SACH

South Asian Composite Heritage

Qawwali : South Asia Sufi Muical Tradition

QAWWALI, a Sufi mystic musical tradition has been an integral part of South Asian composite heritage. The devotional music, which dates back several centuries, is also known as "the music of the shrines". In South Asia, qawwali is also one of the most popular and relatable expressions of Islam and of Sufism - a diverse, mystical branch of Islam that emphasizes having a personal connection to God, as well as embracing tolerance, peace and equality. After the killing of Mr. Amjad Sabri, one of Pakistan's most famous singers of qawwali on June 2016, the devotional music of Islam's Sufi mystical sect is struggling to survive. Amjad Sabri's murder was in a series of blows in recent years to strike at the heart of qawwali, which has thrived in South Asia since the 13th century.

The Qawwali tradition is very popular in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan; wherever the Sufis travelled to, they took their music along. In Pakistan and India, the Qawwali genre holds an exalted position among the Sufis of the subcontinent. Over the centuries, the mystic music has also made its way into the film industries of India, Pakistan and other countries in the region. Qawwali is derived from the word Qaul which means literally, 'word' or 'words of wisdom', and is a relatively recent coinage by the Sufis of the subcontinent. The early Sufis of the 11th and 12th century called it Sam'aa, in the Middle East. Sam'aa, traditionally, was a Sufi gathering with musical instruments. The origins of Qawwali can be traced to the eighth century, coinciding with the birth of Chishti order of Sufism. Based in the city of Chisht, near Herat, in Afghanistan, it is believed that Qawwali travelled to the South Asia with the Chishti order in the thirteenth century. It is a generally accepted fact that Amir Khusrow, the disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya (1253 AD - 1325 AD) promoted Qawwali in its latest form. Khusrow was a Sufi, a courtier, a musician and a poet. Khusrow institutionalized the Qawwali tradition by establishing 'Qawwal Bachchon ka Gharana' (a learning school) where he trained 12 disciples devoted to singing at Hazrat Nizamuddin's final resting place. The later generations of these singers, spread throughout the subcontinent, have popularized the Sufi traditions. The genre entered a golden age in the 1970s as singers known as qawwals battled for prestige, with the Sabri Brothers — led by Amjad's father, Ghulam Farid Sabri — and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan who helped to take this music genre to a newer younger audience and musicians.

In many areas of the world, local forms of Sufism incorporate other religious philosophies and practices as well as regional cultural references. For example, Sufi shrines in South Asia regularly draw not just Muslim devotees, but Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and others. Some qawwali performances explicitly refer religious pluralism and tolerance. Sufi musicians and shrines have in recent years been a particular target of sectarian and terrorist violence. Religious extremists like Taliban and other hard-line groups reject all music as un-Islamic and increasingly the Islamic State attack these shrines over what they see as heretical displays of faith. Targeting Sufi musicians have chilling effects on the pluralism and diversity of religious practice and cultural expression in this part of the world.

A Sad State Of Freedom

Poem by **NAZIM HIKMET**

Nazim Hikmet Ran commonly known as Nazim Hikmet was a Turkish poet, playwright, novelist, screenwriter, director and memoirist. He was acclaimed for the "lyrical flow of his statements". Described as a "romantic communist" and "romantic revolutionary", he was repeatedly arrested for his political beliefs and spent much of his adult life in prison or in exile. His poetry has been translated into more than fifty languages.

You waste the attention of your eyes,
the glittering labour of your hands,
and knead the dough enough for dozens of loaves
of which you'll taste not a morsel;
you are free to slave for others—
you are free to make the rich richer.

The moment you're born
they plant around you
mills that grind lies
lies to last you a lifetime.
You keep thinking in your great freedom
a finger on your temple
free to have a free conscience.

Your head bent as if half-cut from the nape,
your arms long, hanging,
your saunter about in your great freedom:
you're free
with the freedom of being unemployed.

You love your country
as the nearest, most precious thing to you.
But one day, for example,
they may endorse it over to America,
and you, too, with your great freedom—
you have the freedom to become an air-base.

You may proclaim that one must live
not as a tool, a number or a link
but as a human being—
then at once they handcuff your wrists.
You are free to be arrested, imprisoned
and even hanged.

There's neither an iron, wooden
nor a tulle curtain
in your life;
there's no need to choose freedom:
you are free.
But this kind of freedom
is a sad affair under the stars.

Bangladesh : Parliamentary Election and Political Uncertainty

By **SUNIL KUKSAL**, INDIA

THE 11 Parliamentary (Jatiya Sangsad) election in Bangladesh is scheduled to be held by the end of this year as the current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina completes her term in office. The Constitution of Bangladesh requires that the elections take place within the 90-day period before the expiration of the term of the Jatiya Sangsad. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the next election is expected be held on a date between 31 October 2018 and 31 December 2018.

Bangladesh's democracy stands at a crossroads today. The arrest and conviction of Khaleda Zia, former Bangladesh Prime Minister and chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the main opposition party and the state persecution of dissent have raised fears that the next parliamentary election could turn into a violent sham. Khalida Zia, twice prime minister was convicted by the anti-corruption court in Dhaka on February 8, 2018 and sentenced to five years in prison in connection with embezzlement in foreign donations meant for the Zia Orphanage Trust.

The case in point, the Zia Orphanage Trust case, accused Zia and five others including her son and BNP senior vice chairman Mr. Tarique Rahman of embezzling over Tk 21 million (US $252,000) from foreign donations intended for a charity named after former president Zia-ur Rahman, Zia's husband and Rahman's father. Rahman, who lives in London for the past nine years, was given a ten-year-term. He is BNP's heir apparent and now that he too is convicted, the leadership of the party becomes uncertain. Four others were also given a 10 year jail-term in the same case. They are former BNP lawmaker Quazi Salimul Haq, former principal secretary to Zia, Kamal Uddin Siddique, Zia's nephew Mominur Rahman and pro-BNP businessman Sharfuddin Ahmed.

The development has opened a new collision course in the country, pitting acceptance of corruption against democratic rights. The spectre of large-scale violence now threatens to destabilise the parliamentary elections. Any escalation would be detrimental to political stability and economic development in Bangladesh and the region. The verdict was announced at a time the country is preparing to hold the Jatiya Sangsad polls (parliamentary elections) with the formation of a caretaker government three months prior to the election date. Therefore, BNP leaders and alliances underscore a political conspiracy behind the recent verdict to keep the party in tatters, clearing the path for the Awami League (AL).

The BNP, which was contemplating participating in the elections after realising the repercussions of boycotting the 2014 polls, may have to go on without Zia. The verdict could bar Khaleda Zia from contesting in the forthcoming national polls. As per the country's constitution, if someone is convicted for over two years in a case, then he/she cannot participate in the elections for the next five years. Even if the apex court reduces the sentence to maximum one or two years, it would still have an impact on her political prospects. In the absence of Zia, the responsibility to manage BNP political affairs would rest on her son Tarique, whose participation in party activities on the ground is minimum. In such a scenario, it would be extremely difficult for BNP to effectively mount a challenge before the incumbent Awami League in the forthcoming elections. Bangladesh is dominated by two parties, the BNP and the AL. It would be virtually impossible for a lesser-known third party to challenge the ruling AL. If the BNP's viability crumbles over Zia's conviction, Bangladesh will be a de facto one-party state.

After the verdict, clashes broke out in major cities between Zia's supporters and those of the ruling Awami League (AL). The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) – which Khaleda Zia heads – has termed the verdict as part of the Awami League's "plan to keep BNP out of election which, thus, would rob people of their voting rights". BNP leaders and party lawyers representing Khaleda Zia say the verdict was not based on the case's merit. A day before the verdict, Khaleda Zia held a press conference in the BNP party office, claiming that the ruling party leaders had been saying for a long time that she would have to face jail. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir criticising the development said in an interview that "The intention behind the case was to keep her away from politics and also from the next election. The government wants to hold a one-sided election like the one held on January 5, 2014." Zia's party is the only viable alternative to challenge the present government led by Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League (AL).

