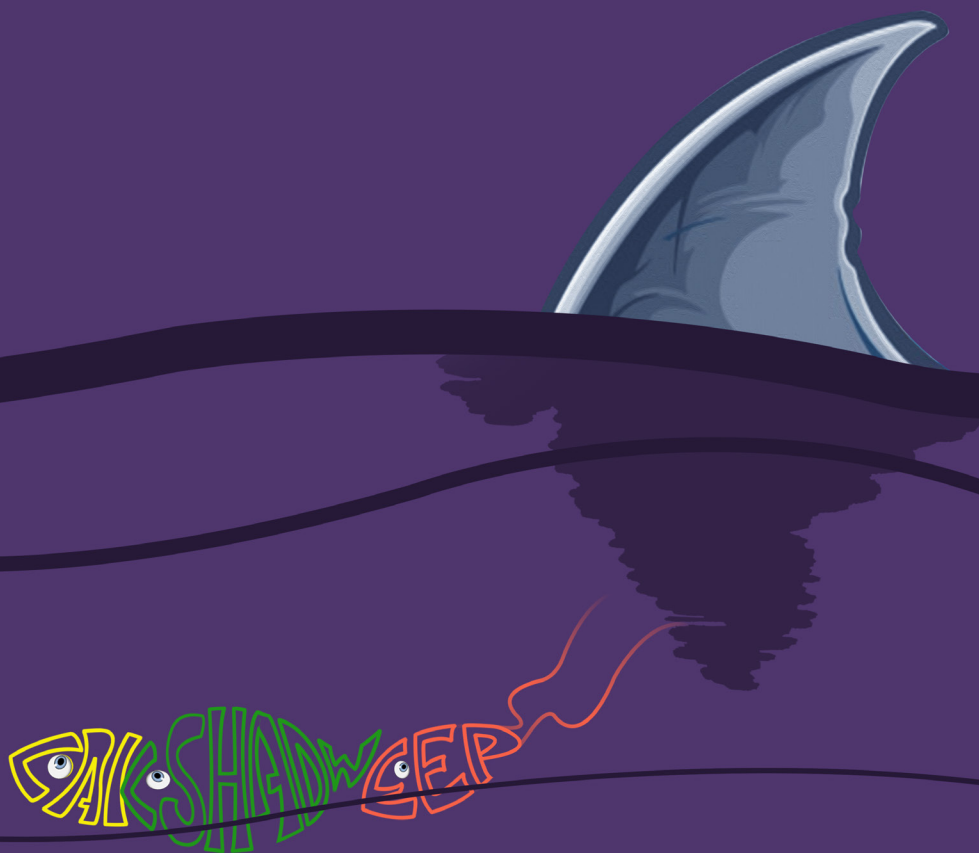


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# together

a national family magazine



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**Together** is a national family magazine. It is a monthly, published by the Franciscans (OFM) in India. It was started in 1935 in Karachi, now in Pakistan. It got its present name in 1966.

The magazine **Together** is a conversation platform. Nothing changes until our families change. It is an effort at making worlds meet by bringing down fearful, pretentious and defensive walls. **Together** is a journey, an ever-expansive journey—from me to us, from us to all of us, and from all of us to

all. Let us talk, let us cross borders. The more we converse and traverse, we discover even more paths to talk about and travel together. **Together** is an effort to uncover our shared humanity.

Your critical and relevant write-ups, that promote goodness, inclusivity and shared humanity, are welcome. Your articles must be mailed to [editor@togethermagazine.in](mailto:editor@togethermagazine.in) before the 15th of every month.

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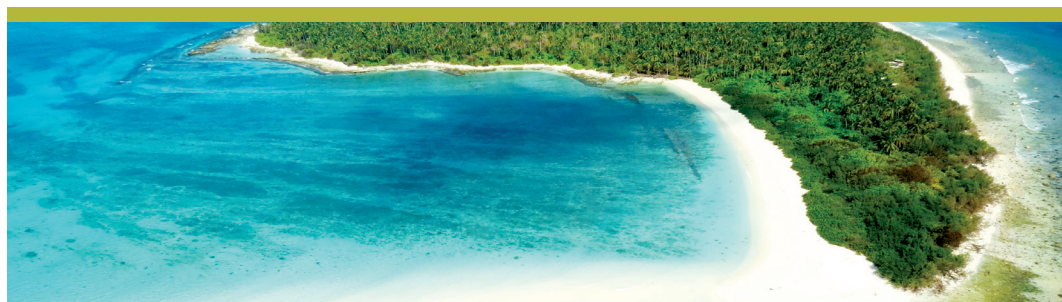
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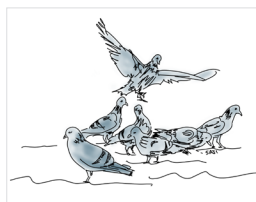
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# Social Engineering in Lakshadweep

On one hand, the peaceful, predominantly Muslim population in Lakshadweep poses a threat to the Hindutva agenda; and on the other, the islanders, with the insulation of law, as natives give no room for corporate invasion. This is bothersome for some.

SAJI P MATHEW OFM

The thirty-six islands, which we now call as Lakshadweep, were organised as a Union Territory during the reorganisation of Indian states in 1956 for administrative purposes. From then on it enjoyed a special status because of its population and ecological concerns. The islands' limited resources, including drinking water, restrict their carry capacity. These islands are surrounded by ecologically delicate coral reefs. Thus thoroughfare is not allowed for outsiders without permits; and outsiders are not allowed to buy land there; but for tourism purposes and for recognised development needs, land is made available by the locals and local authorities.

The 65000 odd inhabitants of Lakshadweep have been conducting their lives civilly for years with elected local government bodies with respectful coordination with the mainland. The Union Government respects their special status by considering and consulting the elected local self-government bodies before any major changes on the islands. The Integrated Island Management Plan, prepared under the supervision of the Supreme Court in 2016, had stipulated that development programmes in Lakshadweep be implemented in consultation

with the elected local bodies. The simple logic is that the natives know better about Lakshadweep than outsiders.

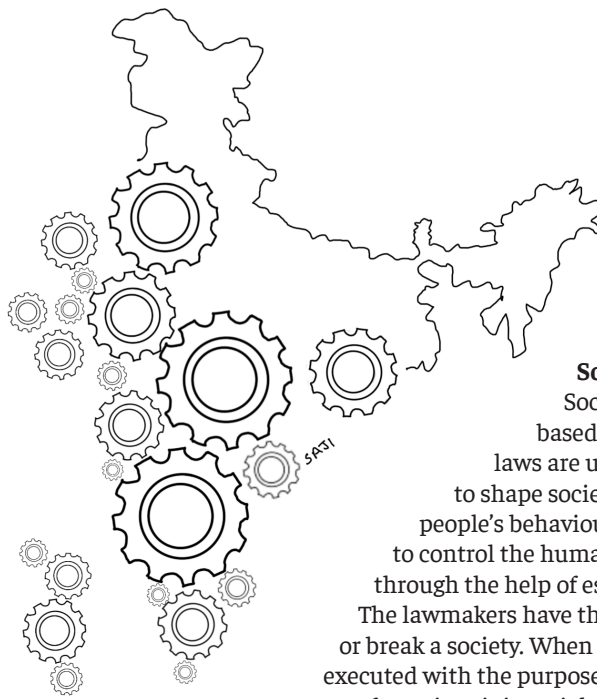
## The Trouble

Lakshadweep had rarely been in news at all in recent past, especially in the national level. Now we hear about Lakshadweep from every media—all for the wrong reasons. The islanders are up in arms against their new Administrator, Praful Khoda Patel, who took charge in December 2020, and the many new laws that he has strongly proposed without necessary consultations and forethought.

Public anger and reaction has been more than visible in Lakshadweep for weeks now. The Islanders are protesting against a number of controversial laws and proposals. The residents view them as disturbing and upsetting the social and cultural fabric of the islands.

The Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation of 2021 (LDAR), proposes to change the existing land ownership laws on the island. The scientists, conservation experts of Lakshadweep, the citizens, and many others have collectively written to the President of India, demanding the withdrawal of LDAR.





The Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Regulation (PASA), is in effect in many other states too, including Kerala, the adjacent state. The islanders feel that, considering the low crime rate on the islands, this law is not called for, but the administrator is paving his way to suppress possible protests and dissent on the Islands.

The Lakshadweep Animal Preservation Regulation (2021), which in effect would ban cow slaughter and consumption of beef. This will make a dent in the income and food habits of the islanders, who are almost entirely Muslims.

The Lakshadweep Panchayat Regulation (2021) disqualifies those with more than two children from getting elected to the gram panchayat. Though it may be a law practiced elsewhere in the country, this is done in Lakshadweep without studying local sensitivities and needed consultations.

Looking at the nature of the proposed laws and the handpicked hardcore BJP man appointed at the helm of affairs, one can only guess what is disturbing the ruling right wing Union Government. The concern is twofold, on the one hand, the peaceful, predominantly Muslim population in Lakshadweep poses a threat to the Hindutva agenda; and on the other, the islanders with the insulation of law as natives give no room for corporate invasion. This is bothersome for some.

### **Social Engineering**

Social engineering is based on the notion that laws are used as a means to shape society and regulate people's behaviour. It is an attempt to control the human conduct through the help of established laws. The lawmakers have the capacity to make or break a society. When law is made and executed with the purpose of altering the core of a society, it is social engineering.

In the past there have been radical social engineering operations in countries with authoritarian governments. In early 1920s Soviet Union did a social engineering to alter the ideals of its citizens. They wanted a change from the mindset as Russian Empire to Soviet Union. The Soviets used newspapers, books, films, mass relocations, and even architectural-design to persuade people to change personal values and private lives.

*Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community) was the Nazis' project of social engineering. They realised it by state action, new laws, administrative procedures, and propaganda. It gave social change a particular preplanned direction. In the final analysis, have they really succeeded is debatable.

### **Social Engineering in Lakshadweep?**

Social engineering can be set in motion by any organisations or governments. Some of the most comprehensive, and most pervasive campaigns of social engineering are those initiated by powerful central governments with the systems of authority to widely affect the individuals and cultures within their purview.

The new Administrator of Lakshadweep, Praful K Patel, appointed at the behest of the BJP Government has introduced new laws

that are drastic; and more of such laws are in the pipeline. Looking at the demography of Lakshadweep and the new laws that are introduced, there is less doubt that the ruling right wing establishment of India is at a social engineering venture in Lakshadweep. The administrator is controlling the behaviour and lifestyle of the Lakshadweep society through the help of Law.

Lakshadweep residents are challenged and changed by the control imposed on killing of animals and the consumption, storage, transport or sale of cattle. There are a couple more of such severe rules like, the Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation, and the detention law.

Social engineering, as a campaign strategy, in itself is not bad. But it raises its ugly head when it's done with discriminatory and biased objectives. In the case of Lakshadweep, the administrator and his regime speak of a utopian social engineering, aiming at Lakshadweep's greatest ultimate good; but the islanders and socio-political critics see Hindutva and corporate agenda at the heart of this social engineering.

### **Another Brick to the Edifice of Hindu Rashtra**

The popularity and majority that the Bharatiya Janata Party, backed by RSS, at the Centre has often been instrumental for enacting policies that support Hindutva ideology in various parts of India ever since the Narendra Modi government assumed power in 2014.

There has been pro Hindutva laws enforced in many states. In 24 states cow slaughter is prohibited; and in Gujarat it is an offence that would attract life imprisonment. The notion of 'Love jihad' is one of the weapons used in the ideological warfare propagated by the BJP openly.

