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REIGN OF UNCERTAINTY

As the nation gets ready to celebrate the sixty sixth anniversary of independence questions are being raised everywhere about growing uncertainty on all fronts and in all parts of the country. Two questions, in particular, dominate the public discourse— political stability and growth rate. The former is political and the latter economic. But like the Siamese twins they are intertwined. The dependence of each on the other is considerable, a combination so vital for human development and national progress, can be lethal, if not handled properly.

The economist turned politician, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is all set to deliver his address from the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15, a ritualistic exercise he will be performing for the tenth time on the trot. To those elders who had the privilege of watching or hearing over radio the first Prime Minister's stirring 'Tryst with Destiny' oration of August 15, 1947, the 2013 edition of that annual Independence Day message by the head of the government would be uninspiring, if not insipid. Some of Dr Manmohan Singh's predecessors did not do any better, if that is a consolation. The Prime Minister's Independence Day message is a tedious annual exercise done in front of a huge audience comprising many VVIPs and foreign dignitaries, most of whom would be seen sitting under raised umbrellas, fanning themselves with newspapers and napkins. To them and millions of small screen viewers it is a familiar exercise that would appear like a schoolboy reading out his annual progress report. The Prime Minister saying that the year under review has been 'the most difficult' due to factors beyond anyone's control would be another familiar refrain.

What is alarming is the uncertainty factor. Not only about the forthcoming general elections to the 16th Lok Sabha and about the polls in the four states before the year end but also about the coalition combinations, both pre and post poll, being worked out. It may be too early to speculate on the poll outcome though some leading TV Channels have kick-started, with characteristic hype and one-upmanship, surveys and opinion polls and even post-poll scenarios!

Equally gloomy is the economic scenario. According to top economists the future is 'uncertain' as growth rate continues to decline with the value of rupee plummeting to unprecedented levels. Uncertainty and confusion cloud the field of statistics too. Strange indeed that there is disagreement over the number of people living below the poverty line with a few authorities on dismal science dismissing government claims and figures as 'damned lies!'

The focus on polls and growth rate is annoyingly excessive, in fact, unnecessary and avoidable. It is not a sign of maturity for a nation that has successfully conducted fifteen general elections. Are we just an electoral democracy concentrating only on vote bank politics and coalition combinations? The spectre of uncertainty haunts all parties and leaders as no one is sure of the outcome. Sops and subsidies confuse and mislead the people. An election is meant not only for electing rulers/representatives but is also a method of choosing right policies. The challenge confronting the nation is to right the many wrongs that have come to afflict our polity such as growing corruption, personality replacing policy and politics without principle. What Jean Jacques Rousseau said of England applies to India of today: "The people of England think they are free. They are gravely mistaken. They are free only during the election of Members of Parliament."

India is known as 'a land of paradoxes', of 'stunning opposites', viewed more as a 'submerging polity' than as an 'emerging market.' On the threshold of becoming the world's youngest nation, the completion of sixty years of independence for the world's largest democracy is no ordinary achievement. The concerns being voiced by psephologists and economists about India's future are, of course, genuine.

Still in the midst of confusion and uncertainty there is more than a ray of hope that everyone will witness on August 15, 2013. The thousands of boys and girls who salute the National Flag and sing the National Anthem in schools and colleges are imbued with idealism and creative energy that can herald the fulfillment of India's *Tryst with Destiny* sooner than later.

The Editor

We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for anyone of us till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India what destiny intended them to be. **Jawaharlal Nehru**

'Appointments to Higher Judiciary' Need for Reform

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1. Presently, legislative bills relating to accountability of the higher judiciary and appointment of judges to High Courts and the Supreme Court are before the Parliament.

The need has arisen from the fact that the credibility of the institution, as also the integrity of many superior judges have come under cloud in recent years, though the public perception even now treats the higher Judiciary as a bulwark against arbitrary state power, self serving legislative privileges and various other vested interests.

Accountability for performance will automatically improve if the rigour and quality of selection of Judges are enhanced. In this context, the public need to know how their superior Judges are appointed and how the pending legislation seeks to tone up the process.

2. There are two distinct aspects to the process of appointment of High Court Judges. One is constitutional and the other procedural. High Court Judges are appointed both directly from the Bar and by elevation from the rank of District Judges in a certain proportion. Article 217 of the Constitution, lays down (in brief) that the President of India shall appoint every Judge of High Court after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, the Governor of the State and the Chief Justice of the High Court concerned. In respect of Supreme Court Judges, Article 124 lays down that the President makes such appointments after consultation with such judges of the Supreme Court and of High Courts in States as the President may deem necessary, in addition to the Chief Justice of India.

3. A plain reading of these constitutional provisions conveys that the appointment of Judges to Higher Judiciary is a Presidential prerogative and power. Since the President is bound by the advice of a Council of Ministers headed by Prime Minister, this becomes essentially an executive power. However, over the years, this power has been taken away from the Executive and located in the Supreme Court. In a series of cases ending with what is known as the 'Third Judges Case', the

Supreme Court traversed from its original position that appointment of superior judges is an executive function to its current stance that Presidential consultation with Chief Justice of India renders it mandatory for the President of India to go by the recommendations of the Chief Justice of India even in the extreme case of a difference of opinion between the Supreme Court and the Executive.

4. This ruling seems to be in clear conflict with the Constitution itself which the Supreme Court is required to safeguard against abuse. Under Article 74 the President is bound by the advice of his Council of Ministers. Therefore, in the event of a difference of opinion between the Executive and the Supreme Court over the appointment of a High Court Judge or Supreme Court Judge, the compulsion on the President by the Supreme Court, to go by its recommendation, should amount to his violation of his constitutional oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution? There is no provision in the Constitution for the President to act independently of his Council of Ministers.

5. The procedural aspect, laid out by the Supreme Court itself, spells out the manner of Presidential consultation in regard to appointments to High Courts and the Supreme Court. For appointment of High Court judges, the Chief Justice of the High Court and two senior most puisne judges constitute a collegium which makes recommendations both from the Bar and from among District Judges. One set of the proposals is directly sent to the Chief Justice of India. Another set is referred to the Chief Minister of the State for his/her reactions and a third set to the Governor of the State for information. In the event of an agreement between the Chief Justice and the Chief Minister, the Governor forwards the Chief Justice's proposals to the Law Minister of the Government of India who, with the help of independent inputs on the background of the nominees, interacts with the Chief Justice of India and processes the final recommendations for the approval of the President. In respect of judges of the Supreme Court, a similar collegium consists of the Chief Justice of India and four senior judges including a judge who had earlier worked in the High Court from where a Judge is being elevated and could therefore be expected to be conversant with the credentials of the appointee. Between the Collegium and the Government of India, the recommendations are processed and put up for the approval of the President.

6. If the Chief Justice and the Chief Minister agree, there is little role for the Governor. Where there are differences, the Governor can either play a catalytic role to reconcile the differences or offer his independent view on such differences while forwarding to the Government of India the two rival sets of proposals. How the Government of India handles these proposals, depends on the nature of its relationship with the State Government concerned and the scope for lobbying and pressures if a party or parties antagonistic to the ruling party in the State is / are part of a Coalition Government at the Centre. As for the Supreme Court, it cannot be faulted for leaning towards the views of the collegium of the High Court. It becomes, therefore, obvious that the persistent delays in filling up vacancies of High Court Judges are the out come of the pluralistic governance that characterises India as also of the turf war between the Executive and the Judiciary.

7. The procedure also lacks transparency and adequate assurance that the search for candidates is wide, comprehensive and thorough. The proposals from the Chief Justice do not contain any information on whether the cases of any candidates other than those recommended, have been examined and relative merits have been assessed to make the particular recommendations. In respect of other superior services of Government, it is standard practice to consider atleast thrice the number of candidates to be appointed whether by direct recruitment or by promotion. The curriculum vitae of the candidates recommended, do not stick to a proforma and are deficient in such essential particulars as academic record, important cases argued and reported in legal journals etc. Vague claims are made and accepted. The income tax record in many cases shows sudden spurt in the quantum of tax paid in the years immediately preceding the year of recommendation. In respect of District Judges, adverse remarks made in Annual Performance Reports by the assessing High Court Judge or the Chief Justice or by both are often ignored on the ground that the performance has improved subsequent to such adverse remarks.

8. There is no requirement of the recommendations being supported by comprehensive minutes of the selection proceedings. It is not unusual to find the collegium judges merely endorsing the recommendations framed by the Chief Justice. Such opaque procedure lends credence to the banter in the

legal profession that the selection process throws up self perpetuating and extended Judicial dynasties. According to Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer "It is unpleasant to investigate the performance of the collegium in India and the inordinate delay inflicted on the country in failing to fill in time vacancies in the High Courts and the Supreme Court. While the patronage of the political bosses has largely vanished, the patronage of the 'robed' bosses has not improved the quality of the Judges selected".

9. Experience of the collegium procedure has been found unsatisfactory by principal protagonist, Former Chief Justice J.S. Verma. Another former Chief Justice Y.K. Sabarwal openly admitted its vulnerability to lobbying. The memoirs of retired Chief Justices of High Courts viz Shri. R.S. Sodhi and Smt. Leila Seth reveal startling and rather sordid manoeuvres in regard to appointment of superior judges. A very recent instance of an Additional Judge appointed in the teeth of opposition from the Executive, to the Madras High Court, being dropped at the end of the initial 2 year tenure without being made permanent Judge tells its own story. If anything, they illustrate the need for a more objective and transparent selection process.

10. Independent judicial commissions serve this purpose. A single national judicial commission covering both Supreme Court and High Court Judges, as is being proposed seems inadequate for practical reasons. At the State level, a commission consisting of the Chief Justice and one Judge from the High Court; the Chief Minister and the Law Minister from the Executive, two eminent Jurists from the State who deliberately chose to remain in legal practice in the High Court or the Supreme Court in preference to being elevated as Judges, with the State's Governor as the chair person of the Commission would be a credible and practical arrangement. The National Commission could have a similar composition with the Vice President in the place of the Governor of the State. Since the President is the appointing authority, the Vice President is suggested. One of the Jurists could be a former Chief Justice of India.

11. Such commissions facilitating face to face interaction among members will impart greater objectivity and credibility to the process of consultation while reducing the scope for lobbying as also friction between the Executive and Judiciary inherent in correspondence on paper.



INDIA AS A 21st CENTURY POWER: THE MARITIME DIMENSION-II

(Admiral Pereira Memorial Lecture Navy Foundation,
Bengaluru, 25th May 2013.)

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

The Challenge of China:

No matter what cosmetic gloss is put on the recent stand-off between the ITBP and the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), India is perceived as having come off second best in test of wills, as the Chinese intruded across the line of actual control in Ladakh, and camped in 'Indian territory' for 20 days. The diffident and tentative Indian reaction to this crisis, once again, brought into public focus questions about India's political resolve and military preparedness in the face of repeated provocations by neighbours. It has taken six decades of maladroit Indian diplomacy combined with a dearth of strategic thinking and planning for matters to reach this pass. Without entering into a detailed discussion about respective capabilities and intentions, it can be said that China and India, as two of the world's largest geographic, demographic and military entities, each in quest of scarce resources to fuel its economic growth, are going to make uneasy neighbours. For the two nuclear-armed nations to rise, almost simultaneously, in such close proximity without conflict will require either adroit diplomacy or a miracle. We should bank on neither. If proof of Chinese malfeasance is required, all we need to look at is the calculated manner in which it turned Pakistan into a nuclear weapon state, by providing it with technologies, nuclear materials, nuclear facilities and completed nuclear weapon designs. It, then, went on to broker a deal whereby North Korea bartered missiles for Pak centrifuges. There could not be a clearer indication, than this, of China's malign intent to undermine India's security and to de-stabilize the sub-continent by triggering an Indo-Pak arms race.

