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Glittering mountains, singing fountains, humming drops of rains, field full of grains and the valley telling the stories of glorious civilization that was home of Swat. Beautiful faces, young girls and boys, roaming around and singing the songs of joy and celebrations, aged and grown up sitting around fire places watching the younger ones, dancing on the tunes, the songs of the valley. Recounting past and telling the stories of glorious traditions of Swat to the growing up generation. A valley which had never seen any violence is now drowned into blood of humanity. Gone are the roses and came in the guns. Gone are the smell of flowers and came in the dirty smell, stinking smell of gun powder. Gone are the chirping of birds and came in the sound of bullets and rockets. Swat is crying. Its people are begging for peace but the vested political interest continues to kill the valley and its people. Let's restore the past of Swat, bring back its glory again.

Poems on Swat By *Shamsher Ahmad*

Oh! My Glorious Swat

Oh! my charming dale,
Where is your hypnotic tale?

Where existed plenty of grain,
Now why every swan is in great pain?

Where existed clusters of trees,
Why we breath a polluted breeze?

Where cuckoo sang a melodious song,
Why the list of your sorrows is so long?

Where existed glistering of emeralds,
Why hesitated your lords?

All were friends far or near,
Why peace is so dare?

Where existed a lot of sublimation,
Why Trouts feel suffocation?

Where existed Swasto's transparency,
Why livers shows deficiency?
We will destroy ourselves,

Because we hate ourselves,
Nature will remain,
In fact it is the defeat of wise man.

Mankial Mountain

Look at the silence,
Of the huge Mankial mountain,

Observe its towering passion,
Stands firm in the chilly waves,
In the beauty of nature,

Why invites men?
To touch its wounded heart,

Why grief is felt?

Why tears drop?

An ambition always lies,
To embrace a tall pine tree,

At the peak of winter,
Silence, silence everywhere,

But not any glacier to fall,
To quench the thirsty land.

Remains at Butkara

These relics remind us,
That previous nations enjoyed,

A moral and civilized life,
But someone think them,

An old legend of the past,
I think them superior,

Because they guide us,
And Create light,

In our dark world,
And always exhibit,

The spirit of hard work,
But the question is,

Are they capable to disclose,
The cryptogram of life?

Stay at Gabral

The snow-covered Vale of Gabral,
When cool layers blow,

And cool drops dance,
Beside the restless waves,

Along the bank of the river,
At dawn when the frozen drops,

Glisten in the thick bushes,
And yellow moon sets,

I think that warmth is mercy,
When the majestic sun appears,

My heart beats within my breast,
It seems the pleasant event,

I welcome the day,
To read and bask.

Roof of Swat

Like saucer on the top,
Amidst the dense tall pines,

In the corridors of silence,
Beyond an allusive scene,

When aromatic breeze blows,
Amidst the lovely flowers,

When the majestic sun sets,
Then observe,

A pinkish mirage,
Above the thick specks of snow,

And imagine the combination,
Of soul and nature,

The awesome beauty of nature,
The lovely Malam Jabba.

What We Can Do for The promotion of Peace?

Arshad Karim

EPS, Swat (PAKISTAN)

Peace, tolerance and interfaith harmony are the most important human values. The world as we know is in the dire need of tolerance. We need peace and tolerance to respect the differences of opinion, belief, gender, thinking and appearance. We need and have to accept the fact that the people cannot be made bend to our will; we all, as a nation, accept the differences. We must be able to listen to one another's point of view patiently, and respect it rather than fight them. We have to understand that there are people on earth who will not have the similar beliefs and faith, and to accept these differences, and try not to change them to our liking forcefully. Because they are the differences that are in reality the beauty of the nature.

It is due to peace, equality and tolerance that we are living in our social life peacefully; everyone has to have fair chance of doing what's right for him/her. It is due to non-discriminatory attitude that all human beings, whether they are of opposite gender, color, belief or thinking, are working together to build a better peaceful future.