Fear of a 2014 repeat, when the parliamentary elections were boycotted by almost all the opposition parties and marred by large-scale violence and killings, runs high in Bangladesh as the ruling Awami League (AL) government faces allegations of a concerted persecution of its opponents. Tensions in the country escalated in the run up to the 2014 parliamentary elections with the government's amendment to the constitution in July 2011, which meant that general elections were no longer required to be managed by a neutral caretaker government.

The abolition of the Care Taker Government, which conducted parliamentary elections since the transition to democracy in 1991 until its abolition in 2011, raised questions about the capacity of the Election Commission (EC) to hold free and fair election. Begum Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had boycotted the election in 2014. Shiekh Hasina's Awami League, which is in power since 2009, won the last election in January 2014 under controversial circumstances. The unsuccessful BNP boycott of the 2014 elections, which returned the AL to power in a massive landslide victory, was the real turning point in Bangladeshi politics. Awami League won more than half the seats unopposed. The election was held in the backdrop of widespread violence over the trial of war criminals and the resulting conviction of two senior BNP leaders and a host of the top office bearers of the radical Jamaat-e-Islami, which was a key BNP ally.

In Bangladesh political power has alternated between the supposedly centre-left, or more secular, ruling Awami League and the centre-right Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Bangladesh's two main parties have been in a deadlock for years over the legitimacy of the government. The leaders of both the parties, Khalida Zia and Sheikh Hasina - both women are related to former Bangladesh leaders - have dominated the country's politics for more than two decades. In fact, the bitter rivalry between the country's most powerful "begums" has pushed Bangladesh in the grip of violence and unrest for years. The BNP leadership accuses the Awami League administration of fraud and vote-rigging in the last national polls. It is demanding that the upcoming national election be overseen by a politically neutral caretaker administration, threatening to boycott the polls if it is not. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League have predictably dismissed the suggestion. At the same time, the Awami League in general and Sheikh Hasina in particular have become unpopular over poor governance issues, corruption charges against some Awami League leaders and Hasina's inclination towards radical groups in the country to expand her vote bank. Sheikh Hasina's stand has brought dissatisfactions amongst secular cadres of the Awami League. However, the absence of a strong opposition party might help the Awami League form government in Bangladesh again.

Political and administrative corruption is evident in Bangladesh during almost all political regimes after its independence. Democracy is yet to be institutionalized in Bangladesh. Bangladesh was fated to experience autocratic rule owing to colonialism and military regime for a long time in the past and many of the country's political problems arose from earlier periods of non-democratic regimes. Ever since popular protests overthrew military dictator Hussain Muhammad Ershad in 1991, Bangladeshi politics has been dominated by twin, antagonistic party-political pillars. A culture of confrontational politics between the country's two main parties has weakened the rule of law and led to the politicisation of state institutions, including the judiciary and bureaucracy. All the organs of government have become contaminated by corruption and state apparatuses have been used for personal and group benefits at the cost of citizens and the state.

Bangladesh is considered one of the least developed countries of the world. Its dysfunctional politics and widespread turbulence in periods preceding and after national elections have always disrupted its economic prospects especially the trade. Although the national economy has been slowly improving, many political and economic analysts worry that the BNP will once again break the political calm in the upcoming national elections. Moreover, widespread political violence is expected to have its impacts on Bangladesh's efforts for securing regional economic integration. Bangladesh also has plans to develop economic corridors to link up with other parts of South Asia. Increased political conflict will undoubtedly affect interests far wider than its own.

What Bravery Means in South Asia

Writers in both India and Pakistan are facing down fierce threats.

By **PANKAJ MISHRA**, INDIA

THE Pakistani government bestowed its third-highest civilian award on the writer and journalist Mohammed Hanif. This, to put it mildly, was unexpected. It's as if Donald Trump had decided to garland Ta-Nehisi Coates with the National Humanities Medal.

However, for many writers and journalists in neighboring India, ostensibly the world's largest democracy, the news could only be bittersweet.

Sweet, because few contemporary writers deserve to be celebrated as much as Hanif. The British-Pakistani novelist Nadeem Aslam once said that while "Pakistan produces people of extraordinary bravery, no nation should ever require its citizens to be that brave." Hanif has long embodied this unreasonable valor in a society dominated by venal politicians, murky spies and religious fanatics.

He has intrepidly exposed the atrocities and pretensions of Pakistan's elites. Writing about human-rights abuses in the province of Baluchistan, he has risked murderous retribution from the country's intelligence agencies.

In honoring him, as well as the late human-rights activist Asma Jahangir, Pakistan's civilian government honors itself. Presumably, its bauble will bring Hanif, if not others, some respite from the country's more malevolent institutions and individuals.

Yet it deepens a bitter realization among many Indian writers and journalists: Their own struggles, three years after the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party returned to power in New Delhi, have in some ways become as arduous as those that have long burdened their counterparts in Pakistan.

Many of those committed to transforming the Indian republic into a Hindu nation are viscerally hostile to intellectual life in general. Still, the ferocity of their assault on the fourth estate in India has come as a surprise.

Journalism has long been a lethal profession in India's border provinces, such as Kashmir. Journalists in the heart of India have now also been targeted by vigilante groups, assorted ideological thugs and criminals. This week, India was ranked 138 out of 180 countries in the 2018 Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Without Borders, a few slots above Zimbabwe and Afghanistan.

Armies of trolls using Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook have manufactured a whole new reality: one in which Muslims, liberals, secularists, leftists and various other "anti-nationals" are seeking to thwart hard-working Prime Minister Narendra Modi from creating a glorious Hindu nation. Last week, they targeted with especially malign force the independent journalist Rana Ayyub, author of "Gujarat Files," an undercover investigation of Modi's colleagues and officials complicit in the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in the state of Gujarat.

"Sometimes," as Siddhartha Deb wrote last month in the Columbia Journalism Review, "it appears as if the enemy is information itself, along with transparency, exposure, critical thinking — anything and everything that might be seen as characteristic of a free, open society."

The mainstream media tries to steer clear of some of India's most shocking stories, such as the mysterious death of a judge investigating murder charges against Modi's consigliere. Pressure from Hindu nationalists only partly explains this evident self-censorship. As Deb writes, "the owners down to editorial staff often seem to be a willing participant in the project of Hindu nationalism."

This is as true of such large-circulation newspapers as the Times of India as of local rags. Journalists unwilling to fall into line have been forced out, including most recently Harish Khare, a veteran journalist and editor of the Tribune, who ran a story uncovering flaws in Aadhaar, the government's cherished biometric-identification project. A long investigative report in Outlook magazine by the journalist Neha Dixit, which described trafficking in very young girls by Hindu nationalists, resulted in the departure of the newsmagazine's editor.

All is hardly lost. Caravan, a monthly magazine run by fiercely contrarian journalists, has published some eye-opening accounts of violence, corruption and official skulduggery. Feisty webzines like Scroll and the Wire have preserved a space for critical commentary. Journalists in India's regional-language media regularly uncover, at great risk to their lives, turpitude among politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen. Kashmiri reporters, working with very limited resources, persisted for months with the story of an eight-year-old Muslim girl repeatedly raped and then killed by Hindu thugs, until it became international news this month.

In recent years, as India appeared to rise, some of the country's most influential writers and journalists were beguiled by dreams of national glory and private aggrandizement. It is not absurd to hope that, at this time of adversity, Indian journalists would produce their best work yet.

Certainly, a younger generation of writers and journalists has been forced to recognize their necessarily adversarial relationship to power. The future of Indian democracy depends on many more of them being as unreasonably brave as their counterparts in Pakistan.