Repetitive territorial claims and diplomatic pin-pricks are added provocations. A relatively new factor in the Sino-Indian strategic equation is the maritime dimension. The rapid growth of both economies has led to increasing reliance on energy and raw materials, sourced from all over the world, and transported by sea. This has focused sharp attention on the criticality, for both economies, of uninterrupted use of the sea-lanes for trade and energy transportation. As part of a well

orchestrated strategy, China has established maritime footholds in strategic locations scattered around the Indian Ocean. At the heart of this strategy is the Gwadar deep-water port on Pakistan's Makaran coast; newly constructed with Chinese help. This harbour marks the beginning of an arc of Chinese maritime influence running through Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Horn of Africa, Seychelles, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The PLA Navy has a rapidly growing surface fleet and its force of homebuilt nuclear submarines is now being operationally deployed with increasing frequency. China's first aircraft carrier is at sea, and more are, probably, on the way. The extended PLAN anti-piracy patrols in the Horn of Africa have helped hone its skills for deployment in distant waters. It is becoming increasingly evident that India's strategic rivalry with China is going to eventually spill into the maritime domain due to an emerging overlap of interests. As China looks towards the Indian Ocean, India too has newfound interests in the South China Sea. On our northern borders, the recent stand-off has only re-emphasised concerns of long-standing. China has wrought dramatic improvements in communications on the Tibetan plateau to enhance military mobility.

These include the Qingdao-Tibet railway, a network of heavy-duty highways and a number of airfields. The location of missile sites, army formations and air-bases in Tibet tilts the military balance heavily in China's favour. The possibility of 'all-weather ally', Pakistan, opening a second front worsens the odds for our forces.

The best that India could hope for, under such circumstances, is a precarious stalemate. On the other hand, a glance seawards, presents a different prospect. India's geophysical advantage in the Indian Ocean enables the IN to closely monitor the sea lanes, and interdict shipping if required. China's trade and energy traffic plying the Indian Ocean sea lanes represents its economic jugular vein. In such a situation, India could redress the asymmetry on land by carefully fostering the 'maritime card' and playing it to exploit China's vulnerability at sea. Let me refer, for one last time, to the Economist. In its concluding prescription the magazine exhorts India to start shaping its own destiny and the fate of its region, by taking strategy more seriously. It recommends three instrumentalities: a capable foreign service, a professional MoD and unified defence staff, and last but not the least, "...a well-funded navy that can become both a provider of security and an expression of India's willingness to shoulder great-power

responsibilities.” This sounds like a tall order, but let me now provide an overview of the maritime dimension, and leave you to judge for yourselves whether the navy can indeed become ‘an expression of India’s great-power aspirations. What I am about to narrate, may not be new to many of you but since this is a mixed audience; I hope that it will be of interest to a majority present.

The Maritime Challenge & Response given the traditional continental mindset of India’s decision-making elite, it is now obvious that a ‘maritime awakening’ occurred over the past decade-and-a-half. It was during this period that a series of developments, including the powerful phenomenon of globalization, the dramatic exposure of India’s soft coastal underbelly in November 2008, the trauma of rampant piracy and the looming menace of the PLA Navy brought home, to our decision-makers, the criticality of the oceanic environment, and the dire need to focus on maritime security.

A powerful catalyst in this process was provided, surprisingly, by the USA. The keenness of the Americans to engage the IN in regular bilateral exercises and, once the process got underway, their frank appreciation of our navy’s high professional standards obviously, led to some rethinking in MoD, MEA and PMO. It would not be an exaggeration to say that US evaluation of IN capabilities has been a significant factor in influencing not just American decision-makers, but also our own. Going back, a little, in time; if the 1971 war was the navy’s baptism by fire, the 2004 tsunami was a defining moment which established the IN as a regional force of substance and resolve. The alacrity and professionalism, with which the IN brought succour to our distressed Sri Lankan, Maldivian and Indonesian neighbours, left an abiding impression on international observers. The sea-lift operation mounted to evacuate refugees from war torn Lebanon in 2006 and Libya in 2011, and the resolute conduct of anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden by IN units has further added lustre to our navy’s image.

India’s geographic constraints and its burgeoning economy, make it as dependent on the seas as any island nation. One telling example illustrates this: the country’s industrial, power and transport sectors consume 3.1 million barrels of oil per day, of which 2.2 million is imported from overseas. This requires that at least one super-tanker (or 2-3 smaller tankers) must discharge cargo in an Indian oil terminal every single day of the year. Disruption of this seaborne oil supply, even for a few days, could have serious consequences on industry, agriculture and the economy.

Apart from its vital role of protecting the nation’s trade and energy, the IN provides a most useful transnational military capability which can be deployed for crisis management, deterrence and power-projection. Foreign co-operation in the maritime context has wide connotations. Countries in our immediate neighbourhood, many of them island nations, seek maritime security; sometimes through direct naval presence, but more often through urgent requests for material aid, training assistance and advice. The slowpace of decision-making in the MoD, and often MEA, has served to stall many naval initiatives and driven potential allies into the arms of other donors of assistance.

The navy envisages task-forces built around two aircraft-carriers, along with an adequate number of destroyers and frigates, sustained by logistic ships and supported by a capable aviation arm. The badly depleted diesel submarine force will start growing again as Mazagon Docks starts serial delivery of Scorpenes from next year onwards. The first indigenous nuclear-powered ballistic submarine or SSBN, Arihant, launched in 2009, awaits commissioning shortly. However, the real ‘game changer’ of the future will be the missile armed nuclear attack submarine or SSN. INS Chakra the SSN leased from Russia joined our navy in 2012, and hopefully an indigenous SSN is on the way. Many other contours of India’s 21st century navy are already emerging: the first indigenous aircraft carrier is due to be launched on 10th August in Kochi, and 30 odd frigates, corvettes and are OPVs awaited from Indian shipyards. Indigenous effort is being pragmatically supplemented by judicious imports. The refurbished Russian aircraft-carrier Admiral Gorshkov is expected by year end. US built P-8 (I) maritime reconnaissance aircraft and Russian MiG-29 (K) fighters will add teeth to the air arm. A satellite-based data sharing system will knit these platforms into a powerful network extending right across the IOR. Shore infrastructure is keeping pace; with the Karwar naval base and the new Indian Naval Academy already functional and other naval and air bases in the offing.

There are few other navies, today, which can boast of such a calibrated build-up of capabilities and professional competence. Navies are powerful instruments of state policy; provided policy-makers are blessed with the vision and resolve to use them wisely. Before I conclude, let me quickly outline the strategic environment that lies ahead.

The Strategic Environment

During the past 66 years India has seen five major

conflicts with its neighbours, China and Pakistan, besides numerous border-skirmishes and spells of armed tension. In a unique juxtaposition, all three neighbours have, in this period, become nuclear weapon powers.

At a macro level, the next few decades will witness the decline of America's economy, and with it, her maritime power and global influence. The jury is still out on the actual significance of the US 'pivot to Asia', especially in the light of heavy defence budget cuts. The phenomenal ascendance of China in the economic, industrial and military fields; will see concomitant gains in terms of international clout, and the ability to influence events in its neighbourhood. The Sino-Pak nexus and the attitude of the new rulers of both China and Pakistan will have a significant influence on India's future.

Relations with immediate neighbours, all-round, remain somewhat edgy if not unfriendly. As far as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are concerned, by permitting domestic politics to dictate foreign policy, India has missed valuable opportunities to consolidate its position. In Nepal India seems to be gradually losing political leverage and influence, as China and Pakistan adroitly capitalize on its handicaps to make inroads into these countries. Only in Myanmar has India shown foresight and pragmatism which may pay dividends in the years to come. As far as the Indian Ocean Region is concerned, there are two Indian initiatives that deserve mention here.

One is the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation. Launched in 1997, the IOR-ARC focuses on cultural, trade and economic issues, but has tended to languish because of its exclusivist charter. The other is the 2008 Indian Ocean Naval Symposium or IONS; a naval initiative aimed at bringing together the region's navies in order to enhance maritime co-operation amongst littoral states. While IONS has great potential, it has so far received only lukewarm support from the MEA and MoD.

Conclusion

Let me say, in conclusion, that the long term security policies of a state must be, guided by a vision of its place in the world and, be rooted in perceptions of its vital interests. Clearly enunciated national aims and objectives help in policy formulation and in visualization of the nation's military capability. In the 66 years since independence, India has neither issued a defence White Paper, nor formally articulated national interests and objectives encompassing different aspects of national security. The most deleterious consequences of this have

been felt by the armed forces who have had to extemporize in order to undertake planning in a strategic void.

India's political dispensation has also chosen to assign policy-making to bureaucrats, while strategy is crafted by diplomats, and matters of grand strategy, like nuclear deterrence or ballistic missile defence remain the exclusive domain of scientists and technocrats. Uniquely amongst major powers, India's armed forces have not been entrusted a formal role in national security decision-making.

The net result is a strange conundrum, whereby India has collected all the trappings of power, without having a real idea of how to use them. 'Strategic restraint' may have been an adequate strategy when India's aspirations were circumscribed by limited capabilities. But a growing economy is steadily boosting India's capabilities, and the world sees it as a rising and therefore strategically significant nation. As the world's 4th largest military power, India can no longer remain hobbled by bureaucratic inertia, an outmoded defence structure and abject reliance on foreign sources for our military wherewithal.

Notwithstanding Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's 'smile diplomacy' China is bearing down on us, in many ways. India's strategic shortcomings, if left unaddressed, will be, not just an obstacle to its dreams of becoming a 21st-century power, but become a dangerous liability for national security. As the 2014 election looms over the horizon, this thought should remain embedded in the mind of India's citizen-voters.

(Courtesy South Asia Monitor website updated on June 2, 2013) CPS Conveys its thanks to Admiral Arun Prakash and Cmde.Uday Bhaskar)



Is India's Nuclear Deterrent Credible?- II

Shri Shyam Saran

Chairman, RIS & Former Foreign Secretary

(Lecture delivered at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on April 24, 2013.)

Mr Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to thank the Subbu Forum Society for Policy Studies, in particular my friend, Commodore Uday Bhaskar and the India Habitat Centre for once again giving me an opportunity to share with you my thoughts on

certain issues of contemporary relevance to India's national security. And thank you, Sanjaya, for doing me the honour of presiding over this meeting. I recall well our fighting in the trenches together during the difficult negotiations on the Indo-US civil nuclear agreement. While I have been introduced as the Chairman of India's National Security Advisory Board I must hasten to add that the views what I shall be sharing with you today are entirely my own and do not in any way reflect those of the Board or the government. These are views that have evolved over a fairly long period of time drawing upon my earlier experience dealing with disarmament and international security issues at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the two year stint I had at the Prime Minister's Office in 1991-92, handling issues relating to External Affairs, Defence and Atomic Energy and more recently my involvement in the Indo-US negotiations on a Civil Nuclear Cooperation agreement, both as Foreign Secretary and later as Prime Minister's Special Envoy. I cannot claim personal familiarity with our strategic establishment but I believe my engagement with it has given me a sense of how our security perceptions have evolved over the years and how different generations of our political leadership have dealt with the security challenges confronting the country. I make this presentation in the hope that there could be a more informed discourse on the role of India's strategic programme in national security, a discourse that is truly rooted in India's own circumstance rather than influenced by external commentaries.

