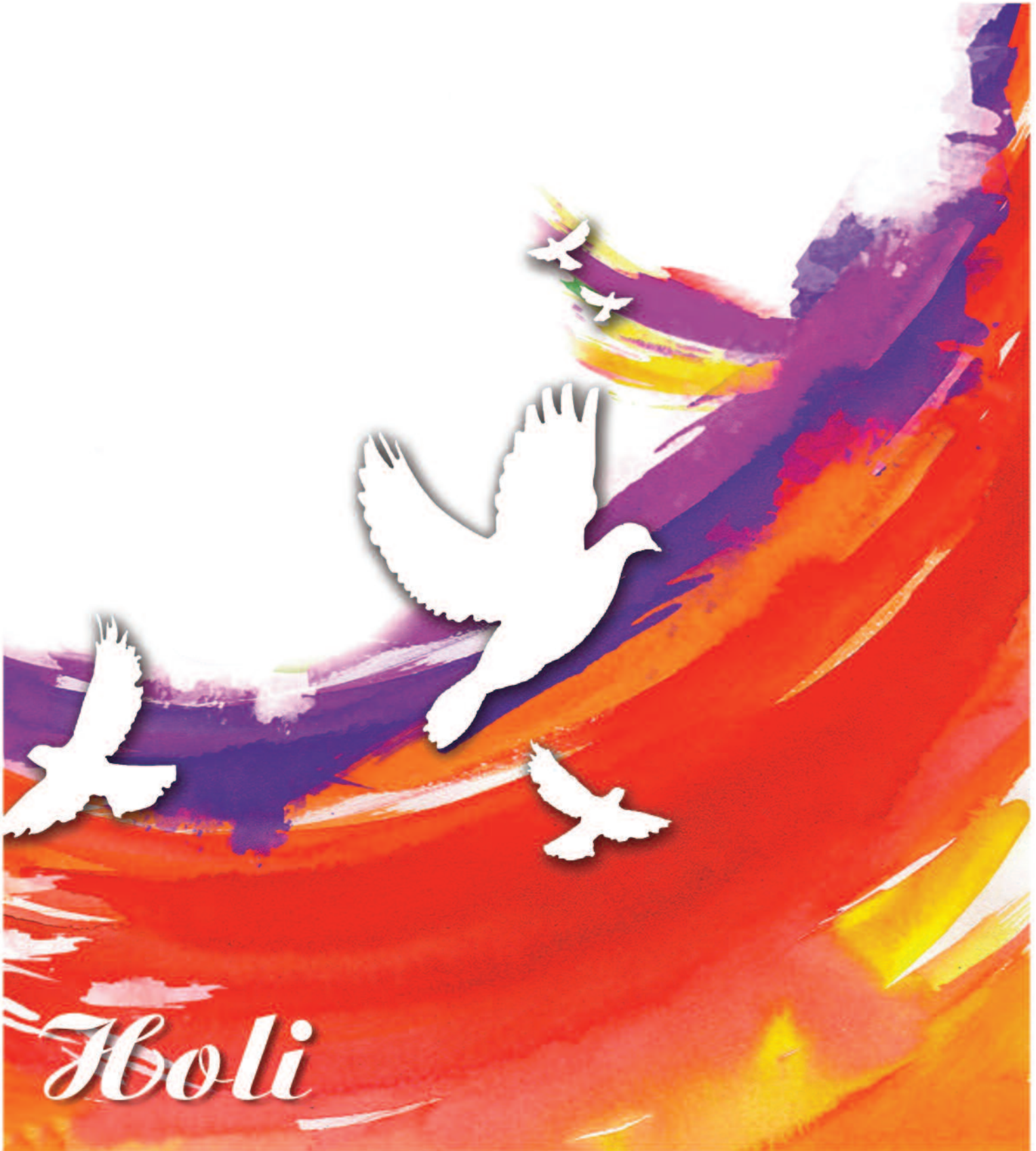


Bhavan Australia

www.bhavanaaustralia.org

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side - Rig Veda, 1-89-i



Life | Literature | Culture

March / April 2013 | Vol 10 No. 9 & 10 | Issn 1449 - 3551

International Centre of Nonviolence Officially launched



Hon. Ela Gandhi



Mr Gambhir Watts



Prof Stuart Rees



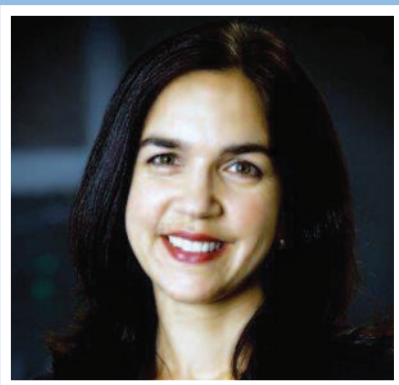
Dr Phil Lambert



Hon. Stepan Kerkyasharian



Hon. Victor Dominello



Hon. Lisa Singh



HE Biren Nanda



Ms Moksha Watts

Ela Gandhi Granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi officially launched ***International Centre of Nonviolence*** on 27 February 2013 at New South Wales Parliament House. Detailed reports appear elsewhere in this magazine.

ICON Australia seeks ways of developing a culture of nonviolence. Such a culture is much more than the avoidance of violence. It challenges imbalances of power, based on race, gender and other identities. It entails that we address the inequalities of wealth in society. It requires and contributes to a context of sustainable development. The role of education in schools and universities is central in building such a society.

Our Vision

Our vision is of a nonviolent society based on the celebration of our common humanity and of the natural environment that sustains us.

Our Mission

ICON works to make strategic interventions in education – development of educators and curricula, teaching and writing – that challenge structural violence, enable learning untainted by violence and advance a culture of nonviolence. It works through reflective practice and focused research to develop and disseminate its understanding, and to build networks of educators with a similar vision and commitment.

ICON South Africa's Current Projects – Inspiration for Future ICON Australia Projects

Higher Education

ICON is a member of the General Education Task Team that is leading the development of general education at Durban University of Technology (DUT). Its specific work at present is to develop three modules: Conflict and peace-building, Diversity and justice, and Humanity in the environment.

The plan is to develop further teaching in the specific area of violence, nonviolence and teaching, for Education students at DUT and other universities.

Non-formal Work

ICON undertakes workshops with a range of local groupings in the Durban area. Currently it is working on a project with the Community Development Association, based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, to develop young peer counsellors in schools on issues of HIV/AIDS.

Developing a Model of Peace-Building within organisations.

ICON jointly formulated a proposal with the Wildlife and Environment Society of Southern Africa to address the social issues related to a new housing project in the eThekweni Metro. This is part of a longer-term project of developing a model for best practice in peace-building within development projects.

For this Month

Nonviolence in Action



'Nonviolence' and 'Gandhi' seem synonyms.

For Gandhi, ahimsa (nonviolence) was the expression of the deepest love for all humans, including one's opponents; this non-violence therefore included not only a lack of physical harm to them, but also a lack of hatred or ill-will towards them. Gandhi rejected the traditional dichotomy between one's own side and the "enemy;" he believed in the need to convince opponents of their injustice, not to punish them, and in this way one could win their friendship and one's own freedom. If need be, one might need to suffer or die in order that they may be converted to love (Shepard 4).

These views seem to be greatly influenced by Sermon on Mount which he first read in his study days in London when he was in his early twenties and recounted throughout his life in South Africa and thereafter. Gandhi never spoke against anyone. He advocated "hate the sin not the sinner".

Gandhi also firmly believed that if violence was used to achieve any end – even if it was employed in the name of justice – the result would be more violence. But such pragmatism in matters of non-violence was unimportant to Gandhi. Thomas Merton writes:

"In Gandhi's mind, non-violence was not simply a political tactic which was supremely useful and efficacious [for him]... On the contrary, the spirit of non-violence sprang from an inner realization of



Hon. Ela Gandhi

spiritual unity in himself”.

Karl Deutsch, an eminent political scientist of the USA attempted an exercise wherein he made a list of eminent people of the world who had made original contributions to human civilization. Among the luminaries he mentioned were Mao of China and Gandhi of India.

Later on, during the fifties, some fifty or more Nobel Laureates made a fervent appeal to the great powers of the world never to allow a nuclear holocaust. In this appeal, the only name they mentioned was that of Gandhi.

I was delighted with bliss when I got invitation from Ela Gandhi to attend 3 days conference on ‘Action in Nonviolence’ in South Africa last year. I attended the conference to be with Ela Gandhi to get a spark of blissful vibes of Mahatma Gandhi. Which I felt.

After seeing her work and the work of other people from all over the world I was determined to start International Centre of Nonviolence. I humbly asked Ela Gandhi if she would come to Australia to launch the Centre and she said yes without any hesitation.

Here we are. She has been visiting various institutes and schools and giving lectures at several institutes including Australia India Institute / Melbourne University and University of New South Wales (attended by 600+ people).

Ela Gandhi launched the Centre at the Parliament House, Sydney in presence of the Federal and State Government representatives and the High Commissioner of India. The formal launch speech was preceded by Peace music and rendering of three National Anthems a wonderful lecture by Prof Stuart Rees on “Practicing Nonviolence: Gandhi Legacy, International Priorities”.

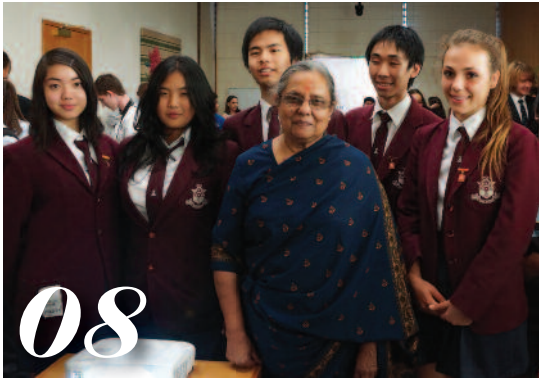
Closing was done by blissful rendering of SGI Choir “Great Heart” by Johnney Clegg, South African composer.

Such a grand launch by the living legend with her extensive related activities over 5 days will keep us on toe to make this centre successful.

Gambhir Watts
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia



Contents



International Centre of Nonviolence Australia Post Launch Report	08	World Harmony Day	45
Messages of Support for ICON Australia	13	Swami Vivekananda Conversations and Dialogues	46
ICON Australia Patron: Ela Gandhi	16	Science is Understanding Nature!	48
Practicing Non Violence: Gandhi Legacy, International Priorities	17	Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi	50
Holi Mahotsav	35	S. Ramakrishnan: He offered Nutrients for Disturbed Minds	54
Celebrations of Bhavan's Holi Mahotsav 2013: A Report	38	Sikkim: Where Culture Reflects Geography	56
Celebrate the Indian Festival of Colours around the Globe	42	Epics—India's Pride and Culture Mahabharata ...	59
The Power of Money	44	Festivals of the Month—Australia	62
		Festivals of the Month—India	63
		Pandora's Inbox	64

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN AUSTRALIA

Office Bearers:

President	Surendralal Mehta
Executive Secretary	Homi Navroji Dastur
Chairman	Shanker Dhar
Secretary	Sridhar Kumar Kondepudi

Other Directors:

Palladam Narayana Santhanagopal, Kalpana Shiram, Jagannathan Veeraraghavan, Moksha Watts, Krishan Kumar Gupta, Srinivasan Venkataraman.

President: Gambhir Watts

Patrons: Her Excellency Mrs Sujatha Singh (Former High Commissioner of India in Australia), His Excellency Prahat Shukla (Former High Commissioner of India in Australia), His Excellency Rajendra Singh Rathore (Former High Commissioner of India in Australia)

Honorary Life Patron: His Excellency M. Ganapathi (Former Consul General of India in Australia and a Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia)

Publisher & General Editor:

Gambhir Watts
president@bhavanaustralia.org

Editorial Committee:

Shanker Dhar, Parveen Dahiya,
Sridhar Kumar Kondepudi, Jesica Flores Sasse
editors@bhavanaustralia.org

Designed and Printed at:

India Empire, New Delhi, India
Ph: +91.9899117477

Advertising:

info@bhavanaustralia.org
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia
Suite 100 / 515 Kent Street,
Sydney NSW 2000

The views of contributors to *Bhavan Australia* are not necessarily the views of *Bhavan Australia* or the Editor. *Bhavan Australia* reserves the right to edit any contributed articles and letters submitted for publication. *Copyright:* all advertisements and original editorial material appearing remain the property of *Bhavan Australia* and may not be reproduced except with the written consent of the owner of the copyright.

Bhavan Australia: - ISSN 1449 – 3551

Swami Vivekananda's Poems

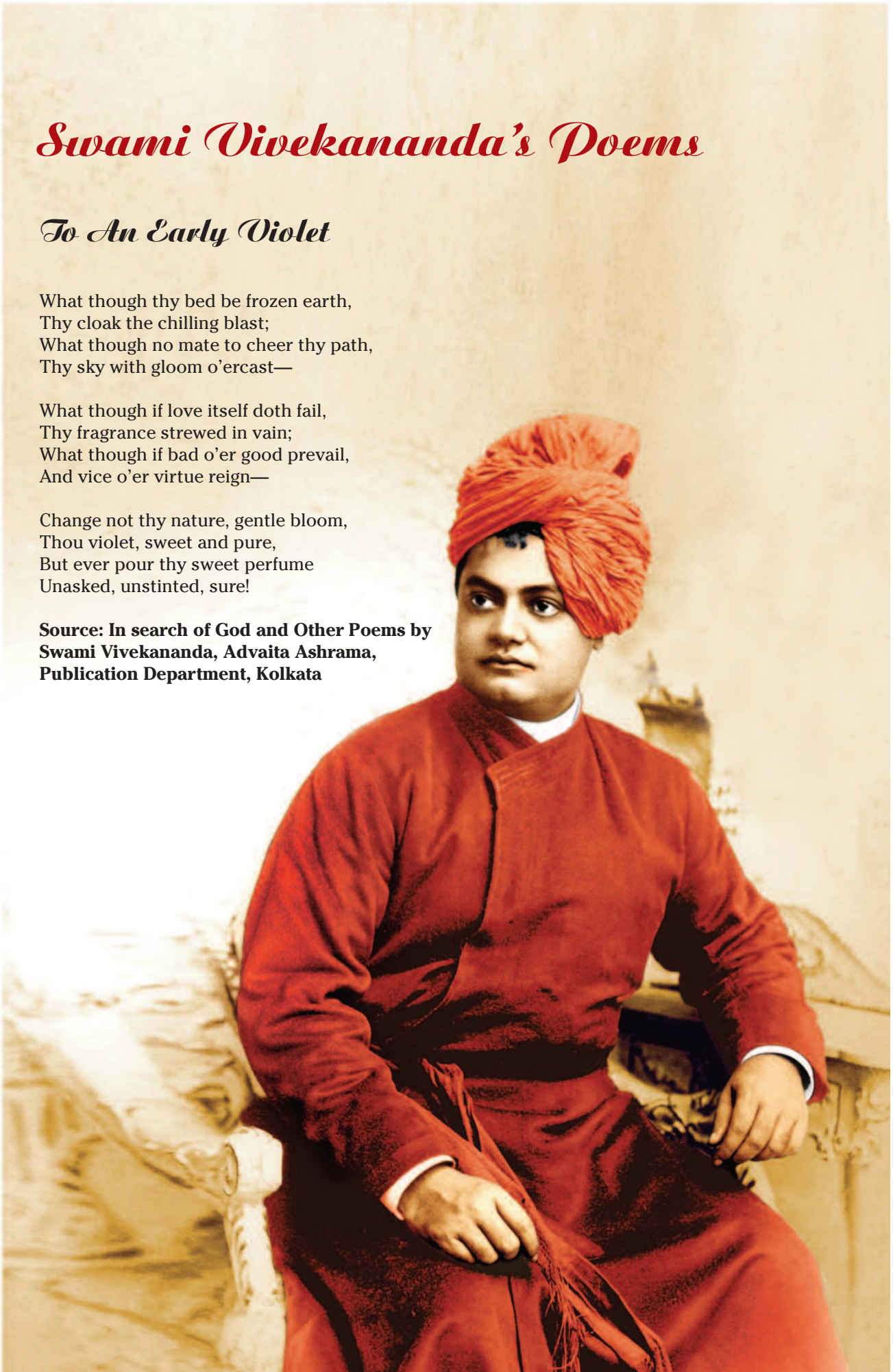
To An Early Violet

What though thy bed be frozen earth,
Thy cloak the chilling blast;
What though no mate to cheer thy path,
Thy sky with gloom o'er cast—

What though if love itself doth fail,
Thy fragrance strewed in vain;
What though if bad o'er good prevail,
And vice o'er virtue reign—

Change not thy nature, gentle bloom,
Thou violet, sweet and pure,
But ever pour thy sweet perfume
Unasked, unstinted, sure!

**Source: In search of God and Other Poems by
Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama,
Publication Department, Kolkata**



International Centre of Nonviolence Australia Post Launch Report

Inspired by and with the support of Ela Gandhi, Gandhi Development Trust and ICON (International Centre of Nonviolence) Durban, we formally launched the International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON) Australia on 27 February 2013 at the New South Wales Parliament House in presence of Federal and State Ministers, diplomats and a host of academic, community and religious luminaries.

Ela Gandhi graciously agreed to come from South Africa for the launch and visited a number of schools and institutions in Melbourne and Sydney over 6 days and was engaged extensively with the Media ABC TV and Radio, SBS and a number of community Radios and TVs.

The schools, institutions and workshops included: Ashbury Primary School and Fort Street High School and Workshops at Parliament House conducted by Sylvania High School and Parliament House conducted by Kingsgrove North High School. Schools program and workshops organised by Dr Phil Lambert PSM, Sydney Regional Director with the Department of Education and Communities.

Events for Ela Gandhi organized by ICON Australia

Melbourne Program for 24 & 25 February 2013

Ela Gandhi's visits to Collingwood Children's Farm; Hanover Crisis Accommodation Centre, University of Melbourne Early Learning Center and Women's Domestic Violence Centre Lecture at the Australia India Institute: *If Gandhi were alive today?* Full Speech appears elsewhere in this Magazine.

Public Lecture for 26 February 2013

Lecture at University of New South Wales by Ela Gandhi: *Building a culture of non-violence: the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi*. Full Speech appears elsewhere in this Magazine.

Lecture for 28 February 2013

Lecture at Olympic Park organised by Soka Gakkai International by Ela Gandhi: *Human Security and*

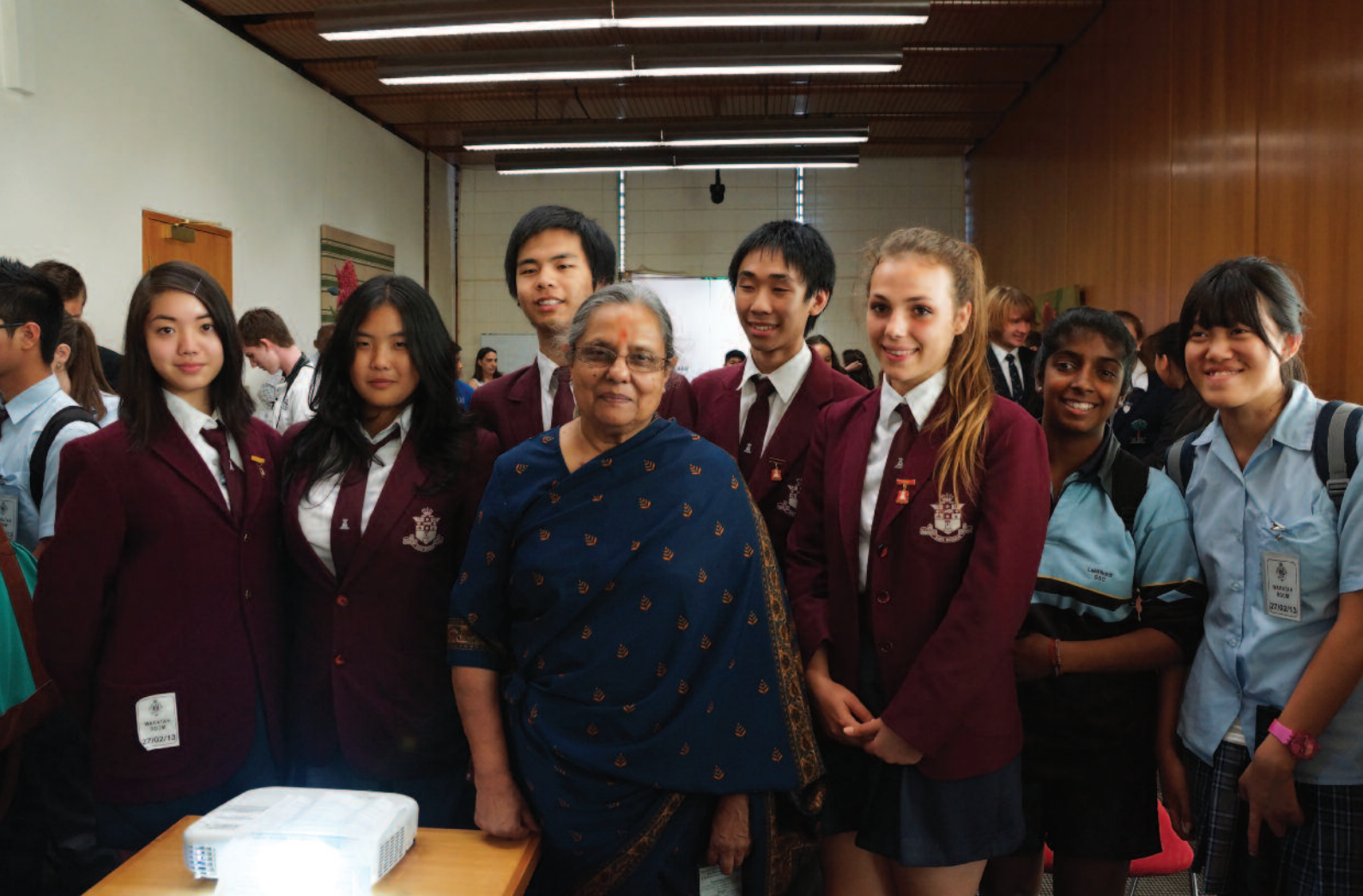
Sustainability. This had been organised Greg Johns, General Director, Soka Gakkai International Australia at their Cultural Centre at the Sydney Olympic Park. Full Speech appears elsewhere in this Magazine.

Speeches at the Launch on 27 February 2013 in Parliament House of New South Wales

Hon. Victor Dominello (New South Wales Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs)

We are in the presence of humanities royalty here tonight; Ela Gandhi is a true successor to the mentor of her grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi. And we are very privileged to have her here today for the launch. This is an important organisation in our State, the International Centre of Nonviolence Australia, ICON. Any organisation inspired by a member of the Gandhi family should be one worthy of support. And when the organisation's goal is to promote nonviolence in our lives, it cannot be ignored.

My support goes automatically to groups who are reaching out across ethnic boundaries to combine their individual strengths. While Gambhir Watts and the Bhavan Australia are setting out to do, the International Centre of Nonviolence will bring together some key leaders from our diverse range of backgrounds to promote this wonderful ideal of nonviolence. I think this Centre can send a very powerful message to the world because we have in this state an almost incredible diversity of race, of faith, of language in our communities, yet we live in harmony. If we can exploit that harmony to promote lives of nonviolence we will have something to show to the rest of the world, where for sure there is way too much violence. And I congratulate you again for this outstanding initiative and when I look in front of me and I see students here and I've heard what the MC said in relation to education. Particularly in my travels as a Minister of Citizenship and Communities I realise how important it is in that educational framework to make sure the message beyond that, the culture of nonviolence is taught. If we don't get that right at the educational level then it's far harder later on



to bring the genie back into the bottle. So I really encourage it because this is going to be a movement, a lighthouse, for where the world needs to be if we want to truly get to that enlightened stage.

Senator Lisa Singh (Federal Government of Australia), Acting Chair of UNICEF Parliamentary Association

I was delighted when Gambhir invited me to be a part of this tonight and I think this is a night that will stay with me for a very long time. To be in the presence of Ela Gandhi is certainly something very special to me.

As someone that grew up with an understanding of the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, of his values, of his words and I try in my 41 years of life to live out those principles, words and values of him to then have his granddaughter here with us tonight, to be part of this opening of ICON here in Australia is indeed a fantastic and a very auspicious moment in all of our lives. There is also no better way to celebrate Mahatma Gandhi than through the opening of this ICON because here in Australia like anywhere in the world we are not immune to violence. We also have our own share of violence that occurs here in Australia and I think that if we can pick up from what Moksha Watts said it is

through education that we can try to change and turn that around. It is through not only the current generation but their children and their children's children that we hope that one day will have a country and a world that is free of violence.

Briefly this week the Four Corners program on the ABC which very much focused on an hour documentary on violence, it look at alcohol feud violence, it looked at violence of young men and for me in my previous political life when I was a member of the Parliament and a Minister in the State Parliament in Tasmania I was landed with a portfolio that perhaps not all Ministers particularly want to put their hands up for and that was the portfolio of corrections, of dealing with our correctional system. And there of course I was landed with how to approach, how we stop the recidivism rate of those violent men who ended up in our prison system coming out and repeating that action and I found myself looking at the values of Mahatma Gandhi and looking at how in some way we can ensure that they come out more peaceful than they've been in in the first place.

Of course I think that the other aspect that Moksha also picked up on is the fact that women are often the more targeted gender, not always, but there are statistics that reveal that women will be more subject to violence, to sexual violence, in their



Ms Moksha Watts



Mr Gambhir Watts

lifetime and I think that again is something that in Australia we are certainly not immune to.

On behalf of the Australian government it is a complete honour for me to stand here tonight and to welcome to Australia and to be here with you at this opening of ICON which is something that the whole country will benefit from in the future.

Dr Phil Lambert (Regional Director, Sydney Department of Education; Adjunct Associate Professor (University of Sydney); Adjunct Professor (Nanjing University)

What a day it's been. I have to say this will go down as one of the highlights of my career. Before today I think I would have said the two most wonderful women that I spent a day with are my wife and my daughter, I'm going to extend that to three because I had the absolute privilege of spending the day with Ela Gandhi.

