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## K.R. Malkani Special



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# Manthan

*Journal of Social and Academic Activism*

Year: 44, Issue: 1

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## K.R. Malkani Special

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## Contributors' profile

**Prof. (Dr.) Pramod Kumar** The writer is a Professor in Department of English Journalism, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi. Before joining the IIMC in 2020, he worked with *Organiser Weekly* for 28 years. During this period he enjoyed close association with the late K.R. Malkani.

**Dr. Anirban Ganguli** Born in Kolkata on August 11, 1976, Dr. Anirban Ganguli was educated at the Shri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry. He later obtained his PdD in Education Policy from Jadavpur University, West Bengal. His prominent works include *Debating culture : Education, Philosophy and Practice*, *Swami Vivekananda, Buddha and Buddhism* and *The Modi Doctrine: Redefining Governance*. Dr Ganguli is currently the Director of the Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee Research Foundation.

**Atul Jain** Born in Delhi on May 31, 1960, Shri Atul Jain became active in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parisad from the very first year of his college life. He has held various responsibilities in many newspapers and magazines. Atul Jain has been the editor of *Manthan* and an Advisor in many government institutions. He has also edited the six-volumes *Virat Purush Nanaji Deshmukh* and produced and directed a 13-episode documentary on the life, work and thoughts of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya. Atul Jain is presently the General Secretary of Deendayal Research Institute and the Secretary of the Ekam Manan Darshan Anusandhan Evam Vikas Pratishthan.

**Kewalram Ratanmal Malkani** (19 November 1921 – 27 October 2003) was an eminent journalist, historian and politician associated with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He was the Vice-President of the party from 1991 to 1994. He was Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, from 1994 to 2000 and served as Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry from July 2002 till his death. He was the Editor of 'Organiser', 'Panchjanya' and 'Motherland'. Born in Hyderabad of Sindh (now in Pakistan), he was also the Vice-President of Deendayal Research Institute (DRI), New Delhi.

**Asghar Ali Engineer** (1939-2013) was an Islamic scholar belonging to the Dawoodi Bohra community. He was a popular writer and social reformist. He is known for his works, Communalism in India and Problems of Muslim Women in India.

**Hongasandra Venkatramayiah Seshadri** (1926-2005) was a lifelong Pracharak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). He served as the Sarkaryawah of RSS from 1987 to 2000. He was an erudite scholar and noted public intellectual. His work, *Tragic Story of Partition*, is a well-known contribution to revelation of some shadowed aspects of Partition of India.

**Mufti Samsuddin Ahmad** was a member of Jamiat-e-Islami. He hailed from Aara district in Bihar. He started his career as an employee in TISCO. He later went to Saudi Arabia for his professional career. Upon return to India, he became public relations secretary of Markaz Jamiyat, Delhi. His book, *Shamme Risalat*, on Hadith is a famous piece of work. He was a prolific writer and Markaz Maktaba Islami published a number of his books on Islamic religious issues and doctrines.

**Kuppahalli Sitaramayya Sudarshan** (1931-2012) served as the fifth Sarsanghchalak of RSS from 2000 to 2009. Previously, he had also served as the Baudhikh Pramukh of the organisation. He had received his training as a telecommunication engineer. In his public life, he emerged as a scholarly voice on socio-cultural history of India.

**P. Parameswaran** (1927-2020) was awarded Padma Shri in 2004 and Padma Vibhushan in 2018. He was an accomplished scholar and have penned several books on Hindu thoughts and national movement. He served as the Vice-President of erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh in the 1960s. He was also the Director of DRI. He had a long association with Vivekananda Vichar Kendra.

**Syed Shahabuddin** (1935-2017) served as an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer. He turned to politics in the latter part of his life. He emerged as an advocate of Muslim laws and community interests during his tenure as a parliamentarian. He edited a magazine, 'Muslim India'.

**Dr. Gopal Singh** (1917-1990) was an activist and a career politician. He served as a Rajya Sabha member, as the Lieutenant Governor of Goa and later as the Governor of Nagaland. He is credited with translating the *Guru Grant Sahib* into English and for writing the biographies of *Guru Nanak Dev* and *Guru Gobind Singh*.

**Braj Kumar Nehru** (1909-2001) was an ICS officer and served as India's Ambassador to the United States. He served as the Governor of Gujarat and also of Jammu & Kashmir. He was a cousin of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 1999.

**Moazziz Ali Beg** is a Professor of Psychology in Aligarh Muslim University.

**Balraj Puri** (1928-2014) was a famous journalist and political commentator, who served as the Director of Institute of Jammu & Kashmir Affairs. His work, *Kashmir towards Insurgency*, is held in high regard for his scholarly presentation of the subject. He was honoured with Padma Shri in 2005.

**Dr. Karan Singh** (1931-active) belongs to the erstwhile royal family of Jammu & Kashmir. He served as the Sadar-i-Riyasat and as the first Governor of Jammu & Kashmir. He is a noted public intellectual and parliamentarian. He has authored several books on cultural aspects of Indian society. He also served as the Chancellor of Benaras Hindu University (BHU).

**Dr. Narayan Samtani** was Born in 1924, Dr. Narayan Samtani emerged as an influential scholar of Buddhist Philosophy and Pali language. He played an important role in establishment of a separate department for the study of Pali language at Banaras Hindu University. He was honoured with Sahitya Academy Award in 2005.

**M. Rafiq Khan** Born in 1933 at Jaunpur of Uttar Pradesh, M. Rafiq Khan was an Islamic scholar. He was associated with Jamia Millia Islamia and Gandhi Peace Foundation, Delhi.

**Minocher Rustom Masani** (1905-1998) was a freedom fighter and a member of the Constituent Assembly of India. He was a famous parliamentarian and a strong advocate of reforms for a free market economy. He emerged as a major figure of the Swatantra Party.

**M.J. Akbar** is a popular journalist, author and a politician. He was the Editorial Director of *India Today*. He was a member of Indian National Congress (INC) from 1989 to 2014. He, however, joined the BJP in 2014 and served as the Minister of State for External Affairs from 2016 to 2018.

**Dr. M. Manzoor Alam** (1945-active) hails from Madhubani, Bihar. He received his PhD in Economics from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). He has served as an Associate Professor at University of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He also worked as an Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Finance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is the Chairman of Institute of Objective Studies, Delhi, which he had founded in 1986. He is an Islamic activist and columnist.

**Parameswar Narayan Haksar** (1913-1998) was educated at the London School of Economics. He served as the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister of India from 1971 to 1973. He also worked as the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission from 1975 to 1977.

**Vinayak Krishna Gokak** (1909-1992) was a prolific Kannada writer and an educationist. He served as the Vice-Chancellor of several institutes and worked as the Director of Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1961 and received the Jnanpith Award in 1990.

**Imtiaz Ahmad** was a Professor of Political Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University from 1972 to 2002. His work, *Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India*, is a widely noted contribution.

**Bishambhar Nath Pande** (1906-1998) was a freedom fighter and a prominent leader of the Congress party. He was inspired by Gandhian philosophy. He served as the Governor of Odisha from 1984 to 1988.

**Maulana Wahiduddin Khan** (1925-2021) hailed from Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh. He was a renowned Islamic scholar, particularly noted for translating the Quran in contemporary English language. He served as president of Islamic Centre, Nizamuddin, Delhi. He was honoured with Padma Vibhushan.

**V. Gangadhar** is a Mumbai-based English language journalist and columnist. He is widely known for creating the character 'Trishanku'.

**Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer** (1915-2014) was a renowned jurist and served as a judge at the Supreme Court of India. He is remembered for pioneering the convention on public interest litigations (PILs) in India. He was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 1999.

**Dr. Sushila Nayar** (1914-2000) was a trained medical physician and an aide to Mahatma Gandhi. She emerged as a popular Gandhian activist in post-Independence period. She had also served as the Union Health Minister from 1952 to 1955.

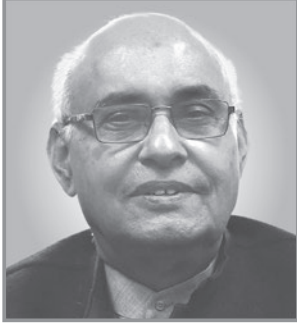
**Prem Narain Bhatia** (1922-1995) was a former Indian diplomat and an influential journalist. He was the Political Editor of *The Statesman* and the Editor of *The Tribune* and *The Indian Express*.

**Dr. A.R. Bedar** was the Director of Khuda-Baksh Oriental Library in Patna, Bihar.

**Lakshmi N. Menon** (1899-1994) was a freedom fighter, who turned to politics and served as Deputy Foreign Minister from 1962 to 1966. She was awarded Padma Bhushan in 1957.

**Madhav Vittal Kamath** (1921-2014) was a famous journalist who served as the Editor of *The Sunday Times* and *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. He was awarded Padma Bhushan in 2004.

**Dr. Shashank Dwivedi** is the Director (Publication) of Mewar University (Mob: 9001433127)



Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma

## Editorial

Season's greetings!

The January-March edition of '*Manthan*', the first issue of the calendar year 2023, is in your hands. This issue is dedicated to the memory of Shri Kewalram Ratanmal Malkani, popularly known as K.R. Malkani or simply Malkaniji. His birth centenary was celebrated on November 19, 2022. The report of the function is given in this issue.

Malkaniji was a sensitive intellectual and a responsible journalist. For nearly five decades, he was engaged in journalistic writings. Naturally, there was a thematic variety in his writings. His family was associated with the freedom movement in Sindh province. His elder brother Shri Naraindas Ratanmal Malkani was a Gandhian Congressman. Shri K.R. Malkani came in contact with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) while he was in Sindh itself. Sindh in particular had suffered the terrible tragedy of Partition. The Swayamsevaks of the Sangh did not accept the two-nation theory based on religion. Therefore, he became an exponent of the ideology espousing 'Akhand Bharat'. He started his work as a journalist with 'The Hindustan Times'. But on the insistence of then Sarkaryavah of RSS Shri Eknath Ranade, he left 'The Hindustan Times' and agreed to become the Editor of the newly published weekly '*Organiser*'. The English world has generally been getting to know about the Sangh through '*Organiser*' only, and he held the position of its Editor for four decades long.

Shri K.R. Malkani was the first prisoner of Emergency in 1975. He was imprisoned on the night of 25th June under MISA. The main reason behind his arrest was that he was the Editor of the daily '*Motherland*'. He remained in jail throughout the Emergency period. The best use of the prison is to get engrossed in studying. Malkaniji was a voracious reader anyway, and the jail turned him into a multidisciplinary one. He has described this in his book '*The Midnight Knock*' (*Aadhi Raat Koi Dastak De Raha Hai*).

For some time, Malkaniji was the Editor of both '*Organiser*' and '*Motherland*'. The publication of '*Motherland*' could not be revived after Emergency. However, '*Organiser*' was published again and Malkaniji

continued to be its Editor till 1983. After that, he became the Vice-President of Deendayal Research Institute and the Editor of research journal '*Manthan*' published by it.

The issue of Indian Muslims is also one of those new perspectives he got about during his studies in the jail. In 1979, he wrote a chapter 'Muslims—A New Perspective' in his book 'The Midnight Knock'. The Hindu-Muslim issue kept churning in his mind, so he published an article in the June 1988 edition of '*Manthan*', titled 'Resolving Religio-Cultural Differences in the Service of the Indian People'. Copies of this article were sent out to more than a hundred intellectuals of the country, followed by a splendid but sensible and insightful debate. That dialogue is published in this issue. The research article he wrote was published in the June 1988 issue of the English '*Manthan*' and the August 1988 issue of the Hindi '*Manthan*'.

The first reaction to this article appeared in 'The Indian Express' on July 7, 1988, written by Shri Asghar Ali Engineer: "I am happy and astonished to learn that Shri K.R. Malkani of Deendayal Research Institute has prepared an essay so as to have a discussion with the Muslims. I can vouch that this introductory article is undoubtedly a balanced one and can set the tone for a dialogue with our brothers belonging to the majority community. The representative organisations of the Muslims should also draft similar documents for discussion with the Hindus. There is a lot of room in Islamic jurisprudence for this kind of exchange of ideas. The Institute of Islamic Studies is well prepared to prepare such a document for dialogue."

Shri Asghar Ali prepared that document and Malkaniji published it in the September 1988 edition of the English '*Manthan*'. The title was 'Hindu-Muslim Problem: A Cooperative Approach' (*Hindu-Muslim Samasya: Ek Sahakari Drishtikon*). On the cover of this draft, it was written 'A Document for Promotion of Hindu-Muslim Dialogue' (*Hindu-Muslim Samvad Samvardhan Ke Liye Ek Pralekh*). The article was published in the December 1988 edition of the Hindi '*Manthan*'. This article is also included in this issue under the dialogue.

The views of Shri K.S. Sudarshan, the then Bauddhik Pramukh of RSS who later rose to become the Sarsanghchalak, and Shri H.V. Seshadri, the then Sahsarkaryavah who later became the Sarkaryavah, expressed in their respective articles are quite frank and outlining the hard ground of truth. The perspectives of these three senior leaders of the Sangh—Shri Malkani, Shri Seshadri and Shri Sudarshan—also reveal the inner dialogue within the Sangh. In course of time, it was the Muslim leaders who came in contact with Shri K.S. Sudarshan only who established the ‘Rashtriya Muslim Manch’.

Eminent intellectuals of all the ideologies of the country presented their views on the model proposed by Malkaniji. They are very insightful. Muslim intellectuals are also among them, their reactions sometimes expressing positivities while sometimes deep negativities. Shri Syed Shahabuddin had made the most negative comments. This dialogue is very interesting and percipient as well as very relevant even today. That is why this issue has been planned.

In the atmosphere prevailing today, sometimes it feels like there is a lot of tension, which is not conducive for a dialogue. But it is not true. The very Indian character by nature is that of dialogue. There is a need for credible and meaningful initiatives. This occasion of the birth centenary of Malkaniji gives us an opportunity to take forward that initiative of Malkaniji.

‘Organiser’, ‘Motherland’ and ‘Manthan’ filled almost whole of his journalistic life. You will find the corresponding material too in this issue. ‘Manthan’ will dedicate the year 2023 to the memory of great men. In this series, the next issue will be a special one on Saheed Bhagat Singh.

Good luck.



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Prof. (Dr.) Pramod Kumar

## Understanding K.R. Malkani through ‘Organiser’

### Abstract

Kewalram Ratanmal Malkani, popularly known as KR Malkani, was an Indian journalist, author and researcher, who is remembered for high journalistic values and extraordinary investigative skills in the post-Independence Indian media. Though he started his career in journalism as a sub-editor with *The Hindustan Times* in early 1948, he earned high popularity as the editor of *Organiser*, which he edited from 1948 to 1983. The regimes of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs Indira Gandhi were so vigilant about his writings that the copy of *Organiser* was provided to them immediately after it was published. The then PM Pandit Nehru had once himself told Malkani that “he eagerly awaits every issue of the weekly to see what the latest criticism against him was”. Perhaps, it was because of this ‘extra vigil’ that Malkani was first to be arrested just two hours after the Emergency was imposed in India at the midnight of June 25, 1975, and was among the last to be released in March 1977. Not only this, a censorship was imposed on *Organiser* in 1950, which was challenged by Malkani in the Supreme Court on April 17, 1950. The Supreme Court, on June 5, 1950, declared the censorship unconstitutional. During his stint as editor of *Organiser*, Malkani provided space to numerous authors and leaders

of all ideologies including Father Anthony Elenjimittam, Purushottam Das Tandon, KM Munshi, Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayprakash Narayan, Dr Karan Singh, etc. Even some staunch communists were happy to share their concerns on different issues through *Organiser*. Malkani represented the generation of Indian journalists for whom journalism was a mission. That is why he left *Hindustan Times* to join *Organiser* even at lesser remuneration. Since, the year 2021-22 is the birth centenary year of that warrior journalist (November 19, 1921—October 27, 2003), it is relevant to understand his contribution to Indian journalism through his writings in the weekly that he edited for 34 years. The researcher also had the opportunity to work with *Organiser* for 28 years and also interact with Malkani on several occasions.

**Key Words:** *KR Malkani, Organiser, RSS, AR Nair, Voice of the Nation, The Motherland, Panchjanya, The Hindustan Times*

### Introduction

As a journalist, K.R. Malkani has impacted many generations of journalists in the post-Independence Indian media through his uncompromising writing and unusual investigative skills. He was ‘a fiercely nationalist journalist’ (Koshyari, 2021), great visionary,

It is K.R. Malkani who shaped present day *Organiser*. An account of his contribution through his writings

articulate author and powerful speaker for whom the nation was always first. He would not hold back his pen on anything he was convinced about. He belonged to the generation of journalists which emerged from the freedom movement with missionary zeal. After joining *Organiser*, he never turned back and continued to work with almost negligible facilities, scant staff and while facing many hardships created by the then ruling dispensations. No attraction could deviate him from his nationalist path and commitment. After leaving *Organiser* in 1983, he joined Deendayal Research Institute rather than any other media house. He was committed to the national cause even while he was a Rajya Sabha MP. Malkani was born on November 19, 1921 at Hyderabad in Sindh (now in Pakistan) and received education from D.G. National College, Hyderabad (Sindh), Fergusson College of Pune and School of Economics & Sociology, Mumbai. His first job was at his alma mater at D.G. National College as a lecturer, where he worked for two years from 1945 to 1947 before joining *Hindustan Times* as a sub-editor in early 1948. He took over as the editor of *Organiser* in late 1948 and proved to be the youngest and longest serving editor of

the weekly. For a brief period, he also simultaneously edited *The Motherland*, a sisterly daily publication of *Organiser* from 1971 to 1975, and *Panchjanya* Hindi weekly. In 1971, when the East Bengal war broke out, Malkani published an evening daily under the title *The Motherland*. It was a four page daily printed on the broadsheet. He was a Nieman fellow at Harvard University during 1961-62. He was also the general secretary of Editors' Guild of India during 1978-79.

*The Midnight Knock* (1977), *The RSS Story* (1980), *The Sindh Story* (1984), *Ayodhya and Hindu-Muslim Relations* (1993) are some of his popular books. His book *India First* (2002) is a compilation of some of his articles over the years. His last book, *Political Mysteries*, investigates several major Indian political assassinations including that of Mahatma Gandhi, Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, the Kashmir Princess, Kanishka aircraft bombing and the Purulia arms dropping case. He passed away on October 27, 2003, while he was Lt. Governor of Pondicherry. He was a Rajya Sabha MP from 1994 to 2000. He served as vice chairman of Deendayal Research Institute (DRI), New Delhi, from 1983 to 1991. As part

of his birth centenary celebration, which began in November 2021, different activities have been organised across the country to remember his contribution to journalism. Hence, it is relevant to understand his thoughts through his writings in *Organiser*, where he worked as editor for more than three decades.

Unlike many present-day editors, who do not even write editorials for their newspapers, Malkani wrote not only editorials for every issue, but also the cover stories himself. Senior journalist K.N. Gupta, who worked with him in *The Motherland*, recalls Malkani's farsightedness, analytical skill and courageousness thus: "Malkani was the man who had predicted that an Emergency would soon be imposed! He had published front-page news in *The Motherland* as early as January 1975 saying that Mrs Indira Gandhi shall soon impose an Emergency and throw all Opposition leaders behind the bars and ban RSS, etc. Nobody believed the prediction when it was made, but later it came true. Emergency was imposed within six months of his prediction. This news was presumably written on the basis of a prediction made by a Jana Sangh stalwart from Bombay Shri Vasant Pandit, who happened to be a great astrologer too. Pandit had told LK Advani that there would soon be a two-year exile. Only a visionary editor like Malkani could dare to publish such a story during those days" (Gupta, 2021).

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The objective of the present study is to understand the contribution of K.R. Malkani to Indian journalism. Since the nature of the study is historical, the prime source of the information is the content published by *Organiser*.

Particularly, the editorials and cover stories written by Malkani and the articles appeared in *Organiser* from 1948 to 1983 have been considered as source of data. Also, the views of some of the persons who had association with Malkani or worked with him in *Organiser* or *The Motherland* have been considered

### Research Methodology

The objective of the present study is to understand the contribution of K.R. Malkani to Indian journalism. Since the nature of

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### Beginning of *Organiser*

The idea of starting an English weekly germinated well before the Independence when a limited company, Bharat Prakashan (Delhi) Limited, was formed with the contribution of 16,000 shareholders in 1946. Under this limited company, the first issue of *Organiser* (dated July 3, 1947), hit the stand in last week of June 1947. The move to form Bharat Prakashan (Delhi) Limited was led by a young Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Pracharak, Vasant Rao Oak, with the support of Devendra Vijay Dadhwal, editor of a Hindi journal *Dainik Bharatvarsha*, Amarnath Bajaj and Chaithram, both government employees, as well as Lala Charat Ram of Delhi Cloth Mills. The main brains behind starting a publication in English from New Delhi were the then senior RSS Pracharaks, Madhav Rao Mulye and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. Deendayal ji was simultaneously preparing to start a Hindi monthly magazine, *Rashtradharma*, and Hindi weekly, *Panchjanya*, from Lucknow. The famous Latifi Press, which was printing *DAWN* till Partition, became the first printing press for *Organiser*. Eventually, this press was bought over and was

made into Hindustan Press after Independence.

No doubt, some RSS people were behind the publication of *Organiser*, very few people know that the first editor of the weekly, A. Raghavan Nair, was not from the RSS school of thought, rather a man who was known for his tilt towards Marxism. Basically, not to wear the Hindutva tag while being in the media profession was the suggestion of none other than the then RSS Sarsanghachalak Shri Guruji. Nair was the choice for his superior editing and linguistic skills. He joined *Organiser* in June 1947. Hailing from Kerala, he had previously worked with *The Straight Times* in China and Bangkok, *The Statesman* and *The Hindustan Times*. *Organiser* continued publication till January 1948, exactly for seven months when the government confiscated *Organiser* press and office following ban on RSS alleging its involvement in the assassination of Gandhi ji. Then A.R. Nair started his own newspaper, *The Delhi Times*, in 1950. Commenting on Nair's association with *Organiser*, his son Krishna Raj says: "My father's association with the RSS journal was purely professional and not at all ideological. He was well-versed not only in English language but also in Hindu philosophy and Indian culture" (Nair, 2018).

An unsigned news story published in *Organiser*, issue dated January 28, 2018, thus explains the initial objectives of the publication: "Undoubtedly, providing space to the alternative voices that were pushed to the periphery by the ecosystem created by Congress-Communist alliance in the post-Independent Bharat was one of the key

objectives of the publication. On the positive side, it also meant to recontextualise the traditional roots of nationhood on the strong edifice of civilisational ethos for which our forefathers fought against the external aggressions. ...*Organiser* experienced the first stumbling block after the brutal assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The ban on RSS with nefarious designs forced the fledgling weekly to close down within six months of its beginning. After the unconditional lifting of ban on the RSS, among many things that resumed normal activity was *Organiser*. This time, Kewal Ratan Malkani was called in to edit the weekly. Malkani soon became the face of the weekly and edited it from 1948 to 1983" (*Organiser*, 2018). Prafulla Ketkar, present editor of the weekly while explaining the ideological leaning of the weekly says: "Every publication has some ideological leanings, overt or covert, but they avoid accepting the same. *Organiser* openly accepted that our inspiration is the thought of 'inherent cultural integration of Bharat' propagated by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), especially when the nationalist voluntary organisation was an anathema to many. While doing that, instead of just being a mouthpiece of the organisation, *Organiser* chose to be the voice of all marginalised who were speaking for the eternal ethos" (Ketkar, 2018).

### Official Acts of Harassment

K.R. Malkani was not merely the first journalist to predict the imposition of Emergency through a news story in *The Motherland*, he was first to be arrested soon after the Emergency was imposed. Senior journalist of *Indian Express*,

Coomi Kapoor, narrates the arrest of Malkani in her book, *The Emergency: A Personal History*, thus: “Malkani was woken up before 1.00 am on June 26, 1975 by a group of policemen who banged on the gate of his Rajendra Nagar bungalow and told him he was wanted at the police station. His house was surrounded on all sides, his small garden swarming with policemen”. News of Malkani’s arrest was also carried as a small box item on the front page of *The Hindustan Times*, which was the only Emergency news that made it to the next day’s newspapers (Sharma, 2020).

Prior to it about twenty-five years back, Pandit Nehru regime had also tried to silence Malkani in early 1950s. Amidst the atmosphere of calls to war with Pakistan and violence against Hindus in West Bengal and Pakistan, *Organiser* published a front-page article titled ‘Six Questions’ on February 27, 1950. It was followed by a series of articles exposing the brutalities against Hindus by Muslims fanatics having links with Muslim League. Pandit Nehru regime used the iron hand to curb the reporting on these sensitive issues and K.R. Malkani was called to explain himself to the Central Press Advisory Committee, which he again protested through an editorial describing it ‘official

acts of harassment’. This led to the imposition of censorship on *Organiser*, which was challenged in the Supreme Court on April 17, 1950. On June 5, finally the Court declared the relevant section of the East Punjab Public Safety Act unconstitutional. “The crackdown by the Congress regime on *Organiser* during Emergency was so ruthless that the weekly could not recover even so far. Its printing press was ruined and the entire office record, including old copies of the newspaper, were destroyed. Later, it somehow collected copies from the readers to even prepare the office files, but it could not purchase a printing press even so far” (Batura, 2018).

### Nieman Fellow at Harvard University

Despite being an editor and having sharp acumen, Malkani was very particular to update his skills. It was for this objective that he, in October 1961, secured Nieman fellowship at Harvard University and left for the US for two years. Those two years helped him in understanding different international issues deeply and also make new friends at global level. In his absence, LK Advani, who had joined as Assistant Editor in 1960, took over as acting editor of *Organiser*. Advani made a remarkable contribution

as a film correspondent and also contributing writing with various pseudonyms such as NETRAS. He had joined *Organiser* on the advice of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. Recalling his discussion with Deendayal ji on this matter he says: “One day, I shared my worry of how to fulfil my filial duties with Deendayal ji. He was a leader whose heart was always brimming with empathy for fellow party workers. He advised me to take up a job in *Organiser*. ‘It is our own journal,’ he said to me. ‘And you’ll like the work there because you have always loved writing. The journal also needs a person like you. ... thus, in 1960, I joined *Organiser* as an Assistant Editor” (Advani, 2018). During those two years, the major issue covered week after week with intense passion was the Chinese aggression of 1962.

### Popular Columns

K.R. Malkani introduced many columns in *Organiser* to engage new readers. Some of the popular columns of those days include a satire titled ‘Satiricus’, which was contributed by Sudhakar Raje, who passed away on October 23, 2022 in Mumbai following old age. Apart from covering national and international current affairs, *Organiser* carried a variety of features like short stories, a question-answer column, book reviews and even sports. Its ‘Periscope’ feature carrying snippets on news was also very popular. The film review column titled ‘Cinenotes’ was contributed by LK Advani. Another popular column was ‘Political Diary’ contributed by the then general secretary of Jana Sangh Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. Advani ji recalls how the film review column

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‘Cinenotes’ was introduced: “One day in our editorial review meeting, we discussed the common perception that ‘our journal was too dry and only wrote about political issues. Malkani responded, ‘That’s true. We should also cover other interesting facets of life, such as films. But who will write on films?’ I volunteered and began writing a regular cinema column under the pen name ‘Netra’ (eye).” Advani ji also recalls how the column by Deendayal Upadhyaya (Political Diary) was introduced: “During my *Organiser* years, Deendayal ji began to write, on my persuasion, a weekly column called ‘Political Diary’. He chose a topical event or issue of the week and commented upon it with insightful analysis. Soon the column became popular among our readers. After writing two columns, Deendayal ji came to me and said, Lal, I cannot continue. It’s not in my nature to write like this. I’ll write about issues, not about myself. His utter inability and unwillingness to think about himself was of a kind that is unimaginable today” (Advani, 2018). *Organiser* had a relatively small circulation, but its visibility and influence in intellectual and political circles was considerable. Under Malkani, the paper began to be read avidly by friends and foes alike of the RSS and the Jana Sangh.

### Distinct Style of Hiring Journalists

It is important to note how Malkani ji used to hire new people for his team. Ramesh Chand Batura, who joined *Organiser* as a sub editor in 1964 and retired as Associate Editor in 2000, recalls his recruitment thus: “Malkaniji asked me to write two pieces on

any subject of my choice. I wrote the pieces and dispatched by post. Two weeks later, I received the joining offer. After negotiating the pay packet, I joined in 1964. I found there LK Advani too as Joint Editor. Both Malkani ji and Advani ji had a rare understanding of men and matters, good command over English and flair for writing. I think the years 1960-71 were the best years of *Organiser* as it was then one of the leading tabloids in the country having a circulation of around 40,000 per week and the sale of the special issues often touched 50,000. *Organiser* had two part-time artists, a painter-sculptor and a cartoonist Runga. During 1964-71, Malkani ji opened up *Organiser* to non-RSS people, changed the content, tried to modernise it and presented it as not just a past story but also connected it to the present day. It was because of that the circulation increased and it became available on the stands also” (Batura, 2018).

### Initiatives for National Integration

Since inception, *Organiser* under Malkani adopted different methods to voice the public opinion. As part of that, it conducted a Gallop Poll in September 1947 to know the opinion of Delhiites on some specific issues concerning the refugees coming from West Pakistan. The Poll was probably the first regular attempt in India to ascertain public opinion on important questions on national policy and was similar to the Gallop Poll conducted in the US. Initially, the opinion of Delhi readers was sought on four questions. These questions were asked both in English and Hindi so that large population could respond. The results of the

Poll were published in the issue dated October 16, 1947. Taking this initiative further *Organiser* added three more questions in this questionnaire in September 1947 and sought the opinions of larger audience all over the country on total seven questions. In 1958, *Organiser* supported the countrywide signature campaign for cow protection. Gopashtami Jan Jagran fortnight was observed all over the country in response to the call made by Go-hatya Nirodh Samiti. Later, when the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri appealed to the countrymen after 1965 war to leave one time meal, *Organiser* supported that campaign too” (Kumar, 2018).

