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Pilgrim's Progress

Kuldip Nayar

When terrorists attack from the front, it means that they are not afraid of consequences. The story of counterattack to kill seven pilgrims, returning from the Amarnath Yatra in Kashmir, is somewhat similar. Lashkar-e-Toiba did not hesitate to taking on the police or the army as if the terrorists knew that the counter challenge would fall short of their resolve to harm the security forces accompanying the yatra.

Lashkar is a possibility, particularly when it has not claimed the responsibility yet. Even if they claim the responsibility, there is no certainty that they are doing so to cover up the homegrown terrorists. Even the J and K Police have pointed fingers at Lashkar. It is quite likely that Lashkar is the perpetrator. The Lashkar is being battered so much in most countries in West Asia that it wants to resell itself. If it can frighten India, there is every possibility of nations in West Asia coming under its spell of fear.

The nation is justified in expressing its horror because the yatris were on the pilgrimage of faith

which they cherish. It had nothing to do with politics. Unfortunately the whole episode, as the days pass by, is being politicized. The BJP is to blame. It has not bothered that the party has a share in the state government and some of the blame would come to it.

This is not the first time that attacks on yatris have taken place. In August 2000, the terrorists had opened fire on over 95 people, leading to a death toll of 89. The series of attacks, which began on the night of 1 August, were believed to be planned. The following year, too, terrorists opposed to the local outfit Hizbul Mujahideen's ceasefire declaration, had attacked a pilgrim base camp at Pahalgam. A total of 32 people were killed in the base camp strike at Pahalgam, of which 21 were Amarnath *yatris*.

Similarly, a militant hurled two grenades at a camp and later opened fire near the Amarnath shrine on the night of 20 July 2001, killing nearly 13 people, including three women *yatris* and two police officers. The attack took place around 1:25 am near Sheshnag, one

of the highest stops on the way to the Amarnath cave.

What is baffling is the fact that nearly 15,000 security personnel and policemen were deployed to offer protection to the Amarnath pilgrims in 2002. Yet, a terrorist attack could not be averted as eight people were killed and 30 were injured. The attack took place before dawn on the Nunwan camp on the way to the Amarnath shrine, according to reports.

Coming back to the attack on the yatris in Jammu, Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi has hit out at the government over the attack, terming it a grave and unacceptable security lapse and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to accept responsibility. "This is a grave and unacceptable security lapse. The PM needs to accept responsibility and never allow it to happen again... India will never be intimidated by these terrorist cowards," he said in tweets.

The bus, which was fired upon by terrorists in Kashmir, was not registered with the Amarnath Shrine Board and plying without any security cover long after the evening deadline fixed for the vehicles carrying Amarnath yatris, said Congress chief spokesperson Randeep S Surjewala.

Pakistan may be involved, but that is only a suspicion so far. The government must lay before the country the evidence of Islamabad's involvement. But we must cleanse our own house. The establishment is involved in training Hindu terrorists and as Hilary Clinton has said that "if you nourish snakes in your courtyard, they are bound to

bite you one day." Indigenous terrorists are now a reality and they do strike here and there. The attack on the Samjhota Express is said to be the handiwork of homegrown terrorists.

The biggest casualty of the Amarnath Yatra is the Kashmiriyat, a secular belief propelled by the sufis. This faith asserted itself when Maharaja Hari Singh quit the government and left it to the popular leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. There was no communal feeling at that time. Fundamentalists and the propaganda by Pakistan have destroyed what was so beautiful. But why should we throw in the towel? For 70 years we have been upholding India's ethos, secularism and democracy.

We have added the word secularism in the preamble of our constitution. Ironically, Indira Gandhi did this when she, as Prime Minister, had imposed the Emergency. She detained one lakh people without trials and imposed censorship on the press. And she openly said that the press did not resist the restrictions she introduced. L.K. Advani was quite correct in chiding the press after the Emergency: "You were asked to bend but you began to crawl."

Were the Kashmiriyat to assert itself, the basic values like the free press would come to be respected. The Kashmiri Muslims have themselves to decide their faith in togetherness which is being replaced by fundamentalism. I was recently in Srinagar and found to my horror that the youth, which has taken to the gun, want to convert the Valley into a sovereign,

Islamic country.

Leaders like Yashin Malik and Shabbir Shah have become irrelevant. Syed Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz have a following but that was because they talked about Pakistan and Islam at the same time. They even support the stone-pelters saying that the stones were being hurled in the name of Islam. It is a dangerous trend to emerge.

New Delhi will have to think hard and come up with a solution which is acceptable to the people in the Valley and the ruling party at the centre. Home Minister Rajnath Singh has accepted the responsibility of arranging the yatra without any mishaps. The BJP should consult with other political parties and take necessary steps which have the consensus behind them.

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Implications of Ramnath Kovind's Presidency

Prem Singh

In the upcoming presidential election, the BJP candidate Ramnath Kovind's election to the post of the President of India is fait accompli. The debate around the presidential election is restricted to BJP playing the caste-card. The Congress fielding Meira Kumar against BJP's caste-card, merely changes the discourse as to whose candidate is the better or more authentic 'Dalit'. One point raised is that Ramnath Kovind is a dedicated swyamsevak of the RSS. This opposition is moot. Which BJP leader is, or can possibly be, not a dedicated swyamsevak?

The real reason behind BJP/RSS fielding Ramnath Kovind is often lost in the debates on the issue. In this write-up, it is our intention to throw some light on that real reason.

RSS has decided to appropriate Ambedkar as part of a well thought out strategy. It may be remembered that till the time of 'liberal' Atal Behari Vajpayee, not just 'palli' topis, but formal green 'safas' were worn by BJP leaders to appease Muslim voters. Even though they were later threatened and told that BJP could get the numbers irrespective of their votes. Hardliner Advani too thought this was the right way, and placed flowers on Jinnah's grave when he visited Pakistan. RSS showed him the door as soon as he got back home. He's still living the exile, as it were.

Thereafter the RSS resumed its work under the leadership of

Narendra Modi. Narendra Modi accomplished in the Gujrat laboratory what Vajpayee had feared he would, when the BJP decided to make him Chief Minister. The fertile land on which first Godhra, and then the entire Gujarat pogrom was played out, had already been prepared by the decade-long neoliberal policies. Narendra Modi, based on the state power, was successful in eliminating all evidences against him and his government, and whoever were declared guilty and punished by the court, are now being released.