From the moment, I actually met her yesterday we talked through the arrangements for today, but met her this morning and talked with her throughout the car trip to Ashbury Public School, one of our fabulous public schools, where we had the most delightful program. It's one of our schools that have been doing some standing work in White Ribbon, combating violence against women and girls and we also have there our Indian Calling Program which opens clearly the eyes of our students, the majority clearly are not from Indian background joined up by video conferences with six other schools who regularly learn about Indian culture and learn to appreciate and respect India and its culture. Then we had a trip to Fort Street

High School, we happened to hear their fabulous band outside, and that was a wonderful program meeting with the senior students there and also a major assembly. Apparently the students at the school, the representative council of the school, ordered the executive of the school that I had to be a whole assembly, there couldn't be a few privileged students to meet Ela. There had to be the full student population and there were so many excited students and the questions were fantastic.

I actually have to say that Miss Gandhi tonight will go to sleep with a big smile on her face; I've never seen paparazzi like I've seen throughout today. There were cameras everywhere, flashing everywhere and she was charming. She accepted every request, every single request. I can tell you my legs are giving away I am going to flop tonight when I get home. She has so much energy I kept asking her if she'd like a little rest that was for me actually. She is a wonderful ambassador, a wonderful woman to hear about her work with Nelson Mandela, with the party, her timing in government and what she's been doing since her commitment. She's an amazing woman.

His Excellency Biren Nanda, High Commissioner of India

Senator Lisa Singh, Gambhir Watts, dear friends I think this a very unique occasion, we are very honoured to have with us here today Ela Gandhiji who has devoted her life to continuing the message, the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi. South Africa was the laboratory in which Gandhiji refined his techniques. In a sense when he left India the nationalists politics in India had begun in 1885 with

the founding of the Congress party but the technique that the Congress party and his leaders like Gandhiji's political group used was constitutional they tried to agitate for self-improvement within the institutions of the community department. When Gandhi came to South Africa he was called to South Africa by a prominent member of the Indian community. Gandhiji faced several disabilities and discrimination in South Africa and he began to experiment with his technique of nonviolence and passive resistance. To Gandhiji this was not just something which was a physical manifestation of action; it was nonviolence, so if you faced nonviolence towards your interlocutor and you did not act violently it was not good enough. That is you have to exercise self-control and have love and affection for the person you were dealing with and it was not just nonviolence in action it was nonviolence at heart and that I think is very difficult to achieve which is why when he went back to India and when he let the mass seek this disobedient movement against the government he offered ... at the time when it seemed to be doing very well, it seemed to be succeeding because for him the means to the end was very important and for him the adherence to the discipline of

nonviolence was very important.

Professor Emeritus Stuart Rees (Professor Emeritus of the University of Sydney, Chair of the Sydney Peace Foundation)

Stuart Rees delivered the theme lecture: Practicing Non Violence: Gandhi Legacy, International Priorities. Prof Stuart said that Mahatma Gandhi advocated ahimsa – nonviolence – as a way of living and as a law for life and that his principles of nonviolence inspired civil disobedience towards governments and other representations of oppressive authority. Through skills in organizing, through the clarity of his philosophy as expressed in letters, articles and speeches and often through his courage in fasting, Gandhi led by personal example. He lived and breathed the principle later embraced by feminists and others that the personal is the political.

The ideology of nonviolence and the cues for practice are contained in the language of Shelley and Thoreau, of Gandhi and King. They painted pictures of justice and human rights. They knew the ideals of a freedom which would enhance everyone's fulfilment without interfering with





others' freedom of expression.

The language of nonviolence is crucial. It conveys people's interest and appreciation, their gratitude and creativity, laughter and love. Such words contrast with the language of violence in politics, in the crafting of economic, defence or security policies and in individuals' behavior, whether in families, in schools, on the streets, in public or private organizations. Such violence is crippling and self-defeating. It has nothing to do with visions of humanity and cues about conflict resolution contained in Gandhi's notion of ahimsa. (Full speech appears separately elsewhere in the magazine).

Ela Gandhi

In the last four days she learnt so much in Australia, by visiting so many schools, so many centres and so many wonderful things that are happening in the country and I'm taking back with me a lot of lessons from here. So I'm not sure how many lessons I'm going to bring to you but I can only invite you to come to South Africa, have exchange programs and let's learn from each other because that is the most important thing about ICON.

I want to say that on behalf of Gandhi Development and Trust and ICON South Africa I want to congratulate you on this initiative. Indeed we must work together to build up a rise of awe of knowledge and respectful models so that it can be replicated throughout the world and we can make a difference.

Ela Gandhi giving a brief background to the formation of ICON in South Africa said that inspired by Gandhiji's work in South Africa and his nonviolent movement a group of volunteers began to look at how to address the rising violence in the country and globally. Ela Gandhi said that while the tendency is to look for solutions in a stringent

justice system approach we look for solutions in Gandhiji's ideas. Clearly his approach to nonviolence was much broader than the strategy to be used in certain situations.

For Gandhiji nonviolence was a way of life. What end is the composition of this way of life and how can we promote it? We brainstormed and came up with many issues and I know Professor Rees has talked about many of them already but among them access to basic needs, universal access to basic needs such as housing, work, education, healthcare, equity, learning universal values, nonviolent communication, all of nonviolent language and a less consumer society. Those were some of the issues brought up at this brainstorming session.

ICON positioned itself for a new and holistic approach because we found that a lot of the peace education programs look at study of values, we also looked at our history syllabus and everybody knows about Hitler, very few people studied about Gandhi or studied about Martin Luther King or any of the peace movements, and there have been many peace movements before and after Gandhiji we heard about them but our history books don't reflect on those. Gandhiji also emphasized the need for learning about other cultures and other languages to broaden the perspective.

In her concluding words, Ela Gandhi said: we look forward to a long and healthy relationship with ICON Australia, a relationship which will share ideas, which will share information and knowledge, and grow from that networking and that relationship. (Full speech appears separately elsewhere in the magazine)

Gambhir Watts
Founder and Chief Coordinator
International Centre of Nonviolence Australia

Messages of Support for ICON Australia

"Take the courage to celebrate what is good in humanity, what is good in the world. This means recognising and speaking of our common humanity and of the ways in which we are connected with each other across countries, across continents, across divisions of race, gender and religion."

"ICON in South Africa is excited to hear of the establishment of ICON Australia. We face different challenges and operate in different contexts, but our task and our ideals are the same. May you go from strength to strength, and may we keep connected and growing together."

Crispin Hemson, Director of the International Centre of Nonviolence, South Africa

"I offer good wishes and admiration for your goals and for the very distinguished list of patrons whom you have already gathered together. I certainly support the concept of a non-religious, non-political organisation dedicated to nonviolence."

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

"Greetings of peace, light and blessing from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Thank you so much for your invitation for the launch of International Centre for Nonviolence Australia. This is indeed a good news to the world and a great initiative which need the support of all of us. I would have love to come in person to take part in the launching ceremony but it will be very difficult to very limited budget my organisation has for such a long distance travel. However I send all our support and partnership to make this initiative an international one. Please keep me posted in all the progress of your noble initiative May Peace Prevail on Earth, In Peace"

Ambassador Mussie Hailu, Regional Director of URI for Africa and Board Chairman of Interfaith Peace-building Initiative, Ethiopia

"At the invitation of respected Dr. Ela Gandhi and ICON's Director, Crispin Hemson, I chaired one of the plenary sessions during the Roots to Fruits conference in Durban and we continue to communicate with Peace Makers/Keepers who attended the Durban conference."

"I am delighted to learn that the establishment of the ICON Australia initiative was inspired by the ICON Durban model which is engaged in a variety of peace education programs at school, university and community levels. Dr. Ela Gandhi is a living practitioner of the Mahatma's declaration that one has to be the CHANGE that one wants to see in the outside world."

"Wishing ICON Australia every success and with kind regards"

Devanathan Govindasamy, Coordinator International School Programme and Special Projects, Durban University of Technology

"May this email reach you and the team in good health and well-being"

This news of the launch of ICON Australia comes with such great hope. We wish you all the best and lots of success in the launch. We are really impressed that the "Roots to Fruits" conference inspired you and the fruit of your participation is the launch of ICON Australia. Love and Light :)"

Saydoon Nisa Sayed, Religions for Peace (WCRP), Durban University of Technology

"Great to hear from you... and congratulations on starting ICON Australia!!! This is fabulous news I am thrilled that the DUT Conference last year has helped inspire you to get ICON Australia off the ground... You are certainly making a tremendous contribution to the Australian community and to the struggle to foster improved peace and non-violence in our world."

Here's to your continued success and good fortune. God bless"

Alan Khan, Senior Director, Corporate Affairs, Durban University of Technology

*"Greetings from Kandy, Sri Lanka!
I am indeed grateful to you for the kind invitation to attend the inauguration of the International Centre of Non Violence Australia. I am extremely happy that you have been able to take the initiative to form this programme. This is the way forward for all our countries and peoples, even though many of our political leaders are not able to understand this. May I take this opportunity to wish you and all others involved in your programme, all the very best and courage to move forward with much dedication and commitment. We will be very much in solidarity with you. Please be in touch and be assured of our prayers and all good wishes for the success of your work. Shalom and with every blessing."*

Bishop Kumara Illangasinghe

"It is so gratifying to learn that you are setting up of an International Centre for Non-violence in Australia. The pivotal role of Gandhian values in general and

Ahimsa in particular in making this earth a peaceful place to live in can never be over emphasized. I heartily compliment you for your efforts in promoting these ideals and am sure that this centre will go a long way in a) providing conducive environment and necessary space for academic studies and b) creating awareness amongst the general public on Gandhian thoughts."

Lalit Surjan, Chief Editor, Deshbandhu Group, Raipur, India

"Congratulations on setting up this remarkable Organization. Such may be a beacon through the World creating a conscience of Peace, Love and Friendship."

Mervin Reddy, Clairwood Tamil Institute, South Africa



Message of Support from HE Ms Koleka Mqulwana, South African High Commissioner

Let me begin by acknowledging the sterling work done by one of the great daughters on our land, Ela Gandhi, the granddaughter of the world-renowned nonviolence global icon Mahatma Gandhi. Also, I acknowledge the tireless efforts by co-founders and coordinators of ICON Australia who, inspired by ICON South Africa, made this launch possible tonight here in Sydney, Australia. I regret that I could not be in attendance tonight to witness this historic launch which undoubtedly will feed into the world efforts for peace and nonviolence through education and public awareness.

I congratulate ICON on its launch and I am hopeful that it will occupy a critical space in the education and advocacy of non-violence not just in Australia but the world-over.

The devastation of violence on society cannot be overemphasised. It robs people of their dignity and fundamental human rights which are incompatible with the principle of social justice. More worrying is that violence disproportionately affects the vulnerable especially women with dire consequences for society since women are traditionally the cornerstone of families and play key roles in societal development. The scourge of violence cannot be left to the governments alone; it is something all of us, NGOs and private sector should tackle head on. ICON Australia will play a pivotal role in this regard.

We cannot turn a blind eye on violence and miraculously expect the problem to disappear. We must all strive to live in a world where there is not only an absence of violence but where love, compassion and empathy thrive. Mahatma Gandhi himself once said, "Where there is love there is life". We must learn and be inspired by people such as Gandhi and Nelson Mandela who espoused the notion of nonviolence even when some people criticised it as ineffective. Violence, whether

amongst individuals or nations, has ravaged society for far too long. The devastating impacts are left behind for all to see. Whilst violence sometimes only lasts for a temporary period, its ramifications can span a lifetime. A violence free society is what we all yearn and strive for.

It is also fair to acknowledge that some of the violence we see is as a result of the abuse of power by those entrusted with this power and others are a consequence of crimes committed against humanity which contributed to current challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty due to past marginalization and socio-economic exclusion. It is true that when people feel that they are being neglected by those who are in power, they sometimes show their contempt through violent means. This of course should be discouraged and rejected but I do hope that it will propel those in power to act in the best interests of people.

I wish ICON success on the important work they are undertaking and would like to leave you with these words by Wally Nelson (1980):

"Nonviolence is the constant awareness of the dignity and the humanity of oneself and others; it seeks truth and justice; it renounces violence both in method and in attitude; it is a courageous acceptance of active love and goodwill as the instrument with which to overcome evil and transform both oneself and to others. It is the willingness to undergo suffering rather than inflict it. It excludes retaliation and flight."



HE Ms Koleka Mqulwana

ICOM Australia

Patron: Ela Gandhi

Ela Gandhi, Granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, a globally renowned peace activist, a living legend herself, ex-Chancellor of the Durban University of Technology having served for 5 years is Organiser and Trustee of Gandhi Development Trust, South Africa, Trustee on the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Trust and Hon International President of World Conference on Religions for Peace.

Leading advocate of the culture of nonviolence and Restorative justice in the Gandhian perspective, she is Founder and Board Member of the International Centre of Nonviolence, South Africa. She is Editor and Chairperson of Satyagraha - In Pursuit of Truth and author of Essential Values of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhiji's Encounter with the Fourth Estate and Mohandas Gandhi and Chris Hani as part of a series called, 'They Fought For Freedom' among others. She was recipient of Bookchat Award – 1994, South African Books of the Year, The Living Legends Award from Kwa Zulu Natal Province, The Padma Bhushan Award by the President of India, and Community of Christ Award among a host of other awards. Ela Gandhi was an ANC Member of Parliament in South Africa from 1994-2004.

Initially her parents educated her at home. "I saw my neighbour's children were all going to school. I was a little child and I said, No, I have to go to school now. I was eight or nine years old". Her parents agreed to send her to a school about two kilometres away from home. "This was my first rebellion".

When Ela went to university the only university in KwaZulu Natal, only catered for White students. They held after hours' sessions for Black students at Sastri College. She enrolled for a B.A. degree



with law subjects but gave up studying law as she did not want to study Afrikaans. She then switched to a Social Sciences degree through UNISA.

Ela first became aware of racial oppression, "from the time I went to school. My mother started a non-racial school at Gandhi's House for about 200 children. An inspector said; you can't teach... there is a law against private schools, and in particular you being an Indian cannot teach African children".

In 1952, when Ela was 12 years old, her father started going to Defiance Campaign meetings. They used to march to the Brook Street library, which was an all-White library, and enter the building. Ela walked with her brother, sisters and friends in and went to African townships where Indians were forbidden to go by law.

"I think activism is working at grassroots. It also trains you in democracy to consult, to value opinions of people, not to have a judgement, not to make up your mind in a drawing room or something. To go out in the community and experience what the community is experiencing and work with them and listen to what they are saying, rather than saying that they are having a bad time, so we need to do something about it". Her goal as an activist was to "bring about awareness among people".

Practicing Non Violence: Gandhi Legacy, International Priorities

—Stuart Rees*

(Paper at Opening of the International Centre for Non Violence, Parliament of New South Wales, 27th of February 2013)

Mahatma Gandhi advocated ahimsa – non violence – as a way of living and as a law for life. His goals included independence for an Indian society to be characterized by equality, tolerance of all religions and an end to the prejudice embedded in the Indian caste system.

His principles of non violence inspired civil disobedience towards governments and other representations of oppressive authority. Through skills in organizing, through the clarity of his philosophy as expressed in letters, articles and speeches and often through his courage in fasting, Gandhi led by personal example. He lived and breathed the principle later embraced by feminists and others that the personal is the political.

Predecessors and Followers

The rich history of non violence owes much to Gandhi but inspiration can also be derived from other leaders, some of whom preceded Gandhi, some of whom followed.

In his famous poem *The Mask of Anarchy* the English poet Shelley challenged the English military forces' massacre, in 1819, of civilians who were protesting peacefully in favour of parliamentary reforms. From the late 1830's until his death in 1862, the American philosopher Thoreau opposed slavery, advocated tax resistance and the benefits of living in harmony with a natural environment. The great Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy opposed conscription, corporal and capital punishment, and sought an end to the worst practices of serfdom. In his last years he corresponded with Gandhi, who wrote of his



appreciation of Tolstoy's influential opposition to various forms of state organized violence.

In the latter part of the 20th century and into the 21st, other leaders of non violence have acknowledged the lessons learned from Mahatma Gandhi and with impressive courage they have put his principles into practice. The civil rights movement in the United States, owed much to the vision and the disciplined non violence of the charismatic Martin Luther King (see King 1987). In her long years of house arrest in Rangoon, the courageous

Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi opposed a brutal military dictatorship and resisted the pleas of those who said that only violence would topple that cruel regime.

Today's Priorities

The ideology of non violence and the cues for practice are contained in the language of Shelley and Thoreau, of Gandhi and King. They painted pictures of justice and human rights. They knew the ideals of a freedom which would enhance everyone's fulfillment without interfering with others' freedom of expression.

The language of non violence is crucial (Rees 2003). It conveys people's interest and appreciation, their gratitude and creativity, laughter and love. Such words contrast with the language of violence in politics, in the crafting of economic, defence or security policies and in individuals' behavior, whether in families, in schools, on the streets, in public or private organizations. Such violence is crippling and self defeating. It has nothing to do with visions of humanity and cues about conflict resolution contained in Gandhi's notion of ahimsa (see Weber 2001).

A poll to identify today's priority in any campaign to replace violence with non violence would probably include the elimination of violence against women and children, an end to child trafficking, an end to drug wars in South America and to any State's use of violent counter terrorism to wage the war on terror.

In such a poll I would place as first equal an end to violence against women and children and the abolition of all nuclear weapons. Millions of others would vote for both choices. Around the world on Valentine's Day February 14th 2013, one billion people marched in protest against the abuse of women. A treaty to eliminate the possession of any nuclear weapons would benefit all of humanity and all living things. The International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) says that the threat to life on earth is not about such weapons getting into the wrong hands. It is about the potential for mass destruction being in any one's hands; and the treaty for non proliferation of nuclear weapons is only a small step towards nuclear abolition.

In relation to this nuclear abolition objective,

the poet Denise Levertov imagined a world in which uranium had been left to lie and nuclear weapons had never been manufactured. If that had happened, she writes, it would have been

*the sign
providing witness,
occasion,
ritual
for the continuing act of
nonviolence, of passionate
reverence, active love.*

-(Levertov, What It Could Be, 2001, p. 249)

The Infinite List of Violence

In the modern world the State itself, which is supposed to represent and protect its people, is a major source of violence against them and others. The extent of contemporary fascination with violence reads like a shopping list of all the products, which in saner moments, almost no-one would buy; and to explain the urgent need for non violent solutions, that list should be identified, beginning with the carnage in the Syrian civil war. Instead of a celebration of their religious and political differences, the opposing forces in that country have sought revenge and with the aid of arms suppliers have consolidated that centuries old cliché that violence begets violence. Similar assumptions about slaughter as a way to address differences have persisted throughout the decades long civil wars in the Congo.

In response to Palestinians' struggles for self determination, the Israeli government practices a Dahiye strategy: the overwhelming use of force to destroy civilian infrastructure, punish opponents and to teach them a lesson. In relation to the daily brutality and collective punishment of the citizens of Gaza, the Israeli army can act with impunity, knowing that almost no one will be held accountable. Under the terms of the Geneva Convention, such punishment is a war crime but because other governments and powerful individuals lack the courage to insist on adherence to international law, in particular when Israeli violence is mentioned, that country's cruelties pass unnoticed or elicit only crocodile tears.

President Putin of Russia has the same fascination with violence: journalists and representatives of the arts who favour change and who oppose the Russian President are

eliminated. In a Moscow church the young Pussy Riot singers satirized authoritarianism and two of their group were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. In Sri Lanka, journalists who have opposed the dictatorship of President Rajapaksa are arrested, killed or they disappear.

Of the many forms of State violence perhaps the most heinous is capital punishment. In Saudi Arabia vulnerable, frail and often innocent individuals, such as teenage maids from Sri Lanka and Indonesia who have pleaded not guilty to murder have been held on death row for years then beheaded in public. In China, women who have taken the lives of their long time abusive husbands are executed with a bullet to the back of the head. State murder lives. Indifference to Gandhi's teachings remains.

Gandhi's long-term influence across India is at best disappointing. The cruelties of the caste system continue. Women remain potential rape victims because representatives of Indian justice are said to collude with the rapists rather than obtain justice for the victims. In the streets of Delhi, protesters who recently demanded better policing and tougher laws against rape were beaten back with canes, water cannon and tear gas shells.

Australian citizens, and representatives of governments, such as the police and military, also fall back on extremes of violence to resolve conflicts. Such resolution often leads to death. Members of the NSW police force have killed innocent citizens with Tasers as well as with guns. In Sydney suburbs, individuals settle differences by shooting dead their friends or opponents. Violence persists via stabbings and shootings, through attacks on foreign students, abuse of prisoners in custody, in domestic violence and in other forms of bullying. Australia also needs to sing from the ahimsa song book.

That Distinct American Contribution

In America a gun toting culture of violence seems to be taken for granted and is treated as an example of US citizens' freedom. In January 2013, the slaughter of 26 children and their teachers in Sandy Hook elementary school in Connecticut was followed by shootings in Chicago and elsewhere. In response President

Obama proposed a ban on automatic weapons and a limiting of magazines to ten bullets plus the introduction of background checks for all purchasers of firearms. On hearing of such reforms, the National Rifled Association said it would 'fight to the death' any attempt to obstruct the people's right to bear arms.

Violence is not only visible, it is also embedded in cultures and becomes what Galtung termed structural violence (Galtung 1971; 1990). The consequences of social and economic inequalities remain the most obvious illustration of such violence; and in the past thirty years, in many countries, so called free market or neo liberal economic policies have nourished inequalities and associated injustice. The free market mantra—tax less, make wages flexible, cut back on investment in a public sector and your economy will flourish—has been an enormous failure (Monbiot 2013, p 20). The rich pay less, the poor pay more. Other evidence of the violence associated with inequality is apparent in unemployment across Europe and in the unemployment, poverty and homelessness across America. Gandhi, incidentally, did not draw a line between economics and ethics. 'True economics' he insisted, 'stands for social justice and moral values.' (Fischer, 2004, p. 411). Commenting on Gandhi's protests against the poverty and disempowerment of the Indian lower castes, his friend and mentor the poet Tagore commented, 'No civilized society can thrive upon victims whose humanity has been permanently mutilated' (in Fischer, 2004, p. 389).

Comments about the violent consequences of free market economic policies are deliberately included in my observations about violence in America. In that country the consequences of inequality are many and various. A punishment oriented penal system is part of that nation's structure and is a barometer of inequality and injustice. The land of the free loves prisons and imprisonment. The United States has more prisoners per capita than any country on earth, three times more than Cuba, seven times more than Germany and 25% of all the prisoners in the world (Thompson 2012; Benjamin 2013).

Representatives of the media could promote non violence through what my colleagues define as peace journalism (Lynch &

McGoldrick, 2005). But it is more likely, in particular in the United States, that media outlets will continue to influence the belief that overwhelming force is the way to solve problems. Violence is newsworthy. The Gandhi legacy is not. By the time an American child leaves elementary school, he or she will have witnessed 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence. The US is not only the biggest consumer and exporter of guns, it is also the world's leader in the sale and renting of violent video games.

The Non Violent Alternative

That inventory of violence is worldwide. The language and practice of violence matches macho cultures, yet the alternative, the language and practice of non violence, is much more health promoting and life enhancing.

Gandhi's ahimsa message, to speak and practice non violence, comes in many forms. The promoters of this opening of a Centre for Non violence, the Indian NGO Bhavan Australia, breathe those values and speak that language. Bhavan includes in its objectives, 'advances in education of the public in literature, music, dance, the arts and in the languages and philosophies of the world.'

(a) Poetry

Those objectives reflect centuries of civil disobedience aided by music and dance, poetry and art. In an American university, I once had a colleague from Columbia who taught a course on the sociology of dance. Her imaginative and colourful teaching traced how people used dancing to experience both solidarity with one another and to express opposition to tyrannical people and regimes.

I have already referred to poets such as Shelley, Tagore and Levertov. Across countries and cultures, poets have been key advocates of non violence, even if their messages were not always explicit. That is part of the joy to be found in poetry and in other expressions of non violence. You are free to craft your own interpretation, perhaps after listening to the crashing chords of the Ode to Joy last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, or after hearing the crescendos of a Shostakovich Symphony challenging Stalinist totalitarianism, or finding inspiration from the

memorable lyrics of numerous popular musicians.

Composers' music and poets' words encourage us to fathom ways to interpret and gain inspiration from non violence. For example, the pacifist American poet William Stafford asks his readers to be still enough for long enough to reflect on their own and others' humanity. Then, in a challenge to leaders fascinated with violence, he warns,

*If great people
get distracted by fame they forget
this essential kind of breathing.
Then in a more explicit warning about bullies'
need to dominate, he writes,
Sometimes commanders take us over, and they
try to impose their whole universe,
how to succeed by daily calculation:
I can't eat that bread.
(Stafford, Poetry, 1996, p. 25)*

(b) Questioning extremism

At this point I want to equate violence with various forms of extremism, whether expressed through suicides bombings, rape and racism, torture and mass executions, human trafficking or ethnic cleansing. Such extremism preceded and followed uprisings such as those described as The Arab Spring. Across the Middle East protesters advocated the replacement of dictatorships with respect for women's rights and other forms of social justice. So far, the hopes of the protesters have not been realized, in part because extremism fuelled by religious intolerance overcomes those who protest non violently for human rights.

Gandhi wrote and spoke about the extremism embedded in religious intolerance. Although he was a deeply spiritual human being, the humanity in his political wisdom also made him cosmopolitan and secular, a sort of religious man with renaissance qualities, an individual ahead of his time. Among political and religious leaders, such tolerance and renaissance vision is desperately needed today.

Gandhi said, 'The need of the moment is not one religion but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions'. 'He explained, 'I am a Christian and a Hindu, and a

Moslem and a Jew' (In Fischer, 2004, p. 416) In what Louis Fischer says was a possibly unintended definition of religious tolerance, Gandhi wrote, 'All faiths constitute a revelation of Truth, but all are imperfect, and liable to error. Reverence for other faiths need not blind us to their faults.'(in Fischer, 2004, p. 417).

(c) Public Policy Not Just Individual Responsibility

As with any programme to teach citizens how to read and write, literacy about non violence would be facilitated by public policy, not just by demands that individuals should improve their understanding and change their behaviour. Policy initiatives influenced by beliefs in the value of non violence could be infinite. They should include gun control legislation or that international treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

In economic policies, the values inherent in non violence can be promoted by abandoning the free for all neo-liberal policies which have enlarged inequalities, guaranteed poverty and the violence inherent in such conditions. The alternative requires re-distribution, state spending on public infrastructure— schools and hospitals as well as on social security (see Monbiot 2013). The value base of such an alternative is contained in the notion that public policy should be characterized by the dominance of altruism over egoism. That means replacing greed and the accumulation of goods with sharing. It puts a priority on the protection of the environment and all living things. It insists that all thirty clauses of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provide for policies which would be socially just and would reflect the philosophy, language and practice of non violence.