### Investigative Journalism

Through *Organiser*, K.R. Malkani played a crucial role in pushing the governments to investigate the mysterious deaths of Lal Bahadur Shastri and Deendayal Upadhyaya. In fact, it was investigative journalism par excellence. Following a lead left by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia about a suspected ‘foul play’ in the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri, *Organiser* proceeded in the case. Dr Lohia had examined the available data on Shastri ji’s death and wrote about it in his journal *Mankind*. *Organiser* led the investigation further. In the first report titled ‘Some Unknown Facts about the Mysterious Death of Shastri’ (issue dated January 17, 1970), the newspaper asked about the whereabouts of some of the people who were present in Tashkent with Shastri. One, Jan Mohammed, a personal bearer of TN Kaul, who was then Indian Ambassador to Moscow, was missing after the case. Also, R. Kapur, the security officer in the Tashkent Villa, where Shastri

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died in the wee hours of January 11, 1966, was out of the picture soon after the event. *Organiser* article echoed in the Parliament with members like Raj Narain (SSP), TN Singh (Congress) and Dahyabhai Patel (Swatantra) flagging the issue. Soon the protest gathered with some 50 MPs calling a press conference to demand an enquiry. A report about it was published in the issue dated April 16, 1970. One of the closest confidants of Shastri, TN Singh went on record to say that “I am more than confident that Shastri did not die a natural death”. An interview of Shastri’s wife, Shrimati Lalita Shastri, originally given to *Dharamyug*, was reported in *Organiser* in the issue dated October 10, 1970. In that interview Mrs Shastri informed about her suspicion that water in Shastri’s thermos flask had been poisoned. A series of two crucial reports also came out in the issues dated November 7 & 14, 1971, which exposed the anomalies in the medical reports about Shastri’s death. Finally, after a lot of reluctance, a White Paper was brought out, and for its discrepancies *Organiser* termed that as ‘A Black White Paper on Shastri ji’s Death’ in the issue dated December 26, 1970. Similarly, *Organiser* played a crucial role in the mysterious murder of Deendayal Upadhyaya. Reports about new evidences and witnesses were persistently printed and new questions were raised. The newspaper also kept a close eye on the functioning of Justice Y.V. Chandrachud Commission and engaged critically with its findings in multiple reports.

### Shaping the National Discourse

A look at the issues majorly covered by *Organiser* reflects the way it has shaped the national discourse. The editorial in the inaugural issue (July 3, 1947) mapped the communal divisiveness in the manifested political culture stating that “the grant of separate representation to Muslims in legislature and local bodies was an electoral monstrosity whose cruel purpose finds fulfilment in all its nakedness in the latest British plan for the division of the country.” The tone was set. *Organiser* was going to oppose a political culture manifested in the same colonial divisiveness around the identities of religion, caste, region, creed, etc. The weekly covered various indictments of Congress rebels such as JB Kriplani in the issue dated October, 16, 1948. The idea of coalition politics that became the talking point of national politics in the late 1980s was deliberated in *Organiser* in 1960s itself. Prominent political voices like Acharya Kriplani, C. Rajagopalachari and KM Munshi always contributed articles putting up a fight against Congress. Rajagopalachari criticised the growing culture of illegitimate financial contribution in politics. In an article published in the issue dated August 29, 1960 he wrote, “If payments to the ruling party for election purposes should also be made free of income tax as some have suggested, there is nothing more to be done for perpetuation of one-party rule.” Strengthening the democratic culture through popular participation was another consistent line that *Organiser* took. Way back in 1969, Subhash Kashyap, who later rose to become the Secretary General of Lok Sabha, argued the case for lowering the voting age from

21 to 18, which became a reality in 1987.

After Independence, *Organiser* boldly stood against the attempts of corruption and malpractices in general life. In 1951, when reports of the ruling Congress prostituting state machinery for electioneering advantages over opposition parties were rampant, *Organiser* chose plain-speak again stating ‘Congress Murders Democracy in Delhi’ in the issue dated September 17, 1951. Scandals and all sorts of institutional corruptions in ministries, judiciary, administration, and beyond were kept in journalistic scrutiny. Not only politics, but the emerging crony culture in industries under alleged socialist Congress rule was not spared. For instance, ‘Discriminatory working of Industrial Finance Corporation’, and ‘Sucheta Kriplani Committee’s Findings’ on it were covered in the issue dated April, 22, 1954. Leaders like Jagjiwan Ram, Abdul Rahman Antulay, Sanjay Gandhi, and anyone who was in the eye of storm over corruption were derided. From ‘Maruti’ to ‘National Herald’ all were assembled in the pages of *Organiser*. A report published in the issue dated March 17, 1952 covered the news how *Organiser* was banned by Sheikh Abdullah for voicing the truth of Kashmir. When Antulay and Datta Samant declared war on *Indian Express* for exposing their misdeeds, *Organiser* stood with the newspaper in support. A detailed report was carried in the issue dated November, 29, 1981.

### Fight for Institutional Integrity

*Organiser* stood against the appropriation of institution by

Congress system. From the very beginning, be it electoral malpractices, ideological colouring of educational and cultural institutions, compromising security and defence, the weekly acted as the conscience of the 'Rashtra'. Much before the war with Pakistan in 1965, *Organiser* kept a close eye of scrutiny on the building bond between Pakistan and USA. The issue dated March 15, 1954 carried reports on arms supply to Pakistan by US. Much to the surprise, Pt. Nehru and his government didn't take all that seriously. Again, the weekly, in the issue dated August, 28, 1961 raised the alarm about an alleged deal asking 'Was the Pact Signed?' It was reported that Pakistan was to get 3000 planes and 21 warships. The high drama of 'National Integration Council' was also exposed by *Organiser* when it published the indictments of Acharya Kriplani who questioned the very basis of the institution. The manifestation of majority versus minority, and thus, the question of safeguards which the council institutionalised were rebuked by Kriplani as an attempt to 'promote sectarianism'.

The weekly also continuously covered the rising Muslim communalism in institutions like Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and how Banaras Hindu University (BHU) was cornered by Congress party for carrying 'Hindu' in its name. When a bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha to drop 'Hindu' from BHU, *Organiser*, in the issue dated November, 20, 1965, carried articles by C. Rajagopalachari in protest. The persistent ideological colouring of institutions such as ICHR, UGC and others in the stewardship of Nurul Hasan with

Indira Gandhi's patronage was extensively covered and opposed (*Azad, 2018*). Since beginning, articles and reports for demands of prohibition on cow slaughter started appearing in the weekly. In a report appeared in the issue dated January 14, 1954, Vinoba Bhave said, "I say, cow protection must be carried out in our secular state." A report carried in the issue dated July 12, 1954 mentioned how the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh at its Kendriya Karyakari Mandal meeting resolved: "We must protect the cow, without Satyagraha if possible, with Satyagraha if necessary!"

### The Idea of Bharat

Ever since its inception, *Organiser* has been as a platform of alternative discourse that was essentially 'national' in character. Independence was lambasted by Partition of the *motherland*. The historical editorial titled 'Whither?' in the issue dated August 14, 1947 specified that "much of the mental confusion and the present and future troubles can be removed by this ready recognition of the simple fact that in Hindusthan only the Hindus form the nation." This audacious stand stirred up censure and condemnation from others who characterised it as 'communal'. In 1947, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had commenced the campaign of vilification against anything 'Hindu'. He was reported as saying, "the very idea of a theocratic Hindu state is not only medieval but also stupid... the conception of Hindu state is Fascist in outlook." *Organiser* responded back! It was argued in many op-ed(s) that 'Hindu does neither denote any community, nor religion, not even any theological system. It is

a nationality. Moreover, Hinduism is not a religion in Muslim sense. It is a way of life. On March 4, 1966, a Citizen Council of Delhi meet was convened to pay tribute to Vinayak Damodar Savarkar after his demise. While speaking on the legacy on Veer Savarkar, Lohia observed: "I agree with Savarkar that all those who live in India are Hindus, whatever their religion. The word Hindu has a connotation similar to that of 'Hindi' and 'Hindusthan'. The connotation of Hindu should not be confused with that of Hindu dharma."

### Galaxy of Contributors

Under Malkani, *Organiser* enjoyed acceptability even among the ideological opponents, which enriched the content and made the debates more meaningful. In the early 1950s when a general despondency had started gaining ground Acharya Vinoba Bhave took to *Organiser* to express his views on the situation. He squarely blamed Prime Minister Pt. Nehru for failing on various fronts including food imports, banning cow slaughter and promoting village industries. "I regard this as a moral lapse", he wrote accusing Pt Nehru of indecision in his planning. In no uncertain terms, he asked the then Prime Minister 'fulfil promises or quit office'. Vinoba ji made a scathing attack on Prime Minister saying that "you have robbed the villagers of their industries without providing any return for the same. You do not have the courage to give clear guidance on any subject".

Field Marshal KM Cariappa too had space in *Organiser* in 1961 when he warned that "India is not likely to sit and watch as a complacent spectator if and when democracy is aggressed".

In an article, 'Physical and Moral Security of India' (appeared in Deepawali special issue) he says: "When I say that our youth should have sterling character, a high standard of discipline and sense of teamwork, I am certainly not being too idealistic. Having had the good fortune to have served my country as a soldier for nearly 34 years of my life and having had opportunities to meet and talk to thousands and thousands of our youth and our people, I have great faith in ourselves. I have faith in our youth. I have faith in our people of all classes".

Noted Gandhian KM Munshi, the founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, also contributed articles in *Organiser*. His article 'Relations Between India and Britain will never Be the Same Again, appeared in November 1965 issue, came up in the backdrop of the Indo-Pak war in 1965. After the UK had tilted its scales in favour of Pakistan expressing displeasure with India, the article was a timely warning to the nation in the context of emerging foreign relations. "After the non-aligned movement spearheaded by India under the leadership of Nehru, this was an alarming outcome", argued Munshi. Later, JB Kriplani, former president of the Congress, also shared his views in the weekly. In 1981, on the supply of arms by the US to Pakistan during the cold war days, Kriplani in his piece 'Our undiplomatic response to US arms to Pakistan' underlined the threat that the US arms to Pakistan posed for India. "Should we in India sit silently in these matters when a dangerous threat to our peace is obvious?" he wondered. Critically assessing the failure of diplomatic relations, he warned India against ploughing a lonely furrow. In the

issue dated December 6, 1981, former Union Minister Dr Karan Singh gave an interview to Dr BR Sharma to elaborate on his ideas on the Hindu culture. In the interview titled 'Hinduism is now ready for creative revival', he said, "Western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato. Plato's concept of philosopher king found its expression in Janak as an ideal king". Commenting on the crisis in India he said, "The problem in India is that of a clear philosophy on the part of the government of India. Our education system is totally devoid of any value system" (*Bhardwaj, 2018*).

### Endless Hardships

Recalling the news sense of K.R. Malkani and the hardships faced by the weekly, the long-time publisher of *Organiser*, Hemandas Motwani, who joined *Organiser* in 1962 and retired on April 30, 2000, comments: "I am witness to many ups and downs in the history of Bharat Prakashan (Delhi) Ltd, the publisher of *Organiser*. I find *Organiser* was at its peak during the period of K.R. Malkani, who was always eager to provide something different and new to the readers, which they did not get anywhere else. The vision and news sense of Malkani ji was exemplary, which was basically the most important factor behind the growth of the weekly. In those days *Organiser* was widely and frequently quoted in different newspapers and the Parliament. However, it made *Organiser* an eyesore for the Left parties and Congress. As a result, when we used to approach companies for advertisements, they would say, 'take money as donation, but don't publish our advertisement, otherwise the ruling party

leaders would harass us'. It was a big hindrance for years and the newspaper faced financial crisis occasionally. In those days Malkani was *Organiser* and *Organiser* was Malkani. It benefited us. The prime reason behind huge demand of *Organiser* was out of the box vision of Malkani ji in selection and presentation of news and articles. It was the only newspaper of opposition parties. Hence, the opposition leaders also read it attentively. Even the Embassies were our subscribers" (*Motwani, 2018*).

Senior RSS ideologue, Ranga Hari, reviews the contribution of *Organiser* and Malkani in national awakening thus: "The situation and conditions that prevailed in our country in late 1940s contributed very much to pave the way for a weekly of clear nationalistic ideological moorings. And, *Organiser* has been serving that noble purpose since its very inception. The weekly has never diluted its ideological commitment, thanks to the ideological inspiration provided by veteran editors like AR Nair, K.R. Malkani, LK Advani, and the current mantle bearers. *Organiser* has never minced words when it found necessary to criticise the prominent personalities from Prime Minister to junior leaders. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had once told K.R. Malkani that he was eagerly awaiting every issue of the weekly to see what the latest criticism against him was. Malkani had later said that such a remark from the Prime Minister of the country made him believe once again that the responsibility he was shouldering was Himalayan and Herculean. *Organiser* did not mince words when the situation warranted criticism, because nationalism



and nationalistic ideology were the sine qua non for it. Fear and favour are alien to *Organiser*. Hence, it never develops cold feet when it feels necessary to criticise even the personalities belonging to its ideological brotherhood. Now, the country undergoes a peculiar situation where ideology and commitment to it constitute the bottom line. Here lies the relevance of *Organiser*” (Hari, 2018).

### Conclusion

K.R. Malkani as the editor of *Organiser* stood for the core values of journalism to serve the nation and organise society for the national reconstruction. With the tag line of ‘Voice of the Nation’, *Organiser* intervened in policy making, provided alternatives, challenged the status-quo and never dashed the hope of organising people for a social and political transformation.

The journey of *Organiser* with Malkani has been an exploration of alternative space for those who challenged the establishment. In the arena of politics, culture, society, international relations, and most significantly the analytical categories, he demarcated a new territory that is rooted in the national ethos that is more integrationist than divisionist, more holistic than reductionist. Malkani played an active role in evolving and understanding India from the Indian point of view. His ‘criticism’, as mentioned by Pandit Nehru, was based on facts. That is why no agency could grill him and the actions against *Organiser* could not stand in the courts. Malkani represents the generation of Indian journalists who stood for truth and for whom nation was always first. His books are testimony to his unique exploratory and investigative aptitude. While being Rajya Sabha MP and Lt. Governor

of Pondicherry he delivered many speeches, which are still to be explored. Also, special studies can be conducted on his books, articles, editorials written in *Organiser* and the letters written to different people. His experience of 1961-62 when he was in the US on Nieman fellow at Harvard University can be explored. Additionally, the articles written by him in *Manthan*, a research journal by Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi, and some other publications need to be explored. As editor of *Panchjanya* and *Motherland* he wrote articles and editorials for these publications too. That too needs to be explored. His tenure as the general secretary of the Editors’ Guild of India during 1978-79 is also a separate topic of research. There is still a lot to be explored about K.R. Malkani and *Organiser*. The mass communication researchers can take it up in coming days. ●

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Dr. Anirban Ganguli

## K.R. Malkani and 'The Motherland' - Sentinels of Democracy

In its brief existence of about four years, between 1971 and 1975, *'The Motherland'*, edited by K.R. Malkani (1921-2003) achieved rare distinction and recognition in the world of journalism. It established itself as a fearless and uninhibited voice of the nation, relentlessly exposing the decay seeping into India's body-politic by the early 1970s. In that respect *'The Motherland's'* advocacy of *'India First'* and its unalloyed articulation of India's national interest remain unsurpassed. It was also its strident and uncompromising criticism of the Indira Congress and the Prime Minister's ways, which eventually led Indira Gandhi to shut it down at the first given opportunity after she imposed the Emergency.

While sifting through the columns and content of *'The Motherland'*, one is struck by its candidness and trenchant analysis of what ailed India, and its no-holds-barred and yet cogent criticism of the Indira-led establishment, its deep sensitivity about the culture of governance India needed and its reflection of the mood of rejection that was then building up within the national psyche. "There is hunger in the land and there is anger in men's mind", as Malkani put it. It was a rejection that would eventually symbolise the yearning for fundamental change, which prompted Indira Gandhi into

imposing the Emergency, ably aided by the elite and scheming members of her 'kitchen cabinet', who's addiction to power and to survive politically, turned India into one vast prison.

By the time he began editing *'The Motherland'*, K.R. Malkani had already established himself as the formidable editor of the weekly, "Organiser". He had already made his mark as a leading political thinker and intellectual, as a remarkable interpreter of the politics and political philosophy of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) of which he had become an early and active member. In fact, by 1971, Malkani was not only a witness, observer, analyst and interpreter of Opposition politics in India, but also an active stakeholder in that flow led by the BJS, which was founded by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee in 1951 under the most adverse and challenging circumstances, to ideate and launch a national political struggle for establishing an alternate vision of India to what was then being promoted by the dominant Nehru-Indira Congress system, propped up at crucial junctures by motley Communist groups.

The Jana Sangh was one of the finest cadre-based parties. Its worker-centrism, its insistence on ideology-driven politics and party-growth, and its foundation on *'India First'* politics, gave it stamina, resilience and

'The Motherland' is the newspaper which kept its focus on 'India First'. Its basic character was shaped by K.R. Malkani

samskara. In one of his riveting editorials in *'The Motherland'*, Malkani wrote, "A cadre is the crystallisation and embodiment of an ideology. It is the end-result of infinite samskaras. It is forged in the crucible of common ideals jointly pursued over a length of time. It has a heritage of battles fought together...Parties can coalesce only in people's struggle." Malkani himself would be a principal player in that heritage of battles fought together, as a relentless cadre-intellectual in the Jana Sangh and later as one of the founding members of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The BJP itself would continue the BJS's tradition of a people's struggle, eventually emerging as an effective and indomitable cadre driven mass party in post-independent India.

Malkani's generation of Jana Sangh and BJP leaders spent the better part of their political life in the Opposition. Throughout, they mounted a spirited and undaunted counter to the Nehruvian consensus and later to Indira's undemocratic dominance. *'The Motherland'* often brought out the articulate political activist in Malkani. Of the Opposition's view, he once wrote, "This is not a question of anybody lusting for office; people who have spent a quarter century in opposition could easily spend the rest of their lives there. Perhaps they would not even be comfortable in office. Any of them could have walked into the ruling party and got a good berth in it—if that is all they wanted. But they never wanted that. What they and every patriotic Indian, however, wants is to have a government with something more than a minority support, a government with moral

Malkani's generation of Jana Sangh and BJP leaders spent the better part of their political life in the Opposition. Throughout, they mounted a spirited and undaunted counter to the Nehruvian consensus and later to Indira's undemocratic dominance. "The Motherland" often brought out the articulate political activist in Malkani. Of the Opposition's view, he once wrote, "This is not a question of anybody lusting for office; people who have spent a quarter century in opposition could easily spend the rest of their lives there

authority, a government that shall enjoy the affection, and command the respect, of the people." Could anyone fault him for this articulation? In another column, he described, philosophically, the difference between Congressmen and non-Congressmen, "The difference between Congressmen and non-Congressmen is not ideology; it is attitude to life. All those who want a quick share in power are in the Congress. And all those who take their ideas and ideals more seriously than the material interests, are in the Opposition."

It was because of this unrelenting and undiminished opposition pressure, led primarily by the Jana Sangh, that India's democratic traditions got well-entrenched. Opposition leaders must be credited for this. Some scholars of post-Independence Indian politics have rightly argued that "the view that Indian politics was largely dominated by the Congress in the 1950s, with the Opposition only playing a marginal role, needs to be revisited. Although in electoral terms the opposition remained fragmented, this did not prevent it from playing an effective role in and outside Parliament."

The non-Congress political space expanded "surely, if

slowly..." The Jana Sangh found itself in that slow but sure expansionist mode. K.R. Malkani's *'The Motherland'*, in later decades, became one of the principle vehicles of Opposition politics and political philosophy, and of 'non-Congressism.'

Malkani emerged to become one of the preeminent political chroniclers of his times and *'The Motherland'*, was for a while, his most cherished and dynamic vehicle. K.R.Malkani's knowledge and repository of Jana Sangh history and of the political complexities of that age was vast and often overwhelming for those exposed to his erudition, his gargantuan memory and analysis of behind the surface of events and beyond. It was a quality that, in him, only sharpened and grew with the passage of time.

His intellectual thirst was driven by deep curiosity. His penchant for getting into details when analysing, led Malkani to undertake wide and comprehensive reading. It was a lifelong passion with him. His pen never ceased, his mind never stagnated, his curiosity never diluted and his deeper quest for strengthening, broad-basing and deep-rooting the nationalist narrative never slowed down.

*'The Motherland's'* staccato

## Manthan

style and impeccable English reflected K.R. Malkani's own style. Its content and concerns reflected his own deeper concerns and aspirations for India. The following lines, he wrote in an edit piece sometime in early March 1975, while discussing India's rise and the need to carve out her position of strength geopolitically, may very well pass off as *'The Motherland's'* own motto and journalistic line, "It must be clearly understood that a country the size and importance of India cannot be anybody else's satellite. India can only be a sun – with a solar system of its own."

When Indira Gandhi imposed the Emergency and the plan for imprisoning the Opposition was swiftly executed, Malkani, by his own admission, was the first person to be arrested in Delhi. Malkani had often displayed an uncanny political prescience. In March 1975, for instance, in one of his columns he wrote of the political situation in India as being "very fluid. You do not know what kind of government you will have next year." In mid-March of that year, the Deendayal Research Institute (DRI) of which Malkani would become vice president later, organised a seminar on 'Emergency under the Constitution and Democracy.' Speaking at the seminar, former Chief Justice of India, K. Subbarao, observed, "A situation may be visualised when the President and the Cabinet may collude to destroy our constitutional democracy." The DRI was perhaps the only think tank on the national horizon that had anticipated the suspension of democracy, democratic rights and cautioned the public against it long before others had even thought of it.

*'The Motherland'* was, as Malkani was to write later, "The only paper in India to announce on 26th June the imposition of the Emergency, arrest of leaders and the wave of national shock." Of Indira's gagging of *'The Motherland'*, veteran journalist Coomi Kapoor, who had worked under Malkani, writes, in her memoirs, "The Emergency: A Personal History", of the paper's "bold, sometimes sensational reports and stridently anti-Gandhi line", which had "personally infuriated the PM." The newspapers "controversial articles", writes Kapoor, "included the charge that there was political conspiracy in the murder of the railway minister Lalit Narayan Mishra in a bomb explosion in Samastipur. It dug deeper than other publications into the infamous Rustom Nagarwala case in which Nagarwala a retired army man, was accused of swindling the State Bank of India of Rs.60 lakh by mimicking Mrs Gandhi's voice and ordering the head cashier to deliver the money to Nagarwala."

"Malkani in *'The Motherland'* had also raised "many embarrassing questions about Sanjay Gandhi's Maruti factory, which were taken up in Parliament." Lines such as these, "Shrimati Gandhi has done certain things which would have destroyed a less popular Prime Minister. But the dignity of her bearing, the innocent ring of her voice, the indulgence due to a high-born lady, have all helped paper over such actions", or this, "Take for instance the small car licence to her son. Not many people were shocked. So many bogus men were getting licenses, so why not one for Jawaharlal's grandson? They

seemed to argue. Some perhaps even thought to themselves that Sanjay's car had a better chance of early materialising and that could mean an early car for those who can't afford the present makes", must have certainly rankled the Prime Minister herself, who was hell-bent on bending all rules and brushing aside all niceties and precedence in order to settle her son Sanjay, both financially and politically.

On the Nagarwala episode, Malkani unequivocally wrote, "Nagarwala's Rs. 60, 00, 000 withdrawal in the name of 'Mataji' would have blown up any other Prime Minister, but not Shrimati Indira Gandhi. The radio was mum, the press was soon tongue-tied. And the inquisitive were referred to court proceedings. If the court acquitted the Cashier, or if death claimed Nagarwala, surely that was not (the) fault of the Prime Minister! The whole stinking affair was neatly tucked away in a court file. Nobody will be surprised if the file itself disappears after some time. But nobody seems to bother over much. People are willing to forgive, and they are willing to forget—for services rendered, and to be rendered." It was observed that throughout the end of May 1971 and later, "Mrs Gandhi kept a discreet silence. Whenever the matter [Nagarwala case] was raised in an agitated Lok Sabha, she would quietly step out to her room and leave an embarrassed Finance Minister Y.B.Chavan, to face the music."

The l'affaire Nagarwala shook the nation. Corruption and money siphoning on such a huge scale came to light and in that, the top name seemed to be directly involved. Malkani was especially

trenchant on the Nagarwala episode. *The Motherland* carried out a series of exposes and Malkani asked, through his columns, what everyone else had in mind. “The question in the public mind will not stop arising. The question of questions is: from what account did Malhotra take out those Rs. 60 lakh? Whose money was it? Was it Smt. Gandhi’s personal account? Was it her party account? Was it her secret account with code number? Or was it foreign money on which she could draw at will? The Pradhan Mantri of a country, like Caesar’s wife, must be above suspicion. But, sad to say that the Nagarwala affair has cast a dark deep shadow over her name. People are asking whether her politics are based on foreign money. The whole thing has become a mystery wrapped in a riddle...” Naturally Malkani was always under the scanner and had been marked by Mrs Gandhi’s revenge radar.

For scholars and enthusiasts of India’s political trajectory post-Independence and post-Nehru, from the triumph of the Liberation War that led to the creation of Bangladesh – of which Malkani wrote in *The Motherland*, “when Bangladesh was liberated, many Jana Sangh sympathisers felt that Shrimati Gandhi had done exactly what Jana Sangh would have liked to do but was in no position to do” – to the nadir of the dark Emergency, *The Motherland* offers an intensive and extensive analysis and insight. The era and political climate in which *The Motherland* functioned is best described in Malkani’s own column, “Twenty-seven years after Independence, India is as poor as ever; it is neck deep in debt, and the gulf between us and

the developed world has widened many times over. This is an impossible situation. And yet the government is behaving as though all is well with the world and things are very much as they should be. We seem to be reconciled to a perpetual subordination of India and progressive pauperisation of the Indian masses.” Malkani assailed the corrosive effects of the then prevailing and ubiquitous ‘License-Permit-Quota Raj’ initiated in the Nehru-era and fine-tuned during the Indira age, thus, “The Permit-License-Quota Raj has reduced Hindustan to Corruptistan.”

Malkani took Indira Gandhi’s policies head on and incisively dissected them, exposing how many of them were adversely affecting India, “We are the only fools on earth offering ourselves up for exploitation – and calling it aid”, he lamented. Yet he always displayed the grace to appreciate Indira Gandhi’s articulations whenever it merited. Unlike Indira’s progeny today, his opposition to Indira was not personal or visceral, it was driven rather by the urge to protect and promote India’s national interest. Unlike the Sonia Gandhi-led Congress of a later era, which was vehement in its opposition to Pokhran II initiated by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in May 1998, Malkani’s *The Motherland* was supportive of Indira’s Pokhran I foray. He wrote, “It must be clearly understood that a nuclear explosion is not merely a big bang; it is a herald of big changes. It makes a qualitative change in the situation. It is like a person coming of age—when everything for him changes”.

The Nehruvian Era merged into the Indira Era, the Congress

behemoth was in ascendant, steeped in a sense of political invincibility. Malkani was unsparing and devastating in his critique of Indira’s India and of her Congress party. In his inimitable galvanising style, he wrote in *The Motherland*, “In the absence of any ideology, Congress has not been able to attract any idealists. They might mouth all kind of radical slogans, but basically they are all grubby grabbers. They do not suffer for the country; they make the country suffer for them. It is this twin tragedy of the Congress— absolute power and absolute absence of ideology—that has reduced that party to a living smelling corpse—and made a mess of the country.”

Of the Congress dumping its essential Gandhianess, he wrote, “Even before Independence, most of the congressmen did not believe in Gandhism; they took Gandhi only, because he was the ‘Mahatma’, whose religious idiom was an excellent vote-getter for them. Gandhi was, for the Congress, something of a trade mark. Today, the mark is gone, but the trade remains. The few Gandhian Congressmen, who really believed in Gandhism, were discarded long time ago.”

*The Motherland’s* essence, its direction, its positions and articulations were shaped and driven by RSS ideals and Jana Sangh ideology, both organisations to which Malkani had dedicated his life. In fact, it became an effective vehicle for the propagation of their philosophy and ideology. Several of his columns have a remarkable contemporary ring. One sees the RSS and Jana Sangh obsession of the Nehru-Gandhi clan even then.

On Indira’s insinuations

that the RSS was a violent and Fascist organisation, Malkani was unassailable in his response, “The whole thing seems to be an obsession with her and the Communists and the communalists crowding round her have a vested interest in making her obsession even more obsessive. She does not pause to ponder why, if the RSS is violent, no RSS worker has ever been convicted of violence in the 50 years of its existence—no, not even by her committed judges. Nor does she see how a “communal”, “Fascist” and “reactionary” organisation could attract and retain the large numbers of talented and idealistic men who are the core of every other party/movement.”

The range of Malkani’s columns in *‘The Motherland’* was phenomenal and fascinating. His knowledge of geopolitics, of American politics, of world diplomacy, of oil politics, his understanding of West Asian politics, of Afghanistan and erstwhile North-West Frontier Province, on corruption, on Hindutva and cultural issues, on labour issues, on food security and lifestyle, on electoral reforms, on Kashmir, on the Hindu-Muslim question and several other issues was extensive. Many of his columns continue to make for interesting reading today, even over five decades after they were written. His writings and sources also reflect a mind which was well conversant with currents of world thoughts, with arguments and narratives that leading minds across the world were churning out; his range of reading was intimidating and citations equally diverse.

An exponent and proponent of many causes, K.R. Malkani’s

position and articulations were often futuristic. In 1975, for example, he advocated voting rights for 18-year-olds long before the 61st Amendment came into effect. A strong votary of the promotion of Indian languages, Malkani, reflecting the Jana Sangh and RSS’s worldview, spoke of Swarajya being incomplete without Swabhasha. His columns in *‘The Motherland’* spoke of the need for education and administration to be imparted in the people’s language, to raise people and to bridge the gap between the people and the government. He was caustic in his denunciation of our over-dependence on English; such a denunciation could perhaps only come from someone who had quite thoroughly mastered the language as Malkani had. “Indeed, a man may know the whole world”, he wrote in *‘The Motherland’*, “but if he does not know English, in India he is considered “uneducated”. Such is the mythology of English-wallas. It perpetuates the caste system in a new form. English has eclipsed our own languages and made our own classics a sealed book to us. We quote Mill and Marx and Machiavelli, but we don’t know a thing about Manu or Panini or Chanakya. Small wonder we have lost all originality, Indian genius is a palsied plant today.”

He could dissect the Kashmir issue like few others. His long years of advocating one of the fundamental positions of the Jana Sangh on Kashmir, had often seen his razor sharp analysis debunking Sheikh Abdullah’s politics of at times soft, at times staunch separatism couched in the language of autonomy. What the people of Kashmir want, Malkani

argued, “is not autonomy – that is the hobby-horse of politicians; what they want is an honest living and good administration. If the government can accelerate the growth rate and give a clean administration, nobody is going to bother about the ‘quantum of autonomy’”, he wrote.