If the BJP of Bhagwat-Modi-Shah does not want the Muslim vote to win elections, it is clear that it needs to make up the deficit by ensuring the support of another big community. This can only be the Dalit community. In the short tenure of the Bhagwat-Modi-Shah, the RSS/BJP have had remarkable success in this direction; it does not matter that intra-community caste-divisions and rivalries for power exist within the Dalit community too. Rather it has captured the sentiments of other backward castes, as well as the tribals. With time it will achieve greater success. With this, there will be a permanent solution for winning elections, and also, it will facilitate manipulation and distortion of the Constitution.

After the victory of 2019, when the existing concept of secularism in the Constitution is replaced by the RSS's concept of the 'Hindu Rashtra', a Dalit President will be

waiting in Rashtrapati Bhavan to sign it. Advani, perhaps, couldn't have done this. The Modi-Shah duo refrained from brazenly installing Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, to carry this out right away, due to some apprehensions. This task has been postponed for now.

If a Dalit does this, it can be said that a Dalit from Modi's 'New India' is carrying forward Baba Saheb's work, which the Congress had delayed or stalled for the past 70 years! This is how RSS-BJP will rectify Baba Saheb's 'wrong' decision of abandoning Hinduism. Along with this, those speaking against Hinduism in their assertion of Dalit identity, will also be taught a lesson. As it is, RSS-BJP is not going to find it tough to deal with Dalit and Other Backward Castes 'intellectuals', because just as Hindu nationalism thrives in the womb of neo-liberalism, most Dalit and OBC intellectuals too try to establish their power/space within the neo-liberal framework.

As this scheme gains momentum, the RSS will gun for its long-awaited agenda of dispossessing the Muslims, already dispossessed of democracy, of the country itself. A rehearsal of this may be seen in the events in Muzaffar Nagar four years back.

The governor of Tripura recently tweeted that Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, founder of Jan Sangh, had suggested that Hindu-Muslim

(Continued on Page 5)

Hazards of Mobile Phones and Towers

Bharat Dogra

More and more evidence has been piling up about the health hazards associated with excessive and careless use of mobile phones as well as with the towers installed for mobile phone communication. The debate on many sided threats from electro-magnetic pollution is likely to hot up with the passage of time and we should not lose any further time in becoming more careful about avoiding as much as possible or minimizing the threat of serious health hazards.

While hearing a case on this issue last year a bench of Chief Justice T. S. Thakur and Justices R. Banumathi and U.U. Lalit asked the parties to file scientific and research data on this issue. The Court also took note of a recent book by Justice J. L. Gupta, a former chief justice of a high court, in which he has written that he had developed a cancerous tumour due to excessive use of mobile phone.

According to a study in 2016, in a year forty to fifty thousand people are diagnosed to be affected by brain tumour in India out of which about 20 per cent are children. The study showed a significant increase in the number of children affected by brain tumour. *The Asian Age* while reporting this study on July 10 2017 said, "Doctors said that this could be attributed to long-term mobile use." In particular this report quoted Dr. P. K. Sethi, Professor and consultant of the neurology department at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital as saying, "There is a lot of literature that establishes a link

between mobile radiation and brain tumour. Mobile phones emit radiation from their antennas and kids are at high risk as they possess soft tissues near ear."

The debate over electromagnetic pollution and more particularly the hazards of cellphone radiation has been escalating in many countries, but the overwhelming tendency has been to try to silence the critics by saying that the research conducted so far has not provided any serious reasons for concern.

Is this true? What really do the existing research results reveal?

The most comprehensive review of the existing research in this field has been authored by Dr. Devra Davis in her recent book 'Disconnect - The Truth About Cell Phone Radiation.' Dr. Davis is an award winning scientist, writer and President of the Environmental Health Trust. After reviewing mounds of research papers, Dr. Davis has concluded "...If you consider all of the studies that have been published, most of them have not followed people for a decade. But if you examine only those studies that have analysed people for a decade or longer you find one thing: Every single one of them shows that long-term heavy use of cell phones has increased the risk of brain tumours."

Another important conclusion drawn by Dr. Davis (who as a fond grandmother is specially concerned about children) is that children face

the most threat from the increasing hazard of electromagnetic pollution. She writes "... Children's skulls and bone marrow are thinner and much more absorptive than those of adults - a fact that explains why children's heads can absorb double or more the radio frequency energy of adults' heads.....All are agreed - children's brains and skulls absorb at least twice as much radio frequency radiation as those of adults. Bone marrow can take in ten times more radiation in children than in adults, according to reports from Swiss scientists in 2010".

This view is supported by a lot of other evidence. In 2001, a Commission of the Royal College of Physicians, chaired by Sir William Stewart, issued this report:

"If there are currently unrecognized adverse health effects from the use mobile phones, children may be more vulnerable because of their developing nervous system, the greater absorption of energy in the tissues of the head, and a longer lifetime of exposure. In line with our precautionary approach, at this time, we believe that the widespread use of mobile phones by children for nonessential calls should be discouraged. We also recommend that the mobile phone industry should refrain from promoting the use of mobile phones by children."

In this context, the evidence provided by a team of scientists based in Lund, Sweden is also often cited. They note that, of course, the

intensified use of cell phones by children is unlikely to induce any obvious, dramatic, or immediate impacts on health. "It may, however, in the long run, result in reduced brain reserve capacity that might be unveiled by other later neuronal disease or even the wear and tear of aging. We cannot exclude that after some decades of (often) daily use, a whole generation of users may suffer negative effects maybe already in their middle age."

One important view that has emerged in research by several scientists is that heavy exposure to electromagnetic pollution may result in breaking 'the blood-brain barrier', particularly in the case of children exposing them to serious hazards. Dr. Devra Davis has carefully summarised these serious concerns, "When it is healthy, the brain of rats and humans is full of fat and is well insulated to keep out anything that is watery. Careful analysis of the brains of the cell-phone exposed rats shows that after just a week of regular two-hour daily exposure they release albumin- a critical material that should not be found escaping from the brain. As a result, these rats remain vulnerable to taking in other agents in the blood that normally would never enter their brain....Once the blood-brain barrier is breached, then anything circulating into our bodies at the time, alcohol, drugs, toxic chemicals, cigarette smoke, diesel exhaust, will more readily enter the brain from the blood."

