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Dear Reader :

Namaste !

Thanks to British-inspired propaganda, even our own history books talk of the "Aryan invasion of India". Dr. N.R. Warhadpande in a well-documented article exposes the falsity of this propaganda. Dr. N.R. is a retired psychologist from the Defence Ministry.

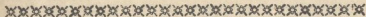
Shri Ramaswamy does a valuable piece on the criminal exploitation of our forests and forest-dwellers.

And then there is a report on a long chat with a group of bright young men of Aligarh Muslim University.

We also carry a review of M.J. Akbar's 'Nehru—the Making of India'. Akbar claims in this book that "Kamala was the only woman he truly loved". And now, comes a refutation from no less a person than Sarojini Naidu; "You know he has no heart He treated Kamala very badly...I feel sure His neglect shortened her life." (Tara Ali Baig : 'Portrait of an Era', published by Roli Books Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi).

Brotherly yours,

'M'



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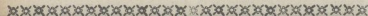
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Vedic Literature and Indus-Valley Belong to the same Civilization

By : Dr. N.R. Waradpande

IT IS frequently asserted that the Vedic literature, read in the context of the excavations of the Indus valley civilization, provides evidence of Aryan Invasion of India.

How far is this true ?

The Indus Valley civilization is so called because the first excavations of the civilization were made in the Indus Valley. But subsequent excavations have revealed that the civilization was not confined to the Indus valley, it extended from the Oxus in the north west to the Yamuna in the east and the Narmada in the south. Nevertheless I prefer to stick to the name "Indus Valley civilization" first because it is in usage, and secondly though not secondarily—because the Hindu civilization, which has characterized India for thousands of years, itself derives its name 'from the Indus. The word Indus Valley civilization, therefore, has an appropriate suggestiveness.

The most striking feature of the Indus Valley civilization is town planning. A town of five kilometers perimeter has been found at Mohenjo-daro. It is surrounded by a wall built on a brick-plinth. The remains of bastions made of fire-baked bricks have also been found. Nine-metre-wide roads, covered drainage, public baths, houses with wells of their own, pillared assembly halls and labour-lines are some other features of these excavations.

One may wonder what all this has to do with the "Aryan Invasion". But some western scholars hold that these cities seem to have been deliberately destroyed and the description of India as "wall-breaker"—Purandar—in the Vedas indicates that they have been destroyed by the "invading Aryans".

Ancient relics unearthed by excavations are necessarily in a battered and decadent state, whether they are found in India or anywhere else. Why should then only the Indian relics be blamed on destruction by Indra ? Why should Indra not be charged with destroying all the ancient cities in the world and the "Aryans" emanating from India be said to have conquered them ?

Examining the references to the wall-breaking by Indra we find the following :

1

"Oh Ashvins, let us enjoy your protection. With your grace Saptavadhri broke the captive box which dragged and confined him, as if within walls." (R 8/73/18)

This hymn uses the phrase "Krshnaya Visha". The word "Krishna" often means black and therefore Western scholars feel that they have found their heart-throb here. But the phrase "Krshnaya Visha" does not refer to any black people here. The allusion is to the story where the Asuras shut up the sage Atreya Saptavadhri in a box which, like a python, used to drag and swallow its prey. The adjective "Krshnaya Visha" describes this power of the box. Atreya Saptavadhri, in this predicament, invoked the Ashvins for his release. The Ashvins thereupon enabled him to break open the box and come out.

Here the word "Pura" meaning wall is used as a simile for the wall of the box. It has nothing to do with the castles of the "non-Aryans."

2

"Brahmahaspti, at the back of the Pura pulled up from the ocean, the dawn, the sun and the waters. He found the speech could resound the heavens." (R. 10/87/5)

It is very difficult to be sure what the poet wants to say but for our limited purpose, this is not necessary. The hymn definitely talks about cosmic events like pulling out the dawn etc. It is therefore futile to read in it any historical events like attacks on the "non-Aryan" forts.

3

"Oh Indra, in battle after battle, you destroyed the Puras. With your respected associates you subdued Namuchi who had magic powers, in a far off land." (R. 1/53/5)

Here the adjective "Mayavi" i.e. having magic powers, indicates that Namuchi was not a man since this adjective is normally used for demons. The subduing of Namuchi took place in a far off locale Paravatu, and not in the Saptasindhu country, and in remote times, Pura. This suggests that it is a mythological and not a historical event.

4

"Oh Indra, you killed Parnaya and Karanja with the lustrous power of Atithigva. You broke the hundred Puras of Vanguda when they were besieged by Rjishvan." (R. 1/53/8)

Indra was a rain-god. All his deeds are super-human and some of them may have been referred to in this hymn. But since the words as they stand do not necessarily indicate anything superhuman, the temptation

to read historical events in them cannot be ruled out as baseless. Even so there is nothing in the hymn which can be considered as an allusion to the "Aryan invasion". The hymn does not say that Karanja, Parnaya, and Vanguda were Indian natives, whereas Rgishvan and Atithigva were foreign invaders. There is nothing against supposing that the war between Rgishvan and Atithigva on the one hand and Karanja, Parnaya and Vanguda on the other, was an internecine war. That the victorious side was invoking Indra does not imply that the losing side was not. That Aurangzeb was a devotee of Allah does not imply that his brothers, who were also contenders for the Mughal throne, were not.

5

"Oh Indra, you battered the moving Pura of Shushna. This added to your lustre and you became even more invokable." (R. 8/1/28)

Here the "Pura" battered by Indra is said to be moving and therefore is not obviously a non-Aryan fort. "Shushna" means drier or sucker. The non-raining cloud is as if a front of the sucker who does not allow even a drop to ooze out. It is this moving front of Shushna which Indra batters and brings rain.

Vedic light on Indus Valley Civilization

DOZENS of references in the Rig Veda clearly indicate that the "Puras" were built by the Vedic people for their own protection; they were not the forts of their enemies. "This fire illuminates the Narminipura, i.e. the Pura of ease and comfort, NARMA. He is far-seeing and far-moving. He is lustrous like the sun and assumes many forms." (R.1/14/3). Sayana explains that the "Pura" here is Uttarvedi Kurukshetra. Kurukshetra was the heartland of Vedic civilization. "The fire illuminated Narminipura" means that it was kindled there in several sacrifices. Those who construe this to mean that the "Aryans" burnt Narminipura—a city of the "non-Aryans"—may as well say that "Divali lamps illuminated the whole country" means that "Divali burnt the whole country."

That Narminipura was illuminated by sacrificial fires unmistakably shows that it was a Vedic city and not a city of any "non-Aryans."

This is confirmed by the following :—

"Oh fire, those who kindle you with offerings protect their manhood. They enter a strong Pura." (R. 6/6/23).

The word "Panti" in this hymn clearly shows that the entry into the Pura is for ones own protection and not for destroying it. Sayana quotes the lines: "Protect us by a hundred strong Puras" in order to emphasize this meaning.

"Oh Indra, satisfy our desire for sons and cattle, who are like Puras (R. 8/6/23). Being exhilarated by Soma, you give cows and horses which are like protective Puras, walls." (8/32/3) "Oh children and sacrificers, offer worship to the confident and brave Indra who is a protector like a Pura" (8/69/8) "Oh fire, you are like a Pura, we meditate on you frequently." (R. 10/87/22) "Oh Apam Napat, let not a foreigner, nongiver, and untruth force our Pura fortifications of raw bricks." (Rs. 2/35/6)

Here the word Pura is used figuratively to indicate a power that protects from the enemy, greed and evil traits

Examining all the references to Puras leaves one in no doubt that the Puras were primarily designed for the protection of the Vedic people. Most of the references to the breaking of the "Puras" are in connection with non-human deeds, and there the word "Pura" is used figuratively. There is not a word to indicate that the breakers of the Puras were non-Indians.

It is said that the excavations reveal the following two pieces of evidence indicating that the Indus civilization was wilfully destroyed:

(1) "Burnt wheat and palm-seeds have been found in some places. Similarly no doors have been found anywhere. This shows that the doors, like the wheat and palm-seeds, were burnt by invaders."

Fire breaks out in almost every city quite frequently and burnt wheat or seeds can be found almost anywhere. No doors are found even in the Red Forts of Delhi and Agra. But it is known that these forts were never wilfully destroyed by anybody. It is too much to expect that wooden doors of an uninhabited building buried in moist alluvial soil, will remain intact for five thousand years, specially if they have been washed away by floods. According to one view, some of the Indus civilization cities have been destroyed by floods. A big river like the Indus changes its course frequently and swallows big cities. Another cause of the defunctness of these cities is the drying up of the Sarasvati. Some of the cities of the Indus civilization have been found on the banks of the Sarasvati. These cities were abandoned when the Sarasvati waters became grossly insufficient. Abandoned cities are bound to be found only as historical relics.

(2) "The skeleton of a delimbed woman has been found on a staircase. On the ground some skeletons of children and women wearing ornaments have also been recovered. This shows that these persons were massacred in battle. Had they been massacred by dacoits, the ornaments would have been taken away."

The notion that only dacoits take away ornaments and soldiers never do so, is naive in the extreme. Many school-books on History contain a picture of a British soldier snatching away the necklace of Tippu Sultan.

Moreover, there is no firm basis to suppose that the skeletons found are those of persons killed by weapons. That some skeletons are not intact proves nothing. The skeletons are not those of bodies carefully laid in coffins; they are of persons running for life. The probability that they will remain intact is remote.

Too few bodies and hardly any arms found in Mohen-jo-Daro

It is reasonable to suppose that the skeletons are of people trying to run away from sudden floods. Even if it is conceded that some of them are of people killed by weapons, there is nothing to indicate that this was the work of the invading "Aryans". The Indus civilization extended over thousands of miles. It is not likely that it was knit by a single government and there were no internecine wars among them. Incidentally very few skeletons, and hardly any weapons have been found in Mohen-jo-Daro.

In fact it can not be maintained that the Indus civilization itself, as distinct from a few of its cities, has ceased to exist. The difference between the Hindu civilization and the Indus civilization is easily explained by the lapse of 5000 years. Hindu civilization today is a continuation of the Vedic civilization and so was the Indus civilization, as will be clear in the sequel. One does not expect that scientific and ideological developments and contact with other civilizations will leave the Vedic civilization as it was in the days of the (Rigveda). The gap between the Hindu and the Vedic is not so wide as to make it necessary to postulate a foreign occupation in between them.

The main feature of the Indus civilization viz town-planning is so deeply ingrained in the Hindu mind that it shows itself even after the cataclysmic Turk/Afghan/Mongol/Mughal invasions. The Mughals built Taj Mahals, but their towns remained a stuffy conglomeration of lanes and

by-lanes. Delhi and Agra cannot vie with Vijayanagar and Jaipur as examples of town-planning.