India became a declared nuclear weapon state in May 1998, although it had maintained a capability to assemble nuclear explosive devices and had developed a delivery capability both in terms of aircraft as well as missiles several years previously. In May 1998, this capability was finally translated into an explicit and declared nuclear weapon status. This is important to recognize because India did not overnight become a nuclear weapon capable state in May 1998. It was already a state with nuclear weapons capability and had the capacity to deliver such weapons to their targets but until the May 1998 tests, a deliberate choice had been made to defer the acquisition of a nuclear weapon arsenal as long as there was still hope that the world would eventually move towards a complete elimination of these weapons of mass destruction. India's leaders recognised the prudence of developing and maintaining national capability and capacity to develop strategic assets if this became necessary but the preference remained for realising the objective of a nuclear weapon

free world. The nuclear tests of May 1998 reflected the judgement that nuclear disarmament was no longer on the agenda of the nuclear weapon states. On the contrary, their objective was to make permanent the division of the world into nuclear haves and have-nots, which India had rejected since the very dawn on the atomic age.

India's policy towards nuclear weapons evolved over a period of nearly three decades and this evolution was impacted by several significant developments in the country's security environment. The testing of a nuclear weapon by China in 1964 was the first major driver. There is evidence that both Nehru and Homi Bhabha had not excluded the possibility of India acquiring nuclear weapons even earlier, in case India's security and defence warranted it. India's first plutonium separation plant came up in 1964 itself at Trombay when both Nehru and Bhabha were still in office. The pursuit of strategic capability took time and each subsequent stage would be linked to certain adverse developments in India's security environment. It would be 10 years before India carried out a peaceful nuclear explosion, in 1974, to signal its capability to design and fabricate a nuclear explosive device. In the background were a series of developments which had heightened India's security concerns and led to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's decision to approve the nuclear test:

- The conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 which sought to prevent the emergence of any new nuclear weapon states, without a concomitant and credible commitment on the part of the existing nuclear weapon states to achieve nuclear disarmament within a reasonable time frame. India had to stay out of the treaty in order to maintain its nuclear option.
- The NPT was followed by the 1971 Bangladesh war and an unwelcome Sino-US axis targeting India. The appearance of USS Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal heightened India's sense of vulnerability.

The next phase in the acquisition of capabilities is also linked to certain new developments adversely affecting India's security. Reports began to appear that China had delivered a fully tested nuclear bomb design to Pakistan in 1983. China may have tested a Pakistani weapon at the Lop Nor test site in 1990. Pakistan emerged as a "front-line state" in the war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the decade of the ninety-eighties, bringing fresh worries to India's security planners. It's feverish and clandestine pursuit of nuclear weapons capability also heightened threat perceptions in India, particularly

when it became clear that the U.S. was not willing to deter Pakistan from the quest, given its equities in the ongoing war. This also marks the phase when Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme, which was led by its civilian political leaders, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and later Ghulam Ishaq Khan, passed into the hands of its military establishment, thus acquiring an altogether more sinister dimension. Today, Pakistan is the only nuclear-armed state where it is the military and not the civilian political leadership that is in effective control of its nuclear arsenal. During this period, India's sense of vulnerability increased due to the surge in Khalistani insurgency, aided and abetted by Pakistan as also the blow back from the ongoing war in Afghanistan. Despite these developments Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi launched a major initiative at the United Nations in 1988 to promote a world free of nuclear weapons through the Action Plan on Nuclear Disarmament. This was a serious effort to promote nuclear disarmament which would enable India to avoid the less preferable alternative of itself becoming a nuclear weapon state in order to safeguard its security and political independence.

The decade of the nineties marks the next phase in India's nuclear trajectory, leading up to the "break-out" in May 1998. This phase was marked by a serious debate within the political leadership over whether the time had come to go ahead with a declared nuclear weapon status or whether the likely international political and economic fallout made this a costly choice. As the decade of the nineteen nineties unfolded, it became abundantly clear that the choice was being forced on India as a consequence of several serious geopolitical developments.

What were the drivers during this phase? One, the U.S. emerged as a hyper-power after the demise of the Soviet Union and this severely narrowed India's strategic space. Two, the nuclear weapon states moved to enforce a permanent status on the NPT in 1995, thereby perpetuating the division between nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapon states, with oblique threats to use the U.N. Security Council to sanction and to penalize those countries which resisted the universalization of the NPT. This would have put India in state of permanent strategic vulnerability to nuclear threat and nuclear blackmail. This may have happened during India-Pakistan tensions in 1990 though the record is ambiguous on this score (Yaqub Khan's visit to Delhi in 1990 is said to have been undertaken to convey the threat of nuclear retaliation against India in case the latter moved its conventional military forces to threaten or to

attack Pakistan). During 1991-92, one was also witness to a determined attempt by the U.S. to put serious limits on India's civilian space and missile programme by pressuring Russia under President Yeltsin to deny India the cryogenic engine technology that it needed to upgrade its civilian space capabilities. The precipitating factor proved to be the effort in 1996 to push through a discriminatory Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which would have permanently foreclosed India's options to develop a credible and fully tested nuclear deterrent. These developments in the decade of the nineties meant that India could no longer have any credible assurance of its security in the absence of its own independent nuclear deterrent. It would confront increased vulnerability vis-a-vis its adversaries, its security would have been severely undermined and made its quest for strategic autonomy a mirage.

It is against this background that a decision was taken in May 1998 to breach the narrowing nuclear containment ring around the country and assert India's determination to retain its ability to deter threats from States hostile to it and to ensure an environment in which it could pursue its development priorities without disruption. This is clearly articulated in India's Draft Nuclear Doctrine released in August 1999. The official Doctrine based mainly on the draft was adopted in January 2003, but its full text has not been shared with the public.

It is important to keep this historical perspective in mind because the nuclear tests carried out in May 1998 were not a mere episode driven by current and largely domestic political compulsions (though this may have influenced the precise timing), but rather the logical and perhaps an even inexorable culmination of a decades-long evolution in strategic thinking, influenced by an increasingly complex and hostile security environment. The timing may have also been influenced by geopolitical developments. The end of the Cold War and the rise of China brought a sense of strategic opportunity to India.

The collapse of the Soviet Union meant that the U.S. was no longer inimical to Indian interests as it had been during the Cold War years, with India seen as being on the wrong side of the fence. China's emergence as a potential adversary to the U.S. made a more rapidly growing India an attractive countervailing power, quite apart from the opportunities it offered to U.S. business and industry. India's swift emergence as an I.T. power and the rising affluence and influence of the India-American community, reinforced the positive shift in

American perceptions about India. Therefore, while fully conscious of the adverse fallout from its decision to undertake a series of nuclear tests and to establish itself as a declared nuclear weapon state, Indian leaders may also have calculated that such fallout would be temporary and India's growing strategic relevance would eventually overcome such impediments. This judgement has proved to be true in most respects.

There is no doubt that the shift to a declared nuclear weapon state posture confronts India with new and more complex challenges. These challenges involve the nature and structure of the nuclear weapon arsenal as well as delivery assets. India has articulated a nuclear doctrine that is appropriate to the current geopolitical environment, is aligned with its existing and projected levels of technological capabilities and affordability and most importantly, is reflective of India's domestic realities and its value system. The people of India want their leaders to pursue an independent foreign policy, maintain strategic autonomy and safeguard the security of the country and its citizens by having adequate means to deter threats to national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Sustaining democracy within the country is seen as integrally linked to the ability of the State to deliver on these fundamental aspirations.

At various stages of India's contemporary history, the Indian state has pursued different strategies to achieve these objectives in a nuclearized, asymmetrical and often hostile regional and global environment. It has had to make difficult choices including embracing a three decades long strategic partnership with the Soviet Union which helped the country to meet the threat from an implacably hostile and belligerent Pakistan and a China that turned into a threatening and often arrogant adversary post India's humiliating defeat in the 1962 border war. Those who perennially bemoan India's lack of strategic culture such as the recent Economist article, seem strangely reluctant to acknowledge the difficult choices that governments of every persuasion in the country have made whether in seeking strategic partners, maintaining a nuclear option or eventually exercising that option despite the odds confronting us.

That mistakes have been made, that sometimes opportunities have been missed or our judgments were misplaced is undeniable. But if having a strategy means the readiness to make reasoned choices, then India has demonstrated an ability to think and act strategically.

It is against this background that I find somewhat puzzling assertions by some respected security analysts,

both Indian and foreign, that India's nuclear weapons programme has been driven by notions of prestige or global standing rather than by considerations of national security. For example, typical of comments from U.S. analysts is the remarkable observation that "India now lacks a credible theory of how nuclear weapons might be used than as an instrument of national pride and propaganda".

India does have a credible theory of how its nuclear weapons may be used and that is spelt out in its nuclear doctrine. One may or may not agree with that doctrine but to claim that India does not have a credible theory about the use of nuclear weapons does not accord with facts. Yes it is true that since January 4, 2003 when India adopted its nuclear doctrine formally at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), it has moved to put in place, at a measured pace, a triad of land-based, air-delivered and submarine-based nuclear forces and delivery assets to conform to its declared doctrine of no-first use and retaliation only. It has had to create a command and control infrastructure that can survive a first strike and a fully secure communication system that is reliable and hardened against radiation or electronic interference. A number of redundancies have had to be created to strengthen survivability.

In all these respects, significant progress has been achieved. To expect that these should have emerged overnight after May 1998 is a rather naïve expectation. India today has a long range ballistic missile capability and is on the road to a submarine - based missile capability. These capabilities will be further improved as time goes on and more resources become available. The record since the May 1998 nuclear tests demonstrates quite clearly a sustained and systematic drive to operationalize the various components of the nuclear deterrent in a manner best suited to India's security environment. This is not the record of a state which considers nuclear weapons as "instrument of national pride and propaganda".

There is a similar refrain in Chinese commentaries on India's nuclear weapons programme. Here is a typical Chinese comment:

"Unlike China, which was forced to develop its nuclear option under a clear nuclear threat, India has never been faced with an immediate major military or nuclear threat that would require New Delhi to have a nuclear weapon option to ensure its national survival. The acquisition of nuclear weapons appears to have been almost entirely motivated by politics. India seems to have

an explicit strategic goal; to be accepted as a world power. And this goal seems to reflect India's deep rooted belief that nuclear weapons constitute an effective physical signature of world power status, and even short-cut to this status".