In analysing the world of Malkani’s *‘The Motherland’*, one could go on and on. While *‘The Motherland’* was intensely involved in shaping the narrative of the world in which it pulsed, it also had a view of the future, it was a future, in which ultimately peoples’ power would be awakened and emerge as the main driver of national progress, “all we need to do,” Malkani once wrote in *‘The Motherland’*, “is to awaken the silent majority to its power and its purity” and the rest would then start unfolding. Social justice and equity were cardinal dimensions for healthy and collective national growth, “We have not yet evolved into an integrated nation”, he wrote in one of his columns, “The sorrows of one section are not felt by other sections. We do not act and react as one—except when national defence is in danger. Once an external threat is over, we relapse into our normal lassitude. We do not react to injustice. We do not stir to right a wrong. We think and act as members of different castes and classes and communities and trades and parties—and not as Indian citizens.”

*‘The Motherland’* emerged as one of the most effective and inspiring voices of India and of Indian democracy. It is that legacy that is enduring and in it K.R.Malkani’s contribution shall remain abiding and unparalleled. ●



Atul Jain

## Malkaniji & 'Manthan' Practicality in Research

Last year, we celebrated the birth centenary of eminent journalist Late Kewal Ratan Malkani. He was a journalist, columnist, editor, thinker, ideologue, politician, parliamentarian and no one knows what all he was, in a row. He was the pioneer of an ideology but he was not rooted to it. Because, though he was bound by the ideology, he was quite pragmatic at the same time. Although he was in politics towards the fag end of his active life, he was mainly known as an intense nationalist journalist and editor. He was one of the founding editors of the country's leading weekly magazine 'Organiser' and daily newspaper 'Motherland'. He was also the editor of the research journal 'Manthan' for eight long years.

While editing Manthan, he himself wrote many research based articles on various subjects and also inspired others to follow suit. For him, research was not limited only to the documents in the archives. He had rather taken up the unique initiative of bringing eminent personalities of the country together on the platform of Manthan or Deendayal Research Institute and documenting their scholarly knowledge and wisdom. As a result, the intelligent readers of Manthan had an opportunity to see, understand and present historical things in the current context. Manthan became an essential reference book for the researchers of political science and

sociology. It continues to be so even today.

'Manthan' has been a long-cherished dream of Deendayal Research Institute. Ever since its inception in 1972, the dream of bringing out such a research journal was uppermost in the minds of the people associated with the institute. The plan to bring out such a journal was announced in the very first brochure published by the institute. It was envisioned that it would provide a platform to the scholars, experts and thinkers from all over the world where they could present practical and contemporary solutions to various problems by having meaningful, fair and objective dialogues there.

However, Manthan had to pass through many adverse circumstances in its initial stages itself. During the Emergency, almost all the activities of the institute came to a standstill. Those who were the backbone of the organisation were either put behind the bars or were waging an underground struggle under great pressure and tension. But as soon as the Emergency was lifted and the activities of the institute resumed, the publication of Manthan also remained one of its priorities.

At that time, a huge number of newspapers and magazines were being published. Nanaji and his team, however, decided that Manthan would not be just one of them. Manthan

K.R. Malkani's contribution in making 'Manthan' an exclusive research journal is unforgettable. Here is an overview of his work

## Manthan

would have a specific objective and a clear mission. As the very name suggests, it is meant for churning out ideas and ideologies. 'Manthan' is symbolically associated with the mythological ocean-churning. Nanaji was of the opinion that Manthan should be enlightening and knowledge should be the motivator for action – the right action. The knowledge that does not inspire action is lame, and the action which has not arisen from knowledge is blind. Manthan was fortunate to have had such editors who were deeply immersed in the current of this concept.

The period in which Malkaniji took over the responsibility of editorship of Manthan (1983-91) was politically a turbulent one. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated while daggers were drawn between two communities. In such a delicate time, he performed this responsibility with great caution and sensitivity. After the assassination of Indiraji, the country was ruled by quite inexperienced people. But Nanaji saw this as an opportunity for the country and through Manthan, Malkaniji converted it into a positive expression.

In 1989, the bugle of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement was sounded in the country. Such research works were published in Manthan for the next two years that irrefutable evidence started trickling in about the demolition of the original temple that existed at the birthplace of Lord Ram. Not only did he work with a lot of focus on this subject, Malkaniji also gave a brilliant edge to the wider aspect of the movement. Through Manthan, Malkaniji raised various aspects of issues like 'nationalism vs communalism' or 'secularism' with such references that the

debate went on tilting in favour of nationalism. Today, we can see the pleasant outcome of his efforts.

During the days when journalists generally used to keep people associated with the Sangh ideology out of their fraternity, even in those days Malkaniji had an acceptance equal to that of the journalists of all shades. Becoming a member of the Editors Guild of India was not a mean feat in those days. It was the most prestigious organisation of eminent editors of the country. Malkaniji was its vice-president and also a member of its various investigative committees. If we study his report published in the October 1987 issue of Manthan, it can be understood as to how objective and purposeful he was. On the one hand, he condemned the behaviour of the government and the bureaucracy in a bold but balanced manner, while on the other hand, he also strongly criticised the indecent behaviour of some journalists and the kind of yellow journalism they resorted to.

In view of the background from which he came or the lifestyle he had, it can never be imagined that Malkaniji could have had any special emotional attachment towards nature. But after reading 'Glorious little things', an article he had written in the March 1987 issue of Manthan, one would realise how 'Indian' he was. In fact, he had drawn our attention towards a lot of small things which are connected to our own self.

In the January 1987 issue of Manthan, he wrote a research based article 'Acharyon dwara samaj raksha' (protection of the society by saints) wherein Malkaniji did a very precise and accurate analysis of various Acharya tradition and Bhakti movements across the country, the concept of Bhakti in

Vedas, etc. Malkaniji believed that the 'mantras and meditations' do not have as much impact on the public as 'devotion' does. He also did not hesitate to say that the saints were left with only two choices: either they would become a bridge between Hindutva and Islam or they would challenge Islam. The effect of this was that Islam was much more influenced by the mysticism of Bhakti than anything else.

In this whole sequence, he was greatly influenced by Gandhiji. Quoting Gandhiji extensively in this article with many references, he has done a very striking analysis of the far-sightedness of our sages. Mentioning the role of Shankaracharyas in curbing religious conversions in the country, he has also drawn our attention towards many historical facts which were disappearing from the minds of the common people. He has given a beautiful account of the special role played by the Shankaracharya of Sringeri in the establishment of the Hindu empire in Vijayanagar.

Malkaniji knew very well that there is a difference in the interests of Hindi and English readers. In the English edition of Manthan's March 1988 issue, he presented an Indian perspective of the Russian revolution before the readers. In this article, he also focussed on the people of Russia and deliberated upon their education, agriculture, industry, religion, culture, literature and moral values in great detail there. Well-known communist leader and former Chief Minister of Kerala E.M.S. Namboodiripad too has made a detailed commentary on his article. At that time, Malkaniji was the editor of Manthan. Had he wanted, he could have printed Namboodiripad's remarks briefly or simply ignored it. But Malkaniji



gave it a bigger place than his own article. He gave similar respect to another noted communist leader A.B. Vardhan's article too. One of the major reasons for this must have been that giving references of political leaders in the writings was being given a lot of importance during those days. Whatever might be the case, it could only be the audacity of large-hearted people like Nanaji Deshmukh and Malkaniji that even staunch leftists like Namboodiriapad and Vardhan used to get such respect on the platform of Manthan.

Malkaniji very much disliked the differences between various sections of the society. He tried a lot to sort out these differences through Manthan. He also made efforts separately as a politician in this regard. In the June 1988 issue of Manthan, he made tremendous efforts to delve into the root causes of these disputes and suggested solutions to resolve them too. He also tried to create communal harmony by extensively quoting the messages of the Sufi poets and the couplets of Ghalib in his article. Through the verses of the Quran, he also tried to reach out to the minds of the Muslims so that they could understand its spirit.

A seminar was organised in Deendayal Research Institute on the Independence Day in 1988 and the dialogue held there would remain unforgettable. Nanaji Deshmukh and K.R. Malkaniji had initiated a sort of oblation to build a bridge between the people of India and Pakistan. The then Ambassador of Pakistan also participated in it. Apart from being an editor, this was an exemplary effort of Malkaniji to fulfill his national responsibility. Together with Nanaji, he had built relationships with journalists based

on mutual trust. There were strong ideological differences, but he had a mastery in the art of making everyone sit together bypassing those differences. A word by word report of the event was published by Malkaniji in Manthan.

Malkaniji did an excellent analysis of the viewpoints of Gandhiji and Jinnah on the interference of religion in politics. In the English edition of Manthan's April 1986 issue, he explained in detail how Gandhiji used to associate religion with morality and dutifulness whereas Jinnah had a narrow outlook. For Gandhiji, religion meant adherence to the rules of life whereas for Jinnah, it was just a way of worship. Gandhiji used religion to achieve freedom for the country while Jinnah used it for his personal gains only. In this article, Malkaniji believed that the Hindu-Muslim problem is not a religious one, but a problem arising out of social and historical reasons. This article of Malkaniji was not only inspired or influenced by his own thoughts, but was capable of making his points with concrete references.

Malkaniji was a dedicated volunteer of the Sangh. When the English Press was unilaterally spewing venom against Sangh, Malkaniji brought out such an impressive combination of the April and May issues of English edition of Manthan in 1989 that all the critics were left speechless. This was his unique effort to bring the Sangh into the mainstream. Together with Nanaji Deshmukh, Malkaniji published a book "How Others Look at the RSS", i.e. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in the eyes of others. In these two issues of Manthan, he compiled the writings and other documents of 38 authors belonging to different

ideologies. Even today, these issues are the most loved compilation of the outsiders' perception of the Sangh. In fact, these are the most important books for those who do research on Sangh and its ideology.

Look at the variety of topics that Malkaniji chose for Manthan as its editor – ranging from 'Meta theory of Hindu economics' and 'Were Marx and Engels racists?' to 'What the Red Indians did for the world, and how the white people treated them', so on and so forth. He has written a highly research based essay in Manthan on the role of spirituality in India's national unity. He also had a special interest in foreign affairs. He had sensed the ill intentions of China from the very beginning.

The cleanliness and perennity of Ganga was such a topic which had been troubling the people of the country for a long time. In October 1985, Malkaniji published a multidimensional issue of Manthan on this topic with articles of various subject experts and his foreword. If the articles were well researched and prepared with references, he did not hesitate to give space to anyone. Under his editorship, many such articles were published in Manthan which were written by foreigners. As far as the variety of subjects taken up is concerned, Manthan has set many benchmarks. No doubt education is a basic element, but going deep into it and doing research on both ancient and modern aspects on the same platform was possible on Manthan only. Otherwise, superficial debates are common even today. Along with the macro and micro aspects of economics, publishing the objective analysis of Five Year Plans was the specialty of Manthan during the tenure of Malkaniji. ●



K.R. Malkani

# Resolving Religio-Cultural Differences in the Service of the Indian People

The communal / religious problem in India has gone on for long. And it threatens to go on and on. At one stage it was hoped that Partition would solve the problem. But it has not. It has only duplicated it—and further complicated it. What was formerly a Hindu-Muslim issue, is now, additionally, an Indo-Pak problem.

Here is a problem that not only leads to social tensions and social violence, it retards the country's progress in every way. This is a problem that must be solved—and it can be solved in the light of our own and other countries historic experience.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to analyse the nature of the problem—whether it is religious, political or what—and to find the right set of remedies for it. These remedies have to be inspired by love and understanding. This method failed with Gandhiji only because, at that time, the third party was there to sabotage it.

The agitation for Partition—and the Partition itself—created so much heat and hatred that the method of love could not be tried for years. But now, forty years after Partition—with the people of Pakistan themselves in a very different mood—it is about time to think coolly and devise ways and means of forging a just and abiding solution of this old and vexed problem.

Although men of religion may or may not directly involve themselves in development work, there is no doubt that a clearer understanding, and a wiser handling, of the problem will create a harmonious atmosphere, in which the country could progress faster and better in all spheres.

## Modern Attacks on Religion

In modern educated India, it has long been a fashion to run down religion. It is assumed that religion is superstitious and backward-looking. All political disputes, old or new, in the name of religion, are debited to Religion—and not to Politics! In this theatre of the absurd, while secularism has been installed as the new religion of official India, Religion itself has been relegated to background as some kind of a necessary evil. Nobody has anything against secularism—if it means Justice for All, and non-discrimination on grounds of creed or religion, etc. But to treat secularism as a substitute for religion—or as whitewash for communalism—is to wholly misunderstand the nature, scope and function of both religion and secularism.

This official ridiculing of religion has an Indo-European history behind it. In Europe, the local princes had resented the primacy of the Pope even in matters political, as if he was heir and successor to the Roman

Even today, communalism is one of the gravest problems in India. It is existent here for a long time. An analysis of the problem along with a plan for solution

Empire. And the town traders had resented the various tithes of the Church. As a result, the two had combined to put Church men in their place and usher in the Reformation, under the leadership of Martin Luther. In the process, religion itself had been challenged and ridiculed. All this attack on Religion was mechanically adopted by educated India, even though it had no relevance to the Indian scene. Neither Hinduism nor Islam was an organised Church like Roman Catholicism. The tyranny in India came from the political tyrant (who may, occasionally, and hypocritically, invoke religion) and not from a tyrannical head of Hinduism or Islam; such a head simply did not exist in the two religions. Indian Islam knew *maulvis* and *maulanas*, but no Caliph. And even the Caliph in Turkey was Sultan only of Turkey; he had no political role in other Muslim countries—and only a nominal religious role in the Muslim world. Caliphs were kicked around by waves of ‘Muslim’ conquerors The Shankaracharyas etc. of Hindus were, of course, purely religious heads with no role in political or public life.

Another development in the West, which downgraded religion, was the insistence by the Church

that science must not say or do anything that may disprove theology. (To this day, in the Bible Belt of USA, Darwin’s Theory of Evolution is either not taught—or taught only along with the Biblical Theory of genesis of man from Adam and Eve.) If the Church said that the sun went round the earth, scientists were ‘heretical’ and therefore fit for the ‘Inquisition’ and the Stake—if they said that it was the earth that went round the sun. By pitting religion against science, the Church brought religion into ridicule in the eyes of the great and growing scientific community.

No such situation existed in India: Hinduism accepted science, much of which seemed only to endorse many Hindu beliefs and concepts. And science vs. religion never became an issue even for Muslims. Indeed, science had thrived very well for centuries in Muslim lands from Syria to Spain. But the rootless Indian intelligentsia mechanically adopted Western scientific criticism of religion and applied it to the religious communities in India!

On top of this, came the foreign missionary attacks on Hinduism. Since the ruler’s religion acquires a certain special prestige in the eyes of a subject people, Christian

missionary attacks on Hinduism came to be accepted by this same rootless intelligentsia as more or less true. And so we had Keshub Chandra Sen of the Brahma Samaj saying: “The Bridegroom (Jesus) is coming!” In China, Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek actually embraced Christianity.

These missionaries found it possible to attack Hindu religious thought and practices because Hinduism accepts the principle of freedom of religious thought. They did not dare to attack Islam, because Muslims believed their religion to be final and perfect, and they would not have hesitated to liquidate the critics of Islam, as per Islamic injunctions.

Some Hindus actually embraced Christianity; and many came to adopt a defensive and shame-faced approach to their own religion. And then came the political disputes—in the name of religion. Politicians are notorious for their cleverness. These gentlemen made it appear as if these disputes were due to religious differences—and not due to the politics of politicians and the general avarice of man. Even during Muslim rule, the fight was between oppressors and oppressed, and not between Muslim Pirs and Hindu Saints. The typical Indian approach was simply, but adequately, expressed by Kabir when he said: “Kashi Qaaba Ek Hai... Bhaj Man Ram Rahim.” More recently, the demand for Partition of India came chiefly from Aligarh Boys, old and new, and not from the Ulema or the Pirs.

All these factors combined to put Religion in the dock in the eyes of these English-educated ‘Macaulayans’. But religion was no kind of a dog to be given a bad

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name and hanged. On the other hand, it had reached the heights of philosophy when it said that “in the eyes of the Seer, the Brahmin, the cow, the elephant and the dog are all the same” but different expressions of Brahma (Gita-5:18). And although the mass of the people could not articulate their defence of religion in the modern idiom, for the satisfaction of our Macaulayan secularists, they knew the importance of Religion in their lives. They believed in Religion—and religion saved them. *‘Dharma Rakshati Rakshitah’* (Dharma protects those who defend it).

### The Absolute Importance of Religion

Dharma literally means ‘that which holds (everything) together’, ‘dhr’. And religion, ‘relegere’ in Latin, likewise means ‘to bind together anew’. So the people clung to their religion as a child clings to the mother. In this situation, even the high-priests of secularism had to come to terms with religion—if they wanted the people’s votes. And so Jawaharlal invariably attended the Kumbh Melas, Indira was demonstratively religious and even Rajiv displays an over-size *tilak*.

However, Religion is something much more than a politician’s convenience. Gibbon was being smart, but hardly profound, when he wrote that all gods are true for the populace, all gods are false for the philosophers and all gods are necessary for the magistrates. Gods are not just magistrates’ policemen—to help maintain law and order and public morals, through fear of God’s wrath. Fact is that Dharma, a ‘just and moral order’, is the very soul of civilisation. It is rooted in man’s joy and wonder over the mystery

of life. Modern science has lighted up the cities and woven many webs round the world; man has landed on the moon. But no science can explain the mystery of life—the unknown and unknowable. The firmament is as much of a mystery as the mind of man. Religion is an attempt at answering the questions that arise in man’s mind.

*“Whence are we, and why  
are we? Of what scene,  
The actors or spectators?”*

Religion is an attempt at interpreting the universe, the universal mind, and man himself, to mankind. While philosophers are free to speculate whether God created man or man invented God—forgetting that God is both, creator and creation, destroyer and destruction, play and player—fact remains that without the concept of an All-Powerful, All-Merciful, All-Beneficent God, man would go to pieces; he would lose his sanity. In the darkness of the jungle night, in the voids of outer space, and in the trackless paths of the human mind, it is this concept of God as ‘Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram’—and al-Rahman al-Rahim—that gives man hope and courage, to live and grow, in faith and charity. The English word ‘God’ is derived from the Gothic ‘Guth’, which is the same as the Sanskrit ‘Huta’, which means ‘one to whom oblations are made’. Without the concept of God, there would be no concept of civilisation, no idea of progress. As Voltaire put it humorously, “If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.” That is why Religion is as old as man—as old as civilisation. It is not the opium of the people, it is their Amritam. It is the Fruit, Flower, Flavour and Fragrance of Life. People who mock Religion only betray the arrogance of their

ignorance. They do not know the role of Religion in the evolution of Man.

Everybody is agreed that man needs to learn the three R’s—‘Reading’, ‘Riting’ and ‘Rithmetic; but unless man is imbued with the spirit of the Fourth ‘R’—Religion—he will not become truly human. The Arabic word for ‘insan’ means ‘Friend of all’ (*ins* means sympathy). And the Veda says: Mitrasya Chakshusha Pashyem, “Look (upon the whole world) with a friendly eye”.

The truly religious man sees God everywhere—in everybody and in everything. In the words of the English poet, he—

*“Finds tongues in trees, books  
in the running brooks.  
Sermons in stones, and good  
in everything.”*

He sees life steadily and sees it whole. He has an integral and integrating approach to life. The man of religion is at peace with himself and with the world.

As good old Hafiz of Iran said ages ago:

*Hafiza gar wasl khwahi,  
sulh kun ba aam-o-khas;  
Ba Mussalman Allah-Allah,  
ba Bramin Ram-Ram.*

“Oh Hafiz, if you want to be one with God, make peace with high and low—one and all; greet the Muslim with ‘Allah-Allah’ and the Brahmin, that is Hindu, with Ram-Ram.”

### The Essential Unity of All Religions

There is a general impression among Hindus that Islam is not much of a religion—and the Muslims return the compliment. But this just is not true. The Gita says—

*Ahamatma gudakesa,  
sarvabhutasayasthitah,*

*Ahamadisca madhyam ca,  
bhutanamanta eva ca.*

(Gita-10:20)

“I am the self, Gudakesha, seated in the heart of all things; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.”

And Koran says the same:

*Hu-wal-Awwal, Hu-wal-Akhir,*

*Hu-Waz-Zahir. Hu-Wal-Batin*

*Wa hu-wa be kulle shayin Alim*

“He is the first, He is the Last also; He is the outer, He the inner too, The manifest and yet unmanifest,

The Lord, ordainer, Knower of all things.”

Islam is not the only religion to say there is one God, Allah. The Veda says: “Ekam Sat; Dutyo Nasti”. Allah is not the God of Muslims (Rab-ul-Muslimeen) only; he is Rab-ul-Alimeen, he is the God of all men.

Mohammed says:

*Al-Khalqo ayal-Allahi;*

*fa ahabbul-khalqi il- Allahi*

*man insana ila a yalihi.*

“All creatures are the Family of God; And he is the most beloved of God, who does most good unto his family.”

Hindus are not the only ones to say there are numerous ways to God. The Prophet of Islam says in Hadis: “At-turqu il-Allahi kar nufusu bani Adam.” (There are as many ways to God as there are souls: as many, as the breaths of Adam’s sons.)

The Koran also says:

*La ekrahia f-id-din. La-kum*

*dinu-kum wale yadim; Udu ela*

*Sabili Rabbeka b-il-hikmate*

*W-al-mauezzatil hasanate.*

“There must be no compulsion exercised in matters of religion. Unto you, your faith be welcome; so my faith to me.”

The Koran elaborates: “To every people have we given a law and a way whereby they may

reach God. If God had wished it so, He would have made you all one people. He has not done so. Wherefore, let every people, in the way prescribed for it, press forward to good deeds. And let none laugh at any other man; perchance they may be better than themselves”:

*Li kullin ja’lna min-kum shira’an*

*wa minhaja, wa luu sha-Allaho*

*la ja’alakum ummatan-wahidah,*

*we lakin leyabul-lowakum fi ma*

*ata kum fasta-bequ-l-Khairato,*

*Yaayyoh-alluzina*

*amanu layaskhar*

*gonumun min qoumin,*

*A’sa unakupa khairam minhum.*

In other words, according to Koran, God has given every people or nation, its own religion, especially suited to it. The Koran says:

*Ashful imani-un Yamanak*

*annaso wa ashray-ul-islami-un*

*islamannaso mil-lessancka*

*wa yadeka.*

“Noblest religion this—that others may feel safe from thee; the loftiest Islam—that all may feel safe from thy tongue and hands.”

At the people’s level, Islam in India has been mostly Sufism. And Sufis are even more explicit on all these matters. For example, Rumi’s ‘Masnavi’ has been described as “the essence of the Qoran”—the Koran in Persian—even as the Gita is the essence of Vedas. And Rumi says:

*Ruh ba aql-ast o ba ilm ast yar*

*Ruh ra ba Hindu o Muslim*

*chekar?*

“The soul is concerned with wisdom and knowledge; what does it have to do with Hindu or Muslim?”

In another place, Rumi writes:

*Baar-e-digar pir-e maa*

*Khirqa baa zunnaar daad,*

*Ganj-e navad-saala ra,*

*raft o baa kuffar daad*

“A second time my reverend Ancient went And changed his gabardine for sacred thread;

His store of wisdom, gathered ninety years,

He gave away unto the infidels, And in exchange, took up their faithless faith.”

And Shabistari says:

*Mussalman gar bi-daniste*

*ke Butt chist*

*Bi-daniste ke dindar*

*Butparast-ist*

“If the Muslim but knew the idol’s meaning, in image worship would he see True Faith.”

The Sufi thinks of renunciation like the greatest Sanyasi. He calls for:

*Tark-e-dunya, Tark-e-utba,*

*Tark-e-Maula, Tarke-e-tark.*

“Renounce the world, renounce the other world, renounce (a personal) god, and renounce renunciation itself—that is don’t be conscious of the pride of renunciation.”

Says Attar, the great Persian Sufi saint:

*Kufr Kafir ra, wa din, dindar ra,*

*Qatra-e-darde-dil, Attar ra*

“Let the believer rejoice in his belief, and the sceptic rejoice in his disbelief; all the drop of the heart-ache of Divine Love.”

Further says the Sufi saint:

*Chashm-band, o gosh band,*

*lab bi-band:*

*Gar na bini ruy-e-Haq,*

*bar ma be-khand*

“Shut your eyes, ears, lips, senses, all from outward things; then surely you will see God.”

Here is an echo of the Gita:

*Yo’ntahsukho’*

*ntararamastathantarjyotireva*

*yah,*

*Sa yogi brahma nivarnam*

*brahmabhuto’ dhigacchati.*

(Gita-5:24)

## Manthan

“He who is happy within, who rejoices within, who is illuminated within, that Yogi attains absolute freedom or Moksha, himself becoming Brahma.”

Even the Sufis’ Ishq Majazi (physical love) transforming itself into Ishq Haqiqi (Divine Love) is to be found in Hindu scripture:

*Yuvatinam yatha yuni, yunam  
ch yuva tau yatha,*

*Mano bhi-ramate tad-van mano  
bhi-ramatam Tvayi*

*Sri Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu  
(1.2.153)*

“As maid delights in youth, and youth, in maid, so may my mind rejoice in thee, my Lord!”

The Alvares and Nayanars of the South sang of physical-cum-spiritual love. Andal is jealous of the conch-shell ‘Panchjanya’ for monopolising the lips of Krishna; Gita-Govinda is a lyric of love, sensuous and spiritual; Bhaktas like Vidyapati and Chandidas were madly in love with Krishna, like the Gopis.

Indeed, this unity of religions covers not only religious thought and religious institutions but even the religious idiom, and the practice. According to Max Muller, many Roman Catholic ceremonies have a Buddhist origin. Like the Hindu God, the Muslim God also has a hundred names (Sahasra-naam).

Islam has four classes of men—just like the four castes of

Hindus. The Quran lists them as (1) ul-ul-ilm (men of learning), (2) ul-ul-Amr (men who command, i.e. Kshatriya warriors) (3) Zurra (traders) and (4) muzad-war (Mazdoor). And the Hindu’s ‘Dharma, Artha, Kama’ become the Muslim’s ‘Deen, Daulat, Duniya.’

Even the pilgrimage to Mecca reminds you of the Hindu pilgrimage. The Haji wraps himself in just one piece of unstitched cloth, takes repeated baths, observes many vows of abstinence, shaves his head and goes round the Qaaba as in ‘parikrama’. The ‘Qaaba’, originally built by Abraham of the Jews, literally means the ‘Cube’, which is what it is in shape. The Muslim ‘Tawiz’ is the Hindu ‘Yantra’; it can be found even in Mohen-jo-Daro. The ‘Ameen’ of Christians and Muslims is an echo of ‘Aum’ or ‘Om’. ‘Butt’ for ‘Idol’ originally stood only for an idol of ‘Buddha’; to this day, the Kashmiri Muslim ‘Butts’ remind you of their Buddhist past. ‘Dhyana’ became ‘Chan’ in China and ‘Zen’ in Japan. The ‘Hormuz’ of the Persian Gulf is an abbreviation of the Parsi God, ‘Ahur Mazda’, which in turn is Sanskrit Asu-rah Maha-dhah, ‘Lord of the Great Creation’. The Hindu Brahma is the same as the Parsi ‘Vahma’. Even Yehowah or Jehovah of Hebrews is J(i)ao of Phoenicians,

Hayy or Yahya of Arabic, O-hau and O-hau-hau of Sama Veda. The Cross is a variation of Swastika. And all religions take the aid of rosary to chant the name of God while turning the beads.

## How Religious Differences Arise

The question therefore arises: When there is so much in common in religious thought and practice, why is there so much religious differentiation and, apparently, so much religious strife? The reason is that while Religion is man’s response to the mystery of life, the conditions of life vary with time and place. And so the idiom of religion also changes. For example, India is a fertile land with a history of economic surpluses growing into accumulation of wealth and efflorescence of art. This gave many men the time, the leisure and the inclination for cogitation, speculation and meditation. The forest background, with its infinite variety and profusion of growth, was also reflected in the rich variety of religious thought. On the other hand, Arabia, with its scanty economy and desert background, could not but produce a simple and direct faith, in spite of the core of religious thought and experience, which it has in common with Hinduism, etc. It was only with the acquisition of territories and wealth that Arabs acquired more art, science, culture, sophistication and different schools of philosophy and law.

Christianity grew in the context of a disintegrating Roman Empire. This led to a certain moral and political vacuum. It was, therefore, natural that the Church should perform some of the functions that, till then, had been performed by the State. And so the Pope (i.e.

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Papa or Father) of the Church came to have some attributes of the Roman Emperor, complete with crown and silk dresses. It will thus be seen that History and Geography have a major role in shaping a religion beyond its core. This makes for religious diversity and differentiation.

Nor is that all. A society not only has religion, it has customs and ceremonies and laws and practices, which it has acquired and adopted over the ages. These constitute the life-style of a society, which it cherishes dearly. Some of these customs and ceremonies have a quasi-religious aura. One can, therefore, never be sure where a society's religion and its customs begin: it becomes one long cultural continuum, which gives a society its personality and its ethos. And this, in turn, gives rise to religious strife, when two such highly differentiated societies come face to face.

Man has been defined as a social animal, a thinking animal, a cooking animal, a laughing animal. Man should also be defined as a wandering animal. Over the ages, tribes of men have been moving all over the earth in search of food, gold, trade and even pure adventure. And so different societies stand face to face. The interaction can be a peaceful and mutually beneficial cooperation, if the object is trade. When, however, the aim is to loot—and kill, burn and rape—it can only lead to the liquidation of the two sides—or a bitter and prolonged conflict.

There are cases of hungry barbaric tribes sweeping down on settled lands. For example, the Goths and Vandals overran Rome. Mongols overran India, Russia and China.

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These repeated mass invasions grew in their size and frequency after the seventh century when the stirrup was invented. Men could now sit securely, ride fast and fight hard, from the height of horse-back—and with the speed of a hurricane. Before the stirrup, this was not possible.