On the other hand, industry sources have steadfastly maintained that an overwhelming majority of studies conducted so far have not

confirmed any serious hazards associated with the use of cell phones. It is true that many respected authorities have taken this view. That there are two sides to the controversy is accepted even by Dr. Devra Davis. As she puts it, "Neither the danger nor the safety of cell phones is yet certain. How we manage that uncertainty could avert a global public health catastrophe."

What she and some other researchers are saying is - It's true that hazards are not fully confirmed, but the available evidence is enough to call for many precautions.

This is also the view taken by two other authorities on this issue. Dr. Elisabeth Cardis and Dr. Siegal Sadetzki who wrote in a publication of the British Medical Association, "Simple and low-cost measures, such as the use of text messages, hands-free kits, and/ or the loudspeaker mode of phone could substantially reduce exposure to the brain from mobile phones. Therefore, until definitive scientific answers are available, the adoption of such precautions, particularly among young people, is advisable." This appears to be an eminently reasonable approach.

It is important to carefully examine all the existing evidence on this critical issue, particularly keeping in view the fact that children are being exposed all the time to more cell phone radiation and cell phone tower radiation not just for communication but also for entertainment and education. Children are exposed to very heavy radiation at a very tender age. In Delhi, cell phone towers are being installed even in parks where

children come to play. Several researches have indicated that all this can lead to a public health catastrophe. The full implication of this may be revealed in about two decades or so. To prevent this catastrophe, we have to take preventive and precautionary action now before it is too late.

(Continued from Page 3)

strife could only be resolved through civil war. A civil war for a Muslim-free India may seem far-fetched right now; but within Asia, there's one happening in Afghanistan, as well as in Iraq and Syria for many years now. Lakhs of people are being killed. From drones to the mother bomb attacks, lakhs of children's lives are completely destroyed. A generation fed on the footage of the worst civil wars in human history is coming into its own.

The way educated, well off cultured Hindus are falling easy victims to Islamophobia, it doesn't seem like they have learnt any lessons from the tragedy of Partition. Emotional claims about family and children will not hold against civil war. Hasn't Modi left his family, and even his wife, for the 'Hindu Rashtra'? As the noose of neo-imperialism tightens, the hate-mongering against Muslims and Christians will also rise. Other minority religious communities will also get caught in this hate mania. The failure to become either modern or world citizens, will be compensated by BJP-RSS by installing 'Hindu president', 'Hindu prime minister', 'Hindu government', 'Hindu development', 'Hindu technology', 'Hindu knowledge' and so on, in the 'Hindu Rashtra'.

We Just Banned Nuclear Weapons!

History was made at the United Nations on 7th July when the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by an overwhelming 122-1 vote by UN Member States determined to provide a legal basis for the elimination of the world's worst weapons of mass destruction.

The ban treaty, negotiated by more than 140 states under the auspices of the UN General Assembly, prohibits development, testing, production, manufacture, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and provides flexible pathways for nuclear-armed and nuclear-dependent states to comply with the prohibitions once they decide to join.

Conference president Elayne Whyte, in submitting the final text for the vote, said we were here “to give life to a new treaty that...seeks to bring together the world around the dream of each and every person to see a world free of nuclear weapons.”

The treaty will open for signature on September 20 at the UN, and will enter into force once 50 states have ratified it.

“This is a landmark achievement that establishes the illegality of nuclear weapons once and for all,” said IPPNW Co-President Tilman Ruff. “The Treaty is rooted firmly in the humanitarian principle that the consequences of nuclear weapons use are unacceptable under any circumstances and that any use of nuclear weapons would be contrary

to the rules of international humanitarian law.”

“The nine nuclear-armed states, which refused to participate in these negotiations, are now faced with a stark choice,” said IPPNW program director John Loretz. “They can comply with the norms that have been clearly and unambiguously established by the Treaty and eliminate their nuclear weapons, as they should have done decades ago, or they will be stigmatized as outlaw states.

“The states that base their security on the nuclear weapons possessed by other states can either withdraw from extended nuclear deterrence arrangements and cease all military planning and preparation for the use of nuclear weapons, or face similar global condemnation.”

As the founder and lead medical partner in ICAN—the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons—IPPNW was an active civil society participant in the negotiations for the Treaty, working to ensure that the final document would fully reflect the scientific evidence about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

“The treaty recognizes the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that concern the security of all humanity, posing grave implications for human survival, the environment, food security, and the health of future generations, said Dr. Ruff. “It also recognizes that these consequences cannot be adequately addressed, and must be prevented.”

“We are very pleased that the treaty recognizes the victims of nuclear weapons,” Dr. Ruff noted. The preamble refers explicitly to the Hibakusha—the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—and to indigenous peoples who have suffered from the effects of nuclear testing. It also acknowledges the disproportionate health impacts of nuclear weapons on women and girls.

“By establishing a clear and comprehensive set of prohibitions, a number of important positive obligations, including obligations to assist victims and help remediate affected environments, and procedures for elimination that can lead to universal membership over time, the treaty provides a powerful legal, moral, and political tool going forward,” Dr. Ruff stated.

“Today, with this historic treaty, the world has changed. The shared interests of humanity underpin this achievement. A nuclear weapons ban can be a game-changer towards fulfilling the urgent global health imperative to eliminate nuclear weapons.”

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In the Name of Cow: Lynching and More Lynching

Ram Puniyani

The lynching of Junaid (June 2017) in the outskirts of Delhi, in a train, did come as a saturation point in the conscience of large sections of society. To express their anguish people came to streets in great number in a largely spontaneous protest, 'Not in My name'. While many critics criticized and undermined this expression of pain and anguish of the sections of society, it did catch the attention of the national and international media. The result was that our Prime Minister who has been keeping *maun* (silence) on the issue came forward to say that 'violence in the name of cow is not acceptable'; and that Mahatma Gandhi would not have approved it. This bland statement was hardly of any effect as just few hours after this; two more Muslims were done to death in Jharkahnd.