That the Indians of today are the direct descendants of the Indus civilization people is proved by the 325 human skeletons found in the excavations. These skeletons have been examined by anthropologists. These experts conclude that the skeletons do not belong to any of the postulated racial types. Says A. Ghosh: "Cephalic index shows that the skeletons found in Mohenjodaro are like those of modern Sindhis and those found in Lothal are like those of modern Gujaratis." In sum, even 5000 years have not changed the racial composition of the people of the cities of the Indus civilization. If the "Aryans"—a people supposed to be of a different race—had invaded and supplanted the civilization, this could have hardly happened.

The notion that there are references to the Aryan invasion of the Indus civilization in the Rigveda assumes that the Indus civilization is older than the Rigveda. This assumption was initially supported by the absence of the skeleton of a horse in the excavations, whereas the horse figures principally in the Vedas. But the subsequent unearthing of horse-skeletons has knocked out whatever plausibility this argument had.

Not only this. The excavations have brought to light evidence to prove that the Vedas are older than the Indus civilization. Cotton has been excavated. The Vedas, on the other hand are silent on cotton. Wool, and not cotton, was used to filter *soma*, as is clear from the expression "Aver Vareshu", through sheep's hair. The other type of cloth known to the Vedas is flax. Maitrayani Samhita (111/6/7) mentions flax with the word *Kshowmi*. The more you wash flax, the more it shines. When the use of flax became rarer and silk came into vogue, silk also was called "*Kshowma*" because of this quality. The "*Atasi*" or linseed plant from which flax is made is mentioned several times in the Rigveda. When wool and flax have been mentioned, the complete silence on cotton can reasonably be attributed to its absence.

Goldstucker and Egeling see in the word "Tarpya" (Atharva Veda 25/23) a reference to silk. Silk was invented in China around 2640 B.C. So if these scholars are correct, Atharva Veda can not be earlier than this. The upper limit of the Indus civilization is 2800 B.C. Moreover, the Rig Veda mentions "Ayas" i.e. iron. The Indus civilization knew copper. It refers to copper swords and bronze, but seems to be unaware of iron. According to these scholars this proves that Rig Veda is posterior to the Indus civilization.

This argument is wrong, first because Vedic literature was composed over a period of more than a thousand years. The posteriority of

the entire Vedic literature cannot therefore be inferred from the posteriority of the Atharva Veda. Secondly there is no basis to construe "Tarpya" as silk. The commentators of the Shrouta Sutras and the Shatapatha Brahmana derive "Tarpya" from the plant "Trpa" or "Triparna". Apte's dictionary gives Kimshuka as an equivalent of "Triparna". In any case "Tarpya" is a Botanical and not a Zoological product. That "Trpa" plant is not a cotton plant is also obvious. The commentators referred to above also opine that "Tarpya" may be nothing other than flax.

Rig Veda (1/88/5) describes fire as "*ayodantra*". R. 5/62/8 describes the chariot-seat of Mitra and Varuna as "*Ayasthuna*" or *ayas*-pillared. If these similes are based on colour, they become appropriate if "Ayas" is translated as bronze, because it is an alloy with copper, a red metal. Chariots can become more durable with the use of bronze instead of pure copper.

The Vajasneyi Samhita mentions "Ayas" with five other metals thus: (1) Hiranya (2) Ayas (3) Shyama (4) Loha (5) Sheesh and (6) Trapu. Here Shyama meaning black must be iron. Loha/Lohita etc. meaning red must be construed as copper. The remaining Ayas must therefore be bronze. Atharva Veda (11/3/7/1) describes two kinds of "Ayas" viz.

Indus Valley Civilization is part of the Vedic Sarasvati Civilization

"Shyama" and "Lohit" Ayas. Here also "Shyama" must mean iron and "Lohitayas" may mean bronze alloyed with a large amount of copper. Shatapatha Brahman 5/4/1/2 distinguishes between "Ayas" and "Lohitayas". Here "Ayas" may mean bronze alloyed with a small amount of copper.

Thus Rig Veda, like the Indus civilization, is pre-iron.

According to some western scholars, script is not known to the Rig Veda. It is true that script and writing are nowhere clearly mentioned in the Rig Veda. On the other hand pieces of writing have been found in the Indus excavations. It is reasonable to suppose that a period which knows writing must be posterior to a period which does not. It therefore follows that the Rig Veda must be anterior to the Indus civilization.

In the face of this, Burrow says that the Indians knew the art of writing at the time of the Indus civilization, but they forgot it by the time the Rig Veda came to be composed!

That the Rig Veda is anterior to the Indus civilization is indicated by another archaeological evidence, viz. the discovery of the beds of Saras-

vati. Sarasvati dried up thousands of years ago and this has given rise to the traditional belief that it is invisible or has been swallowed by the Vinashan Teertha. But Ghosh and Hussain of the Central Arid Zone Research Institute have discovered its ancient beds after laborious explorations. The relics of Harappa have been found on the banks of some of these beds. According to Ghosh and Hussain, these beds were live before 1800 B. C. Sarasvati is the most important river in the Rig Veda. So the Rig Veda can not possibly be later than 1800 B. C.

Ghosh and Hussain have further provided grounds for supposing that the Rig Vedic descriptions of Sarasvati meeting the sea are older still. They have discovered the bed of the ocean-going Sarasvati also. These beds, according to them, are thousands of years older than 1800 B. C. This lends credence to the view of Jacobi and Tilak that the Rig Veda goes back to 4000 B. C.

The assertion that the excavation of the Indus civilization have proved that the Vedic literature as a whole is posterior to it is totally baseless. On the contrary the excavations have unearthed evidence to show that the earliest portions of Vedic literature are more than a thousand years older than the Indus civilization and it is simply impossible that the Rig Veda should contain references to the destruction of the Indus civilization.

It is generally not denied that the geography of the Rigveda is wholly Indian. But sometimes attempts are made to deny this. Sarasvati, accordingly, is said to be not the Indian Sarasvati but the Sarasvati of the Avesta or a heavenly and not a terrestrial river at all. But the river hymn clearly mentions the rivers in the following order:

Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Shutudri (or Sutlej) Parishni (or Ravi) Asikni (or Chinab), Marudvrdha (or the parent river of the Chinab) Vitasta (or the Jhelum), Arjikeeya (or the parent river of the Jhelum, and Sushoma, (a tributary of the Arjikeeya)". (10/75/5)

The rivers have been mentioned in the order east to west. So the Sarasvati of the Rig Veda is undoubtedly the Sarasvati between Yamuna and the Sutlej.

It has thus far been shown that Vedic literature does not, and cannot, contain any references to the destruction of the Indus civilization.

Now let us see whether there are any grounds to suppose that the civilizations appearing in the Vedic literature and the excavations are different. In doing this only the identifications accepted in the reports of the

excavations have been used I have not suggested any identifications on my own.

THE EXCAVATIONS have unearthed some figurines, which are regarded as those of the deities worshipped in the Indus civilization. These figurines are on clay-seals. The figures are nude and some of them have horns on their heads. One deity has three horns. A one-horned figure has also been found. Ox, rivers, the peepal tree and the elephant are some of the objects of worship. Phallus and ring-shaped objects have also been found.

There is a figure of a woman standing on her head, a tree emanating from her vagina. In one figure, a woman is standing with folded hands, a man standing by brandishing his scythe. One seal displays the figure of a monkey. An archer wearing a black garment, with a protective cover on his face and horns on his head, is displayed on another. A figure resembling goddess Durga has also been found. The figures of bulls show their genitals prominently.

Similar modes of worship in the Veda and on the Indus

Squares resembling the sacrificial pit, a swastika and a wheel resembling the one of Vishnu are some other important finds.

Almost all these deities and modes of worship are found in Vedic literature. "Oh, sharp-horned Brahmanaspati, come, destroying the foetus-eating, impoverishing foes." (R 10/155/2)

"This Indra is roaring like a sharp-horned bull in a herd of cows." (R 10/86/5). "Like a sharp-horned bull, this Indra destroys the enemies by himself". (7/19/1). "This ox has three udders and three mouths" (Tryanak). (3/56/3). This humped bull is rejoicing. This brawny and active calf is roaring." (10/8/2)

The one-horned figure is probably that of Vishnu in the form of a boar.

The Vrishakapi hymn mentions a monkey as a deity. "The soma-sacrificer regards Vrishakapi and not Indra, as god. Vrishakapi is intoxicated by soma. (10/86/1) "Oh, Indra what spell does this brown monkey hold for you? You shower wealth on him." (R. 10/86/3)

That phallus-worship was one of the Vedic practices can be inferred from the fact that Vishnu was called Shipivishta. (7/100/6)

Shipivishta means phallus-like. This indicates that Vishnu was worshipped in the form of a phallus. The bull and his fertilizing power are often uninhibitedly praised. The monkey-god Vrushakapi is extolled as Vrusha i.e. oozing (semen). The inhibitions about genital organs which characterize modern society are absent in Vedic literature. As an example 10/86/16/17 may be seen. Thus the Vedic literature provides no basis for supposing that the Vedic people frowned upon phallus-worship.

The Rig Veda holds the Indus and the Saraswati in veneration. There are two entire hymns addressed to Saraswati. This is quite in line with the fact that some of the venerable objects in the Indus civilization were rivers. Atharva Veda 8/10/29 and Panchavinshati Brahmana 25/11/3 refer to the Ashvins. The Airavata could be the famous elephant on Indra. R 10/97/5 refers to Fucus Religiosa or the "Peepal" as a repository of medicine and wealth.

The figure showing the emanation of a tree from the vagina is obviously that of mother earth symbolizing her fertility. It is not possible to depict a tree emanating from the vagina without inverting the figure. "Varuna wears lustre on the top, his branches are below. Let the banners of these branches be always in our heart." (1/24/7) The word Varuna is derived from the root Vr, to cover, and the all-covering sky is the physical form of Varuna. The sky is also called Dyows. Dyavaparthivi or the sky-earth is one of the twin deities of the Rig Veda. The earth is complementary to the sky, the sky has its head above and branches below, the earth on the other hand, has her head below and branches above. This complementary nature has been depicted in the above figure.

The figure of the sacrificial female victim is in line with the human sacrifices mentioned in Vedic literature. The Shatapatha Brahmana describes how Shunashep was tied to the sacrificial post as an offering. The Vajasneyi Samhita 30/16 gives a list of those who are acceptable as human victims in a sacrifice. Human offerings were made to the goddess earth. It is for this reason that a picture of a human offering is imprinted behind that of the mother earth.

The figure of the bark-clad horned archer may be that of god Shiva, in the form of a hunter, "Kirata". The Svastika is regarded as an "Aryan" sign by the Germans. The worship of the wheel figures in the Rig Veda. The year is described as a twelve spoked wheel. (1/164/11). The wheel-weapon of Vishnu is well-known to all.