Reassured and supported by the state, pro-Hindutva or right wing groups are unleashing violence to target Muslims and other minorities in the name of cow protection, Love Jihad, and by labeling those different from them as anti-national.

The sight of a peaceful Muslim majority

community in Lakshadweep is too intimidating for the designers and builders of the Hindu Rashta.

### **Lakshadweep Left Defenseless for Corporate Invasion**

Going with the indications that we have from the earlier engagements of the present government in Kashmir and elsewhere, the Lakshadweep reorganisations and developments are to prepare ground for the big corporates to walk in. They aim to unsettle the natives; destroy the insulation that they enjoy as the natives of the island, and make them and their properties vulnerable to huge corporates. The Indian Government has been ushering in and backing up the big corporates in a huge way. The farm laws, against which the farmers of India are on the street for months now, also pave way for the big corporates.

The same arguments that the government put forth to back the corporates in the case of the new farm laws are used in Lakshadweep too. The government propagates the idea that corporates will bring in investments, developments, and prosperity. In a recent interview with Prof. Noam Chomsky by The Wire Chomsky bursts this myth with enlightening statistics. Chomsky explores the question, "How much wealth has been transferred in last 40 years from the middle class and working class to the super rich in the US?" "The super rich" he clarifies is the fraction of top 1%, which mainly consists of the huge corporates. The reported answer to Chomsky's question is 47 trillion dollars; which Chomsky says, in real could easily be the double of it. The same interview also highlighted statistics from TIME magazine, which said, The top 1% of Americans have taken 50 trillion dollars from the bottom 90% -and that has made the US less secure. This is robbery. The bottom line is that, the unchecked corporate engagements in a place or sector does not make the lot of the natives better, instead they get robbed of even the little that they have. When this robbery is with the assistance of the ruling government, the people also lose the freedom to protest and dissent.

# Colonizing the Island —A Case of Lakshadweep

Business communities continue to extend their economic sovereignty over the affairs of people in indigenous areas all over the world, much like colonial empires in the past.

MARK RASQUINHA

Indian Society has stood on the cusp of both institutional and cultural change for a little under ten years. As time passes, Margaret Wheatley observed, three major trends that shape American societies: the first is a sense of unproductiveness and dread, followed by the realisation that information is biased and untrustworthy, and finally, clarity, that the world changes as a result of local community actions. These trends are not only applicable to American societies but also contemporary Indian societies. Most notably these trends are visible in the recent episode of the draft changes proposed by the Indian government to alter the nature and character of Lakshadweep. An island, situated south of the Indian subcontinent and home to indigenous people, flora and fauna.

The growing sense of unproductiveness and dread accurately describes the mood of Indians, who have suffered decades of inequality. These feelings have developed an attitude toward rural and indigenous communities that declare such communities have no future. Narrative discourses of migrants particularly the rural community announce “their town’s death is inevitable because it lacks economic opportunity.” Expand the space in question and we find, the other discourse is also a discourse of despair. Migrant accounts state that “only attracting industry can

make them prosper.” The widening rural-urban divide in the country since the 1990s seems to confirm a transition in attitudes from impotence and dread to desperation and anger.

Second, the increase in misinformation, the presence of a digital content creation industry, algorithmic news culture to target ideological audiences and the evolution of promotional culture has impacted the value of information. Subsequently, information no longer changes minds, certainly not concerning issues such as global climate change, species extinction, or economic development. For example, draft legislations to change the social, economic and political framework of Lakshadweep has sparked debates over social media and other physical public spheres. The sides of the debate are driven by information and misinformation which have put the average citizen in a state of confusion. More importantly, information and mis-information have resulted in the decline of information’s power to change minds and shape opinions.

The final but most important trend mentioned earlier concerns local communities taking action – with people taking control of their own futures. In order for people in areas such as Lakshadweep to shape their own destiny, they must work together for a common objective that is in the interest of their communities. But first,

they must understand and accept that the ultimate source of economic, social, and ecological degradation and depletion is 'Economic Colonization' by the Indian state.

### **The Economic Colonisation of Lakshadweep**

The feeling of impotence and dread is caused by centuries of economic exploitation and extraction of community resources, not by a country, but by a class of people. In India, European businessmen were enabled to carry out large scale exploitation by Indian men of commerce. Remote regions, such as Lakshadweep continue to suffer the impact of long-term "economic colonization"—a term typically applied to neoliberal economic development in politically colonised countries. Rather than being colonised by national governments, today, multinational corporations now carry out economic colonisation.

Business communities continue to extend their economic sovereignty over the affairs of people in indigenous areas all over the world, much like colonial empires in the past. Corporations use their economic power to dominate local economies and gain control of local governments, robbing communities of their resources. These acts are performed by corporations not only in India but the world over. Therefore, Indigenous communities like the islanders of Lakshadweep are on the verge of further losing their sovereignty, as corporations use their economic power to dominate local economies and governments.

Political colonialism was historically justified by the ethnocentric belief that the coloniser's moral values were superior to those of the colonised and that the colonised would ultimately benefit from the process of civilisation. Today, Economic colonialism is defended by the urban-centric belief that rural people cannot develop their own economies and rely

on outside assistance. The idea that corporate investments will bring much-needed jobs and income to marginalised regions of economically depressed communities has fueled legislative changes. However, access to better schools, better health care, and expanded social services, as well as a wider range of retail businesses remain pipe dreams. Moreover, these basic promises made to previous political colonies were the same.

Such discourses has resulted in Indigenous social and political structures being destroyed, leaving communities with no foundation to reclaim self-government and confront the new age coloniser. The silent support by the citizenry of the Indian mainland gives currency to the new age coloniser who will continue to destroy local cultures. There are plenty of examples to find, some as near as the closest window, only if the eyes were willing to see. There are many

stories of our lost culture that are told by the older generation. But, it is hard to listen to these voices amidst sounds echoing from industrial extraction and exploitation.

Alternatively, colonisation has brought an economic and social change in certain cases,

such as the regions of North America and Australia. However, in these instances, indigenous populations were insignificant and colonial immigrants essentially wiped them out. The indigenous communities of these regions were given the option of assimilation or extinction. While some chose assimilation, others chose extinction. Either way, these communities harbour deep resentment against the states that govern their regions.

Ironically, in the case of rural America (USA), European colonists arrived in rural regions to profit from the wildlife, timber, and minerals that had been left undisturbed by Native Americans. Subsequently, the exploiters moved on once the resources in a particular location were

**Political colonialism was historically justified by the ethnocentric belief that the coloniser's moral values were superior to those of the colonised.**

depleted or lost their economic value. Where many fur trading, logging, and mining towns once thrived, only “ghost towns” remained. This begs the questions we must ask of ourselves, the policymakers (government) and the policy. What is the cost of an economic ghost town and is that what we want for our cultural spaces?

### **The Integral Consequences of Economic Colonialism**

Thus, the ecological threats posed by economic exploitation are real, and they are not restricted to specific areas, as many people are led to believe. Islands like Lakshadweep, in particular, will not be spared the consequences of inaction if denial continues. Gustave Speth, author of the book *Bridge at the Edge of the Earth* wrote, “For all of the material blessings economic progress has provided, for all of the disease and destitution avoided, for all the glories that shine in the best

of our civilisation, the costs to the natural world, the costs to the glories of nature, have been huge and must be counted in the balance as tragic loss.”

Speth points a finger at what is at stake if the proposed draft laws concerning the island of Lakshadweep are not shelved for good. To proceed with the ideas of the government is to sign on the death warrants of indigenous culture, healthy fisheries, reefs and other such marine life. Moreover, to witness the enactment of the draft laws proposed by the union government on a marginalised community will be the act of a morally bankrupt citizenry. However, most members of Indian society remain ignorant to the façade of economic development. Those who are aware either want a piece of the pie or are languishing in jails across the country eating humble pie. Such is the tragedy of our times

HAVE A  
**HUNCH**





# We, Students, from Lakshadweep Seek an Answer

The new Drafts give the administrator powers to remove us or relocate us from our own property. This is an attempt for a corporate land grab. These are islands; where will we go in such a situation?

**Save Lakshadweep.**

**RAKHANABI**

(D.El.Ed Student at OLTTI, Thoppumpady)

**L**akshadweep is a union territory and it is a tropical archipelago of 36 coral reefs in the Arabian Sea, off the coast of Kerala, India. It has the lowest population in India, with just about 65,000 people inhabiting 10 of its 36 islands.

We live here peacefully. In such a situation it is difficult to make sense of the proposed new drafts such as Goonda Act, Lakshadweep Development Authority (LDA), and others. We are anxious, and dread these drafts because these are obviously not for our development; but to serve corporate interests.

## **The Beginning of Troubles**

Trouble began with the replacement of a civil servant with a seasoned politician; and he began doing all these without any discussions with elected leaders. Within five months he had raised six drafts. The main three laws show his authoritarian approach.

First, the creation of Lakshadweep Development Authority is fear-provoking. It empowers the administration to take over any land without consultation with the stakeholders. It gives the administrator powers

to remove us or relocate us from our own property. This is an attempt for a corporate land grab. These are islands, and where will we go in such situation? That is why we are protesting.

Second is Anti-social Activities Regulation Bill 2021, which is something of Goonda Act; using which state can detain anyone without disclosing it to the public for up to a year. It takes away from us even the right to protest. When we protest or resist the administration for this kind of laws, they can arrest anyone under this act without an immediate trial.

The third is Lakshadweep Animal preservation and Regulation Act 2021, which prohibits slaughtering cows, by mandating a license for killing animals, which most likely will not be given for cows. We have an agrarian lifestyle of using cow for agricultural work, for breeding, or for giving milk and meat. This law subverts it. The administrator is systematically working towards changing our lifestyle that is why he is making alcohol available in three more islands. Almost cent percent here are Muslims. We abhor alcohol; and this decision will totally change the ambiance here.





The population growth rate of Lakshadweep is far below that of national level. In such a place how does one make sense of bringing in a new law such as the Lakshadweep Panchayat Regulation 2021, which will ban parents with more than two children contesting local elections?

The administrator has been repeatedly saying that these drafts are for developing Lakshadweep. We are not protesting, or against development; but it must promote the development of the people. Administrator fired casual labourers from various official departments and shut down some schools and Anganwadis. Is this development? His excuse about shutting down of schools is that there is a shortage of teachers. More than 1000 students have finished D Ed/B Ed courses; and now they are unemployed.

**The population growth rate of Lakshadweep is far below that of national level. In such a place how does one make sense of bringing in a new law such as the Lakshadweep Panchayat Regulation?**

### **Covid-19 Crisis**

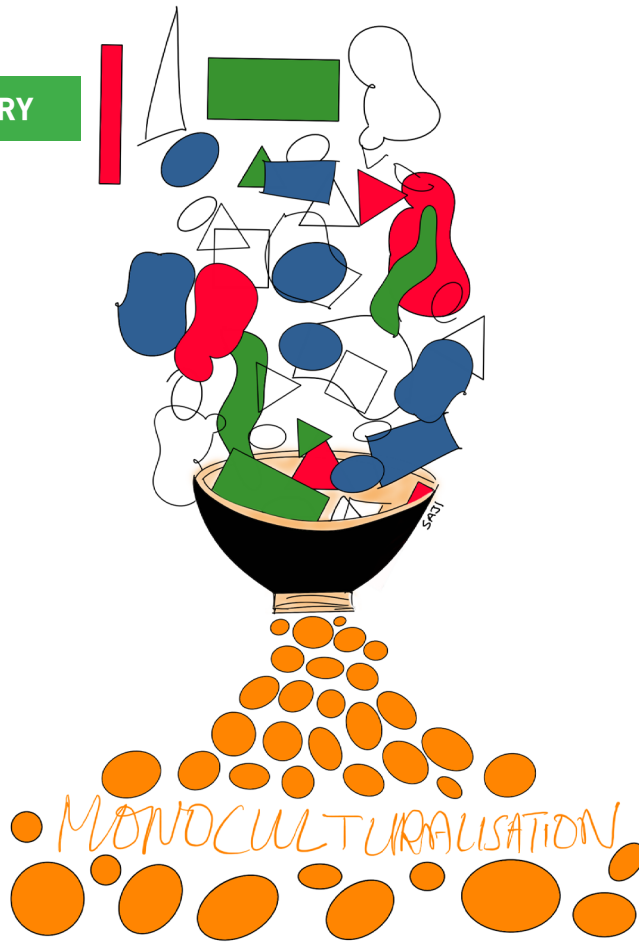
Until last December end, there was an SOP to prevent Covid-19 case in Lakshadweep. The SOP was followed by the people; and was credited to have helped our island stay Covid-19 free. The first covid case was reported on 18 Jan; 18 days after SOP was changed. Here we have only Community Health Centre, and not many hospitals to provide specialized healthcare.