The earlier such statement from him was after the lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq. (October 2015) At that time also nearly two weeks after the lynching he opened his mouth on the issue. That statement was also bland and hardly had any effect on the *Gautankwad* (terrorism related to cow protection) as lynching's continued. So either Mr. Modi is ineffectual in controlling his cabal, the Hindu nationalists involved in such violence, or that they also know that Prime Minister is making such statements for saying's sake, and that they can continue their business irrespective.

Mr. Amit Shah, BJP President, defending the present regime said that the lynching was taking place in

earlier regime in 2011, 2012 and 2013 were more in number. This is a total lie. According to the data collected by IndiaSpend, based on the content analysis of media reporting, "Muslims were the target of 51% of violence centered on bovine issues over nearly eight years (2010 to 2017) and comprised 86% of 28 Indians killed in 63 incidents. As many of 97 per cent of these attacks were reported after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government came to power in May 2014, and about half the cow-related violence - 32 of 63 cases - were from states governed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) when the attacks were reported, revealed our analysis of violence recorded until June 25, 2017." How easily Mr. Shah wants to distort the facts to defend present government!

As such the overall dissatisfaction, deflected anger also leads to lynching, as seen in the tragic case of the lynching of Ayub Pundit in Kashmir. The insanity which comes up in the mob is most condemnable. In case of lynchings in the name of cow, the factors involved are multiple. With the rise of Hindu nationalist politics many a dalits were earlier killed in Gohana for example when they were skinning the dead cow. Adding on to this agenda of polarizing society on the issue of cow, last few years as Modi Sarkar has come to power there are overt statements for Gau Raksha (Cow Protection). While the laws of cow slaughter ban had already been there, with BJP ascendance the laws have been given

rigid twist and along with demonization of those eating beef. In Gujarat the first laboratory of Hindu rashtra, even the consumption of non-vegetarian food has been looked down upon. Now all over the country 'holiness of Mother Cow' is being propagated and imposed on the society with state patronage.

In the context of Akhlaq's lynching Mr. Mahesh Sharma, union culture minister stated that the murder was an accident. He was also the one to go and put tricolor on the body of the accused of the murder, when the accused died in the prison due to some illness. Another BJP leader Mr. Sangeet Som had threatened that if those who have been arrested for Akhlaq's murder are punished, a befitting reply will be given.

What are the major observations on these cases of lynchings? Eating beef, slaughtering cow and transporting cow had been the major pretexts for violence. The victims of this constructed anger are mostly Muslims, while dalits have also been flogged and tortured. Muslims are presented as beef eaters, cruel, not respecting Hindu sentiments about cow, apart from other biases which have been already spread against them. The social scene has been so constructed that due to these biases and regular instigations, the popular adage, 'innocents until proved guilty' has been made to stand on its head to mean 'Guilty unless proved innocents' for Muslims. The 'silent social sanction' for killings and upholding the act is couched as

'defense of Hindu religion' and now Hindu symbol of cow rules the roost. The benign animal is the pretext for ghastly violence. To jack up their agenda there are false claims by BJP spokesperson that Gandhi wanted a ban of cow slaughter ban. He opposed the idea on the ground that there are many who consume beef, and that country belongs to all.

Lynchings are not just law and order problem. These are part of, or rather byproduct of Hindu nationalist propaganda against

Muslims. The propaganda pertains to the Holiness of Cow and Muslims violating that. It is not a coincidence that such brutal acts have become part of social phenomenon, after Modi came to power. Gradually the intensity has been stepped up. Beginning from Modi's own statements about Pink revolution, of greatness of Rana Pratap as he gave his life for protection of cows, to demonization of Muslims in the name of cow makes clear as to what is the underlying social psychology, which leads to

these acts. The claims of 'good governance' bite the dust in the light of these atrocities,

Ayub Pundit's lynching is equally painful one. There is also a need to understand the social psychology operational there and urgent need to combat that. Country wide the insecurity of religious minorities smashes the claims of 'Acche Din', as the polarizing agenda is taking huge leaps in the name of Cow and leading to lynching's' on regular interval.

Near Death of The Indian Postal System

Niranjan Haldar

The slow death of the Indian Postal System began when the Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee negotiated with the IMF for a large loan in 1981-82, with the undertaking that the Govt. of India would reduce its number of employees. The Indian Government did not retrench any employee, but when an employee retired, the government abolished the post so that even a temporary staff could not be employed in that post. New posts can be created only after the provision is made in the Central Budget.

The name of the Department was that of Post and Telegraph. The Telegraph employee had to perform other jobs. The Post & Telegraph Dept. in Kolkata [then Calcutta] discontinued with the Telegram service in all post offices except one in South Calcutta [although there was no dearth of customers], at Lake Market and at the Central Telegraph Office [CTO] near the State

Secretariat, before the Telegraph Dept was abolished, only the CTO remained operative in Kolkata. The number of telegrams received on the last day of the Telegraph Dept, though the number of offices were very small, was staggering.

The Government justified the abolition of the Telegraph Dept. on the pretext that the customers could communicate through phones and e-mails. One cannot send any message to a newspaper in Stockholm, or the Human Rights Commission in Geneva unless the e-mail address of the receiver is known... But for Telegram- no such number is required.. Next, the Money Order system was curtailed by using computers, in most of the post offices where Money Order was accepted, either there was no person to operate the computers, or the computers turned to be defective.. Where the Money Order System remained operative, the Money Order Form had no space to write

down the purpose of sending the money... If there's less Money Order- the needs for delivering those by the Postmen would also be less.

To reduce the number of postmen to deliver letters, books, journals etc- the supply of stamps and postage to the post offices either discontinued for weeks & months, or became very irregular. The Government encouraged usage of the Courier Service that would bring Service Tax to the Government, or the Speed Post, which brings Service tax for the Government more than the price of an envelope.

The Post Office had an excellent system of encouraging Small Savings. Agents of the Postal System, used to collect Postal Savings, by visiting the houses of the small savers. Initially they used to get 2% from the amount they deposited, from the Post Offices. The Finance Ministry reduced the discount to 1%, and

then to 0%. As a result there was no agent to bring in new business, and Ponzi schemes flourished in the country, and many depositors were cheated.