It is encouraging that renewed attention is being given to non violence and to the lessons to be learned from those who inspired Gandhi and those who were inspired by him. Yet I remain surprised that there is not more fascination with Gandhi's legacy, not more enthusiasm for the language of non violence. Such surprise and disbelief was expressed by the Jewish Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel when he wrote about Gandhi as The Patriot:

*I am standing for peace and non violence.
Why world is fighting, fighting*

*why all people of the world
are not following Mahatma Gandhi,
I am simply not understanding.
(Ezekiel, The Patriot, in Forbes, 1999 p. 218)*

References:

- Benjamin, C (2013, The Connecticut Massacre and America's Culture of Violence, Black Star News, February 17th
- Fischer, L (2004), The Life of Mahatma Gandhi, London, Harper Collins
- Forbes, P (Ed; 1999), Scanning The Century, The Penguin Book of Twentieth Century Poetry, London, Viking.
- Galtung, J (1971), A Structural Theory of Imperialism, in Journal of Peace Research, Vol 8, No. 2, pp 81-117
- Galtung, J (1990), Cultural Violence, in Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 27, No 3, pp 291-305
- King, Jr., Martin Luther (1987) Letter From A Birmingham Jail, in Fahey, J and Armstrong, R (Eds), A Peace Reader, New York, Paulist Press
- Levertov (D (2001), Poems 1972-1982, New York, New Directions
- Lynch, J & McGoldrick A, (2005), Peace Journalism, Stroud, UK, Hawthorn Press
- Monbiot, G (2013), If You Think We're Done With Liberalism, Think Again, The Guardian, Monday January 14th
- Rees, S (2003) Passion for Peace, Sydney UNSW Press
- Stafford, W (1996), Even in Quiet Places, Lewiston, Idaho, Confluence Press
- Thompson, N (2012), America's Culture of Violence, The New Yorker, December 15th
- Weber, T (2001) Gandhian Philosophy, Conflict Resolution Theory and Practical Approaches in Negotiation, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 38 No 4

****Stuart Rees AM, is Professor Emeritus of the University of Sydney, Chair of the Sydney Peace Foundation, a former Director of the Foundation and of the University's Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies***

Ela Gandhi Speech at ICON Australia Launch

Thank you. 'Ceremonies'. We usually use that term rather than master of ceremonies just to be general conscious. Honourable Senator, Honourable Minister, Mr Lambert, His Excellency the High Commissioner, Mr Watts and Mr Neville Roach. Professor Rees, after your speech it is a very hard act to follow I must say but it is indeed a pleasure and I want to thank you for inviting me here to launch the Centre. I want to say that in the last I think it's four days but it seems to me like a month, I've learnt so much in Australia, visited so many schools, so many Centres and so many wonderful things that are happening in the country and I'm taking back with me a lot of lessons from here. So I'm not sure how many lessons I'm going to bring to you but I can only invite you to come to South Africa, have exchange programs and let's learn from each other because that is the most important thing about ICON.

On behalf of the Gandhi Development Trust and ICON in South Africa I want to congratulate you on this initiative. Indeed we must work together to build up a reservoir of knowledge on best practice models, so that we can replicate these models throughout the world.

Just to give you a brief background to the formation of ICON in South Africa. Inspired by Gandhiji's work in South Africa and his nonviolent movement, a group of volunteers began to look at how to address the rising violence in the country and globally. In 2002, a report was published by the World Health Organisation (WHO). It was the first World Report combining Violence and Health. It identified violence as a global public health

problem, related to patterns of thought and behaviour shaped by a multitude of internal and external forces, some of which transcend national borders. Although the statistics were chilling, the situation was presented as not being hopeless. The report concluded that there is nothing inevitable about violence.

While the tendency is to look for solutions in a stringent justice system approach we looked for solutions in Gandhiji's ideas. Clearly his approach to nonviolence was much broader than a strategy to be used in certain situations. For Gandhiji nonviolence was a way of life.

What then is the composition of this way of life and how can we promote it? We brainstormed and came up with many issues among them access to basic needs such as housing, work, education, health care, equity, learning universal values, nonviolent communication, and a less consumerist society.

How does one build such a society? If large numbers of people want such a society then they can create such a society. We saw education as key to such a society. If education from infant to tertiary level, is imbued with ethics, basic values of compassion, respect and responsibility, and community values as opposed to individualism, these values will be internalized and the community will behave differently.

Daisaku Ikeda says, "What the world urgently needs now is an age of wisdom. No matter how much information or knowledge we may have, it does not necessarily produce value or bring happiness. The

power of wisdom effectively puts that knowledge and information to use, puts them into action.”¹ (Ikeda, 2001). People who internalize such values will not damage property, nor will they hurt people, animals or nature / our environment.

So with those kinds of thoughts we decided that we needed to bring peace education and what we are doing at the moment is looking at peace education which takes place in a number of countries around the world.

ICON however positioned itself for a new and holistic approach because we found that a lot of the peace education programs look at study of values, we also looked at our history syllabus and everybody knows about Hitler, very few people studied about Gandhi or studied about Martin Luther King or any of the peace movements, and there have been many peace movements before and after Gandhiji we heard about them but our history books don't reflect on those.

True security can only be obtained in a society where everyone has an opportunity to learn about the power of nonviolence and with large numbers of people become engaged from grass root levels upwards in this process. ICON therefore seeks to integrate nonviolence into educational curricular and all levels of education and across the faculties. It will find and promote and deepen a culture of nonviolence both in South Africa and internationally.

ICON hopes to provide the vision and leadership to rearticulate the vows of nonviolence. In the process ICON hopes to build a movement of nonviolence defined not just as a concept but as a way of life. And I hope that all the young people who I saw today this morning will join us in this a movement, a worldwide movement for nonviolence.

Gandhiji further noted the importance of language and indigenous knowledge, when he wrote “Swadeshi” he talked about going back to your

grass roots to your roots and find that knowledge that our grandmothers had. In order to instill pride and personal identity it is important to work within the medium of the community itself.

Gandhiji also emphasized the need for learning about other cultures and other languages to broaden the perspective and when we speak about patriotism about nationalism about religion and so Gandhiji said that yes, you must know your own religion you must know about your own country, you must be nationalistic and patriotic about your own country in order to look after your own country and be proud citizens of your own country. But that doesn't mean that you hate other countries, you must also learn about other countries, about other religions and become a Universalist. After you have developed the nationalism or marked the knowledge about yourself and this is what he did in his life time as well.

In this work and place ICON has the full support of the Durban University of Technology which is committed to mainstream of nonviolence into its curriculum by developing a general education program that offers enriched content and teaching approaches consistent with these values. We look forward to a long and healthy relationship with ICON Australia, a relationship which will share ideas, which will share information and knowledge, and grow from that networking and that relationship. Thank you very much.

We look forward to a long and healthy relationship with ICON Australia.

Bibliography

Gandhi, M. (1938). *Hind Swaraj*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.

Ikeda, D. (2001). *Soka Education*. Santa Monica: Middleway Press.

Ikeda, D. (2001). *Soka Education*. Santa Monica, CA: Middleway Press.

Ela Gandhi Speech on 25 February at Australia India Institute, Melbourne

If Gandhi were alive today?

Let me start by quoting a very important passage from one of Gandhiji's articles in Young India, a newspaper which he edited. The date was 19 November 1931 he wrote thus, "If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children; and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have to struggle; we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which consciously or unconsciously the whole world is hungering." (Parbhu, 1949)

This was written in 1931 and some 8 years later world war two broke out. Did the world in fact take heed of any of Gandhiji's views, warnings, appeals or pleas?

Whatever our thoughts about this statement by Gandhiji, I believe that the important messages in it are universally recognised:

1. that children are a core part of any change that we may wish in the world is a known and accepted fact.
2. that quality education is the key to transformation is also an accepted fact.

Yet today 82 years later we are still looking for solutions to the now endemic problem of violence and in particular violence against women all over the world. Internationally incidences of domestic violence, including violence against women and children and other vulnerable groups, communal violence, violence on the basis of religious differences and structural violence continues to

escalate unabated.

Horrific stories of brutality have in recent months been reported, and have received international attention. The story of the young child Malala being shot for seeking education; the story of the Delhi rape; followed by the story of the Punjab rape; the recent story of the horrendous rape of a young woman in South Africa; and the even more recent story of the internationally famous Oscar Pistorious and the fatal shooting of his girlfriend; and hundreds of others in the past weeks. All these stories indicate the lack of gender respect, the unequal power relations, the lack of compassion and humane qualities, and the total breakdown of the mores or social values in our communities, coupled with the debilitating effects of alcohol and substance abuse. What can we do to fix this situation?

Angry communities are calling for the improvement of the justice system with more stringent laws and penalties, the imposition of the death penalty, some are calling for other modes of punishment, such as castration, beatings and stringent sentences. The question is will this help to curb the situation? Can government alone, change the situation? Many researches done by organisations such as Amnesty International and others show that death penalty is not a deterrent. (Amnesty International, 1989)

Is education the key to transformation? If so then why has society not changed in the past century when education has advanced to such a degree and more people now have access to education?

The answer lies in the content of our education. Our present system of education is geared towards producing technocrats, scientists of the highest



calibre but the development of the personality, ethic and morality, and basic values are receiving less and less attention. An educator pressed for time to go through the Maths lessons will sacrifice the life orientation or life skills lesson. As a result of the science and technology revolution in the present century, issues such as gender consciousness, compassion, respect and responsibility are issues taken for granted and neglected by educators. (Ikeda, 2001)

So referring to Gandhiji's statement, I see three important assumptions in this statement.

1. That we have to start with children. In other words let's see how we can straighten the path of the next generation.
2. That an important element in doing this is through good quality education within the environment of love, nurturing and effective imparting of values. And
3. That peace is not about punishment but about transformation of society as a whole wherein we discard the archaic and destructive beliefs and customs and implant humane and compassionate beliefs and customs—If children are allowed to grow up in their natural innocence.

May I add a 4th element viz. the fatal effects of proliferation and possession of arms.

Learning from the recent incidents that occurred we see:

1. There is a total disrespect of women shown by the perpetrators. Through our socialisation and education system-formal, nonformal and informal—women have been regarded by these perpetrators as sex symbols, as objects to be used and discarded (thrown off the bus, left to die, killed in rage and so on). Such behaviour

also occurs when war victims are subjected to rape and brutal attacks on the body before and even after the person has lost her/his life or consciousness. This brutality reveals the animal like rage and absolute inhumanity displayed by the perpetrators of the crime.

What is the cause of this dehumanisation?

There are many, but a key element is learned behaviour, stereotyping and hatred of particular sectors who are then regarded as less than human and so cruelty towards them is justified and not regarded as cruelty and a total lack of self-control. The latter could be attributed to alcohol and substance abuse and to the general lack of training in restraint and self-control.

Another dimension which is often marginalised and forgotten, is the situation of the survivors. What stigma do they have to live with? How does society view them? What are we doing about secondary and tertiary abuse of victims by families and society on the one hand and by the structural system-police courts, doctors nurses etc on the other hand? These changes cannot be brought about by the government only. Government imposes laws and rules but it has no control over prejudices and lack of sympathy by the officials, who are a product of our society, or families who stigmatise and fail to support the victim emotionally and constructively, or society that blames and outcasts victims. These are all products of our distorted cultural training and value systems which places such burdens on women. Gandhiji said, "Every formula of every religion has, in this age of reason, to submit to the acid test of reason and universal justice if it is to ask for universal assent." (M.K. Gandhi, 1987)

We have to take this up at our community and



family level by raising these issues and changing these perceptions and distorted beliefs. As Gandhiji says through love and nurturing we can transform.

Some of these beliefs and attitudes are so entrenched in society that it becomes imperative to start at the early childhood level. On a recent visit to an Early Childhood Development Centre where we went to observe the application of psycho-motor-training methodology, we were told by a mother that after receiving this training one day when the child, a 5 year old observed his father beating his mother, he intervened and asked his father to stop. He told him that in school he was taught that beating a person is bad. The father was shocked and shamed by this intervention by a little child and since then has stopped beating his wife. Such transformation does not always happen but it certainly did in this particular instance and every transformation is of importance. Respect for women can be instilled in the little ones at the earliest age.

2. There is a lack of understanding of gender equity. Our patriarchal system is so entrenched that we are not even aware of some of the learned attitudes and behaviour that we display involuntarily in respect of gender. A number of exercises reveal this deeply entrenched behaviour patterns within us. Once we become conscious we can change this entrenched reflexive behaviour. To sight one incident let me tell you a little story. When we had our negotiations in South Africa for a new dispensation in the country. There were some 19 parties represented in these negotiations and it was agreed that each party would have 4 representatives 2 negotiators who sit round the table and 2 advisers who sit behind the negotiators. It was agreed that each segment— negotiator and advisor will strictly comprise of one woman and one man. We sat round a huge table and the picture was a table that saw one man one woman round the table. Now one of the women representatives, Mrs King told us that one day when she went to a corner shop to buy bread, the person serving her exclaimed, “I know you! I saw you on TV. You

are the secretary of Minister Mayer”—a former well known Minister in the apartheid Government, who sat with Mrs King at the negotiating table.

So the perception is that a woman can only be a secretary and not a negotiator! On the same lines let us think how often for instance we hear the title President or professor or even doctor, inadvertently we expect a male figure to emerge and are surprised when a female figure appears. As society develops some of these stereotypes are changing but many are still there in our sub consciousness. These may not just be in respect of gender, directly but a stereotype about people who dress in a particular way, or those who maybe poor or of a particular race or caste etc. These stereotypes grow on us so that we remain unconscious of them. But we can ensure that our children are free of such stereotyping, that they do not harbour prejudices. We can, through our own efforts begin to become conscious of our own hidden prejudices and begin to deal with them so that we do not inadvertently communicate these to our children.

3. Finally Gandhiji has so clearly pointed out to us that violence of any kind at any level can only beget violence and that only nonviolence can bring about changes. In response to a question on how to deal with gangsterism Gandhiji responded in the Harijan in the 10 December issue of 1938, “If the best minds of the world have not imbibed the spirit of nonviolence, they would have to meet gangsterism in the orthodox way. But that would only show that we have not gone far beyond the law of the jungle, that we have not yet learnt to appreciate the heritage that God has given us, that, in spite of the teaching of Christianity which is 1900 years old and of Hinduism and Buddhism which are older, and even of Islam, we have not made much headway as human beings. But whilst I would understand the use of force by those who have not the spirit of nonviolence in them I would have those who know nonviolence to throw their whole weight in demonstrating that even



gangsterism has to be met with nonviolence.”
(Parbhu, 1949)

Clearly then Gandhiji advocated nonviolence no matter what the circumstance and he believed that we can only bring about a nonviolent society through the practice of nonviolence ourselves. Slowly but steadily.

4. What has been seen clearly in most incidences of violence is that perpetrators or even sometimes the victims are armed. This does not help. Often we carry weapons to feel safe but there are so many reports of incidences where our own weapons have been used against us. A weapon becomes fatal and therefore we have to look at a strategy to promote the strict control of weapons in our society and generally the need for disarmament in the country. Proliferation of armaments is a major cause of deaths and of injuries.

So what would be the way forward for women to change their position in society. I believe there are a number of things we can do immediately.

1. From the point of view of the victim we can set up systems that help to relieve the pain and the secondary and tertiary violence that women suffer. The method and system needs to be responsive to the nature of the problem and the situation in each country and locality. In our case we set up a 24 hour telephone help line because we found that many women were shy to come out and talk face to face about their intimate experiences. We then realised that the women needed to be financially empowered because often they were afraid of reporting to the police because the men were then taken to prison and they had no means of support. This dependency forced them to continue quietly living in abusive relationships.
2. From the point of view of the correctional system we need to study and understand how the system works and where are the problems or blockages in the system—is it a bad law, bad regulation, bad administration, unskilled people etc. and begin to take steps to lobby

and advocate for the changes necessary. In our case we take up the issues of inefficiency or unsympathetic handling by accompanying the victims and ensuring that they are given proper attention and care and where this does not happen we take up the issues with the relevant authorities.

3. From the point of view of the society we need to look at the societal views customs perceptions stereotypes etc. that need to be changed and begin a process of education through discussions and through the “co-optation” onto our side of the key decision makers such as our religious, political, social leadership and our elders. We have a little educational booklet which we use in training young people. We go through issues of HIV/AIDS because we find that often AIDS and assaults are linked. We go through prejudice and discrimination. We go through the legal rights and procedures and we give them a guide on who they can approach for assistance if ever the need arises.

I want to conclude with a quote from a book written by Richard Gregg, ‘The Power of Nonviolence’. He speaks about moral jiu jitsu. He says “The art of jiu jitsu is based on a knowledge of balance and how to disturb it. In a struggle of moral jiu jitsu the retention of moral balance seems to depend upon the qualities of one’s relationship to moral truth. Hence part of the superior power of the nonviolent resister seems to lie in the nature of his character.” Gregg explains that when an attacker is confronted by a person who displays complete fearlessness and nonviolence without anger and with respect, the attacker is thrown off balance and stops because he does not know how to react to this set of circumstances. On the other hand when the attacker is confronted by a fearful and violent person, his anger, his cruelty are reinforced and his aggression is thus intensified.

I am aware that this is easier said than done. But we as women can learn and try to practise this mode of nonviolence maybe we can set an example for the world that we ourselves can deal with this violence against us by our own nonviolence.



Ela Gandhi Speech on 26 February at University of New South Wales, Sydney

Mahatma Gandhi's Legacy

The growing culture of violence of all kinds, physical, domestic, structural, communal, wars and a host of other kinds of violence, in our world, is reaching epidemic proportions. Many reasons have been cited by academics inequality, lack of a just system, growing levels of poverty, easy access to weapons, living in abusive homes, breakdown in family structures and so on and so forth. (Bhandare, 1999; Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 2008)

The one central feature that has not been touched is the importance of education and in particular the education of 0-7 year olds.

This is a crucial period in the life of a child. In these first years the child learns essential values mostly from observation and copying but also from formal learning. A recent visit to a facility specialising in psycho motor learning skills revealed to me the importance of the introduction of a safe environment where children can experiment on various motor skills but also on simple life skills such as observing rules of good communication through pledging not to push and pull and fight etc. These are rules that the children have to obey in order to have fun and get to play games and learn motor skills.

The difference in behaviour of these children from those in other facilities was stunning. A number of parents spoke about how much of real

improvement they were able to see in their children after they attended these sessions.

Kendra Cherry a prominent educator and writer wrote in a blog, "Early childhood is a time of remarkable physical, cognitive, social and emotional development." Language, mannerisms, likes and dislikes are all learnt behaviour and the learning starts at this level. Good and intensive investment into this level of education can make a lifelong difference to an individual.

Josei Toda, a prominent educator and second President of Soka Gakkai and a war objector who was imprisoned for his beliefs, is quoted by Daisaku Ikeda as saying, "Education, or the fostering of capable people, is indeed a noble mission, and those with a deep sense of responsibility who completely dedicate themselves to this mission are truly worthy of respect." (Ikeda, 2001)

This statement by an eminent educator reveals a number of truths.

1. Education is powerful and an important part of transformation.
2. The content of education is important.
3. The method through which it is imparted is equally important and
4. The quality of the person who imparts it, is absolutely important.

Gandhi Development Trust is based on Gandhian ideas. Many of Gandhiji's ideas were developed

during his 21 years in South Africa.

A study of Gandhiji's legacy of his own personal transformation in South Africa reveals the impact of education albeit informal education on his life. Gandhiji spent approximately 21 years in S.A. During this time he read many books and had many highly intellectual discussions with many and diverse people who came into his life.

I will tabulate some of the key moments of his life in South Africa through which the transformation in his life occurred and then look at some of the ways in which his life transformed. This is so that we can understand what in his life did he change and why and what lessons we can learn from this. In South Africa he faced 6 major challenges.

1. Challenges of a racist society.
2. Challenges of being drawn into 4 major religions.
3. Challenges of dealing with the colonial politics.
4. Dealing with difficult issues of an unequal unjust economic order.
5. Challenges of imposed beliefs and power relations between those who were being subordinated and those who were the subordinators—in terms of colonialism, gender, class and caste. And
6. The challenges of conservation, of natural resources, plant and animal life, and the role of human beings in the protection of valuable resources.

He saw that underlying all these was economics and power. He had discussions with friends of different religious, ideological and racial backgrounds, both men and women. He read many books, on religion—the Bible, Koran, Gita, and a host of others. He read many books by socio political philosophers such as Tolstoy, Thoreau, Ruskin, Marx, Bentham and others. 16 years later he came up with his own philosophy—expressed in a little book entitled Hind Swaraj.

In chronological order, one sees that he was strongly influenced by his Christian lawyers and friends in Johannesburg with whose help he developed a deep understanding of the Bible. He was influenced by his Muslim hosts with whose help he developed an intimate knowledge of the

Koran. He himself felt that it was important for him to learn about Hinduism and studied the Gita thoroughly and also some of the other Hindu scriptures.

He acknowledges the key turning point in his life as the incident when he was thrown off the train because of racial prejudice.

2 years after arriving in South Africa in April 1895, Gandhiji visited the Marian Hill monastery near Pinetown which was started by a Trappist, Father Francis Pfanner. He was impressed by this little settlement of 120 monks, 60 nuns and 1200 learners, all living together and respecting each other. Writing for the London Vegetarian he described his visit thus:

“My companions and I walked to Marian Hill ... It is a very pleasant walk through the little hills all covered with green grass. One of the brotherhood came up and bowed very low.... The Settlement is a quiet little model village....The principle of liberty equality and fraternity is carried out in its entirety. Every man is a brother, every woman a sister. ...A model Trappist gets up at 2 a.m. and devotes four hours to prayers and contemplation. At six he has his breakfast, which consists of bread and coffee, or some such of simple foods. He dines at twelve ... sups at six in the evening and goes to bed at 7 or 8 p.m.....None may keep money for private use. All are equally rich or poor ... A better instance of undying faith and perfect, implicit obedience could not well be found anywhere else. If their repast is the simplest possible, their dining tables and bedrooms are no less so. They believe in no colour distinction. ...I know from personal experience that a visit to the farm is worth a voyage from London to Natal. (F. Meer (ed.), The South African Gandhi, pp. 871-4)”

This visit influenced him deeply and we see some of the ideas replicated in his life. Eight years after this visit, Gandhiji started printing his own newspaper, Indian Opinion, in Durban. This was a tool to educate, mobilise and to provide information to the community. It was produced in 4 languages, English, Hindi, Tamil and Gujarati. (Gandhi, 1928)¹ In 1904 he took the decision to remove the printing press from the centre of town to the countryside. Albert West provides a firsthand account of how and why Phoenix was

purchased by Gandhiji (Illustrated Weekly of India, 1965).

“This came about in an interesting way. My report on the financial situation (of the newspaper) had greatly disturbed Gandhi, and he decided to make a full investigation on the spot. The night he left Johannesburg, Henry Polak, sub-editor of The Critic, who had made the acquaintance of Gandhi at the time of the plague and had become friendly, came to see him off at the station and left him with a book to read during the twenty-four hour journey to Durban. It was Ruskin’s Unto This Last. The reading of this book, Gandhi declared, brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in his life. He came to realise: that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all; that a lawyer’s work has the same value as the barber’s, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work; that a life of labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living. So he decided to reduce these principles to practice.” (Illustrated Weekly of India, 1965)

He moved the press to Phoenix and with it all the people who worked in the press. Most of them considered the scheme to be idealistic and doubted that it would work but went along with Gandhiji’s idea.

West wrote, “To say that I approved of the proposal suggests a certain amount of wishful thinking. I was certainly in love with the idea, and my love for Gandhi was sufficient to make me want to succeed in this venture. ...There was much in this life in open country that was attractive. We enjoyed friendly relations with Africans living in the surrounding hillsides and with passersby to and from the station.” (Illustrated Weekly of India, 1965)

The Phoenix Settlement continued to exist as a settlement providing vital services to the community until 1985. At present it is preserved as a historic site. The newspaper continued until 1962.

In 1906 Gandhiji participated for the second time on the side of the British as a stretcher bearer

during the Bambatha Uprising. He was horrified at the carnage and became more determined to promote nonviolence. He took the vow of Brahmacharya. For Gandhiji a Brahmacharya was not just a celibate person but more so a devotee who tries to attain moksha through discovering the path of truth and virtue. (Gandhi, The Essence of Hinduism, 1987) This was a major turning point in his life.

Arising from these experiences Gandhiji transformed his life.

Some of the visible transformations in Gandhiji’s life were:

- ❖ From affluence to simplicity.
- ❖ From being class and status conscious to living with the poor in a wood and iron “ramshackle” building with only basic simple furnishing.
- ❖ Living in a communal setting as equals.
- ❖ Working the land and becoming self-sufficient.
- ❖ Time management and punctuality.
- ❖ Living with people of different faiths.
- ❖ Holding regular communal inter faith prayers in the open.
- ❖ Imparted his knowledge and skills to the children through an informal school.
- ❖ His education was geared towards the development of the mind body and soul.
- ❖ He emphasized the importance of critical thinking based on knowledge.
- ❖ Learnt the intrinsic value of self-control.
- ❖ Learnt from a number of female colleagues, Ms Schlesin, Mrs Pollack, Olive Schriener, Emily Hobhouse, and the Suffragettes among others to be gender conscious.
- ❖ Began to understand the meaning of liberation or Swaraj as self-control.
- ❖ Began to look at a new economic order which will focus on ensuring that every individual was a part of the economy instead of the existing system which marginalized the poor.
- ❖ Began to view rapid industrialization and mechanization as leading to unemployment. While he accepted that some instruments were essential, he opposed replacement of people by machines.

Gandhiji cites a passage from Professor Huxley who wrote on education, "That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will (self-control) and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of (work ethic); whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order (critical thinking)...whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature (knowledge)... whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience (values and responsibility)...who has learnt to hate all vileness and respects others as himself. (love and respect non-judgemental) Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with nature." (M.K. Gandhi, 1938)—The book was written and printed in the Indian Opinion in a serialized form in 1909.