The book "SUVASTU" consists of different topics and shows us the culture, historical civilization, valuable and rich archaeological sites, communication, socio-economic condition, political, ruling hierarchy, spiritual and religious history of the region of the past, present; where we are living in the chaotic situation. So, we can understand easily that the land of Swat is a "Composite Heritage" and a cradle of the different strata of civilization and having much diversity. Now this is our obligation to work for the promotion of peace to protect and preserve our ancient and historic sites for the coming generation.

Mr. Shahbaz Muhammad, poet and the writer of the book, has shared and analyzed all the above facts in new manner and skills in the form of poem for his learners, and I hope that the present one "SUVASTU" is a new enhancement in Pashto language and would be very useful for the readers of history and specially for Pashto books readers, history students, researchers, governmental and non-governmental organization as well as for tourists so that they will come forward for the promotion of peace through composite heritage, in our mother land Swat.



Suvastu (History)

Shahbaz Muhammad

Environmental Protection Society, Swat

Reviewed by : *Prof. M Javaid Azhar*

“In this world, hate never dispelled hate. Only love dispels hate. This is the law, ancient and inexhaustible.” This is a saying of the Buddha, and the bottom line of the book *Suvastu*, which is an encyclopedic account of all that is related to the vale of Swat, both ancient and modern. The author, Shahbaz Muhammad, a teacher by profession, is a prolific writer of both prose and poetry in Pashto. He has a passion for history. He has to his credit four published works; A eulogy on the untimely death of his only son Haris, *Marg de Zama da Armanuno Marg dey* (Your departure is the death of my dreams) and a travelogue *Yakh Yun* (A Voyage in the Snow). The Pashto translations of two renowned books, “The Story of Malakand Field Force” and “Malakand: A Journey through History” are unprecedented and remarkable.

The front cover of the dust jacket of *Suvastu* has a scenic picture of the village *Ghalegay* (*Shingardar*), focusing on the enchanting stupa which enshrines the relics of the Buddha. It also has an insignia of the EPS, Swat. The back cover carries a brief note about *Suvastu* by Akbar Zeb, Executive Director EPS, Swat and a panoramic view of river Swat. The front flap has a blurb written by Arshad Karim, EPS, Swat, whereas the back flap carries a list of the published and unpublished books by the author.

The book is primarily divided into two parts. It starts with a beautiful long poem which enunciates almost in a chronological order the story of *Suvastu*. The author has portrayed the entire story in such a magical way, as if captured through a time-lapse camera. The reader journeys through the

annals of *Suvastu*, spread over hundreds of years, in a few hours. The second part of the book is the repository of knowledge, which answers almost all the queries that may arise in the mind of the reader. Through a superscript number inserted into the text of the poem, the reader is directed to the corresponding note at the end for a detailed narrative.

In addition, the author has adopted appropriate research techniques in this book. He has enlisted the requisite references and bibliography in the end using Chicago style of formatting references and bibliography.

The author has discussed in reflective detail the etymology of the word Swat, citing eminent writers in this connection.

“Rahi says, “It has been said that in ancient times his area was referred to as Suvastu, and some linguists say that the term Suvastu is derived from the word Sweta which means clear and fresh water; Besides numerous travelers have mentioned the clear and fresh water of Suvastu.”

However, in the book “History of Humanity: From the third millennium to seventh century BC”, edited by Ahmad Hassan Dani et al, it is said, “the word *Suvastu*, signifying ‘fair dwellings’ seems to indicate that there were Aryan settlements along its bank.” This connotes that the word *Suvastu* means “fair dwellings”.

The author has also narrated the arduous journeys of Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Hsien, Sun Yun, Hsuan tsang and Wu-Kung for the quest of Buddhism and its teachings. He has also painstakingly mentioned the Aryan civilization in the area and expressed his profound concern regarding the vanishing and devastation of the relics, and monuments of this rich civilization.