Courtesy : https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-04-26/journalists-in-south-asia-are-facing-down-threats

'People's Movements in Pakistan' – An Account of Political Struggle

Being a participant in many nonviolent socialist movements, particularly movements of trade unions and movements against General Zia's regime, the writer has inked personal experiences and accounts of people who exceptionally devoted their lives for other's rights and freedoms

By **KHURRAM ABBAS**, PAKISTAN

THE book under review, 'People's Movements in Pakistan' by Aslam Khwaja is a groundbreaking piece of work on the nonviolent struggles of Pakistan. Despite the fact that nonviolence and democratic culture is deeply rooted in the Pakistani social fabric, the least amount of work has been done by scholars and academics on nonviolent political struggle. In this book, Mr. Khwaja has tried to compile all facets of nonviolent struggles in Pakistan, ranging from civil disobedience against General Zia's regime to movements for freedom of press, student movements to women's movements for rights, struggle of trade unions against economic exploitation, and Balochistan's struggle for greater share from the centre. The author explains the nature of these movements in the context of Pakistan's political and social culture.

The book reveals the fact that a majority of nonviolent movements including civil disobedience, movement of art and literature, women's struggle for their rights, and movements for freedom of press and expression had been waged against General Zia-ul-Haq. Moreover, it also informs that nonviolent struggles in Pakistan are more successful, as almost all these struggles were successful in achieving their desired results.

Mr. Khwaja's analysis helps in understanding the nature of Pakistan's social and political fabric, contrary to popular international belief. Pakistan is a democratic and tolerant society. Unsung heroes who devoted their lives for the rights of their community, ethnicity, and freedom have been discussed in the book detail. Being a participant in many nonviolent socialist movements, particularly movements of trade unions and movements against General Zia's regime, he has inked personal experiences and accounts of people who exceptionally devoted their lives for other's rights and freedoms.

Mr. Khwaja digs deep in the history of Balochistan and identifies that most of the Baloch movements of nonviolence against the government were based on misperceptions. While narrating the historic events of these struggles, he opines that military and civil bureaucracy played a vital role in creating the misperceptions between the Baloch people and Federal government. Moreover, unlike the popular belief of external role in these movements, Mr. Khwaja considers geography and policies of successive governments as central factors in exacerbating the Baloch crisis.

While narrating the civil disobedience

movement against General Zia ul Haq, Mr. Khwaja describes numerous motivations, aspects, and the role of political forces in those movements. He has discussed in detail the role of different political parties, their internal differences, challenges to the civil disobedience movement, and reaction of the military regime. The writer is of the opinion that though society was overall exhausted by Zia's policies, internal differences of different political parties helped Zia linger on his rule in Pakistan (p. 222). Though, the struggle couldn't obtain its desired results during Zia's lifetime, yet it helped political forces to secure democracy in the country after Zia's death.

Mr Khwaja informs that there has been a long history of exploitation of traders and the labour force by industrialists before 1947. He says that there were no standard wages for labour, and industrialists used to slash wages of labour per their own wishes (p.280) while the British Raj did not take any action to give relief to the labour force as well. However, the political struggle of various segments of society against the British encouraged the traders and labour class to stand against this exploitation, which improved their living and working standards. After independence, trade unions tried to unify many times; however, political parties often used these trade unions for their political agendas. The writer mentions various kinds of tactical changes such as the release of union members by martial law authorities, increase of salaries, etc. in response to some movements (p. 386). However, he does not mention the contribution of trade unions towards structural changes in favour of trade unions.

In his chapter on peasants, Mr Khawaja discusses various peasant movements all across the country. His invaluable personal information about leaders and activists for peasants is commendable. He discusses numerous peasant leaders and their struggle for the rights of peasants. However, he accounts that peasant movements have never spread at the national level as other movements do (426-429), rather these movements have been confined to one province or within one or two districts. He doesn't mention the reason of this confinement though. The writer further adds that peasants are still suffering in the rural areas of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan, and through their compelling stories, one can predict that there are prospects of nonviolent struggle in the future against the agricultural elite by this segment of society.

Mr. Khwaja has given an exhaustive analysis on the impact of General Zia-ul-Haq's policies on the social and political fabric as well as the response of different segments of society to his policies. He describes in detail the dilemmas that were faced by the Pakistani society during the 1980s, of which the Islamization process by General Zia-ul-Haq created a stringent environment for art, culture and literature in the country. Artists faced grim economic and social problems over the showcasing of their art. He also narrates how women faced a stringent environment for education and professional development. He narrates the struggle of a Pathan woman Shayam from Charsada, the struggle of Malala Yousafzai for education (p. 512), the role of All Pakistan Women Association (APWA) for equal rights at various levels of society (p.528), the role of women such as that of Begum Abida Malik, Inayat Begum, Zakia Kaniz and others to protect and defend the Family Law Ordinance (1961) threatened by General Zia during 1978 (p. 526). Mr. Khwaja has shown pleasure over the courage and struggle by women from underdeveloped areas. He believes that the women of Pakistan have now achieved many rights, and he is optimistic that in the coming decades the situation will be further improved.

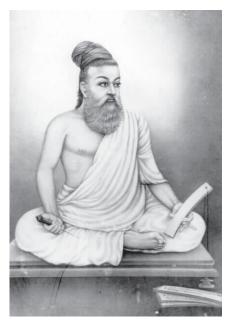# Empowerment Through Readings of The Thirukkural

Progressive ideas abound in the works of saint-poet Thiruvalluvar and other great thinkers from India's past

By **RAKESH KAYASTH**, INDIA

THE highest number of informal slaves (bonded labourers) in the world is in India. The country is categorized in a higher position than sub-Saharan African nations and many other underdeveloped places for volume of corruption, stashing away of black money in foreign banks,and gender prejudice. The triad of corruption,nepotism and abusive exclusivity has become an acceptable subculture among the political-administrative class at the Centre and the states, pushing the country into condemnable depths of degradation. The inclusion in school curricula of the classics of Indian literature, which contain ideas for the empowerment of the weakest, would be one way to remedy the country's current climate.

The Indian education system has often been criticized for its failure to impart the essential values of life—ethics, compassion, inclusive thinking and broadmindedness—to students. This has resulted in a situation where highly educated people, who are engaged in public service, display little empathy for the real sovereigns of India—the common people.

Thirukkural, by saint-poet Thiruvalluvar,should be incorporated in the school curricula across the country: the Tamil classic will help the coming generations to grow up as thinking, feeling, gentle citizens.

Sanskrit and Tamil are two classical Indian languages.Thoughboth have produced voluminous and enlightening literatures, encompassing practically all facets of human life, Sanskrit ceasedto be a vibrant and popularly spoken language from around 1000 AD. Even Buddha, who lived almost a millennia and a half before that, preached in Pali and not Sanskrit. Tamil, on the other hand, has sustained its literary eminence, depth, vitality and greatness with unbroken continuity and vibrancy from the 3rdcentury BCE.

Thirukkural, authored by Thiruvalluvar (estimated to have lived between the 3rd and 1st century BC), is one of the most remarkable books of Tamil literature. It is the synthesis of the best of Indian religions at that time. The poet has codified values evolved in the thoughts of Vedic Brahminism, Buddhism and Jainism, after filtering out religious, ritualistic, exclusivist

and sectarian ideas. In this way the book can be seen as a secularism-based treatise, with sound logic and reason.

In the early 18th century, Western Indologists, highly impressed by Thirukkural, translated it into most of the European languages. Dr. G.U. Pope, who translated it into English, had ranked it with the best of world literature of all languages. He hailed Thiruvalluvar as the 'Bard of Universal Men'. With reference to this book, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, philosopher, scientist and writer, in his book 'Indian Thought and its Development', observed,"There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find such lofty wisdom." M. Ariel, the great French savant, estimated Thirukkural as "A masterpiece of Tamil Literature, one of the highest and purest expressions of human thoughts". Tamil spiritual poetess Avvayar, a contemporary of Thiruvalluvar, who closely studied Thiruvalluvar, spoke in a Tamil song, "Thiruvalluvar bores an atom, pores the seven seas (of knowledge) into its cavity, and cutting the atom, offers its cross-section to us in the shape of the Kural." It is remarkable also that there is no criticism or adverse comment about this book whether about its literary style, craft, aesthetics or contents from any critics— spiritual or secular.