How many can an administration possibly airlift in an out of control eventuality. The administrator wasted the people's yearlong effort.

As a student I couldn't attend online class regularly due to low Internet connection here; the

situation of many students are worse. I fear that we soon will face poverty. An Administration has enough to take care of. We need peace more than development.





# Beyond the Totalitarian Monoculturalism and the Reptilian Brain

The reptilian brain in us fires us with responses to fight against those who are different from us. It forces us with an unconscious urge to conquer, destroy and kill. This is, primarily, due to the deep-seated fear we have of the other; we are afraid of the difference they present.

A FRANCIS OFM



### **The Totalitarian Monoculturalism**

A 'monocultural' worldview that promotes flagrant standardisation and binary thinking, on any domain of life, is the pivotal ideology of totalitarian regimes. An exaggerated devotion to nationalism, often in a pseudo sense than real, is imposed on citizens as a sacred obligation. Steve Allen, the comedian and writer, called it as 'institutionalised patriotism'. Individuals who fail to embrace these treacherously orchestrated untruthful political designs, are labeled as 'antinational', a newer version for the old-world term, 'subversive'. Lynching, riots and even unjust legislations are among the commonly practiced mechanisms to silence, if not to exterminate those who dare to challenge these vicious ideologies. Individual freedom, constitutional privileges, and human rights are far too often forced down the drain in the broad daylight, just like the 'propagandists intruding into our kitchens and inspecting what we cook and what we eat!'

History, nonetheless, is the proof and promise that such politics of outright untruth which is potential to topple great democracies into bloody battlefronts of 'us' and 'them', and redefine one group as 'masters' and the other as 'slaves', 'refugees' and 'alien' immigrants, will not thrive, forever. The pathetic crumbling of the Hitlerian rhetoric of racial cleansing and eugenics that ran counter to our peaceful human

cohabitation, is a good example of it.

History always presents accurate summations of human actions, nothing more and nothing less! Hopefully, our present-day totalitarians, who engage in constructing vicious forms of 'monoculture' around the globe, read history!

### **Getting Beyond Our Reptilian Brain**

We humans are not wired to live with a 'monocultural' mindset that eliminates the difference we encounter around us. Studies suggest that the reptilian brain in us fires us with responses to fight against those who are different from us. It forces us with an unconscious urge to conquer, destroy and kill. This is, primarily, due to the deep-seated fear we have of the other; we are afraid of the difference they present. As long as we live in the domain of our reptilian dictates, we are risking the opportunity for fulfilment of our human potential and holistic growth. The cutting-edge findings in neuroscience and social psychology inform us that our effort to connect with the other who is different from us, and befriend our fear of them is greatly beneficial to us because it makes us grow in resilience, vitality and vigour. Our acceptance of their difference fosters our physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual and relational strengths. The wellbeing of a person on all these levels is what makes a person fully

human, and fully alive. This is developmental psychology, and not an ideological ad-lib!

If this is so, the next time, when we are tempted to think that our belief, opinion, race, religion, gender, sex and identity is superior to those who live around us, be sure to pause and remind ourselves of two essential life lessons: one, we are being enslaved by our reptilian brain and two, we are, in fact, jeopardizing our opportunity to live fully human and fully alive!

Do we have a different option in such moments? Of course, we do! We could recourse to a couple of different choices, if we are intentional. We could focus on activating our 'mammalian' brain that is responsible for thinking with emotions, such as, feeling with the other rather than assuming that 'the other is an enemy'. Compassion, forgiveness, love, appreciation etc., are regenerated in us when we activate our mammalian brain. Another choice we can make is to focus on stimulating our neocortex, the part of our brain which is responsible for thinking with rationality. Thinking rationally is one of the greatest human gifts and "without it we wouldn't have Beethoven's sonata's, democratic forms of government, the novels of Charles Dickens or a cure for polio", says psychologist Nick Wignall.

The prime minister and many women of New Zealand are the examples of this option humans are capable of making. In her response of solidarity with the victims of Christchurch mosques shootings in March 2019, Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister of the country appeared in public meetings with a black headscarf, the 'hijab'. The *Time* reported that her radical example became a mass movement, 'Headscarf for Harmony', among women and children, who posted their photos with headscarves. Obviously, these individuals went above and beyond the dictates of reptilian brains, and the confines of a 'monocultural' mindset.

The process of thinking with emotion, and feeling the thought could integrate more of our 'conscious self' into our pursuit of a behavioural difference we want to make, particularly when we are faced with the fear of the other. This, obviously, shapes a reflective

response that nurtures healing than being fired by an unconscious 'acting out' of instincts and impulses which only aggravates our existing tendencies for polarization.

Are we reminded of the practice of yoga, here? May be a different kind of yoga—yoga for the heart, the mind, and for the spirit!

### **Embracing Our Diversity**

More than ever before in the human evolutionary history, we have been compelled today to confront the complexity of diversity that we humans are constituted with, both, intrinsically and extrinsically. Our confrontation of the inherent diversities of life, has brought in, to some extent at least, transformative outcomes to our living in peace. Look at the fluidity people uphold while speaking about their understanding of masculinity and femininity these days; or the degree of caution we observe in avoiding the potential insinuation of a traditional straight-jacketed attribution to masculine and feminine characteristics. We today speak so comfortably about maternal men and paternal women, a type of conversation which was not too common in the past! Deviating from the fragmented straight-line thinking of the colonial past, and the caste-based society that taught us the most abominable principle of life, "the powerful rule the powerless", we today know that no race, sex, gender, country, culture, caste or religion is superior to others. The reverse feeling is attributed to a phobic state of the mind.

This shift, in my view, is a watershed understanding of our time, which will continue to impact the world with ripple effect of the restoration of justice, freedom and equality in humanity's onward journey.

Finally, to all totalitarians, who continue committing genocide, riot and hate speech in the name of politics, religion, nationalism, race, language or ideologies of any kind; here is an apt quote for your daily reflection and practice, from an author and activist, Satish Kumar, who undertook a peace walk from New Delhi to Moscow, Paris, London and Washington D.C., "Embracing radical pluralism is the imperative of our time."

The background of the top half of the page is a photograph of the Indian national flag (Tiranga) waving in front of a large, classical stone building with columns, likely the Indian Parliament building in Chandigarh.

# Shifting Nature of Indian Democracy and Freedom

As years pass by, we expect Indian democracy and the state to mature, creating more space for the citizens to enjoy freedom of speech and right to express dissent and Civil liberties. But the history of Indian state speaks a different story. As years pass by the Indian state is becoming more and more repressive.

ALEX TUSCANO

**India was recently invited to be present at the G 7 meeting as a guest. At the meeting Mr. Modi spoke: “Democracy, freedom and liberty is part of India’s civilizational ethos.”**

Arfa Khanum Shervani commenting on this asked, “Why does Modi tell lies even at the international forum like G7 meeting? Modi has reduced or tried to finish democracy, freedom and liberty in India.” Taking from Kashmir, strike against CAA, farmers’ agitation, Modi has deprived people the freedom of speech and use of internet.” If Modi upholds the ethos of



India's civilization, then why does not uphold the same ethos for the citizens of India. She has further elaborated how the Modi government has destroyed the institutions of Indian Democracy. Other parties have been outspoken about the destruction of the Institution of Indian democracy under the present rule. When the Indian State and Indian

Democracy is going down the hill it may be a good idea to spend some time to reflect on it and arrive at some clarity. What is the State? The state constitutes the following institutions:

- The Constitution of India: Soon after independence the leaders of India constituted a constituent assembly. The members of this assembly were drawn from the eminent citizens of India representing different castes, communities and religions. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the chairperson of the constituent assembly. He was extremely brilliant and a legal luminary of our country. Commenting on the work of the constituent assembly, Jawahar Lal Nehru said, "... the real work of this constituent Assembly, that is, the high adventure of giving shape, in the printed and written word, to a Nation's dream and aspiration."
- The Constitution of India lays the foundation of Indian State and its social, political and economic life. It gives guidelines for the life of the Nation. Every elected politician, the ministers and everyone in the administration of the country take oath in the name of the constitution promising to uphold it.
- The second institution of the Indian state is the judiciary. The judiciary enjoys independence from the political rules and every other institution of the State. The Judiciary is answerable only to the Constitution of India. Its responsibility is to dispense justice to every citizen of India.
- The next most important institution of the Indian State is the Parliament. The members of the parliament are elected every five years and the party that enjoys majority forms the Government. The Government of the day functions under the guidance of the constitution and the confidence of the Parliament.

- Another important institution of the State is The President of India and the Governors of the states and the bureaucracy. These are constitutional posts and they are accountable to the constitution.
- Finally, The Defense (Arms) forces, the police, security forces constitute the next component of the state.

The state is supposed to function to fulfill the dreams and the aspiration of the Indian Citizens guaranteed by the constitution.

From the first parliament and the government under the leadership of the Prime Minister Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri the state was living to its ideals, namely, working for improving the living conditions of the people and ensuring democracy, liberty and freedom of expression. There are innumerable examples and anecdotes, which bring out the noble character of the government and the Indian State of the bygone days.

### **Undermining the Democracy of India**

There was one case that comes to my mind, which undermined the democracy of India, namely, the dismissal of the first non-Congress, Communist Government (1957-59) under the Chief Ministership of C. M. S. Namboodripad. Under the Prime Ministership Indira Gandhi, the Indian State took a turn to the worst for the first time. She imposed emergency by suspending the constitution and put majority leaders of the opposition in jail.

The subsequent governments legislated laws, which compromised the democracy, liberty and freedom of speech of the citizens. Indira Gandhi's "Maintenance of Internal Security Act" was perhaps the oldest law to put freedom of speech, democracy and liberty of the citizens on hold. The subsequent government passed several laws like Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), some of which were repealed. We have inherited "The Law of Sedition" of the British colonial rulers. These laws were necessitated by the rise of terrorism in the country. The "Unlawful Activities Prevention Act" (UAPA) was aimed at prevention of unlawful

activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India. This law came in force in 30th Dec. 1967. In 2019 “UAPA” was amended to expand the scope of the law to include individuals to be booked under this law. At the face of it, these laws are

necessary, given the number of terrorist attacks that have taken place in India; majority of which are from across the border and their agents within India. But when these laws are misused by the state, the consequences to those innocent is a great issue.

As years pass by, we expect Indian democracy and the state to mature, creating more space for the citizens to enjoy freedom of speech and right to express dissent and Civil liberties. But the history of Indian state speaks a different story. As years pass by the Indian state has become more and more repressive. The states having these weapons (above laws) at their disposal have breached the boundary of truth to interpret these laws to terrorize the citizens who enjoy the freedom of speech and right to dissent and who raise uncomfortable questions to the government.