And this extraordinary assessment of India's quest for security in a nuclearized regional and global environment comes from an analyst in a country which over the years actively and relentlessly contributed to the clandestine nuclear weapons programme of Pakistan, firstly by providing it with the design of a tested weapon and later by assisting it with developing its missile capabilities, both directly and through its North Korean ally. This is a rare case where a nuclear weapon state has actively promoted the acquisition of nuclear weapon capability by a non-nuclear weapon State, though similar allegations have been made about US and French assistance to Israel. Chinese assistance to Pakistan's strategic programme continues apace.

Could India ignore the implications of this alliance and the role of Pakistan as a most convenient Chinese proxy to pose a nuclear threat to India? The narrative that I have sketched out does not square with the observation that "India has never been faced with an immediate major military or nuclear threat that would require New Delhi to have a nuclear weapon option to ensure its national survival". And it is rather odd that a representative of a country whose iconic leader Mao Zedong called for "politics in command" can now say that India's nuclear programme has been "almost entirely motivated by politics". Of course, it has been, but not the politics of seeking world power status as is claimed, but the politics of keeping India and its citizens safe from nuclear threats. We have long been familiar with the Chinese predilection to dismiss India's role in international affairs as that of a pretender too big for its boots, while China's super power status is, of course, regarded as manifest destiny. One should reject such self-serving assertions.

What is worrying, however, is that this status-seeking argument has been finding an echo among some Indian analysts as well. One analyst recently claimed:

"During its long and unfocused nuclear weapons quest, India came to develop a highly self-absorbed approach. This was because India's dominant objective was political and technological prestige, while for every other nuclear weapon state it was deterrence."

Such sweeping statements show a lack of familiarity with the history of India's nuclear weapons

programme, set against the broader political and security backdrop. They also serve to diminish the very legitimacy of India's nuclear weapons status though this may not be the intention. For if deterrence was not the reason for which India became a nuclear weapon state, but only for "political and technological prestige", then why should it have nuclear weapons in the first place?

If the argument is that India has and does face threats for which a nuclear deterrent is required, but that these have been ignored by successive generations of India's political and security elite, then obviously it must be a mere fortuitous coincidence that we have strayed into a strategic capability. This elite, it is implied comprehends neither the security threats nor the manner in which this accidental acquisition of nuclear weapons and delivery capabilities, must be operationalized. This does not square with facts.

The thesis that India's nuclear deterrent is mostly symbolic is, for some, driven by the perception that India's armed forces are not fully part of the strategic decision-making process and that they play second fiddle to the civilian bureaucracy and the scientific establishment. Even if this perception was true, and in fact it is not, one cannot accept that the credibility of India's nuclear deterrence demands management by its military. The very nature of nuclear deterrence as practiced by a civilian democracy dictates that decisions relating to the nature and scope of the arsenal, its deployment and use, be anchored in the larger architecture of democratic governance. It is the civilian political leadership that must make judgments about domestic political, social and economic priorities as well as the imperatives imposed by a changing regional and global geopolitical environment.

The military must be enabled to provide its own perspectives and inputs, just as other segments of the state must do. Undoubtedly the military's inputs and its advice would have to carry weight, especially in operational matters. But to equate exclusive military management of strategic forces, albeit under the political leadership's overall command, as the sine qua non of deterrence credibility is neither necessary nor desirable. One should certainly encourage better civil-military relations and coordination. It may also be argued that the military's inputs into strategic planning and execution should be enhanced to make India's nuclear deterrent more effective. But one should not equate shortcomings in these respects with the absence of a credible nuclear deterrent.

If we look at the current status of India's nuclear deterrent and its command and control system, it is clear that at least two legs of the triad referred to in our nuclear doctrine are already in place. These include a modest arsenal, nuclear capable aircraft and missiles both in fixed underground silos as well as those which are mounted on mobile rail and road-based platforms. These land-based missiles include both Agni-II (1500 km) as well as Agni-III (2500 km) missiles. The range and accuracy of further versions for example, Agni V (5000 km) which was tested successfully only recently, will improve with the acquisition of further technological capability and experience. The third leg of the triad which is submarine-based, is admittedly a work in progress. We need at least three Arihant class nuclear submarines so that at least one will always be at sea. Submarine-based missile systems have been developed and tested in the form of the Sagarika but these are still relatively short in range. It is expected that a modest sea-based deterrence will be in place by 2015 or 2016. There is also a major R&D programme which has been in place since 2005, for the development of a new, longer range and more accurate generation of submarine-based missiles which is likely to be ready for deployment around 2020.

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THE NUCLEAR GENIE-8

Israel, a Covert Nuclear Weapons State

Prof. M.N. Sastri

Israel's pursuit of nuclear weapons involved high level deception, overseas financing, circumspect diplomacy and even a suspected sea piracy in the Mediterranean.

The state of Israel was formed on May 14, 1948 after almost two millennia of Jewish dispersal and persecution. Its formation has been immediately challenged by the surrounding Arab countries, with bitter and violent confrontations continuing and no peace in sight, putting its very survival in jeopardy. Further, the "memory that no country was prepared to help when Hitler murdered six million Jews" made "Israelis doubt that any country would come to their aid if they were being pushed into the sea." Israel resolved to covertly pursue the nuclear weapons goal for its security as early as 1949 under the leadership of Ben-Gurion, its first Prime Minister. "What Einstein, Oppenheimer and Teller, the

three of the Jews, made for the United States, could also be done by scientists in Israel for their own people," Ben-Gurion declared.

A geological survey of the Negev desert revealed the presence of recoverable amounts of uranium in the phosphate deposits. Extraction of uranium from these deposits began in small plants started under the cover of a fertilizer company called the Negev Phosphate Chemicals Company. The Israel Atomic Energy Commission was constituted in 1952 with Ernst David Bergmann as its Chairman. Bergmann was a stubborn supporter of an Israeli bomb to ensure "that we shall never again be led as lambs to the slaughter." After the announcement of the US Atoms for Peace programme in 1953, Israel became the second country after Turkey to sign an agreement with the US on July 12, 1955 for the construction of a small swimming pool reactor in Nachal Soreq. Using this reactor as a facade a much bigger reactor was built at Dimona in Negev Desert with French assistance. France's decision to help Israel build a nuclear reactor and chemical processing plant came in the wake of the 1956 Suez crisis to help Israel build a bomb "so that Israel could face its enemies in the Middle-East." Agreements were originally signed in October 1957 for the construction of a 24 MW(thermal) reactor for peaceful purposes. France justified its decision by citing the 1955 decision of Canada to help India build a heavy water reactor (CIRUS) for peaceful purposes. The complex was constructed in secret, and outside the IAEA safeguards regime.

The reactor actually built by France was nearly six times as large (about 150MW). The reactor tank, the largest of the reactor components was declared at the French customs as part of the desalination plant for Latin America. Great Britain extended its help by supplying chemicals needed for reprocessing, samples of enriched uranium as well as plutonium and in due course materials required for the assembly of hydrogen bombs too. Supply of 20 tons of heavy water was made clandestinely. The Dimona reactor went critical in 1962. By 1965 the reprocessing plant for plutonium separation became operational. The processing facility had the capacity to produce 40-60 kilograms of plutonium a year, enough to assemble 5-10 nuclear warheads. Despite some problems France's assistance continued till 1966.

Israel is also believed to have developed nuclear weapons using enriched uranium. Up to 100 kg of enriched uranium missing at a facility in Pennsylvania in US is believed to have been smuggled out and taken to Israel for the purpose.

I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.

Charles de Gaulle

Israel however faced difficulty in procuring natural uranium in quantities required for the reactor. The Negev mines were not able to meet the demand. France also withdrew support under directions from President Charles de Gaulle. Israel could not buy uranium in the open market. To get over this problem the Israel secret agency Mossad undertook a carefully planned pirate operation that has come to be known as the Plumbat Affair. A fictitious company was set up in Liberia in 1968 to purchase a tramp ocean freighter named Scheersberg A. This freighter was used to smuggle Yellowcake (uranium oxide concentrate powder obtained from uranium ore) worth \$3.7 million stored in Antwerp, Belgium, by the Union Miniere Company. The entire crew of Spanish-speaking sailors were disembarked and replaced with workers picked up by the Mossad. With the help of an official of a German petrochemical company, this material, under the fictitious name Plumbat, a harmless lead product (plumbum means lead in Latin), was sealed into 560 drums each with a capacity of 200 litres and loaded in the freighter declaring Genoa in Italy as destination. It was further declared that after chemical processing at Milan the material was to be shipped back to Antwerp. The freighter then headed ostensibly to Genoa. In the middle of the Mediterranean near Crete, two Israeli gunboats seized the freighter and sent the entire shipment to Haifa and thence to Dimona. Eight days later the freighter turned up in Palermo, Sicily, empty with no crew and all evidence erased. The Italian company presumed that the shipment was hijacked by pirates. It is estimated that the stolen cargo contained enough uranium to run a reactor like the one at Dimona for up to a decade and yield plutonium for assembling around thirty atomic bombs. News of this incident, described as “laundering” of Yellowcake due to weak safeguards leaked out in course of time.

Israel was also reported to have entered into a secret agreement with South Africa to provide technical and critical materials assistance in its nuclear weapons programme in exchange for the supply of 300 tons of uranium as well as access to nuclear weapons testing grounds in South Africa. South Africa abandoned its nuclear weapons programme and signed the NPT in 1993. Paul de Klerk, President of South Africa disclosed in 1993 that South Africa built six atom bombs and destroyed them.

From its inception the Israeli nuclear programme was conducted under the strictest secrecy. Israel described the Dimona complex as a textile plant, an agricultural station and a metallurgical research facility

till 1960 when David Ben- Gurion announced it as nuclear research centre for peaceful purposes. The US inspectors visited Dimona several times during the 1960s but were unable to obtain an actual picture of the activities due to “tight Israeli control over the timing and agenda of the visits.” The Israelis even installed false control room panels and put up brick barriers over the elevators and hallways that accessed the critical areas of the facility. As a result the US inspectors could find no evidence of “weapons related activities” even after visiting Dimona seven times. The US Government is said to have been deliberately kept in the dark by the US diplomatic corps in Israel about the activities in Dimona. Walworth Barbour, the US Ambassador to Israel from 1961 to 1973 is believed to have played a crucial role in insulating the US President from receiving intelligence reports on the Israeli programme.

The lid of secrecy of the Israeli weapons programme was finally opened by Mordechi Vanunu, a former Israeli nuclear technician by revealing details of Israel’s nuclear weapons programme to London Sunday Times in 1986, complete with photographs of the nuclear weapons facility that lay behind the bricked-over area of the complex. The London Sunday Times, after verifying every detail of Vanunu’s story broke the news in its October 5, 1986 issue under the Headline; Revealed: The Secrets of Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal. Vanunu was arrested by the Mossad in Rome. After spending 18 years (including solitary confinement for 11 years) in jail he was set free in 2004 only to be put back in jail several times on charges of violations of restrictions.

Israel has never made public the details of its nuclear weapons inventory. According to 2010 estimates, Israel has between 100 and 200 nuclear warheads including 100 thermonuclear devices capable of being delivered by missiles, fighter bombers or submarines.

There is no evidence that Israel has ever carried out a nuclear test. But there is speculation that a suspected nuclear explosion in the Southern Indian Ocean on September 22, 1979 was a joint Israeli-South African nuclear test. Analysis of a distinctive flash recorded by the US “Vela” satellite together with other information from intelligence sources gave strong evidence that the flash has been caused by a low-yield nuclear explosion.