Bhiku Parekh describes Gandhiji's transformation beautifully when he says that Gandhiji saw Truth as the basis and that one needed to be truthful to oneself. That learning and transformation was a journey through which one discovers truths through self-reflection and continues to make the changes necessary to be in tune with the truth. (Parekh, 1996)

So how does this impact on the present education system?

Some of the key ideas have been seen through the Gandhian experiments but the basic issues that we face is that our present education system is geared towards providing skills and knowledge Toda said, "Those who put the highest priority on fame and wealth lack the qualification to be leaders in the truest sense." (Ikeda, 2001) A colleague recently came to me with a serious dilemma. Her son who was doing very well in Arts and scored top marks in this field was making a career choice and her dilemma was that he was making a choice based on which profession will get him the highest income. Do young people today make choices on the basis of what they can do for the community? Do parents want their children to make choices on these bases? Do we still value Florence Nightingale?

Certainly there is something that needs to be corrected in our system which is giving rise to the growing culture of crime, corruption, consumerism, violence, oppression, selfishness and exploitation of people and of nature. Are all the concerns that have been raised by Gandhiji, Toda, Huxley, Emerson, Toynbee or Gramsci being addressed by our system of education or are we governed simply by industry and capital? These are some of the key questions that need to be asked when we re-look at our curriculum. Once we agree what are really important priorities for us then we need to begin to look at a process through which these can be communicated through education from the early childhood level to the tertiary level and beyond as life is about learning and re-learning.

Bibliography

Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza. (2008). *The Roots of African Conflicts The causes and costs*. Pretoria: UNISA Press.

Bhandare, M. C. (1999). *The World of Gender Justice*. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications PVT LTD.

Gandhi, M. (1928). *Satyagraha In South Africa*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan publishing House.

Gandhi, M. (1987). *The Essence of Hinduism*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing house.

Ikeda, D. (2001). *Soka Education*. Santa Monica: Middleway Press.

M.K.Gandhi. (1938). *Hind Swaraj*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.

Parekh, B. (1996). *Gandhi's Legacy*. London: The Gandhi Foundation.

Note:

1. (Gandhi, 1928) (M.K.Gandhi, 1938)

Ela Gandhi Speech on 28 February at Soka Gakkai International Cultural Centre, Sydney Olympic Park

Human Security and Sustainability

We are living in times when there are many challenges facing humanity. The very existence of humanity is at stake. As Dr Daisaku Ikeda points out, we are living with great uncertainty. There is great anxiety among people about the future. The down turn in the economy, the effects of this on jobs and security, the rapidly depleting water and energy resources, the progressive climate change endangering life, food shortage, crop failures, and natural disasters. All this leads to scramble for scarce resources leading to violence and war.

Many Religious and community leaders are concerned but many go on with life denying that there is need for concern. The lack of clear concise decisions in the various world summits is worrying. What we see continuing is an escalation of excessive consumerism, excessive use of energy and water, production of chemicals at the risk of pollution of our scarce water resources, human and animal health, and the unharnessed excavation and mining activities.

A section of humankind is refusing to see the writing on the wall and continues with business as usual. Some Scholars of religion have pointed out that we have gone through the first “Axial Age” and are entering the second Axial Age. They herald this period with great hope and believe that humankind will become more conscious and conscientious. The polarization of the majority against the minority.

The author of this thought, theologian Ewert Cousins writes,

If we shift our gaze from the first millennium BCE to the eve of the twenty-first century, we can discern another transformation of consciousness. It is so profound and

far-reaching that I call it the Second Axial Period. Like the first it is happening simultaneously around the earth, and like the first it will shape the horizon of consciousness for future centuries. Not surprisingly, too, it will have great significance for world religions, which were constituted in the First Axial Period. However, the new form of consciousness is different from that of the First Axial Period. Then it was individual consciousness, now it is global consciousness.


(Association of Global New Thought & Parliament of World Religions, 2012)

Towards the end of 2012 many religious groups were brought together by Association of Global New Thought and the Parliament of World Religions and they drew up a charter to indeed realize the dream of the second axial age. The charter in its preamble reads as follows:

If ours is indeed an age of value shift, no dimension of that epochal change is more important than that which is underway in the world's great religious and spiritual communities. It is a movement that embraces the possibility of peace, champions the causes of justice, accepts the burdens and privileges of ecological stewardship, and demonstrates compassionate service in the face of human need.

(Association of Global New Thought & Parliament of World Religions, 2012)

People around the globe are indeed rising up to meet the challenges. The concern is whether the rich and the powerful will transform and embrace the Gandhian notion of Trusteeship? At present there is still denial and continued unbridled exploitation of people and resources. All over the world people are demonstrating against these miners, nuclear producers, chemical and pharmaceutical companies



and the many “giant” groups, including banks who are embarking on a disastrous course of Genetically Modified food production with no concern for the future of the earth. Money is being poured into the manufacture of weapons and wars are continuing in many countries. (Roy, 2003)

But while this is so there are people who are working to change the world. They are embracing nonviolence and beginning to change their life style to conserve and not consume unrelentingly, to work for equity and not for their own aggrandizement and to learn self-control and not vent anger and destructive behavior.

As Dr Ikeda points out there is a need to grow the culture of compassion, of readiness to help at times of disasters and depression. In South Africa there is a group of professional people, known as Gift of the Givers, an organization which is growing in strength and experience and is known to respond instantly to disasters internationally.

Their work is akin to everything that Dr Ikeda is asking of the Soka movement. Indeed the more of such organizations we have the more harmonious and wonderful the world would be.

The qualities that endears a person to volunteer their services with little hope of remuneration, with many risks to the persons’ own safety and with the advent of hard work, are indeed the qualities that our education should instill in the infants, in the youth, in the community generally. It is these qualities that will not only go a long way towards saving the world but will also help to transform humankind.

Our system of education with its examinations, grades, sports and arts entrenches the idea of competition. The idea of wanting to score high points. Wanting to be at the top. This then means that there are many who are below and they struggle and become demoralized. This is not humanitarian competition about which Dr Ikeda writes. He quotes Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, “The methods of humanitarian competition are not, of course simple or unitary; all other forms of competition—military, political, economic—must be conducted within a humanitarian framework. In other words, the objective of states should not be merely the selfish pursuit of their own good but

should be to enhance the lives of other peoples as well. We must choose those methods that profit ourselves while profiting others. We must learn to engage consciously in collective life.” (Ikeda, 2001)

We therefore have to work to transform our education system so that people generally benefit from the education and lead a life that will lead to a sustainable future. As Gandhiji said, “nonviolence to be a potent force must begin with the mind. Nonviolence of the mere body without the cooperation of the mind is nonviolence of the weak or the cowardly, and has therefore no potency. If we bear malice and hatred in our bosoms and pretend not to retaliate, it must recoil upon us and lead to our destruction.” (Gandhi, 1960)

For the mind to be disciplined in this way, quality education becomes absolutely essential. But it is also important for us to remember that education does not only happen in schools. Gandhiji is an example he learnt much more by reading and through his discussions with friends than he did from school. Dr Ikeda too has had many conversations with eminent people and so his knowledge, thoughts and understanding improves. A very light hearted but telling story was about Gandhiji’s encounter with a group of young men who were travelling with him on a ship on one of his overseas trips. Wanting to make themselves useful they decided to bring out a little bulleting on the ship and called it scandal times or some such and wrote scandalous stories about various people on board. They brought the paper for Gandhiji to scrutinise before publishing it. Gandhiji read it and then returned the document to them keeping back the office pin that held the papers together. Intrigued by his silence the youngsters asked him “Well what are your thoughts about our writing skills?” He responded briefly thus, “I have kept back the most valuable part of your work.”

Gandhiji always maintained that good thoughts, good literature positive feelings builds our character, entertaining ugly thoughts reading unsavoury literature and holding evil thoughts about anyone harms us more than it harms anyone else. So working towards sustainability in the world we need to transform ourselves begin to take steps to direct our energies towards building a peaceful contented conserving and compassionate world.

International Women's Day Message by Ela Gandhi as requested by Media



We celebrate International Women's Day amid the horrific attacks on women in various countries not least the rape and abuse of a young student in Delhi India, and a rape and a shooting in South Africa. Following on these horrendous incidents, it was good to see the massive demonstrations by young people and the extensive media coverage. As a result of this awareness, many countries produced startling statistics of rape and abuse of women.

Clearly the world continues on a path of patriarchal domination. Yet this year marks 102 years since the first organised women's day demonstrations were held in some countries and marks the 36th anniversary since the United Nations declared 8th March as International Women's day in 1977.

While commercialisation of the day has led to women being given treats and presents, one needs to remember that the origin of this day was in massive demonstrations by women against discrimination of women on the factory floors and in countries where they were denied the vote. The reason for the observance of this day internationally was to draw attention to the need for equal status of women. But a century later very little has changed for the masses of the women.

Spanning the various communities, we see major issues such as genital mutilation, female foeticide, child brides, stigmatisation of widows, divorcees and those abused and raped. In these societies

women are regarded as either a burden, or just a commodity. Because of this low status, women carry the burden of unrewarded, unrecognised work as housewives and mothers, and suffer the sexual demands of their partners regardless of their own feelings in the matter. Much of the abuse arises from these intimate relationships between husband and wife or partners living together. Women are expected to obey and submit to any demands made by the men in their lives. In order to entrench this position of women their access to education is denied in some societies.

These discriminatory practices, prejudices and assumptions that women who dress in a particular way do so to attract men, or women who want to access jobs which were previously occupied by only men are in these positions not only at the behest of men but also to be at their back and call and mainly in a junior position to men. Those who are occupying senior positions are often targeted because society feels that they are not really capable of doing these jobs.

Yes there are many today who are able to access jobs formerly regarded as male jobs and have made a success in these jobs. Women have the vote internationally. In terms of social status however women in many societies continue to suffer many indignities. It is these indignities that need to be dealt with vigorously not just on the 8th of March but throughout our lives until we can say that the nature of our society has indeed changed.

But undoubtedly to get to that situation we need to work hard now on education. The International Centre of Nonviolence in Australia and South Africa with the support of educational institutions and governments can begin to put together new content that will ensure that young people become gender conscious and are able to make the necessary changes to create a social order that will accord respect and dignity to women.

Such a society will be attained when housework, rearing children and caring for the aged at home becomes recognised as an essential service and is accorded the honour and dignity that work outside the home is given then only can women feel that they are no longer oppressed. Then we can say that International Women's Day has now achieved its purpose, until then I urge all those who believe in equality, come out and demonstrate against the status quo even if it is only on one day! Aluta Continua!

Holi Mahotsav

Acknowledgments

Just thinking of Holi Mahotsav fills our heart with extreme joy and happiness. The Holi festival is truly a celebration of Harmony and friendship and multiculturalism. Holi heralds the arrival of spring and new harvest. The festival has an ancient origin celebrating the triumph of good over evil. In India during Holi days one can see colours of joy everywhere.

We decided to celebrate Holi in Australia in a most prominent location constantly visited by people from every community. Our obvious choice was Darling Harbour where flow of people never stops and we wanted it to be free for everyone to join in the festivities. This enables us to share the celebrations of harmony and friendship with the broader Australian communities. Our continued efforts over past 10 years have made Holi Mahotsav as one of the most important Australian festivals. City of Sydney has included Holi Mahotsav as a part of their Living in Harmony Festival.

This year Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia is celebrating the 11th anniversary of the Holi Mahotsav from Friday 5 April until Sunday 7 April 2013. Holi Mahotsav started as one day festival and has become a three days long celebration since 2012 with inclusion of special schools day programmes.

We are indeed immensely grateful to all those who have travelled with us in eleven years in turning Holi Mahotsav an Indian festival of harmony and friendship into mainstream grand Australian festival of harmony today. Australian community has made Holi a part of our evolving cultural calendar. Our special thanks are due to Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, India Tourism Sydney and ISKCON Sydney who agreed to and encouraged our plans for Holi Mahotsav in 2003 and have remained with us since then. The Premier of New South Wales has been supporting Holi Mahotsav since 2005 with

grants from the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, City of Sydney since 2012.

We are grateful to City of Sydney and LAC City Central & Rocks, NSW Police who have greatly supported our Street Procession / Rath Yatra every year since 2005. Our sincere thanks and gratitude are due to them.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to Lebara Mobile and other sponsors: Community Relations Commission for a multicultural New South Wales, City of Sydney, Australian Government: Department of Immigration, Incredible India, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and ISKCON Sydney. We are grateful to our media supporters Sydney Morning Herald, ZEE TV, Eastern Suburb Newspapers, Desi Kangaroo, The Indian Telegraph, Indus Age, Indian Link, The Indian Down Under, Punjab Times, Masala Newline, Navtarang Newspaper & Radio, Nepalese Times, and the Epoch Times, SBS who join us in making this 2013 festival even brighter and diverse.

We are indeed grateful to our stallholders whose names appear separately in this souvenir.

And the performers, staff and volunteers without whom the success of Holi Mahotsav could not have been possible, whose names separately appear in this souvenir. I bow before and salute them with humility and greatest gratitude.

We are grateful to Alison Jenny, Clare Clarks, Scott Eager, Brendan Burke, Desiree Lane, Annie Winter, Graham, Peter Malony, Peter Baker and other staff from Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority for their valuable contribution in hosting this festival.

Gambhir Watts
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

Messages



**Hon. Barry O'Farrell MP,
Premier NSW**



**Hon. Clover Moore
Lord Mayor of Sydney**



**Hon. Kate Lundy, Senator,
Parliament of Australia**



**Hon. Biren Nanda, High
Commissioner of India,
Australia**

It is great that this festival celebrating multiculturalism, friendship and harmony is being held just after the NSW Government's month long celebration of cultural diversity here in NSW – Multicultural March.

-Hon Barry O'Farrell MP, Premier NSW

The Holi Mahotsav Festival plays an important role in showcasing Indian culture, tradition, heritage and achievement, with music, dance, theatre, cinema, art and handicraft, as well as promoting a deeper understanding, friendship and harmony among people from all cultures.

I commend the Indian community for your valued contribution to life in Australia, past and present, and I wish you a wonderful Holi Mahotsav Festival and continuing success for the future.

-Hon Clover Moore, Lord Mayor of Sydney

This wonderful event is an important opportunity for members of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan community from around Australia to come together and share knowledge, build social networks and celebrate the richness of Indian culture.

Australian-Indians are a prime example of a success story in multicultural Australia—working to build a

cohesive, well organised and well represented ethnic community within the greater Australian community, while maintaining strong ties to their culture and heritage.

-Hon Kate Lundy, Senator, Parliament of Australia

Holi is an important festival that brings together people from diverse backgrounds in a celebration of colour and joy.

With the growth of the Indian community in Australia, the festival is being celebrated in different cities by the Indian Community. The celebrations of Holi at Darling Harbour will provide another opportunity to share Indian culture with Australian friends.

-Hon Biren Nanda, High Commissioner, High Commission of India, Canberra, Australia

The celebrations at the Darling Harbour with dance and music performances, cultural workshops, Ayurveda and Yoga demonstrations, meditation sessions and food and crafts stalls will provide a glimpse of the best of Indian culture and cuisine to Sydneysiders. I am sure that, as in previous years, the Holi Mahotsav will be attended by thousands of people.



**Hon. Arun K. Goel,
Consulate General of
India Sydney**



**Dr Geoffrey Lee, MP,
Member for Parramatta**



Hon. Amanda Fazio MLC



**Hon. Shanker Dhar
Chairman Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan Australia**

I would like to convey my heartiest congratulations to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia for organising this event and wish that the Mahotsav will leave a lasting impact on the hearts of people visiting the Festival.

-Hon Arun K. Goel, Consul General, Consulate General of India Sydney

As ‘The Grand Festival of Friendship and Harmony’, the Holi Mahotsav Festival represents what is great and successful about our multicultural Australia. This celebration of cultural harmony and peace reflects the universal values which make our country great, whilst the diverse and engaging activities throughout the festival will showcase the richness of Indian culture.

-Hon Dr Geoffrey Lee MP, Member for Parramatta

Holi has Hindu religious origins and is said to represent the victory of righteous forces. Holi is an exuberant occasion full of colour, friendship, and harmony, and celebrates the Hindu mythology of the love of Krishna and Radha.

The Grand Festival of Friendship and Harmony provides people of Indian ancestry an opportunity to celebrate their common beliefs and become a

united community.

The Indian community is long established, well-regarded and has earned a prominent place in this State. It is well known for its contributions in the business, academic and cultural spheres.

***-Hon Amanda Fazio MLC Opposition Whip
Legislative Council of NSW***

The festival of Holi is a celebration of the colours of unity and brotherhood - an opportunity to forget all differences and indulge in unadulterated fun. It has traditionally been celebrated in high spirit without any distinction of cast, creed, colour, race, status or sex. It is one occasion when sprinkling coloured powder (gulal) or coloured water on each other breaks all barriers of discrimination so that everyone looks the same and universal brotherhood is reaffirmed.

In our multicultural Australian society, the uniqueness of the Holi festival is very significant. By its very nature, Holi celebrations help strengthen the social fabric and secular character of the society as people work on building cordial relations, forgiving any hard feelings for others.

***-Hon Shanker Dhar, Chairman Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan Australia***



Celebrations of Bhavan's Holi Mahotsav 2013: A Report

Over three autumn days Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia celebrated the 11th anniversary of the Holi Mahotsav starting on Friday 5 April and finishing on Sunday 7 April 2013 at Tumbalong Park in Darling Harbour, Sydney. An estimated 12000-15000 people attended the Sunday festivities. Saturday festivities were attended by 4000-5000 people.

Our expectation were much higher 20,000 people on Sunday and 10,000 people on Saturday. The weather conditions (rain) seem to have effected the people turn up for the festivities.

Cooking demonstrations were conducted by three of the participating Indian restaurants: Taj Mahal Tandoori, Sweet Basil and Taj Sweets & Restaurant. People enjoyed and learned useful tips on Indian cooking. Demonstrators liked the enthusiasm of the people to learn new style and taste of food and gave useful tips to enthusiastic participants. People tasted the food and asked for quick tips to try at home. Looking at the enthusiasm of the people in Sydney to taste and learn new food, cooking demonstrations will now be a part of Holi Mahotsav each year.

Over five hundred artists performed during the festival days and represented a rich mixture of culture, spirituality and entertainment. The cultural performances included: Indian, Bollywood,

Classical, Bhangra and Belly dances, fusion and folk music, Punjabi songs, Balinese and Chinese performances and a surprise flash mob which engaged into dance the standing audiences. The music and dance, yoga, prayers, meditation activities and dance and art workshops lasted for all three days. The visitors could enjoy delicious vegetarian Indian food and craft stalls.

The first day of the festival was dedicated to schools, young people and children. Thanks to the great support of the Department of Education and Communities of Government of NSW and Sydney Region India Calling Program many school groups participated with group performances and in art workshops. At the VIP session for school day Dr Phil Lambert, Regional Director of Department of Education and Communities of Government of NSW expressed his delight for the mutual cooperation and engagement of school children in stage and workshop activities. Seven school regions, namely Mascot Public School PS, Cronulla PS, Carlton Sth PS, Ashbury PS, Canterbury PS and Janali PS were to participate but due to whether conditions only two schools, namely Botany PS and Carlton Sth PS made to the festivities. The special school day has become an annual tradition since last year.

Saturday was the day of spirituality. At noon time



people had started to gather at Martin Place enjoying ISKCON Sydney stage performances while waiting for a street procession of more than 500 participants to start. Departing from Martin Place people passed through Sydney CBD and Sydney Town Hall and culminated into Tumbalong Park. The procession included Rath Yatra (hand pulled Chariot) of Lord Jagannātha. The ISKCON devotees chanted prayers and praises of the Lord while pulling the chariot together with procession participants.

On Sunday the traditional practice of colour throwing took place in the designated area in multiple sessions throughout whole afternoon. This joyful activity brought many people of different cultural background together and was celebrated with happiness and harmony among the participants and viewers.

During the special VIP session held on the last day of the festival the special guests expressed the importance of such events as Holi Mahotsav and demonstrated their support and pleasure of being part of the celebrations. Among the respected speakers who graced the festival there were: Michelle Rowland MP representing Senator the Hon Kate Lundy, Parliament of Australia; The Hon Geoff Lee, Member for Parramatta, Parliament of NSW

(representing The Hon Victor Dominello, Minister for Citizenship and Communities); The Hon Amanda Fazio, Opposition Whip, Parliament of NSW (representing The Hon John Robertson - Leader of the Opposition); and Dr Phil Lambert, Regional Director, Department of Education and Communities, Government of NSW. Among other visiting VIP guests there were present: Hon. Arun Kumar Goel, Consul General of India, Sydney, Government of India; Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian, Chair, Community Relations Commission for a multicultural NSW; Thuat V. Nguyen, President, Children's Festival Organisation Inc; Shanker Dhar; Amarinder Bajwa, Hashim Durrani; Harmohan Singh Walia; Neera Shrivastav; Dr Yadu Singh and Linda O'Brien.

The success of Holi Mahotsav could not have been possible without the selfless and untiring support of nearly thousand artists and performers from a large number of dance academies and cultural groups. We bow before and salute them with humility and greatest gratitude. The crowd passionately danced and sang with the performers and enjoyed every bit of the multicultural program. Our special thanks come to all performing artists—Indo-Aust Bal Bharathi Vidyalaya-Hindi School Inc; Sahaja Yoga Music of Joy; Botany Public School; India Jiva; Om Multicultural; Aparna Dixit; Aziff Tribal Belly Dance;



Chinese Traditional Dance; Samskriti School of Dance; Shyam Dance; Akriti Gupta; Mayur Academy; Maya Youth in Performing Arts; Mayur Academy; Priya Dewan Bollywood Dance Academy; Alisha Singh; Rhythmic Squad; Nanhi Kaliyan; Global Gypsies; Taal Dance Academy; Geetanjali School of Dance and Performing Arts; Gatka; Ghawazi Caravan; Mango Dance; Nupur Dance Group; Chiknis; Seema Bharadwaj; Folk & Fun.

The stage performances were provided with direction by our great masters of ceremonies: Seema Bharadwaj, Monalisa Grover, Vijay Jogia, Reena Koak, Divya Sriram, Shalini Varmani, Soiam Raja and Sophil Raja.

The food stalls during the Holi Mahotsav pepped up the festival by adding variety to the event. A wide selection of delicious Indian vegetarian meals, beverages and sweets was offered by renowned Indian restaurants: Govindas Pure Vegetarian, Swaad-Taste of India, Sweet Basil, Taj Sweets & Restaurant and Taj Mahal Tandoori. Stay Cool Tropical Sno, Sugar Cane Juice and Tall Grass Cane Juice brought cooling and calming drinks.

Merchandise stalls and marquees offered great bargains such as traditional dresses, tops, fashion accessories, fancy bangles by Simply Gorgeous and artistic Henna art tattoos from Zenat Art Henna Tattoos. Lebara Mobile offered special SIM cards and discounted service plans for overseas calls. Vision Asia gave out discounted prices for their popular Indian channels package. Among other stalls there were: UAE Exchange Australia PTY LTD, India Tourism, Desi Kangaroos TV, Bank of Baroda, Donate Life, Money Gram and Sahaja Yoga Meditation marquee.





We express our heartfelt gratitude to our main sponsors and supporters: Lebara Mobile; NSW Government: Premier of NSW, Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW and Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority; City of Sydney; LAC City Central & The Rocks NSW Police; Australian Government: Department of Immigration; India Tourism, Sydney; State Bank of India, Sydney; AFL Multicultural Program, Sahaja Yoga and ISKCON Sydney.

We are grateful to our media supporters, Desi Kangaroo TV, The Indian, Indus Age, Indian Link Newspaper & Radio, The Indian Down Under, The IndoAus Times, Punjab Times, Masala Newline, Hindi Gaurav, Navtarang Newspaper & Radio, Nepalese Times, and the Epoch Times, Indian Times, SBS Radio, Chinese Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Navtarang Media Group, The Immigration Centre Pty Ltd and ZEE TV who helped us in making this 2013 festival even brighter and more diverse.

We appreciate the help of the volunteers Ottavia Tonarelli, Nathan Nathakumaran, Denisse Pazita Codocco, Abhisha Srikumar, Xiao Li, Angela Darke, Andy Khai Duy Pham, Vishal Joshi and Vaidehi Joshi, Tom Li, Aaron Qin, Michelle Cheung, Micaela Agosteguis, Jonathan Peticara, Karina Flores Sasse, Shruti Arya, Haerim Han, Muhammad Bilal Sarwar, Yang Hu, Mi Christian, Serina Hajje.

We are grateful to Brendan Burke (Venue Hire Manager), Scott Eager (Venue Hire and Event Coordinator), Allison Jeny, and other staff from Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority for their valuable contribution in hosting this festival.



Celebrate the Indian Festival of Colours around the Globe

To mark the arrival of spring, Hindus celebrate Holi—the festival of colour, plentiful harvests, joy and togetherness. Primarily celebrated in northern India, with bonfires lit on the eve and coloured dyes sprayed on the final day, the celebrations have recently travelled to different countries, breaking barriers of age, caste and creed. Here, the best locations across continents to catch the festivities.

Twickenham is set to ring in spring with vibrant colours this March as Orleans House Gallery hosts their annual Holi festival. The one-day event will take participants through lively community dances by local schools, youth groups, Bollywood and Bhangra troupes and colour-dousing sessions in the afternoon. The atmosphere will be further charged with live dhol drumming performances, activities for kids and food stalls serving mouthwatering Indian fare. Noon onwards, Church Street will witness street entertainment, alongside a world food and craft bazaar.

Those on the North American east coast need not miss out on the free colour, music, dance and food

at the Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza in NYC at the end of the month. The day-long cultural affair is designed to keep revellers on their toes for hours at a stretch. Get ready to smear friends and family with colour, eat delicious traditional Indian laddoos and enjoy Punjabi-style Bhangra dances. 2013's gala is especially exciting with opportunities to win Kerala-style spa massages and lavish hotel stays in India and America.

Friendship, culture, spirituality and entertainment—all blend in at Darling Harbour, Sydney as the city readies itself for a three-day Holi Mahotsav next month. Besides acts by 400 artists from various genres, there will be yoga, prayer and meditation sessions, cultural workshops and art exhibitions—all designed to enhance the Indian experience. For those who like to keep away from this exuberant festival for its boisterous side-effects, rest assured that colour throwing is fairly restricted and takes place within designated areas and on specific days. The event also features the lighting of the sacred Holi fire, symbolising the victory of good over evil and a chariot-led street procession covering the



Kids performing in Sydney



Holi in Johannesburg



Holi in NYC



Holi in Berlin

central business district (CBD).