Where the invading tribes are barbaric, they cause much destruction, but since they don't have much of a culture of their own, they quickly come to adopt the culture of the societies they overwhelm. The conquerors are culturally conquered by the locals—and they even become ardent defenders of the society of their adoption. Where, however, the invading tribes are not all that barbaric, or they have a creedal religion with fixed beliefs, the cultural inter-change is more equal but also more difficult. Where each society takes pride in itself and in its culture, confronting societies face cultural conflict. This conflict is basically economic, social and cultural—and it is religious only to the extent that religion is part of their culture. Indeed, the religious factor is often emphasised as cover for conflict of interests, because its appeal can be used to rouse more men, more deeply than economic, political or social issues can.

For example, the Crusades were launched ostensibly to recover from Arab lands, the

Cross on which Jesus was believed to have been crucified. But the wooden cross could not have survived for more than thousand years that intervened between the Crucifixion and the Crusades. The real objects of the Crusades was to loot rich West Asian lands and settle the surplus West European populations in the 'Fertile Crescent' constituted by Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. One of the Crusades consisted almost exclusively of children who were lectured by the Pope to go and find land and food for themselves. It was simple cry for 'Lebensraum', that is 'living space'—all in the name of Christ.

Before Timur invaded India, he called a conference of his commanders, told them that both India and China were 'Kafirs' or infidels and asked them which country they should invade. Nobody thereafter mentioned either 'Kufr' or religion, and nobody mentioned China. Speaker after speaker said that India had huge rivers, difficult to ford; it had dense forests full of lions; it had brave soldiers and elephants "who lift up rider and horse and throw them both away." And yet all of them wanted to attack India because, as Prince Sultan Ahmed said: "The whole country of India is full of gold and jewels... plants which produce cloth and aromatic plants; sugarcane. And the whole

aspect of the country is pleasant and delightful.” And so one lakh Tartars (Mongols) swarmed into India like so many hungry wolves. “Plunder in war”, said Timur, “is as lawful as their mothers’ milk to Mussalmans.” And because all this murder and loot was carried on in the name of religion, it gave the concerned religion a very bad name. As al-Biruni, witness to Mahmud Ghazni’s raids on India, noted at the time, Mahmud “utterly destroyed 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.”

### What Divides the People?

The Indian objection was not to Islam. Sant Tukaram, contemporary of Shivaji, went so far as to say: “Never forget to take the name of Allah first.” Hinduism, by definition, looks upon all religious thought and practice as legitimate.

As Ghalib put it:

*Kahan aisee azadiyan  
hai muyassir*

*An’al Haq kaho aur maot no pao?*

“Where else can you have the freedom even to say ‘I am God’ and yet not face death?”

But India could not accept ‘rapine’ in the name of religion. And when the invaders attacked in the name of Islam, they ensured a bad name for Islam in India. The converts were described by Arabs as ‘Mawalis’, that is agents or clients—and Hindus also viewed them in the same light, as quislings.

India had thousands of Muslims

living peacefully in Delhi itself before Mohammed Ghori. They included Hussain Shah, brother of Ghori. These Muslims had no problem with local Hindus. According to Chand Bardai’s ‘Rasso’, they actually joined hands with Hindus and many of them, including Hussain Shah, died fighting for Prithviraj. But once the invaders had occupied the land, and they used the sword and the temptation of land and/or office to convert Hindus, Islam lost its legitimacy as a religion in the eyes of Hindus; it became a case of political aggression.

Fortunately, this stark situation did not last very long. Tribes and dynasties, all ‘Muslim’, fought each other and competed for alliance with Hindu princes. As Humayun Kabir has pointed out, there were more wars among Muslims than between Hindus and Muslims.

Though Islam started out as monolithic, it did not stay so very long. There is something in the mental make-up of man that rejects a monotonous and deadening uniformity. Hinduism of course always had its sects and sub-sects. And the Muslim Millat also soon divided itself not only into Shias and Sunnis but into as many as 84 sects, with half a systems of law. Christians divided not only among Roman Catholics, Orthodox Greek Church, Coptic Christians and Syrian Christians, but into a variety of Protestant sects, ranging from Presbyterians and Episcopalians to Jehovahs Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists. Even the small Sikh religious community grew into Namdharis and Nirankaris, Nirmalas and Udasins, Mazhabis and Nihangs, Radhaswamists and Sindhi Sikhs.

The Mughals made war on the Bahmani kingdoms Deccan, not only because Delhi assumed paramount power over all India, but also because these kingdoms were ‘Shia’. In retaliation, the Bahmani kingdoms allied themselves with fellow-Shia Iran, which now disputed Mughal control of Kandhar, the Central Asian gateway to India. It was this Delhi-Deccani Sunni-Shia conflict that made it possible for Marathas under Shivaji to come up—just as it was the Maratha-Abdali conflict in Punjab which weakened both, and enabled the Sikhs to come up. Nadir Shah looted Delhi; and Sikhs looted Nadir Shah himself! (They could not capture the Peacock Throne only because it was too well defended!) It was all these action, reactions and interactions that produced, from the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, and even more so after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, until the explosion of 1857, an increasingly homogenous Indian society, in which the incoming elements had every much influenced Hindu society, but which had lost their own foreign identity, and got Indianised in the process.

This progressive homogenisation was retarded, and partly reversed, by a number of factors. The Hindu-Muslim united action in 1857 persuaded the British to launch a policy of ‘Divide and Rule’. Beginning with separate Hindu and Muslim units in the Army, it went on to separate electorates and weightages and reservations, and with a helping hand from Pan-Islamists and Khilafatists, it ultimately led to Partition. On the other hand, missionary translation, study and revival of Hindu scriptures restored Hindu pride in the pre-



Islamic Hindu heritage.

Today, the unities of Indian life, worked out over the centuries until 1857, have been replaced by the wave of westernisation. Hindus don't study Persian or Arabic, as they used to do until the turn of this century; even Muslims don't—such is the transformation in the scene. And Muslims don't observe festivals like Basant, Holi, Raksha Bandhan and Diwali, under the influence of modern fundamentalists, as they used to do until modern times. In this situation, the 'special features' of the two religious societies stand out—in spite of the unities fostered by regional languages and cultures, and by the English language and Western culture in general.

The regional culture partly unifies all people in a region; but here, too, the religious differences stand out. And a common Westernisation is neither an adequate nor an acceptable unifier; it can only be one factor in partly unifying the people, not by harmonising their cultural differences, but by bypassing them. The gut issue, therefore, is: How to ensure religious freedom for all, and cultural unity or harmony for the country, so that men may live in peace and harmony, and the country may go forward?

India has always believed in, and acted on, the principle of religious freedom. This freedom must be not only recognised but also respected. Islam believes in the unity of God and the Prophethood of Mohammed; and this faith is supported by Namaz, Roza, Zakat and Haj. Muslims should be heartily welcomed to the practice of their religion. In Chinese tradition, everybody

praises another's religion.

Nobody should sneer at, or make any snide remarks about, any aspect of any religion. Nor should Hindus and Muslims refer to each other disparagingly. Some Muslims refer to Hindus as 'Kafir' or 'Bania'. And Muslims are slighted as 'Gadia' in Haryana, as 'Laundiya' in Maharashtra, as 'Neray' in Bengal and as 'Jhat' among Sindhis, etc. These cheap jibes must stop.

Nobody should make any sarcastic remarks about Mohammed—or his many marriages. Incidentally, Shivaji had as many wives—seven—as Mohammed at any one time. Mohammed is not a religious prophet for Hindus; but Hindus could recognise and respect him as the Napoleon or Lenin of Arabs—the great unifier and liberator of his people. Rama and Krishna are not the religious leaders of Muslims. But they sure are heroes par excellence of all India. Even Indonesians accept Rama as their Hero No. 1. And many Muslims have been drawn to the 'Leela' (playfulness) of Krishna over the ages. Muslim maestros sing the glories of Krishna. Fortunately, the Ramayana TV serial has introduced Rama even to non-Hindus—and installed him in the heart of one and all. If Muslims and Christians like it, we can have TV serials on Muslim or Christian themes. For example, films on Haj pilgrimage can be shown on Indian TV—for the education and enlightenment of Hindus and Muslims alike.

### Harmonising Different Customs

All this would be eminently sensible. The problem arises only with customs and practices that

have nothing to do with religion but that have come to be thought as quasi-religious, if not actually religious. Reconciliation and harmonisation are necessary here because a certain degree of cultural unity is necessary for the unity and integrity of a state. Every state has its limits of toleration of diversity. If diversities in a state are so great that they make for division, disputes and violence, then these limits of tolerance are crossed, and that country will go to pieces. These limits, therefore, must never be crossed.

Many Muslims look upon invaders and tyrants, who happened to be Muslim, as welcome carriers of Islam. Many of them no doubt spread Islam by the sword. But this practice was not only un-Islamic, it gave Islam a very bad name, Muslim Indians should dissociate themselves from the memory of men like Mohammad Bin Qasim, Mahmud Ghazni, Mohammed Ghorji, Allauddin Khilji, Aurangzeb. And they should not hesitate to return to Hindus the more historic temples, forcibly—and un-Islamically—converted by these bigoted tyrants into mosques. This will be a symbolic gesture that will seal the unity of Hindus and Muslims and effect National Reconciliation. Hundred years back, the British removed the big ornamental doors of Jama Masjid of Ghazni and brought them to India, saying they were originally the doors of Somnath Mandir. The Hindus could have kept these—at least as trophies. But they did not; they examined the doors, said they could not be the doors of Somnath, and had them returned to Ghazni. After 1857, the British had converted the Jama Masjid of Delhi into a stable. It was the

Hindus of Delhi, who waited on the British Commander, and had the mosque restored to Muslims. Facts are sacred. Historic truth and historic justice are important for a just peace among contending groups.

In this respect, the Sindhi Muslims have set a fine example. They look upon Mohammed Bin Qasim as villain—and his victim, Raja Dahir Sen, as hero. All Indians, Hindu, Muslim or Christian, should look upon Dahir Sen, Anangpal, Prithviraj as national heroes, who died defending the country against foreign invasion.

But, at the same time, the average Hindu should shed the idea that there were no Muslims who could be accepted as national heroes. Some of them object even to Akbar. They hold it against him that he took a Hindu wife! They do not know that the proposal did not come from Akbar; they do not know that it was Jodha Bai's father, Raja Bharmal, who made and pressed for the proposal; they do not know that Jodha Bai was a practicing Hindu in the Mughal Palace all her life; and they further do not know that it was not Mughals who refused to marry off their daughters to Rajputs, it was the Rajputs who, for a variety of reasons, excused themselves. When Peshwa Baji Rao took the Muslim danseuse Mastani for wife, it led to a socio-political earthquake in the Maratha confederacy capital of Pune.

Apart from Akbar, there were saints like Kabir and Chisti, statesmen like Abul Fazl and Safdarjang, savants like Dara and Khusrau, poets like Jayasi and Rahiman, Bulhe Shah, Abdul Latif, Lallan Faqir and Habba Khatun. School texts should

Bulgaria, which was long part of the Turkish Empire, has a sizeable Muslim minority. Recently, it ruled that all Bulgarian children must be given Bulgar names—and not Arabic names, in the name of 'Islam'. Albania is an overwhelmingly Muslim state in Europe. It recently decided that all Albanian children must be given old Illyrian names, and not any Arabic/Islamic names

glorify these men—and street-names should consecrate their memory.

Nothing fosters separatism more than externals like names. (In West Indies etc., non-Christians had to take a Christian name to secure admission in school!) The question is: what has name got to do with religion? In Indonesia, even Muslims bear Sanskrit names like Soekarno and Suharto. In China, Muslims bear Chinese names. In Thailand, whether a family is Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim or Christian, the new-born child can only be given one of the Sanskrit names listed in temples. Recently, an Indian family in Bangkok named a new-born as 'Varuna'. But Thailand refused to recognise it, since it was not listed in the temples. When it was pointed out to them that the new name was also Sanskritic, they decided to include it in the temple list—and then they allowed that name to be given!

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Shakespeare was being poetic,

and not realistic, when he said. "What is in a name? A rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet." There is more in names than we realise. We feel sympathy for our group name-sakes; we feel less of it for bearers of 'foreign' names. Muslim Indians should not hesitate to bear at least such secular names as Anil and Sunil, Ashok and Gul, Sisir and Vasant, Amar and Anand, Sonu and Mithu, Ganga and Jamuna, Sindhu and Hind. Interestingly enough, one of the more popular women's names in Mohammed's Arabia was 'Hind'; one of the Prophet's wives was also named 'Hind'!

A Mysorean Muslim friend of mine, Mr. Mehkri, a veteran sociologist, now in Karachi, was named Ghulam Mohammed by his parents. Some time back, he discovered that nobody even in Arabia called himself 'Ghulam' of Mohammed or Ali or Hussain. He has now renamed himself 'Gulab Motia Mehkri'. Two of the more popular girls' names now in Sindh are 'Sindhu' and 'Marui' (Skt. for 'desert-girl'), after a folk-heroine who, like Sita, did not yield to her abductor. Indian names have become very common among Christian Indians. Let them be adopted by Muslim Indians also. (In Arab countries, Christians take Arab names, and not Roman names.)

Until recent times, many Hindus used to be given Persian-

based names like Khan-chand, Khushi-Ram, Khub-chand and Daulat-Ram. This practice could be revived and beautiful Arabic names like Akbar and Kabir could also be adopted by Hindus. If we can have Western 'Christian' names like Jackie, Tony and Dolly, why can't we have some lovely Persio-Arabic names? An increasing commonality of names could be a big psychological bridge between religious communities.

Some Muslim practices in India are not Islamic; they are just anti-Hindu, fostered by rulers, out to spite their Hindu resisters. Cow-slaughter is one of them; music before mosque is another. The letter issue has been finally settled by the Supreme Court. And in view of the Koran's laudatory references to the cow—"cow's flesh is poison; cow's milk, medicine" (Lohumoha dauna, wa libnoha davauna)—Muslims should not oppose any measures for cow protection. No responsible Muslim should plead the case of butchers on grounds of their right to freedom of occupation. For one thing, total ban on cow-slaughter will still leave them free to live by slaughtering other animals. For another, if this right were to be carried to its logical conclusion, Zamindari-abolition should be illegal since it deprives Zamindars of the right to live by their lands!

Until recent times, all people used to keep facial hair as per their local social and/or religious custom. And that distinguished them. It made for variety but it also made for differentiation. Fortunately or otherwise, cleanshave—or a mini-moustache—is the new fashion for all. And the pant is increasingly replacing dhoti, pajama, lungi and salwar. But the Hindu still looks askance at salwar; and the Muslim tends to ridicule Dhoti. Some Muslims still look upon sari as 'Hindu'.

Now fact is that sari, as we know it today, is only some 200 years old; there is no sari in Ajanta or Ellora cave murals. And salwar itself, if not too baggy, looks just like stitched dhoti. Today, the 'Muslim' salwar-kameez is popular with young Hindu ladies in large parts of the country. And sari is popular with Hindu, Muslim and Christian ladies alike all over the Hindustan Peninsula. Interestingly enough, some of the best saris are woven and embroidered by Muslim workmen—even as many temples are constructed by Muslim builders.

Many Hindus look upon 'Khan' as Muslim; actually, it is an old Central Asian word for 'Chief', just like 'Sardar'. And even the dome-like 'Kulah' in the

Pathan turban is not 'Muslim' or 'foreign'; you will see a devotee in Ajanta frescoes wearing it.

Muslims have come to look upon the Green Flag as Islamic—and Chand-Tara as Islamic symbol. Actually, green is the colour of old imperial Iran. Mohammed carried flags of different colours in his many wars, including the Bhagwa; but it so happens, that he never carried a Green Flag! There is, therefore, nothing Islamic about the Green Flag. And Muslims—and secularists—should have no objection to accepting the Congress Flag Committee Report of 1934, recommending the adoption of the ancient Bhagwa Dhvaj as the National Flag of India.

Likewise, the crescent moon is beautiful for all mankind. It finds its place in Shiva's knotted hair and in the Hindu's 'Om'. There is nothing 'Islamic' about it; the symbol is universal and it should be widely used by all.

Today the Muslim looks upon circumcision as 'Islamic' and must; the Hindu has a holy horror of it. The Hindu has always looked upon a physical deficiency, deformity or amputation as ugly and inauspicious. It weighed very heavily on forced converts who re-embraced Hinduism.

This practice has an interesting history. It is not Islamic; it is old Semitic, being common to both, Arabs and Jews. Whether it started as an aid to easier cleanliness or heightened sexuality—or something else again—is a matter of disputation between sociologists. But this little is known: when Muslim attackers were keen to convert more people quickly to Islam, they dispensed with circumcision, since the Hindu was allergic to it: but when

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they were keen not to share the loot with too many new converts, they insisted on circumcision—to keep the number of co-sharers down.

Interestingly enough, Mughal emperors—from Akbar down so Bahadur Shah Zafar—were un-circumcised Muslims. Many elderly Muslims got themselves circumcised only when they moved to Pakistan. On the other hand, many children in the West are now-a-days circumcised.

### A Concrete Plan of Action

India has always been the land of freedom of thought, expression and life-style. That being the historic context, it should be eminently possible for all people—Hindus, Muslims, Christians—to live together in peace and amity—given good sense, good faith and consciousness of a Common Manifest Destiny. We will all sink or swim together.

1. First of all, the history of India written by the British from the imperial angle, and mechanically regurgitated ever since by Indian authors, should be replaced by one written by Indians from the Indian angle. It should be people-oriented and not king-centred. Such a factual and balanced history of the Indian people will do more to harmonise relations than anything else.
2. All schools should provide moral instruction with special reference to the life and teachings of great religious leaders.
3. The life, limb, property and honour of all citizens must be safe and secure. Any social violence must be immediately inquired into, the findings

published, the guilty punished and the victims compensated.

4. The lifeless Minorities Commission should be replaced by a Human Rights Commission at national, state and district levels to deal with all complaints of discrimination on grounds of caste, creed or language.
5. Muslims don't have to be more 'Islamic' than Mughals. Like those Muslim rulers, they should join in celebrating Dussehra and Diwali, Basant and Holi. Indeed, just as non-Christians celebrate Christmas in Christian countries, non-Muslims should celebrate Eid in Muslim countries and non-Hindus should celebrate Hindu festivals in Hindu lands.
6. Also, Muslims don't have to be more 'Islamic' than Pakistan. If they are not yet ready for a Uniform Civil Law, they should at least accept such amendments in Family Laws as have been enacted in Pakistan, banning, for example, bigamy.
7. All organised mass conversions should be banned.
8. Political parties whose membership is confined to any one community should be banned. But all minority interests should be helped to protect themselves through a system of proportional representation, as demanded by Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly.
9. No religious leaders or organisations should be allowed to receive foreign funds—except from persons of Indian origin. Just as Indian religious leaders working outside India, do not get Indian money to spread Hindu thought

abroad, Muslim and Christian religious leaders or institutions working in India should not get foreign money from Arabia, USA etc.

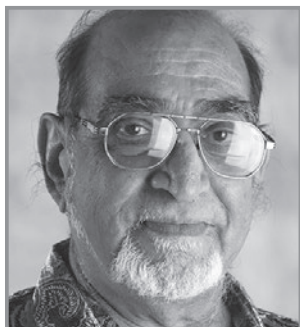
10. The Indian Constitution should be implemented in the true federal spirit so that units and areas in the Hindustan Peninsula outside of the 'Indian Union' consider it worth their while to join the Indian state on honourable and autonomous terms, for we are all One People.
11. Article 30 of the Constitution should be amended to provide that while any 'minority'—or even 'majority'—can run educational institutions of its choice, the same must be governed by general rules in respect of admission of students, recruitment of staff and standard of education.
12. Above all, Hindus, Muslims and Christians must learn to respect each other's religion. As Gandhiji rightly said: "There is, in Hinduism, room enough for Jesus, as there is for Mohammed, Zoroaster and Moses."

If the people of India move in this direction, there will not only be peace in the land, there will also be peace in the minds of men; it will also be rich contribution to world peace. Such a positive National Reconciliation could move India to the front rank of nations, make a valuable contribution to a New World Order and lead to a transvaluation of human values. A just and fair resolution of the 'minority problem' is the fulcrum on which the lever of the future of India—and of the world—depends. So help us God! ●

OM SHANTI!

Manthan, June 1988

The paper titled 'Resolving Religio-Cultural Differences in the Service of the Indian People' by K.R. Malkani was sent to more than a hundred intellectuals across the country. Most of them responded to the paper. Their responses begin from here on:



Asghar Ali Engineer

## Hindu-Muslim Problem— A Cooperative Approach

It is banal to state that even after years of Independence the Hindu-Muslim problem is as far away from solution as it ever was. If anything, it has worsened. There are many reasons for that—political, religious as well as socio-economic. One can only regret that political processes are getting more and more communalised in our country. Also, socio-economic constraints and slow rate of development is intensifying rivalry between different caste and community groups. No wonder then that communal and caste problems are getting more and more intractable.

Both politicians and competitors for economic resources and jobs invoke religion for their respective ends and it appears as if religion is the main culprit in the whole fight, which is not true. However, since it is the general perception, and it is perceptions which matter, not reality, it is important to deal with the religious aspect as well, so as to create a meaningful cooperative spirit between the two major religious communities of India i.e. Hindus and Muslims. Thus, this paper would mainly deal with the

religious aspect of the problem and that too with Islam in particular, as it is being written to project the Islamic viewpoint on the communal conflict.

Islam has been greatly misunderstood, thanks to bigotry and fanaticism on both sides. It is thought to be intolerant of other religions, especially of Hinduism, and it is also sought to be projected as aggressively expansionist. Sociologically and psychologically speaking, when we confront an idea or a system of ideas, or an ideological system, in a conflict situation, our view of it gets prejudiced. Islam and Hinduism, on a political level, confronted each other in a conflicting situation, each trying to steal political march over the other and hence the political elite from both the communities developed highly prejudiced view of each other's religion and also of each other (though, of course, there was political collaboration also among a section of the two elites at one level). On the level of the masses, on the other hand, Sufi and folk Islam became popular and evoked no animosity. We shall deal

The Hindu-Muslim problem in India has been worsened by the time. A close look into the Islamic teachings and societal practices

## Manthan

with it separately.

First, we shall examine some of the Islamic teaching to see whether Islam encourages pluralism in matters of religion or not, so as to correctly judge its potential for peaceful coexistence with other religions. The holy Quran says emphatically, "For every one of you, we appointed a law and a way. And if Allah had pleased, he would have made you a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you. So vie one with another in virtuous deeds." (The Quran 5:48)

No one should be left in doubt after reading this verse that Islam discourages pluralism or wants to establish supremacy of Islam. It clearly says that "for every one of you, we appointed a law and a way" and that "if Allah had pleased, He would have made you a single people" but obviously he didn't as He wanted to try humans whether they can live in peace despite plurality of religions and faiths and that all we should do to live in harmony is to excel each other in good deeds.

Also, the holy Quran repeatedly says, "To every nation, we appointed acts of devotion, which they observe, so let them not dispute with thee in the matter, and call to thy Lord" (Quran 22.67). It also says in another verse, "And for every nation, we appointed acts of devotion that they might mention the name of Allah on what He has given them of the cattle quadruped." (Quran 22.34)

And yet in another verse, it repeats the theme in these words, "And everyone has direction to which he turns (i.e. everyone has a way of worshipping Him),

so vie with one another in good work" (Q.2:148). Also in one Meccan chapter (109), the holy book elaborately goes on to say:

*O disbelievers,*

*I do not worship that which you worship*

*and neither do you worship that which I worship*

*And I will not worship that which you have worshipped*

*and neither will you worship that which I worship,*

*Unto you your religion and unto me my religion.*

One can find many more such verses in the Quran which do not approve of any compulsion in religion at all. "There is no compulsion in religion", (2.256) it unequivocally declares.

It is also thought that Muslims are required by the Quran to demolish others' religious places and construct mosques. May be some uninformed Muslims believe that. The Quran, on the other hand, says contrary to that. It says in this respect, "And if Allah did not check some people by others, cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered, would have been pulled down." (22.40)

It is clear from the above verse that Allah's name is remembered whether it is mosque or synagogue or church and that Allah protected all places of worship by dispelling one set of people by the other, i.e. those who did not protect these places were dispelled by Allah by those who could. Thus there is clear disapproval of non-protection, let alone demolition of any religious place of worship. Any Muslim, who demolishes or justifies demolition of any place of worship, is clearly acting

contrary to the injunction of the Quran. Allah would dispel such people and punish them as His name is much remembered in all these places of worship.

The second Caliph Hazrat Umar did not pray in the church of Palestine when he visited it during his sojourn to that city. When the Archbishop of Palestine inquired of the reason; the Caliph said it should not be later claimed by the Muslims as their Caliph prayed here. So he took all precautions that a church should not be claimed by Muslims for conversion into mosque. Thus, both the Quran and the practice of the Prophet's Caliph are against demolishing any place of worship, whatever religion it belongs to. However, it must be admitted that practice never conforms to the ideals. For political vendetta, some Muslims not only ravaged some non-Muslim places of worship but also their own holiest place of worship, Ka'ba. In early history of Islam, the forces of Ummayyad caliph Yazid burnt K'aba as the same had been occupied by his political rival Abdulla bin Zubayr. (Tabari, however, maintains that the fire was accidental.) Whatever the case, it is a fact that the K'aba was surrounded by the forces of Yazid and battle waged there. (Tarikh Tabari, vol. 7, page 14, of Khurshid Ahmed Fariq *Tarikh-i-Islam*, (Delhi, 1978), pp 318-320).

It is also maintained by some that Islam believes in beheading all those who do not believe in Islam. Partly it has been answered by the verses above. When there is no compulsion of any kind in matters religious where is the question of converting anyone

with the help of the sword. As for the word *Kafir*, it has been greatly misunderstood. It is necessary that it should be seen in its proper perspective. *Kafir* literally means disbeliever. Anyone who disbelieved in the truth revealed by God is *Kafir*. But, and it is important to note the Quran says that all that was revealed before to other prophets was also from Allah and that Allah had sent prophets among all nations and in their own language. “And for every nation,” the Quran declares, “there is a messenger. So when their messenger comes, the matter is decided between them with justice, and they are not wronged.” (10.47)

Thus, prophets are sent to every nation and the main purpose is to settle things among them with justice so that they (i.e. people) are not wronged. So all those who believe in one or the other prophet (whoever the prophet, he should be messenger of God) and adhere to the norms of justice, are believers. The Quran not only requires belief in all prophets but also equal respect for them without any distinction. “We make no difference between any of His messengers,” says the Quran (2285). The Quran also requires that a believer should accept all His prophets, including those in the past, and sent to different nations, without making any distinction among them. Thus, the Quran says: “Those who believe in Allah and His messengers and desire to make a distinction between Allah and His messengers and say ‘we believe in some and disbelieve in others’ and desire to take a course in between—these are truly disbelievers...” (4-150-151)

Thus, true disbelievers

It was never the unanimous view of the Ulema to reject Hindus as Kafirs. The Prophet himself, while concluding a treaty with the Parsis of Bahrain and Umman, accepted them as *ahl al-kitab* (the people of the Book) though they have not been mentioned in the Quran as such. Similarly, third Caliph Hazrat Uthman accepted the Berber tribals of North Africa as people of the Book although it is doubtful whether they possessed any book at all

(*Kaffirun haqqan*) are those who do not accept all the messengers sent by God and make distinction between them. It is also important to note that all the prophets have not been named in the Quran. The Quran itself makes it clear, “And (we sent) messengers we have mentioned to thee (i.e. the Prophet) and messengers we have not mentioned to thee” (4.164). Thus, in the light of this and other verses mentioned above, some Sufi saints like Abdur Rahim Jan-i-Janan concluded that God had sent prophets among the Hindus too and likened Brahma to Adam and accepted the Vedas as the revealed books. Certainly, it would not be in keeping with the true Quranic spirit to denounce the Hindus as *Kafirs* as often done by some sectarian Muslims.

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Ahmed Fariq, op. pp 116) although it is doubtful whether they possessed any book at all. When the Berbers of North Africa, whom Ibn Khalladun describes as barbarians and most uncivilised people, could be accepted as *ahl al-kitab*, why could not be Hindus, who were highly civilised and cultured and were already in possession of highly developed philosophy, metaphysical theories and physical sciences. Famous historian Masudi observes about India:

“In the remote past when all other nations were divided into various tribes (i.e. when others were at the tribal stage), certain people of India adorned with the qualities of nobility, rectitude, wisdom and learning were trying to bring together people under a central government. They first established a central authority and claimed to rule over others. They appointed the Great Brahman, the Supreme Leader, as their ruler. It was the age of the ascendancy of the learned. The people made progress in all the fields of life. They extracted iron from mines, made swords and other weapons, built palaces, studied the Heavens and stars and the movement of the sun.” (Muhammed Zaki, *Arab Account of India*, Delhi, 1981)

Jahiz, who was highly talented essayist during the Abbasid period, is also all praise for India and its achievements. He says:

“The inhabitants of India are highly meritorious in astrology and medicine. They have a peculiar script. In medicine too, they have a supreme insight. They have in their possession some strange secrets of the art of Aesculapian... In making busts and statues, in making pictures out of colours and in architecture they are superb... Their music is also enchanting. One of their musical instruments is known as kanka (?) which is played on by striking a chord strung in a gourd... There is an uncommon fund of poetical wealth and oratorical affluence in their possession. They know the arts of medicine, philosophy and ethics. The book *Kalelah wa Dimnah* (translation of *Panchtantra*) has come to us from them. They have plenty of courage and common sense and many qualities which are wanting even in Chinese. Cleanliness is a noted feature. They have good looks, tall stature and a taste for perfumes. It is from their land that the peerless ambergris comes for the kings. *Streams of higher thinking flowed down from India to Arabia.*” (Jahiz,

*Fakhrus-Saudan 'Alal Baidan*, pp 80-81. JC, 1932, 624-625 (cf. Muhammed Zaki op. cit, p-24). (emphasis supplied)

Abdul Karim Shahrastani, a 12th century scholar of comparative religions, also admits that Indians are a great nation and great (religious) community (*Ummat-e-kabirah wa millat-e-azimah*), but they have divergent views and ideologies. (Shahrastani, *Al Millal wa al Nihal*, vol. III, pp 236-37)

Thus, we see the early Arab and non-Arab Muslim historians shower lavish praise on Indians and things Indian. They were all praise for their religion, metaphysics and ethics as well. Mahmud Shabistani, a noted scholar of early 14th century, in his *Gulshani-i-Raz*, even justified idolatry. He says, “The idol is the expression of love and unity in this world, and to wear the sacred thread is to take the resolve of service. As both faith and unfaith are founded in existence, unity of God is the essence of idol worship. As things are the essence of expressions, one out of them must at least be the idol. If the Muslim knew what the idol is, then he would not go astray in his faith. The latter did not see in the idol anything but external

creation, and for this reason he became *kafir* in the eyes of the law. If thou too would not see that reality is hidden in the idol, thou wilt also be not know as a Muslim according to law.” (Dr. Tarachand, *The Hindu Muslim Problem*, pp 34-35 of B. Pande, *Islam and Indian Culture*, (Patna, 1987), pp 9-10)

As pointed out earlier, the third caliph Uthman had accepted even North African Berbers, who were nothing more than barbarians, as *ahl-al-kitab* (people of the Book), how could then one declare Hindus as *Kafirs* and condemn them. It was for nothing that when Muhammed bin Qasim, confronted with Hindus, wanted to determine their religious status and questioned the Ulema about it, they could not take any unanimous decision, the majority accepting them *ahl-al-kitab*.