Israel’s security fears and its decision to go nuclear can be understood in the context of the Israeli raid and destruction Iraq’s nuclear reactor on June 7, 1981. Iraq bought a 40 MW light water nuclear reactor from

France in 1976. This Osiris-class reactor fueled with approximately 12.5 kilograms of enriched uranium and intended for peaceful purposes was named Osirak by the French, blending the names of Osiris and Iraq. The Israeli Government apprehended that Iraq had intentions to develop nuclear weapons at the Osirak reactor. Failing in its intense diplomatic efforts to halt the French Government financing the project, Israel decided to launch a military strike before the reactor was loaded with nuclear material and thus avoid the danger of nuclear fallout. Taking off from the Negev Air Force base on June 7, 1981, a squadron of fourteen Israeli planes headed to Iraq flying through the Jordanian and Saudi airspace. King Hussain of Jordan, who was vacationing in Aqaba at the time, saw the planes pass over his head. He immediately notified the Iraqis of the danger of their country being the target. The Iraqis never got the message due to communication errors and were caught completely by surprise. The reactor was reduced to rubble in one minute and twenty seconds! It is the world's first air strike against a nuclear plant.

Two weeks after the Osirak attack, Israel admitted it had the capability of developing its own nuclear weapons. However it is yet to declare itself as a nuclear weapons state!



Two Lovers of the Lord

Prof. Manoj Das

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

Srirangam, City of the Lord of Play, Lord of Joy. ' If ever you wish to visualize the Indian cities as they were 2,000 years ago, pay a visit to Srirangam. I don't mean that you'll see any millennium-old monument, barring parts of the large temple complex and an array of sculptural and architectural specimens of several ages, but you'll feel the ancient air and smell it while walking through the city,' a Tamil scholar had told me. 'And never be in a hurry at Srirangam. You not only need time to appreciate the wonderful figures of the Gopis at the shrine of Venugopal, the towers numbering 21 laden with ornamental art and other examples of exquisite beauty, but you need muster a certain calm and poise to feel the vibrations of love - that of Andal and the Bibi - which still pervade the subtle atmosphere of the complex,' he had added.

I knew of Andal, but of the intriguing Bibi I learnt only at Srirangam.

The picture of the South Indian city that emerges from the ancient literature is an expanse of clean bright paths flanked by tall trees planted to offer shade to travellers, with elegant buildings behind them. While most of the people were pedestrians, some rode horses and a few elephants. A palanquin or a chariot was an occasional sight. The shrines exuded perfumes inspiring peace and devotion.

Faithful to the silent promise I had made to the scholar, I shut my eyes while walking certain patches of the streets of Srirangam filled with perfumes from burning braziers and tried to conjure up the probable scenes of the past. The scenes, naturally, could only be as pure as the perfumes frequently diluted by the smell of petrol and diesel.

But it was different inside the temple complex. The air was reserved for an abundance of fragrance from fresh flowers, the sandalwood paste and the *Tulsi* leaves. I was assured that the lyrical prayers, even though relayed through microphones, were no different in tune and rhythm from those as Andal sang them in the 10th century.

Vishnuchitta, a devotee of Vishnu - here known as Ranganath - had adopted an infant girl he had chanced upon amidst a plethora of *Tulsi* plants. The girl grew up and was known as Andal. Vishnuchitta collected flowers every day in the morning, and made a garland of them and carried it to the temple. The priest received it and put it on the deity.

'What's this, Vishnuchitta, how come I find a woman's hair in the garland?' an annoyed priest one day demanded of the devotee.

Vishnuchitta was taken aback. There was no woman in his house excepting his daughter. Next day he kept alert. He saw Andal entering the puja room where he had kept the freshly made garland, putting it around her neck and looking into the mirror.

'What are you doing, my foolish child?' Vishnuchitta asked, storming into the room.

Andal looked at him quizzically, as if unable to understand how a sensible person could ask such an irrelevant question!

'Well, Father, what is wrong in my ascertaining that I indeed looked like Ranganath's consort?' she asked innocently, taking off the garland and handing it over to him.

Vishnuchitta stood speechless. He had no doubt about the intensity of his daughter's love for the deity. He also knew that she composed moving poems on the Lord. But today she dared him to answer a question for which he was least prepared.

Despite his newfound impression of his daughter, he could not make bold to offer the garland to the deity. He threw it away.

At night Ranganath appeared to him in his dream and asked, 'Why did you deprive me of my garland?'

'I'm sorry, my Lord, but my foolish daughter defiled it by putting it on herself before it had been offered to you,' answered Vishnuchitta.

The deity seemed to laugh. 'Defiled it?' he said. 'It's because she used it every day before you brought it to me that it exuded a special fragrance and was so dear to me,' said the deity. 'Never throw my precious ornament away again.'

Vishnuchitta felt overwhelmed, but his worldly prudence whispered to him that it could be just a dream! In any case, a responsible father that he was, he looked for a suitable bridegroom for Andal.

'But my bridegroom is waiting for me!' said Andal, pointing her finger at Ranganath.

Once again neither could Vishnuchitta dismiss the girl's incredible claim as nonsense nor could he accept the proposition as viable. But at night the deity told him, 'How long do you propose to keep my bride away from me? Arrange for our wedding; would you?'

It was not as if Vishnuchitta alone began acting under a spell. The priest of the deity, too, did the same. Together they arranged for all that was necessary for a normal wedding. The bridal procession reached the gateway of the shrine. Andal was received by the deputies of the priest and their- womenfolk with due ceremonies. Her aura dazed all and straight she entered the sanctum sanctorum, sat down beside the deity and vanished!

Andal (8th century) is among the twelve Alvars or celebrated Vaishnava saints of the South. Her poems are among the gems of ancient Tamil devotional poetry. But she is worshipped as an emanation of Bhudevi - the earth-goddess. The other damsel, Bibi, though nothing more than a mere human lover, is also remembered with reverence and looked upon as yet another consort of the Lord.

It happened sometime in the 12th century. A

certain Sultan from the North invaded the temple town and plundered it, carrying away a huge quantity of gold and jewellery. One of the baskets filled with precious booty he presented to his daughter, Bibi Nachiar, contained the small *Utsava Murty*, the movable representative image of the deity, used during festivals, since the original image was immovable. The princess fell in love with the image. She forgot everything else and devoted herself to taking care of the image as if it were a living being.

Years later the great sage Ramanujacharya, the exponent of the Visishtadvaita philosophy, made a trip to the Sultan's court and persuaded the potentate to restore the image to the temple. The Sultan obliged his daughter to part with it and the happy sage began his return journey to Srirangam.

It was a moonlit night. Along the lonely road, the sage woke up to the fact that a young lady followed his cart on foot, often sobbing. He stopped the cart and, to his great amazement, found the follower to be none other than the princess. She had not been able to reconcile to her separation from the image.

Nothing could dissuade the princess from settling down permanently in the temple complex. In recognition of her devotion some Muslim rites were introduced in the Puja that are still observed. A memorial to her in the temple complex, bearing Islamic motifs, perpetuates her association with the deity.

'Do you know about the origin of the deity?' I asked one of the priests and he went on to narrate it: Once Brahma was meditating on Vishnu as the latter lay in his Yogic sleep. Brahma's vision materialized into this image later to be renowned as Ranganath. It was owned by Manu and in due course of time came into the possession of his descendant, King Dasaratha of Ayodhya. Among the many kings assembled to honour Dasaratha when he performed the *Aswamedha Yajna* was the Chola King Dharmaraja from the South. The latter was fascinated by the image and continued to meditate on it on the banks of the river Kaveri after his return to his kingdom. Years rolled by marked by momentous events - such as Rama's exile, Ravana kidnapping Sita, the Rama-Ravana war and the triumphant Rama's return to Ayodhya. Once again there was an assembly of kings to honour Rama on the occasion of his coronation and among them was Bibhishana, the new king of Lanka. He, too, was enchanted by the image of Ranganath. Rama understood

It is long and hard and painful to create life; it is short and easy to steal the life others have made.

George Bernard Shaw

the mind of Bibhishana and made a gift of it to him. On his return journey to Lanka, Bibhishana stopped for a while here as King Dharmaraja's guest; but ready to resume his journey, he was unable to lift the image. The Lord had become a captive of Dharmaraja's devotion. Bibhishana went back without the deity. Since then the Lord has been here - making this the holiest of all the Vaishnavite shrines in the country.'

The legend was fascinating, not for the gross facts which nobody could vouch for, but for the sweet and subtle fact of the relationship between the devotee and the Lord. The themes of the legends of Andal and the Muslim princess were not different either.

Almost each of the 60 shrines within the seven circles of walls had a legend to tell. 'Look at that tower. That bears the memory of a Devdasi, a danseuse of the Lord, who once saved the temple from a planned plunder and ravage,' told a local friend. Once a certain invader, who had taken the town by storm and was looking forward to a merry night in the company of a dancing girl procured for him, was led by the latter to the tower with the promise of showing him some hidden treasure. 'Lean and look down,' she said sweetly and as soon as the dreaming paramour followed the instruction, she pushed him down to his death. His soldiers fled.

Srirangam was never attacked thereafter.



RETHINKING COSMOPOLITAN MODERNITY - IV

RABINDRANATH TAGORE ON NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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Tagore found answers to some of the grave issues of his times, thanks to what Mary Louis Pratt calls the 'contact zones' between cultures. Indeed, he spoke of 'imaginary voyages of the mind' between cultures, by which the best of each culture could compensate for inadequacies in other cultures. He saw his many physical voyages precisely in these terms and was destined to meet like-minded souls who were on their own mission for seeking affiliations for a cosmos in the making. Two such personalities had set out on their journey from France to Japan.

Early in 1916 Mirra and Paul Richard left for Japan from France via Britain with a travelling companion, an

English woman named Dorothy Hodgeson, a follower of Abdul Baha. They travelled via the Cape Of Good Hope [the Suez Canal was closed] on board the Japanese vessel Kamamaru. After two months of travel, they arrived in Japan. From Kobe, they journeyed to Tokyo. Here Paul met, through a French contact in Paris, an American journalist named Samuel Fleisher, the editor of a daily newspaper called the Japan Advertiser. Fleisher asked Paul to write a series of articles about the cause of World War I. Although initiated by Germany, the war, surmised Paul, was 'really a European colonial contest, for the dominance of Asia'. 'I knew, he says, 'only one Frenchman who had not been swept away by the side of hysteria and chauvinist hatred and that was Roman Rolland'. (MPR, 1987: 83).

Richard's articles were perhaps too hard hitting, a pill too bitter for the 'quasi-official newspaper' edited by Fleisher. The twelve pieces appeared later in a different form thanks to the intervention of Tagore (MPR: 84). Richard recalls Tagore's visit to Yokohama when he was accompanied by two English friends: Pierson and Andrews. A friendship between Tagore and the Richards ensued. Richard passed on his twelve articles, a critique of European nationalism through Tagore to a friend in Denmark named Hollenberg. Tagore instead forwarded them to James Pond, his literary manager in New York. Upon Pond's suggestion and approval, Tagore agreed to write a foreword to a book comprising Richard's articles. The result was *To the Nations* published by James Pond in New York in 1921.