After gaining popularity within a short time in Europe, America and Singapore, the first-ever Holi-inspired WE ARE ONE Colour Festival is being held at Emmarentia Dam in Johannesburg this April. Unlike Holi in India, this fun-filled celebration of music and dance has no religious antecedents, focusing instead on integrating people from diverse backgrounds. Expect the festivities to be a big bang with electronic dance music, energising crowds and a visual feast of brightly coloured (but non-toxic and environmentally friendly) pigments in the air every hour post noon.

The Festival of Colours is back in its second edition at the equestrian stadium in Berlin, during which you can let your guard down, partake in magical showers of gulal, enjoy desi acts and groove to mood music. The open-air festival highlights friendship, harmony and peace, bringing strangers together under one colourful cloud. This year's affair is also expected to spill over to Stuttgart, Böblingen, Munich, Leverkusen, Frankfurt,

Dortmund, Leipzig, Saarbrücken, Dresden, Mannheim, Karlsruhe, Essen and many more. To maintain excitement, the dates and venues are being kept secret, but you can stay clued in by tracking the event's Facebook pages by city.

-Purnima Bhaskar-Shrinivas, author and independent journalist, regularly contributes to the international online editions of Departures and Centurion Magazines with a particular focus on fashion, design and culture in India. Purnima featured the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia's annual festival Holi Mahotsav 2013 held at Darling Harbour as part of a Top Five Article on Holi Events Around the world. Published with Permission, first published by www.departures-international.com



The Power of Money

Gold, Silver, bronze or currencies, it is money. According to a popular saying, “money is what makes the world go round”. You can agree, disagree or proclaim it to be an exaggeration.

It is true that money cannot buy happiness but most certainly money can put an end to a lot of unhappiness. If one cannot meet his basic needs then it is not a life worth living. If a man cannot afford to have a dwelling, feed his family, pay for his wife’s treatment or children’s education is it difficult to imagine his trauma?

Each time a farmer commits suicide because the crops have failed and he is burdened with a ruinous debt, is it not a grim reminder of what happens when there is no money? The next time you give a hungry old woman money to buy food, you will be delighted to hear the blessings she will shower on you. Or buy an ice cream and put it in a hapless child’s hands and you will be thrilled with the radiant smile that greets you. This is the power of money.

Moreover, the happiness one derives from giving will be yours, only if you have that extra amount to spare. The luxury of giving is not a luxury the poor enjoys. The luxury of giving is the privilege of the rich.

To eradicate poverty and malnutrition among the poor, to provide proper shelter and sanitation, education, health care and the works, money is required.

When children as young as 5 years old need to toil alongside their parents in backbreaking drudgery, then we know how important money is. When you read advertisements saying, “47% of children are out of school; your little help can make a difference”, you again realise what money signifies.

Violence is often a serious fallout of poverty. When hunger pangs gnaw at the innards of the body, or a child dies from malnutrition or lack of treatment, or when rainwater gushes in from holes on the roof and floods a home, desperation can drive a person to violence.

As Oscar Wilde said, “There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich and that is the poor”.

This does not mean that one is advocating greed. Greed is a rapacious and an intemperate desire to amass money and wealth with the intention to hoard it for one’s self, far beyond the dictates of one’s needs and is often acquired by devious means. In the process, some gullible wretch is made poorer or another robbed of his cherished dreams in life.

However, if an ambitious and hardworking person is more narcissist rather than altruistic and works towards achieving his own goals in a fair manner, why should he be faulted?

After all, it is everyone’s right to advance and achieve one’s own self-interest and dreams. So though one may possess a comfortable place of residence, one may still wish to possess a luxurious villa. Where lies the harm in fulfilling a dream?

If a person does have a dream and sets out to fulfill it by sheer hard work and zeal can he be chastised for avarice and gluttony? All he has to ensure, side by side with his endeavours, is to rise from being a mere self-serving entity to one who also cares for the ambience around him and the needy and hapless who dwell in it. This, on his part, would call for in some measure attainment of rectitude or Aparigrah (Non-hoarding) and the spirit of sharing.

The final verdict comes from religious teachings which do not negate the importance of prosperity and wealth, and in particular Hinduism which has designated at least two days in the year purely to the worship of Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Ganesh, the two deities of wealth, prosperity and well-being.

Surendralal G Mehta
President, Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan



World Harmony Day



Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well.

-Mahatma Gandhi

World Harmony Day was started after the devastation of the September 11 World Trade Center incident in New York, America that shook the world and left it in fear and terror grappling helplessly for some semblance of security and safety.

Significance

World Harmony Day is a day to celebrate ALL of humanity as one global family. It is an observation that is not only symbolic, but most importantly, will bring hope to the rest of the world. This is happening all over the World and it will create a wave of Harmony and become one collective voice—visualising love, light, peace, harmony and unity. World Harmony Day is about sharing, caring, loving and understanding people needs—“All We Need is LOVE”.

A Love & Spiritual Movement

World Harmony Day is not a religious organization as such, but rather a movement that embraces common themes found in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other major faiths.

These themes include love and empathy, peace and harmony and tolerance: things which can help liberate citizens of the world from all diverse religious backgrounds.

World Harmony Day is basically a non-denominational spiritual movement that embraces peace, harmony and unity as its core beliefs. A love and spiritual movement helps one to find one's place in the world by spending time proactively to help others. This makes our existence more relevant and contributes to the bigger picture in our own

lives and the lives of others.

Proper actions and decisions made by this generation can help to set the next generations on the path towards peace-keeping with diverse populations. World Harmony Day's “seekers of truth, peace & harmony” are people from all over the world who believe ordinary citizens working together can and will make a profound difference. The true spirit of World Harmony Day is in bringing all the citizens of the world to a deep sense of the “Oneness” of all human beings.

Celebrations

Harmony Day is celebrated on 21 March each year. It's a day when people celebrate their cultural diversity. The Day is celebrated worldwide. Harmony Day in Australia began in 1999 and since then, a wide variety of groups including sports organisations, community groups, local, state and federal government agencies, schools and businesses have staged more than 25 000 Harmony Day events.

People celebrate the important role that sport plays in bringing together Australians from all walks of life to share in a common passion with the message Sport—play, engage, inspire. The aim is to encourage everyone, regardless of background, to participate in a sporting activity, increase understanding and to be inspired or inspire others.

In the dualism of death and life there is a harmony. We know that the life of a soul, which is finite in its expression and infinite in its principle, must go through the portals of death in its journey to realise the infinite.

-Rabindranath Tagore

**Source: www.harmony.gov.au,
<http://worldharmonyday.com>**

Swami Vivekananda Conversations and Dialogues¹



Q.—Then you call those Brahmins who are Sāttvika by nature?

Swamiji:—Quite so. As there are Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas—one or other of these Gunas more or less—in every man, so the qualities which make a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, or Shudra are inherent in every man, more or less. But at times one or other of these qualities predominates in him in varying degrees, and it is manifested accordingly. Take a man in his different pursuits, for example: when he is engaged in serving another for pay, he is in Shudrahood; when he is busy transacting some piece of business for profit, on his own account, he is a Vaishya; when he fights to right wrongs, then the qualities of a Kshatriya come out in him; and when he meditates on God or passes his time in conversation about Him, then he is a Brahmin. Naturally, it is quite possible for one to be changed from one caste into another. Otherwise, how did Vishvāmītra become a Brahmin and Parashurāma a Kshatriya?

Q.—What you say seems to be quite right, but why then do not our Pandits and family-Gurus teach us the same thing?

Swamiji:—That is one of the great evils of our country. But let the matter rest now.

Swamiji here spoke highly of the Westerners' spirit of practicality, and how, when they take up religion also, that spirit shows itself.

Myself:—True, Maharaj, I have heard that their spiritual and psychic powers are very quickly developed when they practice religion. The other day Swami Saradananda showed me a letter written by one of his Western disciples, describing the spiritual powers highly developed in the writer through the Sādhanās practiced for only four months.

Swamiji:—So you see! Now you understand whether there are Brahmins in the West or not. You have Brahmins here also, but they are bringing the

country down to the verge of ruin by their awful tyranny, and consequently what they have naturally is vanishing away by degrees. The Guru initiates his disciple with a Mantra, but that has come to be a trade with him. And then, how wonderful is the relation nowadays between a Guru and his disciple! Perchance, the Guru has nothing to eat at home, and his wife brings the matter to his notice and says, "Pray, go once again to your disciples, dear. Will your playing at dice all day long save us from hunger?" The Brahmin in reply says, "Very well, remind me of it tomorrow morning. I have come to hear that my disciple so-and-so is having a run of luck, and, moreover, I have not been to him for a long time." This is what your Kula-Guru system has come to in Bengal! Priestcraft in the West is not so degenerated, as yet; it is on the whole better than your kind!

XI

INDIA WANTS NOT LECTURING BUT WORK—THE CRYING PROBLEM IN INDIA IS POVERTY—YOUNG SANNYASINS TO BE TRAINED BOTH AS SECULAR AND SPIRITUAL TEACHERS AND WORKERS FOR THE MASSES—EXHORTATIONS TO YOUNG MEN TO WORK FOR OTHERS

(From the Diary of a disciple), (The disciple in this and the following conversations is Sharat Chandra Chakravarty.)

Disciple:—How is it, Swamiji, that you do not lecture in this country? You have stirred Europe and America with your lectures, but coming back here you have kept silence.

Swamiji:—In this country, the ground should be prepared first; then if the seed is sown, the plant will come out best. The ground in the West, in Europe and America is very fertile and fit for sowing seeds. There they have reached the climax of Bhoga (enjoyment). Being satiated with Bhoga to the full, their minds are not getting peace now even in those enjoyments, and they feel as if they wanted

something else. In this country you have neither Bhoga nor Yoga (renunciation). When one is satiated with Bhoga, then it is that one will listen to and understand the teachings on Yoga. What good will lectures do in a country like India which has become the birthplace of disease, sorrow, and affliction, and where men are emaciated through starvation, and weak in mind?

Disciple:—How is that? Do you not say that ours is the land of religion and that here the people understand religion as they do nowhere else? Why then will not this country be animated by your inspiring eloquence and reap to the full the fruits thereof?

Swamiji:—Now understand what religion means. The first thing required is the worship of the Kurma (tortoise) Incarnation, and the belly-god is this Kurma, as it were. Until you pacify this, no one will welcome your words about religion. India is restless with the thought of how to face this spectre of hunger. The draining of the best resources of the country by the foreigners, the unrestricted exports of merchandise, and, above all, the abominable jealousy natural to slaves are eating into the vitals of India. First of all, you must remove this evil of hunger and starvation, this constant anxiety for bare existence, from those to whom you want to preach religion; otherwise, lectures and such things will be of no benefit.

Disciple:—What should we do then to remove that evil?

Swamiji:—First, some young men full of the spirit of renunciation are needed—those who will be ready to sacrifice their lives for others, instead of devoting themselves to their own happiness. With this object in view I shall establish a Math to train young Sannyāsins, who will go from door to door and make the people realise their pitiable condition by means of facts and reasoning, and instruct them in the ways and means for their welfare, and at the same time will explain to them as clearly as possible, in very simple and easy language, the higher truths of religion. The masses in our country are like the sleeping Leviathan.

The education imparted by the present university system reaches one or two per cent of the masses only. And even those who get that do not succeed in their endeavours of doing any good to their country. But it is not their fault, poor fellows! As soon as they come out of their college, they find themselves fathers of several children! Somehow or other they manage to secure the position of a clerk, or at the most, a deputy magistrate. This is the finale of

education! With the burden of a family on their backs, they find no time to do anything great or think anything high. They do not find means enough to fulfil their personal wants and interests; so what can be expected of them in the way of doing anything for others ?

Disciple:—Is there then no way out for us?

Swamiji:—Certainly there is. This is the land of Religion Eternal. The country has fallen, no doubt, but will as surely rise again, and that upheaval will astound the world. The lower the hollows the billows make, the higher and with greater force will they rise again.

Disciple:—How will India rise again?

Swamiji:—Do you not see? The dawn has already appeared in the eastern sky, and there is little delay in the sun's rising. You all set your shoulders to the wheel! What is there in making the world all in all, and thinking of "My Samsāra (family and property). my Samsāra"? Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, "O ye brothers, arise! Awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!" Go and advise them how to improve their own condition, and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the Shāstras (scriptures), by presenting them in a lucid and popular way.

So long the Brahmins have monopolised religion; but since they cannot hold their ground against the strong tide of time, go and take steps so that one and all in the land may get that religion. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmins. Initiate all, even down to the Chandālas (people of the lowest castes), in these fiery Mantras. Also instruct them, in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc. If you cannot do this then lie upon your education and culture, and lie upon your studying the Vedas and Vedanta!

-Swami Vivekananda

Source: Swami Vivekananda's Works

¹ These Conversations and Dialogues are translated from the contributions of Disciples to the Udbodhan, the Bengali organ of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Science is Understanding Nature!

"Whosoever would be a man must be a non-conformist."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Science is all about telling stories about how this wonderful wonder, nature, works. Each story teller understands nature in his/her own way. Naturally, science will have differences of opinion and keeps changing from time to time. That which does not change does not qualify to be called science.

The big bang theory, the relativity theory, quantum mechanics, as also many others that followed do have their share of misunderstandings in-built into them as long as scientists just rely only on their five senses to study and understand this enigma, nature. Medicine, which follows the natural sciences of physics, chemistry and biology, has to per force have the same degree of uncertainties and possibly more as the human body is a greater wonder than many other aspects. Applying the faulty reductionist science to the dynamic, chaotic human physiologic laws leads the medical world into the bottomless pit of misunderstanding resulting in human suffering, making our interventions worse than his/her disease. Our whole edifice, built on the concept of individual diseases and their treatment, seems to be getting torn apart.

Having said that, I must explain the difference between the usual reductionist science that we use and the chaotic holistic science that nature follows.

Let us say that one wants to know the taste of a nice chocolate. If he goes to analyse the chocolate for its contents, one comes up with sugar, cocoa, and milk as the main ingredients. Then we study the tastes of the three separately. If we pronounce that chocolate should taste like sugar, milk or cocoa, even a child, which has tasted chocolate in the past, will disagree. Similarly, while studying the effect of fresh garlic on human health one goes by studying its individual constituents like antioxidants and the SH group that gives its smell; one comes up with wrong conclusions.

Just as chocolate tastes as a whole, garlic will be an effective drug only when eaten whole, that too after chewing in the mouth for the saliva to activate its vital action. The last two actions are called holistic actions vis-à-vis the reductionist ideas of tasting sugar as chocolate!

The hot topics in science today are the moon journey and stem cell research. Both these efforts are trying to bend nature's laws to suit our convenience and not trying to understand nature. Stem cell research has become a money spinner. In fact, that is the bane of scientific research. Societal respect for science seems to depend on the quantum of grant money that one gets. Knowing how one gets these grants etc, I need not say that only those who know the ropes do get those grants. Lesser mortals who are not in the loop might find it hard to get in. Research institutes, coming up like mushrooms all over the country, are vying with one another to get into to either AIDS or stem cell research, where plenty of research funds are available.

One could manipulate the stem cells in vitro in any way one likes, but when they are inside the human body they do not necessarily follow what the scientists want them to do. They might have their own compulsions of holism to do what they do depending on the environment.

In short, there are innumerable imponderables inside the human body that we are not able to account for and manipulate from outside. The same holds good for genetic engineering. One could do anything in vitro to engineer the genes, but once inside the system gene penetrance depends on the environment to a great extent! I wonder why people do not talk about the audits on the outcomes of the first trials of genetic engineering in patients with leukaemia. What matters at the end of the day is healing outcomes, as all our "so called" science is to help patients in distress. Predicting the unpredictable outcomes based on our reductionist thinking is akin to giving respectability to astrological predictions.

The million dollar question is: could we learn from nature about the working of such cells which are pluripotent in nature? Bart Flick, a noted orthopedist at the University of Georgia, could answer a part of this question along with another researcher, Prof Rustum Roy at Penn State. Bart was lucky to have had training under Robert Becker in New York University in the 1950s. Whereas a household salamander could regrow its cut tail in a few days, a frog or you and I can not do that! Why does this happen? How could the salamander, a less evolved animal, do that while higher evolution comes in the way?

It reminds me of how the snakes can suck their myocardial blood directly from the ventricles through small holes in the endocardium that spread the blood through fine meshwork of vessels all over, while we, the higher evolved creatures, need a separate circulation—the coronary tree which seems to be the best business where we claim to improve their blood supply with our interventions going in between with malice!

Silver is a great healer of human ills from “times out of mind” in Ayurveda. Rustum Roy could get nano-silver particles in water to heal many ills. Bart did similar experiments on wound healing.

In place of the conventional dressing, Bart dressed wounds with silver mesh that got a small current from a DC source. The latter might do two things (a) it might get the silver deposited as nanoparticles on the wound thereby avoiding any infection, and (b) also reverse the cell wall polarity at the cut ends for the cells to grow. The wounds heal!

He has even healed fingers with the terminal digit, cut off to re-grow to full fingers with finger nails and finger prints! That is not my story today. Bart did something wonderful which tickled me. He learnt a great lesson from nature as a bonus!

He was fascinated to see some gelatinous glistening debris on the healing wounds stuck to the inside of the silver mesh. He cleverly sent the material to the laboratory without telling them where it came from!

The report said that it was from the bone marrow with many blast (mother) cells that are pluri-potent. If the environment is created that is conducive, nature can produce pluri-potent cells (akin to stem cells) at the site, without our expensive stem cell research, to repair the cuts without any effort on our part. This is called observational research and

learning science from nature.

I strongly feel that this kind of research of carefully observing nature as to how it tries to keep man (or any other creation) alive on this planet deserves the best Nobel Prize.

Maybe in future we shall see how a simple Pulsed Electromagnetic Field energy could stimulate the ischemic myocardium to re-grow new perforating vessels to relieve anginal pains as also to increase the left ventricular ejection fraction.

My friend Glen Gordon, who invented this simple device was himself a patient waiting for a heart transplant after a massive heart attack from which he survived by the skin of his teeth. His ingenuity from his dying bed did the trick and made him walk out of the hospital with his own heart remodelled to bicycle through half of the United States to convince his doctors at Mayo Clinic that he was alive and kicking.

Let us teach our young children in school, that true science is learning from the workings of nature as our best teacher. Let us change our educational system from Rota learning and memorising to creative curiosity in every child where it is dormant. Every new born child is but a genius waiting to be allowed to blossom. (e=out, ducare = deliver). Let not their schooling come in the way of their education! While a good teacher teaches, a better teacher preaches, the best teacher reaches the child's heart!

Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.
-Oscar Wilde.

B.M. Hegde, MD, FRCP, FRCPE, FRCPG, FACC, FAMS. Padma Bhushan awardee 2010. Editor-in-chief, The Journal of the Science of Healing Outcomes; Chairman, State Health Society's Expert Committee, Govt. of Bihar, Patna. Former Prof. Cardiology, The Middlesex Hospital Medical School, University of London; Affiliate Prof. of Human Health, Northern Colorado University; Retd. Vice Chancellor, Manipal University, Chairman, Bhavan's Mangalore Kendra.



Source: Bhavan's Journal, February 28, 2013

Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi

The years that have passed since the death of Mahatma Gandhi have shown that the Mahatma is relevant, not only to India, but to all of humanity. His life and thought have become a source of inspiration to movements in all the continents of the world. Wherever and whenever there is injustice, exploitation and discrimination, a fall in moral values or outbreak of violence, people have derived solace and inspiration from the Mahatma to counter these evils.

Thus, to mention only a few examples, the Rev. Martin Luther King, who fought for the rights of the black in the US, Nelson Mandela who spent 27 years in jail in his fight to end racial discrimination in South Africa or Chief Albert Luthuli who was expelled from his own country to fight for the same cause, Lech Walesa, the leader of the Solidarity movement which overthrew the Soviet hegemony in Poland and Aung San Su Kyi who, despite being elected as the democratic leader of Myanmar, held captive by the military rulers of that unfortunate country, are all disciples of Mahatma Gandhi.

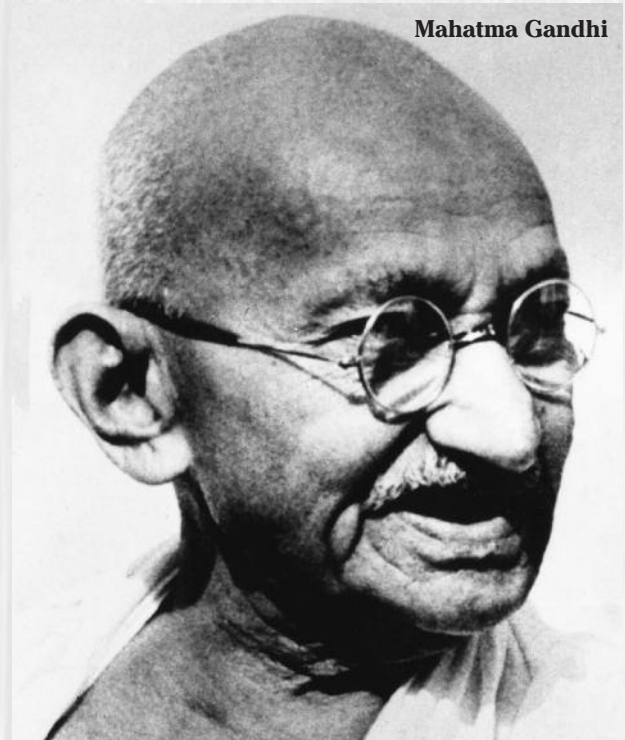
In our own country, Vinoba Bhave who undertook a nation-wide padyatra for his Bhoodan movement aimed at distributing the surplus land of the landlords among the landless, Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan, who led the national protest movement against the autocratic Emergency rule imposed by Indira Gandhi, the leader of the Chipko movement in the Himalayas, Shri Sunderlal Bahuguna and last but not the least, Baba Amte, who put the despised lepers on their own feet and gave them a sense of self-reliance are all eminent Gandhians.

What is it in Mahatma Gandhi's life and teachings which seems to be universal in their application transcending the barriers of time and space?

Mahatma Gandhi was a saint in the tradition of Bhagwan Buddha of 2500 BC and Jesus Christ. Like them, he showed the path of compassion, tolerance, love, truth, peace and non-violence.

But he was not only a saint. He was also a valiant leader of masses of people who fought steadfastly for political freedom and social equality. From early years as a young man, till his assassination at the age of 79, in his life-long struggle, he led several movements and struggles.

For him, moral principles were not just for individual salvation. They were also instruments for



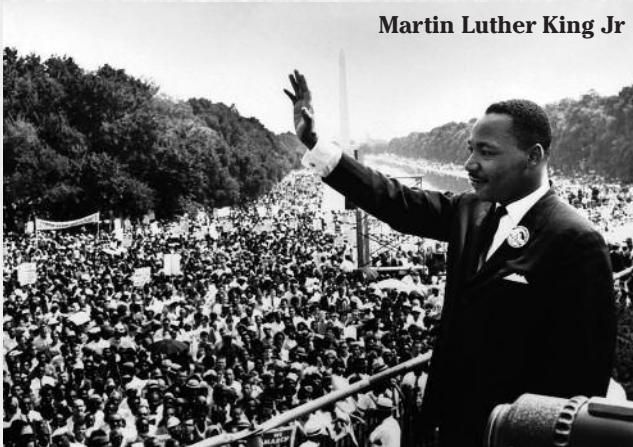
Mahatma Gandhi

political economic and social transformation. Karl Marx inspired Communist thought to put an end to the inequality and exploitation of Capitalism. But he, like Adam Smith, the father of the free market economy also envisaged the concept of the economic man rather than the moral man.

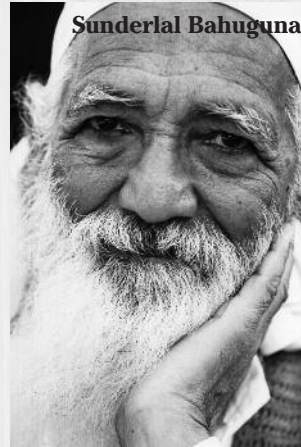
For Karl Marx, moral values were a product of the system of economic relationships. For Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, moral values had their own inherent strength and what he aimed at was the creation of a moral force which could put an end to exploitation and injustice in any form.

Mahatma Gandhi was not a bookish scholar or philosopher. He had read only a few books such as John Ruskin's *Unto the Last*. But what he read, he deeply reflected upon and if convinced of any idea or principle, he would translate it into practice. For him, there was no dichotomy between theory and practice, concept and action.

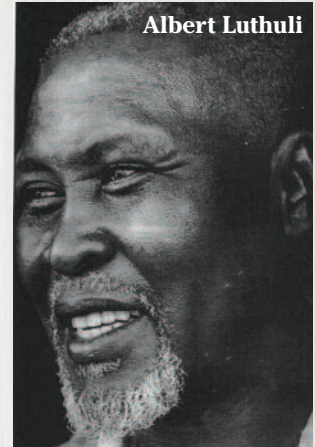
That is why Mahatma Gandhi did not develop a monolithic philosophy contained in a definitive work such as Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. Every idea that he put forward, or every principle that he preached, he had already tested in the crucible of experience. It is only then that he placed these ideas before the people and mobilized mass support for them.



Martin Luther King Jr



Sunderlal Bahuguna



Albert Luthuli



Nelson Mandela



Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan



Aung San Su Kyi

Of the most important ideas that he put forward was that of non-violence. When he launched his first non-cooperation movement in 1919, he had no hesitation in winding it up as soon as he got reports that the Chauri Chaura police station was burnt and reduced to ashes with all the policemen inside.

When, as a aftermath of partition, there was communal violence all over the country, he did not participate in the independence day celebrations but went far away to Noakhali (now in Bangladesh), moving bare-foot from house to house, extinguishing the flames of violence.

That is why Viceroy Mountbatten described him as a one-man army on a mission of peace. But Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence was not that of a timid person; it was non-violence of the brave. He would not bow down meekly before injustice, Mahatma Gandhi had once observed that free India would have the smallest army in the world.