Thiruvalluvar never took any dogmatic stand that could be seen as violating the laws of biology. Nor did he preach impractical spiritualism and celibacy. The book has three parts dealing with (1) Dharma (moral code) (2) Artha (wealth code, covering politics and administration) and (3) Kama (love code). Comprehension and internalization of core values in Thirukkural could act as a tonic for the upgrade of the individual, family, community, society, nations and humanity.

A few illustrative inspirational couplets (Kurals):

"Be pure in mind. That is dharma. All else is but pompous show." (Kural No. 34)

"That body where love dwells is the seat of life; all others are but skin-clad bones."

(Kural No. 80)

"The crown of wealth is one's compassion; all other wealth is found even among meanest of men." (Kural No. 241)

"Water cleanses the body; truth cleanses the soul." (Kural No. 298)

"To track all things to their subtlest retreats is true knowledge." (Kural No. 355)

"Strict inquiry,and impartial justice mark the rule of a just monarch." (Kural No. 541)

"Verily the two eyes of a king are espionage and the celebrated code of laws." (Kural No. 581)

"Those who labour hard, undaunted by obstacles will overcome destiny." (Kural No.620)

"Most stupid is the learned fool who remains disloyal to his own noble teaching." (Kural No. 834)

Unlike some religions that advocate the anti-biological dogma of Brahmacharya, Thirukkural never advocated abstention from genuine and legitimate love. Kural No. 1,102 in the chapter, 'The Ecstasy of Love's Union', observes, "The remedy for a disease lies not in the disease but in some healing balm; but not so the loved one who is at once the disease and cure for the pangs of love."

There has never been any controversy over the authorship or historicity of Thirukkural, which was produced in the historic period, unlike in the case of religious scriptures, which were penned down in pre-historic mythological times. Thirukkural also does not project an exclusive identity of any religion, ideology, dogmatic doctrines or system of faith. The 1,330 gnomic aphorisms in Tirukkural are comparable to the maxims of Gautam Buddha, the parables of Jesus Christ, the proverbs in the Bible, the Hadith of Prophet Mohammad and the teachings of Chinese philosophers Lao-Tse and Confucius

The incorporation of this work in the middle and high school curriculawill help instil basic moral and ethical values deriving from our own classics.

Courtesy : https://sabrangindia.in/column/ empowerment-through-readings-thirukkural

Recurring Violence Against Muslims: What Is It All About?

By **MOHAMED R. M. FAROOK**, SRI LANKA

PEACE is more important today than any of the earlier eras because of the positively advantageous characteristics in the post-modern world with its attendant advancement in technology, socio-political vibrancy and religious freedom. Yet violence erupts mainly either on political or religious issues. Violence is the antithesis of peace. If we desire peace, harmony and peaceful coexistence among communities then violence has no place and should be abhorred. Yes, the vast majority of people from all communities in Sri Lanka – Buddhists, Muslims and Tamils – are not inclined towards violence of any type or form. They love peaceful coexistence which is openly visible to everybody from their daily interactions among one another on an individual and collective scale in their personalized transactions in their neighbourhood, routine, social, purchasing / marketing / selling activities throughout Sri Lanka. What else we need to be inclusive and like / love and be kind to one another? Yet violence 'exists' and has emerged in recent times, particularly against Muslims, in different locations starting from Aluthgama (2014), Gintota (2017), Ampara, Digana, Teldeniya and few other areas in Kandy (2018). Can one find the causes / reasons for this sporadic 'attacks' on Muslims and their properties – homes and businesses? The answer is 'YES' and also 'NO'.

The world has changed from a religiously and culturally based internalized communities to high tech societies banging on the concept of Global Village and with that human thinking too has changed from human and humanely based thinking to technology-directed thinking which has given rise to self-seeking pursuits devoid of empathy and wellbeing of others within one's own community and other communities. This is the scourge of the present day behavioural pattern particularly in the South Asian regions. The outcome (or output) of this phenomenon is that a large number of people from every community lacks the essential fundamental knowledge of their own religion and practise only rituals and thereby do not know the important aspects of treating / respecting the followers of other religions. Similarly the present generation does not know the cultural / traditional aspects that had transcended through years within the three communities that respected each other and was the cornerstone for peaceful living. Thus conflict leading to ad hoc chaos. We, for that matter any analyst / researcher, may not be able to identify all the reasons / causes of the violence or may miss out the vital ones as some of them may be known only to the perpetrators themselves. Yet we can point out some leading events that definitely could have contributed towards the unwanted calamity that got unfolded.

A few years ago some Sinhala Buddhists (SB), for reasons known to them only, propagated the '**false notion**' that Sri Lankan Muslims (M) will overtake the SB population by about 30 to 35 years in time due to SB families having lesser number of children than M families. With the official

statistics of 70% SB and 09% M in a total Sri Lankan population of 21 Million, and assuming that the reproduction processes of SB and M are, say, two (2) and five (5) per family respectively, even by one hundred years from now, the Muslims will not be able to overtake the Sinhala Buddhists through population growth. Forget overtaking, the Muslims will not be able to reach even 12% of the population say within hundred years. It is the Sinhalese peasants who had a larger number of children per family than the Muslims. The one, two or three children per Sinhalese families are confined to their educated and elite class and never to their rural population. With the present day complex lifestyles, high cost of living, woes of bringing up children, the hassles of schooling and living as nuclear family, everybody, irrespective of race or ethnicity, is going for small – two / three – children families. The myth of Muslim population expansion gets exposed.

After this canard they started the Halaal issue and from stage to stage from Colombo, through Kandy, Kurunegala and other places, Buddhist monks indoctrinated the Buddhist audience present with falsehood against Islam and Muslims. While some would have believed in what these monks said, a reasonable majority of the SB rejected such propaganda and in fact were questioning the behaviour of the monks as per the teachings of Buddhism. Next came the interference in and incitement at Muslim businesses that got culminated in Aluthgama violence (in2014) followed by Gintota (2017), Ampara, Digana, Teldeniya and other areas in Kandy recently – a sad spectacle for the otherwise hospitable, helpful and kindhearted Sri Lankans in general and especially the Sinhala population in particular.

What all these show is that a very small minority of Buddhist monks has influenced a group of Buddhists (youth) to their (monks') ways of thinking of initiating and developing hatred against Muslims – an unnecessary and uncalled for endeavour by this minority group of Buddhists. This goes on and is an unhealthy

and dangerous social behaviour that affects not only the Muslims but also the perpetrators themselves, the Sinhala Buddhists at large, others and finally the Sri Lanka as a country in the long run. What have the Muslims done for you (the Buddhists) to go against them? They are in business because they could not get employed in the state sector or in established commercial enterprises as they did not have educational qualifications due to either their (or parental) neglect on school education or their inability to get admission to leading schools – and finally became drop-outs through de-motivation and / or frustration.

Whereas the majority in a country especially in the South East Asian region are somewhat complacent with their strengths in their numbers, enjoy official / state patronage and have a perceived self-confidence in their livelihood, the minorities get into the notion that they have to be hardworking to survive economically / financially. This is the story everywhere in the world be it Britain, Belgium, America, Philippine, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, or Sri Lanka – minorities are hardworking and their business activities, small, medium or large have invariably helped the people and the economy of the respective countries – a plus point for any minority in any part of the world. Why be jealous of the Muslims of Sri Lanka? Benchmark them for your progress in your personal life as well as in business. Thereby together the Sinhalese, the Muslims and the Tamils can rise up morally and economically for the benefit and progress of all concerned! This may appear as a Utopian suggestion – yet let us give a try shunning violence and stretching the hands of friendship.