While in Japan, Richard received a copy of the book handed over by Tagore. Somewhat embarrassed by this turn of events, upstaged by James Pond, Samuel Fleisher published the series of articles in his own newspaper as he had originally planned.

Richard credits Tagore for the 'epigrammatic style' he learned from the poet. Surprised at Tagore's indifference to anything that did not satisfy his need for beauty, Richard one day exploded: 'How can you enjoy all this peaceful finery in a world at war and in agony?' (86). A week later, Tagore, according to Richard, conceded the truth and said: 'I have given a great deal of thought to what you told me and I concede the truth in it. But I cannot do otherwise; although I am not very old, I am very tired'. (MPR, 1987: 86). Richard's reminiscences of Tagore would make for an interesting study in comparative cultures. Deeply impressed by Gurudev, Richard recognizes the poet's outstanding traits and records his own meetings

with Pierson at a village not far from Lake Norjiri.

Richard makes other acquaintances too such as Okishama, related to the Imperial Family and Mistsuru Toyama, alternately known as 'the most respected leader among Japanese patriots' or infamously seen as the head of the dreaded Black Dragon Society, 'the greatest master of political bullies and cutthroats in Japan'. A man of contradictory traits, Toyama's avowed goals was 'Asian Unity and Freedom, and a Renaissance of Spiritual values' (MPR, 1987: 89). As seen earlier, this dangerous admixture of anti-colonial nationalism/pan-Asianism and Japanese militaristic expansionism was perhaps responsible for the ambiguity that marked Richard's faith in Japan as the leader of the resurgent Asia.

Working on the editorial board of Okawa's new magazine *The Asian Review*, Richard and others put together a declaration of racial equality and sent it to the American President, Woodrow Wilson at the Peace Conference in Paris. When Wilson declined to accept this declaration on racial ground, Richard recommended withdrawal of Japan from the Peace Conference.

The Richards met and developed a friendship with James Cousins, an English Professor of Irish origin who was on a visiting assignment at Kayo University, Japan. Cousins were serving in India as Head of Annie Besant's school in Madanapalle and would be instrumental in a publication on the book *Dawn over Asia* by Paul Richard. Cousins' role in the promotion of the national-international debate would be noteworthy. A poet-scholar interested in theosophy who travelled to India and Japan and became a bridge between the east and the west, Cousins made significant contributions to the emerging cosmopolitan culture. It is worth noticing here that while working on a review of James Cousin's book, *New Ways in English Literature*, Sri Aurobindo ended up writing an entirely new volume of literary criticism called *The Future Poetry*. The developments would show the way nationalism of the narrow kind was being rapidly transcended in favor of an intercultural communion that led to creativity of a different kind.

Through the help of Cousins, a manuscript of Richard was accepted by Ganesh and Company of Madras. Published as *The Dawn over Asia* in 1920, translated from the original French into English by Sri Aurobindo, whom Richard refers in the book as 'my brother,' the volume carried a valuable foreword by Tagore.

In the epigraph to the book Tagore wrote:

When I met Monsieur Richard in Japan, I became reassured in my mind about the highest era of civilization than when I read about the big schemes which the politicians are formulating for ushering the age of peace into the world.... When gigantic forces of destruction were holding their orgies of fury, I saw the solitary young French man, unknown to fame.... face beaming with the lights of the new dawn and his voice vibrating with the message of new life, and I felt sure that the great Tomorrow has already come though not registered in the calendar of the statesman. (PR 1920: epigraph unpagged).

The foreword was accompanied by two quotes: The first from the Ceylon Patriot said:

This inspiring and thoughtful work must be in the hands of everyone who is interested in the promotion of peace and goodwill among the nations of the world. (PR 1920: Epigraph unpagged)

The book comprised a series of addresses that Richard gave to Japanese students about the rise of Asia in the context of a new international movement. He identified Sri Aurobindo as the leader of the new age. The appendix comprised a note about the 'League, for the Equality of Races.'

It would thus be seen that Tagore's travel to Japan brought him in close contact with a number of others from east and west, who sought a free and creative interchange of cultures and who were leaders on their own terms. Among them Paul and Mirra Richard would rank as some of the most notable. Parting from Mirra in 1920, Paul left for France, after spending a few years in India, in the Himalayas and elsewhere, he travelled to the United States where he spent the rest of life till he passed away in 1967. Mirra became a collaborator of Sri Aurobindo. She organized an international convention on education in April 1951 at Pondicherry that was presided over by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. In 1968, under the auspices of the UNESCO, she established Auroville, the City of Dawn based on Sri Aurobindo's vision of world unity underlined in his book, *The Ideal of Human Unity*. Like Tagore, she envisaged in Auroville the pavilions of the cultures of India and of the world where free from religious, political and sectarian rivalry; men and women from different parts of the world could live a common life of interchange growing in peace, harmony, progress and perfection.

Tagore admired Sri Aurobindo as the prophet of the future, the idea he outlined in his Modern Review article after their meeting at Pondicherry in 1928 when the poet was on his way to Colombo. Sri Aurobindo's ties with Tagore, from his Bengal days and later through mutual associates such as Dilip Kumar Roy and Sahana Devi, would constitute a topic in itself whose kernel was the common search for a post enlightenment modernity based on spiritual foundations.

Unlike Tagore and Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo worked out his philosophy of the future of the Indian culture in his celebrated book *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. One would do well to look especially at the last chapter, 'Indian Culture and External Influence'.

Speaking of the growing importance of internationalism and human unity, Sri Aurobindo wrote about the need to liberate national cultures and give them their place in a federated comity of nations. The national and the international, he argued, can co-exist in each human being. Indeed, there is a paramount need to harmonize the claims of the smaller formations with the larger ones. The secret of this lies, he maintained, in the law of self determination where each individual, at the deepest core of his psychological and spiritual self, would see an affinity with fellow beings. He wrote insightfully:

The principle of self determination really means this that within every living human creature, man, woman, and child, and equally within every distinct human collectivity, growing or grown, half developed or adult there is a self, a being, which has the right to grow in its own way, to find itself, to make its life a full and satisfied instrument and image of its being. This is the first principle which must contain and overtop all others; the rest is a question of conditions, means, expediency, opportunities, capacities, limitations, none of which must be allowed to abrogate the sovereignty of the first essential principle. (Sri Aurobindo , 1962:838-40).

Sri Aurobindo wrote thirty five chapters of *The Ideal of Human Unity* that first appeared in the journal *Arya* serially from September 1915 to July 1918 and was published by The Sons of India Ltd. Madras as a book with three appendices, a preface and detailed synopsis of the chapters. The book was briefly taken up for reconsideration by the author at the end of World War II. A post-script chapter was added in 1949 where Sri Aurobindo spoke of the Cold War and the future world order.

Underlying the book, written as an argument, lay the cardinal necessity for the awakening of the international idea as an aspiration in individuals. He declared:

The great necessity, then, and the great difficulty is to help this idea of humanity which is already at work upon our minds and has even begun in a very slight degree to influence from about our actions, and turn it into more than an idea, howsoever strong, to make it a central motive and a fixed part of our nature. Its satisfaction must become a necessity of our psychological being, just as the family idea or the national idea has become each a psychological motive with its own need of satisfaction. (Sri Aurobindo, 1962:284-287)

Tagore, Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo constitute a trinity; along with figures such as Richard, Cousins and Mirra they give us examples of "affective communities." While the contributions of the first two are widely recognized, the affinity between Tagore and Sri Aurobindo has not been adequately explored. 'Tagore is a wayfarer to the same goal as ours though in his own way,' wrote Sri Aurobindo memorably to Dilip Kumar Roy.

Indeed both Tagore and Sri Aurobindo represent the selective assimilation of modernity. Each in his own way resisted what Heidegger called 'the Europeanization of the world', and each carved out his unique path for a cosmopolitan modernity.



Budget and Education

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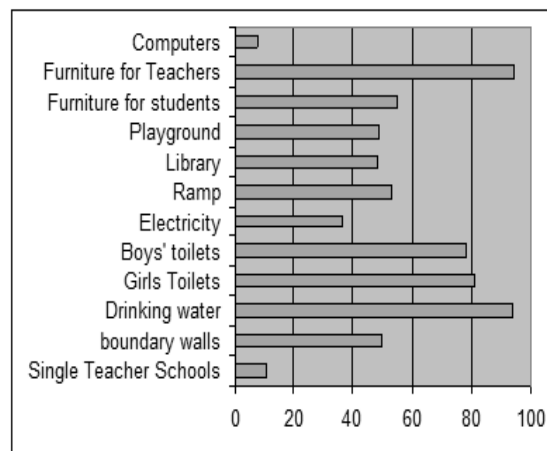
The Finance Minister started the Budget speech (2013-14) promising "high priority" for education, and to create opportunities for the youth to acquire education and skills. So one expected reasonably good allocations to education in the budget. But actual allocations to education are far from satisfactory, and are not in tune with the high expectations created by the Minister, nor with the needs of the sector. The total promised allocation to education was Rs. 65.9 thousand crore in 2013-14, compared to Rs.61.4 thousand crore in 2012-13 (budget estimates) and Rs. 56.2 thousand crore (revised estimates), i.e., Rs.9.6 thousand crore increase if revised

estimates are taken, or hardly Rs. 4.4 thousand crore increase if budget estimates for 2012-13 are considered.

Since the budget documents do not normally outline any new policies and programmes, one has to examine the allocations in the broad context of the government's stated policies and programmes, say in the Twelfth Five Year Plan. The Twelfth Plan envisages serious implementation of the Right to Education Act, enacted in 2009 and came into force with effect from 1st April 2010. The Union government's all programmes and schemes relating to elementary education including its flagship programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has to be modified so as to be in consonance with the norms, rules, and other provisions of the Right to Education Act. The government has realised that implementation of the Act requires huge amount of resources on all accounts – infrastructure, teachers, teacher training, strengthening of local structures, etc.

The deficit in infrastructure facilities is enormous, as still after three years of implementation of the Right to Education Act, there are several schools in the country without infrastructure to the levels specified by the Act. For example, according to the latest statistics (2011-12) available from the District Information on School Education (DISE), 48 per cent of the primary schools do not have play grounds; only about 80 per cent of the schools have toilets either for boys or girls; half the schools do not have libraries, a similar proportion does not have ramps, necessary for the disabled children to go to schools comfortably, and so on. The situation is no better in case of upper primary schools. 11 per cent of the primary schools and 14 per cent of upper primary schools are single teacher schools. Teacher shortage is one that is recognised to be a very serious challenge. Lakhs of teachers are additionally required to reach the pupil-teacher ratio specified in the Act. More importantly, all the teachers have to be necessarily trained and qualified. Training of teachers assumes more significance, as teachers need to be trained, not only for normal teaching, but also for the challenging task of continuous comprehensive evaluation. Perhaps almost all – existing and new teachers need to be trained in this regard.

Figure 1. Availability of Infrastructure Facilities in Primary Schools, 2011-12



Source: DISE (2011-12. New Delhi: National University of Educational Planning and Administration.