### **The Many Arrests, and No Trial**

Mr. Uday Kumar from Tirunelveli was leading a struggle to oppose the Kudankulam Nuclear power plant. This project was environmentally hazardous and would endanger the lives and the livelihood of the people. Dr. Manmohan Singh Government booked him under the law of sedition. What is significant is, after 2014 the government had been using the “UAPA” and the “Law of Sedition” indiscriminately against anyone who criticizes the government or opposes the laws which go against the freedom, livelihood and lives of the people. This law is used against the people who agitate against Citizens’ Amendment Act or for repealing of the Farmers law.

**As years pass by, we expect Indian democracy and the state to mature, creating more space for the citizens to enjoy freedom of speech and right to express dissent and Civil liberties. But the history of Indian state speaks a different story.**

There are hundreds languishing in jail under UAPA or Under the law of sedition. According to one report in the state of Jharkhand around 6000 youths are still languishing in different jails. Since 2015, 7840

people were arrested. Only in 26% cases the investigations were completed and 155 (2%) people were convicted.

There are no charge sheets filed in many of these cases; no trials have started and the law allows the security forces to keep these people in jail for years. There was an auto rickshaw driver, Habib Mohammed, who spent four years and three months in jail. He was arrested in 2017 in connection with 2005 terrorist attack in Indian Institute of Science. He was discharged on June 14, 2021 due to lack of credible evidence of his involvement. The judge “failed to understand why he was arraigned as an accused in the case.” A renowned journalist Vinod Dua, who was awarded “Padma Sri” for journalism and many more awards was charged under the law of sedition and later declared innocent. Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita, students of Jawaharlal Nehru University; and Asif Tanha, student of Jamia Millia Islamia university, were booked under UAPA. Their crime was that they participated in the protest against Citizenship Amendment Act. After spending 13 months in jail, they were released on bail. The court did not find any evidence of them being inciting violence. The court declared that expressing dissent against the government does not amount to unlawful activity.

There have also been cases where some have lived in jail as long as 40 years and after 40 years, they are freed because the courts did not find any evidence against them. There is no question asked about the long years of their lives being wasted in jail and after they come out the world appears to them as a dark tunnel. We

have a notorious case of Elgar Parishad, Bhima Koregaon case where several intellectuals, human right activists have been arrested and are spending years in the Jail.

Many more were booked under various provisions: namely, Sudha Bhardwaj, born in Massachusetts, United states was graduated from Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, a lawyer activist and trade unionist working for three decades in Chhattisgarh. She is an active member of Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha; Anand Teltumbde, an Indian scholar, writer, civil right activist, a professor of Goa Institute of Management, and has been an advocate of the rights of Dalits; Gautam Navlakha, a human rights activist and journalist, a member of people's union for democratic rights, been also an editorial consultant of the Economic and Political Weekly; Hanny Babu, a professor of Delhi University; his wife, Jenny Rowena, also a professor. Fr Stan Swamy SJ (84), an eminent Jesuit Priest who was a director of the premier Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, and has been working in Jharkhand for the rights of the Adivasies; for their self-rule (PESA) Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Area) Act 1996 Ensuring Self-Governance through traditional Gram Sabhas for people living in the Scheduled Areas of India; and Varavara Rao (80), poet, writer and activist. Apart from these Vernon Gonsalves, Arun Ferreira and Rona Wilson also are people who are arrested and charged as supporting terrorist's activities.

There are many more citizens who are in jail with charges under UAPA or the Law of Sedition. They have been languishing in jail without charge sheet or trial. There are some evidences that have come out which indicate that the laptops of several of the accused were compromised. The investigation agencies have used malware to take control of their computers and inserted in their computer incriminating documents. The computer of human right activist, Rohan Wilson, who is in jail in connection with Bhima Koregaon case, was compromised. Using Malware several incriminating documents were inserted in his computer.

### **Some Were Not Arrested, But Killed**

To add to the above list, there are cases like Gauri Lankesh, a journalist who was assassinated on 5th September 2017; On 16th February 2015 Govind Pansare, a leftwing politician was assassinated along with his wife by gun wielding assailants in Kolhapur. M.M. Kalburgi, an Indian scholar of Vachana Sahitya in Kannada language and also served as a Vice Chancellor of Kannada university, Hampi, was assassinated on 30 August 2015 in Dharwad. Narendra Dabholkar, medical doctor and activist, was assassinated on 20th August 2013. These people were known for their anti-Hindutva views. These assassinations were meant to create fear among all radical thinkers and make them shut up.

In the past under the Congress and other governments, states used repressive measures against the people who were defending the right of the people. These laws were misused to protect the growth of Capital, big business and corporations.

There is a quantitative shift from the number of cases filed prior to 2012 and after 2015. Apart from the sharp rise in the cases, most of these cases have been filed to intimidate citizens who oppose the government and speak against the saffron agenda of the government. Justice Deepak Gupta has pointed out that the Law of Sedition and UAPA has been most frequently misused. The government of the day also resorts to induct rightwing people to the ranks of NIA, and other investigating agencies. The people from RSS, right wing thinking and the BJP will vehemently defend the action taken against the people using UAPA and the Law of Sedition.

While Pragya Thakur, accused terrorist in Malegaon case is not only released but has become Member of the Parliament. She openly declares Nathuram Godse who killed Mahatma Gandhi to be a hero. She claims drinking cow urine protects people from Corona Virus. These kinds of utterances are not seen as antinational.

To sum up, the nature of the Indian state has reached a point where Indian people are not necessary to run their government. It is governance by the corporates and saffron ideology for the corporates and the Hindutva agenda.



# A Parent's Love

Love takes many forms; but none as tough and enduring as a parents' love. At times, it even goes blind: perhaps, as the old adage goes, in love, as in war, everything is fair.

RINNY EAPEN

## A Forest Fire

**A**n uncontrolled forest fire raged on for 21 days. Every effort was made to douse it but lakhs of plants, trees, reptiles, butterflies, insects, birds and animals were charred to ash and some species would have even become extinct. Almost every year some deranged person lights dry grass or plants with matches or a cigarette to watch the fun -houses burning, firemen rushing to the scene and some even being burnt alive! Every morning the burly head forest warden would start his Jeep and leave for inspection. He had not slept for days. Deep in the jungle below a tree he noticed a small nest, a bird had spread its wings covering it—its feet clutching the edges of the nest. It was pink in colour as the fire had burnt away all its feathers.

When the raging fire burnt down the branch supporting the nest, the nest floated down like a flying saucer and landed on the ground. The warden lifted the dead bird with his baton, below its wings four tiny birds screeched in fear; but the mother never left them and flew away. The big ranger wiped his tears away. He took the nest with the little birds to the small veterinary

clinic in his bungalow and with an ink filler fed the birds and all four survived. When they grew bigger they flew into the forest but would return once in a while, where they would come and sit on the ranger's shoulder or peck at his cheeks—they think he is their father.

## No Time to Consider

A duck had hatched 3 eggs and would sit protectively over her three ducklings, once in a while the ducklings would cry and the mother's heart would flutter in fear. A wild dog half a kilometre away picked up the sound and started to drool at the thought of the small tender ducklings. He charged towards the sound and the mother's heart turned to ice when she sighted the dog. She stood up, stretched her wings and her neck fully to look big and menacing and lunged at the dog in attack mode. The dog was irritated and angry, he had no time for the silly antics of the mother, with one snap he crushed the mother's head. He took the duck a little further away, dug a pit and buried her, covering it with soil and dried leaves, saving it for later whenever there was a terrible food shortage. He returned to the ducklings and

► When the raging fire burnt down the branch supporting the nest, the nest floated down like a flying saucer and landed on the ground. The warden lifted the dead bird with his baton, below its wings four tiny birds screeched in fear; but the mother never left them and flew away.

swallowed them one by one and sped away to his den which was two kilometres away.

His three puppies were moaning in hunger. He regurgitated one duckling at a time into each of their throats, the puppies were satiated and happy and nuzzled their father many times. It was the evening and he had not eaten anything for two days. He ran into the jungle in search of a squirrel or rodent for dinner. In his happiness of having provided the best dinner for his children, he had forgotten his own acute hunger.

### **All for His Son's Education**

A hunter was sitting on a thick branch with his high tech binoculars, rifle and bag close to him when he was suddenly drawn by rays of psychedelic swirling lights emitting from the trunk of a tree. He zeroed in on it with his powerful binoculars and almost fell off his branch. A massive 8 foot long snake with a 2 foot girth, the likes of which he had never seen in his innumerable trips around the world; he had never read about or watched any documentary which had record of such a snake. The snake was now lying motionless eyeing the three puppies. It looked like a cross between a black mamba, a black cobra and a rattlesnake. It was jet black with violet, copper and bronze rays emitting from his skin in the setting sun, his eyes were the brightest green; his beauty was beyond description. By a twist of luck, the area the Hunter spotted the snake was not a part of the Reserve Forest where hunting was illegal.

His whole world was in turmoil. Yesterday two things had happened to him- an unbelievable opportunity, but a resulting hopeless situation. After praying for eight long years, God had finally blessed him and his



wife with a beautiful son. As he grew a little older, their dream was to put him in the best school in the city and they were able to get an appointment with the Principal. Although there was a large crowd waiting to meet him, the PA called them in but they were asked for donation which was extremely large. His wife literally fainted and the peon had to sprinkle a little water on her face for her to recover. She sat up but their dreams shattered. They would have to pledge everything they had and even then wouldn't be able to raise even 25% of the amount required. Their son was very clever for a boy of his age but all that was of no use as the principal informed them, 'So many ministers, IAS, IPS, MPs, MLAs and business tycoons are all waiting for a seat, so, please only come back if you can arrange the amount. I have asked my PA to hold the seat for one week for you.' Even a thousand weeks would have been insufficient to raise the



amount. They cried themselves to sleep. Money money money: it's a rich man's world!

A 100 kg blue fin tuna was auctioned in Japan for a million dollars. A seven-foot tall goat was bought by an Arab for sacrifice for 1.5 crores. A Kobe bull was auctioned for two million dollars. But these fish and animals have to be without any blemishes or marks, so you can't shoot or harpoon them.

The Hunter would have to be extra careful but very quick. Then God's wisdom struck him- he had an electric stun gun, he had to get as close to the snake as possible, the snake had already spotted him. If he gets too close the snake could make a lightening strike or shoot poison into his eyes which could reach even 10 feet and kill him on the spot. He moved like a ghost. He would risk anything for his son, he took a perfect shot between the snake's green eyes and got him. He covered the snake's head

with a nylon net and taped it securely. There were many top notch farms all over the world that bred crocodiles, iguanas, snakes and many other reptiles. They kept shedding their skin, they didn't need to be killed. They also cross bred them for new designs and colours.

He knew an Italian who was the worlds biggest procurer of the rarest and most expensive skins, antiques, etc. He was extremely rich and only did this business as it fascinated him.

A few days ago the chairman of LVMH, Bernard Arnault was named the richest man in the world overtaking the likes of Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos who are all worth well over a 100 billion dollars each. It is unbelievable that during a pandemic the rich were getting richer and buying more properties, hotels, jewelry, etc. The atmosphere was perfect! Getting a one in a million chance, the Hunter was able to contact the Italian and explained everything to him. The Italian told him, 'I will come to you in my private jet with my team. Don't tell a single soul about this otherwise you will be in great danger, there are many ruthless smugglers. You called me as you trusted me, I will never short change you.'