It is also important to note that most of the early Arab historians were all praise for the Hindus and their intellectual achievements, the latter-day Ulama were hostile to them often condemning them as *Kafirs*. Why this difference of attitude? To understand this, it is necessary to understand that our attitudes about others are often determined by our interests, socio-economic or political. The early Arab historians were all praise for India and things Indian as they perceived a lot of benefits by contacts with them and tried to learn from them. They were at lower developing level of intellectual achievements than the Hindus of India and hence praised them. However, it was different with the latter-day Ulema, who were patronised by the Central Asian Muslim nobles in competition with the Hindu

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elite. It was political hostility which assumed the form of religious hostility and many Ulema came to term Hindus as *Kafirs*.

No wonder then that Sufis took an entirely different attitude towards Hindus from that of the Ulema. The Sufis were not aspirants for power. On the contrary they kept away from it and absorbed themselves in spiritual exercise. They found many parallels in the spiritual practice of Hindu Yogis. Once Nizamuddin Awliya, great Sufi saint of the Sultanate period, was walking along with his disciple Amir Khusru along the bank of Jamuna. He saw some Hindu women bathing and worshipping the sun. He promptly said *har qaum ra dine wa gibla gahe* (for every people, there is their religion and way of prayer.) The Sufi concept of *fana fi Allah* also seems to have been derived from the Buddhist concept of Nirvana which predates it.

It is also important to note that the sufis did not even hesitate to use the local Hindu idiom in putting across ideas and teachings. Sheikh Mohammed, a Sufi saint from Maharashtra, named his book on Sufism *Yogasangraha*. He used Marathi language and Sanskrit terms rather than Arabic ones. For, he calls *dil* (heart) as *antahakaran*, *jahaliyat* as *tamo gun* and *kamaliyat* as *sad gun*. In fact, he uses all those terms which were used by Patanjali, Shankaracharyas and commentators of Vedantas. (See Asghar Ali Engineer, "Seminar on Sufism and Communal Harmony—A reportage", Occasional paper No. 4, Vol. 4, April 1988, Institute of Islamic

Studies, Bombay.)

Sheikh Mohammed was not alone or an exception. There were many other Sufi saints who thought like him. They were genuinely interested in spiritual practices. They knew its outward forms varied, not its contents. They were least prejudiced against Hindu practices and religious idiom. Some Sufis of Gujarat even projected the Prophet as Krishna and composed poems to this effect. (Khwaja Hasan Nizami in *Fatimi D'awat-e-Islam*.) Also, the doctrine of *wahdat al-wajud* (literary Unity of Being) was quite Universalist one on account of its pantheistic contents. The entire universe, according to this doctrine, was creation of God and reflects His glory. Thus, there is no question of fraternising with one section of humanity holding similar beliefs and rejecting other having different outward beliefs. The Sufis holding to the doctrine *wahdat al-wajud* fraternised with all.

Today, for reason other than religious, we are too much obsessed with our past. As pointed out above, it is essentially political hostility which has been, for reasons of legitimation, transformed into religious antagonism. We oversimplify history and see into it nothing but religious conflict between the Hindus and Muslims. However, as serious students of human affairs, we should remember that human, especially inter-group or inter-communal relations, are characterised by ambiguity, complexity and relativity. We do not wish to examine this question here in detail. Much has already been written about it. All we wish to emphasise

here is that any historical event must be examined in all its richness, depth, complexity and ambiguity.

We should also remember, as pointed out earlier too, human behaviour is not motivated by any one factor alone, however important it may be. Religion may be very important but it is not the sole motivating factor even for ordinary human beings, not involved in any power game much less so for the rulers. If we give up oversimplistic approach and try to understand various events, historical or contemporary, in all its complexity and ambiguity, we will be better able to comprehend real motives and it would help reducing religious conflict. It would promote better understanding.

Let us keep in mind that we differ among ourselves so much even on interpretation of contemporary events. Let us take Blue Star operation, for example. Did Indira Gandhi order it for her own political motives or did she do it for her hostility towards Sikhism or she wanted to work up Hindu chauvinism for winning elections? Had she turned communal or did she conceive herself to be the only leader capable of promoting the country's unity? We would adopt one or the other opinion depending on our political interests or involvement or on our *a priori* inclination. The debate goes on. Among Sikhs too, there is no unanimity of opinion.

When we could differ so deeply on a contemporary event, how can we say anything with certainty about remote past? Still we flaunt our opinion about historical events with great degree of certitude, completely

ignoring complexity and possible range of motivation of the historical actors. These historical actors were neither religious bigots nor great liberals. They were certainly not motivated by these considerations alone. They were mainly motivated by their own political interests. Let us not lose sight of these facts. If we adopt this attitude, much of our perception of history and historical events can change. It is highly necessary to defuse the communal situation in our country.

A changing society throws up very complex problem, ethnic problem being one among them. Communalism in India is a modern phenomenon in this sense that with the advent of the British rule, the socio-economic structure and consequent political relationship between different communities, especially between the Hindus and Muslims, began to change. No pluralist society which is undergoing change can be free of communal or ethnic tensions, of manageable or unmanageable proportions. The communal phenomenon jumped to the fore when feudal-autocratic power relationship began to change to capitalist-democratic relationship. This change began to deepen further when socio-economic transformation became relatively faster after Independence. New forces and new relationships began to emerge on our social and political horizons. This transformation again needs to be understood in complexity, richness and ambiguity, without resorting to oversimplifications.

Most of the Third World countries are experiencing the ethnic or communal problem

in various degrees. All those countries which were considered model of unity and amity are being torn asunder by ethnic and communal conflict. Whoever thought just a decade ago that the peaceful island of Fiji in Pacific would experience violent ethnic convulsions? The Fiji Indians and the natives began to fight. The conflict, to be sure, was of economic and political nature. The conflict broke out with the election of Fiji Indian-supported coalition led by Dr. Timoci Bavadra. It generated resentment among the natives who felt left out both in economic and political race for power. The native Fijians asserted themselves, democracy was subverted and the natives seized power through military dictatorship.

The Tamil-Sinhali conflict in Sri Lanka is also a result of socio-economic balance changing there. The Tamils were thought to be a privileged minority by the Sinhalis and even otherwise peaceful Buddhist monks got involved in the anti-Tamil movement and resorted to violence. Until recently, these countries had known ethnic peace but the development process generated conflict. The expression of conflict always assumes communal or racial overtones. Many more examples can be given from other countries of the world.

The Hindu-Muslim problem in India (and now the Hindu-Sikh also has been added to it) is of the same variety. Actually speaking, the Hindu-Muslim problem is not of a religious nature. The conflict lay, in fact, in the secular arena which unfortunately gets expressed in religious idiom and the problem gets projected

as a religious problem. Anyway, we have to tackle it from the viewpoint of its perceivers, not only of actors. The religious problem also has many aspects to it; not least is the cultural aspect.

Our hindu brothers complain that the Muslims are unwilling to become part of national mainstream. It is partly true, partly not. If we look at it from the point of view of North Indian Muslim urban elite, it appears to be true. But it is not true in the case of either North Indian rural Muslims or Muslims in general in southern and eastern parts of India.

In fact, the centre of gravity of communal problem lay in the Hindi belt (which can also include Gujarat and Maharashtra) and the urban elite in this belt insists on a separate identity and has a definite sense of Indo-Islamic culture. The urban middle-class Muslims of this belt are quite proud of this Indo-Islamic identity. Also, it has a history of Hindu-Muslim conflict since nineteenth century. It has been the centre of Aligarh movement. Above all, it was the centre of Muslim power. In this belt, we have largely those Muslims, especially in urban areas, who are descendants of the erstwhile ruling classes. The battle for Pakistan was also mainly fought in this belt.

It is, therefore, not surprising if the feelings of separate identity are stronger in this belt. Again, it is the Hindus of this belt who feel very strongly about separatist attitudes among Muslims. It is, therefore, quite natural if they feel that Muslims refuse to be part of Indian mainstream. However, the problem has its own complexity and ambiguity. Also, as is often

done, its genesis should not be seen only in religion. The roots of separation are in politics, not in religion.

Let us go back in history in search of the roots for this separatism. When Emperor Akbar adopted a liberal policy towards Hindus, it created resentment among a section of Muslim nobles, mainly those who were of Central Asian origin. Subsequently, this section of Muslim nobles found their rallying point in Mujaddid Sirhindi, a Naqshbandi Sufi theologian. In fact, it all began with Bagi Billah of Naqshbandi order from Punjab. He was born in 1563 and died in 1603 in Delhi. (Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *On Understanding Islam*, Delhi, 1985, pp 177). It was Baqi Billah who began contacting the Muslim nobles and subsequently converted Sirhindi, who was a liberal, influenced by Abu'l Fazl, a great liberal Sufi intellectual.

Mujaddid Alf Thani Sirhindi wrote letters (*Maktubat*) to various Muslim nobles and stressed the importance of Islamic orthodoxy and opposed the un-Islamic policies of the emperor. He found support among those nobles who did not want to share power with the Hindu nobles. The tussle continued and Aurangzeb also courted the support of Muslim nobles to wrest political power from heir-apparent Dara Shikoh, who again was a great liberal. The Muslim nobility sided with Aurangzeb who won. Shah Waliullah also tried to inspire Muslim nobility to restore Muslim power but failed.

Of course, the Central Asian Muslim nobility had lost its original identity and developed a

After the advent of British power, a new phase of struggle for power began and it was during this struggle that among the urban Muslim elite of North India—which was the theatre of this struggle—the Islamic element of its identity began to assert itself again. It was so because the struggle was between the Muslim and Hindu elite. So much of an assertion was quite expected. The Muslim elite, in order to mobilise Muslim masses for their struggle for power, tried to generate Islamic identity among them too

new Indo-Islamic identity which was both Islamic and Indian. This fact must be recognised as it has important bearing on the question we are discussing. The ingredients of this identity are both Islamic as well as Indian. Its Islamicness asserts itself in certain circumstances and its Indianness in certain others, depending on the situation, and struggle for power.

After the advent of British power, a new phase of struggle for power began and it was during this struggle that among the urban Muslim elite of North India—which was the theatre of this struggle—the Islamic element of its identity began to assert itself again. It was so because the struggle was between the Muslim and Hindu elite. So much of an assertion was quite expected. The Muslim elite, in order to mobilise Muslim masses for their struggle for power, tried to generate Islamic identity among them too. There has been strong element of Hinduism in folk Islam. The names, the traditions, the costumes and other cultural elements had strong Hindu influence. The Muslim elite, *not for religious but for political reasons*, began to urge the Muslim masses to purge their customs of local Hindu

elements. The Deobandi Ulema, on the other hand, took up this campaign for religious reasons. They thought, whether one agree with them or not, that unless we practice 'pure Islam', we will not be able to check the degeneration among the Muslims.

However, our more concern is not this stream of thought. We are more concerned with the political stream of thought here. Analysing increasing degree of separatism in 19th century Bengal, Rafiuddin says:

“Such changes were hit solely due to the campaigns of Islamisation. Improvements in communication that brought the rural Muslims into close contact with their urban co-religionists, wider diffusion of education, Islamic as well as Western, and finally, communal tensions resulting from a variety of social and political factors, all contributed to the increasing aloofness of the ordinary Muslims from their Hindu neighbours. (Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengal Muslims 1871-1906—A Quest for Identity*, Delhi, 1981, pp 107)

Rafiuddin describes various changes which began to take place in the emerging identity of Bengali Muslims. He observes: “The earlier *nasihat namas*, written as late as the seventies

## Manthan

of the nineteenth century, often referred to the Creator as 'Sri Sri Huq', 'Sri Sri Iswari', 'Sri Sri Karim'. The increasing tendency now was to substitute such 'un-Islamic' honorifics as 'Sri Sri' by 'purer'—i.e. Arabic and Persian—invocations such as 'Allah-ho-Akbar' or 'Allahu Ghani'. The style of addressing a person also showed the same trend, 'Sri, Srijukta', and 'Sril, Srijuta' of an earlier era, giving way generally to such Arabicised honorifics as 'Janab', 'Munshi' and 'Maulavi'. Even the titles of *nasihat namas* underwent rapid transformation. Bengali titles were replaced by Arabic ones, such as 'Tariqah-i-Muhammadiya', 'Akhbar al-Marifat', 'Bedar al-Ghafilin' and so on. These changes were symbolic of the psychology behind the campaigns of Islamisation. They also showed how the crusade against polytheism was increasingly taking the road to cultural separatism. (Rafiuddin Ahmed *The Bengal Muslims...* pp 109).

Similar process took place among other Muslim communities, for example Meos of Rajasthan and Haryana. (One must see Pratap Aggarwal's *Study of Meo Muslims* in this connection.) They were also highly assimilated Muslim communities, but as the struggle between Hindus and Muslims intensified during freedom struggle, the process of cultural separatism and Islamisation reached its height at the time of Partition. It was at the time of Partition that the Khoja Muslims of Gujarat gave up their Hindu names and customs. (There used to be puja of Ganesh among Khoja Muslims until the Partition, when

the Aga Khan began the process of Islamisation.)

It is highly necessary that this cultural separatism and Islamisation should be seen not as an integral part of Muslim fanaticism but a sociological process which partly resulted from the political struggle between the elites of two communities. It was, so to say, also the result of heightened political consciousness. Of course, it is very difficult to say whether cultural and religious consciousness precedes political consciousness or vice versa. It is a highly complex process. But one thing can be empirically established that political struggle between two communities also does lead to religio-cultural separatism.

Often, Indonesia's example is cited in this connection. The Muslims there have been deeply influenced by Hindu culture. Their national cultural symbols are Hindu. Even their national dance is based on Ramayan. Their names also resemble Hindu names in many cases. All this is true. But in Indonesia, Muslims are in overwhelming majority and there was, or there is, no struggle between Hindus and Muslims. There is no fear of Hindu domination. As pointed out above, the identity formation, i.e. crystallisation of ingredients of one's identity, is as much a socio-political process as religious and cultural. And the sense of separateness begins with the urban elite, not with the rural masses.

As it is obvious from the example of nineteenth century Bengal, there was remarkable degree of cultural assimilation, perhaps as striking as that of

Indonesia, but things began to change with more education and intensified struggle between the elites of the two communities. Also, even today, there is greater and intensified sense of cultural separatism, among the North Indian urban elites. And the process of intensification is still on with intensification of the process of communalisation. Even in these conditions, there is quite a degree of cultural assimilation between Hindus and Muslims in the rural areas. Their dialect, mode of dressing and social customs have lot of similarities. A number of empirical and anthropological studies bear this out. (Imtiaz Ahmed, *Caste and Social Stratification Among Muslims in India*, Delhi, 1978.)

Whatever the political compulsions or process, cultural or religious separatism cannot go beyond a certain limit. Even at its height of separatism, the identity of Muslim elite remains, as pointed out before, an Indo-Islamic identity. The Muslims of India cannot get away from their sense of Indianness in cultural and social sense. Their social ethics are as much Indian as Islamic. Their Muslimness cannot completely submerge their Indianness. The Islamic world also refers to them as Indian Muslims ('Hindi' ed.).

Also, in southern and north-eastern parts of India, like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, Kashmir and West Bengal (leaving aside Bihari Muslims of Calcutta), there is remarkable degree of cultural assimilation between Hindus and Muslims not only in rural but also urban areas. They enjoy common social customs, cultural values and, of course,

speak the same language. In Kerala, the marriage ceremony is called Mangalam and their marriage customs are matriarchal like the Hindus (wherever there is matriarchal system in Kerala). In Kashmir, the Sufi saints are referred to as *rishis* (Nuruddin Rishi etc.). These *rishis* are venerated by both Hindus and Muslims. In Kashmir, another commonly venerated Sufi poetess is Lalleshwari (popularly known as Lal Ded), who was contemporary of Nuruddin Rishi (Nund Rishi). She was a Shaivite and she composed poems in popular language. Kashmiri Shaivism has a strong element of unity of God (*tawhid*).

Thus, it would be seen that the sense of cultural separatism is prevalent in a small section of urban population in North India and its importance should not be exaggerated. And, as pointed out above, this sense of cultural separatism is getting further intensified due to intensification of communal feelings. Electoral processes and political opportunism have much to do with the intensification of communalism all over India. If the sense of cultural separatism is to be arrested, instead of attacking it, one would do better to attack communalism

and create better and more harmonious relationship between Hindus and Muslims. Here, in our opinion, two dimensions of the problem must be clearly recognised, if it is to be tackled more objectively and fruitfully. First, we must recognise the fact that with more education, a sense of one's own identity is bound to develop which would tend to separate him/her from other community/caste. It is happening with all castes and communities. It is a psychological process. Even Dalits are becoming highly caste-conscious due to spread of education. This seems to be inevitable and must be accepted in right perspective.

Second dimension of the problem relates to a deliberate attempt, by the leadership or the elites of the community, to serve their own interests, to build up an atmosphere of confrontation leading to conscious efforts at separatism between the communities. It is this process that we have to bring to an effective end. Confrontation must be replaced by cooperation. Polemics must be replaced by dialogue.

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We also have to recognise the fact that India has chosen a secular and democratic course. Also, ours is a pluralist society. Democracy cannot be stabilised without secularism in the modern context, and secularism cannot remain stable without genuine pluralism, both religious as well as cultural. To strengthen the forces of pluralism (on which would depend secularism and democracy), we will have to develop a sense of equal respect for all religions and cultures. Mere tolerance would not do

Democracy cannot be stabilised without secularism in the modern context, and secularism cannot remain stable without genuine pluralism, both religious as well as cultural. To strengthen the forces of pluralism (on which would depend secularism and democracy), we will have to develop a sense of equal respect for all religions and cultures. Mere tolerance would not do. In a way, tolerance is a negative quality—as something exists any way, let us tolerate it. We should go beyond this attitude and inculcate equal respect for other religion(s). Respect is a positive quality. The Muslim should show as much respect for Hinduism as for their own religion, Islam. Similarly, Hindus should not view Islam with any sense of suspicion. It is true Hinduism is not doctrinaire but Hindus do tend to become doctrinaire. It is practice we are concerned with, not merely theory. Islam is, theologically speaking, no less tolerant as shown from the Quranic verses above. But, Muslims are far from being tolerant in practice.

Both the communities—at least some prominent members sincerely committed to the cause of communal peace—must undertake genuine self-criticism of their respective communities. We tend to throw blame always on others and completely ignore our own faults. This is very common human psychology; we all are its victim. Some of us must come out of this and attempt a bold self-criticism. We will also do better if we recognise that communalism *per se* is bad. It should not be divided in the artificial categories of minority and majority communalism. One

feeds the other. We have very well witnessed this—if any proof is required—during the Shah Bano case and the Ramjanam Bhoomi-Babri Mosque agitations. Muslim communalism was at its aggressive worst, which in turn fed Hindu communalism and it appeared as if there is total confrontation between the two communities.

The common Hindus and Muslims should recognise that it is the game of vested interests and that they often become its victims. In most towns, cities and villages, they live cheek by jowl and in peace. There is no confrontation among them, unless it is created from above. Common people are genuinely religious but far less communal, whereas the elite and the leadership is far less religious but far more communal. They also have more respect for each other's religion than the elite. Also, common people are involved in their own struggles for living. Those who take confrontationist attitude hardly ever concern themselves with the people's struggles. They raise abstract emotional issues like Babri mosque-Ram Janambhoomi, and hardly ever issues pertaining to people's struggles. These priorities must be reversed, if communal confrontation is to be de-escalated.

Muslim intelligentsia has also become super-sensitive on religio-cultural matters. While some of their religio-cultural sensibilities are genuine, they should not lose their sense of proportion. They should also take into account the sensibilities of majority community and should realise that a minimum degree

Muslim intelligentsia has also become super-sensitive on religio-cultural matters. While some of their religio-cultural sensibilities are genuine, they should not lose their sense of proportion. They should also take into account the sensibilities of majority community and should realise that a minimum degree of tension is bound to remain between major communities in a pluralist democracy

of tension is bound to remain between major communities in a pluralist democracy. They should not tend to over-react, as they often do, further exacerbating the situation. An open mind and accommodative approach would be far more helpful.

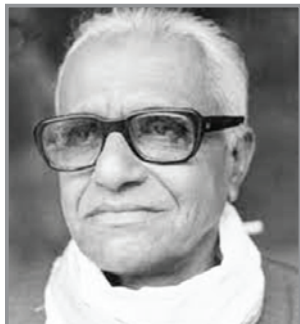
The Hindu should also realise that progress of the country is possible only when there is communal peace and cooperative spirit between majority and minority. If minority feelings get intensified, the integrity of the country will be endangered, much more so with heightened communal consciousness. They should show a little more accommodation for the minorities and show respect for their cultural-religious sensibilities (though culture is a much more complex category and is often common between majority and minority, especially at regional levels). Minorities, as a rule, tend to be more sensitive on such issues.

Muslims should also realise that indigenous element in their identity content is very important and should not be de-emphasised. True religiosity and genuine faith is far above petty-mindedness and it cannot be affected by imbibing of local traditions. In fact, no Muslim community is 'pure Islamic community' in the world. 'Pure Islamic Community',

anthropologically speaking, is a mythical category. They should also not make their identity merely past-oriented. Present and future also must enter into their identity-consciousness, if they want their life to be more meaningful in the contemporary world. They should, thus, opt for progressive, and not regressive, identity. It means they should be open to change and shake their feudal past. The Muslims have imbibed feudal values so deeply that they find it difficult to shake themselves free. But it will have to be done. Islam has very little in common with feudalism.

There are some tentative suggestions for developing a cooperative approach between Hindus and Muslims. It is easier said than done. But, let us remember, nothing is impossible given will and determination. We should not be dismayed by the problems cropping up. They are bound to arise. After all, we are engaged in the process of nation-building. It is a pretty mighty task. In Europe, the process was comparatively simpler. Theirs' were societies based on single religion and language and the process of industrialisation was also far ahead. Ours is a multi-lingual, multi-religious society and industrialisation is also proceeding at a slow pace.

*Manthan*, September 1988



H.V. Seshadri

## Hindu-Muslim Problem is Deeper than British Mischief

As you are aware, the subject you have taken up is of the deepest concern for persons like me. Your thesis at the level it is argued—the level of reason, common sense and spirit of give-and-take—is eminently appealing.

A couple of observations with regard to certain points may not be out of place here:

On page 1, there is a reference that “remedies inspired by love and understanding tried by Gandhiji failed only because, at that time, the third party was there to sabotage it.”

However, the fact that minority problem did not end with the quitting of the British, and the expectation that after paying the terrible price of Partition, curtain would be finally drawn over the problem, has been belied, only shows that there had been other potent factors responsible for it.

On page 24, there is a reference that “minority interests should be helped to protect themselves through a system of proportional representation as demanded by the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly”.

Here, also, history records that it was the pernicious principle of communal representation introduced by the British that lay at the root of separatism, ending finally in Partition.

In your not, there is no mention of the vital role of language in bringing about emotional integration right up to the grassroots level. One of the major planks of Hamid Dalwai with regard to this aspect was that Muslim Indians should take to the local languages just as others do, irrespective of their religious affinity.

Now, a few general observations: Experience tells us that under normal circumstances, the average Muslim and Christian can be made to happily join the local Hindu in the social and cultural mainstream. But there is a big ‘if’; and that is, if only they are freed from the political and religious leadership which is keeping them in its communal and separatist grip. Unfortunately, most of the national political parties also abet it with an eye on the Muslim bloc vote. It is this unholy nexus between separatist Muslim leadership and general political leadership of the country that acts as one of the major stumbling blocks. In a way, the situation partly resembles the one of Muslim League and British axis of yester-years. This only means that unless national political parties are cleansed of their minority-mania, the sustenance to the present fundamentalist Muslim leadership will not cease and their hold over

A realistic analysis of Malkaniji’s document and an intrepid opinion about the problem of communalism

the masses will not be loosened.

Experience also tells us that wherever the Hindus have become sufficiently organised and have been able to overcome their internal differences like casteism, untouchability etc., the local Muslims also have tended to join the mainstream. On the other hand, wherever Hindus are weak and divided into splintered groups, Muslims try to exploit the situation and

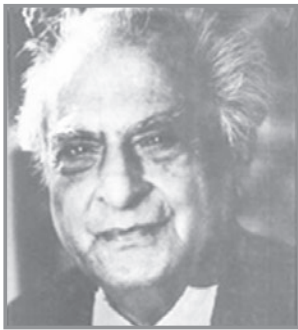
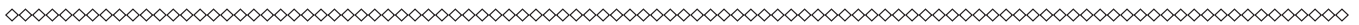
politicians also abet them. It is significant that even Sri C. Achyut Menon once said, the responsibility for bringing about suitable social reform in the Muslim community rests on the majority i.e., the Hindus.

Now, the new state, Pakistan, projected as a symbol of success of aggressive Muslim separatism, has come on the scene as one more de-stabilising factor so far as the Muslim

mentality here is concerned.

These are some vital factors which have to be gone into in depth if an abiding union of hearts has to be brought about among all the children of this country. The main hurdle in the process of bringing into practice the many useful suggestions you have made lies precisely in the play of these factors.

*Manthan, December 1988*



**P.N. Haksar**

## **The Major Problem is to Define Religion**

I have just now received your letter together with a paper titled, 'A Just and Abiding Solution of the Minority Problem'. You probably do not know that the condition of my eyes is such that I can no longer read by myself. Consequently, everything has to be read out. This inevitably takes time. In the circumstances, I cannot straight away send you my reactions to the paper.

Certainly, love, compassion and tolerance are and have been, since the dawn of human history on this earth, the noblest aspect of us human beings. However, as you know, human beings continue to respond to hatred, cruelty and intolerance. And more often than not, we do this in the name of God and religion. The major problem, in my humble opinion, is

to really define the word 'religion'. Surely, there is a vital difference between human beings' yearnings in response to matters of spirit, and religion organised by and often getting aligned with, political power or search for political power.

While the Hindu-Muslim divide is culpable enough in our country, that is not the only thing which divides us in our country.

I apologise for these unthought through remarks. Whatever we may or may not do, I would very humbly submit that we must cease to be self-righteous if we wish to establish a sense of common participation among all the citizens of India irrespective of their caste and creed.

*Manthan, December 1988*

The major problem is to define the word 'religion'



## Solving Problems through Love and Understanding

Mufti Shamsuddin Ahmed

**I**n response to the request from Mr. K.R. Malkani, Vice-Chairman, Deendayal Research Institute, to offer comments/suggestions on his paper captioned 'A JUST AND ABIDING SOLUTION OF THE MINORITY PROBLEM', it is given hereunder:

First of all, I appreciate the sentiments—"it can be solved through love and understanding", expressed in the covering letter. There could be no two opinions so far as the objective is concerned, i.e. solution of minority problem based on justice, which is possible only through love and correct understanding.

Before we proceed, it should be fully realised that it is a very complicated and sensitive issue, where suspicions and misunderstandings are involved, besides legacy of history and religious susceptibilities. Hence, all care should be taken to avoid anything that may create further misunderstanding or hurt others' sentiments, and thereby hamper the very objective. And, above all, justice and sincerity is a must, because without that, it will only be a futile exercise as there is no dearth of high sermons, philosophical ideas, political manoeuvrings and what not, but there is a lack of sincerity and justice.

Further, it should also be borne in mind, and all concerned should remember that we are all equals, and that none has any right to dictate terms to others. Actually, we all are members of a grand family, whose destiny is linked together. We are sailing in the same boat and hence all will swim or sink together.

Now coming to what has been suggested in the paper, I would like to suggest as follows:

Regarding 'secularism' in the West, its historical background and analysis, by and large, there should be no difference. The conflict between the Church and the scientific approach gave rise to the trend of opposing religion itself. Whereas, actually there should not occur any such conflict, because the sphere of science is entirely different from that of religion. However, despite that, there are reservations whereupon the writer has referred to Islam—for example "...they (Muslims) could not have hesitated to liquidate the critics of Islam as per Islamic injunctions" (page 3 last para). It is not a correct representation of Islam. Because, Islam welcomes healthy criticism. But to use derogatory language and/or abuse the Prophet or the Holy Quran is entirely a different thing.

The fights between Hindus and Muslims were not of Hinduism and Islam. It has been correctly stated,

A delicate analysis into the issues raised in Malkani's paper and logical opinion over it

though with some twist, that “Even during Muslim rule, the fight was between oppressors and oppressed and not between Muslim Pirs and Hindu Saints (page 4).” Actually, these fights were there even before Muslims came to India. We should more elaborately make it clear and remove the flaw, as Indian history, compiled after colonial rule, was motivated. Actually, the fight was for power, wealth and territory between two rulers, though sometimes, it so happened that the two warring parties belonged to two different religions, but at other times, they belonged to the same religion also. This has to be made very clear, because here lies the spice of bitterness among the two communities. All these fightings were based on political considerations whether between Muslims and Muslims or Hindus and Hindus or between Muslims and Hindus.

Once it is admitted that these fightings have nothing to do with religion, this chapter should be closed once for all. None should ask the other community to condemn this ruler or that. It is useless, rather harmful for the task ahead, to ask Muslims to condemn Mohammad Bin Qasim, Mohammad Ghori, Babar or Aurangzeb etc. Because the same could be asked from the Hindus about Hemu, Rana Sanga or Shivaji, who fought against the Delhi rulers. They all fought to expand or defend their own kingdoms and territories. Actually, it is useless to run after each and every war that occurred in history because it will only instigate and provoke and won't help create national unity and harmony. It is better to let the sleeping tiger of history sleep

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and proceed on positive lines for a cordial atmosphere and bright future.