Old People and Pensioners used to deposit their Savings to receive the interest on a monthly basis. When the people were harassed and perplexed during the demonetisation, of Rs 500.00, and RS 1000.00 Bank Notes, the Post Offices were debarred from opening new Savings, or MIS accounts. Instead, a counter in a Post office became a counter of Post Office Bank that would operate like a bank but opening of an account in in Post Office Bank is more difficult than opening an account in an ordinary Bank.

Apart from the lack of Postmen in the Post Offices, the lack of sorters have created more problems. As there was no sorter reportedly at the General Post Office, letters were sent from the GPO, to another Post Office, for sorting.

Noida is a flourishing urban area in the Capital region- but it's Post Office 201-301 has no sorter and less number of post men. As a result, packets of Newsletter sent to Mr Vinod Jain in H-901 Elite Homez, Sector-77, Noida 201-301, did not reach his house for the last five months.

To discourage people to drop letters and journals in letter-boxes, the Postal Department is replacing

large letter-boxes by smaller letter-boxes, where no journal can be dropped. IRHA Newsletter is published from the postal area of PIN 700 107.

The less number of postmen has very badly affected the delivery-system ... the 700107 Post Office in South Kolkata delivers letters, journals etc once a week, or once in a fortnight.. The local TMC MP [South Kolkata], though not blind, does not respond to any demand, though he is a party to pass the Central Budget.

The MPS get Rs 5 Crores every year under MPLAD schemes, but they do not bother about the impending death of the Indian Postal System.

A lynching is much more than just a murder. A murder may occur in private. A lynching is a public spectacle; it demands an audience.

The lynching of Pehlu Khan, a 55-year-old dairy farmer, in the western Indian state of Rajasthan at the beginning of this month attracted a live audience of dozens and a virtual one in the millions. Mr. Khan, a Muslim, stood accused of smuggling cows, which are sacred to Hindus. A whole nation watched the scene on its smartphones and televisions: Mr. Khan, a lone hunted figure in white, lurches and stumbles along the edge of a dusty highway. He is pursued by "cow vigilantes," young men in striped T-shirts and jeans, armed with belts and sticks. Eventually they gain on Mr. Khan, who falls to the ground, clutching his stomach. A crowd with cameras and smartphones circles. In screen within screen, we see Mr. Khan brutally beaten by the vigilantes in broad view of everybody. He died three days later, the sixth fatality since 2015 of a Muslim man subjected to vigilante justice of this kind.

A lynching, unlike, say, a terrorist attack, does not depend on maximizing the loss of life. What matters — whether in the American South a century ago or in India today — are not numbers, but the public, almost orgiastic character of the violence. The crowd surrounding Mr. Khan was baying for him to be doused in gas and set alight. A lynching is a majority's way of telling a minority population that the law cannot protect it. That is why in the American South so many African-American men were dragged from jails or hanged outside courthouses — unmistakable symbolism of the law's paralysis.

In Mr. Khan's case, the law was not merely paralyzed; it actively served the killers. In the first hours after Mr. Khan was attacked, 11 people were rounded up and arrested for cow smuggling — but not one for murder. Three people were arrested for Mr. Khan's lynching, but only days later, after he died. But the effect of the arrests was minimized by the role played by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.

—Aatish Taseer, *New York Times*

Satyagraha as a Peaceful Method of Conflict Resolution -II

Vibhuti Patel

Pioneering Contribution

Today, as the word *Satyagraha* is used randomly to mean any protest action, the Director of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, Savita Singh [2007] tries to trace its evolution; honing it in his South African laboratory and turning it into an effective weapon of non-violence against colonialism. Arguing that *Satyagraha* is a force that has come to stay, Singh also dwells on how Gandhi's legacy has been carried forward by the likes of Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi. A commemorative volume, the narrative draws heavily from some of the major works on the subject, and- needless to say-Gandhi's own writings. Doubling up as an account of the freedom struggle, the narrative gets wonderful pictorial support; not just in the form of photographs but copies of dated newspaper clippings, *Satyagraha* leaflets issued by Gandhi, his letters to Tolstoy and Gokhale among others, and government correspondence relating to him. The Annual Report [2004-05] captures *Salt Satyagraha*: seventy-five years and makes an extremely inspiring reading as it has relevance in the contemporary context. The Annual Report [2005-06] provides an overview of *Satyagraha* [Hundred Years, September 11, 1906 -September 11, 2006] and shows its relevance in the current context of environmental degradation, pollution, war mongering, violence against women and importance of SHGs. The Annual Report, 2006-07, *Kranti to*

Gandhi: Rajya to Swarajya talks of conservation and restoration, girl child and world peace. The Annual Report, 2007-08, *Hind Swarajya: 1909-2009* is dedicated to centenary year of *Hind Swarajya* which became a rallying point for all peace lovers when on 2-10-09 [138th birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi] became historical milestone in humanity's quest for global non-violence when the United Nations declared Mahatma Gandhi birth day as An International Day of *Non-Violence*.

Women and Satyagraha

Mahatma Gandhi attached great importance to the status and role of women in society. He advised women to refuse to be the slaves of their own whims and fancies and the slaves of men. He attached the highest importance to women's honour. If a Woman is assaulted she may not stop to think in terms of *Himsa* or *Ahimsa*. Her primary duty is self-protection. Mahatma Gandhi's ideas and activities contributed a lot to generate unprecedented awakening among Indian women. They came out of their homes and participated actively in the freedom movement and the constructive programme of Gandhi as equal partners of their men folk. Gandhi took the idea of *Satyagraha* from Kasturba, his wife.

He was deeply influenced by Annie Besant [a radical feminist and a Theosophist], Sarojini Naidu [a trusted co-worker], Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya [a fiery

Satyagrahi], Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Pushpaben Mehta. Geraldine Forbes examines the model that Sarojini Naidu developed in her speech as President of the Indian National Congress, a model with India as the *house*, the Indian people as members of the joint family and the Indian woman as the *Mother*. Naidu, Gandhi and many other advocates of women's and national liberation agreed wholeheartedly that women and India would advance together to the extent this new familial model for India was adopted by the women and men of India.