The Italian came early morning to his small house, saw the snake and gasped, 'I have never in my life seen anything so beautiful. You are one of the very few trustworthy suppliers. Here take this money- it's 50,000 dollars. I will take out an insurance policy in your son's name for 1 million dollars. As long as he studies, all his expenses will be taken care of with the interest.'

His assistants took the snake and left. The Hunter and his wife hugged and cried one more time. He hurried to the principal, paid the donation along with 12 years of fees.



## IN PICTURES

# A JAIN TEMPLE IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

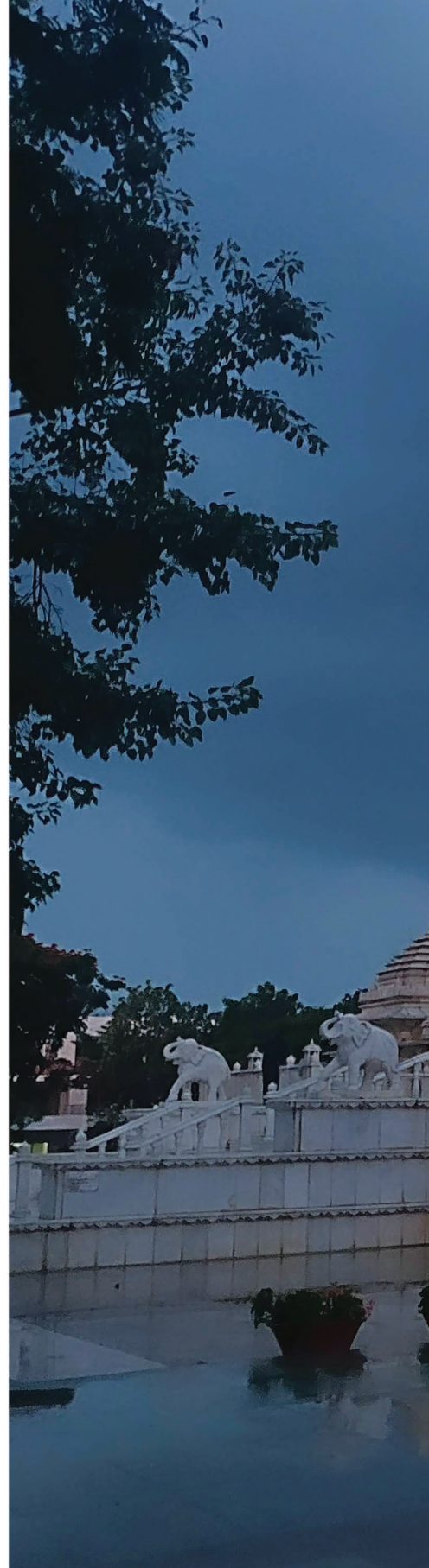
BHUMIKA JAIN

**J**ain temples have majestic and magnificent architecture. One can spend the entire day just sitting by and beholding them. They are well known for its complex arrangements of entrance porches, halls and shrines. This characteristic organisation of elements create a distinct structuring of space.

Jain temples are white in colour. Traditionally Makana stones from Rajasthan are used for building them. These stones have the innate ability to spread positive energy and vibes and are preferred because as people pray, do puja, chant mantra's etc. These white stones also keep a place cool.

Something that has amused me is the ongoing construction and restoration processes at Jain temples. It is a feature with most dynamic Jain temples. We overlook it because it looks so natural. Any works on these temples take years and decades. A lot of carvings, minute designs and architectural details with profound meaning are inherent in them and the white architecture needs constant care, attentiveness and devotion.

The thought that Jain temples are a continuous process is so sublime. Jain temples, like us, are never a finished product but are constantly *becoming*.









# Families, Children, and Self-esteem

It doesn't take long to notice how marriages are failing today, people are not able to get along either in their homes or in religious communities. The abundance of riches has not assured a strong ego worth.

JOY PRAKASH OFM

**A**s a student in the 60s I was corrected, reprimanded, ridiculed, nick-named and called by all kinds of names, but unlike the children of our day I did not even for a second think of suicide or of harming myself or others. I had thought I needed to grow up a lot more, and never stop growing up. That spirit still continues in my whole system even if failures and setbacks overwhelm me. And when I became a teacher, I thought the students under me would be of the same calibre as myself but when I corrected or admonished them, it was taken with so much resentment and

unhappiness. Somewhere along the path of life, I thought something must have happened to the human race that I belong to. It doesn't take long to notice how marriages are failing today, people are not able to get along either in their homes or in religious communities. The abundance of riches has not assured a strong ego worth.

It does not take long to realise that we are living in a terribly broken world, broken relationships and broken marriages. What is at stake? Self-esteem and self-worth have taken a beating today! Many children born into broken relationships and marriages are made to feel



that they are not welcome in this world. With the easy availability and thoughtless use of contraceptives, parents are conveying the feeling, "I hadn't really expected you, but once I found out I was pregnant, I decided to have you anyway....You were sort of an accident." Once, waiting for a visa at a Consulate I overheard a group of young girls cursing their fathers and mothers for having brought them into this world! Our world is full of people who question whether it would have been better had they not been born.

Each of us "lives by the word", though we don't always notice that.

A word can actually change the way one feels about oneself. I remember reading "The

Dynasty: a Political Biography of the Premier Ruling Family of Modern India," by S.S. Gill. The author recounts the way Indira grew up in a joint family and found little sympathy and understanding in it. A skinny, sensitive and self-willed child, she was quick to take offence. She could never forgive her overbearing aunt Vijayalaxmi for calling her 'ugly, stupid'. "This shattered something within me," she confessed nearly forty years later, when she had become the Prime Minister. As a result of this shattered self-confidence, "I was so sure that I have nothing in me to be admired."

Henri Nouwen says, "When we come to believe in the voices that call us worthless, and unlovable, then success, popularity and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions." S.S. Gill says, "Indira wallowed in the most blatant kind of flattery poured on her by the bucketful by the swarm of sycophants that surrounded" her during the time of Emergency.

Our world is also suffering from the prevailing desire of everyone to be at the top. Therefore, families have become places where climbing the ladder of material progress is the only thing that is hammered into the children of our day. "We have to be better than others; we have to be the first ones in our tests, fighting for grades, certificates, prizes, incomes, and degrees."

In our self-esteem we depend too much on those *outstanding qualities* or else we become nobodies. Thus, we become jealous, mean, anxious, insecure, envious, and hateful, and we cannot form a community with others because of all that, because we refuse to live in a world we have in common with others, and refuse to live, or try to live within the margins of our common existence.

In the Jewish rite of bar mitzvah, the young man of thirteen is brought to the synagogue to be declared an adult by his congregation. He is given a leadership role. He reads from the Book of Genesis and gives a short sermon. Then, he is affirmed by the rabbi, and his friends and parents. The parents' blessing for their son is : the father says, "Son, whatever will happen to you in your life, whether you will have success or not, become important or not, will be healthy or not, always remember how much your mother and I love you."

This goes along with the Christian understanding of the person. Everyone is a unique image made by God: one that only that person and no one else is or has. Thomas Aquinas says that each and every one of us is a unique expression of God in this world. The world would be poorer if every single one of us were not here to express God in his or her special way.

The story of Zacchaeus gives a typical example of a lack of selfhood and how it made him a money man, who thought only of money, and dreamt money. And when Jesus visited him in his own house and told him, he is also a son of Abraham, it opened up in Zacchaeus, that short one-dimensional, money-making, money-lending, money-loving, money-smelling, money-man, quite another, a new dimension. He no longer has to 'look' big! That name, "son of Abraham" spoke of him in terms of eternity, of infinity, of an eternal promise, of divine life, and realities like that. That same invitation caused him to come down and open himself to his real dimensions and possibilities.

We are larger, bigger, divine sons and daughters of God; even heaven is not our limit, God himself is our limit.



# An Individual or a ‘Migrant’?

It’s no fun being at the receiving end of discrimination.

MONICA FERNANDES

**Everything can be taken from a man but. . .the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.**

Dr. Viktor Frankl  
*Man’s Search for Meaning*

Psychiatrist, Dr. Viktor Frankl may have been one of many Jewish prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp. The inmates were stripped of their clothes, of their dignity. They were tortured and compelled to do hard labour but they could not be stripped of their individuality. The Nazis tried to de-humanise their hapless captives but could not break their spirit.

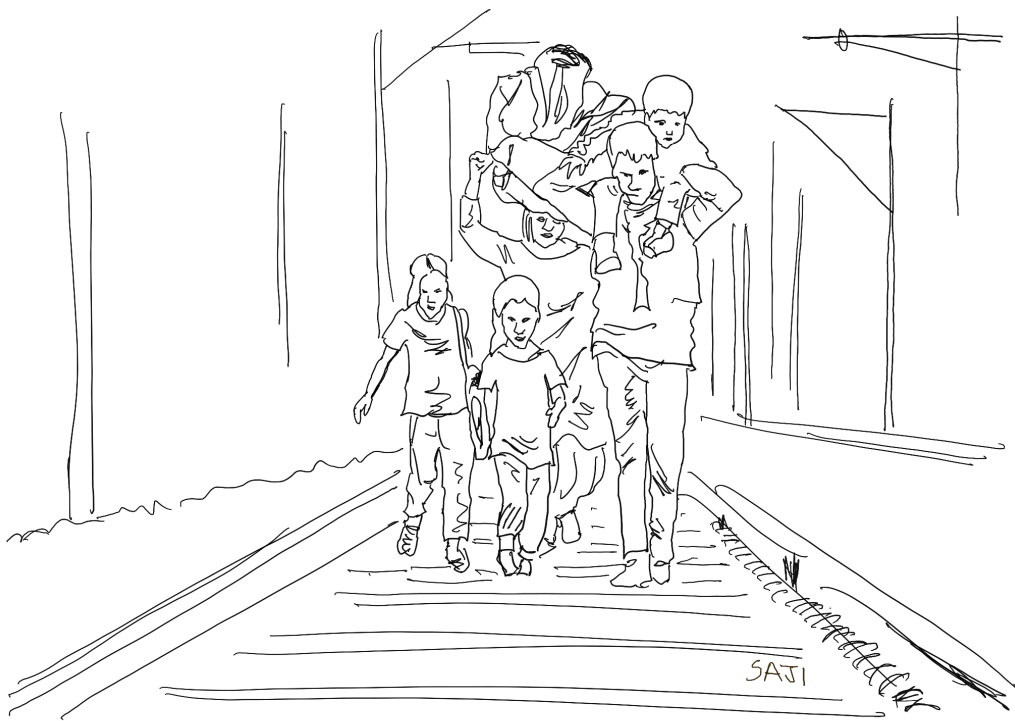
The term ‘migrants’, to me, is derogatory. It conjures up an image of bottles being manufactured on an assembly line. Every bottle must conform to a laid down standard or out it goes into the trash heap. Are human beings assembly line products? Are we clones of each other? Do all the people in the same economic or social strata live in an identical fashion?

The answer is an emphatic NO. God has created each of us in a different mould. It is mind boggling to realize that no two individuals in a world with billions of inhabitants have exactly the same faces, not even identical twins. To illustrate our individuality further, the left side of any face varies in minor ways from the right side. We differ in shape, colour and height. There are optimists, pessimists and those somewhere in the middle. Some are strong while others are weak. A loving God values each of us regardless as persons with a free will and

a choice on how to react to similar outward circumstances. We throw some of our fellow temporary passengers on earth into the dustbin of Rejection.

The term ‘migrants’ has a one-up, one-down; “I am superior, you are inferior” connotation. We should guard against thinking of those who are less privileged than us, because they are less educated or poorer, as belonging to ‘the migrants’, to an assembly line of human beings. Many of us have made our home in Mumbai though our ancestors hailed from another part of the country. So technically we too are ‘migrants’!