The find of a sacrificial pit knocks out the bottom of those who maintain that the Indus civilization was non-Vedic.

Durga, Vishnu's incarnation as a boar, etc., are Pauranic. According to one view the Puranas were composed by the Aryans after absorbing some features of the Indus civilization. But this view requires evidence other than the excavations and the Vedic literature. These two by themselves do not provide any basis for it. Confining ourselves to the excavations and the Vedic literature, we can not easily escape the conclusion that the mode of worship reflected in both is the same.

HARAPPA points to the following types of funerals: (1) burying the whole body, (2) putting the bones in a vessel and burying the vessel, (3) burning the body, collecting the remains and building a tomb on it.

Three skeletons, indicating the first practice and vessels, tables and chairs along with them, have been found. In the second practice the body is exposed for the birds to feast on—just like the Parsis to this day—

Common modes of disposal of the dead

It is reduced to bones and then put in an urn and buried. Hundreds of such urns are found to have been buried in the compound of the house itself. The third practice consisted of cremation, keeping the ashes and bone remains in a wide-mouthed vessel along with jewels and bracelets and burying the vessel near the door.

A five-roomed cemetery has been found at Dambasuthi. In every room the remains of corpses have been found in stone-squares.

So few skeletons, whether in vessels or without have been found that cremation seems to have been the usual method of disposal, and burial, exceptional.

The funerals referred to in the Vedic literature are similar. R. 10/11/14 talks of burning and non-burning funerals. Atharva Veda gives two more: (1) thrown away, Paropita, and (2) exposed or Udhita bodies. Zimmer regards the first as the same as the Parsi custom of exposing the corpses to the birds and the second is abandoning an old dying man to die in the open. (R. 8/5/2) According to Whitney, Udhita is not a living man that was left in the open, but a corpse placed on a platform for display.

R. 10/18 describes the ritual of burial. There are indications that the corpse was fully dressed and held a bow in his hand. Atharva Veda 17/7/35/3/7 mentions a coffin. Sayana maintains that the burial is not that of a corpse but of an urn containing its bones.

The Chandogya Upanishad refers to the practice of adorning the dead body with ornaments. (8/8/5)

Thus the Vedic literature, like the Indus Valley excavations, gives evidence of both cremation and burial. The Greeks also practised both.

3000 inscriptions have been found in the excavations. These are mostly on terra cotta. Some are on vessels and copper-plates. Some consist of only one letter. One has 26 letters and three lines. A figure of a bull is found with a three-lettered inscription.

There is no agreement among research workers about the script and the language of the inscriptions. But Roy and Gidvani in their Bibliographical essay on the Indus civilization have mentioned 12 readings as the most important. Out of these, six hold the language to be Indo-European i.e. a language similar to Sanskrit. The reading of B. Hrozny is of special importance because he deciphered the Asia-minor inscription, in the absence of any bi-scriptural clue. His reading is universally accepted and has now been confirmed by a piece of bi-scriptural writing. Hrozny had no doubt that the writings are in an Indo-European language and mention the deities worshipped by the Indo-Europeans (Aryans). Later Gadd supported this opinion and said that the Indus script was the precursor of the Brahmi Mohen-jo-daro. His vol. III contains photostats of the Indus inscriptions. Experts hold that some of the letters in them are Brahmi. S.R. Rao reads the names of "Aryan" deities in the inscriptions. Mitchenev called the language Indo-Aryan. Sudhanshu Kumar Roy, who is not mentioned by Roy and Gidvani but who was honoured by the Watumal Foundation with an award for reading the Indus script, holds that the language is Sanskrit-like and mentions Aryan names like Dasheratha.

In sum, the reading that regards the Indus inscriptions as some form of Indo-European, mentioning Indo-European deities, can count on more advocates than any other reading.

Gold/copper/silver ornaments and jewels were worn in the Indus civilization. Women wore a fan-shaped ornament on their head. A gold or silver band seems to adorn the head. Ear-rings made of gold/silver wires, necklaces of gold/silver/jewels, rings in fingers, copious gem-studded bracelets and anklets were in fashion.

Women tied their hair in a bow, on the back. Men wore long hair, tied at the back, with a parting line in the middle. Beards were common.

Cosmetics like collyrium, powder, a kind of rouge, lipstick and a green-coloured clay-ball have been found.

Two garments were worn: one like a dhoti and the other like a shawl on the left shoulder going through the right arm-pit. Needles for sewing cloth have been found.

Hand-loom have been found in some houses.

The find of a metal mirror shows that the art of making glass-mirrors was not known.

R. 1/173/6 speaks of Indra bearing the sky like his Opasha. "Indra made the earth move by touching his Opasha to the sky." (R. 8/24/5) Sinivali is described in the Yajurved as Vasopasha or of luxurious hair. Thus 'Opasha' designated the hair-do of both men and women.

Same dresses, some ornaments same languages, same gods

"Oh fire, reach the heavens with your heavenly Stupa." (R. 7/1/1) "Varuna holds his matted hair in the bottomless sky." (R. 1/24/7)

All these descriptions show that both men and women wore long hair.

Beards are also referred to. "Oh Indra, come again and again to drink soma, showing your delight by your shaking beard" (R. 2/11/17), "Indra is entangled in the dishevelled hair of his beard, moustache and head" (8/33/6), "Indra is in a high place moving his beard" (R. 10/23/1), Rain follows when Indra moistens the beards of Maruts etc. along with his own by the soma juice, (R. 10/23/4) "Indra is moving his beard with ease." (R. 10/26/9)

Indra is thus mainly described as bearded. The bearded deity found at Mohen-jo-daro may therefore be Indra.

Not all the Vedic people kept beards, as is shown by the line: "Oh fire, like a barber shaving off a beard, you go about shaving off the forests." (R. 10/14/4)

The following ornaments are mentioned : (R. 10/72/2) and R. 8/78/3 refer to Karna-Shobhana i.e. ear-ornament. Atharva Veda 6/38/3 mentions Kumba. Taittiriya Samhita 4/1/5/3 mentions Kurcer as the head-ornament of women. R. 5/54/11 describes Maruts as wearing chains on their feet and necklaces on the chest.

The word Drapi occurs in R. 1/125/13, 116/10-4/2-9/86/14, 100, 9. Sayana construes this to mean armour, but Varuna in 1/25/13 and Savita in 4/53/2 is not dressed for battle. Why should they wear an armour? The "worn out wear" in 116 cannot be armour. Armour is made of metal and the adjective "worn out" does not quite fit in with it. The Pavamana or flowing soma in 9/100/9 has no reason to wear an armour. So the word Drapi can be more justifiably rendered as skirt. Similarly the word Shamulya in R. 10/85/89 on the basis of the references in the Jaimineya Brahmana has been rendered as woollen shirt by Keith and Macdonell. This points to the use of sewn garments.

The word Neevi in Atharva Veda 8/2/16 and Paridhan in the very next hymn points to the use of a lower garment like the dhoti.

Kathaka Samhita 23/1 and Taittiriya Brahman 1/5/6/6 and Shatapatha Brahmana 2/6/4/5 mention Shalali, the feather of a porcupine used for parting the hair and applying cosmetics to the eye.

Maitrayani Samhita, according to Geldner, Shatapatha Brahmana 5/4/5/27 and Taittiriya Brahmana 1/8/2/3 mention Prakasha, a metal mirror.

Some kitchens of the Indus civilization have been unearthed. They indicate that goats, oxen, pigs, hens, fish etc. were eaten. Wheat, rice, barley, dates and milk constituted the main meal.

Vajasneyee Samhita 18/12 mentions Vrechi i. e. rice. The later Samhitas mention Neevar i. e. wild rice. Yava barley or corn and their fried form Dhana are mentioned in the Rig Veda 1/66/2, 13, 8, 2/3/8-1/18/2-3/34/3. Dhana also means any grain. The word Godhuma for wheat occurs in Maitrayani Samhita 1/2/8. Milk is mentioned with the words Ksheera, Go and Payas. (R. 1/109/3, 164/7)

Shatapatha Brahmana 3/4/1,2 enjoins the killing of a big goat for a guest. All the animal victims offered to the gods, like sheep, goats, oxen were evidently eaten. Man will not offer to the gods anything which he regards unfit for his own consumption.

Atharvaved 3/5/6 mentions a fisherman and 10/4/99 (ibid) refers to the fish Karvar caught by a fisherman Pownjishtha. Vajasneyee Samhita 30/16 and Taittiriya Brahman 3/8 mentions Dash, Kaivarta/Pownjishtha and Mainal, all meaning a fisherman, as fit victims in a human sacrifice.

A figure of a ship with masts has been found at Mohen-jo-daro. One of the ships carries two birds. S. R. Rao maintains that Lothal has a dock suitable for anchoring large ships. Some earthenware in Harappa bear the figure of a ship. One seal bears a boat made of reeds. Its masts are clearly seen. This boat resembles the ships of ancient Mesopotamia.

The Vedic literature provides ample evidence of sea-faring. King Tugra sent his son Bhujyu with an army against an enemy across the sea. His ship was engulfed by a storm. So Bhujyu prayed to the Ashvins. The pleased Ashvins rescued him in their boat and brought him back to his father after three days and three nights. (R. 1/1/16, 3/117, 5/119)

The boat of Bhujyu was navigating a sea which had no harbour or a place to anchor. This boat had a hundred oars. R. 6/62/6 speaks of birds guiding the course of the boat. The word 'Patatri' in the second line stands

Ship-building and sea-faring in the Vedas and in the Indus Valley

for masts, 'Patatra' or wings of the ship meaning sails. The sails did not have even a particle of dust 'Arenubhih', so far were they from land. 'Patatri' cannot be construed to mean birds, because birds are already mentioned in the first line. Moreover the 'Patatras' are spoken of as tied-Yojanebhih. This is not applicable to the birds. 7/69/7 talks of the 'Patatris' as wear-proof, 'Astridha', and damage-proof, 'Avyathi'. These adjectives are also indicative of masts.

The ancient mariners used birds for knowing the direction. These birds were known as 'Dishakaka' or direction-crows. The birds can detect land, from a considerable distance and when released, they fly towards it. The migratory birds which fly in specific direction in specific seasons also serve to guide the ship.

The mention of masts and the necessity of using birds for finding land, point to vessels going to the high seas, in Vedic times.

The Baveru Jatak also reports a similar use of birds. The Jataka narrates that some traders reached Baveru (Babylon?) with the help of such birds. The Baveruans had never seen such birds. The traders therefore sold some of these birds to them for 100 "Khanas".