Gandhi believed women could do much to transform India on all levels. He believed that equal rights for women and men were necessary but not sufficient to create a more just social order. What good does it do to us to have equal rights if we are divided within ourselves and unable to attend true unity with others?

In a letter written to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur from Wardha on October 20, 1936, Gandhi writes, "*If you women only realize your dignity and privilege, and make full sense of it for mankind, you will make it much better than it is. But, man has delighted in enslaving you, and you have proved willing slaves till the slave and holders have become one in the crime on degrading humanity. My special function from childhood, you might say, has been to make women realize her dignity. I was once slaveholder myself but Ba proved an unwilling slave and thus*

opened my eyes to my mission."

The *Satyagraha* method of Mahatma Gandhi has been adopted by New Women's Rights Movement of the Twentieth and Twenty-First century, particularly with the purpose of promoting peace, communal-harmony, sustainable development and environmental safety.

In 1983 the women's movement in India in its currently known phase, was just beginning to mobilize itself. Kamladevi was witness to and part of valiant efforts by women to "...not only push forward their own progress but act as levers to help other oppressed sections, while facing fierce hostility... there were no grants to feed such activities; no awards, titles, national recognition, no press publicity instead a lot of abuse." She defines women's actions of that time to be for equal rights, which could not be described as feminist. "Women's problems were never sought to be treated on a sex basis but as social maladies of a common society, men and alike. What are indeed significant are the danger signals she saw at this time. Habit, complacency and consequent lack of vigilance, which fast undermined women and eventually deprived them of whatever gain they have been able to secure over the years. There are numerous subtle ways of ignoring women and abridging their rights. She lamented that woman had docilely accepted the situation of *helper* and that their work in political parties was only to mobilize support for the party and not to assert their personalities or strength as political entities. Kamladevi concerns for the gains achieved during the freedom movement were well founded if we view the almost regressive situation

in rural and urban society with increasing violence against women, and the decreasing number of women in the population ratio. Modern technology, consumerism and lack of effective instruments have allowed, women no real progress even while allowing greater mobility and visibility to women from the middle and elite classes. Visibility alone is not empowerment in the real sense.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that *Satyagraha* was the most powerful weapon in a non-violent struggle. *Satyagraha* involves defiance. It involves the willful, peaceful, breaking of laws that are unjust. It means picketing, protesting, squatting, obstructing, challenging and publicly resisting wrongs. Since women were the most nonviolent and ardent lovers of peace, it could be sharpened and extended as a weapon in women's struggles for justice and equality. To him the ultimate *ahimsa* and *Satyagraha* was when women, in vast numbers, rose up to put an end to the destructive aspects of male dominance in society. Had the momentum of freedom struggle not been slowed down, such mobilization could have attracted many more women into public life. Political activity geared towards the transformation of society into the holistic, integrated entity as Gandhi had visualized has not yet crystallized. *Satyagraha* is now just a word, a mere symbol, that serves no purpose for the academic or the elite, or even the middle class feminist whose dialectic emerges from a theoretical background far removed from Gandhi's poor women who act because they have no use for words to explain themselves. Among those women who today have made *Satyagraha* a

mode of struggle for a better world are the *meira peibi* of Manipur who stand in clusters on the roadside outside their village with flaming torches to protest against men who indulge in drugs and alcohol, which are jointly ruining the youth of northeastern India. These women also raise their voices against the excesses of the security forces and form a protective shield around their villages against them. They do not quote Gandhi or term their struggle as *Satyagraha* but their steadfast, powerful and peaceful picketing has all the elements of struggle in the manner, Gandhi himself would have wished.

The anti-liquor movement of Andhra Pradesh built up gradually in the minds of poor and illiterate women who for long years suffered the ill effects of alcohol consumption by their men folk. For families steeped in poverty, for women who were subject to domestic violence related to alcohol, for wives who had nothing material to lose by rebelling because they had nothing to lose, they fulfilled Gandhi's wish of deciding no longer to be slaves of the situation. "*No one can be exploited without his or her willing participation*", said Gandhi. Gandhi said that women "strengthen my belief in *Swadeshi* and *Satyagraha*.... if I could inspire in men devotion as pure as I find in the women, within a year, India would be raised to a height impossible to imagine. As for *Swarajya* it was the easiest thing in the world." Gandhi expected them to do battle from their homes, while still fulfilling their traditional roles. The superior qualities of women and the intrinsic difference between man and woman were something Gandhi kept highlighting. Since he believed that women could bring about

Swarajya better, women were the very embodiment non-violence, for him they were greater soldiers and beneficiaries of his Swarajya campaigns. The three famed spearheads of these campaigns were the manufacture of salt, boycott of foreign cloth and shunning of liquor which he said, "were specially meant for the villages and the women would benefit especially." In 1930 Mithuben Petit reported to Gandhi that habitual drunkards were enthusiastically breaking earthen jars containing toddy and that thousands of persons in Surat who were given to drinking had started having resolutions passed by their castes prohibiting drinking.

Somewhere along the way, however, the issues close to Gandhi's heart have been largely left by the wayside by women who became part of the power structure as well as by the emancipated women's groups. Organizations involved in trade union work, social reform and development issues have in part or in whole addressed the issue of prohibition, but neither has women as a group in parliament nor through institutional structures raised this demand loudly and effectively. Prohibition is not accepted when it is presented as a moral issue alone and therefore the argument has to include developmental priorities, revenue collection, and budgetary allocations to social welfare, health and other sectors which rural women are unable to do.

The salt Satyagraha and boycott of foreign cloth emphasizes the indigenous, but the feminist movement has not associated itself with the Swadeshi movement except for the Gandhian elements within the

various groupings. The wearing of Khadi and handloom among the younger activists is more as the badge of a progressive liberal rather than as a commitment to the foods of indigenous manufacture. These are no longer taken up as issues of struggle although many women are part of the wider movement against the neo-colonial pressures of the new world trade regime, which destroy both sovereignty and national resources.

Many institutions and organizations representing women's rights have a high visibility in the cosmopolitan arena and have effectively expressed their concerns. Not only has that, their members decisively moved far ahead of Gandhi's vision of fearless women. Alert, active and bold, they engage in constant discussion and introspection for genuine equality.