A couple would come to my doorstep selling fruits. They were very proud to inform me that though they were illiterate, by dint of hard work, they educated their three sons who are now teachers in the village. In contrast, my part time help Jyoti had a husband who wasted her hard earned earnings on liquor and would regularly beat up his family. Those unfortunates trudging hundreds of miles to their village were contributing members of society – plumbers, electricians, construction workers and not faceless human beings. It was a tragedy of gigantic proportions as wave after wave of human beings with meager belongings, some carrying their tiny tots, braved the hot sun because they had lost their jobs during the pandemic.



Why are we wary of those different from us? This is evident from our remarks such as, “Mark hails from X state. The saying goes that you should trust a snake but not someone who comes from X.” Needless X does not come from the State our ancestors come from. This displays a small minded, bigoted attitude.

Mother Teresa and Baba Amte took pity on lepers, the sick, the destitute and the dying – those lovingly crafted by God but rejected by their own. These people were in need of help, medicine, kind words and above all, love to restore their dignity.

Part of our attitude is that we are wary of those different from us and look at them with suspicion. No one lives in my husband’s ancestral house in Saligao, Goa. Family members stay in the house off and on. It has been the target of two burglary attempts since the pandemic began. Darshan, a local Goan, is my regular taxi driver during my stay. I was recently in Goa and asked him, “Who do you think is targeting empty houses? Are they the locals or those who have come from outside the State for jobs?” He was horrified that I could even think the locals could be responsible. “No, Madam, no! Not the locals. Definitely the migrants”, stated the budding Sherlock Holmes.

It’s no fun being at the receiving end of

discrimination. For instance, there was a time when society just could not accept that women could become qualified professionals like doctors, lawyers and chartered accountants. It was an uphill task for these women to prove otherwise.

History has shown groups of self serving men and women treating people differently. They may appear to succeed in the short run but eventually lose out. Stalin’s totalitarian regime in Russia in the 1940’s arrested many men and forced them to do hard labour in the forbidding Siberian terrain. One such person was Alexander Solzhenitsyn, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973. His book ‘One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovic’ illustrates that while all the prisoners seem identical during their daily trudge over snow covered terrain, they were individuals with a common purpose, viz. their own survival and that of the group. There was the expert mason, Ivan Denisovic also called Sukhov, the respected team leader Tiurin, hardworking Buinovskiy and lazy Fetiukov.

We do not realize it but our labeling a large group of people by calling them ‘migrants’ is discriminatory. Our mindset can only change when we stop pigeon holing an entire group of people into categories.

# Anaesthetized Conscience

People are not born with an anaesthetized conscience. At given moments in their life they choose to develop an anaesthetized conscience lest human concerns hinder self-interests.

GERRY LOBO OFM

Not only a physical body can be medically anaesthetized in preparation for the surgery, but also conscience of human persons can be anaesthetized by hardening one's heart and ignoring the stark realities beneath one's very nose. Plight of the suffering masses is ignored, facts are hidden, ears are deafened consciously and eyes are closed deliberately, human feelings are numbed and the gates of the heart are shut. Injustice meted out to citizens with a conscience has become the rule of the day. Such is the environment created by political leaders who are primarily responsible for the *polis*, the well-being of citizens. Establishing a kingdom of their own, they live with an anaesthetized conscience so that 'might' continues to be 'right.'

Prisoners languishing behind the bars, migrants constructing our cities but deprived of a home of their own, vendors sweating profusely for their daily meal, women sacrificing their bodies by a dint of hard work both in their homes as well as along the streets, children looking famished and lingering around eateries, maintaining a *status quo* about the large slums beneath the sky-rocketing structures, convicts begging for speedy justice as in the case of Fr. Stan Swamy and thousands of others in the jails and elsewhere - these are situations entertained and perpetrated by the 'anaesthetized conscience' of responsible leaders, whether they be from the legislature, from the judiciary or from the executive in our country, a nation considered to be highly "spiritual" with diverse ancient religions.

Why poke fun at Nero who seemed to have been fiddling when Rome was burning? Was his conscience alone anaesthetized in history? What about Hitler? And today, is India not aware

of a Nero of our times, mightily and forcefully, is executing the construction of Central Vista Redevelopment Project costing millions of dollars when the second wave of Covid-19 is depleting human population and distress of millions is so glaring? Anaesthetized conscience cannot be resuscitated, no matter whether one suffers or exterminated, until the last breath of a commoner lasts.

Anaesthetized conscience lets children die of strange illnesses every day; lets the farmers, the life-line of our nation, go ignored for months on in spite of their consistent determined agitation; lets unemployment of the educated and trained youth sky- rise; distracts the minds of the ordinary with spectacular feat such as raising a temple that would be another wonder of the world, while the basic need for a decent house for many is still a distant dream. Anaesthetized conscience believes that housing God within the costly fine-stoned walls is more urgent than attending to the farmer who cries for justice only so that he can satisfy the physical hunger, the basic need, of millions as the greatest service he could ever provide for humanity from his little portion of the mother earth.

While even many ignorant or illiterate citizens of our nation, with the minimum of physical needs, live with *largesse* and sacrificing heart in solidarity with the misery of their compatriots, and whose conscience never gets anaesthetized when it is a justice concern—women-mothers, particularly—it is sad to come across many, even the educated lot among them, comforting themselves with an anaesthetized conscience; while tears, pain, loss, hunger, need for a grain of love and a cup of justice are all the "bread" one has in the neighbourhood, the anaesthetized conscience is immersed in the

best profit one can earn by lucrative practices.

Dives, the rich man, in the parable of Jesus as recounted by Luke, was more than content and justified about his generosity for long years towards the beggar, Lazarus, of throwing the crumbs from his table to keep the hungry mouth physically alive. Well, the anaesthetized conscience, such as that of Dives, could never consider anything better to donate than keep alive the poor beggar at his door with the leftovers. That a human person is always a needy and dependent one on another in his or her very existential being and has legitimate right for shelter, food and clothing and love above all, never occurred to

Dives, or rather, his conscience never allowed it to occur. Similarly, the Priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan walked the way from Jerusalem to

Jerico with an anaesthetized conscience because the injured Jew did not belong to them; it was not worth the trouble to hear his cry and bend down to pick him up to save him from death. Thousands die of Covid and are thrown into the Ganges River or buried along the banks or cremated somewhere. Why should one burn his or her conscience because of it? Why should anyone be bothered about 26 victims of Covid dying at the same time in a hospital in Goa? After all, it is such a daily event and common to the eyes!! The Samaritan, on the other hand, impressively manifested a conscience that is alive and is meant precisely to bring healing to a broken, divided world.

People are not born with an anaesthetized conscience. At given moments in their life they choose to develop an anaesthetized conscience lest human concerns hinder self-interests. Statements they make and winded sermons they preach do not match their praxis. Sadly enough, in our political systems all that matters is a conscience without a conscience. Power positions attached to overwhelming benefits matter the most. Without an anaesthetized

conscience, world cannot be gained, empires cannot be established and statues reaching the sky cannot be erected. Only with such a conscience one gets emotional before the public eyes and crocodile tears are shed when a whole family is already turned into ashes or washed away by the tidal wave. Tragedy of human life somehow does not affect any hardened conscience; it is no instrument for a change of one's laid out path or fixed plan. This is the story, be it in the political world or religious world.

Education aims primarily at excellence with character, formation of conscience with compassion for the human soul and for mother

earth. On the other hand if education is pursued in order to stand above and out do others with an aggressive and competitive mind, then it clearly leaves people anaesthetized of their conscience

**Anaesthetized conscience is ambitious about outshining ones lamps in the Festival of Lights, while ignoring the humans living in the darkest slums as one passes through those houses.**

about existential realities of human concern. Specialization and expertise on different fields of learning may keep one tall but is lacking in empathy with or even a bit of sympathy towards others. Technology may be at our finger tips and communication the air we breathe, however if these are for self gratification and pride, then it is a sign of anaesthetized conscience.

Religion could also enhance anaesthetized conscience syndrome if God is not sought when passing by the neighbour's front yard. Mere religious practices, preached and exercised, often leave *bhakts* (devotees) with anesthetized conscience. Didn't the Kumbh Mela, promoted by religious and political leaders in March-April 2021 during the second outbreak of Covid, clearly and outstandingly show what an anaesthetized conscience was? Anaesthetized conscience is ambitious about outshining ones lamps in the Festival of Lights, ignoring the humans living in the darkest slums as one passes through those houses (R. Tagore). Oh....!!

Anaesthetized conscience, indeed, is a "dulled conscience," "numbed conscience" and "killed conscience" (Fulton J. Sheen). It is diabolic!

# Trauma & Healing

Learning to love myself—my child self, my adult self, my scared self, the courageous self that I keep tucked away a lot of the time—has been the hardest part of my journey with trauma.

RICHARD ROHR OFM

**C**laude AnShin Thomas suffered for years from the trauma of war as a Vietnam combat veteran. A retreat with Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh set him on the path of mindfulness and healing. He is now a Zen Buddhist monk. He recounts his story:

I suffer from a disturbed sleep pattern that has been a part of my life since a nighttime attack in Vietnam in 1967. Since that time, I haven't slept for more than two consecutive hours in any one night. . . . My sleeplessness became the central symbol of my not-all-rightness, of my deepest fears that I would never be all right. . . .

Part of the reason I had difficulty sleeping was because of my night terrors: the sounds of artillery (that isn't there) firing in the distance, of helicopters on assault, that special look of everything illuminated by artificial light, the sounds



of small arms fire, of the wounded screaming for a medic. For me, this is what rises up out of the silence that is special to night. I hated the sun going down. I fought and struggled with my inability to sleep, and the more I fought, the more difficult the nights became. So I turned to alcohol and drugs (legal and illegal) for relief, but my suffering just got worse. . . .

Some years after getting sober, I was standing at the kitchen sink in my cottage in Concord, washing dishes. Above the sink was a window through which I could see a row of fifty-foot-tall pine trees that lined the driveway. That day as I did the dishes, I was watching a squirrel busy doing whatever it is that squirrels do, when I had a powerful experience. A voice inside me, the voice of awareness, said to me, "You can't sleep, so now what?" I began to laugh. It was a moment



**You can just feel whatever is there, exploring it, until you also discover the liberation that comes with stopping the struggle and becoming fully present in your own life. This is the real path to peace and freedom.**

of complete acceptance. I finally understood that I just was how

I was. To resist, to fight, to attempt to alter the essential nature of my life, was in fact making matters worse, and now I understood that I simply needed to learn how to live with the reality of who I was. In this moment I discovered that it was here, in the midst of suffering and confusion, that healing and transformation can take place, if I can stop trying to escape.

But I'm not special, you know. You can do this, too. You can face your own sorrow, your own wounds. You can stop wanting some other life, some other past, some other reality. You can stop fighting against the truth of yourself and, breathing in and breathing out, open to your own experience. You can just feel whatever is there, exploring it, until you also discover the liberation that comes with stopping the struggle and becoming fully present in your own life. This is the real path to peace and freedom. You could do this for yourself; you could do this for your family. Our whole world will benefit.

### **The Soul Wound**

**Attorney and activist Sherri Mitchell from the Penobscot Nation writes about the collective trauma and "soul wound" that Native Americans have suffered:**

My group, Native Americans, have suffered an unrecognized holocaust in this country. The brutal genocide of Native peoples is hard to acknowledge for many, especially for those who have inherited some value from the loss and destruction that occurred here. How do you acknowledge the injustice of genocide, disruption of culture, and the destruction of a way of life when you're living on the lands of those who have been victimized? It is hard for people to accept that horror and continue to live with the outcome, so they choose to ignore it or minimize

the story. The simple truth is that this country was founded on genocide and slavery. . . .