Reading the Vedic literature in the context of the Indus civilization excavations, affords not a shred of evidence of any "Aryan invasion". On the contrary, the excavations provide evidence to show that a considerable portion of the Mantra and Brahman literature is older than the Indus civilization. The Chandogya Upanishad and the later Vedic literature is later than the latest phase of the Indus civilization. The excavations do not provide any basis for regarding the Indus civilization as non-Vedic. □

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A Long Chat with Some Bright Young Men of Aligarh Muslim University

On Feb. 5, the Students Islamic Organisation of India, Aligarh Muslim University unit, held a Symposium on "National Integration: Theory and Practice". The SIO is the student front of Jamaat-i-Islami.

Speakers included Sarva Shri Yunus Saleem, former Union Deputy Law Minister, Prof. Sanghasen Singh of Delhi University, Javed Ali, former General Secretary of SIO, and K.R. Malkani. Dr. F.R. Fareedi, formerly of Riyadh University, presided. It was a very fruitful exchange of ideas.

After the Symposium, several students met Shri Malkani and put to him any number of questions. These questions threw much light on the thinking of bright young, religious-minded Muslims—their hopes, their understanding of history, their perception of the Indian reality. Here we publish the substance of this informal Question-Answer session.

—Ed.

Q. Don't you think Islam made a great contribution to world civilization?

A. I will not call this contribution "Islamic", in the religious sense. However, it is a fact that when Arabs and Turks became Muslims and occupied many lands, their armies carried the arts and sciences of one country to many others. There was, therefore, a great cross-fertilization of cultures and spread of knowledge, industry and commerce. This could even be described as "Pax Islamica".

I also believe that the beginnings of the modern western civilization lie in the Middle East. It was the Christian crusaders from Europe, who saw the wealth and industry of Palestine and learnt and spread these arts and ideas in the West. Europe was never the same again.

Muslim armies were only carriers of old cultures. But their very act of international communication proved creative, radical, historic.

Q. Do you think Muslims did not make any contribution to India?

A. I have never said that. Nobody has. We excoriated British rule. But the British also did many desirable things in India.

When Islam spread over vast stretches, they carried the arts and sciences of India, Arabia, Iran, Greece, Egypt etc. far and wide. In this process there was much inter-mingling of cultures. The *Surahi*, the *tandoor*

the *biryani*, the red rose, the bazar, the big city, the army camp, even the zamindari and jagirdari systems, are some of the innumerable things introduced during the Muslim period. But there was also tremendous destruction and infinite cruelty. Please read the Muslim historians and you will know what happened.

We all admire the Taj; but how about the countless great temples destroyed? When Mahmud Ghazni was marching on Mathura, he was so bewitched by the beauty of golden domes and shikharas glistening in the morning sun, that he ordered the whole army to stop and admire it, before, he said, he destroyed it. And destroy and loot it, he did. (Al-Biruni, a historian brought to India by Mahmud Ghazni, writes that "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country and performed those wonderful exploits by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims.")

Today there is not one ancient great temple standing anywhere in India, except in the far South. Akbar tried to heal these wounds; Aurangzeb reopened those wounds. And the tragedy is that many Muslims today criticise Akbar and praise Aurangzeb. The regret is that many Muslim brethren even today overlook this titanic tragedy. They are not prepared to condemn those scourges of mankind—or right their wrongs, even symbolically. There is gross insensitivity in the matter.

Q. *Hindus describe the Aryan invasion as the "advent of Aryans" but they describe the incoming of Arabs, Turks or Mongols as "invasion". Why?*

A. Because people have been moving from one area to another; people have been coming into India and moving out of India; but there never was any such things as "Aryan invasion" of India. "Aryan invasion" is only a theory, propounded by British historians in the last century, to justify British rule in India.

They wanted to justify the foreign rule of Britain by saying that Turks who had ruled India were also foreign. And to bolster this argument, they claimed that Aryans who ruled India were also foreign.

There is no evidence—historical, literary, archaeological or any other—about any such "invasion". The Indus Valley civilization is supposed to be pre-Aryan and pre-Vedic. But you have the same ancient Gods—Shiva, Kali etc.—in Mohen-jo-Daro, the same foods, the same dress, the same havan-kunds. The cephalic index on the shape of the skull

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shows that Mohen-jo-Daro people had the same type of skull as modern Sindhis—and Lothal people, the same skull type as the modern Gujaratis. So much for the "Aryan invasion".

Please don't try to explain away, and kind of justify, the crimes committed by Turks and Mongols, behind the smoke-screen of an "Aryan invasion" that never was. There is no such race mixture.

Q. *Did not the advent of Islam with its message of equality, weaken the caste system in India?*

A. Not really. The exact opposite happened. Caste was not just casteism and touch-me-not-ism. Caste was also a professional guild. Within a caste, all men, rich and poor, were socially equal. Caste also meant social security for caste-men. Caste, thus, was a great social fortification. In the violence and insecurity that followed Turkish invasions, castes became more necessary, more strong, more important.

Q. *Hindus expect us to return mandirs-turned-mosques to them. But, at one time, all India had become Buddhist. So all old Sanatani temples must have become Buddhist temples. Why don't Hindus return all these temples to Buddhists?*

A. If Buddhists make this demand, Sanatanis will consider it. However, your conclusions are as wrong as your assumptions. Hindus and Buddhists are like Shias and Sunnis, minus the Shia-Sunni hostility. What is the Muslim *locus standi* in any hypothetical Sanatani-Bauddhi disputation?

Secondly, India never went wholly Bauddh, or Jain, as you seem to think. Buddhism—and Jainism—was basically an urban, mercantile, middle-class phenomenon. Agricultural India never went Bauddh; it continued Savite, Vaishnavite, Tantrik. And in any case, all ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death even in Bauddh families, were conducted by Brahmins.

Some people have very wrong notions about Bauddh-Sanatani relationship. Some people even think that Buddhism was driven out of India. Fact is that Buddhism in its institutional framework failed society, and so it faded away. But Buddhist ideas that were found good and wholesome, were whole-sale adapted, adopted and incorporated in 'Hinduism'. Vegetarianism is one of them. As a result the Hindu of India is much more Bauddh than a Bauddh of Burma or Lanka, China, or Japan.

Q. *There is a clear difference between myth and history. Is not Ramayana a myth?*

A. It is possible that only the core story of Ramayana is history and the rest is "poetry"—or myth, if you will.

But that is not important. Hinduism is not a historical religion like Islam or Christianity; it is 'Sanatan', without beginning and without end. There are gods who are not at all historical—Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma—and yet they are worshipped because they are worshipful concepts. So Hindus don't have to prove the birth-place—or even the birth—of Rama, to claim the spot of ancient Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Secondly, it is wrong to assume that history is superior to myth. While history is at best factual, myths embody the wisdom and morality of the ages. Whether Ramayana is history or myth, or more myth than history, is not terribly important. Ramayana, even as pure literature, represents a people and reflects a civilization, a whole value system. That is its importance. It is, therefore, more important than all the so-called histories of ancient India put together.

In any case, you never know where history ends and mythology begins. As good old Arnold Toynbee says in his 'Study of History', there is lot of history in myths, and lot of myths in history. ("History, like the drama and the novel grew out of mythology, a primitive form of apprehension and expression in which—as in the fairy tales listened to by children or in dreams dreamt by sophisticated adults—the line between fact and fiction is left undrawn. It has, for example, been said of the 'Iliad' that anyone who starts reading it as history will find that it is full of fiction but, equally, anyone who starts reading it as fiction will find that it is full of history. All histories resemble the 'Iliad' to this extent, that they cannot entirely dispense with the fictional element. The mere selection, arrangement and presentation of facts is a technique belonging to the field of fiction, and popular opinion is right in its insistence that no historian can be 'great' if he is not also a great artist; that the Gibbons and Macaulays are greater historians than the 'Dryasdusts'—a name coined by Sir Walter Scott, himself a greater historian in some of his novels than in any of his histories—who have avoided their more inspired confreres' factual inaccuracies.)

Q. *Islam attracted men because it stands for the equality of man.*

A. All religions stand for the equality of man. The Gita says that the wise man sees a learned Brahmin and a dog with an equal eye. However, practice is different everywhere. In the West, "all men are equal" has "generally meant" all white protestant males. Both Islam and Christianity accepted slavery.

All Muslims are not equal. Arabs consider themselves the best of Muslims. Even among Arabs, Qureshis ranked highest. And then there are Syeds and Sheikhs. The Iranians considered fellow-Muslim Arabs as

"barbaric". The recent Iran-Iraq war was only an echo of Qadisiyah, the fourteen-hundred-year-old war between Arabs and Iranians.

Throughout the middle ages, the immigrant Muslims called themselves "Ashraf" (superior) and looked down upon local converts as 'Arzal' (mean). The Mughals dealt with Hindu Rajputs on equal terms, but they took a dim view of local converts. (Many Mughal princesses remained unmarried because Mughal princes did not want rival Turkish brothers-in-law; Mughal kings were willing to give their daughters in marriage to Rajputs, but the latter would not have them; and the Mughals just were not prepared to have matrimonial alliances with native converts, whom they considered inferior.)

Q. *Don't you think that Hindus embraced Islam because they found it more modern, more egalitarian?*

A. There were many reasons why some Hindus became Muslim. Please read Elliott & Dawson's "History of India as Told by its Historians," all of them Muslim, for the element of force used in conversions. A second major factor was temptation. A Hindu in trouble could save his life and property by becoming Muslim. He could even get a Muslim bride as bonus. Many people refused and died. Some compromised and lived on.

There must also have been some voluntary conversions. In a place like East Bengal, where the people were Buddhist, and there was no protection of caste, millions drifted into Islam as Buddhism declined and Islam ruled the roost.

It is not possible to say, at this distance of time, what was the relative role of force, temptation and voluntarism in conversions.

Q. *Islam has helped Afghans defeat a super-power like Russia.*

A. Was it Islam that helped Vietnam defeat an even bigger super-power like USA? And why did Islam fail the Arabs against Jews? It is nationalism—the love of your country, your people and your culture—that gives you the strength to fight superior force.

In the case of Afghanistan, there is an additional factor. The mountainous geography of Afghanistan fosters the spirit of liberty, as in Switzerland. It was this spirit that made Afghanistan give a terrific fight to Alexander. Indeed Alexander, the so-called 'World Conqueror' did not dare to go back to his Greek homeland through the route he came, namely Afghanistan. He knew his Army would be butchered by Afghans, who had suffered by his sudden stormy invasion of their country. And so he chose the Sindh-Baluchistan route, which also cost him more dearly than any of his earlier campaigns. Afghanistan was Buddhist at the time. Bamiyan has the earliest and some of the finest sculptures of Buddha in the world. Later, Afghanistan kept Islam at bay for three hundred years before it was overwhelmed by much superior force.

Q. *We believe that the Prophet Mohammed was the last Prophet.*

A. You are welcome to your beliefs. But you cannot make the world think so. Man is not prepared to put a full stop to religious development in the seventh—or even in the seventieth—century.