The ground realities may not be conducive to our suggestions above. In that case let us look at the ground realities which are many and varied from utter dislike / hatred towards the Muslims for no faults of their own except the faulty perception by the misdirected tiny minority hate mongering Buddhist youth backed by misguided Buddhist monks. Their dislike for, the anger they nursed

along, and the brutal harm they planned and unleashed on the Muslims variously got projected, for / against, in social media and through the mouths of trouble makers and rumour mongers. One suggestion for a solution for this is for the Muslims, affected and others, to call them (the 'empowered' Sinhala youth and the monks) through all available means immediately to initiate discussions to resolve the issues of both sides – The Sinhalese and The Muslims. It may be difficult at the beginning, but let us start it as soon as possible for the sake of progress of all communities and the forward march of our country – Sri Lanka. If there are other ways of addressing this issue of 'misunderstanding' and / or 'misconception' let us go into those too. All suggestions must be welcome and no stone left unturned to resolve this issue of violence against Muslims in Sri Lanka.

Be that as it may, let's look into the livelihood patterns of each of the three ethnic / racial groups. Each of the three main communities in Sri Lanka had and still continue to have distinct liking at specific sectoral / educational / vocational involvement for their livelihood. The Sinhalese aspire for the public sector employment, get into the positions and thereby are the decision makers, general administrators and political rulers in Sri Lanka. The Tamils (Jaffna) have taken the path of education seriously and do well in their careers within Sri Lanka or overseas provided opportunities come in their way. The Muslim community traditionally had been in trading / commercial activities and they continue and new businesses spring up too. Further, due to various encouraging factors such as better social status and also the glamour of being in business today (with the attendant risk involved notwithstanding), freedom of being independent earner, better earning potential than wage employment and importantly governmental support and incentives for self-employment, people from all three communities have ventured into businesses of various types which we see throughout Sri Lanka. Thus the past notion (may be a reality then) that Muslims are /

were the dominant group in business does not prevail now. Yet Muslim businesses (retail) are conspicuous in their traditionally held Muslim towns such as Akurana, Beruwala, Mawanella, Thihariya, Kalmunai, (to name a few) and had expanded within these towns. Muslim businesses do not exist in the new towns such as Ampara, Nugegoda, Maharagama, Homagama, Kiribathgoda, Embilipitiya etc. Thus it is the Sinhalese who are more in businesses today than the Muslims (or even the Tamils) – this is what it should be and what it is as the Sinhalese constitute the majority. This situation must be clearly understood to erase the myth that Muslims are the dominating group in business and thus create unwanted confusion in the minds of the Sinhalese.

Whatever their religious / ethic group, all business persons (except a very few who committedly practise their religious commands in business ethics) today are of a mind-set to make quick financial gains, disproportionate profits and look out for opportunistic situations to exploit the customer whoever they may be. This is in all trades from greengrocers, grocers, farm producers and all other businesses. This opportunistic exploitation has nothing to do with market mechanism of supply and demand. This is based on the business persons' greedy outlook combined with the exploitation of the trust the innocent customers have in the business persons along with exploitation of lack of knowledge on the part of customers on quality, prices, availability of the same or substitute goods at other places, and finally the level of anxiety of the customers in their purchasing process – all these combined give the businesses, irrespective of their (businesses') ethnic / racial orientation, the strengths to exploit their customers whoever they may be. Therefore it is wrong and dangerous too to arouse the feelings of the Sinhala Buddhists to the warped and twisted notion that Muslims are the dominant group in business and they exploit their customers – all businesses at various levels and degrees exploit their customers.

Having said of the many issues that could have been the reasons for the violence against Muslims without any normative inputs, up to this point, from this write-up, it is important to focus on the unfounded and unprovable advocacy by the lead Sinhala Buddhist political figures and some other Buddhist personalities that Sri Lanka belongs to the Sinhala Buddhists. There is no truth in this statement. Of course the Sinhala Buddhists are the majority in Sri Lanka. This notion is advocated essentially for the purpose of gaining political advantage from the Sinhala Buddhists vote base and nothing else – and also may be based on chauvinism in the minds of such Buddhists. This notion must be countered and abandoned to seek a way forward approach to the multi-ethno-racial pluralistic Sri Lanka that is what we are today and had come through ages in order that Sri Lanka would march forward as a nation in all aspects internally and globally through genuine and committed cooperation of all her communities with the motto that Sri Lanka belongs to all its citizens – Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Muslims.

Another important matter is the role of the State in safeguarding every community, whether minority or majority, to any form of danger that may emerge through propaganda, incitement or violence. The state's re-active approaches of paying compensation to the damaged properties and the slow apprehension of the middle-rung culprits who committed the violence / crime leaving the masterminds to live with impunity are no solutions to the said issues by a democratic government. The government should always be pro-active and have standby controlling mechanisms to prevent communal violence among its multi-racial and multi-ethnic society in whichever part that violence may emerge, round up the perpetrators and take legal actions against them. All governments of the day had been slack and people witnessed one-way communal violence on Tamils in 1956 and 1983 and on the Muslims in 2014, 2017 and 2018. In these series of violence every community was a looser and there is no one

to be said as the winner. We all must learn lessons from these nasty events and thus abhor violence. Although the Constitution of Sri Lanka guarantees the freedom of religion to every religious group, the Constitution should be strengthened further through an additional clause guaranteeing every community from violence of any sort.

Finally, to get a better understanding of the violence against the Muslims, we also must look into the Muslims' overall behaviour as an individual, as a collective or community, as business people, as political figures and clergy-based organizations – all these could individually and in concert send various signals that could be interpreted in different ways by the Sinhalese which could be detrimental towards the Muslims. Muslims in their individual capacity have good relationships with the Sinhalese (also Tamils) in their personal interactions. Their dresses of head scarfs, Shalwars, Abaayas (full body cloaks) and even the face-cover (Niqaab) have been in existence for long time and has become accepted dress code by others and there seem to be no repulsion or repugnance by the individual Sinhalese. It is the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) which created a fuss about Muslim women's dresses going to the level of calling the Muslim women wearing the long cloak as 'goni billas'. Every person, irrespective of their religion, has the freedom to wear whatever they wish provided the dresses do not reflect public nuisance through indecency. It is surprising to note that BBS does not say a word about the mini shorts (skirts) worn by young girls exposing greater part of their thighs and also wearing tops that expose unnecessarily the female breasts and the cleavage. What is the logic? Decent ways of dresses should be 'insulted' and indecency accepted in the name of fashion for the perverted desires of the onlookers!

The behaviour of the Muslims as a community is different from their individual behaviour. This is because the community is unnecessarily controlled by leaders of the Mosques (trustees), other religious (Islamic) organizations and also by socio-political

associations among many others. Each of these entities has their own agendas and work on them without looking into the consequences on implementing the agendas. They stress or emphasize on the rights of the Muslims without looking into the responsibilities of the Muslim community towards the other communities. This is where any problem would start. For example, there is no issue in making use of the public address system (loud speakers) by mosques in their call for prayers in predominantly Muslim areas but have to restrict its use in areas where other communities also live. Further the members (elected, nominated or otherwise hold official positions based on the criteria of their respective constitutions) of the governing body of these mosques and religious associations do not in many instances discharge their duties as per the true Islamic guidelines as the mosques and all the associations are divided on the basis of different sects (forming into sects is against the teachings of Islam) and propagate their own 'corrupted' versions and the congregation is divided and are in most cases unable to raise their individual voice even as a minority collective which version might be the correct one to do. Most of the socio-political Muslim organizations exist to serve the purpose of political parties and / or other entities, local or foreign, which may support them in various ways including financial help. Thus by looking at these Muslim organizations including the Mosques, it will not be a surprise if the Sinhalese and also the BBS see the Muslim community as an inward looking community without compassion and empathy towards others.