Critical Evaluation

Rai [2000] makes an attempt to study Gandhian *Satyagraha* in a philosophical way by analyzing the basic principles of *Satyagraha* with a critical viewpoint. It contents the basic philosophical ideas persisting in Gandhi throughout his life. The book has detailed and elaborates explanation of all the basic thought and practices of *Satyagraha*, and what are the inherent contradictions. In concluding chapter the author has pluck up courage to find out how far *Satyagraha* and its principles are relevant now a days and what its negative implications are. This book is not only for the students of Gandhian thought or philosophy but also for general people as well to know Gandhian *Satyagraha* in its totality in context to modern times.

Satyagraha operates at a level deeper than nationality, politics, military power, book education or socio-economic ideology. It is a process working in the very elemental human nature of mankind as a biological species. As *Satyagraha* becomes more widely employed, it will, partly by virtue of this capacity as a mirror, help in the development of human self-consciousness and confidence in one's own capacities.

Verma and Bakshi [2005] analyze a very crucial period of modern India under the British Rule because after end of First World War followed by famine, unemployment and magnified sufferings of Indian people and new motivations and impulses, which influenced the character of freedom, struggle. Mahatma Gandhi made it clear that he had no admiration for British Parliamentary system and also declared in a special session of Indian National Congress held in Calcutta [now Kolkata] that *Swarajya* can be attained in one year provided adequate response from masses to the Congress. Occurrence of such events in quick succession widened the scope of the fight for freedom. *Non-cooperation Movement*, non-violent *Satyagraha*, participation of women, appointment of the *Simon Commission* and movement against him, emergence of Lala Lajpat Rai followed by Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries and their martyrdom shook the roots of the British Rule and they started sensing that their days were numbered.

Krishna [2008] deconstructs the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa that was gradually entering a new era, the era of non-racial democracy. Though ethnicity

will continue to cast its shadow on politics, as religion and castes do in India even after six decades of secular democracy. The Gandhian *Satyagraha* can be an effective tool to challenge the unjust order.

Shukla [2008] states that the first *Satyagraha* Revolutions inspired by Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian Independence Movement occurred in Kheda of Gujarat and Champaran of Bihar between the years of 1917 and 1918. Gandhi established an *Ashram* in Champaran, organizing scores of his veteran supporters and fresh volunteers from the region. He organized a detailed study and survey of the villages, accounting the atrocities and terrible episodes of suffering, including the general state of degenerate living. Building on the confidence of villagers, he began leading the cleanup of villages, building of schools and hospitals and encouraging the village leadership to undo *Purdah*, untouchability and the suppression of women.

War, Peace and Satyagraha

Peace is threatened generally by three kinds of national or international conflicts. The first and most destructive is the arms race, carrying with it the possibility of nuclear confrontation; the second is that of conventional wars between the states for territory, resources, honour, or ideological supremacy; the third is a consequence of totalitarian or authoritarian rule resulting in oppression and denial of equality, freedom, and justice to the whole population of a state or to distinguishable groups within it.

For the first time in the modern world, we have witnessed that

President Barack Hussein Obama managed to convince the house to reduce the defense budget and allocate more resources to the public health. Currently, at 200 geographical locations conflict situations are prevalent. Peace movements are gaining momentum throughout the world. Goal 8 of The MDGs also demands from the nation state mutual cooperation and global peace.

The wars of national liberation in Latin America and Africa are instances of the third type. The second and third kinds of threats can become intertwined, as evidenced in such wars as the one between Ethiopia and Somalia in the late 1970s [in which Somalia put forward claims to the Ogaden region based on traditional movements of the tribes within its own jurisdiction], or the disputes between India and Pakistan over the territory of Kashmir. The war between Iran and Iraq is at once an ideological conflict [where the Shiah fundamentalist Islam of Iran has set itself against the more secularist, traditional Sunni Islam of the Arabs] and a dispute over boundaries separating the two states. The conflict between Arab states and Israel is similarly multilayered. It is about territory, the rights of the Palestinians for a homeland, and Israel's right to exist as a state.

There is very little possibility that in the foreseeable future any state will replace arms with non-violent means to deter aggression. Indeed, all governments believe that nonviolence is irrelevant to the problem of defense, and that therefore armed force must be the ultimate arbiter in human affairs. Against this unqualified faith in the

efficacy of force, one must point out that wars do not always obtain their desired ends, nor does oppression ensure true and enduring control over peoples and nations. Indeed, Adolph Hitler did not obtain his objective through force, nor did various imperial nations such as Great Britain and France gain their ends by employing force in their colonies. The wars of national independence have time and again proven the impotency of superior force when matched against massive grassroots violent and non-violent resistance. Thus, there is no reason to believe that force and violence will invariably intimidate others and achieve the ends desired of them. By the same token, non-violence is not applicable in every situation of potential conflict, although Gandhi and his supporters claimed that it was.

Let us take the case of ultimate violence first.

Ever since the advent of nuclear weapons, the world has lived in terror of annihilation. The means of destruction are so lethal that they have rendered largely irrelevant the objectives for which a war could be waged.

There is no real purpose in waging a war if the conflict spells certain mutual destruction within a few minutes and if very little of either adversary's national substance would be left to dominate the other.

Horsburg, however, argues that although *Satyagraha* is no substitute for deterrence, the spread of nuclear weapons to a large number of states will create a situation in which non-violent means of resolving conflict will become increasingly

relevant. He admits that disagreement and hostilities will persist, "*There are bound to be many cases in which negotiations will end in a deadlock*". However, he claimed, "*it does not seem wildly speculative to predict that in these circumstances an increasing interest will come to be taken in the possibilities of non-violent action.*"

He defends his position, "*If it is said that those optimistic speculations are absurd, I must insist that they are soundly based on the logic of deterrence. If the risks that deterrent policies involve must continue to increase, the use of armed force in the international sphere must become progressively more dangerous and hence it must eventually become too hazardous to use in the most extreme national emergencies.*"

Unfortunately, the logic of deterrence does not quite work in the way Horsburg describes. Nuclear states often engage in conventional wars and by a tacit agreement refrain from using their most lethal weapons. For instance, in the conflict over the Falkland Islands between England and Argentina, England certainly had the capacity to wage a nuclear war. Similarly, in the 1979 conflict between China and Vietnam, China had an independent nuclear capacity and Vietnam was under the Soviet nuclear umbrella. Indeed, one might point out that the rough parity in nuclear weapons has aggravated the competition for the Third World between the USA and the USSR.