A net increase in the allocation of resources by Rs. 5 thousand crore (over the revised estimates for the previous year) for elementary education will not be adequate to meet these and other requirements of elementary education that has to be provided as a fundamental right of the children. The Working Group on Elementary Education constituted in the context of the Twelfth Five Year Plan has made detailed estimates of resources needed for improving various dimensions of elementary education and has recommended an allocation of Rs. 451 thousand crore. But the plan allocation is estimated to be around Rs.340 thousand crore. The annual budget allocations during the first two years of the 12th plan -- Rs.32.2 thousand crore in 2012-13 (revised estimates) and Rs.37.1 thousand crore budget allocation in the current year -- do not seem to be reflecting any move towards tallying the allocations to the allocation promised in the Five Year Plan.

It is also important to note that the target date for ensuring some of the provisions of the Act is almost gone (31st March 2013). The budget allocations may indicate that the government is not serious or worried about missing the targets. It appears the government has already decided to amend the Act and defer the target dates!

In case of university and higher education, the allocation made in the budget –Rs. 5825 crore -- is less than the revised estimates of the previous year (Rs.5995 crore). Does it indicate that much of the planned expansion and strengthening of higher education promised in the eleventh Five Year Plan but deferred for the 12th Five Year Plan will have to be shelved? That a token allocation of Rs. 1 crore is made for the

establishment of Educational Tribunals, Accreditation Authority, National Commission for Higher Education and Research, and National Finance Corporation, bills regarding which are pending in the Parliament, may also suggest that these bills are not likely to be taken up!. Also surprisingly no clearly demarcated allocations are made to some of the research funding organisations like the Indian Council of Social Science Research, Indian Council of Historical Research, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, and also institutions like the Indian Institute of Science, Indian Institute of Advanced Study etc.

Substantial increase in the allocation of budgetary resources could be noted in case of, apart from secondary education under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, only in case of Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management. IITs will receive Rs.2220 crore in 2013-14, compared to Rs. 1212 crore in 2012-13; similarly the allocations to IIMs have been increased by three times from Rs.102 crore to Rs. 331 crore. These raises might be justified as the new institutions set up during the eleventh Plan need to be fortified with more resources, as their needs in terms of basic infrastructure and faculty are not yet met. But so is the case with the new central universities set up during the eleventh plan. But no such allocations are made for the central universities. The insignificant increase in the total allocation to the University Grants Commission from Rs.5078 crore to Rs. 5147 crore cannot be expected to take this aspect into account.

The government has promised an amount of Rs. 5,284 crore for scholarships to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and minorities and girl children. But surprisingly, the amount allocated to one of the familiar scholarship schemes in school education, viz., the National Merit Cum Means Scholarship, has remained unchanged at Rs. 63 crore; and for the scholarships for college and university students, the current budget allocation is Rs. 350 crore. In fact, a large amount, Rs. 1100 crore is allocated, compared to Rs. 800 crore in 2012-13, to 'Interest Subsidy and Contribution for Guarantee Fund' for educational loans. As the loans are captured more by students in technical education, this also becomes a subsidy for technical education. To promote equity, it may be necessary to focus more on and strengthening the National Merit Cum Means Scholarship Scheme than interest subsidies on loans and guarantees to the banks.

In short, the budget allocations made in the union budget 2013-14 for education do not reveal any clear

priorities of the government or clear plans in developing "the high priority sector"! It is not clear how far do the budget allocations promote access, equity and quality in education or simply equitable access to quality education.

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Inclusive Banking – Barefoot Banker

Shri V. Bhaskara Rao

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Bank of Baroda

The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer, it means *ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity* To wipe every tear from every eye....may be beyond us, but *as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.*

Tryst with Destiny (Nehru, Aug,1947)

On 15th August 2013 the nation will be renewing pledge again. Now it's inclusive growth, Financial Inclusion, game changer Direct Benefits Transfer with aadhaar and so on. We may even boast about UNs report: India will be achieving one of the eight MDGs – Millenium Development Goals-Viz-target for reduction of poverty. Not ending it. It will do a world of good to the policy makers and the implementers, the grass-roots bank manager if they learn lessons from the past. I give below a comment made by a retired IAS and former District Collector on his experience in 1970s which is self explanatory.

'I used to spend considerable amount of time in chairing DLCC meetings and following up with different bankers implementation of decisions taken in the DLCC meetings. In spite of my offer of complete support of the district administration by making necessary manpower available to the bank managers for making credit available to various developmental schemes in different parts of the district, the response of bank managers, in general, was lukewarm, except in the case of the Lead Bank managers. The banking functionaries from banks other than the Lead Bank used to take the position that their bank had the Lead Bank responsibility elsewhere and hence could not pay much attention to my district. However, it will not be fair not to acknowledge that there were outstanding exceptions to this.'

For the exceptions he was referring to whom I chose to call Barefoot Bankers on the analogy of Barefoot Doctor of China, an idea floated by the former Finance Minister the late C.Subramaniam.

The following narrative is an example of one Barefoot Banker.

Outstanding Exceptions

'I was 25 and I went there one week after my marriage. I took my wife along and stayed in the village itself. I must share my feelings. I reached the place from Eluru by train and a bus to the godforsaken place. That was how I felt. In the bus I travelled, some goats and sheep were the co-passengers. I could not make out the language people spoke though it was Telugu, my mother tongue.

As I mingled with people I gained confidence and I found the people were so good and nice to me. I started imagining how as a Manager with education in agriculture and specialized knowledge I gained in ICRISAT should help them. I started day dreaming of helping small and marginal farmers and the poor agricultural labour. I recalled how I got through the interview when I emotionally articulated my conviction of helping the rural poor get out of the clutches of money lenders.

The area is surrounded by Thandas – tribal habitats. Most of the crops were rain fed. They needed upliftment, not mere finance. I began assessing their requirements in concrete measure for improving crop production and bringing social development–cultural change in their lives.

I learnt more about their problems interacting with them daily by engaging them in talk. Once they became free and expressive I could get an insight into their problems. What these conversations revealed was that I should play a social reformer more than any other lender who may have come to release them from the sharks of real money lenders. This is the meaning of a development banker, I thought, cropping pattern, irrigation requirements especially of the small holdings in command area of our branch which is quite large.'

Barefoot banker is a trope, a phrase used in figurative sense, like in the case of doctors as Barefoot Doctors (of China). But used as an identity to cherish it can do a world of good to Inclusive Banking, an aspect of Financial Inclusion. Dr.Aswini Kumar's article in the 100th CPS bulletin can be the starting point. He wrote in his article Sri Satya Sai Mobile Hospital doctors 'the doctors who serve them all do work *voluntarily*... such wonderful

service at the *door step of a common man* only Bhagwan with his *compassion* and *abundant love* made it possible.

The Barefoot Bankers can imitate doctor of the *mobile* hospital, may be rightly described as Barefoot Doctors – serving the common man at the door step.

Applied to Inclusive Banking bankers are given a compulsory assignment to serve a few years in rural areas but if they take the squirrel as role model they would become Barefoot Bankers and attain super satisfaction for the rest of their lives, accepting it as if it is sought after. Thinking makes it so.

The inspiration to serve the common man can come from inner urge. Voluntary can mean 'out of free will', a chosen path, not compulsory postings as in the case of bankers. In Ramayan it was a compulsory assignment to the *vanaras* but not to the squirrel. Her contribution to Rama karya – *sethu* – small, but significant enough, to attain moksha, with Sri Rama's acceptance with gratitude.

In the same bulletin appeared 'Understanding Modern Medicine' by Dr.G.Raghu Rama Rao. I pick up the following sentences that can be related to Inclusive Banking.

'In the medical field, doctors and patients together have come to a conclusion that the technological advances are the ultimate in the management of the illness'.

'Unfortunately the aggressive commercial advertisements of these corporate houses in their enthusiasm to sell their products, make the common man believe that high-tech medicine is the only solution for their ailments'.

'The fact is that high-tech medicine can never be an alternative to a good doctor'.

'Modern medicine is a fine balance of optimally utilized technology with passion for profession and compassion for patients'.

Can Inclusive Banking be a fine balance of technology and human touch.

Barefoot Doctor and Barefoot Banker

Two articles that appeared in the 100th bulletin of CPS both by Medical practitioners serve as case material for classroom discussion in any bank's training establishment to impress the rural manager how sacred is the role they play in a short tenure bank imposes on every employee. Although lakhs of graduates from all streams and disciplines apply for bank jobs only a few thousand get selected each year. Out of these about 15 to 20 per cent are reported choose not to join. Reasons,

the investigators report are far from convincing. One reason is that the place of posting is not to the liking of the candidate. Bank jobs are transferable jobs and the initial postings could be anywhere but sooner or later he or she would be transferred out. Hence other reasons reported are that the work is dull and work place full of politics. Politics are in the nature of organizational reality.

As for dullness in metros and big places, the places of preferred posting are more likely to be dull. What makes the work dull is the technology and not human interactions which are plenty even in urban centres. If one does not possess inter-personal skills he or she would find job boring.

It was unfortunate that the concept was not fully exploited by creating an identity, the greatest motivator.

In our euphoria of technological breakthroughs we are likely to forget the much needed human touch. To strengthen my point I append below what Western thinkers write which needs no elaboration and close my essay.

‘Increasing utilization of technology’ wrote Peter A.Dunne and James G.Barnes ‘led to diminishing human moments with appearance of ‘oversensitivity, self-doubt, boorishness, abrasive curtness’.

There are exceptions to this rule which some barefoot bankers ‘have been able to get around to deliver goods. That is what is making the operational banker a target of attacks by the public and media. The country needs the exceptional Barefoot Bankers – an army of them to achieve Inclusive Banking and sustain it.

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Book Review

GANDHI AND APPLIED SPIRITUALITY

K. Ramakrishna Rao

Indian Council for Philosophical Research

Matrix 2011 pp 377 Rs 895-00

“As Mahatma Gandhi showed by his own example,” writes His Holiness the Dalai Lama in his foreword to Prof. Ramakrishna Rao’s book on *Gandhi and Applied Spirituality*, “non-violence can be implemented not only in politics but also in day-to-day life. That was his great achievement.” The Dalai Lama hoped that this book would ‘inspire readers to develop practical ways in which children and adults can be educated in the paths of non-violence, kindness and compassion’ to become worthy inheritors of the Mahatma’s legacy to us.

Gandhiji called himself ‘a practical idealist’ with a firm disclaimer that he had not ‘discovered anything new or original.’ But such was the impact of Gandhiji’s life and work that distinguished philosophers, scholars and scientists sought to understand and explain the philosophical foundations and scientific approach of his thought and action. If Ernest Barker saw in Gandhi ‘a great bridge’ between ‘a great Indian tradition of devout and philosophic religion and the western tradition of civil and political liberty in the life of the community’ Richard Gregg found in Gandhi “a social scientist because he follows social truth by the scientific method of observation, intuitional and intellectual hypothesis, and experimental test. He is not a mere scientist: he is a great scientist in the realm of social truth. Describing Gandhi as ‘a religious actualist’ Erik Erikson explained how Gandhiji made an alliance of his ‘inner voice’ and the ‘voice of mankind.’ Scholarly works continue to come out regularly on Gandhi and as K.Swaminathan aptly wrote “the Gandhi story is inexhaustible like the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha combined.” According to Aldous Huxley the Mahatma showed how ‘man’s physical and intellectual limitations are compatible with a practically infinite capacity for spiritual progress.’