When we don't allow ourselves to acknowledge the pain—the deep, agonizing soul pain that results from historical trauma—we aren't able to recognize that we are all carrying some measure of that pain within us. Instead, we allow it to isolate us and keep us cut off from one another. We also fail to recognize that the cause of that pain is not only a violation against us, it is a violation against life itself, and its mournful cries echo through our DNA, and become lodged in our genetic memory.

**The collective and intergenerational trauma that Sherri Mitchell describes manifests in individual bodies and requires healing on multiple levels. Kaitlin Curtice, a dear personal friend and member of the Potawatomi Nation, shares:**

I am someone who journeys with trauma.

The next step after naming my trauma—the trauma of assimilation, the trauma of being an Indigenous woman who grew up in the Baptist church, the trauma of a broken family, the trauma of struggling with anxiety, and more—was to learn how to live with the reality of those traumas, because once we name something out loud, it becomes true in a way it wasn't before. My journey with trauma includes learning to love myself in a more embodied way, continuing therapy, and actually stepping out of toxic church spaces and institutions into a fuller journey with the Christian faith that accepts me as I am.

Learning to love myself—my child self, my adult self, my scared self, the courageous self that I keep tucked away a lot of the time—has been the hardest part of my journey with trauma. When we learn to stop blaming our child selves for their trauma, fear, and behaviors, we learn to understand who we are as adults, and we get the chance to become embodied again.

# THE FRUITS OF THE FARM ARE TURNING BITTER IN OUR MOUTH





In the past, 'Jai Jawan and Jai Kisan' was the chorus of children in our schools. But today when the same farmers march toward the centres of power, barricades, water canons and trenches await them.

BOBBY JOSE KATTIKAD OFM CAP

Van Gogh painted shoes several times. Once the dusty, worn out shoes of a farmer was the subject of his painting. Thinkers such as Martin Heidegger and Zach Darida base their observations on Van Gogh's 'A Pair of Peasant Shoes' to discuss art history; and meaning of art in particular. As Heidegger observes, the soil from the field is not found on it. But the toil and daily struggle of an ordinary farmer is etched so clearly on them.

I remember my great grandfather who toiled in the fields of Kuttanad. The likes of him had not even had the good fortune of having a pair of shoes. They were mostly barefoot. The farmers ensure that we have food on our plates; but then, what have we done to them? Consequently their lives have become more uncertain and insecure than farming. In the past, 'Jai Jawan and Jai Kisan' was the chorus of children in our schools. But today when the same farmers march toward the centres of power, barricades, water canons and trenches await them. Are the police personnel happy to do this?

We run a small mess in one of our towns where people are welcomed to eat even if they have no money. Suddenly one day we see a pile of bananas on the street. On discovering

that those bananas were sold for pittens, the mess thought it could add a piece of steamed banana to its menu. But soon we realised the sad situation of the farmers who wouldn't even get a price equivalent to the water poured or the months of toil put in to cultivate them. Soon, the fruit turns bitter in your mouth. It is not just about the price alone, but we experience the devaluation of the whole spectrum of agrarian lifestyle.

Once, we were nomads and we found peace and security from agriculture. The first lesson of an organised social structure was learnt there. Even our culture depends a lot on agrarian life. Our ancient scientific wisdom too found its root there. There is no greater discovery than the finding of seeds. Even if we live in the times of AI, we have not yet produced a seed on our

own. And therefore, people who dedicate themselves to farming all kinds of seeds call for utmost reverence and honour from all of us who are the beneficiaries. What is more disturbing? The shrinking farm-lands or

the tragedy of the dwindling number of farmers who have taken up farming as a livelihood, who are giving up or committing suicide day by day. Just think of what happened to paddy cultivation, which is as old as the Yajurveda!

**There is no greater discovery  
than the finding of seeds.  
Even if we live in the times of  
AI, we have not yet produced  
a seed on our own.**

# The Real

The real and the unreal shadow are closely interwoven in life.

FR K M GEORGE

“Triple lockdown” is in effect in the Covidosphere in Kerala. I take a discreet early morning walk along the Kodoor rural stretch. Paddy fields are slowly swelling with the monsoon rains. The dying leaves of some leftover rice plants are sticking out of water casting their reflections below. The picture transpires some sort of semi-abstract geometrical shapes of triangles and squares. They seem to be complete in themselves and are closed polygons. But on closer examination, they are found part real and part shadow.

In order to distinguish between the real and the unreal in them, we may imagine a horizontal line across the middle of each image. Then the top half is real and the bottom half is shadow or reflection. However, our eyes take them together, that is, the real object and its unreal reflection, in order to create our complete and comfortable picture of a triangle or a square.

Traditional wisdom often compares our life to a mirror. Just like water that reflects the objects on its surface, life too reflects that which appears on its surface. The real and the unreal shadow are closely interwoven in life.



It is common knowledge that not only pleasure but pain, disease, and death are necessary to complete the polygon of life. If there is no pain of some sort -physical, psychic, or social- we wouldn't be aware of what we now call reality. In fact, they are essential for us "to keep in touch with reality", as they say.

It is interesting to observe that in the digital culture today we speak of more than one reality and we even can deliberately mix and manipulate realities. If what we normally call Reality is our down to earth existence, we now speak of and experience new levels of reality like Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and Mixed Reality.

Especially since the onset of the viral pandemic and lockdown most of us live in virtual Reality a good part

of our time. From tiny tots in the kindergarten and humble farmers in the field to ivory tower academicians, high flying rulers, world leaders, and business magnates - all enter the virtual world to do online what they are supposed to do in the real world.

For many, the Net provides an escape route to break out of the tedious mundane reality to enter another world. There have always been people who try to escape the boredom of the real world by means of some intoxication whatsoever. In fact, people invent innumerable ways to circumvent the drudgery of reality's chores, and wish to remain always, if possible, in a state of excitement by means of arts and sports, eating and drinking, warring and violence and what not .

If the current momentum in Cyber

technology is maintained humanity will inadvertently bump into ever new levels of reality. They say the emerging technologies like Quantum Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Mixed Reality together with Nanobiotechnology, 3D Bioprinting, and a host of various Human Enhancement technologies would radically alter our human reality. We shall then enter the post-human world. In fact, we have already crossed the threshold.

One may also remember that there are very old counterparts to this futuristic vision. The

great spiritual and mystical traditions have always spoken of new levels of reality that one could experience by practicing certain spiritual sadhanas while living here in our ordinary reality. This is essentially experiential and subjective, and not

to be compared to objective scientific methods.

All major religions and popular mythologies speak of many worlds. Heaven and hell in religious terminology are treated in the plural, and are said to possess numerous subdivisions as well.

It may be interesting that some in the field of scientific cosmology propose the hypothetical notion of multiverse or parallel universes rather than a single "universe".

In any case, it is better to keep our consciousness open and resilient, and be ready for any new future Reality that may subtly percolate into our ordinary world without "asking the host's permission to join". Change and Transfiguration, whether in the spiritual realm or in the scientific-technological sphere, is the law of life. An Incomplete, hence open polygon rather than a closed one may suggest ever-new possibilities. It seems human consciousness is still the greatest mystery on earth!







# Art Is All About Perspective

Is there a red tape when it comes to artistic expression and analysis in a religious context, or have we fully embraced the autotelism of art?

SUSANNA CORREYA

**T**he stripped down paintings of Francis Kodankandath contrast the opulence and the essence of the Church. His jarring juxtapositions invite us to ponder whether our eyes are trained on the materiality or the essence of Christianity. They hover between completeness and incompleteness to remind the viewers that the Church is still a work in progress while prompting us to reexamine the foundation upon which it was built and conclude that, maybe, we have thrust a grand façade upon a humble scaffolding.





▲ Left top: *Decoding Da Vinci*; top right: *Restoration from within*; above: Francis A. Kodankandath

Often, the plain message of scriptural *logos* is obscured and lost in the dense jungle of interpretation, vitiated by conflicting exegeses whose stylistics excel their substance. When this ornate impasto flakes, perhaps we will glimpse and excavate the original truth. While the artworks are not a denunciation of interpretation, they seem to vouch for an appraisal of the robustness and the aptness of the framework whence they will proceed.

Art is all about perspective. The unconcealed linear perspective and the undefined physiognomy of the disciples in *Decoding da Vinci* reinforces the centrality of Christ. The ambiguous character in Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* instigated speculation that troubled the legacy of Mary Magdalene and Christ. Kodankandath

attempts to rectify this deflection by returning the focus to Christ and the Eucharistic meal.

Now, a question remains: Is there a red tape when it comes to artistic expression and analysis in a religious context, or have we fully embraced the autotelism of art? Under the logic and discourse of autotelism, art need not service a moral or religious agenda. Bring "art for art's sake" to converse with Barthes' "death of the author" and the esthetic value of art could triumph over its religious value while myriad interpretive possibilities flourish.

The affective possibilities of beauty are vast and varied. The sublime majesty of a church can lure you into its portals. Hopefully, you won't need perspective lines to identify the heart of the place.

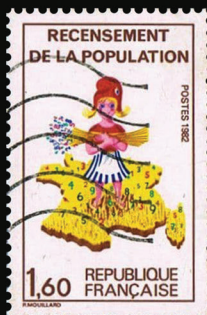
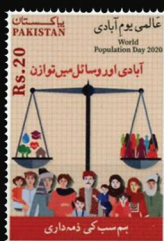
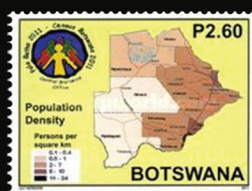
# 11 July World Population Day

IN STAMPS

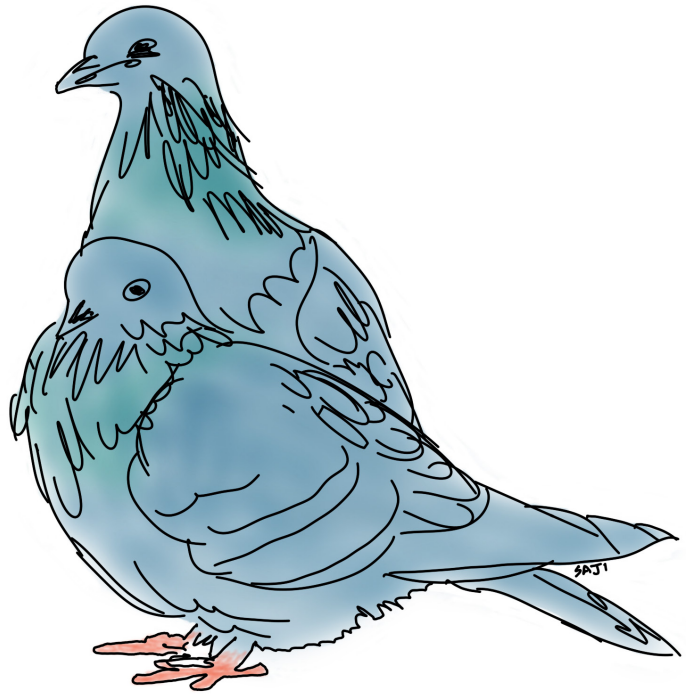
July 11 is dedicated to focus on the splendour in the multiplicity of the world population; and to focus on the consequences of population issues. The United Nations established this day when the world population reached five billion in 1987. Now when we celebrate the World Population Day we take stock of how much the population has increased since the last year. The present population of our planet is 7.8 billion. A day like this also advises us to include population issues as part of our academics and conversations. Population issues cover a lot of territories, from family planning, gender equality, and environmental impacts to human rights concerns.