But when the marauders infiltrated into the Kashmir valley and indulged in rape and looting, he did not oppose the decision of the Government of India to send the army to the Kashmir valley to drive out the intruders. Mahatma Gandhi would have been alarmed at the violence that the world has witnessed during the last 50 years. World War II ended with the US letting loose atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No doubt, World War III has not yet broken out, but

bombardment of Vietnam and the use of long range missiles against Iraq and Serbia have taken a heavy toll of human life and American thinkers like Samuel Huntington are talking of the Clash of Civilizations. Russia has indulged in relentless bombing on Chechnya, taking tool of civilian lives. The world has not yet learnt the lesson that violence solves no problem and civilized humanity should solve the problems through peace and goodwill and that in the ultimate analysis, all wars should end and all armies which are instruments of coercion and violence should be disbanded. While insisting on a comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT), the US is in possession of thousands of nuclear weapons and missiles on ready alert.

Mahatma Gandhi stood for communal harmony. He was acutely aware that people of different religions live in India and he wanted them to live with feelings of brotherhood towards each other. He was an intensely religious person and was deeply attached to Hinduism but he respected all other religions. His evening meetings started with prayers of all religions.

Free India adopted the constitution in which people of all religions were given freedom to pursue and propagate their own religion. The state itself had no religion but would protect the religious freedom of all people. This was the concept of the secular state embodied in our constitution. However, despite this, religious conflicts have occurred from time to



When he launched his first non-cooperation movement in 1919, he had no hesitation in winding it up as soon as he got reports that the Chauri Chaura police station was burnt and reduced to ashes with all the policemen inside.

time and took a high pitch after the demolition of the Babri Masjid on the fateful day of December 6, 1992. People of India should never forget Mahatma Gandhi's message of communal harmony if India has to progress with the united efforts of the people in the years to come.

Mahatma Gandhi insisted on moral values in politics. He felt that politics without principles has no purpose. He insisted on the purity of means no less than the purity of ends, because he believed that no matter how good are the ends, they would not remain good if the means to attain them were bad.

For him, freedom was the goal, but it had to be accomplished through a non-violent movement and furthermore, freedom itself was not the ultimate goal, but the means of improving the lives of masses of people, of "wiping every tear from every eye."

That was the pledge which Nehru, his disciple, gave when he became the first Prime Minister of India. But over the years, especially after Nehru's death, the moral standards of Indian politics have sharply fallen. Politics is used for the pursuit and perpetuation of power and power has become an end in itself. Misuse of power for the pursuit of private and partisan interest has become widespread, and no wonder corruption and nepotism have become rampant.

From Bofors onwards, Indian public life has been mired in scams and scandals of vast proportions. India has been ranked as one of the most corrupt countries of the world.

If Mahatma Gandhi had been alive to see all this, what would he have felt? Was this the free India for whose existence he had dedicated his life? Mahatma Gandhi is not present in our midst to wipe out corruption, but only his ideal of clean

public life can save India from the slippery slopes of corruption.

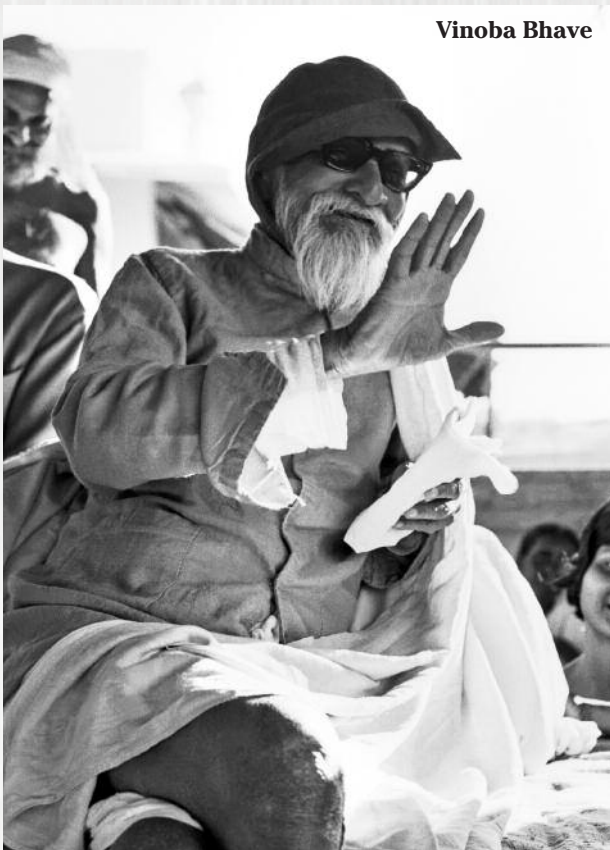
Mahatma Gandhi believed in political and economic decentralization. He wanted the village Panchayat to be the basis of the Indian polity. His was a bottom-up and not a top-down approach. But framers of the Indian constitution did not accept his ideas. The chairman of the drafting committee Dr. Ambedkar went to the extent of saying that Panchayats were dens of narrow mindedness.

Afraid of the fissiparous tendencies, the constitution makers went in for a strong union. Even the states remained comparatively weak. Panchayats had to find a place in the directive principles of the constitution.

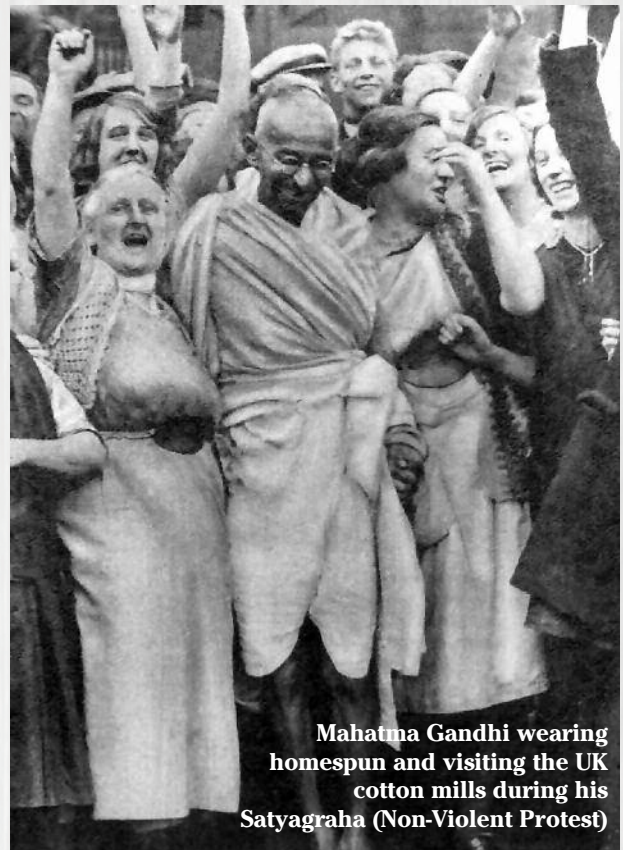
A few years after independence, it was realized that development work in a large country like India should be undertaken through the grass root level Panchyati Raj institutions. The 73rd amendment of the constitution gave Panchayati Raj institutions a constitutional position, yet these institutions cannot realize their full potential without alert public opinion in the village communities. The Gandhian workers in the countryside should undertake the task of strengthening the democracy at the ground level by creating alert public opinion.

Mahatma Gandhi wanted to promote economic decentralization through Khadi and village industries. He felt that they alone can generate adequate employment opportunities and sustain the traditional skills of the village artisans. They would bring the production and consumption of goods in close proximity with each other.

This Gandhian pattern of economic decentralization was fully justified and amplified by the famous economist Schumacher in his well-known book *Small is Beautiful*. But Nehru was enamoured of the modern westernized concepts of industrialization



Vinoba Bhave



Mahatma Gandhi wearing homespun and visiting the UK cotton mills during his Satyagraha (Non-Violent Protest)



Lech Walesa

and went in for mass production rather than production by masses, as envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi.

The age of information has once again opened out opportunities for

decentralized economic activity. Thus the Gandhian concept of decentralization seems to hold relevance for the 21st century.

Mahatma Gandhi must also be considered to be the harbinger of the modern movement of environmental preservation. As far back as 1927, he warned against indiscriminate exploitation of the natural resources in the name of raising the material standards of living. He said that nature has enough for fulfilling the human needs but not for meeting human greed. For him, unlimited consumerism was totally unjustified and could not lead to human happiness. Thus Mahatma Gandhi must be considered to be the originator of the modern concept of sustainable development.

Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts on education and

health were also equally revolutionary in character. Mahatma Gandhi wanted education to be related to the reality of life. We have forgotten this basic principle with the result that the education that we impart is said to be utterly useless because it does not create economic self-reliance and alienates the products of the educational system from the society. Mahatma Gandhi, like Rabindranath Tagore, wanted education to be imparted in the mother tongue. Acquaintance with English has got the better of understanding the subject.

In his ideas of health, Mahatma Gandhi laid emphasis on proper diet, environmental sanitation and a healthy style of living. By promoting junk food, tolerating squalor and insanitation and unnatural ways of living and depending more on allopathic systems of medicine to cure illness, we have exacerbated our health problems.

Mahatma Gandhi's ideas of non-violence, social harmony, political and economic decentralization, sustainable development and proper balance between the spiritual and material aspects of life have much relevance to happy human living in the 21st Century.

**Dr. P.R. Dubhashi,
Chairman, Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan, Pune Kendra is
former Secretary to Govt. of
India and Vice Chancellor,
Goa University**



S. Ramakrishnan: He offered Nutrients for Disturbed Minds

It is 10-years since Shri S. Ramakrishnan expired after more than five decades of service in the cause of spreading Bhavan's ideals and values. February is the month which Kulapati Munshi and his successor shared in death even as they shared decades in shaping the destiny of Bhavan and nursing its growth from a small sapling of Indian culture to a global exemplar of the glorious traditions and values of India. Amidst the welter of programmes held to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and the 125th Birth Anniversary of Kulapati Munshi, it is necessary to spare some thoughts for the man who personified everything that Bhavan cherished for more than 30-years after the death of Kulapati Dr K.M. Munshi.

Someone paying tributes to SR, described Bhavan as "a monument that Ramakrishnan has left behind". What this "Tapasvi without saffron robes" left behind is not a monument but a living organism that keeps growing in a social and political atmosphere that leaves very little scope for organisations standing for protection, preservation and promotion of established values and holy scriptures.

It was Shri Ramakrishnan, SR for short, who supplemented Munshi's motto "Bhavan's work is God's work" with his own moral dictum: "Once a Bhavanite, always a Bhavanite". Thereby he set a benchmark for two opposite things, lifelong dedicated service without any thought of financial gain or compensation. When Munshi launched the Bhavan, Tiruchur, Shri Ramakrishnan was an acknowledged steno-cum-secretary of excellence serving Vallabhbhai Patel and senior members of the Congress party. Sardar Patel was gracious enough to accede to Kulapati Munshi's request that SR be made available for Bhavan's services.

There was a huge salary drop but the spirits of the early Bhavanites were high. When Kulapati Munshi died in 1971, a leading editor of a national daily said in half gloom and half cynicism that he would have to write two obituaries, one on Kulapati Munshi and another on the Bhavan itself. Ramakrishnan's first two decades at the helm not only belied that gloomy prognostication but showed that the organisation had an inner strength and sublime character and image to weather financial and other constraints and grow in all directions. In a manner of speaking, Ramakrishnan's place in Bhavan's history is akin to Swami Vivekananda's role in the growth of the Ramakrishna mission.

It is difficult to imagine how Shri Ramakrishnan managed the duties of chief executive of the Bhavan, Group Editor of Bhavan Publications and the Editor of Bhavan's Journal besides organisational work that involved launching of Kendras, schools, art centres, etc., in every nook and corner of the country.

He moved with global celebrities with the same easy respectful affability and friendliness as he did with his driver and office peon. He gave his time for everyone generously and joyously. He wore spotlessly white Kurta and Dhoti wherever he went, the sartorial whiteness matching the soothing whiteness of his mind and heart.

Simple living and infinite grace in office marked SR. He was ever in the service of the Bhavan never allowing interests of self and family intrude into what he unflinchingly pursued as 'God's Work'. Once, industrialist KK Birla rang up to tell him that he had made a gold crown for the Lord of Guruvayur and he wanted Ramakrishnan to talk to the temple authorities about arranging a special function for the 'coronation'. Ramakrishnan told Birla that the work will be done and he would personally accompany 'KK Birla' to Guruvayur to conduct the special pooja. When the function was complete, Birla was overwhelmed with happiness and gratitude.

Back at work a few days later, SR received a basket of juicy mangoes with a white envelope on top. The cover contained ₹ 5,000 (a big sum in those days). A week later, KK Birla received a brief letter from Ramakrishnan which said: "Many thanks for the fruits and the generous donation to the Bhavan. A receipt for ₹ 5,000 is enclosed."

Instances such as this were numerous and it was that selfless and total dedication to the Bhavan embodied by Ramakrishnan which attracted everybody from global statesmen, national leaders, corporate giants and learned scholars to countless lesser known people who associated themselves with Bhavan. Every scheme of Bhavan attracted generous gifts of land and money from people from all sections of society. Ramakrishnan himself was bewildered by the phenomenal growth of Bhavan's immovable and financial assets and expressed his anxiety to Rajaji (C. Rajagopalachari, first Governor-General of independent India).

Rajaji advised him: "Do not spend the money you have received as donation for the Bhavan for

interior decoration of your office rooms”. Ramakrishnan took this advice so literally that the Bhavan’s headquarters did not receive any whitewash for long intervals of time during his tenure. Twelve years ago Ramakrishnan asked me to accompany him to Kodagu from Bangalore by car. He was on his way to launch a new Kendra of the Bhavan at Madikeri, once known as Mercara. It was then that he asked me to join Bhavan as Associate Editor and work from Bangalore. Predictably, he did not talk about any remuneration and nothing did come for the next 24 months I worked as Associate Editor and then suddenly he asked: “How much Dakshina would you take?” It was a way with him.

A Dakshina implies gratuitous offering. No pay, no salary, no conditions of service! He fixed it at a princely sum of ₹ 5,000 a month—and no retrospective payments for services already rendered! SR took the burden of work as editor of Bhavan’s Journal both seriously and lightly. He was very proud of the journal but not too bothered about how to fill up the pages. He relied on printed articles authored by famous people and texts of speeches. Rajaji had pointed this out to SR many times and once he wrote an article which was accompanied by a letter saying: “Bhavan’s Journal seems to depend almost totally on previously printed material; for a change, I am sending you an original article never published anywhere else. Please see whether it is fit for publication.”



**S. Ramakrishnan with
Kulapati KM Munshi**

Even as he went in for already printed articles, SR always told his visitors to write for the journal; he gave them promises and time unstintingly. As editor he was a publisher’s nightmare. For SR there were no deadlines. Even after printing of an issue had started, he would send a few articles to the printer with instructions to remove dozens of pages to accommodate the

late arrivals. For a journal with about 20,000 (in’ 90s) circulation, each issue would have three or more different editions. My first assignment as Associate Editor of Bhavan’s Journal was to bring out a special issue on Ramayana to be released on Ramanavami Day in the year 2001.

I launched into research pieces on different versions of Ramayana, a pictorial depiction of Ramayana taken from the walls of the famous Ramaswamy temple in Kumbhakonam along with an article by me on the South-East Asian traditions

based on Ramayana.

The issue was beautifully laid out and the release of the book in Chennai became a big public event covered by all the local newspapers. My own article was prominently displayed in the early pages of the issue. I came back to Bangalore a few days later and the final edition was waiting for me on my table. I casually flipped the pages in search of my article and found it nowhere in the issue.

A more intense search revealed that the article was pushed to the last four pages of the journal which generally carried advertisements. Much later, I found out that copies sent by mail to subscribers did not have my article at all! I was puzzled but I was told this was a routine phenomenon. A flood of articles which flowed in long after printing had started but specifically sought for by SR from various celebrities and swamijis, were accommodated and several articles had to be pulled out.

The editor in SR was neither disturbed by shortage of fresh contributions nor too concerned about the journal’s reliance on already published celebrity speeches and writings. SR considered the journal to be of archival importance rather than contemporary relevance. Late President of India, R.Venkataraman, who became Bhavan’s President in his out-of-office years, confirmed this perspective on Bhavan’s Journal, when I approached him with ideas to make it commercially viable. Entering the market place, he felt, would trivialise and even vulgarise the journal.

SR himself was a prolific writer and a very learned man who could write on varied subjects. Like the man, his writings too display a sweet kind of gentleness and positive outlook about everything in life. It is difficult to buttonhole SR into an arch type. Days of adversity did not dampen his spirits. He was a man of grace who remained modest and moderate even in celebration of joy, success and honours. He took his work seriously but carried his burdens as if they didn’t exist.

Above all, he had that uncanny ability to see positives in a completely negative environment. I will not forget his words to me when I narrated him the circumstances under which I had to leave daily journalism. I told him that I was experiencing “the trauma of life after a successful suicide”. With his ever consoling smile he said: “God wants you to discover the joy of after-life”.

That’s SR all over. He never contradicted people. Instead, he gratuitously offered thought nutrients for disturbed minds.

V.N. Narayanan

Source: Bhavan’s Journal, February 28, 2013

Sikkim: Where Culture Reflects Geography

Geography and culture dominate Sikkim. No visitor to the State can remain untouched by them. This has found an excellent illumination in an essay by Nicholas Roerich (1874-1947), the celebrated Russian artist, philosopher and explorer who came to Sikkim in December 1923. In Sikkim, he found a country steeped in spirituality and Buddhist ethos, and wrote in his journal, *Heart of Asia: Memoirs from the Himalayas*:

‘Nowhere else on earth are expressed two such entirely different worlds. Here is the earthly world, with its rich vegetation, brilliant butterflies, pheasants, leopards, panthers, monkeys, snakes, and the innumerable other animals that inhabit the ever-green jungles of Sikkim. And above the clouds, in unexpected heights shines the snowy kingdom, which has nothing in common with the busy anthill of the jungles’.

Sikkim is located in the lap of the eastern Himalayan region bounded by Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and the plains of north Bengal. Since times of antiquity, the original inhabitants of Sikkim (Lepchas, Bhutias and others) have played a major role in conserving the flora and fauna of the land. In historical times, the boundaries of Sikkim far exceeded its present area and included Darjeeling and the foothills as well.

The coming of the Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition through folklore and folktales to this region further advanced the ethos of ecological conservation. The permeability of folklore, even in areas considered

geographically inaccessible, is evident from the Tibetan rendition of the monkey tales of the Ramayana. This version is believed to have travelled to Sikkim.

The subsequent and substantive spread of Buddhism under the indomitable leadership of Guru Padmasambhava, a scholar from Nalanda University who travelled to Tibet from Sikkim, deepened and enhanced people’s respect for nature. It is not surprising that the local people view the forests and mountains as abodes of gods and goddesses and their preservation as a sacred duty.

Sikkim, which was a monarchy from 1642 for 333 long years, became an integral unit of the Indian Republic on May 16, 1975. The main deliberation as to how to celebrate the Republic Day, however, took place in New Delhi.

The leaders of the new Indian Republic felt the need to have a National Day and it was decided to celebrate such an occasion on January 26 every year—the date of the adoption of the Constitution of India as a Sovereign Democratic Republic under the title ‘Republic Day’.

It was resolved to celebrate the Republic Day Parade on Rajpath in Delhi with an impressive military parade before the President of India, and in the State capitals before the Governor of the State. The Ministry of Defence was entrusted with the responsibility of organising and providing the





necessary wherewithal for the national event.

The founding fathers of the Republic were deeply conscious of the age-old cultural strengths of India, and were keen to make cultural manifestations an integral part of the Republic Day celebrations. Thus transpired the magnificent blending of a military parade with a cultural pageant representing India's plural society and belief-systems. This combination came to signify that this new Republic valued cultural progress no less than military strength.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru provided the initial spirit and substance to the cultural pageant that followed the military parade on Republic Day and sent notes to his colleagues Education Minister Maulana Azad and Defence Minister Sardar Baldev Singh as to how to effect improvement in the Republic Day parade.

His minutes led to the reconstitution of the high-powered Inter-Departmental Committee for the organisation of the Republic Day Parade. In a minute recorded on 9.9.1952, Nehru brought out the importance of the cultural pageant and reflected on its possible character.

"...we should bring out the civilian aspect of that day's programme (Republic Day) even more than previously...some kind of proposal.....to have a demonstration of folk dances, more especially by tribal people from various parts of India and particularly the North-East, the Nagas, etc.....I should like that procession also to contain some more civilian element—boys and girls from schools and colleges, representatives of various professions, more especially representatives of arts and crafts. Indeed, some of our tableaux may represent the famous arts and crafts of India....."

In a letter written a day after, that is, on September

10, 1952 to the Chief Ministers of all the States, Nehru made some succinct suggestions as to what should constitute the cultural pageant. Extracts from that letter given below make interesting reading:

"During past years we have had a very effective and impressive parade in Delhi followed by tableaux, which represented a kind of historical pageant of India. I feel that the celebrations...(should have)...an exhibition plus also folk dances, more especially by tribal people. The concept of this procession and exhibition and everything else should be to demonstrate both the unity and great variety and diversity of India...I would love to see in our procession people from various parts of India including our tribal people, the Nagas from the North East, the Bhils from Central India, the Santhals and other showing that they are also full partners in this great enterprise of India going ahead. It would be a good thing if we could hold a meeting in Delhi...Each State could send a representative. He need not be a senior officer. It would be better to send a young and enthusiastic person with ideas."

So great was Nehru's keenness in this matter that he recorded yet another minute on 17.9.1952 which enunciated that women too should be involved in the organisational effort. It also settled a number of issues relating to the contents and character of the pageant.

Every year, a grand parade is held in the capital, New Delhi, from the Raisina Hill near the Rashtrapati Bhavan, along the Rajpath, past the India Gate. The President of India arrives, escorted by the President's Bodyguards (PBG), to grace the occasion as the Chief Guest. Prior to the commencement of the parade, the Prime Minister lays a floral wreath at the Amar Jawan Jyoti, a

Sikkim also known as Shikim or Shikimpati) is a landlocked Indian state located in the Himalayan mountains. The state borders Nepal to the west, China's Tibet Autonomous Region to the north and east, and Bhutan to the southeast. The Indian state of West Bengal lies to the south.

Sikkim is the least populous state in India and the second-smallest state after Goa in total area. Sikkim is nonetheless geographically diverse due to its location in the Himalayas; the climate ranges from subtropical to high alpine, and Kangchenjunga, the world's third-highest peak, is located on Sikkim's border with Nepal. Sikkim is a popular tourist destination, owing to its culture, scenery and biodiversity.

Sikkim has 11 official languages: Nepali (which is its lingua franca), Bhutia, Lepcha, Limbu, Newari, Rai, Gurung, Mangar, Sherpa, Tamang and Sunwar. English is taught in schools and used in government documents. The predominant religions are Hinduism and Vajrayana Buddhism. Sikkim's economy is largely dependent on agriculture and tourism.

The Himalayan mountains surround the northern, eastern and western borders of Sikkim. The state has 28 mountain peaks, more than 80 glaciers, 227 high-altitude lakes, five major hot springs, and more than 100 rivers and streams. Sikkim's hot springs are renowned for their medicinal and therapeutic values. For the most part, the land is unfit for agriculture because of the rocky, precipitous slopes. However, some hill slopes have been converted into terrace farms. Numerous snow-fed streams have carved out river valleys in the west and south of the state. These streams combine into the major Teesta River and its tributary, the Rangeet, which flow through the state from north to south. About a third of the state is heavily forested.

memorial to unknown soldiers at the India Gate at one end of Rajpath, which is followed by a two-minute silence in memory of the unknown soldiers. Since 1950, India has been hosting the Head of State or Head of Government of another country as the State Guest of Honour for Republic Day Celebrations in New Delhi.

Regiments of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force proudly do a march past before the President of India, who takes the salute. The crème de la crème of NCC cadets, selected from all over the country, consider it an honour to participate in this event, as do the school children from various schools in the capital.

The grand parade is essentially a celebration of India's unity while, at the same time, highlighting its rich diversity. Every part of the country is represented on this occasion, which makes the Republic Day the most popular of all the national events of the country. The Republic Day Parade is preceded by a 70 minute folk dance festival on 25 January every year in the presence of the President of India. This event is televised to the whole country.

The Beating Retreat ceremony, conducted in the evening of January 29, officially concludes the Republic Day festivities. Bands of the three wings of the military—the Army, the Navy and the Air Force—perform in the Beating Retreat.

The Republic Day celebrations have reached a level where only minor changes can be perceived and implemented. Its appeal is yet to reach a plateau

for people are getting increasingly enthusiastic about the Republic Day celebrations both at New Delhi and in State capitals. The Republic Day parade shows the military strength of India and the state of alertness and readiness of its security forces. It also demonstrates the country's cultural pluralism and integral nature. All those who have witnessed the parade for the first time have been unanimous in their opinion that the Republic Day pageant is not only an impressive spectacle, but it clearly conveys the military and cultural strength of a vibrant nation. This year, as I watched Sikkim celebrate its 36th Republic Day with its usual festive cultural pageantry at the picturesque Paljor Stadium, I realised how closely it reflected the rainbow up in the blue sky, comprised as we are of multiple cultures and ethnicities.

Despite the uniqueness, each segment is fundamentally Indian; it is this composite Indianness that is on display on the Republic Day, be it in the military parade or cultural pageants or the other artistic displays or in the performance of young boys and girls.

****Balmiki Prasad Singh, a distinguished Civil Servant, now Governor of Sikkim.***

Source: Bhavan's Journal, January 15, 2013



Epics—India's Pride and Culture

Mahabharata



The Mahabharata is often described as the fifth Veda. It is the largest poem known in literary history, being about eight times the size of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey put together; greater than all the epic poems of the European languages. Indologists feel it is a store house, for a critical study of grammar, syntax and geography, astronomy, etymology and folklore.

The Mahabharata was composed thousands of years ago by Vyasa. To quote Rajagopalachari "The characters in the epic, move with the vitality of real life. It is difficult to find anywhere such vivid portraiture on so ample a canvas. Bhishma, the perfect knight; the venerable Drona; the vain but chivalrous Karna; Duryodhana, whose perverse pride is redeemed by courage in adversity; the high souled Pandavas, with God like strength as well as power of suffering; Draupadi, most unfortunate of queens; Kunti, the worthy of heroes; Gandhari, devoted wife and sad mother of the wicked sons of Dhritarashtra—these are some of the immortal figures on that crowded but confused canvas. Then there is great Krishna Himself, most energetic of men, whose Divinity scintillates a cloud of very human characteristics".

Another name for Mahabharata is 'Jaya' which means Victory—protection of Dharma.