Satyagraha and Nuclear Disarmament

If *Satyagraha* is impractical in a situation of nuclear war, does it have

any relevance in negotiations for nuclear disarmament? In other words, can it act as a preventive? Can the Gandhian principles of steps and stages, sympathetic understanding for one's adversary, formulation of minimal demands consistent with truth, refusal to threaten or intimidate the enemy, and open diplomacy be meaningfully applied to fashion a strategy for gradual nuclear disarmament?

In principle, the Gandhian framework can be an important guide for negotiations on disarmament. Indeed, even conventional diplomacy recognizes the need for confidence building measures and reciprocity. Nor can negotiations be successful unless both sides are convinced of the sincerity of their opponents.

However, today such settlements are seldom arrived at by open diplomacy or via adherence to the idea that mutual demands should be consistent with truth. More often than not, open diplomacy is used to score points with critics at home, to pressure the adversary, or worse still, to camouflage reluctance to negotiate. The usual practice in arms negotiations is to demand the maximum, in the hope that the final agreement will ensure more than what is required for defense.

It is difficult to imagine a situation in which a nuclear power would unilaterally disarm without an effective substitute strategically equivalent to armed strength. Although some scholars have postulated the adoption of non-violence and gradual phasing out of dependence on arms, it is clear that a nation would have to undergo fundamental structural changes in its

society and politics to accept the Gandhian view of human nature and forego the sense of security offered by weapons.

There are, however, elements in *Satyagraha* that have an important bearing on the question of how to engage constructively in bargaining for disarmament. Let us look at some of the causes of the arms race between superpowers. According to several scholars, the arms race is a result of certain attitudes common to both the USA and the USSR. Each country has dehumanized the other, discounting the fears and concerns of the other's population and characterizing the other's leaders as warmongers. This attitude was evident in Dulles's characterization of the Soviet Union as the *diabolical enemy*, as it is in the Reagan administration's view of the USSR as the '*evil empire*'. And yet, scholars and practitioners of international diplomacy have pointed out that the situation leading to war or peace is one of mutual dependencies. For instance, analyzing the US-Soviet Relationships, Henry Kissinger contended that "*both sides had to be aware of this dependency if mutually damaging wars and costly arms were to be avoided.*" The *SALT-I* was based on a successful identification of such dependencies.

The theory of power and politics implicit in Gandhian thought rejects this separation and stresses instead a fundamental continuity between two seemingly opposite entities.

The Gandhian strategy of action requires that the protagonist attribute an irreducible minimum humanity to the enemy; to do otherwise is to

betray one's own humanity. The significance of this premise for reconciliation of conflict and for the process of negotiations can hardly be over-stressed.

There is one more possibility of applying the Gandhian technique to the problem of disarmament. This is in mobilizing mass movement against the arms race and building grassroots support for negotiations. The methodology of mass mobilization in this situation, however, would be no different from that of other issues. Critics might argue, and with justification, that peaceful protest would not solve the basic strategic dilemma and might in fact threaten national security by forcing democratic societies to negotiate away their advantages. Against this argument, one may point out that acquisition of arms beyond a certain point is useless, and a peace movement can raise awareness among the masses as well as generate pressures on governments to devote more money to social advancement rather than to defense. Satyagraha and Non-Nuclear Defense.

This brings us to our question under consideration. Can massive non-violent resistance be an adequate means of non-nuclear defense? Several scholars have examined the nonviolent method of defense and concluded that at least theoretically; it is a plausible alternative, although widespread ignorance and prejudice against its methodology have often prevented its being considered seriously.

Military power today does not have the real capacity to defend in

conflict the people and society relying upon it. Often it only threatens mutual annihilation. He goes on to say that although non-violent civilian defense will not stop the aggressor at the borders, military aggression does not give the invader political control of the country. He suggests that in civilian defense, the population as a whole can resist military aggression, making it impossible for the enemy to establish and maintain political control. Enemy control can be prevented by massive and selective refusal to cooperate.

For instance, police would refuse to locate and arrest patriotic opponents of the invader. Teachers would refuse to introduce this propaganda into the schools, as happened in Norway under the Nazis. Workers and managers would use strikes, delays, and obstructionism to impede exploitation of the country... Politicians, civil servants, and judges, by ignoring or defying the enemy's illegal orders, would keep the normal machinery of government and courts out of his control...as happened in the German resistance to the Kapp Putseh in 1920... Newspapers could refuse to submit to censorship.... as it happened in the Russian 1905 revolution and several Nazi-occupied countries.

Gandhi's Solution to External Invasion Would be to Convert the Conflict from One at the Borders to One Against Occupation within the Country

A struggle against occupation, rather than defense at the borders, will shift the conflict to the turf where *Satyagraha* has a decided

advantage and where the enemy must depend on popular cooperation. However, there are cases where *Satyagraha* will not be feasible. For instance, the enemy may be interested merely in inflicting military humiliation and may withdraw promptly after armed intervention. In some situations, the national population may be too small in numbers to mount effective non-violent resistance. In other situations, the invader may be interested merely in extracting raw materials, and may not require cooperation of the civilian population to do so. In most other instances, however, the Gandhian theory of power will become operational and give civilian defense a powerful means to foil the ambitions of an aggressor.

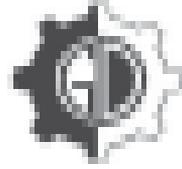
(To be concluded)

Disgraceful

“Disgrace abounding” ‘ignoramus and constitutionally impermissible’ is the instant reaction to the totally unacceptable suggestion of Central Board of Film Certification Regional office to words like ‘Cow’, ‘Gujrat’ and ‘Hindutva’ from the interview of noble laureate Amritya Sen.

This action has made laughing stock of India's claimed open society. It should be immediately scrapped. Modi's stooges in Censor Board should not be allowed to mock at the fundamental rights of free speech.

—Rajindar Sachar



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