Q. *Koran is the word of God. This explains the fact that the style and quality of Koran is very different from that of the Hadis.*

A. Believers are free to believe that Koran or any other scripture is the word of God. Many Hindus also believe that Vedas are "a-paurush-eya", that is, "not human", but divine. But these statements should not be taken literally. Actually it is only the inspired and inspiring utterances of Prophets, Avatars or Seers.

The fact that the idiom of the Koran is different from that of the Hadis does not prove that the former is the word of Allah, and the later, that of Mohammed (PBUH). Hadis is a vast collection of anecdotes about the Prophet, compiled generations after him. A majority of them were long ago rejected as wrong and inauthentic. So, rationally speaking, the Koran is the inspired word of the Prophet and the Hadis is the reverential word of his disciples. This would explain the difference in the idiom and style of the two works.

Q. *Do you believe in God?*

A. I do not believe in any God living in the seventh heaven or swimming in Kshir-sagar. I would say that the whole Brahmaanda or cosmos, the principle informing it and the spirit animating it, is God.

The popular conception of God is the invention of man. For long ages man has lived in fear and terror. He has lived in fear of wild animals and in terror of the storm, the sea and the dark night. Man has also stood in awe of the sun, the moon, the stars. He needed to think of a higher beneficent power, protecting him. Such a comforting thought was a source of great solace and reassurance in an uncertain world. That is how and why man thought up God.

God is a working hypothesis. Without the concept of an almighty all-knowing, all-merciful God, helping him along, Man would not have been able to stand up and advance. Civilization would not have been possible. The greatest invention of man was not the Fire, the Wheel or the Zero, but God.

Q. *What is the future of Islam? Don't you see a bright future for it? What is going to be its role in the world of tomorrow?*

A. The world is moving in the direction of a global village, a world government. Perhaps a new and higher humanism will become the new religion of mankind. One can't say what contribution Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Toism, or Science will make to the emergence and evolution of this New Religion. It will depend upon the intrinsic worth and inherent strength of the various ideas and institutions. ("M")

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MJ Akbar's book on Nehru and the Mis-making of India

M.J. Akbar's 'NEHRU—The Making of India' is a useful contribution to Nehruana. Looking at India only through Nehru's eyes—including seeing a rainbow on the day of Nehru's taking office, and an earthquake on his death—becomes a good-natured exercise in the Nehru Centenary year.

There are some avoidable errors of facts, figures and names : Bipin Chandra Pal becomes Bipin Bihari Pal; Archarya Narendra Dev becomes 'Dave'; Sewagram becomes Seagon. Delhi was in ruins after 1857; its population in 1912 was less than 30,000; so it could not have been "1,60,533" in 1875. The Kurukshetra War was fought in Kurukshetra and not on the site of Purana Qila in Delhi. Savarkar did not resign his Presidentship because of involvement in Gandhi Murder Case; he had ceased to be Mahasabha President after 1943. In Noakhali, the casualty figure was not 5000 but less than 500. In East and West Punjab, the killings were not 5 lacs but nearer one lac. (Minorities left, not only because of killings, but because their houses were being burnt before their eyes, and they were given to understand that they were not wanted.) Gandhi started wearing his minidhoti not in 1917, but ten years later. And then of course there is the usual quota of cock and bull stories about RSS.

I also wish that Sir Syed Ahmed's accountant who reportedly cheated AMU of Rs. 1 lac, had not been identified as 'Hindu'; a Muslim can cheat as well as a Hindu. Incidentally, the learned author mentions the embezzlement of Rs. 16 lacs of the Khilafat Fund, but he does not identify M.H.H. Chhotani, the Muslim contractor, who did it, and who then promised to repay the money in his next life.

Akbar thinks that the British wanted to split the nationalist forces in 1921 by arresting the Ali Brothers while "Hindus were carefully left free". This is not correct. A co-accused with Ali Brothers in the Karachi Conspiracy Case was none else than the then Shankaracharya of Puri, Shri Bharati Krishna Teerth Ji Maharaj, who passed away only a few years back.

Akbar also tries to explain away Muslim secessionism as reaction to Hindu Mahasabha propaganda. Except in the 1927 elections, HMS was never a major political force in India. In 1937 General Election, it got a grand total of 3 seats out of 808 General Assembly seats. No, the Hindu Mahasabha was only an excuse. The Muslim League also attacked the Congress and not the Hindu Mahasabha.

However, the book is very valuable in respect of Jawaharlal-Motilal, Jawaharlal-Jinnah, Jawaharlal-Gandhi, Jawaharlal-Indira and Jawaharlal-Lady Mountbatten relations.

Motilal had been consistently pro-British. Jawaharlal considered him "immoderately moderate". He had not only attended Delhi Durbar in 1912, there was talk of his being made a Rai Bahadur. Earlier he had condemned the 1905 Swadeshi movement as "the most stupid and, I may add, the most dishonourable thing I have ever seen." (Even in 1930, when Gandhiji launched his Salt Satyagraha, Motilal said if he were in power, he would promptly send Gandhi to jail.) Akbar, therefore, notes: "No one is sure why Motilal changed lin 1921." One explanation is that he joined the movement to promote his son's political interests. Writes Akbar: "No commitment in Motilal's life was greater than his love for his son. The faith in Jawaharlal's greatness was almost fanatical. Gandhiji, who understood both well enough to know what he was talking about, was once asked what was Motilal's most striking quality. 'Love for his son', replied Gandhiji. 'Not love for his country?' came a follow-up question. 'No,' said Gandhiji. "Motilal's love for India was derived from his love for Jawaharlal."

Another explanation is that his daughter Vijayalakshmi's affair with Syed Hussain had shocked him, and Gandhiji's efforts in sorting out that matter—arranging Syed Hussain's education in UK, and getting VLP married to Ranjit Pandit—inclined him in favour of Gandhiji and his movement. Maybe there were other reasons also. But the whole thing came as a complete and very pleasant surprise to the country.

However, Motilal's paramount interest in Congress all through was his son, Jawaharlal. Motilal insisted on making Jawaharlal Congress President in 1929, when he was only forty, though the majority favoured Sardar Patel. Gandhiji tried to dissuade him by talking of "the anarchy and hooliganism that seem to be growing in the Congress." When, however, Motilal persisted, Gandhiji agreed. Jawaharlal presided over the Lahore Congress Session. But Motilal was not content with that. The national press used to boost the nationalist leadership even on its own. In addition, Congress had its publicity budget. But on top of that Motilal had a family budget for the purpose. One of the self-praising Urdu posters widely printed by him on the occasion read:

*"Apni qurbani se hai mashhoor Nehru Khandan,
"Shame-e-mehfil dekho, yeh ghar ka ghar parwana hai."*

(Nehru clan is famous for its sacrifices; my dear, every member of this family is like a moth—burning itself in the patriotic flame.)

All this was more than senior Congress leaders could stand. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, who had presided over the Guwahati Congress in 1927, ridiculed "this new trinity" of "Father (Motilal) son (Jawaharlal) and the Holy Ghost (Gandhi)."

A second subject of interest in this book is Nehru's relations with Muslims. As a Kashmiri, he started with an innate friendliness for Muslims. His very first tutor was a Muslim gentleman. Two of his college mates in UK were Syed Mahmud and Saifuddin Kitchlew. In jail he at times fasted (observed Roza) with Muslims during Ramzan. But none of this helped him work out a proper equation with Muslims, even in his native U.P. As Congress President, he bungled the informal agreement with the Muslim League for a Congress-League coalition in U.P. in 1937. Later, he said the Congress should have put up more Muslim candidates, forgetting that all the nine Muslims put up by the Congress in U.P. in 1937 (out of a total of 64, the League winning 27) had lost the election. Jinnah described him as "the Peter Pan of Indian politics," the man who

Jinnah dubbed Nehru as "Peter Pan" and "sole custodian of the masses"

never grew up. When Nehru talked of a "Muslim mass contact programme," to wean them away from the League, Jinnah ridiculed him as a "busybody" who thought himself "sole custodian of the masses."

Akbar is quite right when he says that "Pakistan was created by Jinnah's will and Britain's willingness, not by Nehru's mistakes." Actually it was the British commercial-imperial decision to partition India, that encouraged Mr. Jinnah to ask for Pakistan. And Jinnah was only avenging his "insult" in the Congress by now asking for his pound of flesh. Before Gandhiji arrived on the scene in 1917, Jinnah was expected to succeed Tilak. He felt cheated when Tilak was followed by Gandhiji. Gandhiji worked for the Khilafat movement; Jinnah opposed it. In the Nagpur Congress, Jinnah was shouted down for being reluctant about referring to Gandhiji as Mahatma. But he refused to call Mohammed Ali "Maulana", was shouted down, and he walked out, never again to attend the Congress. (Actually Mohammed Ali was not called Maulana because he was an Islamic scholar but because he—and his brother, Shaukat—had helped convert some Hindus to Islam.) However, not all the British will and Jinnah's wilfulness, can excuse Nehru's mistakes, which were many and egregious on the Muslim issue.

Did Nehru promote Indira in politics? Akbar says: "He never promoted her in politics himself; but he never restrained anyone else from promoting her." But the point is: would anybody have promoted Indira in politics—as member CWC and CPB, etc.—without the consent, or against the will, of Nehru? The turning point was 1959. Some sycophant in the CWC suggested Indira as Congress President. Pandit Pant promptly turned it down, saying she was not in good health. Thereupon Nehru equally promptly said: "What is wrong with her health?" That clinched the issue; Indira became Congress President—though it has always remained a mystery why she did not preside over the next session of the Congress. Later, in 1962, after the Chinese attack, he appointed her Chairman, National Citizens Committee. Fact is that he promoted her in his own sophisticated manner.

I am reminded of an incident when some Bihar MPs called on him to request the selection of a particular IAS candidate. Nehru rang up the UPSC Chairman there and then, asked the candidate's marks and kept down the receiver. The MPs said he had not asked the Chairman to select their boy. And Nehru explained to them that asking the boy's marks was hint enough to the UPSC Chairman that he would like the boy to be selected. He was right; he did not need to be crude and explicit in getting things his way.

The women in Nehru's life make an intriguing subject. According to Akbar, "Kamala was the only woman he truly loved." Truly or falsely, I don't know; old-timers tell very different tales. It is an open secret that Kamala used to be quite unhappy. She had written many letters to her friend Prabha, wife of Jaya Prakash Narayan. When Prabha died, J.P. turned over these letters to Indira. If these letters have not been destroyed, they could be published, to put the record straight.

It is also learnt that Nehru wanted to marry a certain lady after Kamala, but Gandhiji warned him of adverse public opinion. And so, says Akbar, "a story was planted on the Allahabad correspondent of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*" to deny the report that he was marrying "a beautiful colleague" who was "socialist and graduate".