The story of Mahabharata is too familiar, to the entire nation and outside, to need repetition here. The characters of the main actors in the drama will be dealt with and, more particularly, in consonance with the title of the publication, the cultural aspects—moral and ethical values, and Godliness, will form the major portion of the chapter.

What are the lessons to be learnt from the epic?

The main lesson to be learnt is that if one adheres to Dharma, (moral and ethical principles), the end result will be happiness while non-adherence invariably leads to unhappiness and suffering. The positive aspects of moral values like Truth and Dharma have been forcibly brought out in the epic. This has been well explained in the Do's and Don'ts of Vidura's wholesome advice to his brother. Dharma is the core of the epic, individually and collectively, and the role of the State is defined.

It is felt that four main aspects in connection with godliness and cultural, moral and ethical principles are well brought out in (1) Vishnu Sahasranama (2) Yaksha Prasna (3) Code of Conduct:- (a) Dharma and (b) Vidura Neeti (4) The eternal Bhagavad Gita.

Shri Vishnu Sahasranama (One thousand names of Lord Vishnu)

At the end of the Kurukshetra war, the veteran Bhishma Pitamaha, wounded by the arrows of Arjuna, lay on the bed made of arrows, looking forward to the sun moving to the northern hemisphere to shed his mortal coils, meditating on Lord Vishnu. Lord Krishna realised that Bhishma was meditating on Him and felt his mind drawn towards Him. He was apprehensive that when Bhishma shed his mortal remains, there would be a decrease in knowledge in this world. He goaded Dharmaputra to meet Bhishma and seek his Upadesam. Looking at Bhishma, the Lord said "Gem of Bharat, to Dharmaraja who is seeking enlightenment from you, the words you utter will be immortal words of the Vedas in the world, lasting for ever". Bhishma replied, "Govinda, due to your

Grace, consequent on my meditating on you without break, all my bodily illnesses have vanished and I have become young. I feel strong enough to teach Dharmaraja all about Dharma and, what I am going to teach is the Supreme Dharma of all Dharmas”.

The secret of all Dharmas and the substance of the Sastras were imparted to Dharmaputra in the form of Vishnu Sahasranama (Thousand names of Lord Vishnu) in the presence of Krishna and through him to others. This Vishnu Sahasranama, imparted by Bhishma was included in the Mahabharata by Vyasa.

We know that the three literary master pieces in Sanskrit are the Brahma Sutras, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. These three are styled ‘Prasna Triya’. It may be mentioned here that before writing the Bhashyams, on the above three, Adi Sankara felt that, he should write the Bhashya of some literary piece. The story goes that Adi Sankara sent his disciple to the book shop to get any book. The disciple came back with the book on Vishnu Sahasranama. Returning the book, Sankara asked another disciple to go to the shop and fetch a book. The disciple returned with the same book on Vishnu Sahasranama.

While Sankara was pondering, Goddess Saraswathi appeared before Him and told Him that He may write first—the Bhashya of Vishnu Sahasranama. As one reads the Bhashya, one finds the deep and intense devotion poured into it and the godly analysis of the thousand names. The daily recital of Vishnu Sashasranama is considered a panacea for ailments and solution for the difficulties man faces in his daily life. It is a mine of power to draw spiritual solace in difficult situations, lifting one from the mundane plane to the spiritual level and, final salvation.

Yaksha Prasna

Veda Vyasa has given to the world, the Bhagavad Gita. Another sermon, next only in importance to The Gita is Yaksha Prasna in which Yudhishtira is the key figure. It is in the form of questions and answers and “is a standing testimony to the ethical, spiritual and intellectual grandeur of India”.

The questioner is the controller of death, Yamaraja and the person providing answers is the eldest of the Pandavas, Yudhishtira. Dharma incarnate, Yudhishtira is otherwise known as Dharmaraja or Dharma Putra.

The stipulated period of twelve years in exile was coming a close and the five brothers and Draupadi had to spend the next one year incognito. The Yaksha Prasna episode is towards the end of the 12th year.

A brahmana boy was all set to conduct his Samitadhana by using the Arani sticks to produce the fire when a deer ran away with the sticks. The boy sought the help of the Pandavas in securing the sticks from the deer. The five brothers chased the deer which disappeared. Fatigued with hunger and thirst, they rested below a tree. Nakula climbed the tree and could locate a pool nearby. He went over to the pool and was about to drink the water to quench his thirst, when an invisible voice (Asareeravani) stopped him and said that Nakula must first answer his questions and then drink and carry the water for his brothers. Nakula disregarded the advice, drank the water and dropped down dead.

With the delay in Nakula’s return, Sahadeva was sent and the same fate befell him as also later Bhima and Arjuna. When Yudhishtira found that none of his brothers returned, he went over and found his brothers dead. Feeling extremely thirsty, he was about to drink from the pool when the same voice forbade him from drinking the water before answering his questions. It was Yamadharmaraja who appeared before him and Yudhishtira agreed to answer the questions. Yama asked 121 questions ‘most complex ones, very difficult to answer even by the most erudite scholars well versed in sastras’. Dharmaraja (Yudhishtira) answered all the questions to the satisfaction of Yamadharmaraja and the four brothers were restored to life. Yama had taken the form of the deer and Yaksha to test his son, Yudhishtira.

The questions related to various aspects of life and the universe and, provides information on the day to day problems of man. Select few questions and answers which have a direct bearing on culture and moral values are presented here:-

Q. What is happiness?

A. *Happiness is the result of good conduct.*

Q. In what lies happiness?

A. *Good Character is the tool or base of happiness.*

Q. What is the essence of Dharma?

A. *Integrity or honesty is the highest refuge of virtue.*

Q. What is the essence of fame?

A. *Gift or charity leads to fame.*

Q. What is it that leads to Heaven?

A. *Truth alone leads to Heaven.*

Q. What makes one desert his friends?

A. *Avarice makes one desert his friends.*

Q. Why does not one go to Heaven?

A. *On account of attachment of worldly objects one does not go to Heaven.*

Q. When will one be considered as dead?

A. *A person facing utter poverty may be considered as dead.*

Q. When will a kingdom be considered as dead?

A. *A country without a proper Government may be considered as dead.*

Q. Who accompanies a man in death?

A. Dharma, that alone accompanies the soul in its solitary journey after death.

Q. What is the greatest wonder in the world?

A. Every day men see creatures depart to Yama's abode and yet, those who remain, seek to live for ever. This verily is the greatest wonder.

Code of Conduct

(a) Dharma

In all our scriptures and epics, considerable stress has been laid on Dharma, both at the individual level and state level. It is said that it was a self-imposed rule and not dictated by any authority or law. A well-known verse says "There was neither kingdom nor the king; neither punishment nor the guilty to be punished; People were acting according to Dharma, thereby protecting one another".

In the Shanthi Parva of Mahabharata, Bhishma elaborates on the code of conduct for individuals and the State, personified by the King and, the mode of governing. This exposition was to Yudhishtira, himself an embodiment of Dharma.

"Dharma in the Karna Parva of Mahabharata says about Dharma; that which sustains all human beings". As for ethics of the State, Raja Dharma, Bhishma tells Yudhishtira that a well governed State is one wherein "If women decorated fully with ornaments, and without any men accompanying them, can go about freely and fearlessly through the streets and lanes (unmolested)". The Mahabharata says "What are called heaven and hell, both are nothing but the senses; when they are controlled and disciplined, it is heaven and when let loose, it is hell".

Again to quote Mahabharata "Both immortality and mortality are established in the body of everyone: by delusion one reaches death; by truth one attains the immortal". Sama and Dana—mind restraint and self-control are the two means which Indian thought prescribes for the creative taming of power. The truly great are those who achieve this.

"Mere congregation of men does not constitute society. Dharma is the value that unites man to man to form the integrated organisation which is society. Dharma stresses the idea of mutuality and inter-dependence of man on society". Man needs the contact of other human beings for his humanisation. This is what Lord Krishna expounds in the Karna Parva of Mahabharata.

The message of Dharma is the essence of the epic, Mahabharata. At the end of the epic, in the Svargarohana Parva, four verses taught by sage Vyasa to his son Suka convey the essential wisdom of the epic. These four verses are known as Bharatha Savitri, The Savitri is the holiest Vedic

mantra of Gayatri (XVIII 5.47.50).

The English translation of two Slokas relevant here are given.

"With arms uplifted, I make this proclamation, but none listens to me; all wealth and organic pleasures can be had through Dharma; why then does man not pursue it, that Dharma".

"Never shall man abandon Dharma, through the impulses of Kama (anti-social organic cravings), bhaya (fear), and lobha (anti-social greed), even for (the saving of) his life; (for) eternal is Dharma; happiness and sorrow, on the other hand, are impermanent; the soul (in man) is eternal, but the cause of its visible manifestation non-eternal."

(b) Vidura Neeti

On request by Dhritarashtra, Vidura, his brother, explains to him the code of behaviour. The intellect must be able to differentiate between right and wrong. He must have control of the senses. The seven temptations, women, dice, hunting, harshness of speech, drinking, severity of punishment and waste of wealth should be guarded against, by a king. By refraining from harsh speech and avoiding wicked persons one can attain renown. Lust, anger and covetousness must be avoided. "That man does not grieve when calamity has already come to him; who exerts himself with all his senses controlled and who bears his memory in season is the foremost of men and all his foes are vanquished". "Intoxication with wealth is much worse than wine since a man drunk with power of wealth can never be brought to his senses unless he has a fall". Harsh words and speech should be avoided, virtue should never be forsaken out of desire, fear or temptations for the sake of life itself; virtue is lasting; pleasure and pain are transient. Contentment is the highest of all virtues".

The message of truth and righteousness is emphasised by Vidura to Dhritarashtra, his brother. He makes a list of qualities a man must imbibe and those he must avoid. "Righteousness is the highest good; forgiveness the supreme peace; knowledge the one supreme contentment and benevolence to one's self. One who masters lust, anger, grief, confusion of the intellect, pride and vanity will be the master of his senses and never commit sin".

To be continued...

Source: Cultural Heritage of India by Dr. J. Thuljaram Rao, Impress, Coimbatore, India





Yackandandah Folk Festival



Adelaide Festival of Arts



The 3 Sisters Blue Mountains



Somerset Celebration of Literature

Festivals of the Month—Australia

Adelaide Festival of Arts—1–17 March 2013

Adelaide Festival of Arts, launched in 1960 has created a strong tradition of innovation and inspirational performances, drawing on selections of very diverse art forms from across Australia and around the world. The festival presents a rich and diverse program of international and Australian cultural performers and events.

Blue Mountains Music Festival—15–17 March 2013, Katoomba, NSW

Blue Mountains Music Festival of Folk Roots and Blues, now in its 18th year is a venue to numerous musical performances by world class acoustic practitioners, seasoned campaigners and emerging talents.

Byron Bay International Film Festival—1–10 March 2013, Byron Bay, NSW

The Byron Bay International Film Festival provides a platform for independent filmmakers locally, nationally and from around the world showcasing a diverse range of films with an emphasis on content that seeks to raise social, cultural and environmental awareness, human rights, diversity and multiculturalism, creativity, indigenous culture, spirit, healing, connecting to nature, conscious thinking and positive living, music of every variety, marine preservation etc.

Yackandandah Folk Festival—22–24 March 2013,

Yackandandah, VIC

Yackandandah Folk Festival provides a wide range of entertainment (music, song, dance, poetry, literature, theatre, film, visual arts and food) that reflects a commitment to the preservation and development of the folk culture. It showcases talents of local people involved in artistic and cultural activities that promote community expression or development of the folk culture.

Somerset Celebration of Literature—13–15 March 2013, Somerset College, Mudgeeraba Queensland

The Somerset College Celebration of Literature is the premier school based literary festival held in Australia. The festival has a primary focus on Literature, Reading and Writing but in addition has displayed inclusiveness while promoting the Arts: literature, music, theatre, film and the visual arts. The festival is offered to the Queensland and Australian cultural community by Somerset College as its contribution to the literary and cultural landscape of the nation.

Source: www.festivalaustralia.com.au



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
"The Whole world is but one family"



Festivals of the Month—India



Maha Shivaratri

Maha Shivaratri—10 March, 2013

Shivaratri or Mahashivaratri (Night of Shiva) is a Hindu festival, celebrated all over the country with great enthusiasm. On this festival exclusively dedicated to Lord Shiva, people offer prayers to Lord Shiva and observe fast throughout the day.

Natyanjali Dance Festival—10 March, 2013

Natyanjali festival dedicated to Lord Nataraja, the cosmic dancing Lord Shiva is celebrated by dancers from all parts of India and abroad where they congregate and dance as an offering to Lord Nataraja. The festival promotes a universal message of 'Unity in Diversity' conveyed in the universal language of music and dance.

Holi—27 March, 2013

Holi, the grand Festival of Colors to celebrate good harvests and fertility of the land is one of the most



Natyanjali Dance Festival



Holla Mohalla

ancient festivals celebrated throughout world. People greet each other with colours and celebrate the occasion with gaiety and excitement.

Holla Mohalla—28 March, 2013

Holla Mohalla, a Sikh festival a day after Holi, was started by the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh who had tried to gather Sikhs for military exercises and mock battles after Holi. Sikhs celebrate this festival joyfully by watching and performing in martial arts parades, led by the Nishan Sahibs of the Gurdwaras.

Source: www.festivalsofindia.in,
www.panchangam.org,
www.hindudevotionalblog.com,
www.drikpanchang.com

Incredible India
India Tourism Sydney

Pandora's Inbox

New Delhi: A half-century before the invention of e-mail, T.S. Eliot asked, "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" If he were alive today, contemplating an electronic inbox on a flickering computer, he might well have added, "Where is the information that has been lost in trivia?"

It is one of the paradoxes of our times that inventions meant to make our lives easier inevitably end up slowing us down. When e-mail first entered my life, I was thrilled; instead of letters piling up for months as I struggled to find the time to pen replies, faxes not going through, and telegrams that cost an arm and a leg, I now had a cost-free means of communicating instantaneously and efficiently. I became an avid and diligent e-mailer.

And how I regret it.

I get over three hundred e-mails a day, sometimes twice that. Some are urgent (but not necessarily important) work-related questions. Some are from friends; because I am an Indian MP, many are from job-seekers, favor-demanders, and petitioners. Some are one-line queries; others are lengthy documents requiring perusal and comment. Many are unsolicited junk mail, offering products and services that I never asked for and do not need; and though an efficient filter catches many of them, it also catches some "real" mail.

Some are mass mailings, both interesting (like an international affairs mailing list to which I subscribed years ago, when I innocently believed that I would have time to read its contents) and diverting (like my daily update of *Doonesbury*). An

astonishingly large number are jokes—both verbal and visual—of varying quality. Many are campaigns—I received several thousand e-mails recently from Muslim students who do not want exams to be administered on Fridays. And increasingly, some are viruses that have infected friends' address books, with attachments that, if opened, could destroy my computer.

Because they are on the screen, I feel obliged to go through them all, if only to make sure that I do not need to read them. And this is a chore that takes more and more of my time. When e-mail first came into vogue, one could spend 15-20 minutes a day on it; now it consumes 2-3 hours. And, because one's other work does not stop, those are hours added to one's workday, and therefore subtracted from one's personal life. A convenience has become a burden.

When I am at my computer, I find myself neglecting more important matters that have arrived by "snail mail." E-mails automatically become urgent, because I know that if I do not reply to one immediately, it will soon be swamped by 200 others. I find myself scrambling to attend to utterly trivial e-mails only to get past them to the (possibly) important ones that lie behind.

The result is "information fatigue"—a palpable sense of exhaustion, coupled with persistent anxiety about coping with the sheer volume of material to be digested, compounded by an ever-shortening attention span in the face of the ceaseless barrage of data. Like Eliot, I felt that I understood more when I knew less, and knew more when I had less information to process.

This is a global problem—an estimated 294 billion e-mails were sent daily in 2010, and the figure continues to increase. As technology advances, it has become more and more difficult to escape it. No longer is e-mail confined to a desktop computer at the office; the advent of smart phones has allowed people to check their e-mail wherever they are.

It is almost enough to have one longing again for the day when information was a scarce resource and one had to go out to find it. Now so much information is so readily available that the challenge is to sift the wheat from the chaff. To paraphrase Kipling, it is clear that the e-mail of the species is deadlier than the mail.

Addiction to e-mail is increasingly being recognized as a malady. The British national lottery operators, Camelot, once tried to ban e-mail on Fridays; they wanted staff to talk to each other at least one day a week. But the experiment was abandoned within a month: people have grown so accustomed to the convenience of copying messages to multiple recipients that walking to their desks is now an unfamiliar idea.

Part of the problem is that we allow ourselves to be persuaded that new inventions will only make our lives more convenient, rather than also adding to our burdens. Just as the telephone did not supplant the postal system, e-mail sits alongside prior methods of communication. Now we have more means of reaching each other than ever, but with less worth saying.

Indeed, there is an inverse relationship between the difficulty and expense of communication, on one hand, and the quality of what is communicated, on the other. When telegraph operators were paid by

the word, and there was always the risk of garbled transmissions, messages were crisp, succinct, and to the point. When neither length nor complexity affects the cost of a message, however, the field is open for irrelevant and unnecessary communication.

Without even the price of a stamp to deter the prolix, the unmanageable tsunami of e-mail threatens to drown the world in information, unless the servers, switches, and wires that sustain the system burn out first. Ease of replication permits matters to get out of hand very quickly.

I have finally given up trying to cope. I have decommissioned my e-mail account and set up an auto response that gives e-mailers ten other options to reach people who can help them (including bringing messages to my attention). So far, it hasn't made much of a difference: e-mails continue to flood the decommissioned mailbox. But it has helped me: I no longer feel obliged to reply.

Shashi Tharoor, a Minister of State for Human Resource Development and a former UN Under-Secretary General, is the Author of a dozen books, including *India from Midnight to the Millennium* and *Nehru: the Invention of India* and his most recent, *Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st Century*.



Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2010, www.project-syndicate.org

Mahadevi Verma

Mahadevi Verma was a well-known Hindi poet of the Chhayavaad generation, the times when every poet used to incorporate romanticism in their poetry. She is more often called the modern Meera. This famous Hindi poet and writer was born on 26 March 1907, in Farrukhabad in a family of lawyers. She was the eldest among her four siblings. She received her education at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. She went to Allahabad University for higher education and obtained her Master's degree in Sanskrit from Allahabad University.

Married Life

Mahadevi Verma was married to Dr Swarup Narayan Verma at an early age. After marriage she continued to live with her family and receive education. She met her husband for some time in the princely state of Tamkoi somewhere around 1920. Thereafter, she moved to Allahabad to further her interest in poetry. Unfortunately, she and her husband mostly lived separately and were busy pursuing their individual interests. They used to meet occasionally. Her husband died in the year 1966 and then Mahadevi Verma decided to permanently shift to Allahabad.

Chhayavaad

Mahadevi Verma was one amongst the other major poets of the Chhayavaadi School of the Hindi literature. She was the epitome of child prodigy. Not only she wrote fabulous poetry, but also made sketches for her poetic works such as Deepshikha and Yatra. Deepshikha is one of the best works of Mahadevi Verma. She was also famous for her book of memoirs. She was highly influenced by the values preached by the Buddhist culture. She was so much inclined towards Buddhism that, she even attempted to become a Buddhist Bhikshuni.

Notable Works

Some of her notable works included: Prose: Ateet ke Chalchitra, Kshanda, Mera Parivaar, Path ke Saathi, Sahityakaar ki Aastha, Sambhashan Sankalpita, Shrinkhla ki Kadiya, Smriti ki Rekhayen.

Poetry: Deepshikha, Himalaya, Neerja, Nihar, Rashmi, Sandhya Geet, Saptaparna.



Mahadevi Verma

Collection: Geetparva, Mahadevi Sahitya, Parikrama, Sandhini, Smarika, Smritichitra, Yama.

Honours

Her writings were well-acclaimed and earned her an important position in the world of Hindi literature. Her amazing poetry collection Yama brought her the Gyanpeeth Award (1940), the highest Indian literary award. In the year 1956, the Government of India honoured her by conferring the title of Padma Bhushan upon her. She was the first Indian woman to become a Fellow of the Sahitya Akademi in the year 1979. Her most famous works include Atita ke Chalchitra (The Moving Frames of the Past) and Smriti ki Rekhayen (The Lines of Memory). Her famous poetic publications are Nihar, Rashmi, Neerja and Sandhya Geet. Her work Shrinkhala ki Kadiyan reflects the plight of Indian women.

The Mirabai

Mahadevi Verma was deeply aesthetic. Her poetry is marked by a constant pain, the pain of separation from her beloved, the Supreme Being. Due to this she is also sometimes compared to Mirabai. There is an element of mysticism in her poetry. Her poems are addressed to her distant



lover, while her lover remains quiet and never speaks. With her work *Deepshikha*, which contains 51 poems, she ventured into new field of Hindi literature—*Rahasyavaad*. She also served as an Editor of the famous Hindi monthly *Chand*.

The Social Reformer

Mahadevi Verma was also a social reformer. She strongly advocated the cause of women in India. Many of her prose works reflect her views on the plight of Indian women. She was appointed the first Principal of Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth and started to impart education to girls through Hindi medium. Later she became the Chancellor of the institute. She believed that, only by educating women, society becomes enlightened. She wanted women to be empowered and become self-dependent.

The Literary Figure

Mahadevi Verma was one of the top ranking figures in the world of Hindi literature. She was always remembered with reverence along with the pioneers of the “Chhayavad” movement, such as Jai Shankar Prasad, Surya Kant Tripathi ‘Nirala’ and Sumitra Nandan Pant. Her style was such that she could easily integrate mysticism of nature with the highest imagination of a human being where sorrow and happiness are interwoven. She not only enriched Hindi literature but also gave it a new direction, directing it towards newer objectives leading to a more enjoyable and rejoicing path.

Her readers were not only impressed by her flowery language and beautiful expression but also in the deep aesthetic stream of philosophical realization of eternal truth emerging from a sense of union with the Supreme Reality, which enabled her readers to have a taste of eternal happiness or bliss. In most of her works the essence of spirituality can be seen. She was a lover of nature like Wordsworth. For her the beauty of nature was not only a thing of joy, but also an object of worship and adoration.

Nature, for her was an eternal source of inspiration leading to self-realization. To her, prose was a subject of the intellect and poetry dealt with emotions. In prose, one needs subjects to ponder over and discuss, but poetry flows by itself. It does not need any sort of external support. She enriched

Hindi literature by expressing herself beautifully both in prose and poetry. She was also deeply involved in fine arts, culture and self-expression through her poems, articles and other writings.

Mahatma Gandhi

She had no interest in politics but she was very much aware of the contemporary scenario. She was against the evils existing in the society in the form of corruption, bribe, treachery, untruth, falsehood and hypocrisy. She was a profounder of truth and was a faithful admirer and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. She said, “At the time of Mahabharata only one untruth brought a lot of misfortune for both Pandavas and Kauravas, but now everyone is taking shelter under untruth, falsehood and hypocrisy. Hence, we find everywhere in society deep distress, unhappiness and misery. Only God knows what will happen to the country.” In her Presidential Address at Hindi Sansthan, Lucknow, she expressed her anguish over the ways of the politicians who were selfish and self-centered.

They always gave importance for their well-being and ignored the common well-being of the people. According to her, politicians had become mere puppets in the hands of the dishonest tyrants and their only objective was to achieve the highest seat in the corridors of power. She said, “I can understand if someone dreams to serve the country and devote himself for the important task of nation building or to serve mankind at large, but I cannot understand how a person can dream to be at the helm of affairs by snatching the highest chair in the power-achieving game and still think that he is a great person.”

Final Days

Mahadevi closely followed Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of life. She worked with towering personalities like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr Rajendra Prasad. She realized that truth and happiness flows naturally from sacrifice, from reunion with the Supreme Reality. She practiced what she preached in her life so much so that each and every word in her poems became more or less a sermon, or a piece of scripture. Mahadevi Verma died on September 11, 1987.

Source: www.iloveindia.com,
www.mapsofindia.com, www.indianetzone.com



The Road to Asian Unity

New Delhi: Asia's lack of institutions to ameliorate regional tensions is often lamented. But greater Asian unity may be arising by the backdoor, in the form of new and impressive infrastructure links.

Today's efforts to expand regional infrastructure projects are all the more remarkable for linking even countries locked in diplomatic, and sometimes open, conflict. New bus routes between India and Pakistan may not make headlines, but they deliver a degree of normalcy to relations riddled with mistrust. Elsewhere, rail links between China and Vietnam, road developments connecting India and Bangladesh, and new ports, harbors, and pipelines in Myanmar and Pakistan are forging a new form of economic unity alongside the region's manufacturing supply chains.

Such ventures now dot Asia's geography, even as tensions over unsettled boundaries and sovereignty claims are fueling turbulence. Consider Afghanistan, which faces yet another phase of internal dislocation. There, India nonetheless continues to build a strategic ring road around the country, as well as a vitally important dam at Salma. And a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan, which would traverse the country, is coming closer to reality.

Then there is the Bay of Bengal, where Chinese infrastructure investment is set to transform the backward Myanmar seaside town of Kyaukpyu and the surrounding region by tapping offshore gas fields and constructing a pipeline to Yunnan Province in southern China. These initiatives reflect not only China's voracious drive for natural resources and new trade routes, but also

Myanmar's own plans to create a "mini-Singapore" within its borders.

Of course, China is not investing in such infrastructure out of altruism. Almost a decade ago, outgoing Chinese President Hu Jintao identified the country's "Malacca Dilemma," referring to the channel between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra that connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as a grave strategic threat. Roughly 80% of China's energy imports pass through that potential chokepoint, which is mostly policed by the US Navy. The links now being developed in Myanmar will reduce China's dependence on the Strait of Malacca by more than one-third.

The plans are illustrative of Myanmar's pragmatic new outlook. Sandwiched between China and India, Myanmar, which had earlier suspended construction of the Chinese-backed Myitsone Dam, may one day be the link that facilitates closer economic ties between the two giants. Japan, not wishing to be left out of the great infrastructure game in Myanmar, is investing billions in port reconstruction.

To the west, in Pakistan, one can travel on the Makran coast along a road built with Chinese assistance, eventually coming to the ancient fishing port of Gwadar, with its natural deep-water harbor. With a development plan by the Port of Singapore Authority having fallen through, the China Overseas Ports Holding Company has taken over, raising strategic concerns in India, Japan, and the US. Indeed, despite intense opposition from the US, China's project in Gwadar may soon be followed by



a joint project with Iran to lay a pipeline carrying 750 million cubic feet of natural gas per day.