Secularism, in the Indian perspective, it should be made clear (in theory and practice, both) as has also been emphasised in this paper—“it means justice for all, and non-discrimination on grounds of creed or religion etc...” (Page 2). The present state of affairs is not compatible with our solemn declarations.

Representation of Islam and quotations given, are not always correct. Better, whatsoever is said about Islam, should be based on its source, the Holy Quran and Hadith. Poets, Sufis, saints have their own respect, no doubt, but they are not standards or scales for any authentic judgment. Besides that, even when the Holy Quran is referred to or quoted, our learned writers should base their thought on correct information and understanding. For example, on page 10, it is stated, “Islam has four classes of men—just like four castes of Hindus—(1) Ul-ul-Ilm (men of learning); (2) Ul-ul-amr (men who command, i.e. Kshatriya warriors); (3) Zurra (traders); and Muzad-war (mazdoor)”. It is absolutely wrong. There is no caste (or class) system (Varnashram) in Islam as Hinduism has. Since

there is no scope to go into details in this paper, better the learned writer correct his information. Likewise, there is no mention in the Holy Quran as “cow's flesh is poison and cow's milk, medicine”, as quoted by you. Also, please correct your information, as none of the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) bore the name ‘Hind’ as stated by you.

Other similarities have also been tried to collect from here and there, but it is quite uncalled for. Common religious teachings are more than enough to unite religious people (against anti-religiousness) like faith in God, moral effects of human actions, truth, justice, love and affection towards all living beings, honesty, moral values, respect for life, property and religion and culture of others etc.

The question of national heroes has been raised, but not dealt with in correct perspective. Like Ashoka, Harsh Vardhana, Samudragupta, etc., Mughals (right from Babar to Aurangzeb) consolidated and united India and gave this country beautiful art, literature and magnificent culture, especially Aurangzeb, under whose rule India's map was the largest one in history, (not withstanding the fact that some

people may differ with some aspects of his policies), Religious affiliations apart, how an Indian national point of view can defend and justify Shivaji's attack on Moghal Empire of Delhi? Please assess the situation without any bias and/or reservation!

Now come to the question of Sri Ramchandraji and Krishanji which has been also referred to. So far as I know, they are 'religious leaders' of Hinduism like Mahatma Buddha for Buddhists and Shri Mahabirji for Jains and not 'national leaders' of India which comprises, among others, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis. Of course, our national leaders are Maulana Mohammad Ali, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, etc. or in the recent history, Bahadur Shah Zafar, Rani of Jhansi etc. may be termed as such.

One thing also needs clarification, i.e. the position of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). First of all, I have serious objection to the manner in which the learned writer has described him. According to Muslim faith, he was the last prophet of God. And even

a gentleman of another faith, when he names the prophet, he is expected to maintain the least decency of calling him Hazrat Muhammad or Muhammad Saheb, as generally Hindu brothers call him. Secondly, Muhammad (peace be upon him) according to Muslim faith, was a prophet (recipient of revelation) and absolutely not a national hero like Napoleon or Lenin of Arabs as described in the paper. The information of the writer is subject to correction. You may call Khalid Bin Walid, Tarique Bin Zaid, Mohammad Al-Fateh or Salahuddin Ayubi as national heroes of Arabs.

Regarding places of religious worship, Muslims firmly stand for the principle that no mosque should be built on a piece of land which has been occupied forcibly, illegally or the worst, by destroying and demolishing a temple. If such things are proved on the basis of correct evidence and not by myths and stories, Muslims will not hesitate for a minute to vacate it. Likewise, no mosque should remain under the occupation of any person or community or even governmental body, depriving the faithfuls of

their right to prayers. And to have a "just and abiding solution of this problem, it would be advisable to enact a legislation to mark the position of 15th August, 1947, the Independence Day of India, as final; and thereby root out one of the causes of persistent quarrel and dissatisfaction.

Suggestions regarding dress, food habits, etc. or advising Muslims to adopt Hindu names (as only they are supposedly Indian names) is nothing but the reflection of one tendency, i.e. assimilation of minorities which has been, at times, termed as 'Indianisation' also. Really this poisonous tendency is the basic cause which has made all minorities, especially Muslims, most suspicious and allergic. This is a chronic disease and it can be cured only if we understand that all communities have equal right to preserve their cultural identity. The formula is 'live and let live'. India is a country of composite culture and this basic fact has to be realised. Hence, preservation and recognition of the cultural identity of each community, which is the life line, especially for minorities, should be the corner-stone of our policy and national programmes. Since minorities are always in a weak position in a democracy, their suspicion is understandable. It is the large-heartedness of the majority which can create confidence among minorities. As stated by our national leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India has a unique composite culture, but there is unity in diversity. We should be proud of having different religions, cultures, races and languages, but after all, we all are Indians.

Something about the suggested

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The question of national heroes has been raised, but not dealt with in correct perspective. Like Ashoka, Harsh Vardhana, Samudragupta, etc., Mughals (right from Babar to Aurangzeb) consolidated and united India and gave this country beautiful art, literature and magnificent culture, especially Aurangzeb, under whose rule India's map was the largest one in history, (not withstanding the fact that some people may differ with some aspects of his policies), Religious affiliations apart, how an Indian national point of view can defend and justify Shivaji's attack on Moghal Empire of Delhi? Please assess the situation without any bias and/or reservation

Action Plan:

1. Indian history should be re-written with a view to create communal harmony and not to 'divide and rule' or demoralise this community or that.
2. Our future generation, particularly during school-going stage, should be given value-based moral instruction and/or each community should be imparted its respective religious teachings, but not any particular religion or culture.
3. Agreed.
4. 'Lifeless' Minorities Commission should be given life and statutory status so that it could achieve its assigned goal and redress the grievances and remove injustice, wherever it is found.
- 5&6. One fact has to be made very clear, i.e. Muslims do not consider Mughals or Pathans, Turkey or Indonesia or even Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, as their ideals to be followed. It is only the

Holy Quran and Hadith which is standard for any judgement as stated above, and nothing else is binding for Muslims. Further, India is not a Hindu land, as has been implicitly stated. It is equally a Muslim, a Hindu, a Sikh, a Christian and a Buddhist land. Hence the very premise is wrong. Of course, it is welcome that Muslims and Hindus and other religious communities greet each other on festivals and share the pleasure with others, within the limits of every community.

7. Conversion or proselytisation is a matter of personal choice, and freedom of belief and faith is guaranteed for all in our Constitution. But it should not be effected by force, threat or lure of money. It should also not be widely celebrated or organised on a large scale like functions, lest it hurt the sentiments of another community.
8. Proportional representation of minorities (by the members who really represent and

enjoy the confidence of the concerned community) is welcome; and this principle should be adopted not only in politics but also in services—public or private, civil or military, police or administration. I hope if this is implemented honestly, a large portion of minority problem would automatically be solved.

9. Foreign funds, if used for education, economic upliftment or humanitarian services, I don't think there should be any objection, provided it is used for the declared specific purpose, and not misused.
  10. SAARC is a good base, if honestly worked and confidence gained, it could help achieve the desired goal.
  11. Article 30 of the Constitution should be honestly followed in letter and spirit.
  12. Agreed. We should respect each other's religion and also refrain from abusing any religion or its founder
- Manthan, December 1988*



V.K. Gokak

## Miracles do Occur Now and Then

I have gone through your brochure. The plan that you contemplate is a good step to begin with. In the present atmosphere, nothing more than this is likely to succeed. A permanent solution can only be found when there is a real change

of heart, nation-wide, through the spread of education and culture of the genuine type. Miracles do occur now and then, and I am hopeful that another half a century may see us out of the woods.

*Manthan, December 1988*



K.S. Sudarshan

## Some Problems in the Way of Hindu-Muslim Relations

After carefully going through your well-reasoned article, I feel that certain vital aspects have not been touched which are so very central for a threadbare analysis of the problem known today as the 'Minority Problem'. I shall try to summarise my observations as follows:

My first submission is that the very concept of minority and majority is not at all compatible with the idea of secularism, which guarantees equal treatment by the state to all its citizens irrespective of caste, creed, language and religion. It was all-right for the Britishers to have used those words with the express purpose of dividing our society into as many conceivable groups as possible and try to pit one section of the society against another. They not only created religious minorities but also linguistic and racial minorities, as well as minorities based on castes. By persisting in the use of the same terminology today, we shall only be allowing ourselves to fall prey to the machinations of the imperialist and expansionist powers who are making use of the same in furtherance of their global politics.

As such, I agree with you that the 'Minority Commission' should be replaced by 'Human Rights Commission' as given in your recommendation No. 4, but find it difficult to agree to your

recommendation No. 8, which again speaks of 'minority interests'. The concept of minority-majority should go lock, stock and barrel.

There are backward sections in all religious groups in our country. Some are only economically backward while some have social disability also in addition, just as our Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Special provisions have been made in the Constitution for the upliftment of these sections but because of faulty and insincere implementation of those provisions, new tensions have developed, threatening the unity or our society. Whereas their proper implementation brooks no delay, one more aspect shall have to be considered that those of the SCs and STs who have reached a particular level of economic and social progress, should not be entitled to further concessions so that the same opportunity is availed of by other less fortunate members of those communities.

In addition to these provisions for the SCs and STs, some provisions should be thought of for the economically backward sections of the society, irrespective of the caste or community to which they may belong. But they should be only for the educational field so that those who are deserving do not feel hindered simply because they cannot

The very concept of minority and majority is not at all compatible with the idea of secularism. A logical analysis

afford it.

The general refrain of your article is that the core of all the religions is the same but history and geography have played a major role in shaping them beyond their core, that religion is being exploited by ambitious politicians to serve their economic and political ends and it is they who give a bad name to religion. But complications crop up when religion and politics enter into a wedlock, as has been the case with Christianity and Islam.

You have already mentioned about the emergence of Papal authority, how it tried to play the role of an emperor and how its authority was repudiated by different nations of Europe, and how science came into conflict with Christianity etc. Today, no doubt, the Church has lost its pre-eminent position but it has become a willing ally of Western powers for furtherance of their global designs. It was not for nothing that the eminent Gandhian economist Dr. J.C. Kumarappa, himself a Christian, had made these cryptic remarks: "The Western nations have four arms—the infantry, the navy, the air force and the Church". The Church in its turn is getting sustenance from the Western nations for its expansion and maintenance. Today, the Church Missions in India are playing

a political game by creating frictions among the different sections of the society. Their designs can be brought to naught if your recommendation No. 9, which suggests stopping all foreign funds, is accepted and implemented.

The case of Islam, however, stands on a different footing. Politics has been so inextricably woven into the fabric of Islam that any talk of separating religion from politics creates an apprehension in the minds of the Muslims that their identity is at stake. The fortunes of Islam began to rise only when Prophet Muhammad established his republic at Medina and called back his persecuted followers who had taken refuge in Abyssinia. He welded the Muhajirs (immigrants) and the Ansars (helpers) into an Islamic brotherhood and started his military expeditions all around until in the 8th year of Hijra, he triumphantly re-entered Mecca. Ever since the taking of Mecca, the Prophet worked as hard as the most industrious of sovereigns, organising expeditions, giving audiences, despatching ambassadors, dictating letters, besides hearing complaints, administering justice and interpreting the law. Always ready to hear and take advice, whatever the subject, he kept all the reins of power in his

own hands and, till his death, managed both the external and internal affairs of a vast and ever-growing community which he had founded, and of which he was both the spiritual and temporal head.

It is not difficult to comprehend that most of the revelations of Koran had a local context or a particular situational background. It was also natural for his immediate successor Khalifs to take recourse to the revelations as also the precepts and directions of the Prophet to keep the community together and crush apostasy and revolts that had raised their head immediately after the Prophet's demise. They had to be ruthless in accomplishing their task and, in the process, religion and politics got so inter-twined that today it has become next to impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins.

So when we say that because all this murder and loot was carried on in the name of religion, it gave the concerned religion a very bad name, we are stating only a partial truth. Because it was not only Timur who said that 'Plunder in war is lawful as their mother's milk to a Mussalman', the Prophet himself has made the same observation. "The spoils of war were not lawful for any people before us. This is because Allah saw our weakness and humility and made this lawful for us" (*Hadis 4327*). Now, if Timur says the same thing on the authority of the Prophet, can we blame him for acting against religion? As a matter of fact, the plundering of infidels or polytheists is a central concept in Muslim religion and it was the linchpin in the economy of the Ummah for centuries.

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You have already mentioned about the emergence of Papal authority, how it tried to play the role of an emperor and how its authority was repudiated by different nations of Europe, and how science came into conflict with Christianity etc. Today, no doubt, the Church has lost its pre-eminent position but it has become a willing ally of Western powers for furtherance of their global designs

Allah made war booty lawful for Muslims—“Eat ye the spoils of war, it is lawful and pure?” (*Koran 8-69*).

Again you are correct when you say that when different societies stand face to face, the interaction can be peaceful and mutually beneficial cooperation if the object is trade. When, however, the aim is to loot and kill, burn and rape, it can only lead to the liquidation of one of the two sides—or a bitter prolonged conflict. But when loot, kill, rape and burn get religious sanction, the consequences are not only disastrous, the perpetrators also have no compunction in committing those crimes.

We have only to glance at a few of the many verses in the *Koran* to get an idea—

- (i) O Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern with them. Hell will be their home, a hapless journey's end.
- (ii) Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against disbelievers and merciful among themselves. (48-29)
- (iii) Fight them: Allah will chastise them at your hands and He will lay them low and give you victory over them, and He will heal the breasts of folk who are believers. (9-14)
- (iv) They surely disbelieve who say: Lo: Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo: whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, for him Allah hath

forbidden Paradise. His abode is Fire. For evil-doers, there will be no helpers. (5-72)

- (v) Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers. Whoso doeth that hath no connection with Allah unless (it be) that ye but guard yourselves against them taking (as it were) security. Allah biddeth you beware (only) of Himself. Unto Allah is the journeying. (3-28)
- (vi) He said: worship ye then instead of Allah that which cannot profit you at all, nor harm you? Fie on you and all that ye worship instead of Allah. Have ye then no sense? (21-66, 67).
- (vii) Allah is the protecting friend of those who believe. He bringeth them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are false. They bring them out of light into darkness. Such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein (2-257).
- (viii) Those who believe do battle for the cause of Allah. And those who disbelieve do battle for the cause of idols. So fight the minions of the devil. Lo: the devil's strategy is ever weak (4-76).
- (ix) Worse is he of whose sort Allah hath turned some to apes and swines, and who serveth idols. Such are in worse plight and further astray from the plain road (5-60).
- (x) And all married women are forbidden unto you save

those (captives) whom your right hand possesses (i.e. those women, whether married or unmarried, who are captured by the Muslims in jihad or holy war) (4-24).

If a faithful takes recourse to loot, murder, rape etc. and cites the above verses in support, can he be said to be acting against religion if the other man happens to be a 'disbeliever'? Can he be accused of bringing bad name to religion? Unless, of course, such situational revelations are sifted and declared out of context by the jurists and Ulema of the Islamic world, or at least those of India. Is it possible?

Syed Amir Ali has cited a Hadis in his book 'The Spirit of Islam': The Prophet declared—“Ye are in an age, in which, if ye abandon one-tenth of what is ordered, ye will be ruined. After this, a time will come when he, who shall observe one-tenth of what is now ordered, will be redeemed.” I cannot vouchsafe for the authenticity of this Hadis though according to Syed Amir Ali it is given in *Jama'ut-Tirmizi* and is also found in *Mishkat*. If it is acceptable to the Sunni theologians also, then has not the time come to sift that 'one-tenth' which will redeem the believers in our modern age? If that is done, will it not help in removing the apprehensions from the minds of the Hindus and other non-Muslims who have not had a very flattering experience of Islam throughout history?

There had been attempts in the past at reinterpreting Islam in the changed context but they met with stiff resistance from the entrenched orthodoxy. Jalaluddin Afghani, an Arab

## Manthan

born in Afghanistan and who was for long years a teacher at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, emphasised the need to give up the habit of clinging to the past, for the purpose of intellectual progress in harmony with modern knowledge. He claimed that Sunni Islam was capable of adapting itself to both the highest cravings of the human soul and the needs of modern life. However, this could only be done if Muslim thought freed itself from the chains in, which it has lain for many centuries. He attacked the autocratic Turkish Caliph's rule which stifled intellectual progress of the Muslims. He also came to India and had impressed a sizeable number of Muslim religious leaders by the force of his logic. But his views were strongly attacked by the Ulema in Turkey. They alleged that Jalaluddin was an atheist and a perverter of religious law. Afghani then threw a challenge to them for a public debate over the different issues raised by them but the Turkish authorities asked him to leave Turkey forthwith.

In our country also, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan gave a new interpretation of Koran and, on the basis of that, made out a case for reforms. For all practical purposes, he rejected the Hadis and the Fiqh (Holy sayings and Law of Islam) on the ground that the two were relevant to the society a thousand years ago and were no longer valid. Even the Koran has to be understood on the basis of reason, and some of the injunctions could no longer be considered as applicable and binding. His interpretation of Islam sought to make it thoroughly compatible

with modern thought. But here also, he was declared a heretic simply because he supported the British annexation of Egypt from the Turkish Empire. Thus, the movement for religious reformation started by Sir Syed and directed towards making secular ideology popular among the Muslims in India, could not cut much ice with them due to pan-Islamic sentiments aroused during the hostility towards Turkey.

Today also, whoever strives to bring about religious reformation, would have to face stiff resistance. But then that has been the lot of all religious and social reformers in all societies. Can we expect the Muslim intelligentsia to rise to the occasion and start a mighty reformist movement if they think that it is called for?

Similarly, your statement that 'Indian Islam knew *moulavis* and *moulanas*, but no Caliph', is also partially true. The concept of a central Caliphal authority has always been influencing the minds of the Indian Muslims. The Muslim advent in North-East India almost coincided with the crystallisation of the concept of Khalifat during the Abbasid dynasty. Mahmud Ghaznavi submitted himself to the spiritual sway of the Abbasid Caliph. In his mind, the process of submission to the 'Universal Khalifat' and the invasion and occupation of 'infidel' Indian territory were clearly interconnected. He received investiture from the then Caliph Al-Qadir and his sack of Somnath led to a second capital investiture with more titles and honours. The practice of inscription of Caliph's name on the coins was started by him and it was continued by succeeding

Khilji and Tughlaq dynasties. Caliph's name was also recited in the Friday prayers.

During Moghul rule, however, the practice got discontinued but after the decline of the Moghul Empire and rise of the Hindu power of Marathas and Jats, Shah Waliullah Dehlavi led the first modern revivalist movement of Islam. Waliullah of the Naqshbandi Suti order was the first to utter the cry of Islam in danger in India. He not only wanted the Muslims to regain political power in Delhi but also advocated the necessity of a unified Caliphate for the Muslim World so that it could serve as a perpetual spiritual and temporal guide for the community and keep the different Muslim rulers under some form of control. He also invited Ahmed Shah Abdali to invade India and asked the Rohilla Chief of Awadh to be ready to help him, whenever the invasion took place.

His son Shah Abdul-Aziz (1748-1824) went one step farther in declaring India 'Dar-ul-Harb'. He established a network in Rohilkhand, Doab, Awadh and Bihar "for raising funds and volunteers, groomed one of his relatives, Syed Ahmed Bareilvi (1776-1831), for leadership of the New Caliphate. The future Caliph was recognised by the devotees of Abdul-Aziz. Syed Ahmed Bareilvi administered oath of allegiance to the Muslim masses during his extensive tours of northern India. After his return from Haj in 1826, he resumed his task of preaching and recruiting soldiers for the Jihad. With an army of 80,000 soldiers, including volunteers from India and from the local tribes around Naushera, where he



first established his government but subsequently shifted to Peshwar, he attacked the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who decisively defeated him in the battle of Balakot in 1831. Syed Ahmed was killed in the battle.

Shah Abdul Aziz had already died in 1824. His grandson, Mohammad Ishaq, who succeeded him, taking a lesson from the disaster at Balakot, reorganised the Waliullah movement and adopted a new programme which stopped the condemnation of the dargahs and gave up the new interpretation of the Shariat in favour of the Hanafi School, the two features which had previously enraged the Pathans who did not support Syed Ahmed's venture. The most important part of the programme was to establish links with the Ottoman Sultanate of Turkey. He left India for that purpose but, before reaching Turkey, he died in Mecca in 1846.

The Faraizia movement of Shariatullah in Bengal was also of a similar nature. It took up the cause of the poor peasants against the exploiting Zamindars. Moulvi Karamat Ali started a movement of pure Islam in Bihar, taking inspiration from Waliullah and Syed Ahmed Bareilvi. Thus, we see that the theologian-cum-jurist leaders resented the downfall of the Muslim political power and for them the only hope of arousing the Muslims for re-establishing their rule in India lay in a parallel movement for pure Islam. They kept the concept of Khalifat very much alive in the minds of the Muslim masses and it was because of this that the masses could be swayed during the Khilafat movement in 1921, which was supported by Mahatma

Gandhi in his eagerness to enlist the support of the Muslims in his fight against the Britishers for establishing Swaraj. But the working of the Muslim mind can be gauged from the outpourings of one of the Ali brothers, Gandhiji's trusted lieutenants, who said: "Even the most sinful Muslim is better than Gandhi because he believes in Islam and the Prophet." Mahatma Gandhi's support to the Khilafat movement ultimately drove Jinnah, who had criticised the Khilafat movement, to the orthodox camp and enabled him to become creator of Pakistan, of which even he himself was not very sure.

The pampering of the orthodox Muslims by the political parties even after Independence, with an eye on their bloc votes, has again led them on the path of orthodoxy. Today, we find that the Shahabuddins and Imam Bukharis are more respected than the Arif Mohmmeds and Sikander Bakhts.

I am afraid, it may not help us very much in finding stray similarities between the Semitic religions and those under the Hindu canopy, because the approach of both is basically different. Hinduism is a large aggregate of beliefs developed in the course of many centuries evolving from the sacrificial hymns of the Vedas to the philosophical speculation of the Upanishads, the discipline of Yoga, the metaphysical subtleties of Vedanta and the passionate devotion of Bhakti. Islam, on the other hand, is bound by an austere central discipline, revolving round Koran, the Vox Dei (Voice of God) and Hadis, the Vox Propheta—and whatever speculation it has evolved or

borrowed from external sources has been more or less adjusted to these two primary sources of religious authority. As such, the very Shloka of Gita (10-20) cited by you in your paper will be considered a blasphemy by the orthodox Muslims, simply because a mortal like Krishna says—"I am the self, seated in the heart of things", whereas the Koran says—"He is the first, He is the last." Acharya Vinoba Bhave took great pains in selecting similarly meaning verses from different religious scriptures but could not attract Muslim workers for his Sarvodaya work. Because though the Hindus may flaunt such verses from the Koran to show the basic similarities between the two religions, they fail to impress the Muslim mind as in his eyes, most of those verses are 'mansookh', meaning abrogated, by the 'ayat-ul-saif', the verse of the sword, which says—"Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolators wherever ye find them, and take them captive, and besiege them, and prepare ambush for each of them. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the alms-tax, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is forgiving, merciful."

This single verse, which was revealed in the 8th year of Hijra, is said to have abrogated 124 previous ayats of Koran, which are generally cited as proof of Islamic tolerance.

Citing Sufi poets is also not very helpful. Because, of the seventeen Sufi orders prevalent in India in the sixteenth century, as mentioned by Abul Fazl, eight (Habibi, Jumaidi, Tasi, Chisti, Suhrawardi, Qadiri, Naqshbandi and Firdausi) were orthodox

and closely integrated with the Shariat. In Indian Sufism, anti-Hindu polemics began with Muin-ud-din Chishti. Early Sufis in Punjab and early Chishtis devoted themselves to the task of conversion on a large scale. The only orthodox order which seems to have borrowed Indian elements directly from Yoga and possibly from other forms of Hindu mysticism was the Shattari order, whose followers lived in forests like Yogis on a frugal diet of fruits and herbs and subjected themselves to hard physical and spiritual exercises. This syncretic element is also discernible in its liturgical formulae.

But in India, because of the challenge and risk of disintegration into Hindu mysticism, Sufis took special care to resolve its differences with orthodoxy. In Islamic religious history, the tension between the religious assertion of the transcendence of God and the mystical aspiration for his immanence was perhaps nowhere resolved more thoroughly to a middle-of-the-road position than in India, where Islam was propagated mainly by Sufis with a firm emphasis on the observance of the tenets of Shariat.

Lalla Ded of Kashmir brought Saivism into contact with the Naqshbandi Sufism in the fourteenth century. But in its later development in India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Naqshbandi Sufism developed an attitude of uncompromising opposition towards Hinduism, especially so in the teachings of Khwaja Baqui-billah and Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, who can be regarded as by far the most outstanding Muslim theologian before Shah

Waliullahi. From him begins the Indian Muslim tradition of scholarship of Hadis which was to culminate in the works of Waliullah and the Ahl-i-hadis of the late nineteenth century.

Sheikh Sirhindi regarded Islam and Kufr (in the context of India, Hinduism) as “opposites, antithetical and, therefore, mutually exclusive. Opposites cannot integrate; one can thrive only at the expense of the other. It should, therefore, be realised that the honour and security of Islam is dependent upon the humiliation of the unbelievers and their faith. He, who holds the infidels in affection and esteem or keeps company with them, dishonours his own religion.” He considered it binding on Muslims to hold the infidels and their idols in contempt. Innovations—presumably those inclined towards eclecticism—could be tolerated in the days of the glory of Islam, but not in the age of its (political) decline. He regarded ‘jezia’ “not as a poll-tax for the protection of the Zimmis but as an institution symbolising their humiliation. To regard Ram and Rahim identical is the height of folly. The creator and the created cannot be identical. Before the birth of Ram and Krishna, no one called God by these names. How could he assume these names after their birth?” Though he did believe that divine grace could not have left India without Prophets to guide it, he suggested, that perhaps they came and went unheeded. Hinduism, as he saw it, was not only antithetical to, but also arch-enemy of Islam and, therefore, he urged Muslims to curse the infidel practices, for cursing is the proclamation of enmity.

Sirhindi’s doctrine rediverted Islam’s various streams, orthodox and esoteric, into a single channel; it relaxed the tension between the religious law and the mystical experience. It resolved whatever conflict there was between the Sufis and the Ulema, uniting them in the single synthesis of solidarity.

Waliullah also propagated that Islam in India was facing a crisis due to corruption of Islam by the un-Islamic practices adopted by the Muslims in company with the Hindus. However, in their capacity as the followers of the ‘final religion’, Muslims were duty-bound to resist such corruption in their religion. For this purpose, it was necessary to launch a vigorous campaign against Hindu practices. It was essential that the Muslims should not consider themselves as part of the general Indian society. They should never forget that they were an integral part of the larger Muslim world. Dr. I.H. Qureshi writes: “Waliullah did not want the Muslims to become part of the general milieu of the sub-continent; he wanted them to keep alive their relations with the rest of the Muslim world, so that the springs of their inspiration and ideals might ever remain located in Islam and the traditions of the world community developed by it.”

Aziz Ahmed says in his scholarly book ‘Studies in Islamic Culture in Indian Environment’: “In a way Sirhindi was the pioneer of what modern Islam is today in Indo-Pakistan sub-continent— isolationist, self-confident, conservative, deeply conscious of the need of reformation but distrustful of innovation, accepting speculation in theory

but dreading it in practice, and insular in its contact with other civilisations. This is not surprising because at one time or other, the intellectual leaders of modern Muslim India—Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Iqbal, Abul Kalam Azad—widely different though their religious and political solutions have been, had come under the influence of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi.”

Today also, the Sunni Muslim mind is controlled by the *moulavis* of Deoband, the centre started by the followers of Abdul Aziz of the Naqshbandi order. With this conditioning of the general Muslim mind, they not only resist adopting Indian names and traditions and observing Hindu festivals, but also see in it as loss of their identity. It is for this reason that a systematic campaign is going on in the countryside to make the Muslims eschew whatever Hindu influences have crept into their life. The example of Mehrat Muslims of Rajasthan is worth mentioning. They were all Chauhan Rajputs, who after the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan, were forced to accept Islam by the Ghoris. They, however, took both Hindu and Muslim names and observed Diwali and Dussehra together with Eid and Moharram. But they were exhorted by the orthodox Muslim leadership to shed all un-Islamic accretions to

preserve the purity of Islam. This also created a reaction in a section of the Mehrats, who instead of getting rid of the Hindu accretions and thus cutting themselves away from their roots, thought it fit to get rid of the Islamic accretions and return to their ancient Hindu fold.

There is also no unanimity among the different Ulema as to who is a Muslim or a *Kafir*. In the wake of the Ahmediya riots in Lahore sometime after the creation of Pakistan, the Pakistan Government instituted a two-member enquiry commission consisting of Justice Munir and Justice Kayani. In response to the basic query as to who is a Muslim, the Ulema's answers were so divergent that Justice Munir had to write:

“Considering all the definitions given by the Ulema, we can only state that no two Ulema agree on this fundamental question. If we give our own definition, and that definition does not agree with the definitions given by the Ulemas, then they will unanimously declare us to be outside the circle of Islam. And if we agree with the definition given by any one of the Ulema, then we shall be deemed to be Muslims in the eyes of that *alim* but all the others will declare us *Kafirs*.” (Munir Report, pp 229-30.)

The Ahmediyas have already

been declared as non-Muslims by law in Pakistan and 400 cases have been instituted against prominent Ahmediya leaders under the Prevention of Insult to the Prophet Act, because they do not accept the finality of Prophethood of Hazrat Mohammed. The penalty under this act is death sentence to men and life-imprisonment for women. The recurring Shia-Sunni conflict needs no elaboration. But in an interesting incident last year, even a Sunni *maulvi* from Bareilly was declared as *Kafir* and not allowed to enter the Kaaba simply because he belonged to the Barelvi faction of the Sunni Muslims who believe that whatever is to be got from Allah, should be got through the agency of the Prophet. According to the Deobandis, another faction, this amounts to making the Prophet a partner of Allah, which is ‘*kufr*’. And it was because a Deobandi *maulvi* had informed the King, Shah Fahd of Saudi Arabia, of the impending visit of a ‘*kafir*’, that Maulvi Akhtar Khan Azhari was denied entry into the Kaaba and kept behind bars for some ten days before being deported to Bombay.

In such a situation, how is it possible to set up a proper equation with the Muslim masses who are being swayed all the time either by the *mullahs* and *maulvis* or by wily politicians who have a vested interest in keeping the gulf unbridged between Muslims and Hindus?