As we have stated above, almost all businesses are exploitative towards the customers and Muslim businesses are no exception. Business persons have their religions and every religion does teach their adherents of doing business in the right manner (Business Ethics). Muslims have the Islamic guidelines in businesses and have to follow them if they are to be in the fold of Islam. Though a vast majority of Muslim businesses do adhere to their Islamic guidelines

to the level as they perceive as possible and may by necessity resort to some harmless tactics or gimmickry in closing business transactions, Muslim businesses also have a quota of black sheep among them who have brought the bad image to the Muslim businesses thus making others stereotype all Muslim businesses in the black sheep category. Whereas Muslims, approximately up to the mid twentieth century, were upheld positively on single or very few positive interactive criteria (halo effect), today it is stereotyping from the few 'bad' Muslims to the entire community. This is one factor that makes Muslims face hate speech and violence.

Many of the Muslim political personalities and politicians have shown themselves as greedy for ministerial portfolios and jump from one regime to another for the sake of financial gains and show no concern for the Muslim community. Thus the Muslim community is leaderless and helpless and are susceptible to all types of danger from within their own and also from hate mongers and perpetrators of violence. The main clergy based Muslim organizations are more concerned with the religious works they are performing and are conspicuously uninvolved in finding solutions for the violence against Muslims. But they are helping the affected Muslims by collecting donations and dispatching same to the affected areas – this is the 'need of the hour' measure and in no way would alleviate the emotional distress of the victims.

Let the proponents and perpetrators of hatred and violence, re-think and reflect on their mission against Muslims and see that whether that mission of theirs could help the Sinhala Buddhist and Buddhism to be better or worse off tomorrow! Think seriously, reflect positively, and resort to non-violent ways of addressing the issues concerned so that all communities in Sri Lanka would live in an atmosphere of Sri Lankan brotherhood – and, God Willing (*Insha Allah)*, this ought to be possible.

Courtesy : https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/ recurring-violence-against-muslims-what-is-it-all-about/

Who Do You Think You Are?

By **PRATAP BHANU MEHTA,** INDIA

WHILE identities matter, when they are carelessly ascribed, they become inimical to freedom.

Identities are often maintained by policing boundaries, if you are one thing, you cannot be another.

In the film, The Party, there is a line ascribed to the Indian character Bakshi played by Peter Sellers. In response to a taunt, "Who do you think you are?" Bakshi responds: "In India we don't think who we are, we know who we are." For those of us, who are never quite sure what it means to know who we are, such confidence is a great source of envy. But it is sometimes alarming, when we not only seem to know who we are, but also seem to know who everyone else is. We easily ascribe identities to others, nest those identities in a set of expectations, and confidently proclaim the obligations that follow from those identities.

Collective identities matter to people. They may give a sense of belonging. They can sometimes produce solidarity. Sometimes they are premised on a sense of superiority and domination. Sometimes they are a defensive reaction against oppressive constructions that target people for being who they are. Collective identities are produced through complex social, psychological and historical mechanisms. Sometimes identities precede political action, sometimes they are constructed through it. But in our public discourse there is something deeply suffocating and inimical about the use of collective nouns and pronouns to capture identities. Almost all words that designate any collective identity — "Hindus", "Muslims", "Dalits", "Indian", or even categories of gender — are almost casually used to imprison people than recognise them. This is not the occasion for theoretical exercises in notions of identity. But the utter lack of self-awareness, and false confidence with which these terms are invoked should make us pause.

While it is a truism that identities matter, it is also a truism that when they are carelessly ascribed, they become inimical to freedom. What does it mean to invoke the term "Indian Muslim"? What does it mean to say, "I am Hindu" or I am "Jain or "Tamil?" These words have contextual uses, and can be aspects of people's self-definition. But they easily become tyrannical when the common sense pitfalls of any collective noun or pronoun are ignored.

The pitfalls that make the easy ascription of collective identities fraught are obvious. But they bear repeating. In invoking a collective identity, are we too easily ascribing a unity of purpose, meaning, experience and capability to members of large group that they cannot possibly have? In ascribing that unity, or measuring that identity against a benchmark, we abstract away the different textures, struggles, individual engagement through which that identity becomes a hard won achievement, or the diverse forms in which it is imagined. Second, Nietzsche once said, that only ahistorical beings can be defined. To confidently name an identity is, in some ways, to freeze it; it is to impose a stable set of expectations that circumscribe our possibility of action. We become

manifestations of that larger collective identity rather than agents who shape it.

Third, identities almost always seem to trap us in binaries, what Bhikhu Parekh in a lecture once evocatively called "the false antinomies between closed wholes". Identities are often maintained by policing boundaries, if you are one thing, you cannot be another. Or worse, the truism that the solidarity behind collective identities is often sustained by identifying a threat or an enemy. One of the paradoxes of India is that at the level of vernacular practice, our identities can be a lot more permeable. It is when we put the pressure on naming them (Is "X" practice Sikh of Hindu?) that identities go from being open fields that we freely inhabit to closed fortresses that we zealously guard. Fourth, public invocations of identity are insidiously colonising and easily displace reason and argument. Which collective identity you can be slotted under is then assumed to give you authority over some subjects not others, define your moral responsibilities, and even be a predictor of what you might say. If an argument takes the form, "Speaking as 'X' I make the following claim," it is the speaking as X that is supposed to give you authority not the validity of your claim.

India, of course, has the most nauseating history of imposing compulsory identities on people, through caste. But other casual invocations of public identity also extract huge moral costs. Just as nationalism is a form of collective aggrandisement and narcissism, so do most collective identities run the same risk. Collective identities efface individuality. The emphasis in describing everyone first by the collective noun into which they can be slotted often completely forecloses any space of interiority, no space for inwardness, or psychological complexity. Aurobindo was right in thinking that at some point rigidified external social identities made India something akin to a charnel house of rotted interiorities, to use Lukacs' phrase. If you wanted to explore the depths of being and the complexities of existence, you had to escape society; society always had its scripts ready for you. Our constant inability to think of individuals outside of the collective noun under which we slot them has a similar effect. And by subsuming people under abstractions, collective identities do away with ordinary human sympathies.

Collective identities are also becoming scripts others control. They take away possibilities of self-definition. When we use terms like Hindu, Muslim, Women, Dalit, casually in public discourse, what do they actually mean? What expectations are associated with them? Are the listeners associating the same meaning with that collective noun as the speaker? Do the listeners burden those who inhabit these identities with different stereotypes than those who invoke them? Indian public discourse is so suffocating in part because these collective nouns are the medium through which we constantly misrecognise each other. Casual stereotyping is just one manifestation of that.

These categories are perhaps inescapable. But we can be more self-aware about their imprisoning logic. Contrary to the character Bakshi's confidence, we don't know who we are. We get that confident certainty that we know who we are, or who other are by slotting them into boxes. By naming them, putting them under a collective noun, we avoid the labour and hard work of having to know who we are and who others are. Naming has become a substitute for knowing. Perhaps we will be more liberated not if we have the illusory confidence that we know who we are, but if we replied like Bulleh Shah: "Bulla ki jana main kaun?" For it is the tyranny of naming that destroys our freedom, and makes us presumptuous enough to define others as well.

The Fear Inside Us : Confronting Sri Lanka's Past

AT first, the tall, brooding silhouette at her doorstep was unrecognisable.

After more than three decades, Sellaiah Manoranjan, an ex-Tamil fighter, returned to a house in Jaffna where he and his family once sought refuge from the Sri Lankan military.

It reminded his Sinhalese host of the time she risked her own safety by offering shelter to this Tamil family in the beginning of the country's 26-year civil war.

"We're still alive, aren't we, my boy?" she asked, patting Manoranjan on his shoulder, as if he was still a teenager. "They harassed us because we supported Tamils. But we protected them anyway."

Manoranjan has returned with his nephew Jude Ratnam, a filmmaker who is retracing his uncle's experiences to get closer to understanding not only the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict, but also the infighting and power struggle within Tamil separatist groups that characterised their quest for a separate homeland.

A HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATION:

After gaining independence from Britain in 1948, Sri Lanka became embroiled in a struggle between the Sinhalese majority ethnic group and the minority Tamils.

Despite the British Raj over Sri Lanka being largely coloured by the divide-and-rule strategy, figures from the Tamil minority of Sri Lanka were appointed to high-ranking civil services jobs and played an important role in the governance of the island.

But in 1948, administrative power fell into the hands of the Sinhalese, who began an onslaught of legislative discrimination against the Tamil population.

The Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948 denied citizenship to Sri Lankans of Indian descent (Tamils were largely of Indian descent). Then, in 1956, the Sinhala Only Act made Sinhalese the only official language of Sri Lanka. In the 1970s, importing Tamil language books, magazines and films from the Tamil cultural hub of Tamil Nadu in India, was also outlawed.

"Once political parties dominated by the Sinhalese majority got entrenched, they pushed through certain policies that had an effect on the everyday life of Tamils and made them feel marginalised," said Nira Wickramasinghe, professor of modern South Asian studies at Leiden University.

"This was seen as an affront to the idea of equal citizenship and created a situation that radicalised the youth and led to a feeling of discontent that was channeled into anti-state movements," she told Al Jazeera.

Calls for the right to Tamil self-determination, reflected in the 1977 parliamentary elections, were brushed aside when the Sri Lankan government responded with an amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution, prohibiting peaceful advocacy of independence.

Four years later, in 1981, an irreversible blow to Tamil culture and history at the hands of an organised Sinhalese mob saw the Jaffna library set on fire. Over 95,000 Tamil historical texts and manuscripts were burned to ashes.

SRI LANKA'S BLACK JULY:

In July 1983, a group of Tamil fighters ambushed a contingent of the Sri Lankan military, killing 13 soldiers. The incident sparked the 1983 anti-Tamil riots, and a bloody civil war broke out that left more than 100,000 dead and around 800,000 displaced.

"That night in July 1983, the whole capital was set on fire," recalls Ratnam, referring to what is widely remembered in Sri Lankan

history as "Black July".

When the dust settled, thousands of Tamils had been displaced from their homes and their businesses uprooted. Many Tamils were forced to migrate to the northern parts of the country, mainly to the city of Jaffna.

Ratnam was still a child when they fled the violence, but he remembers his father walking helplessly up and down the platform as his family boarded the train from Colombo to Jaffna.

"That picture is deeply etched into my memory," he said. "That night, I didn't realise we were fleeing Colombo as refugees. We went to the north where the majority of Tamils were already living."

"Just as we were arriving in the north of the country, the Tamil fighters began to organise themselves to take up arms. The Tamil guerrillas' fight for an independent state began," Ratnam said.

A REBELLION DIVIDED

Under the banner of Tamil Eelam, the struggle for a separate homeland for the Tamils, the resistance fractured before it could present itself to be a viable opposition for the state.

"All the names I heard as a child, Tigers, TELO, PLOTE, EPDP, EPRLF, EROS, were those of the various Tamil militant groups," Ratnam said. "I was proud of those names."

Pride soon turned into fear as infighting started within the group.

"They [Tamil Tigers] were killing all those who opposed them, one by one," said Manoranjan, who was a member of the National Liberation Front of Tamileelam (NLFT). It was a "small political group" that stood for "socialist revolution" and a group that inevitably was overshadowed by the more violent and menacing Tigers.

"In the early 1980s, you had a streamlining of the [Tamil resistance] groups. The Tigers really consolidated their hegemony as the dominant group and physically eliminated most of its rivals," Wickramasinghe told Al Jazeera.

"The TT consolidated its place quite violently. There wasn't a rallying around in an organic way, it was a battleground for who would become the representative of this movement," she said.

The struggle for Tamil Eelam was quashed in 2009, when, after weeks of intense fighting between the Sri Lankan military and the Tamil Tigers, Velupillai Prabhakaran, the chief Tamil leader was shot and killed by security forces.

'THE FEAR IS READY TO COME BACK'

Almost nine years after the end of the civil war, Sri Lanka is still grappling with its recent past. Many challenges remain unresolved and many of the physical, emotional and psychological wounds of war remain unhealed.

According to Meenakshi Ganguly, Human Rights Watch's South Asia director, successive governments have failed to properly address issues raised by the conflict.

"Immediately after the war, the government led by Mahinda Rajapaksa was unwilling to address concerns around violations of laws of war," she said.

"Those seeking accountability and answers were under severe pressure with the government cracking down on freedom of expression. Those suspected of any connection or sympathy with the Tamil Tigers were subjected to arbitrary arrests, disappearances, and severe torture, including sexual abuse, in custody," Ganguly told Al Jazeera.

In March 2017, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the UN Rights Council that "the consistent failure to effectively investigate, prosecute and punish serious crimes appears to reflect a broader reluctance or fear to take action against members of the security forces."

The current government stresses it has indeed been involved in efforts to address some of the concerns regarding its role in the civil war. In that light, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena appears to contradict key findings from a UN investigation into the country's civil war, released in September 2015.

"Today, in our country, we're asked to move forward, forgetting the past," said Ratnam.

"Almost all traces of the war have been wiped out. Everyone wants to believe the country will develop whatever the means. We are asked to deny our identities in order to move forward. But I know that that fear, which is buried deep inside us is ready to come back to the surface and it could happen at any moment."

Source : Al Jazeera

The World and the "I"

By **CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL**

...Continued from previous issue

WE saw that in experience neither object nor subject, matter nor mind, is ever completely "pure," and that this "impurity" is reflected in language. Therefore the common world and the common ego do not live apart, they interpenetrate. Always, given in the Word, is a certain subjective attitude towards a certain piece of reality. Science, concerned with objective reality, uses words as far as possible so as to eliminate or cancel out the subject : art to build it up.

All experience is organised, is real. There is not just a blur of phenomena, but things separate themselves out into a real spatial world. In the same way feelings are organised, they come to a point in the ego, they have stability and radiate out and have broad drives and homogeneities.

Words therefore cannot just be flung together in a hotchpotch. They must have organisation : express something real – a part of the universe, and a real attitude towards it – a part of the ego.

When we are making a scientific statement, we make it about observable things – observable operations of ordering, observable colours, actions and the like. We assume always there is "someone" doing this ordering and counting. The assumption is so implicit and naive that scientists do not always realise that they are making this assumption and that they are referring everything to one observer. If queried, they will reply that this observer is any "right-thinking person" without explaining what right-thinking person could have so bewildering a range of experience, and maintain so neutral, so admirably judicial an attitude towards it. The scientist has tended to regard this understood observer as just a piece of scaffolding, and to assume that, if it were necessary, the scaffolding could easily be knocked away – it would make no difference to the building. But the latest developments of physics have shown that if this scaffolding is knocked away – nothing is left. The building absolutely depends on the scaffolding for its support. This queer, universal "Mock Ego" of science is illusory and yet necessary: all the reality which science's language symbolises is attached to "him." Only mathematics seems to escape him, and then only because, as we have seen, it escapes from outer reality into the human brain and becomes a mere extension of the Mock Ego's personality. This Mock Ego is not of course taken seriously by scientists. He is appreciated as an abstraction. There is no interest in his life or hobbies.

Now in precisely the same way when poetry – or literary art generally – wishes to "symbolise" the social ego, wishes to convey affective attitudes in an organised way, it is still compelled to make some statement about reality. The emotions are only found in real life adhering to bits of reality; therefore bits of reality – and moreover organised bits – must always be presented to achieve the emotional attitude. But the statement about reality selected for the underlying emotional attitude is not supposed to be about material

reality, any more than science's Mock Ego is supposed to be a real man. It is a mock world; it is an illusion, accepted as such. So, by a long road, we have arrived back at the illusion, the mimesis, which is the essence and puzzle and method of literary art.