Incidentally, Nehru did not complete his term as Chairman Allahabad Municipal Committee because he saw no objection to one Akhtari, a prostitute, buying a house anywhere in the city, and people and councillors did not agree with him.

It is enough to note that Sardar Patel noted during the Nehru Congress Presidency in 1936 and 1937 that "a stinking atmosphere is prevailing

in the country. Reading of socialist and sex literature is the order of the day." Akbar himself admits that Nehru was "amoral about sex" and he "gave further provocation by his open friendships with women." When he became Congress President again in 1946, he went so far as to drop stalwarts like Acharya Kripalani and Sarojini Naidu, and to induct Mridula Sarabhai and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya in the Congress Working Committee.

Akbar is wrong to claim that "the people of India could not care less" about Nehru's peccadillos. Fact is that the people just didn't know at the time; the Press "patriotically" obliged, and covered up the foibles of leaders. For example the Press never showed Nehru smoking, though he smoked heavily. And Matthai and Khushwant Singh accounts—and publication of Nehru's love letters to Padmaja (Selected Works, Vol. 13)—came only long after Nehru's death. Public knowledge of these facts at the time would have put a full stop to Nehru's public life.

However, his friendship with Lady Mountbatten was a very different kettle of fish. It derailed Indian politics. After World War II, Nehru wanted to visit Burma, Malaya and Indonesia to study the problems of

The harm done to Indian interest by Nehru's friendship with Lady Mountbatten

Indians there, but the British permitted him to go only to Malaya, where Mountbatten was boss. Here Jawaharlal forgot all about Indians—on Mountbatten's advice, he did not even lay a wreath at the memorial to Indian soldiers—and instead struck up an instant friendship with Lady Mountbatten. It is this friendship that led to the appointment of Mountbatten as Viceroy of India, with Menon telling Cripps that Nehru wanted it. In the Rashtrapati Bhavan he and the Lady were seen bathing in the circular pool in the Mughal Gardens. Russi Modi, son of U.P. Governor Homi Mody, saw the two "in a cinch" in Government House, Nainital, when he went to call them for dinner at 8 P.M. Khushwant Singh and Matthai have more stories to tell on the subject. The personal life of a person is his business, but when it impinges on, and influences, his public life, it becomes a serious matter. And Nehru's friends, the Mountbattens, proved a regular disaster for India.

Before Mountbatten's arrival on the Indian scene, Partition was considered a remote possibility; with his coming, it became an instant reality. Although Attlee had fixed mid-1948 for transfer of power, Mountbatten advanced the date by a year—almost to make sure the

League did not change its mind about Pakistan. This sudden brutal political surgery led to profuse bleeding in mass slaughter. It was under Mountbatten's advice that Nehru made Kashmir's accession to India conditional on a plebiscite. And again it was Mountbatten who persuaded Nehru to refer the Kashmir issue to UN, where it quickly became a victim of international intrigue. The whole thing has distorted our policies, drained our resources and bled the country.

When Gandhiji decided to fast in January 1948 for communal amity, it was Mountbatten who persuaded him to make the payment of Rs 55 crore to Pakistan—something GOI had decided *against*, in view of Paki invasion of Kashmir—a pre-condition for breaking his fast. It is remarkable that Akbar does not make any reference to this Rs. 55 crores affair. Maulana Azad is equally silent on the subject even in his famous "Thirty Pages."

It was the forced reversal of its own earlier decision by the Union Cabinet, that angered the people and created an atmosphere in which a man like the Mahatma could be killed. The real responsibility for that colossal tragedy lies on the head of the Mountbattens and their friends whose actions irritated people beyond their limits of toleration. But it was the country that had to pay a killing price for it. The death of Gandhiji killed the Indian Dream of Ram Rajya etc., at least for the time being, and handed over the country, bound hand and foot, to Nehru for his half-baked experiments in his quarter-baked socialism and secularism. Today India is neither secular, nor socialist, and certainly nor Gandhian; it is just plain decadent and dynastic.

One reason why the Tories wanted to partition India was that Congress had vowed to leave the Empire. However, obviously under Mountbatten's influence, India belatedly agreed to remain in the British Empire—now conveniently renamed 'Commonwealth'—and continue its emotional and imperial links with London. But meanwhile India had paid the price of Partition.

It was for all these services rendered to the Empire that the British Parliament enacted a special law, exempting Lady Mountbatten from payment of Estate Duty on her vast properties. But their services to the Empire had cost the Indian people very very dearly. And so Nehru's friendship with the Mountbattens leaves one wondering whether he contributed to the making of India or to its mis-making, at least for the time being.

Akbar quotes Nehru's many basic differences with Gandhi and comes to the conclusion that he was not a Gandhian and he was not a Marxist. This is absolutely true. At one stage Gandhiji wrote to Jawahar Lal: "The differences between you and me appear to me to be so vast and radical that there seems to be no meeting ground between us." But Gandhiji

needed a younger man with a modern mind to appeal to the urban young and educated. This could be only Nehru or Bose. Since Bose could be uncompromising, Gandhi opted for Jawaharlal. When, therefore, Jawahar Lal apologised, "Am I not your child in politics, though perhaps a truant and errant child", the prodigal was promptly forgiven. However, after the transfer of power, Nehru did not bother to sort out his differences with Gandhi, and the objections raised by the latter remained unanswered.

Communists also found Nehru disappointing. He had promised to R. Palme Dutt in London to help them, but the Communists found him ambiguous. Fact is, that Nehru was neither Gandhian nor Marxist; he was Nehruite. In all the secular-socialist games that he played, he always came out on top. Nothing illustrates his policies more dramatically than his cynical attitude to INA. When Subhas Chandra Bose went abroad and organised the INA, Nehru said he would go out and fight them; when the British prosecuted three INA officers, and INA became the rage of the country, Nehru quickly put on the lawyer's gown to join the legal team defending them. And when India became free, he left INA men high and dry and refused to absorb them in the Indian Army!

That was Nehru, a sophisticated cynic to his finger-tips. It will take many more, and much deeper, studies of Nehru, to unravel the man behind the image. ("M")

Political Astrology in India—

It would seem that astrology has always played a role in Indian politics, whoever the ruler. Shahjahan entered the Red Fort on April 19, 1648, as per the advice of astrologers.

When Gandhiji started on his Dandi March, the British didn't know what to do. Lord Irwin, Viceroy, assured the Secretary of State for India on April 7, 1930, that he would die before he reached the sea. As proof, he quoted the astrologers! During World War II, Churchill wanted to know why Gandhiji had not died yet, as per the forecasts.

Indian Independence was timed for the midnight of Aug. 15, for astrological reasons. Dr. Rajendra Prasad didn't want the new Republic born on Jan. 26, 1950; the astrologers had declared that the day was not auspicious. Nehru over-ruled him and said the country could not be run by astrologers.

About five years before Nehru died, astrologer Haveli Ram had predicted his exact date of death—May 27, 1964—to Gulzarilal Nanda.

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So-called 'Social Forestry' Programme is anti-Social, anti-Poor

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THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE for the preservation and restoration of grasslands in Karnataka has been among the major environment-related movements in India. What started as local agitations in a few districts has, over the years, snowballed into a widespread and multi-dimensional movement. There has also been increasing realisation that the issue is of significance not only for Karnataka but for the whole of the country.

The problem is not new. What is new is the urgency it has acquired because of the enormously increased pressure on land. Vast stretches of rich forest have in recent years been converted into industrial plantations.

When even this short-sighted policy failed to meet the ever-increasing raw-material demands of industries—both Government and private industries—the programme of encouraging tree-farming in agricultural land and in the village commons started. In addition to other programmes the so-called 'Social Forestry' scheme, originally conceived to meet basic rural needs, was distorted into a programme very largely serving the needs of industries. Using the loan funds from the World Bank and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of U.K., the Karnataka Forest Department promoted plantations of industrially useful species in over 120,000 hectares of private farmlands during 1983-88, addition to sizable extent of public land.

Just two years prior to the completion of the five-year Karnataka Social Forestry programme, World Bank (IDA) and ODA jointly carried out a mid-term review. The review report states :

"Too much emphasis was placed on physical planting targets. These should have been balanced by recognising two equally important objectives :

- a) That the planting programme had to be directed at meeting the forestry needs of the rural and semi-urban poor;
- b) that the capability of the KSFD, in collaboration with other agencies, had to be built up to enable it to meet the above needs.

Within the objectives set, fodder should have been accorded equal priority with fuelwood, and emphasis placed on multiple-use species and on planting mixtures which provide an early and continuing supply of small branchwood and fodder".

A member-secretary of the Planning Commission's Working Group on Energy policy had observed :

"I have seen many programmes launched in the name of the poor but soon distorted to benefit the upper classes. But no programme has been diverted further away from its objective than Social Forestry. The Forest Departments never seem to ask the question : wood production for whom or for what ?"

The paradigmatic shifts in the arguments advanced in favour of the Social Forestry programmes by the funding agencies and the Forest Departments themselves speak volumes about the net effect of the programmes. At first the programme was made out as being beneficial to the rural poor and as serving a most necessary and timely ecological function.

When the poor masses were justifiably cool towards the programme, Farm Forestry acquired dominance. This naked aberration of the programme was justified by the World Bank on economic grounds. In fact farm forestry is considered by the World Bank and the Forest Departments as the most effective approach to afforestation.

When even 'Social Forestry' was inadequate to fulfil the needs of wood-based industries whose capacity expansions were recklessly licensed on the basis of mythical projections of realisable produce from forests, new and more devious ways had to be found to oblige the industrialists. The most recent of these governmental moves is the floating of so-called joint-sector undertakings with profit-motivated industries, thereby entitling the latter to enjoy the status of government companies. This was a device mooted by industries to circumvent the provisions of the land reforms legislation which had set a ceiling on land held by individuals and private companies. The 'joint-sector' scheme was thought of by the Government of India originally to interest private industries in afforestation of 'degraded' lands. However, taking shelter under this scheme, governments in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa started leasing away to joint-sector companies rich forest lands and areas which have in the past been earmarked as utility lands for community use.

It is well recognised that it is these facility lands which have given stability to the farming system in the country. On the basis of an extensive study in seven States, N.S. Jodha has computed that the average yearly income of a rural household from common property resources (which include grazing-lands, ponds, threshing grounds, etc.) ranges from Rs. 530 to Rs. 830—which is more than the income generated by the several poverty-alleviation programmes of the Government. The common resources also act as a cushion during droughts and other crisis situations, since the poor lack the adjustment mechanisms available to the better-off.

This vital ecological endowment suffered neglect in recent years, due to a variety of factors. While such neglect has caused much hardship to the peasants, blocking their use by handing them over to industries is nothing short of a disaster.