China is also actively pursuing the construction of a Pan-Asia Railroad, which, when complete, will form an enormous circular route. Starting in Kunming in Yunnan Province, it will extend through Myanmar and south to Bangkok, where a spur will traverse Malaysia to Singapore. From Bangkok, the line will run east through Cambodia and north through Vietnam to Hanoi, then through Laos and back to Kunming.

This sounds like an enormous undertaking, and it is; but, with some rail lines already existing (some for many decades), the project could be completed by the 2015 target date. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' long-held dream of unity might first arrive by rail.

Meanwhile, India has already opened up road communications linking the East Indian state of Manipur to North Myanmar, with India's Border Roads Organization completing the first all-weather road connecting the two countries. And, in Central Asia, India has projects at Ayni Air Base near Dushanbe in Tajikistan, including a functioning field hospital (where the late Ahmed Shah Massoud, the leader of Afghanistan's anti-Soviet war, died following an assassination attempt on September 9, 2001).

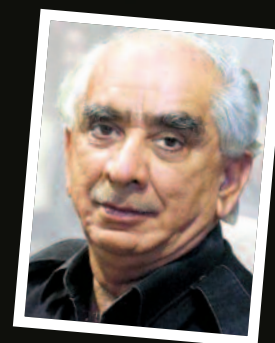
These infrastructure investments clearly hold the potential to bind Asia closer together than ever before. But there are geopolitical risks in this scramble for development. Predictably, the West is ramping up its aid, particularly in Myanmar, where

the streets of Yangon are now choked with traffic created by aid and government development agencies (and investors).

Of course, tension is probably unavoidable as these links develop. Tellingly, Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has spoken of her country in terms of the "vicinity of China, the geographical distance of the US, and the cultural linkages with India." The question is whether Asia's infrastructure investments, particularly those by China, will be used to create Asian satellites of the Middle Kingdom, or become tools to be used among equals.

Asia can use its geography either to keep its states isolated, or to trade with one another and develop to the benefit of all. After centuries of isolation and colonial slumber, the region is now awake to the potential benefits of greater unity. It will not matter that the infrastructure may not have been built solely for that purpose if Asia's leaders keep their eyes on prosperity, rather than only on power.

Jaswant Singh, a former Foreign Minister, Finance Minister, and Defense Minister of India, is a member of the opposition in India's Parliament. He is the Author of Jinnah: India—Partition—Independence.



Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2010, www.project-syndicate.org

Ustad Bismillah Khan

If you dedicate yourself to what you learn, if you practice it sincerely, you will lose all fear..

—Ustad Bismillah Khan

Ustad Bismillah Khan, the legendary Shehnai player, was one of India's most celebrated classical musicians. Bismillah Khan is fully credited with taking the Shehnai from the marriage mandap to the concert hall. He was the third classical musician after Pandit Ravi Shankar and MS Subbulakshmi to be awarded Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian honour in India. No one could think of Shehnai without Bismillah Khan or vice-versa. It is he, who, in fact, gave a popular instrument the capacity and courage to rise to be admitted to the hoary company instruments of Hindustani classical music globally.

Early Life

Bismillah Khan was born on March 21, 1916 at Dumraon, Bihar. He was named Qamaruddin to sound like his elder brother's name Shamsuddin. However, when his grandfather Rasool Baksh Khan saw him as a baby he uttered the word "Bismillah" and hence he came to be known as Bismillah Khan. His father used to be a Shehnai player in the court of Maharaja Keshav Prasad Singh of Dumraon. Ustad Bismillah Khan was trained under his uncle, the late Ali Bux 'Vilayatu', a Shehnai player attached to Varanasi's Vishwanath Temple.

Shehnai at Red Fort

Ustad Bismillah Khan brought Shehnai to the centre stage of Indian classical music with his concert in the Calcutta All India Music Conference in 1937. He had the honour of performing at Delhi's Red Fort on the occasion of India's Independence on August 15, 1947. Bismillah Khan mesmerized everyone with his heart-touching rendering of Raga Kafi from the Red Fort on the eve of India's first Republic Day ceremony, on January 26, 1950.

Shehnai and Khan

Bismillah Khan religiously practiced the Shehnai and attained perfection in a very short time. He alone made Shehnai as one of the most famous classical music instruments. He monopolized Shehnai recital in the post independence era and kept the legacy of classical music alive with his recitals. He can be truly called a pure artist who always believed that music will survive even if the world perishes.

"We reach Allah in different ways. A musician can learn. He can play beautifully. But unless he can mix his music with religion, unless he strives to meet



God, he will only have kalaa (art) but no assar (mystical union). He will always stand at the ocean and never reach the heights of purity."

Allah and Saraswati

Ustad Bismillah Khan was an icon of the composite culture of India. He was a worshipper of both Allah and Saraswati. Ustad Bismillah was greatly attached to the city of Varanasi and the river Ganga. Once, a rich American university invited Bismillah to be their musician-in-residence, and asked him to state his terms. Bismillah Khan replied, he would only come if he could bring his beloved Ganga with him. Ustad Bismillah Khan performed in various parts of the world. He performed in Afghanistan, Europe, Iran, Iraq, Canada, West Africa, USA, USSR, Japan, Hong Kong and almost every capital city across the world.

Ustad Bismillah Khan was a recipient of many honours and awards. These include: Padma Vibhushan (1980), Padma Bhushan (1968), Padma Shri (1961), Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1956), and Tansen Award by Govt. of Madhya Pradesh. In 2001, Ustad Bismillah Khan became the third classical musician to be awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour. Despite the fame that he achieved, Bismillah Khan always remained where his roots were.

Final Days

On 21st August 2006, at the age of 90, Bismillah Khan breathed his last after having a cardiac arrest. "Begum" Was Waiting, But Master Never Returned. His body was buried in Varanasi with a 21-gun salute from Indian Army. His Shehnai was buried with him in his grave.

**Source: www.iloveindia.com,
www.culturalindia.net**



From Bhavan's Journal February 17, 1963
Reprinted in Bhavan's Journal February 28, 2013

Mother India

Thou cam 'St to irradiate my world in a flash,
India, Mother mine, and stoodst revealed
Not as thing of dust and sand and clay,
But as incarnate Grace, Love's scepter to wield.
We, Nature's underlings, alas, respond
To the blandishments of the Siren, Desire;
We know in our hearts-hers is phantom voice,
But still would deaf be to thy call of Fire;
And so, because we slept, thy thunder came
To wake us from illusion's slumber of shame!

And as thou tolledst thy bell, we saw overawed:
Thou art no clod-wan, lifeless and supine;
Thy every atom's electrified with
The soul consciousness-mystic, divine!
And 'was for this divinity's lure that He,
Lord Narayan, comes down from age to age
As a Wonder Child to be nursed at thy breast
With Night's dark hordes His radiant war to wage,
Rebuild His crystal Home and foster the race
Of Yogis who dispense thy golden Grace.

'Twas here we first heard the ringing footfall
Of Ganga, the Daughter of Infinity
And the Mother of ruth who flows on singing still
Redeeming derelicts with her melody.
'Twas here the Himalay's snow-crowned peak Kailas
Invoked Lord Siva to initiate
Wan mortals into His supernal lore
Of Godliness that conquers greed and hate
Proclaiming His compassion's victor fleam
No demon clouds can mar nor blizzards him.

—Dilip Kumar Roy

China's Aim is World

Domination

The latest information from China, which was not really unexpected, highlights both a crisis and an opportunity.

Such a crisis in national and international affairs is not a matter for hesitation or dejection but is a clear call to the Indian people to be consolidated and unified by way of reaction to a cynical aggression and a philosophy of life which are foreign to our heritage and agelong outlook.

The present is also an opportunity for us to recapture the messages of Vyas and Sri Krishna.

Our culture has a two-fold aspect, one being the pursuit, within reasonable limits, of Ahimsa or non-injury and the other involving the obligation to fight with all our might and main against the forces of evil and of disintegration.

We cannot but note that the various manifestations of Siva, of Sakti and of Vishnu were concerned with the elimination of evil agencies.

China today claims to be the sole and orthodox exponent of its version of Marxism and Leninism, and in pursuance of the long-cherished and well-publicised policies not only of Lenin but of Mao Tse-tung himself, it has launched upon a programme of world conversion and world domination.

—Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar

◀ ◀ ◀ *Flashback*



Will Programmers Rule?

New Delhi: Marc Andreessen made his first fortune writing the code that became Netscape Navigator, the Internet browser. He is now a venture capitalist who evangelizes about the growing importance of software in business today. Indeed, he proclaims that software is taking over the world—that it will be the primary source of added value—and offers the following prediction: the global economy will one day be divided between people who tell computers what to do and people who are told by computers what to do.

Andreessen's aim is to shock his listeners—not just for effect, but to get them to do something about it. To stop the world from being divided between a few alpha programmers and many drones, he wants the potential drones to stop taking easy liberal arts courses in college. Instead, he wants them to focus on courses in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), where the good jobs will be. But will this solve the problem that he poses?

Perhaps not. Two attributes of software creation allow a few talented programmers to corner the market and take all the associated profits. First, software with a slight edge tends to get a significantly greater share of the available market; and, second, the available market is global, because it costs so little to make an extra copy and send it anywhere in the world. As a result, those who are creative and competent enough to write that slightly better search engine will capture the global market.

In this winner-take-all environment, only a small number of those who have taken programming courses will reap a majority of the rents. Completing the right preparatory courses is no guarantee of

receiving a share of the software jackpot. Differences in luck and talent among those equally prepared will ensure that the quality of software firms' products lies on a bell curve, with only a few Googles and Facebooks and many more bored, moderately paid computer technicians helping the average confused person deal with malware.

Put differently, in a winner-take-all world, raising the average level of skills or education does nothing to alter the skewed distribution of income. So, will anything prevent inequality from widening?

The obvious answer is yes. But how society responds will mean the difference between a prosperous world and a world torn apart by slow growth and resentment.

Property rights are ultimately sanctioned by society, and, to the extent that they seem to be unfair, society has an incentive to change them. But will society see the software billionaire as having acquired her wealth unfairly, or will it see that wealth as a fair reward for cleverness?

The more that everyone has access to the same educational opportunities, the more society will tend to accept some receiving disproportionate rewards. After all, they themselves have a chance to be winners. Interestingly, software may itself reduce the cost of expanding educational access—witness the massive open online courses (MOOCs) offered by companies like Coursera.

But equal access is probably an unlikely ideal. The other extreme is very unequal access, made more unequal because the wealthy have the time to help



their kids with homework and the money to arrange for tuitions, while the poor leave their children watching TV while they work a second job. Will the resentful workers who must follow a computer's instructions—say, in assembling an order in Amazon's fulfillment centers—vote to tax the programmers who put them there until the software creators lose the incentive to innovate, leaving society poorer? Or will the rich programmers all migrate to Monaco or Switzerland, taking the brains and rents with them, as society falls apart into barricaded and mutually resentful enclaves and ghettos?

In reality, many intermediate possibilities exist. One is that cultural norms may develop that encourage billionaires to share their wealth, even if they are spared taxation. For example, the Giving Pledge is a commitment by some of the world's richest people, Warren Buffett and Bill Gates among them, to devote the majority of their wealth to philanthropy.

Economic competition may also play a role—if billions are to be made by innovators, more of the most talented get into innovation, so that, even in a winner-take-all world, the winner captures the market for a fleeting moment before someone else takes it away from him. The billions to be made today may only be millions tomorrow.

And values also adjust. While a quartz watch keeps time more accurately than the most finely crafted handmade mechanical Swiss watch, the value of a quartz watch has plummeted, while Swiss watches' value has climbed into the stratosphere. Even though they are virtually indistinguishable in appearance, people seem to cherish the knowledge

that someone has lovingly crafted their watch.

So it may well be that the demand for discussing, say, medieval French church music in small classes at a university will grow even as the demand for MOOCs grows. Not everyone should heed Andreessen's exhortation to quit liberal arts programs!

That is not to say that his basic concerns are unwarranted. Better access for all to fundamental needs like quality education is necessary to make the winner-take-all character of markets more tolerable. But societies may also have to change. If we are lucky, the changes will take place spontaneously.

Raghuram Rajan, Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and the chief economic adviser in India's finance ministry, served as the International Monetary Fund's youngest-ever chief economist and was Chairman of India's Committee on Financial Sector Reforms. He is the author of *Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy*, the *Financial Times Business Book of the Year*.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2011, www.project-syndicate.org





Untold Stories of King Bhoja

Yogi becomes A Pig

At that time one of his disciples, who presumably had gone out, came, and seeing his guru in tears respectfully asked: "Master, may you be pleased to tell me the cause of your sorrow so that if anything could be done about it, it might."

Controlling his tears, the yogi related in full the circumstances under which he fell a prey to a woman's guiles and enticement and how steep a fall his was. He ended with a request to his disciple: "You can help me in my predicament. As a result of this sin of mine, I shall have to be born as a pig in which form I wouldn't like to live even for a minute. I shall be born to a sow in the home of the hunter living yonder. You can recognize me by a black spot on the forehead of a new-born pigling. When you see that, do not hesitate to wring its head off. Then alone would my wretched karma come to an end."

When the chela heard these words, he found himself torn between two emotions. One was that such a cruel fate should befall his guru and the other was the propriety of doing violence where none but its opposite was called for. When he expressed his doubt, the yogi replied: "You need have no qualms on that issue. Only by killing me would you be doing me good. Therefore, follow my advice unhesitatingly." The disciple agreed.

After some time the yogi went the way of all men born in the world and, as foretold by him, the sow in the hunter's pig-sty came to be in the family way. The disciple kept an eye on the sow by calling at the hunter's place every day and blessing him with mantrakshata. One day the hunter asked the disciple: "Sir, why is it that you take the trouble of visiting me day after day? If there is anything I can do for you, please be kind enough to tell me and I shall most willingly do that."

"Yes," said the disciple and continued: "I want you to permit me to keep that pregnant sow of yours at my place for some days and when she is delivered of her young ones, give me one of the piglings for sacrifice to Kali. I shall return to you the mother and the other piglings."

"With pleasure," replied the hunter. Accordingly, the disciple drove the sow to his place and tended it carefully, for it was going to give a

second birth to his guru.

In course of time, the sow brought forth a litter of piglings, one of which had the tell-tale mark on its forehead. Assured that that was his guru, he took out a knife and raised his hand to cut its throat. While he was half-way, his resolution gave way and for a time his mind wavered. When again he brought the sword down on its neck, the pigling shouted: "Stop, do not kill me now. Let me, with Lord's grace, enjoy this life too for a time before my final liberation."

On hearing this strange exhortation which sounded un-guru-like, the disciple asked: "Deva! What kind of pleasure would you enjoy in this swine life?"

"Listen. Happiness and sorrow, likes and dislikes, are common to all living creatures. Further, you failed to kill me the moment I was born by wavering for a short while. That short interval has engendered in my heart a desire to live and enjoy. Hence you had better go away now without any compunction whatsoever." Confused and worried, the disciple thereafter returned to the hunter, the mother pig and the piglings, saying: "The need has not yet occurred for the sacrifice I told you about and so I am returning all the piglings to you."

The guru in pig-form grew, but continued his tapas even in pig-form by propitiating Lord Hari. One day wishing to test the purity of his heart, Lord Hari took the form of a hunter and bought the particular pig from its owner. Taking it to the foot of a hill, the new hunter drew his knife and pressing it on the throat of the pig asked: "Now, hurry up. Pray to your god if you wish to, for I shall soon slit your throat open."

The pig on hearing this said calmly: "My God is the lotus-eyed, easy of approach by His devotees, protector of those who seek His refuge, the Omnipotent, the Omnipresent, Spouse of Lakshmi, the Indestructible Vasudeva. I seek refuge at His lotus-feet with all my devotion."

-To be continued...

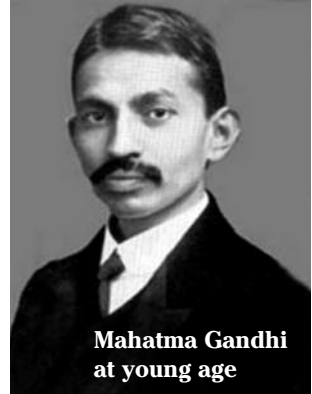
V.A.K. Ayer

Source: Untold Stories of King Bhoja, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



Mahatma Gandhi



Mahatma Gandhi at young age



Mahatma Gandhi leading Satyagraha in South Africa

Mahatma Gandhi could not leave. He had become a lawyer leader for the Indian community and they would not let him go back.

The decision was made by the people and a regular fee was also arranged for him as he had to earn his living. As a lawyer, he applied to the Law Society for membership and in spite of opposition from the whites, he was enrolled. But he was not allowed to wear his turban in court. He did not object, for his mind was on bigger things.

He formed the "Natal Indian Congress", bringing together all communities. Two of the many rules made were interesting. All were to be addressed as "Mr." And smoking was prohibited.

In the beginning, the membership was mostly for the well to do Indians. Later a Tamilian changed that. One day, a man in torn clothes, broken teeth and bleeding mouth came into Gandhi's office weeping, having been badly thrashed by his white master. Gandhi took the man's master to court and saw justice done. The indentured labourers had found a new friend to defend them.

Mahatma Gandhi often repeated, "It has always been a mystery to me how men can feel themselves honoured by the humiliation of their fellow beings."

Mahatma Gandhi's campaign in South Africa was of great value and he decided to stay on. But his family was still in India, so taking six months' leave, he left for his own country in June 1896. On board ship he wrote of his struggle in South Africa and the article became so popular that more than 20,000 pamphlets were printed. Because of the green cover, it became known as "Mahatma Gandhi's Green Pamphlet."

At home in Rajkot there was a fear of plague. He visited many homes examining the dirty latrines, much to the irritation of the occupants and found that the latrines of the "untouchables"

were the cleanest!

While in India, he met many outstanding people. There was Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, called the uncrowned king of Bombay (Mumbai), and the celebrated fierce patriot Lokamanya Tilak and Gopalkrishna Gokhale impressed him the most for his struggle against casteism and untouchability, and his emphasis on education.

-To be continued...

-Mrinalini Sarabhai, an internationally recognized dancer and choreographer is a director as well as an author of scholarly books, novels and children's books. She was Chairperson of the Gujarat State Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation Ltd and is one of the trustees of the Sarvodaya International Trust, an organization dedicated to promoting the Gandhian ideals of Truth, Non Violence, Peace, Universal Brotherhood and Humanitarian Service. She is closely associated with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for the past more than three decades. The Bhavan has published her book 'Sacred Dance of India', 'The Mahatma and the Poetess', a selection of letters exchanged between Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu edited by Mrinalini Sarabhai.



Source: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi by Mrinalini Sarabhai, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, India

Holy & Wise

Just as, in fondling a child, as well as, punishing it (if necessary), the mother has no mercilessness in her heart, so also the great god—the controller of the world has no cruelty in his mind, as regards the virtue and vice (of the creatures).

-Sivapurana

I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.

-Nelson Mandela

A person should preserve (maintain) his good conduct, with efforts; wealth comes and goes (is very fickle); a person poor in wealth is not really poor; but one who has become poor in character is really poor and is destroyed.

-Vidura Neeti

It is the law of love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e. hate, ruled us we would have become extinct long ago. And yet, the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilised men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence.

-Mahatma Gandhi

I have known God only as Truth. There was a time when I had doubt about the existence of God, but I never doubted the existence of Truth. This Truth is not something material but pure intelligence.

-Mahatma Gandhi



Kulapatiwani

Overpowering Bigness

Everything is big-growing bureaucracy, galloping technology, advancing science. Governments are big; so is business. The bigness of things has invaded literature in the shape of mass production of ephemeral values. The press is being given more and more to bigger sensations, to advertising bigger crimes and scandals, to bigger entertainment and amusement. The cinema and the novels, not to be left behind, are big with sex and violence.

We are so overpowered with this bigness that we have no patience to ponder over the dignity of character (Satyam), the richness of love (Shivam), or the beauty of a rich and fulfilled life (Sundaram). We have no time to develop a sense of proportion, much less to contemplate on things and deeds in their intrinsic value.

Even the Universities, which are traditional homes of discipline, are growing bigger like service-stations for the current needs of society. Eminent educationists have spoken disparagingly of the changing shape of modern education. Not unoften have they characterised the educational profession as lacking in quality, thoroughness, seriousness and integrity.

Dr K.M. Munshi
Founder, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

Charter of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

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

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

Bhavan Australia Charter derived from its constitution is:

- To advance the education of the public in:
 - a) the cultures (both spiritual and temporal) of the world,
 - b) literature, music, the dance,
 - c) the arts,
 - d) languages of the world,
 - e) philosophies of the world.
- To foster awareness of the contribution of a diversity of cultures to the continuing development of multicultural society of Australia.
- To foster understanding and acceptance of the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the Australian people of widely diverse heritages.
- To edit, publish and issue books, journals and periodicals, documentaries in Sanskrit, English and other languages, to promote the objects of the Bhavan or to impart or further education as authorized.
- To foster and undertake research studies in the areas of interest to Bhavan and to print and publish the results of any research which is undertaken.

www.bhavanaustralia.org

The Test of Bhavan's Right to Exist

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

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

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



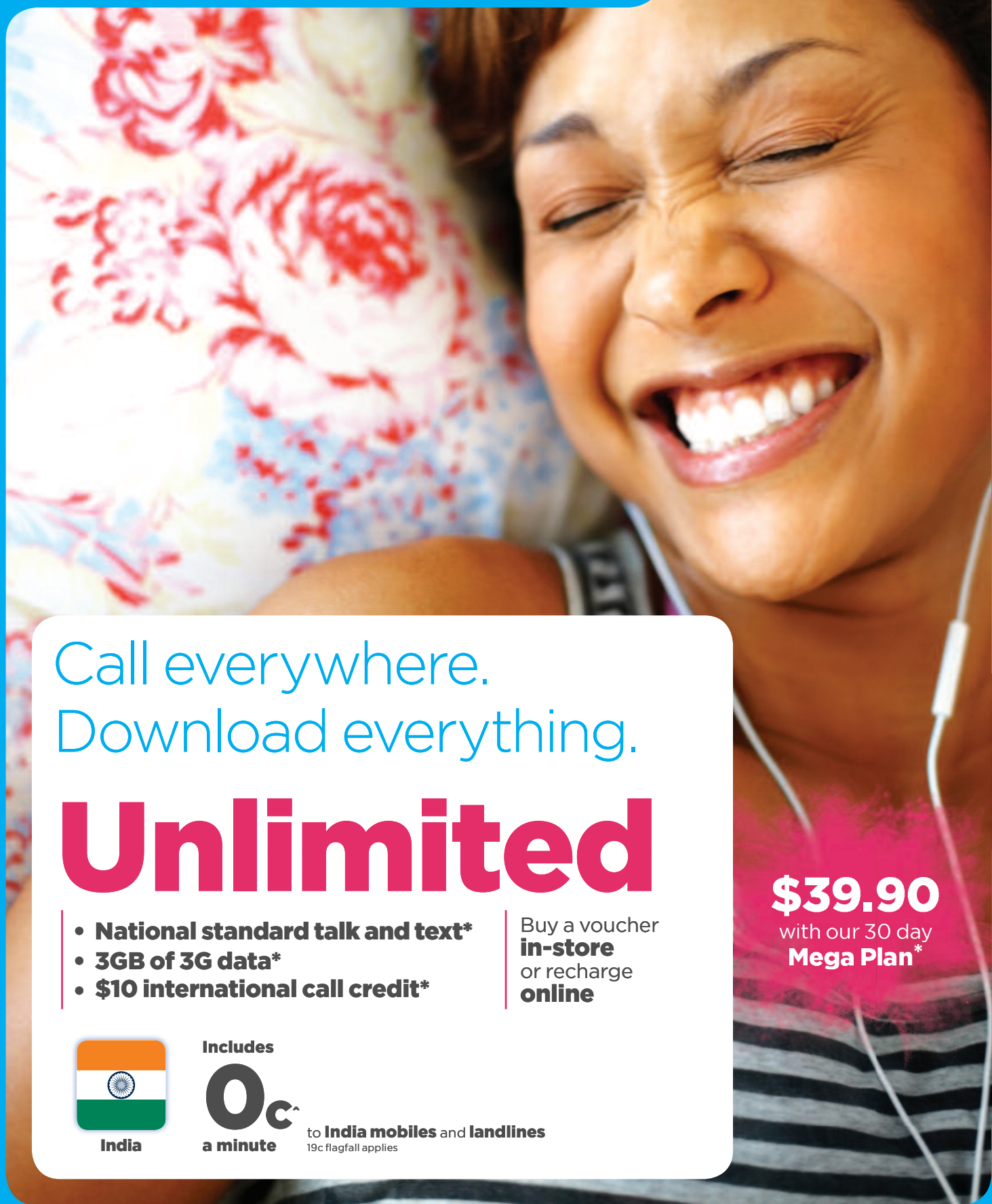
Admire the Mughal's love of architecture

Admire a Mughal's love for his wife

Find what you seek

Incredible India

Taj Mahal at Agra, one of the seven wonders of the world. To know more, log on to www.incredibleindia.org
India Tourism Sydney, Level 5 Glass house, 135 King Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: +61 2 9221 9555 email: info@indiatourism.com.au



Call everywhere.
Download everything.

Unlimited

- **National standard talk and text***
- **3GB of 3G data***
- **\$10 international call credit***

Buy a voucher
in-store
or recharge
online



India

Includes

0c
a minute

to **India mobiles** and **landlines**
19c flagfall applies

\$39.90
with our 30 day
Mega Plan*



taxation & business guru

Taxation Guru - using their knowledge and expertise to stay ahead of the every changing taxation legislation.

Whether you're a company, partnership, trust or sole trader, you need help with Super, Salary packages, Fringe benefits, Investments and deductions.

Call the Taxation Guru, the power to help you make the right decisions.

We endeavour to take the burden off your shoulders and make life easy by providing a broad range of tax related services.

Contact us at:

Suite 100, Level 4, 515 Kent Street, Sydney 2000

t: 1300 GURU4U (487848) & +612 9267 9255

e: gambhir@bmgw.com www.taxationguru.com.au



THE TAX INSTITUTE

CHARTERED TAX
ADVISER

BMG

GROUP

www.taxationguru.com.au