This mock ego of science and this mock world of art are both necessary because object and subject are never parted in experience, but engage in the contradiction of an unceasing struggle. Science and art, separated out from mythology by an initial division of labour so that each can be better developed, keeps as a souvenir of separation a kind of scar or blind side like the Norwegian trolls which are hollow behind. This hollowness or blind side is the mock ego of science and the mock world of art. Science and art are like the two halves produced by cutting the original human hermaphrodite in half, according to the story of Aristophanes in Plato's Symposium, so that each half evermore seeks its counterpart. But science and art do not when fitted together make a complete concrete world: they make a complete hollow world – an abstract world only mode solid and living by the inclusion of the concrete living of concrete men, from which they are generated.

That then is the purpose, the social function, of science and art? Why are reared upon this mock world and this mock man a frigid but true image of reality and a phantastic but warm reflection of man's own countenance?

Both are generated as part of the social process: they are social products, and the social product whether material or ideological can have only one goal, that of freedom. It is freedom that man seeks in his struggle with Nature. This freedom, precisely because it cannot be won except by action, is not a freedom of mere contemplation. To attain it a man does not merely relapse into himself – "let himself go." Just as the spontaneity of art is the result of laborious action, so freedom has as its price, not eternal vigilance but eternal labour. Science

and art are guides to action.

(1) Science makes available for the individual a deeper, more complex insight into outer reality. It modifies the perceptual content of his consciousness so that he can move about a world he more clearly and widely understands; and this penetration of reality extends beyond his dead environment to human beings considered objectively, that is, as objects of his action, that is as the anvil to his hammer. Because this enlarged and complex world is only opened up by men in association – being beyond the task of one man – it is a social reality, a world common to all men. Hence its enlargement permits the development of associated men to a higher plane at the same time as it extends the freedom of the individual. It is the consciousness of the necessity of outer reality.

(2) The other world of art, of organised emotion attached to experience, the world of the social ego that endures all and enjoys all and by its experience organises all, makes available in the individual a whole new universe of inner feeling and desire. It exposes the endless potentiality of the instincts and the "heart" by revealing the various ways in which they may adapt themselves to experiences. It plays on the inner world of emotion as on a stringed Instrument. It changes the emotional content of his consciousness so that he can react more subtly and deeply to the world. This penetration of inner reality, because it is achieved by men in association and has a complexity beyond the task of one man to achieve, also exposes the hearts of his fellow men and raises the whole communal feeling of society to a new plane of complexity. It makes possible new levels of conscious sympathy, understanding and affection between men, matching the new levels of material organisation achieved by economic production. Just as in the rhythmic introversion of the tribal dance each performer retired into his heart, into the fountain of his instincts, to share in common with his fellows not a perceptual world but

a world of instinct and blood-warm rhythm, so to-day the instinctive ego of art is the common man into which we retire to establish contact with our fellows. Art is the consciousness of the necessity of the instincts.

(3) It is important to understand that art is no more propaganda than science. That does not mean that neither has a social rôle to perform. On the contrary, their rôle is one which is as it were primary to and more fundamental than that of propaganda: that of changing men's minds. They change men's minds in a special way. Take as an extreme case of science's way of changing man's view of outer reality, a mathematical demonstration. It cannot be said to persuade. A mathematical demonstration appears either true or false: if true, it simply injects itself into our minds as an additional piece of outer reality. If false, we reject it mere word-spinning. But if we accept it, we are no more persuaded of its truth than we are persuaded of the "truth" of a house standing in front of us. We do not accept it: we see it.

In the same way, in art, we are not persuaded of the existence of Hamlet's confusion or Prufrock's seedy world-weariness, we are not persuaded of the existence of Elsinore or Proust's madeline cake. The whole feeling-complex of the poem or the play or the novel is injected into our subjective world. We feel so-and-so and such-and-such. We are no more persuaded of their truth than of the truth of a toothache: but the vividness or social universality of the emotional pattern is announced by the poignancy of the sensation we call Beauty. Music affords an even more striking example of this.

Thus neither Truth nor Beauty are persuasion, just because they are guides to action. Persuasion must be not a guide but a persuasion to action, a pressure to be or do differently. In fact science and art are opposite poles of language, and language has as its main function the rôle of persuasion. It has only evolved these poles

as refinements, as tempered spearheads of the advance of life. Art and science are persuasion become so specialised as to cease to be persuasion, just as in the flower petals the leaves have become so specialised as to cease to fulfil the function of leaves.

Language sucks its life-blood from daily life, and in daily life all conversation which is not informative of outer reality regarded objectively (e.g. of events or the speaker's feelings treated objectively) or of inner reality (e.g. accent, angry or pleased "tones," facial expressions, circumlocutions, manner, polite, curt, surprising or warm phraseology), is rhetorical in the Aristotelian sense, that is, it is designed to persuade others to act in a certain way and feel in a certain way.

Now rhetoric stands in this relation to science and art, that it is not a guide to action on outer reality or on the instincts but is always mixed or counterpointed. Thus in so far as a man already has an instinctive urge to do something in a certain situation, then persuasion is directed to explaining the nature of outer reality so that he will see the necessity of doing the particular things to which we wish to persuade him. On the other hand, if the situation plainly indicates action, our persuasion is directed to arousing the emotional urge to fulfil the action. Thus there is a kind of reversal of the use of words: emotional reasons objective statements are used, but generally both are mixed.

Rhetoric or persuasion is the universal mode of language through which men freely guide and lead each other by appealing to day-to-day activity on the one hand to the necessities of the task, and on the other hand to the demands of the instincts. Rhetoric, too, is rooted in outer reality and the genotype, and because it is more direct, urgent and prosaic it is more primitive everyday. It is the warp and woof of language as an instrument of association, from which science and art separate themselves as more specialised, more organised, more aloof, more abstract and more real and convincing in their special

fields precisely because of their use of those unreal and illusory scaffoldings, the mock ego and the mock world.

That persuasion can be used to mislead, that rhetoric can be empty and hypocritical, is merely to repeat in another form the well-known facts that truth and error both exist and that man makes mistakes. It does not invalidate persuasion as such. Science can be false, art trite, persuasion hypocritical or misleading; as society develops historically, the false persuasion emerges from the true.

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We see, then, that language communicates not simply a dead image of outer reality but also and simultaneously an attitude towards it, and does so because all experience, all life, all reality emerges consciously in the course of man's struggle with Nature. This image of outer reality and this ego do not confront each other stonily across a chasm; they emerge from and return again into concrete living; they are the results of a dialectic development. Between them is the bridge of matter. Both are built on the soil which connects body and environment. The very nature of language is a proof of that interpenetration. Art and science therefore, through the means of social action, mediated by persuasion, continually play into each other's hands. Because man's life is educed from present reality by the contradiction between man and Nature, outer reality and inner feeling by this very contradiction mutually develop each other and themselves.

Poetry, like the human life of which it is an examination, springs from the fruitful quarrel of mathematics and music.

1. The distinction between the affective and rational significance of words is of course an old one. Hindoo philosophy recognised the "dhvana" or hidden meaning of words as characteristic of poetry. Dante distinguished between signum rationale and signum sensuale, which in turn was based on a division recognised by William of Occam. Milton's well-known definition of poetry as simple, sensuous, and passionate was no doubt influenced by this conception. Ogden's and Richards' analysis of meaning is based on a distinction between the symbolic and emotive meaning of words.

2. One hesitates to use the word mind, which is so confusedly treated by most philosophers and psychologists. Probably the most consistent use of the word is that of gestalt psychology. Of any conscious field, mind consists of those elements most closely adherent to the sensory or subjective pole. Idealist philosophers use the word mind more loosely. All phenomena are counted as mental because they form part of conscious fields, and since all objects are only known as phenomena, all objects are counted as mental. Thus the idealist reduces Reality to "Mind," and since he knows phenomena as part of his conscious field, Reality is only "his mind."

3. In particular, Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy and the conflict of quantum physics with relativity physics.

to be continued...
Courtesy—Illusion and Reality