At a time when the need to preserve the few remaining forests at all costs and to bring rural economy at least to subsistence levels has been universally recognised, diversion of these resources to the captive control of industries is tragic in the extreme.

Even weeds, growing wild in open fields, are presently performing an important role in meeting the fuel needs of the poor. When such lands are planted up and fenced by the Forest Department, even weeds are not available to rural households.

It is this critical situation in respect of forests, grazing-lands and other facility lands which has triggered the major people's movement in Karnataka recently.

There has for long been sustained resistance to programmes of raising industrial plantations in forest areas in the Malnad (hill district) belt.

Even jungle weeds are useful as fuel

One such movement was in the fifties in Narasimharajapura Taluk, Chickmagalore District, in the fringe of the Western Ghats. People sat in protest in front of trees in a village called Madguni, not allowing the forest staff to fell the trees for raising plantations. There were, however, substantial forests still remaining, and officials managed to overcome people's resistance. The dense forests soon made way for single-stand eucalyptus plantations.

A dramatic protest was organised by farmers in Tumkur district, under the leadership of Karnataka Rajya Raita Sangha (State-level farmers' association), who in March 1983 uprooted eucalyptus seedlings and planted saplings of traditional trees. This was provoked by the drying up of streams due to eucalyptus planting in water catchment areas.

What has come to be known as the Appiko Movement was a spill-over from the agitation against the Bedthi hydroelectric project in the late seventies in Uttara Kannada, a district which has a concentration of latter-day 'temples' celebrated by Jawaharlal Nehru. While the Bedthi struggle raised environmental activism to a new height of articulation the succeeding Appiko and other movements after September 1983 witnessed the participation of common people in large numbers. Such resistance to

reckless felling of dense forests by contractors proved a temporary setback to the Forest Department. Similar resistance had emerged also in the neighbouring Shimoga and Chickmagalore districts where vast stretches of forest were, and still are, being devastated by Government and industry.

When the Karnataka Forest Department started clearfelling 17 acres of forest at Kelase in Uttara Kannada district, over 100 villagers hugged the trees and refused to allow the contractors to axe the trees. Sustained protest resulted in the Forest Department's retreating.

In Shimoga and Chickmagalore districts, over 1-0,000 acres of land classified as 'C' and 'D' has been transferred by the Revenue Department to the Forest Department; in Sagar Taluk alone, over 70,000 acres of such lands have been transferred. In scores of villages, the entire land not under ownership titles has been mindlessly transferred. Not only cultivated lands but also portions marked as pastures, tanks and even houses and sites fall under this category. The Forest Department has not hesitated to file false and trumped-up cases against those who tried to protest against takeover of such lands.

The Karnataka Government's pro-industry stance reached a new high in 1983-84. In November 1984, Government entered into partnership with the industrial house of the Birlas to float a joint-sector undertaking called 'Karnataka Pulpwood Limited' to bring under eucalyptus over 75,000 acres of so-called 'C' and 'D' class lands in the two high-rainfall districts of Shimoga and Chickmagalore in the Western Ghats. Simultaneously another farm forestry project bringing under eucalyptus some 45,000 acres in four districts within a 100-kilometre radius of Harihar Polyfibers was activated with the stipulation that the entire produce is to be supplied exclusively to that Birla industry. This latter scheme was so patently anti-people that, in addition to Mannu Rakshana Koota ('Save Soil' Forum), even senior bureaucrats felt outraged. Public pressure resulted in Government's burying it.

When details of the joint-sector scheme became known, there were State-wide protests. Mannu Rakshana Koota, which is a broad State-level alliance of activists from the voluntary sector, Gandhian organisations, Rajya Raita Sangha, etc., started organising workshops, awareness-building Jathas, street-plays and public meetings. It also collaborated with local organisations at the district level. MRK mobilized the support of several organisations and leading citizens for the cause; it met concerned ministers in delegation, and lobbied among legislators and the media. On 2nd October 1985 (birthday of Gandhiji), MRK activists made a bonfire of rayon clothes in symbolic protest against deforestation and pollution and took the Khadi vow.

In the meantime Arogya Vikasa Prakalpa, a voluntary rural development organisation in Shimoga district, carried out a physical survey of 'C' and 'D' class lands in Shimoga and Chickmagalore districts. The study established, contrary to Government claims, that lands categorised as 'C' and 'D' in that region have a tree density of 50-200 per acre on average. There are also cultivated lands, lands allotted to dam evacuees, and even lands granted to tribals.

The Karnataka Forest Department's attempts to take over such lands were naturally resisted. In mid-1985, the Forest Department used police force to evict residents of Hariharapura in Koppa taluk (Chickmagalore District), even though the villagers had been cultivating the lands for over a decade. Similarly, in Tattikere and Agaradahalli in Shimoga District and elsewhere, farmers blockaded the village against the invasion by the Forest Department. In yet another village called Arsikere in Chickmagalore district, the Forest Department attempted to evict 98 poor families who had painstakingly brought under cultivation some 400 acres of barren land. Using their bullocks, the farmers furrowed all the land overnight to thwart the high-handed efforts of the forest department to plant eucalyptus forcefully.

The havoc played by Eucalyptus trees

In yet another novel protest in January 1986, villagers in Sagar Taluk of Shimoga District led by Vriksha Samrakshisi Vedeke, registered their protest by uprooting the boundary-stones newly installed by the Forest Department.

In June 1986, villagers of Sagar Taluk filed a writ petition in the Karnataka High Court seeking retention of control over village facility lands. The High Court in November 1986 stayed diversion of grazing-lands and other utility lands; these and several other similar cases have been going on in various courts since 1986.

Village youth in Shimoga district have on several occasions kept night-long vigil to spot smugglers in the act. Instead of being rewarded as per rules, these patriotic youth are being hounded and punished by the forest staff.

Even in sparsely populated areas, villagers have started organising themselves to protest against illegal acts by government and industry—e.g., in Tumri (an artificial island created in the backwaters region of Linganamakki dam), in Bedarakoppa near Thagarthi—both in Sagar taluk of Shimoga District.

As against the repeated claims of the Forest Department that green trees are not felled, representatives of rural development organisations from all over the State witnessed and sat in Satyagrah protesting about felling of dense tree-growth in Mahime forest in Sharavathy valley in March 1987.

In Hosoor near Sagar, the Mysore Paper Mills started bulldozing natural forest in areas which had not been assigned to it. There were wide protests in July 1988. Even the local forest department officials admitted the illegality of the act. Activists of Vriksha Samrakshishi Vedike who led the protests were arrested. Subsequently the villagers sued the MPM in the court. The court at Sagar, in its order of 18th August 1988, has ruled against MPM.

With assistance from the Committee for Implementation of Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS) of Government of India, and by the efforts of Samaja Parivartana Samudaya (a Dharwad based voluntary organisation), a public-interest writ petition was filed in the Supreme Court of India on 9th December 1986 by citizens of Karnataka, questioning the propriety of the formation of Karnataka Pulpwood Limited. The court ordered a status quo on 24th March 1987. The final judgement of the court is still awaited. The lead petitioner in the case is Dr. Shivaram Karanth, a doyen of literature and Jnanpeeth laureate. The other petitioners include Samaja Parivartana Samudaya and villagers of Shimoga and Chickmagalore districts.

In November 1987, villagers of Kusnur in Dharwad district (covered in a second agreement of July 1986) symbolically uprooted the eucalyptus saplings in community lands encroached by KPL and planted saplings of locally useful species. The event (described as 'pluck and plant' agitation) was widely covered in the press which described the joint-sector undertakings as 'state-aided exploitation'. There have since been other similar protests. Samaja Parivartana Samudaya has continued to provide articulation to the villagers' struggle in Dharwad district wherein KPL has been operating.

On 29th April 1988, when there were villagers' self-training programmes in Hirebasur village in Dharwad district, the Forest Department staff attached to Karnataka Pulpwood Limited waylaid and intimidated social workers and even visiting journalists including Ajit Bhattacharjee who has commented (*Deccan Herald*, 6th May 1988): "Nongovernmental organisations function on the margins of the law. Their only weapon against forces represented by KPL is the Gandhian tradition of non-violent struggle, made much more difficult by the level of provocation to which semi-official exploiting agencies like KPL can descend."

In July 1988, the Samaja Parivartana Samudaya has filed contempt-of-court and perjury cases in the Supreme Court of India against heads of the forest bureaucracy in Karnataka, bringing to the notice of the court the gross violation of court orders by KPL and government, and deliberate suppression of facts in regard to transfer of lands. On 13th October 1988 the court issued notices to the Chief Conservator of Forests in Karnataka and others.

The movement in Sagar and neighbouring taluks in Shimoga district has been co-ordinated by Vriksha Samrakshishi Vedike of Sagar and other local initiatives. Several cases have been filed in the local courts against the encroachment of village forests and the commons by Mysore Paper Mills, a Government owned industry. In two recent cases in respect of Talguppa and Avinahalli hoblis taluks, the MPM operations have been pronounced illegal by the Court of the Principal Munsiff.

Businessmen pay Re. 1 for a ton of Bamboo; Village craftsmen pay Rs. 2000 for it !

Mysore Paper Mills has in numerous instances tried to forcefully occupy forested and village lands not concessioned to it. Thus in December 1986 MPM started bulldozing vegetation (including Sandalwood and special grasses used for mat-making etc.) in Baniga, Hosanagar taluk, Shimoga district. When appeals failed, the villagers, led by Vriksha Samrakshishi Vedike, sat before the bulldozers till the higher officials found time to intervene.

Such confrontations have now become common notwithstanding harassment and State terrorism frequently unleashed on the people.

In August 1987 MPM illegally attempted to occupy and start planting in a village called Kalasavalli in Sagar Taluk. Forest staff, armed with sticks and daggers, attacked the local population which was protesting peacefully. Those who were beaten up by the forest staff have had to face prosecution by Government. The villagers have taken the matter to the petitions committee of the State legislature.

Voluntary organisations all over Karnataka and especially in the coastal belt used the opportunity afforded by the 'Save the Western Ghats March' (November 1987-February 1988) to highlight the critical environmental situation in the Western Ghats directly as a result of State policy.

Apart from field protests, there have been academic investigations by reputed researchers, whose findings have confirmed the need to ensure continuance of villagers' access to the common facility lands. These

include studies by Dr. Chhatrapati Singh of the Indian Law Institute, Dr. Ramachandra Guha of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and others. Premier organisations like the Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, and civil rights groups like Citizens for Democracy have lent support to these people's movements.

In the villages of Bidar district in northern-most Karnataka, the Forest Department has been displacing poor local inhabitants for whom physical survival itself is a daily challenge.

That such confrontations have now become a daily affair in many parts of Karnataka indicates the urgent need for radical solutions.

While preservation of the few remaining forests and regeneration of grazing-lands on sound ecological principles merit the highest priority in the present context; governmental policies and programmes have consistently moved in the opposite direction.