The concept of nationalism vis-a-vis Islam also needs deeper consideration. Nearly all scholars of nationalism have come around to accept nationalism as a ‘we-feeling’ fostered in a group of people mainly by a common culture evolved in the particular

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There is also no unanimity among the different Ulema as to who is a Muslim or a *Kafir*. In the wake of the Ahmediya riots in Lahore sometime after the creation of Pakistan, the Pakistan Government instituted a two-member enquiry commission consisting of Justice Munir and Justice Kayani. In response to the basic query as to who is a Muslim, the Ulema's answers were so divergent that Justice Munir had to write

environment prevalent in the land of their ancestors. Muslim thinkers, however, have been unable to evolve nationalism as a logical outcome of the Islamic thought process. Hence, they accept nationalism only so long as it does not come into conflict with their Islamic tenets, which generally means the Arabic culture.

Basically, Islam began as a manifestation of Arab nationalism. We find many verses in Koran where it is expressly stated that the revelations of Koran are for the Arabs.

“Lo! We have revealed it, a Lecture in Arabic, that Ye may understand.” (12-2)

“Thus, we have revealed it, a decisive utterance in Arabic.” (13-37)

“A scripture whereof the verses are expounded, a Lecture in Arabic for people who have knowledge.” (40-3)

“Lo! We have appointed it a Lecture in Arabic that happily ye may understand.” (43-3)

Naturally, Islam has a strong impress of Arabic culture, traditions and customs. If we can persuade ourselves to consider Prophet Mohammad to be a national leader of the Arabs, who wanted to mould various nomadic tribes into a strong nation, most of his sayings and actions can get justification. But when in the course of its expansion, the Arabs began to coerce people of other countries into conformity with the Arabic culture and customs, it created fissures in the Islamic brotherhood and could not remain monolith which it was expected to be.

Today, we find each Islamic nation projecting its own form of Islam. While Turkey has

In those countries where Muslims are in a minority, they exhibit a tendency to withdraw into a protective shell until the day they become a majority there, both by proselytisation and procreation. Till then, they are not amenable to accept even those changes which have been effected in other Muslim countries. Says Badruddin Tyabji, ICS, former Foreign Secretary and India's ambassador in various countries, in his manifesto for the 1971 elections to the Lok Sabha

amalgamated European culture with Islam, Indonesia has been able to project a fine blend of Islam and Hindu culture, where a Muslim is not inhibited in accepting Ramayan and Mahabharat as his cultural epics and adopting Sanskrit names for individuals and institutions. Iran has its own blend of Islam and Iranian culture. Today in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the same process is discernible. But this is true only for those countries where Muslims are in a majority, i.e. Dar-ul-Islam.

In those countries where Muslims are in a minority, they exhibit a tendency to withdraw into a protective shell until the day they become a majority there, both by proselytisation and procreation. Till then, they are not amenable to accept even those changes which have been effected in other Muslim countries. Says Badruddin Tyabji, ICS, former Foreign Secretary and India's ambassador in various countries, in his manifesto for the 1971 elections to the Lok Sabha: “The Union Government should not try to bring about any social reform in the Muslim society, even though it may have been accepted in Pakistan, because even after 23 years of Independence, the Government has not been able to win the confidence of 6 crores of

Indian Muslim.” (*Indian Express*, 7-2-1971). This tendency inhibits the Muslims to accept the culture of the land, which alone would make them a part of the national ‘we-group’. Shri M.R.A. Baig, our erstwhile ambassador to Iran, writes in his book ‘Muslim Dilemma in India’:

“Since Muslims ideologically should have no country, they have to compensate it with an excessive sense of community. This characteristic effectively bars their assimilation in non-Muslim countries, and inhibits a practicing Muslim being either an internationalist or a nationalist or even a humanist. Islam makes him a trans-national communalist who feels at home only in Muslim majority countries.”

With such a mental make-up, if Muslims look with suspicion upon all overtures of the majority community to establish a harmonious relationship with them as something to obliterate their separate identity, it is not at all surprising.

All this sounds really pessimistic, especially when we find that sizeable number of social and religious reformers are not forthcoming in the Muslim society to enable it to face the modern world with courage and confidence. A sustained and vigorous propaganda by the

enlightened Muslims on a non-political level is the greatest need of the hour. This will have to be done even at the risk of being dubbed as *Kafir* by the Ulema.

Recently, one Akhtar Hamid Khan, Director of Orangi Pilot Project in Karachi, was bold enough to state in an interview given to the New York Times, and reproduced by the Urdu weekly of Pakistan 'Taqbir', 19th May, 1988.

He said: "Islam has not taught Muslims to live in peace with non-Muslims. The Koran says that there have been scores of such minority communities in the past which ultimately vanquished and dominated the majority communities. Our religion and history do not teach us how to live as a minority. They tell us to go on fighting until victory in ours. The message of Islam to the Indian Muslims is to achieve victory over Hindustan. This is

a suicidal policy. The minority mentality is the root cause of all the troubles and backwardness of the Muslim community in Hindustan. This does not allow them to compete with others on an equal footing, which inhibits their growth. The Parsis and Jews never hankered after minority status and privileges and they have advanced in every field of life. Even the Bohras, Memons and Khojas have progressed because they took to trade and industry without hankering after minority rights."

Akhtar Hamid's interview is replete with relevant quotations from the Koran. But still the editor of the weekly published the interview with an introductory note in which he accused Hamid of having a Hindu mind and demanded his expulsion from Pakistan.

In our country, however, such reformers would get

encouragement from the Hindu society, though that will still further expose them to the charge of heresy by the entrenched Ulema. Shri Hamid Dalwai did proceed with a rationalistic outlook through his Satya Shodhak Mandal at Pune, which however got a serious setback due to his untimely demise. The Muslim society is, however, not devoid of such well-meaning persons who can dispassionately analyse the ills that are affecting their community. The only thing that needs to be done is to come together and start their campaign in an organised manner. They will have to face the wrath of the Ulema and, maybe, also excommunication. But if they stick to their guns, they will surely be able to slowly expand their base. Hindus will gladly back their endeavor.

*Manthan, December 1988*



P. Parameswaran

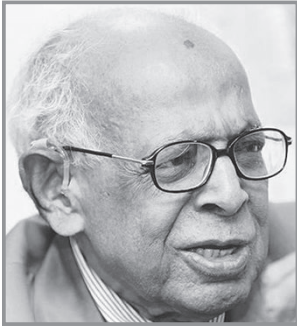
## Refreshing Approach to Vexed Problem

I went through your note 'A Just and Abiding Solution of the Minority Problem'. I was delighted to read it. It is a refreshing, off-the-beat write-up on a vexed problem. I am sure it contains many a novel, but nonetheless eminently reasonable, proposals for solving the minority problem. A countrywide discussion by eminent intellectuals

on this theme is bound to yield valuable results. The time is also most opportune.

This is my preliminary impression on the first reading of the paper, there are certain points on which, I think, I have to elaborate. That I will do after making a further study of the write-up.

*Manthan, December 1988*



Syed Shahabuddin

## Hindu Presumptuousness and Self-Righteousness

I HAVE GONE THROUGH your paper on the 'Minority Problem in India' and take the liberty of making some comments on it, which can be further elucidated only during a discussion.

The case for Hindu-Muslim unity is not on compatibility between Hinduism and Islam or their eventual synthesis, but on peaceful coexistence of religious groups inhabiting the same national territory and the possibility of a modus vivendi based on mutual respect and tolerance as well as joint effort for the common cause of the nation. This does not foreclose the possibility of cultural interaction between different religious or ethnic groups and the emergence of a common way of life, save in matters which are strictly based on religious precepts and are considered essential for the maintenance of its religious identity by a particular group. At the same time, we must completely banish from our consideration any forced march towards 'Indianisation' which is just another name, if I can read the mind of the chauvinist forces in Hindu society, for 'Hinduisation'.

Consciously or unconsciously, because of the scratches on our mind, we are insensitive to the religious susceptibility of each other. Insensitivity on one side and fanaticism on the other can be an

explosive mixture for any society. I know you do not mean it but let me state frankly that your comparison of the Holy Prophet with Shivaji or his description as the Napoleon or Lenin of Arabs is offensive to the religious susceptibility of the Muslims.

I do not agree that a nation-state is based on cultural unity or that cultural unity is essential for national unity and territorial integrity. I do not have to dilate on this point because many nation-states today are multi-cultural and proud of being so. I do not see why, when religious, linguistic, ethnic, regional and, therefore, cultural plurality is writ large on the face of our country, we should be so anxious about harmonisation or homogenisation, which I interpret as nothing more than the force of assimilation which runs like a thread throughout our history from the advent of the Aryans to the present times.

The sub-continent has been invaded times without number since the advent of history. The last in the series were the Arabs, Turks, Afghans and Moghuls. I do not see how objective history can distinguish between the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic invaders and I maintain that invaders must be distinguished from those who made their homes in India. In this sense Mohammed bin Qasim, Ghaznavi and Gauri are different from Khilji or Aurangzeb.

The case for Hindu-Muslim unity is not on compatibility between Hinduism and Islam, but on peaceful coexistence of the two religious groups inhabiting the same national territory

You speak of the return of historic temples. Let each case be decided on the basis of facts and not on the basis of myths and legends. But then let us trace back the history of each such place of worship and restore it to the worshippers of original religion. I do not know how many Hindu temples all over the country will have thus to be returned to the Jains and the Buddhists. The question is where do you draw the line in history—whether it is desirable to dig up the past, to bleed old wounds? Such an endeavour is not worthy of a living nation which made a new beginning on 15th August, 1947, and which is looking forward to its due place in the world of future. Looking backwards and pondering over past humiliations, real or imaginary, is a pathological state, which cannot but detract from our constructive endeavours. And imagine the turmoil it would cause if the wrongs of the past were sought to be balanced against the account of the present.

You have suggested that Muslim Indian should adopt 'secular names'. Of course, it is only Hindu names which sound secular to you. But let me add that I have equal regard for all names. And indeed, in the process of spontaneous cultural interaction,

many names have emerged as equally acceptable to people of different communities. But why should you be allergic to names whose origin is Arabic or Persian and why should you call upon the Muslim Indian to disown his Islamic heritage?

Your reference to cow slaughter and music before mosque are very interesting. On one hand, I am against any demonstrative slaughter with a view to hurting religious sentiments. On the other hand, I cannot see why dietary prohibitions should be enforced on any one or why the national economy should pay for the upkeep of unwanted cattle. Apparently, you do not see anything objectionable in music before mosque while a congregational prayer is going on. Here again is a case of insensitivity and, if I may say so, bigotry. I would like a general understanding that all religious processions of any community passing before a place of worship of another community at the time of worship, should stop playing music out of respect.

In your enthusiasm for cultural uniformity, you want to prescribe a common dress and common fashion. These have nothing to do with nationalism or religion. Styles and fashions go on

changing. Even China has grown out of this infantilism.

You also suggest that the Bhagwa Dhvaj should be the national flag of India. There must have been some reason why the freedom movement or the Republic of India did not do so. I think you should wait until India is declared a Hindu state.

Finally, you make a very interesting suggestion that Muslims should give up circumcision. I do not see why the Hindus should be horrified when the Muslims circumcise themselves.

Coming to your plan of action, I broadly agree with your suggestion that history of India should be rewritten from the point of view of the Indian people. The problem, however, is where to find historians who are not 'Hindu' or 'Muslim'. I agree with your proposal of moral instruction in schools with reference to the lives and teachings of great religious leaders.

As for your third suggestion, I would like to emphasise that social violence is directed against specific social groups and, therefore, their institutions, including places of worship, instruction and burial, should also be secure.

I do not think Minorities Commission should be replaced. If lifeless, it should be revived with statutory status and appropriate funding. Side by side, a Human Rights Commission should protect the rights of individual citizens.

With reference to para 5, it is not clear to me what you mean by "joining in celebrating religious festivals". No Hindu can join in a 'namaz' nor can a Muslim join in a puja. But surely, they can

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**Manthan**

both join each other in a fraternal spirit to share the joys of the season. It is interesting that you describe our country, in this para, as 'Hindu land'.

As regards Muslim Family Code, I have always supported the idea of codification; it is coming and it will come, but not at the point of the gun.

Change of faith is the privilege of an individual. No state or authority can take away this privilege and the resulting right. As regards the right to propagate religion, what must be banned is attack on other religions which are not only an exercise in misinformation but also, liable to cause ill-will and provoke strife.

Regarding communal parties, what is important is not the label because communalism pervades even those parties whose membership is not confined to any one community. Your idea of protection of 'minority interest' (I thank you for conceding this)

through a system of proportional representation should be spelt out in greater detail.

As for foreign contribution, I would go further than you have. I would suggest that except for strictly educational and humanitarian relief purposes, all foreign contributions must be banned or all foreign contributions should be routed through a government agency.

I endorse the suggestion in para 10.

With regard to para 11, I also agree that all religious linguistic or cultural communities at any level should enjoy the same privilege of establishing and administering institutions of their choice. And I feel that the establishing community should have the right to reserve up to 2/3rd of the facilities for its own children.

I wholly endorse your view that people of different religions should respect each other's

religion. This is why I am against forcible occupation by one community of the places of worship belonging to others.

I may add that there are some inaccuracies of fact in your paper. For example, I am not aware of any such verse in the Quran on the cow that you have quoted (page 21). I am not aware that the Holy Prophet ever used the Bhagwa Dhvaj. I am not aware that the Mughal emperors were uncircumcised. I am not aware that non-Christians perform mass in Christian countries or non-Muslims participate in Eid prayers in Muslim countries.

I must add in a spirit of frankness that there is an air of self-righteousness as well as a presumptuous assertion of India as a 'Hindu land' which run throughout the paper and detract from its objectivity as well as from its constructive purposes.

*Manthan, December 1988*

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I, Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

1 Mar, 2023

Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma  
Publisher





Dr. Gopal Singh

## General Principles are Acceptable but Specifics are Questionable

I have read your paper on 'A Just and Abiding Solution to the Minorities Problem' with the consideration and respect that it deserves.

I have always admired your undoubted scholarship, devotion to your *motherland* and patriotic feelings. I also read some of your articles in the 'Statesman' and letters to 'The Times of India'.

I was struck by the balance and the study of comparative religions reflected in the first 17 pages of your thesis. However, permit me to point out, that from page 18 onwards, there are items with which I would like to differ, with due humility. While the Muslim Indians, especially the intellectuals, should dissociate themselves from the memory of men like Mohammed bin Qasim, Mahmud Ghazni, Mohammed Ghori, Allauddin Khilji and Aurangzeb, we should be careful not to press our advantage too far to ask the present-day Muslims to return the more historic temples, no matter how forcibly and un-Islamically taken, and converted in the distant past into mosques. This is not the way to bring about a National Reconciliation. It will tear our country to pieces.

If a similar demand is made on us, by our neighbouring countries with regard to our frontiers which, according to them, were forcibly tagged down to India by the British,

or earlier by the Moghuls, where shall we land?

It is unhistorical to say that the British removed the ornamental doors of Ghazni 'to please the Hindus'. It is the Sikhs who did so. Ranjit Singh had made it a condition of helping Shah Shujah to his throne in Kabul that (i) cow-slaughter will be banished in Afghanistan and (ii) the doors of the Somnath Temple shall be returned to India, to which Shah Shujah at that time did not agree. Later, when the Sikhs and the British together invaded Kabul (1839), it is the Sikhs who insisted that they shall take the doors of the Somnath Temple from Ghazni, in whatever condition, and restore them to where they belonged. Whatever happened later is a different story. I do not think, the Somnath Pujaris refused this offer.

It is not necessary for the Muslims to change their names. We are not Bulgaria. Indonesia and Thailand have a different cultural history altogether. One has a Hindu-Buddhist background, and the other a Muslim-majority (with a Hindu past) background. It is the minority status of the Muslims in India that has made them more fundamentalist than in the countries where they enjoy a majority, as in the Arab countries, or even in Afghanistan or Iran.

I think along with cow-slaughter,

The word minority reflects an appalling comprehension. We should hope it to be removed from our constitution

we should also ban pig-slaughter. In fact, if you really ask me, we should ban all animal slaughter, in spite of what the Vedas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata may say.

The dress, the hair-styles, the food habits etc. are all changing fast, under the impact of the machine-age. Even names are changing. Unless there are more inter-marriages, we shall not be able to effect the cultural cohesion and oneness that we all desire and need. Will the Hindus also give up caste, and now their recently-acquired linguistic exclusiveness and fundamentalist outlook? You have not touched upon them. And you have been more than harsh on the Christians. Conventions

apart, their contribution to the fresh discovery of our faiths and the challenges they threw to us to reform or go under, has to be taken notice of. Other people have also been influenced by Christianity and the English language, but we have thereby discarded not only our culture, but started hating ourselves. Whose fault is this, is not our own?

I have visited Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities abroad very often, and found that they conform to the modern trends much more than we do here. Unfortunately, the fundamentalist atmosphere among the present-day political Hindus is not a reaction to the Minority fundamentalism. It is on account

of the majority consciousness (even though divided by caste and language) which is a by-product of our political process, borrowed wholesale from the West.

I hope you will not mind these observations. I am sending you my own views on the minority problem. Please do react. As you may have read, I hate the word 'minority' based on religion or language and wish to see it removed from our Constitution. Incidentally, my father was a Hindu (a majority-walla) and I, his son, am condemned to be a minority, being made a Sikh by him, though no fault of mine!

*Manthan, December 1988*



B.K. Nehru

## Wanted Rationality & Not Religion

I am afraid I too am one of those who regard religion as irrational and one of the most divisive forces in human history and society. I fear also that I cannot accept the thesis of the unity of all religions.

The Hindu-Muslim divide is not religious in the sense that the observance of the two religions by the believers therein need not necessarily give rise to conflict. But it is religious in the sense that when Indians started to feel the first stirrings of nationalism, they were compelled to go back to their roots in order to find a base for that nationalism. The Hindus went back to the Vedas

and the Shastras to find inspiration, and the Muslims went to the Quran and the Ahadis. Today, therefore, as Hindus are the dominant majority, it is natural that Indian nationalism should have a preponderantly Hindu content. This is what the Muslims find difficulty in accepting and it leads to a kind of aggressive defence of their separate identity.

The cure will be found, therefore, in the slow growth of rationalism leading to the acceptance of loyalty to a country whose ideal is a society based on reason and justice rather than the authority of the Holy Books.

*Manthan, December 1988*



नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री

## मध्यप्रदेश पेसा नियम



शिवराज सिंह चौहान, मुख्यमंत्री

जनजातीय समुदाय को  
जल, जंगल, जमीन, मजदूरों,  
महिलाओं व संस्कृति संरक्षण  
के मिले अधिकार

# मध्यप्रदेश सरकार ने दिये आर्थिक उन्नति के साथ सांस्कृतिक संरक्षण के अधिकार

अनुसूचित क्षेत्र के 89 विकासखंडों में हुए लागू

सामाजिक समरसता के साथ  
जनजातीय वर्ग को मिले उनके अधिकार

### जमीन के अधिकार

- गांव की जमीन और वन क्षेत्र के नक्शे, खसरा बी-1 पटवारी और बीटगार्ड कराएंगे उपलब्ध, नहीं लगाने होंगे तहसील के चक्कर
- राजस्व अभिलेखों की त्रुटियों के सुधार की अनुशंसा का अधिकार
- भू-अर्जन, खनिज सर्वे, पट्टा और नीलामी हेतु ग्राम सभा की सहमति और अनुशंसा
- गलत तरीके से जमीन खरीदने/कब्जा करने पर ग्राम सभा का हस्तक्षेप, नहीं कर सकेगा कोई छल-कपट
- ग्राम सभा वापस दिलवा सकती है कब्जे वाली जमीन

### जंगल के अधिकार

- लघु वनोपजों एवं तेंदूपत्ता के संग्रहण और विपणन का अधिकार, अब जनजातीय समुदाय तय करेगा अपनी लघु वनोपजों का मूल्य, मिलेगी उचित कीमत
- एक निश्चित दर से कम रेट पर नहीं बिकेगी वनोपज



मुख्यमंत्री शिवराज सिंह चौहान ने केसला विकासखण्ड से 89 जनजातीय विकासखण्डों में पेसा जागरूकता अभियान की शुरुआत की



पेसा नियम पर मुख्यमंत्री जी के उद्बोधन को सुनने हेतु स्कैन करें

मध्यप्रदेश शासन



नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री



शिवराज सिंह चौहान, मुख्यमंत्री

माफिया के  
कब्जे से छुड़ाई  
**23 हजार**  
एकड़ जमीन

**बनेंगे गरीबों के लिये घर**  
भोपाल के नीलबड़ से हुई शुरुआत

# We Need a Spiritual Intervention

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Moazziz Ali Beg

**T**hank you very much for sending me the document containing your deliberations on the Minority problem. Most of the passages are surely an echo of my own voice and I share the feelings you have expressed. I assure you of my cooperation and the services I can render for this noble and worthy cause.

As far back as 1957-58, I made sincere efforts in the same direction on the intellectual plane and am enclosing herewith photocopies of two very important letters from authorities who came to grips with the problem of the 'unity of all religions'. Professor Sorokin had opened a Research Centre for Creative Altruism at Harvard and I was in touch with him till his death.

I feel convinced you have caught the point and now let us move ahead, cherishing the hope that the cult of hatred shall vanish before the settled truths of human nature. We must root it out from this soil as a matter of 'National Urgency'. Whatever my humble resources, I am prepared to go ahead with you.

I honestly believe that modern

man is a victim of nihilism and is dominated by the sensate mentality. He has, therefore, become disenabled so far as altruism is concerned. A sort of spiritual intervention has now become a necessity. We can possibly take lead if we succeed in rooting out hatred which is telling upon our national dignity.

The closed mind and arrogance of the average Muslim is almost pathological. I have certainly given thought to it and am still exploring a solution. Your writing has been a source of great encouragement to me.

I am also enclosing herewith my paper entitled 'The Possible Role of Islamic Mysticism' etc. which was read at an International Colloquium at Munich in 1984 under the auspices of Arbeitskreis Fur Interculturelle Kommunikation (Koln) and the Centre For Indian and Inter-Religious Studies, Rome, Italy. Its German translation exists in the proceedings of the said Colloquium. I would appreciate your comments on it.

*Manthan, December 1988*

The cult of hatred shall vanish before the settled truths of human nature. A heartfelt admiration



Balraj Puri

## I would Like to do an Alternative Complementary Paper

I am certainly impressed by your earnestness for a dialogue on a problem the solution of which, as you rightly conclude, “is the fulcrum on which the lever of the future of India—and of the world—depends.”

There are many points on which it should not be difficult for a person like me to agree with you. But as far as the main approach of your paper is concerned, I beg to disagree in a fundamental sense. Full discussion on my disagreement would require writing an alternative paper. Here, I may refer to my two articles in Hindustan Times which deal with my approach on the subject. One was recently published on ‘Religion and Politics’ on September 15. The other one was published on 1st July, 1987. A fuller discussion on the same subject was done in the article in EPW dated 11th July, 1987. If you are interested and cannot locate them there, I would send you copies of these.

Briefly stated, I have doubts about the practicability and even desirability of attempts at homogenisation of all religious communities, through search of ‘essential unity of all religions’, common names etc.

What is more important, this approach implies that we should respect only those who are similar to

us and not those who are dissimilar; whereas the spirit of tolerance and, in fact, basis of a civilised and democratic life, demands respect for dissent. Moreover, theological or philosophical differences have never been a cause of communal tension in this country. By trying to remove these differences, we are merely wasting our energy over removing a non-existing cause of the malaise.

The real problem is posed by the role of religion in a community, to which even its agnostic members belong. The relevant question is: how far the urge of minorities for a distinct identity is legitimate and what is the legitimate sphere of autonomy of these identities? Further, how to reconcile respective claims of community identities with one another and with that of the nation?

You do come quite close to the distinction I am making between religious and communal approach to problems when you observe that the demand for Partition of India came chiefly from Aligarh Boys and not from the Ulema or Pirs. Elsewhere, you have also conceded the way religion is connected with customs, ceremonies and the cultural continuum. But you hardly deal with the problem that religion poses as a basis of identity formation and instead concentrate on its role

A doubt about the practicability and desirability of attempts regarding communal harmony

as ‘an attempt at interpreting the universe’ which, to my mind, is the least troublesome part of the problem.

At any rate, Hinduism has no problem in not only tolerating but even accommodating within its fold any number of metaphysical, theological or philosophical beliefs. For, practically, the entire range of such beliefs already exists therein and no particular scripture has an infallible status for all sects and members of the community. Hinduism is, in fact, not a religion in the strict sense of the term. It has been called a ‘parliament of religions’.

Hinduism, however, comes in direct conflict with other religions in its attitude towards nationalism. In essence, it is a sum total of ancient Indian heritage. As an evolutionary religion, it also continued to get itself enriched by diverse

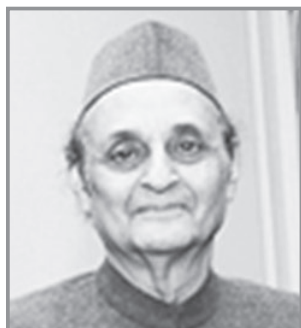
contributions. In a way, Hinduism is a spiritual and religious manifestation of Indian nationalism. Indian mythology, ancient history, national epics, worship of Ganga and Himalaya form essential components of it. Bharat Mata is, undoubtedly, the most sacred ‘goddess’ of Hindus.

Judging by their own attitude towards nationalism—religious, spiritual and emotional—Hindus often find other communities wanting in this respect. They are the most tolerant of religious beliefs of others but could be most intolerant if they suspect any other community is lacking in reverence for Bharat Mata. In this sense, it is far more important to know and teach essential difference of Hinduism from other religions than to know and teach their essential unity.

In sum, there are two main issues that are worth debating but not being debated in the context of inter-community relations, particularly of Hindus with other communities. The first relates to the urge for identity of the minorities which is getting sharpened all over the world on account of the impact of the forces of modernisation. The second relates to the concept of nationalism. How much pluralistic or homogenised should it be? Is it mere patriotism or is it also an ideology, political and religious? What to do with those who do not share an ideological or religion approach to nationalism?

If you concede the relevance of these issues, then our two papers would be more complementary than contradictory.

*Manthan, December 1988*



**Dr. Karan Singh**

## Wanted a Creative Inter-Faith Dialogue

I have received and read with much interest your paper regarding Inter-religious Relations in India. This is an area with which I am deeply concerned, and over the last few years, I have been active in the Inter-Faith Dialogue in India and abroad. Earlier this year, I delivered a lecture in London entitled ‘Hinduism and

World Religions’, a copy of which is enclosed.

It is my conviction that a creative Inter-Faith Dialogue is essential, particularly in a country like India where eight of the world’s great religions flourish.

*Manthan, December 1988*

# It is a Very Practical Paper

Dr. Narayan Samtani

Religion is part and parcel of the life of Indian people. A practical approach to the problem as well as potential solutions

In Banaras a Christian group, who have built a nice 'Maitri Bhavan', is interested in organising dialogues between Hinduism and Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, Jainism and Hinduism, etc. They keep all the pictures of gods and saints of other religions. I shall request them to send you a book on dialogue when they publish.

As regards your paper, I find it very practical. Religion is part and parcel of the life of Indian people. Hence, we should find out a solution which sustains religion, but at the same time people prosper. You are right when you say that science versus religion has never become an issue in India and that political leaders have exploited religion for

their vested interests.

You are also right when you say that "There is something in the mental make-up of man that rejects a monotonous and deadening uniformity". Not only Hinduism had sects but Buddhism was also divided into 18 sects.

Religious freedom has been our forte. You have mentioned that in Chinese tradition, everybody praises another's religion. This was also said by Ashok in his edicts: "One should hearken dhamma of other sects and respect them. By doing so, he benefits his own sect."

Anyhow, I have liked your paper and wish you all success in your laudable efforts.

*Manthan, December 1988*

# Authentic and Convincing

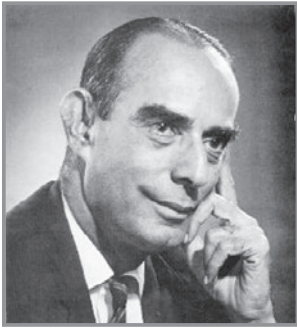
M. Rafiq Khan

Thanks for the letter and the enclosed document entitled 'A Just and Abiding Solution of the Minority Problem'. I have gone through it several times and, I

must say, the paper has based itself on very authentic and constructive events and has argued the points very convincingly.

*Manthan, December 1988*





M.R. Masani

## Religious Problem is Not Minority Problem

Minority problem is not the same that the communal or religious problem is. A critical approach

**T**hank you for your letter forwarding your paper on solution to the Minority problem in India. I much regret due to old age and my eye-sight getting weaker, I shall not be able to participate in the discussion you are planning later this year. Kindly excuse me. Since I cannot read any more, I had your paper read to me and while I sympathise with the values you stress, I have the following comments to make:

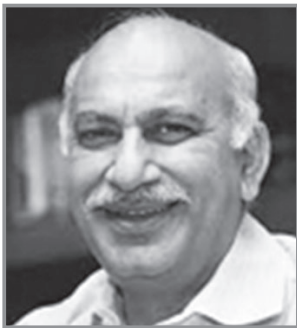
1. Your paper is not really about the minority problem of India but about communal or religious problem. The two are not the same.

The tribals represent the ethnic problems and Harijans represent caste problem. They are both minority problems, but not religious ones.

2. You do not deal on the issue of discrimination the reservation of jobs in government and seats in colleges. This is called in America 'affirmative action'.

I enclose a copy of the conclusions reached by our seminar organised in Bombay by the Indian Liberal Group and the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom.

*Manthan, December 1988*



M.J. Akbar

## An Important Contribution to the Discussion of a Most Difficult Problem

**I** have just received your paper on the Minority Problem of India. While I do not agree with all its aspects, I believe it is an important contribution to the discussion on perhaps the most difficult problem

facing us in modern times. As such, I would be pleased if you gave us permission to publish the paper on the editorial pages of the Telegraph.

*Manthan, December 1988*



Manzoor Alam

## The 12-Point Plan of Action is Generally Acceptable

Thanks for sending June 1988 issue of *Manthan* and sorry for the delay in commenting on your article as I was preoccupied in various other works.

Before commenting on your article, I would like to present a brief introduction of Islam.

As the word Islam connotes 'submission, surrender and obedience', the religion of Islam is unconditional surrender and obedience to the commands and will of Allah.