Different countries have brought out stamps to highlight the World Population Day.

Here are some from philatelist, Tom John OFM.



- 1.9 billion adults are overweight or obese, while 462 million are underweight
- 149 million children under 5 were estimated to be stunted (too short for age)
- 45 million were estimated to be wasted (too thin for height)
- 38.9 million were overweight or obese (Source: World Health Organisation)



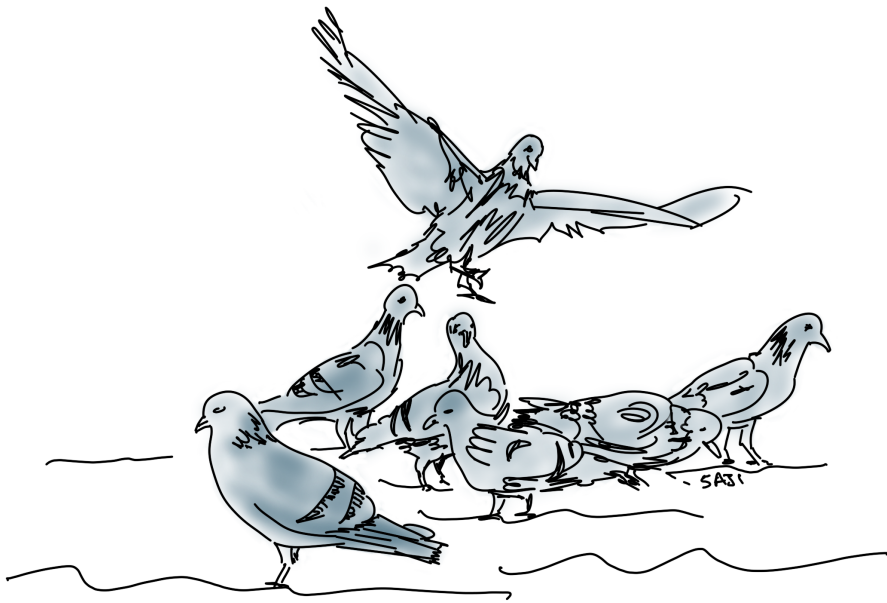
# The Pigeons

DIVYANK JAIN

Saurabh shut the book down on the table. He looked at the wall, surprised to see that the hands of the clock were still striking at 4:40. He let a sigh out. It had been a lazy day. After getting up from the sofa, he stretched his hands, fingers, toes and twisted his back sideways, then he strolled across the hall to the balcony, which was in the backside of the apartment.

Down there was a narrow street with buildings in a row next to it, old and yellow. The paint on the walls was peeling out. Saurabh had always found the window right in front of his balcony closed, but today the doors of it were wide open and there was an old man with steel-rimmed glasses and a cabbie cap, standing, leaning out on his elbows, staring down at the empty street. They were so close that if Saurabh leaned out a little, both of them could easily shake their hands.





"Good evening, sir," Saurabh greeted and smiled at him. He was bored with the slow passing of the time and the story he had been reading since morning. "Evening," the old man, slightly looking up, replied in a dry voice as though he had spoken something after several months. His lips were dry, and his teeth showed yellow as he smiled. Then again, he dropped down his head to peep in the right of the street.

"Are you waiting for the truck, sir?" Saurabh asked him after a while. Before speaking, the old man cleared his throat. "No," he said, "taking some fresh air in". Saurabh laughed because he thought it was a rather sarcastic statement for such an adverse situation they were collectively facing. He said, "I don't think it's fresh anymore, sir."

"What do you think, then?" the old man asked. "Look!" He pointed out with his shaking hand at the pigeons perched on the electric wires which were moving up and down because of the sudden movements caused by the flutter of the wings. Saurabh glanced down at the road and shifted his gaze from right to left and then left to right; the narrow road was covered under the dead leaves of mango and neem trees, and the over- aged stray dogs were yawning while sitting on the top of the dusty vehicles parked down there. Once too noisy, but now the street was so silent that Saurabh could even hear the

clock ticking behind in the living room.

In a white shirt plainly tucked in, with neatly trimmed beard, and the cap, the old man stood there not caring to move his eyes away from the pigeons. "Never in the whole six years have I seen this road like this," Saurabh said as he was somewhat annoyed by the emptiness. For as long as he could remember, the street had always been occupied and was running day and night, that also kept it alive.

"Never seen so many pigeons here together in the last 20 years?" "You've been living here for 20 years?" Saurabh said, observing his face. He had sure never seen him anywhere. "Where the hell do you want to send me at this age, boy?" The old man gave a crooked smile. Saurabh glanced at his dark brown wrinkles at the corners of his tiny eyes, as the steel rim around them shone in the sun. "I didn't mean that, sir. Do you live here alone?"

"Yeah, An old man can live on his own. Have you never seen one?" After an awkward pause, he said, "I am a writer, boy. And a writer is always alone no matter where he lives." The long lost pride came and dwelled over his lips as he declared himself a writer.

Saurabh : "Great! What do you write, sir, newspaper articles?"

Old Man: "I may look so boring to you, but I write interesting stories"



Saurabh: "Working on something interesting right now?"

Old man: "I have finished one this morning."

Saurabh: "I'd love to read, sir. Trust me, I am a good reader. Just finished a book."

Old man: "I'll give you the copy of it but you must wait. The pigeons never really come here again and again."

As some of the pigeons commenced to fly, the Old man looked up in the clear sky, where they were going, beyond the tall buildings and was disappearing behind them. The old eyes seemed sad as they couldn't see them anymore. "The truck comes at five o'clock, do you need anything, sir?" Saurabh asked him again. "No, boy. I bought all the stuff yesterday... for the whole two weeks... Now, I need nothing." The old man proudly smiled. "Thank you so much for asking."

Saurabh took out a packet of cigarettes from the pocket of his pyjama. The old man observed Saurabh and then he looked back inside his darkened room, and then asked, "does that truck bring cigarettes too?" "No. It only brings food and groceries. But I got stock." I see," the old man said, looking at the cigarette between Saurabh's fingers. "You can have it if you want to." Saurabh forwarded his hand. "Take it, sir, I have more."

"No, no...um.. okay .. just, just give me one" said the old man.

Saurabh threw out a cigarette, and the lighter afterwards. The old man failed to catch both times. He took them off the ground and lit the cigarette with his trembling hand. After blowing the smoke out in the air, he asked, "What do you do?" "An engineer," Saurabh said as he lit the cigarette for himself.

Old man: "Oh."

Saurabh: "That's why I am sitting at home, I think I should have been a doctor."

Old man: "A noble thought. Doctors are busy nowadays."

Saurabh: "When I was studying in UP, I dreamt of becoming a doctor and shifting to the USA someday. Now I think, I was so stupid."

Old man: "Why? Don't you know? The condition is out of control. Worse than ours? Yeah. Just like hell. And in New York... The old man was anxious as he pronounced 'New York' and stared into Saurabh's eyes as if he had forgotten about everything all of a sudden, even the pigeons.

Saurabh: "Worst! Why?"

Old man: "Someone of mine lives there."

Saurabh: "Who?"



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The old man said nothing and slowly released the smoke from between his cracked lips and it made him feel good to watch the smoke going up in the sky where the pigeons were going too.

Old man: "You, too, live alone here?"

Saurabh: "Nope, with my wife."

Old man: "And your father, UP? alone?"

Saurabh: "Umm, sir, he passed away a long ago."

Old man: "Oh, Sorry. I thought ..."

Saurabh: "It's okay. Had he been alive today, I would have kept him here with me."

"But then you couldn't smoke like this." The old man mocked and tried to give a clever smile. "You ever remember him?" he asked as he was taunting Saurabh. "What?" "Don't you miss your father?"

Saurabh: "Sometimes." "Sometimes you have to forget things and move on."

"You are right boy...forgetting fathers... moving on... yeah... we all do that. No one's fault. You won't believe it, I've almost forgotten my father's face, except for his big upwardly twisted moustaches." He threw the butt away as far as he could with all the strength left his old right hand, then without looking at Saurabh, said, "Once, in my teen years, he taught me how to cook delicious eggs. I've never forgotten that. He was indeed a good teacher."

Saurabh took the last puff and let the butt slip from the grip of his finger and watched it roll down the slope to dusty tires of cars. "My father always wanted to send me to the city, to see me becoming something... something really big. Then one day..."

"Every father in this world does the same." The old man took off the glasses and wiped them on his chest. He continued after wearing them, "Forgetting things... moving on. But, I stayed with him till his last breath. He said to me, It's a great feeling when you die in your son's lap."

Saurabh couldn't take his eyes off the old man for a few seconds and then suddenly he shifted his gaze to the right; people were peeping out of their balconies there. They were anxious.

"I don't think the truck will come today," guessed Saurabh.

"Most probably not!" The old man agreed, looking at the pigeons, as one by one, they flew away, except for the one big rounded pigeon. It seemed too lazy or perhaps too old to fly immediately. The old man moved uneasily and settled in his previous position.

"I don't want to embarrass you, sir," Saurabh said, "But... as you know it is really a hard time for our country, for the entire world, at least in this difficult time, we must help each other."

"Yeah, it is, boy" the old man agreed.

Saurabh: "Sir, do you need anything?"

The old man gulped down and turned back to look into his room, then he said, "I took all the stuff yesterday." He looked down at his nervous hands and then at the lone pigeon. "Everything! but the eggs. You just reminded me of my father. Do you have some eggs?"

Saurabh went inside without wasting a second and brought a whole tray of eggs for the old man and gave it to him. He smiled while leaning out of his balcony. "Thank you." The old man tried hard not to make eye contact with Saurabh. "Welcome, sir," Saurabh said. "You can call me anytime if you need anything."

"No, I.. Yesterday I bought everything I needed, but the eggs!" The old man laughed, slightly shaking his head. He smiled again at Saurabh, but this time there was no pride in his smile, but a glimpse of shame and hesitation that he wanted to hide anyway. He stared at the eggs.

Saurabh: "I want to read your story, sir."

Old man: "Of course. But, I think I need to add some more things to the story. I want to give it a new ending, and then I'll give a copy to you. Tomorrow?"

Saurabh: "Yeah, tomorrow would be fine."

"Thank you again, son, for this. You're really a good boy." The old man waddled inside, staring down at the tray of eggs. He left the window open, maybe unintentionally.

"Sir, look!" Saurabh called out, louder. "Your pigeons are coming back."

The foundation of the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph's of Tarbes was in France.

On 15 August 1843, God gave six young peasant girls of Cantalous, Diocese of Tarbes in France an experience of His Trinitarian Communion. Each of the girls relished this experience, discerned it, and was spontaneously drawn to share it with one another in simple faith.

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The Lord is inviting you, dear friend, to be part of our family.

**May they all be one.**  
JOHN 17:21



**For Further Information**

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**INTEGRO**  
INFOTECH & CONSULTING



## MOBILE APP DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE



### MOBILE APP DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Android and IOS] for institutions – Schools, Colleges, Nursing homes, Hospitals and NGO's

- User friendly platform based development that enables institutions and NGO to update NEWS directly
- Send NEWS and Notification directly to your target customer base [Students or Donors or Collaborators]

#### BUILD YOUR NETWORK AND SOCIAL MEDIA VISIBILITY

- As news and notifications in the APP are quick share enabled for all social media platforms
- Engage your stakeholders efficiently and Effectively – Send NEWS, PHOTOS & VIDEOS directly to their mobile phones.

### WHY INTEGRO INFOTECH?

- Customised APP Development, each APP is unique
- Unlimited Storage for NEWS and Events
- Unlimited Push Notification Alerts
- APP based contact form /reply form/application form...

CONNECT WITH US  
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