Common lands are a rich potential resource. According to the estimate of D. R. Bhumbale and Arvind Khare, Karnataka has grazing-lands of the order of 1,398,000 hectares. In addition there are 967,000 hectares 'current fallows' and 530,000 hectares of 'culturable wastes'.

As a consequence of various policies and general neglect, there has been alarming deterioration of topsoils. Regeneration of grasslands and what are called common lands merits utmost priority. There has so far been no sign of recognition of this urgency in government programmes. To hand such lands over to the Forest Department has been disastrous.

As a matter of fact, it is the failure of the Forest Department in achieving targeted production in forests in its own total custody which resulted in their moves to invade croplands and village commons for raising industrial rawmaterial. This has resulted in extinction of grazing resources and the fodder base, and in irremediable damage to these lands through mono-culture tree-farming.

When common grazing-lands become out of bounds to the poor, not only is their fodder-source lost, but they will also be in no position to benefit from the produce of farm forestry because they can hardly afford to buy them.

There is intimate correlation between available common resources and the labour endowment of the poor. In addition, common resources like grazing-lands also generate additional employment to the rural population such as herding, product processing, etc.

The quantum of community lands has drastically declined during the last three decades (1950-52 to 1982-84) e.g., by 41% in Bidar district, by 44% in Dharwad district, by 48% in Gulbarga district and by 32% in Mysore district, as documented by N.S. Jodha.

Even under the land-reforms legislation, the poor did not fare too well, since large communities were deprived of the right to collective use of grazing-lands, since the poor lacked the complementary resources needed to utilise small acreages of poor quality land benevolently granted to them, these were foredoomed to be taken away from their hands.

Various policy statements concerning grazing-lands emphasise increased productivity of these lands. However, such discussion would be futile if it did not take into account the end-use pattern of presently existing produce. A merely technological intervention is bound to fall flat if pressure of the now-favoured market forces on the already impoverished is ignored.

The Forest Department is in league with wood-based industries

Thus, it is hardly surprising that the 'green revolution' technology greatly increased the disparities, resulting in more conflict situations. A vast number of dwarf varieties of cereal crops were, and still are, being aggressively promoted everywhere. This itself has resulted in reduction in the availability of fodder.

The access of the poor to so-called fallows for grazing of livestock animals is being increasingly curtailed in the name of 'wasteland development' and diversion of such lands to industries for 'better management'. The problem is becoming more acute in arid and semi-arid regions.

In such a background, the aspect of 'access differential' deserves much more attention than in the past. It is precisely the inadequacy of, entitlements that aggravates hunger, impoverishment and under-nourishment. As Madhav Gadgil has found, while bamboo was being given away to paper mills at a nominal cost of Re. 1 per tonne, the poor basket-weavers and craftsmen had to pay as much as Rs. 2000 or more per tonne.

The partial and irrational character of paradigms of over-grazing, etc., has been exposed by Anil Kumar Gupta in a number of studies.

"Converting a political problem into an environmental problem is one way of shifting responsibilities for degradation in the economic conditions of a certain class of people vis-a-vis others. As regards the concepts like over-grazing, population pressure etc., they derive their meaning in a particular technological and understandable context. Not everybody has access to a particular grazing-land. Not all species contribute to regeneration or degeneration equally in a given region. Same species of livestock under different management conditions may change its behaviour with regard to browsing or grazing pattern. How do we define the so-called carrying capacity and over-grazing? Is it a purely technological question? And if it is, then one should not be surprised that the National Task Force on National Grazing policy recommended amongst other things sedentarisation of the migratory flocks, considers herdsmen responsible for any damage caused to the agricultural field and plantation, suggests people to adopt stall-feeding systems, and pleads for closing the critical areas like catchment of major rivers besides asking for complete stoppage of grazing by sheep and goat in the forest areas."

A survey of over 650 households in Gujarat by the Centre for Management in Agriculture, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, found that "poor farmers knew well the importance of resource preservation, particularly regarding certain three-species of which almost every part was useful. The implication is that we must shed some of our biases which imply the poor are the culprits, before looking for future options. Also, since the condition of private wastelands was no better than common wastelands, the case for privatisation was weak."

Let us now take a look at 'Social Forestry'.

When the Fifth Five Year Plan recommended the concept of 'Social Forestry', the intention was to meet the daily fodder and other needs of the rural people. This concept was immediately hijacked by the Forest Departments and distorted in order to meet the requirements of wood-based industries with whom they have long had an incestuous relationship. Hence the forest bureaucracy's obsession with eucalyptus monoculture, especially in private farmlands.

A coincidence which has not been sufficiently appreciated is the synchronisation of the launching of 'social' forestry by Karnataka Forest Department with the implementation of land reforms in the mid-seventies, which abolished tenancy and transferred ownership of uncultivated surplus land in excess of prescribed ceiling to the tenant. Eucalyptus cultivation (a simple one-shot operation with insignificant labour component) enabled big land-holders to bring large extents of land under 'own' cultivation—since leaving them barren would attract government takeover. Thus, as the investigation by S.T. Somashekhar Reddy has demonstrated, in four taluks of Kolar district surveyed, holdings of 15 acres and above accounted for 37% of the total area under eucalyptus in 1983; 10 acres and above 56%; 5 acres and above 87%. Gradually, owners of small holdings situated amidst eucalyptus plantations were also obliged to

cultivate eucalyptus. Soon, because of cash and other incentives offered, foodcrop lands increasingly made way for eucalyptus.

That meeting the fodder and other needs of the rural poor was farthest from the intentions of the funding and implementing agencies is evident from the fact that during 1984-85, 96-97 per cent of eucalyptus wood produced in Kolar and Bangalore districts in Karnataka was sold to Harihar Polyfibers, and hardly 3% was available for local sale as fuel.

Even in the early stages of the Karnataka Social Forestry programme the potential anti-poor direction of the scheme was sensed and highlighted by several researchers such as Jahanto Bandopadhyay, Vandana Shiva, Claude Alvares and Vanaja Ramaprasad. Subsequent developments during 1983-88 amply confirmed the fears and concerns expressed by these investigators.

The official documents of the World Bank and Overseas Development Administration (ODA) themselves have admitted that the present plantings under 'Social Forestry' are a response to market conditions.

Only 3 per cent of forest products available to forest-dwellers !

The State-level Federation of Voluntary Organisations for Rural Development in Karnataka (FEVORD-K), Mannu Rakshana Koota ('Save Soil' Forum) and the Rajya Raita Sangha (State level farmers' association) have demonstrated the aberrations in the 'Social Forestry' programme. The Mannu Rakshana Kepta brought out a comprehensive impact analysis of the Karnataka Social Forestry programme in February 1987. The document (co-authored by D.M. Chandrashekhhar, former Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court, B.V. Krishnamurti, sometime adviser to FAO, and S.R. Ramaswamy, Convener of the 'Save Soil' Forum)—which has now come to be known as the Chandrashekhhar Report—has attracted wide attention even at international level.

FEVORD-K has also carried on a dialogue with the World Bank and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of U.K. demanding re-orientation of the Social Forestry programme.

The adverse effects of the Social Forestry Programme, as presently implemented on rural economy and on the life of the landless—especially in the context of Karnataka—have been emphasised in several campaigns at the international level. Thus the Environmental Defense Fund of the U.S., the Coalition for Environment and Development in Finland, the

Malaysia-based Third World Network, Oxfam-UK and several other bodies have expressed strong criticism of the market-oriented approach of the World Bank.

The World Bank and the Forest Departments in India have repeatedly been projecting social forestry in Gujarat as a success story. Land originally under maize, pulses, cotton, etc., was brought under eucalyptus on a large scale. The result has been surplus production and a slump in the price of eucalyptus since 1987. Farmers in Baroda district and elsewhere are having a hard time finding markets for their eucalyptus wood. There is increasing disillusionment about the desirability of bringing croplands under eucalyptus.

Programmes like social forestry are also against the socialistic principles to which the government is committed—since in effect the rich are being subsidised instead of the poor. An additional factor is that infrastructural facilities are also being sectoralised.

Agencies like the World Bank ought to introspect and analyse whether their funding anti-poor programmes through government departments with a legacy of being chronically out of tune with the rural masses, is proper. They have to share the moral responsibility for the increasing human misery being generated by the programmes funded by them.

* The problem, though described as an environmental crisis, is intimately related to the model of development being pursued. The real conflict is between cash culture and subsistence economy. Till this basic conflict is addressed, whatever is done in the domain of environment will serve but a limited purpose.

Even the Establishment theoreticians recognize the need to rebuild nature. But how does one go about it?

Anil Agarwal says:

"This can only be done if we re-establish a healthy relationship between the people and their environment. Then only a nature that is useful to the millions, not for making millions, can be re-established. Regardless of what happens in the West—its electronics revolution, its biotechnology inventions, its communications satellites, its efforts to mine the oceans and its efforts to build solar and wind mills—and regardless of how much we may want to catch up with the West in the name of modernization, rebuilding nature and rebuilding its relationship with the people will remain the only way to solve the problem of poverty and

possibly even unemployment. With some 100-150 million hectares of waste and near-waste lands and with the crying need to produce biomass, this country can never get a better opportunity to harness the power of its people and the power of its land, to strike at the roots of landlessness, poverty and unemployment, all at the same time."

The 12th General Assembly of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN—Zaire, September 1975) had recommended "that governments place greater emphasis on maintaining or restoring traditional methods and customs which formerly enabled communities to live in greater harmony with nature", and "that governments consider means by which indigenous people may bring their lands into conservation areas without relinquishing their ownership, use or tenure rights."

Several pronouncements of the Government of India also reflect these sentiments. What remains is committed action at the implementation level. The problem is not absence of technology or legislation. The need is to match policy with action.

Wanted Buddhist Economics

Buddhist countries have often stated that they wish to remain faithful to their heritage.

No one seems to think that a Buddhist way of life would call for Buddhist economics, just as the modern materialist way of life has brought forth modern economics.

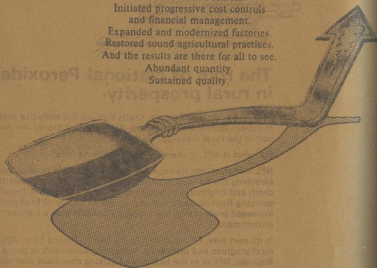
I suggest that the foundations of peace cannot be laid by universal prosperity, in the modern sense, because such prosperity, if attainable at all, is attainable only by cultivating such drives of human nature as greed and envy which destroy intelligence, happiness, serenity, and thereby the peacefulness of man.

As Gandhi said, "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not for every man's greed." Permanence is incompatible with a predatory attitude which rejoices in the fact that 'what were luxuries for our fathers have become necessities for us'.

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