Allah has not left his creation without guidance. Beginning with Adam (Peace be upon him) and ending at Mohammed (PBUH), we have a chain of prophets. Some of the prophets brought Allah's guidance through revealed books. The Quran, revealed to Mohammed (PBUH) is the last and final of the series of books of guidance and will of Allah.

Islam is not a religion in the Western sense of the word. Islam is a faith and way of life, religion and social order, a doctrine and a code of conduct, set of values and principles and a social movement to realise them in history.

Now coming to above-mentioned article, so far I have understood the main thrust of your article is to bring about peace and harmony between various religious communities like Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains,

Christians and Sikhs. I fully endorse this healthy change in your approach.

Your reference regarding modern attack on religion and importance of religion are well researched and well argued. It is a fact that religion in our society is so deep-rooted that even known atheist's take shelter in religious terminology. Among Muslims, the roots of religion are still deeper. This is evident from the fact that Michael Aling, the propagator of Baathist theory, had to use Islamic terms to propagate Baathism (Syrian and Iraqi version of Socialism).

To us Muslims, the unity of religions is an alien concept. We do believe in co-existence of religions—and we are instructed by the Quran and the Prophet (PBUH) to respect other religion's and religious leaders—but, to us, Deen is only one, which started from Adam (PBUH) and completed by revelation of Quran. According to Islam, the relationship between Creator and Creation is that of Master and Slave. A Muslim has to seek his pleasure. Thus, the very concept of reaching God has no relevance to a Muslim. The concept of 'different ways of reaching God' is alien to Islam. Also, Moksha does not fit into the Islamic framework. Moksha from what? To us, a Muslim is punished or rewarded hereafter

Religion in our society is so deep-rooted that even known atheists take shelter in religious terminology

according to his/her deeds.

The first check Islam has put on a Muslim is that of himself and his conscience. The other more apparent check is that of society in every respect. Thus, the creation of a healthy society not only minimises social problems but produces a good human being. Quran and Hadith have given guidelines and a broad framework for the society, within which only one is free-believer or non-believer, to move around with respect and dignity. There are no class conflicts, no economic exploitation or rivalries. As a result of which, one lives in peace, the other meaning of the word 'Islam'.

Of course, nobody can deny the importance of social customs but, at the same time, to us, these customs are of secondary importance. If there is a clash between a particular local custom and basic teachings of Islam, the latter will prevail. Let us not waste time in 'Shalwar-Sari' or 'Pyjama-Dhoti' conflict or controversy. There is no Islamic Dress as such, every dress is Islamic that is modest.

"What is in a name? A rose by any other name, would smell as sweet."

Before coming to the concrete proposals of action, it is pertinent to mention what Islam stands for.

In brief, it can be said that Islam stands for the establishment of justice and welfare of mankind. The mainsprings of social justice are Universal Brotherhood, Equality, Emancipation and Freedom of Thought and Action and Impartiality of Social Institutions.

To conclude, we can say that 'man' is a superb creature of Allah. He is appointed as His

The history of India written by the British from the imperial angle, and mechanically regurgitated ever since by Indian authors, should be replaced by one written by Indians from the objective angle, based on facts and with right perspective. Such a factual and balanced history of the Indian people will do more to harmonise relations than anything else

'Viceroy' in this world. He has given the (delegated) power to implement the law in this world for the progress and welfare of 'Humanity'. The power is it trust and it ought to be exercised in accordance with the desires and conditions set by Him. Keeping in view the basic teachings of Islam and the emerging condition of India, the following points may be taken as plan for action:

1. First of all, the history of India written by the British from the imperial angle, and mechanically regurgitated ever since by Indian authors, should be replaced by one written by Indians from the objective angle, based on facts and with right perspective. Such a factual and balanced history of the Indian people will do more to harmonise relations than anything else.

2. All schools should provide moral instruction and religious education from original scriptures and basic sources.

3. The life, limb, property and honour of all citizens must be safe and secure. Any social violence must be immediately inquired into, the findings published, the guilty punished and the victims compensated.

4. The lifeless Minorities Commission should be given statutory status.

5. Muslims and Hindus may greet each other on their festivals.

6. Muslims should follow

the teachings of Quran and Sirat, not the precedents of any Muslim country.

7. One should be free to choose or change his religion according to his understanding and conviction.

8. Political parties whose membership is confined to any one community should be banned. But all minority interests should be helped to protect themselves through a system of proportional representation, as demanded by Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly.

9. No religious leaders or organisations should be allowed to receive foreign funds, except from persons of Indian origin.

10. The Indian Constitution should be worked in the true federal spirit so that units and areas in the Hindustan Peninsula outside of the 'Indian Union' consider it worth their while to join the Indian state on honourable and autonomous terms.

11. Article 30 of the Constitution should be amended to incorporate the spirit of the guidelines given by Permanent Court of International Justice regarding the status of minorities (1935, PCIJ Ser, A/B No. 64, P.A.).

12. Above all, Hindus, Muslims and Christians must learn to respect each other.

*Manthan, December 1988*



Imtiaz Ahmed

# We have to Draw on Indian Experience for Solution of Indian Problems

The problems of our land need our own solution. An intrepid opinion

I do welcome the initiative you have taken to write up this paper as a step towards a dialogue on the Minority Problem. As to the concrete contents, I must state that my own understanding of the questions is so different that I can agree with what you have said only in parts. In my view, we have a limited choice—either to relegate religion to the background (Macaulay’s secularists) or accept its vitality. If we accept the first course, the problem will not solve itself. If we accept the second course, many points in your final plan of action would be meaningless and untenable.

There is a strong tendency in our country to gloss over substantive

questions while discussing the minority problem and to engage in pleasant reaffirmation of good faith. I think that the solution to this problem would require us to look at, and draw from basic Indian civilisation and society and not be either full-blooded secularists or hybrid reactionaries. Unless we realise the basic nature of Indian society, we cannot really come to terms with this problem.

I hope that when, if at all, you have a detailed discussion on the paper, I would be glad to offer my comments on the paper at length. I enjoyed reading it.

*Manthan, December 1988*



B.N. Pande

# Congratulations!

I have received your article as well as the opinions on it. It have cursorily glanced through it. It is a short essay on

basic oneness of all religions. My congratulations.

*Manthan, December 1988*



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

## Where even Akbar and Dr. Bhagavan Das Failed...

Religious freedom and tolerance is the only solution to the problem of communalism

**Y**our analysis of the communal problem is basically correct. I fully agree with your view that religious freedom and tolerance is the only solution to this problem. But in an attempt to provide a rational basis for this view, it is neither necessary nor indeed possible to prove that all religions are one and the same. We have two notable instances of how such attempts (that is, to make people realise that all religions are one and the same) have met with total failure. One such attempt was made by Emperor Akbar, and another, in the recent past, by Dr. Bhagavan Das. The former was equipped with great

political power and the latter with great encyclopaedic knowledge of all religions. In spite of their best efforts, they failed utterly in this matter. In the light of such experiments, I feel that religious freedom and tolerance can be achieved on a practical basis alone and not theoretically.

Your proposed plan of action is also basically correct. However, your point No. 7, according to me, is not greatly “in harmony with the principle of religious freedom” which has been so powerfully and rightly, advocated by you.

*Manthan, December 1988*

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## Read with Interest but Not Agreement

V. Gangadhar

**T**hank you very much for sending me a copy of ‘Manthan’. I read with interest your piece on Hindu-Muslim relations despite the fact that I don’t agree with many of your ideas and proposals. Most of our problems could be solved if we decide to pray at home, ban public celebrations of all festivals and utilise the money saved

for other nobler purposes. Taking religion to the streets has harmed the country immensely and reduced the significance of the festivals to showing off, thuggery and nuisance to law-abiding people.

This is just one of my thoughts as loudspeaker music blares all around me. Does Ganesh really need this?

*Manthan, December 1988*



Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer  
(Retd.)

## I would Draw up a Different Agenda

The secular imperative of India does not mean uniform hostility to religions, but friendly co-existence of each, without interference in temporal affairs

**F**or various reasons, I could not find the time to read your long paper on the Minority problem. In the Ayurvedic Hospital where I am going through treatment, I rushed through your paper. To say the least, I find it interesting, impressive in places, instructive and informative on the whole. There is a strong case for harmonious living of the various communities of diverse faiths and of atheism.

Generally speaking, your analysis appeals to me although in a few places, I have disagreements. There is a strong case for Hindus, Muslims and Christians to live together, be their religion what it may. The secular imperative of India does not mean uniform hostility to religions, but friendly co-existence of each, without interference in temporal affairs. The plan of action you have given has some appeal but does not find complete concurrence from me. Of course, I would draw, if given the opportunity, a different agenda. There I would put human rights recognised by the evolving world legal order as

fundamental, making it difficult for any religion to claim the right to reject humanism, compassion, egalite and other basic rights. Gender Justice deserves to be included; likewise, a modern Civil Code deserves to be hammered out. It will consist of modern conceptions which may be partly Islamic, partly Hindu and partly just modern and secular. I have dealt with this subject in some of my writings. I agree that mass conversions should be controlled by the State purely from a secular angle, and to preserve public order. Similarly, political parties must be prevented from becoming communal parties. The test will have to be carefully worked out. Likewise, foreign funds, which play havoc by operating covertly, must be subject to invigilation, especially when they affect religion.

On the whole, I welcome the discussion that you propose and hope that the leaders who meet will produce a constructive formulation.

*Manthan, December 1988*



Dr. Sushila Nayar

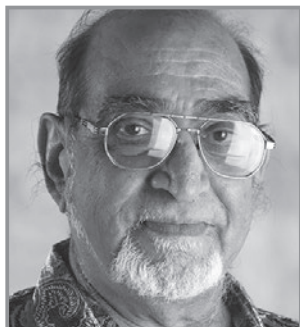
## Your Suggestions Need Careful Consideration

I have seen your circular letter enclosing your paper on the minority problem on my return to India a few days ago. I have read it with great interest. I agree with you that it is not religion but political exploitation of religion that

creates problems.

Your suggestions and plan of action need careful consideration. The idea of calling a conference on the subject is good.

*Manthan, December 1988*



Asghar Ali Engineer

## Wanted! An Earnest Dialogue

Thank you very much for your letter along with a draft article on the question of minority problem. I will certainly go through it very carefully and send my comments to you.

Needless to say, we are equally seriously concerned with this problem and are earnestly trying to promote communal amity in the country upon which depends its integrity and unity.

I very much appreciated one of your articles which you wrote last year in the Statesman, Calcutta, and

also included it in the appendix of my book on Delhi-Meerut Riots. However, I had some reservations about your article on Aurangabad situation recently published in The Indian Post, Bombay.

An earnest dialogue is very necessary to promote better understanding between different religious communities. We keep on trying for it at our end.

*Manthan, December 1988*



Prem Bhatia

## A First-Rate Piece of Research

**F**orgive me for not having sent my reactions to your paper on the minority problem in India which you sent to me some days ago. This is really a first-rate piece of research and projection. In fact, your paper is one of the best presentations on the issue of secularism. I am glad that you sent a copy to P.N. Haksar

who, as you know, is convener of the Special Group set up by the Prime Minister to advise on national integration.

Why not have the paper—in a more brief form—published in one of our major newspapers?

*Manthan, December 1988*

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## Let us Handle the Essentials and Forget the Peripherals

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Dr. A.R. Bedar

**I** appreciate your humanistic approach to the national problem of communalism and the spirit of goodwill behind a very sincere effort.

We should, however, differentiate between essentials and peripherals—should go straightaway by priorities and concentrate our efforts on such issues that matter, lest we might be found entangled in non-issues like circumcision and Arabic names.

Page 3 last line: 'As per Islamic injunction' does not seem to me indispensable either.

Myself, peripherally speaking, I would like to know the sources of information regarding:

Page 13 last line: the quotation of Taimur. It does not seem to be correct

(nor is it indispensable).

Page 18: The doors of Ghazni's mosque supposed to be the doors of temple of Somnath were returned to India but given back to Ghazni, as the conjecture was found not to be correct.

Page 21: Quran is cited to say that cow's flesh is poisonous and cow's milk medicinal.

Page 23: Mughals from Akbar to Bahadur Shah Zafar were not circumcised.

Page 17: "Nobody should make a sarcastic remark about Mohammad and his many marriages." The underlined portion has itself become unintentionally sarcastic (not called for either).

*Manthan, December 1988*





Lakshmi N. Menon

## The Root of the Problem is Economic

I owe an apology to you for not sending my opinion on your paper on communal harmony problem. I read it through carefully and was hesitant to express my frank opinion. I do not want to discourage a young aspirant but my conscience tells me that you are not likely to misunderstand me.

You have described at length the unity of all faiths as described by various people, saints and sages. When you come to deal with minorities, the focus is on the Muslims. India has not one but many minorities. What divides them is not differences of faiths but economic disparities and social prejudice encouraged by outmoded tradition. Among disparities, the emphasis should be on land reforms. The violence against Harijans and Scheduled Castes (a division which I disclaim as one of the hurdles to national integration) has its roots in land division—distribution of surplus land from the landlord to the landless. The rich landlord does not accept the policy and he relentlessly uses violence to get back the land by adopting dubious methods of torture and incendiarism. This is aggravated by Government's indifference and inefficient enforcement apparatus.

My long experience has convinced me of one thing: our masses, being

ignorant and illiterate, are swayed by misinformation and vile propaganda. Some of the things propagandists say are swallowed easily by the poor; being illiterate, they have no other means of getting correct information. So theory of 'religion in danger' becomes a sort of 'mirch masala' to their humdrum life.

What we want, in my humble opinion, is a rethinking on the subject, accept our responsibility for perpetuating economic and social injustice which gives a handle to the politician and the propagandist to exploit the poor. The only panacea that I can think of is more and more education which will enable the citizen to distinguish truth from falsehood. I am afraid, you are not going to achieve anything by repeating 'Truth is one, different persons interpret it differently', or 'God is one and the same, by whatever name you call him'. They sound nice on the platform or in the drawing room. I must confess that you have not succeeded in finding a formula for a just and abiding solution and you will succeed when you go to the root causes—economic and social injustice.

Thank you for sending the paper to me and forgive me for being frank.

*Manthan, December 1988*

What divide us  
is not differences  
of faiths but  
economic  
disparities and  
social prejudice



M.V. Kamath

## Here's a Meaningful Dialogue between Hindus & Muslims

**T**hank you for your circular letter and the enclosures. May I congratulate you on your excellent paper? It is beautifully argued and brings out the essential unity of India very forcefully.

Right now, I am working on a book for Junior College students for their Foundation Course. Instead of writing a text book, I am doing a series of letters addressed to a grand-niece of mine—in the style of Jawaharlal's Letters to His Daughter—covering a wide range of subjects. I am calling my book, Letters to Gauri. You have provided me with so much fascinating material of such vital relevance that I wonder whether I can incorporate many parts of your paper in my

letters. I would be deeply obliged if I have your permission to do so.

In your Concrete Plan of Action, you suggest that history as written by British or British-inspired Indians should be given up and replaced by a book by Indians looking at history from an Indian angle. That is exactly what I am doing. Your paper will be of inestimable help to me, if I have your permission to use it extensively.

In any event you have embarked on a really meaningful dialogue with non-Hindus and it is about time an attempt was made. I have no adverse comment to make but fully endorse your views. All power to your efforts.

*Manthan, December 1988*

## Deendayalji: An Angel in Human Form

**K R Malkani**

**I**mage of leadership. Most of the leaders look like heroes, talk like oracles and pose as kind of super-men. Deendayalji was nothing of the kind. He looked and sounded so ordinary. But he was so very extra-ordinary in his simple living, his clear thinking, his correct judgement of men and matters, and above all in the utter purity of his character. He was, verily, a Brahma Sanyasi who lived in the thick of the world but was altogether above it. While most leaders fall in your estimate as you come to know them, Panditji belonged to that rare species who rise in your esteem the more you know them. I must say I was not particularly impressed when I first saw him during the period of the ban on RSS way back in 1948. But I found that the bright young 'Swayamsevak' of UP already treated him with reverence. They were right. For years I called him 'Deendayal'. But as I saw more and more of him, I, too, unconsciously, switched over to "Panditji". It was a quiet tribute to the quality of the man and his leadership. More than ten years back we pressed him to write a weekly diary for the Organiser. He agreed—but he could not always make it in the midst of his busy schedule. A few years later he told Jagdishji that every time he came to Delhi he was afraid of being reminded by ORGANISER that he had missed this week and that.

Closing Ceremony of the Birth Centenary of K.R. Malkani

# Eminent editor Malkaniji's books released

*Malkaniji was a spokesperson of Indian cultural values: His Excellency Arif Mohammad Khan*



**-Dr. Shashank Dwivedi**

## Malkaniji was a giant personality

The birth centenary of eminent editor and social thinker late K.R. Malkani, fondly called Malkaniji, was celebrated last year. A valedictory function was organised on November 19, 2022, in New Delhi. Two recently published books – “K.R. Malkani: Hindu-Muslim Dialogue” edited by Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma and “K.R. Malkani & the Motherland” edited by Dr. Anirban Ganguly – were released on the occasion. His Excellency Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala, Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, eminent journalist and president of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, and Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma, president of Ekatma Manavdarshan Anusandhan Evam

Vikas Pratishthan, released the books while Dr. Anirban Ganguly, honorary director of Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee Foundation, introduced the books to the audience in the program.

In his keynote address, Dr. Sharma pointed out that people do not know much about Malkaniji whereas everyone should know about this great personality. The people of the country and the media came to know about Malkaniji through his critics – as described and presented by them, hence they did not get a chance to know his positive sides. In reality, Malkaniji's journalism was divine and worth emulating. There was a strong nationalistic flavour in his writings. Malkaniji was a brilliant scholar and he used to develop

himself on a day to day basis. He was the only person who had the unique experience of editing a research magazine 'Manthan', a daily newspaper 'Motherland' and a weekly magazine 'Organiser' at a stretch. He was a voracious reader and used to write and speak about the fundamental problems of the country in a very thoughtful manner. On the Hindu-Muslim issue, he held the view that everyone should get justice and no one should be appeased.

Dr. Sharma further said that Malkaniji was the first prisoner of Emergency in 1975 when he was arrested under MISA in the night of June 25 itself. The main reason behind this was he was the editor of the daily newspaper 'Motherland'. He remained imprisoned throughout the period of Emergency. The best use of

prison is getting involved in reading and Malkaniji was a voracious reader anyway, so the jail turned him into a multidisciplinary, polymath scholar. He has described this in his book 'The Midnight Knock'. Malkaniji was the editor of both 'Organiser' and 'Motherland' for some time. After the Emergency, 'Motherland' could not be published again. However, publication of 'Organiser' was revived and Malkaniji remained its Editor till 1983. After that, he became the vice-president of Deendayal Research Institute and Editor of the research journal 'Manthan'. The high skill with which Malkaniji edited all the three publications – 'Manthan', 'Motherland' and 'Organiser' – was unique. Malkaniji had the exceptional talent of successfully editing three publications of different

nature simultaneously. In his writings, there was no chance of any sell-out, getting suppressed or buckling under any pressure. He was such a Swayamsevak who was a self-inspired editor and not at the behest of anyone, Dr. Sharma concluded.

Introducing the books, Dr. Ganguly said that to know what shape India was in before the Emergency, one should read the writings of Malkaniji published in the 'Motherland', which was edited by him between 1971 and 1974. His thoughts should be read also to comprehensively understand the character of today's Congress and its politics. Malkaniji was not an opponent of the people in power at that time; he was rather a critic. He had strongly supported the Pokhran nuclear test carried out by the government in 1974. In the 'Motherland', he had written even about the good aspects of Indira Gandhi's working style. Malkaniji was a competent editor who had mastery over both Hindi and English languages. Regarding the different languages of India, he held that all of them are Indian languages and everyone should learn them. There should be no discrimination anywhere on the basis of language.

Addressing the gathering, His Excellency Khan deliberated in depth upon his relationship with Malkaniji. He said that it was Malkaniji who initiated qualitative



intellectual thinking on political subjects after Independence. He wrote on controversial and important topics in such a way that people could have a healthy debate on it. He rather used to ignite the debates. Khan said that when he himself resigned from the Union Cabinet in 1986, he was only 35 years old and was in great need of encouragement and cooperation. At such a time, Malkaniji encouraged him a lot through his writings and thoughts. Khan shared many memories related to the bus trip to Pakistan initiated by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He said that he did not want to go to Pakistan but Atalji reminded him that it was a national duty that he has to carry out.

In the context of the Hindu-Muslim problem, Khan said that national duty should be put above all such things. What we really need is national unity, he said, adding that had Gandhiji been there,

he would not have talked about Hindu-Muslim unity but about national unity. India's diverse and glorious tradition is still surviving because of the fact that Indian culture and civilization accepted changes with time, he pointed out, asserting that Malkaniji was the "spokesperson of Indian cultural values." There is no happiness in thinking silly; it is necessary to have a human perspective in life. He further said that the British did not consider India as a nation; they rather thought India to be a collective of different groups. Hence, they adopted the policy of 'divide and rule' on that basis and even succeeded in it to a great extent.

The British wrote the history of India with an imperial mindset. Indian writers also mechanically dragged on the same narrative. The need of the hour is to first rewrite our history from the Indian point of view and replace the old one with it.

It should be people-oriented and not centred around the kings. This type of factual and balanced history will create harmony in the mutual relations of the people. India has always been a country of independent ideology, expression and way of life. With this perspective of history, it would be possible for all – Hindus, Muslims, Christians, etc – to live together in peace and harmony with good reasoning, mutual trust and a feeling of all being the children of the same God, Khan added.

It is written at one place in Malkani's book 'Hindu Muslim Dialogue' that Henry Ford's historical statement that 'history is like a bed' is wrong. Anyone who thinks that it has to do with the original past, has a confused mind. History is a living entity. In fact, history is the depiction of that part of the past which still has relevance even in the present. Rather, history is the reflection of the



past on the present. If politics changes, history also changes. So the question arises: how to solve the problems of the present and how to change politics? History is written not just for dissemination of information or laying out guidelines, but also to advise, caution and inspire us. Turks ruled India for centuries, but you won't find a single Turkish family in India today. Only about one-tenth of the population expressed a desire to go out of India on the basis of 'Islam' and this one-tenth is closer to Hindu culture than any neighbouring Muslim country. India's victory against the invaders is now almost complete, we have successfully weathered the storm, Khan asserted.

The book 'K.R. Malkani: Hindu Muslim Dialogue' breaks many popular beliefs and presents facts in a logical manner, an example of which is in the context of Rajput king Mansingh. While Maharana Pratap's action as a resisting force has been extremely gallant, no inferiority can be assigned to the conduct of Raja Mansingh of Jaipur either. Mansingh honestly thought that the Mughals could never be defeated. So he agreed to help them at a cost. Thus, Jaipur became an important centre for the Mughals and later they became quite dependent on Jaipur. In the process, the Mughals gradually came under its control and Jaipur

tried to take over Delhi. Jahangir precipitously killed Abul Fazl, hurting Akbar deeply. Otherwise, Akbar and Mansingh had decided that Mansingh would be made the 'raj pratinidhi' (regent) instead of Jahangir and Khusro, though a minor then, would be crowned as the de facto ruler, so that the boy could become the real emperor after Akbar, Khan concluded.

In his speech, senior journalist Rai said that Malkaniji's book 'Hindu-Muslim Dialogue' will outstrip thousands of other books on the same topic. Unlike others, Malkaniji's book opens the doors of dialogue. Malkaniji's book and thoughts have the ability to turn an inert mind into a knowledgeable one. In the context of why Gandhiji failed and Jinnah succeeded, Rai explained that sometimes, failure turns out to be more valuable than success. In fact, Gandhiji's failure was more valuable than his success. He said Malkaniji had dreamt of a grander country. He has written very beautifully on the fundamental sublime unity among all the religions. Malkaniji's thoughts propagate a realistic approach and at the same time, warns against misinterpretation of history. Rai also opined that today's social media has become a platform for violence, sex, corruption and lewdness, and not a platform for dialogue.

Muslims know very little about Hindutva while Hindus too don't know much about Islam. Therefore, it is necessary to systematise subject-specific knowledge and introduce it to both of them. Biographies of great religious leaders and compilation of main religious teachings should form part of the general education of our youth. It is only the magnificence of the American education system that it has absorbed Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Russian, Italian and Irish literatures into it and produced patriotic American citizens. Certainly, the Indian education system too can similarly be made suitable for the service of India, Rai concluded.

K.R. Malkani Birth Centenary Celebration Committee convenor Prof. Raj Kumar Bhatia, who is associated with RSS and ABVP, proposed the vote of thanks. The programme was coordinated by Shri Prabhat Kumar, the head of Prabhat Prakashan which published the two books. Dr. Ashok Gadia, the vice-president of Ekatma Manavdarshan Anusandhan Evam Vikas Pratishthan as well as the Chancellor of Mewar University in Rajasthan, had a special contribution in organising the programme. Hundreds of intellectuals, journalists and eminent citizens were present in the programme. ●

# पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय कर्तृत्व एवं विचार



डॉ. महेशचंद्र शर्मा

## पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय कर्तृत्व एवं विचार

डॉ. महेशचंद्र शर्मा



“पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय के विषय में जानकारियाँ बहुत ही सीमित हैं। डॉ. महेशचंद्र शर्मा ने इस विषय पर गवेषणात्मक अध्ययन किया है। इस शोध-ग्रंथ का प्रकाशन न केवल जनसंघ की राजनीति व विचारधारा के प्रति लोगों को लाभदायक जानकारियाँ देगा वरन् राजनीति शास्त्र की वैचारिक बहस को भी आगे बढ़ाएगा। दीनदयाल उपाध्याय व भारतीय जनसंघ को समझने के लिए यह शोध-ग्रंथ प्रामाणिक आधारभूमि प्रदान करता है।”

—डॉ. इकबाल नारायण

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“यदि मुझे दो दीनदयाल मिल जाएँ, तो मैं भारतीय राजनीति का नक्शा बदल दूँ।”

—डॉ. श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी

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## Shri Mahakal Lok Ujjain



### A historic rejuvenation of Shri Mahakaleshwar Dham

**S**hri Mahakaleshwar Dham in Ujjain is amongst the most revered Jyotirlingas in India and a world renowned pilgrimage site. As part of the urban transformation of the Mahakal Temple precinct, the Phase 1 for Shri Mahakal Lok has been completed which aims to improve the experience of pilgrims by decongesting the area, providing state of the art infrastructure and aesthetically pleasing open spaces. This iconic project includes a 900-mtr long corridor filled with traditional installations, theme park, a heritage mall, e-transport facilities and revitalization of the pious Rudrasagar lake. The 856 Crore Shri Mahakal Maharaj Mandir Parisar Vistar Yojana is a comprehensive development plan envisioned by the Madhya Pradesh Government under the leadership of CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and able guidance of PM Narendra Modi.



Shiv Stambh with Saptrishi



Swagat Sankul Kshetra (Plaza) showing Kamal Kund



Shiv Vivah

*The entire premise has been developed on the mythological themes about Lord Shiva and depicts different stories of Shiv Vivah, Tripurasur Wadh, Shiv Paran and Shiv Tandav Swaroop to elevate the religious sentiments and experience of the pilgrims. Facilities like public convenience, shopping, eatery zones have also been developed.*

### Key facts of the project

- ▶ Swagat Sankul Kshetra (Visitors' Plaza) with two magnificent dwaras - Nandi Dwar and Pinaki Dwar, ticketing/information kiosks, sculptures, Rudrasagar (lake) view area and 54 ft. high Panchmukhi Shiv Stambh with Saptrishi, has the capacity of nearly 20 thousand pilgrims at a time.
- ▶ Well-equipped security surveillance area with command centre and e-rickshaw parking with charging dock.
- ▶ 128 shops constructed for Swaipahar (food court), handicrafts, ritual commodities, florists, etc.
- ▶ The revamped Shri Mahakal Lok will have surface parking for 400 cars with 400 kilowatt solar roof.
- ▶ Mansarovar constructed near Mahakaleshwar Temple to increase the holding capacity by 6000 people at a time.
- ▶ Conservation of the ancient Mahakal Dwar and the ancient pedestrian route linking the Shri Mahakaleshwar Temple and Ramghat.
- ▶ Rejuvenation of Rudrasagar lake to make it sewer-free, with provision for filling the lake with Kshipra River water.





Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



75  
आज़ादी का  
अमृत महोत्सव



Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister, MP

“  
CM RISE Schools will be established with an aim to provide high-quality, outcome-oriented education across the state. The goal of these lighthouse schools is to instill values of citizenship, knowledge and skills in children. Indian values, culture and tradition will form an integral part of the learnings imparted.  
- Shivraj Singh Chouhan  
”

## Reimagining Education Across Madhya Pradesh

Placing School Education at the heart of the latest reforms, the Government of Madhya Pradesh is set to provide world class education to every child. Massive strides are being taken to prioritise school education through an array of initiatives - with the goal to transform the lives of learners across the state.



**CM RISE SCHOOL : A Vision for the future** - The Government of Madhya Pradesh is bringing 9200 exemplar, resource-rich schools offering high-quality education. This flagship programme will facilitate holistic development for all learners while fostering Respect, Integrity, Strength, and Excellence - the core values of these schools. **370 schools** will be fully developed at every district and block headquarter in **PHASE-1 (2021-24)** and remaining schools will be made fully functional in **PHASE-2 (2024-32)**.

### 4 TIERS OF SCHOOLS ENVISIONED



### 10 KEY ASPECTS OF CM RISE SCHOOLS



### OTHER MARQUEE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES IN THE STATE

- ✓ **Super 100** : Free-of-cost, high-quality coaching for meritorious students to aid them in realising their educational dreams.
- ✓ **Local-language dialect based primary curriculum** : To enable easy and seamless teaching-learning in local language.
- ✓ **Improving the quality of learning for Grade 5 & 8 students** : Leveraging scientific surveys and detailed analysis of student learning data.

### ADDITIONAL EFFORTS FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

**ANUGOONJ**: Paving the way for STEAM (Science, Technology, Education, Arts, and Mathematics) education, MP is pioneer in integration of Arts in education by providing a platform for students to express their artistic talent.

**UMANG**: A life skills education program, focused on fostering a healthy mindset and developing the right attitude, thereby honing informed decision-making abilities in children.

**ECCE training for co-located Anganwadi workers** - Blended in-person training model adopted, conducted by state-level master trainers and digital modules to supplement capacity building efforts.

**Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN)** - Ensuring basic literacy & numeracy skills in all students by the time they reach 3rd standard, inline with National Education Policy 2020.