To that genre of writings belongs this recent work of Prof K.Ramakrishna Rao on *Gandhi and Applied Spirituality*, dealing with “the spiritual foundations of Gandhian philosophy and practices and their relevance to today’s world troubled by terror and violence.” As the Chairman of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research Rao brought out this book, fulfilling, to a large extent, his long cherished wish to “indigenize Indian psychology and to make service an integral part of our education.” His 1969 publication on *Gandhi and Pragmatism* Rao bore testimony to his deep interest in Gandhian studies and keenness to explain and emphasize their relevance for our troubled times. Rao who holds a Ph.D. degree in philosophy and D.Litt in psychology rose to become an internationally acclaimed authority on parapsychology. He straddles the two fields of knowledge, philosophy and psychology, with as much ease as he travels between the United States where he taught and worked as Director of the Institute of Parapsychology and India where he has performed varied roles as Vice Chancellor, Chairman AP State Council of Higher Education and more recently Chairman ICPR. With the objective of brining the East and the West closer to each other through academic and intellectual pursuits and blend the essence of Indian philosophical tradition with modern scientific research for ending violence and human conflict Ramakrishna Rao has been tirelessly working for over half a century. His

It is the constant testing and application of religious principle by the process of reason that fascinates me in Gandhi. Kingsly Martin

latest work on Gandhi is a welcome addition to Gandhiana and the eminently readable book begins with a Gandhian reconstruction in philosophy, an overview of the globalized world of today, and a way forward. This is a work of high quality, intellectually stimulating and rewarding even for one not adequately acquainted with studies in psychology and parapsychology. The author's analytical presentation of diverse themes such as identity, conflict, violence, science, philosophy, psychology, yoga and spirituality and insightful observations on the legacy of the Buddha, Nehru and Gandhi enhance the value of the work. The lucidity with which Rao explains basic concepts and tenets and relates them to Gandhi's non-violence and satyagraha reveal the depth of his scholarship and intellectual rigour.

From the first chapter titled 'Towards a Gandhian Reconstruction' to the twelfth and last the author takes the reader on an intellectual voyage from ancient times of Patanjali et al to the 'current scenario of wide spread identity conflicts, divided self and general use of violence as a means of conflict resolution and how Gandhi's spiritual force or truth force is the sole beacon of hope for the troubled humanity.' Every chapter of this volume is studded with conceptual clarifications and thought-provoking observations on issues and problems of contemporary relevance. For instance the BMC model explained in the beginning is applied at the end to the Mahatma as "a mature illustration of the model". Sarvodaya, the rise of all, literally means the fall of ego. Besides yoga and consciousness and related subjects on which he has done extensive research, Rao writes cogently on national integration, inclusiveness and Indianness and the eternal relevance of Indian philosophy.

The reviewer does not like to indulge in the usual practice of pointing out printing errors here and there in such a good work though it should have been *Gandhi Vardhanti* not *Jayanthi* on January 30 as printed at the end of the preface, and *Vasudhaika Kutumbakam* not *kutumbam* on page 163.

"Nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world first began" wrote Dr S.Radhakrishnan in the monumental work he edited on Mahatma Gandhi. Ramakrishna Rao writes that "studies of Gandhi, yoga and parapsychology should be pursued together for a wholesome understanding of human nature." The author of this important book is himself a trend-setter whose work will inspire many to pursue that goal.

A.Prasanna Kumar



The influence of Vedas - I

Shri C. Sivasankaram

Over the ages India is famed as the legendary land of religion and religious leaders. These leaders were reputed tapasvins. Tapasvin is one who could denude the forest of desires with the ruthless axe of detachment and opts for a life of ceaseless selfdenial. He cares little for appeasement of senses with the firm intention to attain self-realisation. Thus the tapasvin achieves mastery and undisputed hegemony over carnal realm. Inner askesis combined with outward austerity mark his style of life. His stern adherence to spiritual stoicism and secular antagonism stand him in good stead seldom yielding to the gales of worldly pleasures. Serenity undisturbed, calm fortified he becomes a saved soul. Self denial does not mean unnatural suppression of carnal urge. It is the sane outcome of relentless endeavour for sound perfection. This tapasvin has no palpable duty to discharge, apart from attainment of Atmavidya. These Tapasvins sing from their cave dwellings notes that lay stress on wisdom of the supreme. This is the end of their ordeal, their walk on sharpened edge of supreme knowledge. It is the knowledge of the self and the Veda. Veda denotes Brahman and the vice-versa, in other words it is the Adhyatma vidya. Sri Krishna identifies himself with it. As He is the Iswara seated in the lotus of hearts of all, the whole world is permeated by the principle of God. Veda is the breath of Brahman. We are free to conclude from this that the world gains succour from the infinite breath of God. The secret of Veda is life eternal Atman and Veda are inter-changeable. For both the inward and the outward of the universe self is the source. As the cloth got its form out of the cotton, the universe got its shape out of the yarn of the Brahman. We can equate Brahman with Veda. Hence the idea that world is the outward form of the Veda the infinite.

The whole effect tangible is that of the cause which is grounded in Veda. Both Veda and the cause are indestructible. The exterior naturally reflects the content, Modern or olden age the power and force of the inner core maintains its sway. The primitive age was also at one time modern. Both past and present are products of one present. At every stage in the history of mankind this infinite impalpable power of the supreme cause had its impact. Unless Vedas are not alive today, unless their worth is not recognized by the modern age homosapien the power that is contributing to the haltless movement of the world was impossible. When it is known to oneself as he is such and such there remains no room for enquiry into his what abouts. In the same way when the world is

Hindusim is more a way of life than a form of thought, not a static but resilient religion, a movement not a position, a process not a result, a growing tradition, not a fixed revelation. **Dr Radhakrishnan**

known as the manifestation of Lord and Veda is Lord's breath there is hardly room for doubt about the influence of Veda on any age. Usually there occurs variance in application of Vedic Dharma.

Vedas are first of their kind in the Indo-European languages. The ageless, endless Vedas are of all ages. In every age according to the development of the mental faculty of the peoples it is practised. Ages are limited and bound. The influence of Vedas erased the barriers artificial and transformed the face of the universe into one unfettered. This observation may sound drastic and arbitrary and far from truth. However, taken an objective view of - if it is not incorrect. The whole world shrinks, appears as one harbouring people who are freed from all divergent views and convictions in the hour of some massive disaster befell anywhere in the world. God assumes the role of unifying force through the mystic agency of Veda.

The seeming lack of belief in the Authority of the Veda is not profound or lasting. It is not true that the world is fed up with the elaborate rites and rituals prescribed by the Vedic texts Veda is a perennial Himalayan Fall and an ethereal torrent irrigating the idle fields of human mind to produce a common dialect and idiom for the healthy, amicable order of society.

For such a society God is enthroned to diffuse Veda as filial light to dispel clouds of dissension and dichotomy. Then the doubt, the suspicion that world may be balkanised on the principles of religion and ism will have no right to engage the mind of the modern man. Sadly enough modern man seems like old wine in new bottle.

He speaks science, practises superstition. If superstition is incapable of making inroads into the body politic of man of today to the extent of uprooting the conviction that he has a worthy tradition and a noble heritage it is due to the influence of Veda as propounded, practiced, preached by the seers and savants who continued to grace seats of knowledge periodically. Ramakrishna Paramahansa is an eloquent and dynamic epitome of the spirit of Veda. Swami Vivekananda is Adi Sankara resurrected. Aurobindo is the embodiment of the esoteric and mystic kernel of Veda. From Raja Rammohan Roy down to the present Avatar of Sri Satya Sai Baba of Prasanthnilayam there has been intermittent current of Vedic knowledge. Linyutang the greatest Savant of New China found the wisdom of India perennial and its power continues to shape the human being to fit in with the spirit of the ages that come and disappear. Names of philosophies are several and different like the names of the rivers while their source is one and the same. Vedas flow in the current of Ganga. Ganga originates from the great, mighty, lofty Himalayas the Himalayas are doubly sanctified by the presence of Rishis their discussion of real and illusion, lasting and evanescent, light and darkness. Every iota of Ganga has in its womb the embryo of wisdom of India. Spontaneously overflow out of the transcendental state of the sages. These waters are the blood that courses through the veins of every Indian theist or atheist, agnostic or anarchist. Thus Veda enters the heart of the man that drinks the waters of Ganga. His blood, his bones, his marrow are culmination of this ancient tribe of Vedic Rishi's thought current.

(to be continued)

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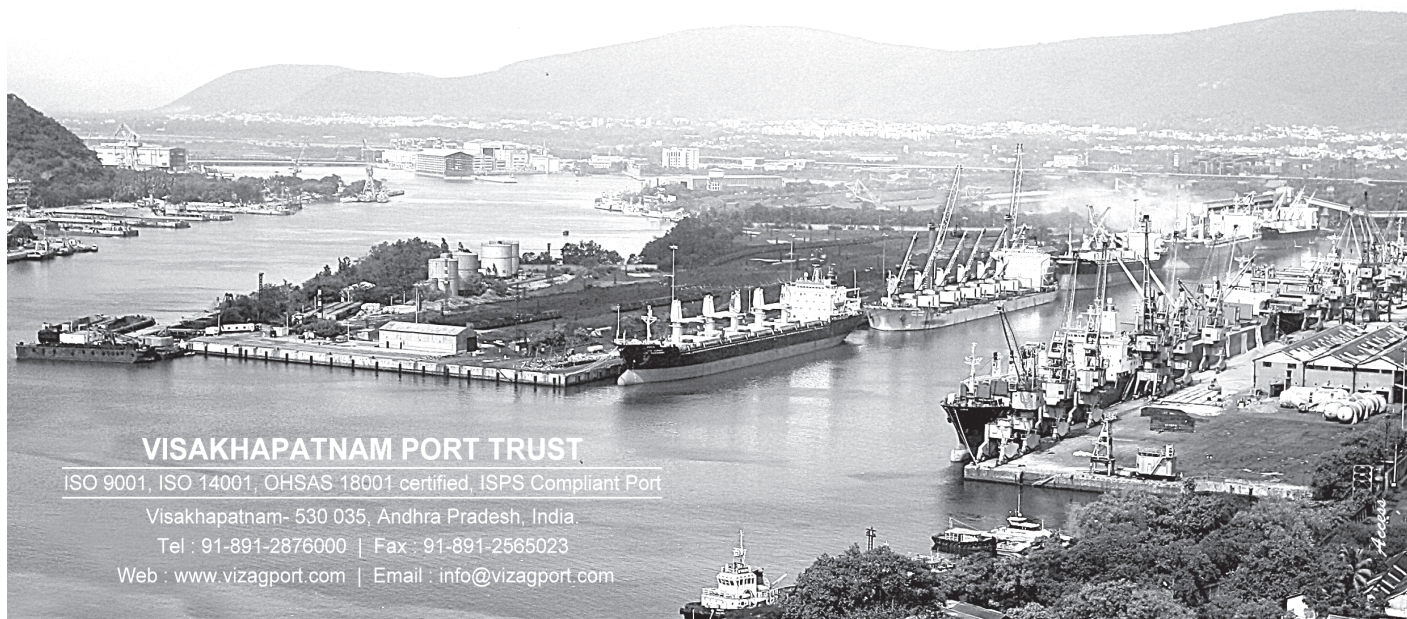
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