“A great number of relics of Aryan

civilization can be found in the mountains of Swat... However, these are vanishing due to the weathering effect. And certain ignorant people purposely destroy them as if committing a noble deed. It is feared that in a short span of time this rich page of history will become obscure and then finally disappear.

His meticulous explanation of religious scriptures such as Rig-Veda and Bhagwad Geeta is very fascinating. However, his elucidation of a plant named "Soma" is somewhat tantamount to digression.

The author's depiction of the Indian campaign of Alexander the Great needs some clarification. According to the Wikipedia, Cleopis was the mother of the chieftain of *Masaga* (suburbs of Swat) who had assumed command after his death. And according to Curtius, "Not only did Alexander slaughter the entire population of *Masaga*, but also did he reduce its buildings to rubble." Hence the romantic encounter of Alexander the Great with the queen of *Masaga* sounds untrue. Moreover, Roxana was a Bactrian (Balkh, Afghanistan) princess and a wife of Alexander the Great. She accompanied him on his military campaign in India in 326 BC.

Shahbaz Muhammad has also written a short biography of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. He has also highlighted the sacredness of Swat for Buddhists.

"The Buddhist believes that the reincarnation of Gautama Buddha took place in Swat. He has stayed here for a long period of time, roaming about. That's why the Buddhist revere Swat a lot and deem it a place of great blessings."

The remarkable story of various rulers of Gandhara from Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, and Kanishka, to the last Raja of Swat Raja Geera is very attention grabbing. The author has been very objective in praising the policies of the Greek Bactrian king Menander.

"Menander was an enlightened and magnanimous king. During his era all religions were granted freedom. Buddhists refer to him as Millinda, and he occupies an elevated status among their religious leaders.

The writer also refers to the controversy regarding White Huns, however, the mystery regarding the origin and nature of White Huns has been finally solved by Professor Paul Harrison of Stanford University on May 24, 2007, when he translated and published a scroll, dated 492-493 AD from the Hephthalite period, revealing the fact that Huns were patron of Buddhism and their names were Iranian (archives.worldhistoria.com).

While mentioning the campaigns of Mehmood of Ghazna, the writer strives to absolve him of the negative image portrayed mostly by the Western writers.

"The writers' of Swat's social geography claim that "the local Hindus of Swat embraced Islam as a compulsion; and some fled to the nearby hills." does not sound true, because the Hindu historian Dr. Tara Chand writes about Mehmood Ghaznavi that he didn't force anyone to accept Islam. He rather recruited a lot of Hindu officers and sepoy in his army who fought on his behalf in central Asia and Iran."

The book has a comprehensive note on the arrival of Yousafzai tribe under Malik Ahmad and Sheikh Mali in Swat and the expulsion of the local Swatis to Hazara.

While referring to the Mughal repression of Yousafzais that followed the de'tente between Mughal king Babur and Yousafzais, the author's objectivity is a bit skeptical. Here he has portrayed Khushal Khattak as a stooge of the Mughals, though Khushal's endeavours for the promotion of peace and national integration of Pakhtuns after his alienation from Mughals deserves a mention.

The author has unveiled an interesting fact in *Suwastu* that the rulers of Kashmir, Tonk

and Junagarh state hailed from Swat.

In the last part of the book, a number of short biographies of prominent writers and scholars is a nice gesture for the recognition of their literary services. However, the writer's sophisticated portrayal of Akhun Derveza jeopardizes his impartiality as a historian.

In a nutshell, the book *Suvastu* is a beautiful anthology of the history of Swat. The crux of *Suvastu*, "the composite heritage of ancient and modern civilizations" depicts the fact that "Unity in Diversity" existed in Swat. The beautiful cultural intermingling through the ages can still be witnessed in wood carvings and textiles. Therefore, a universal moral code is enough to bring all of the humanity together because; all religions and societies unanimously condemn evil and support good.

The promotion and preservation of composite heritage of Swat, a *sine qua non* for

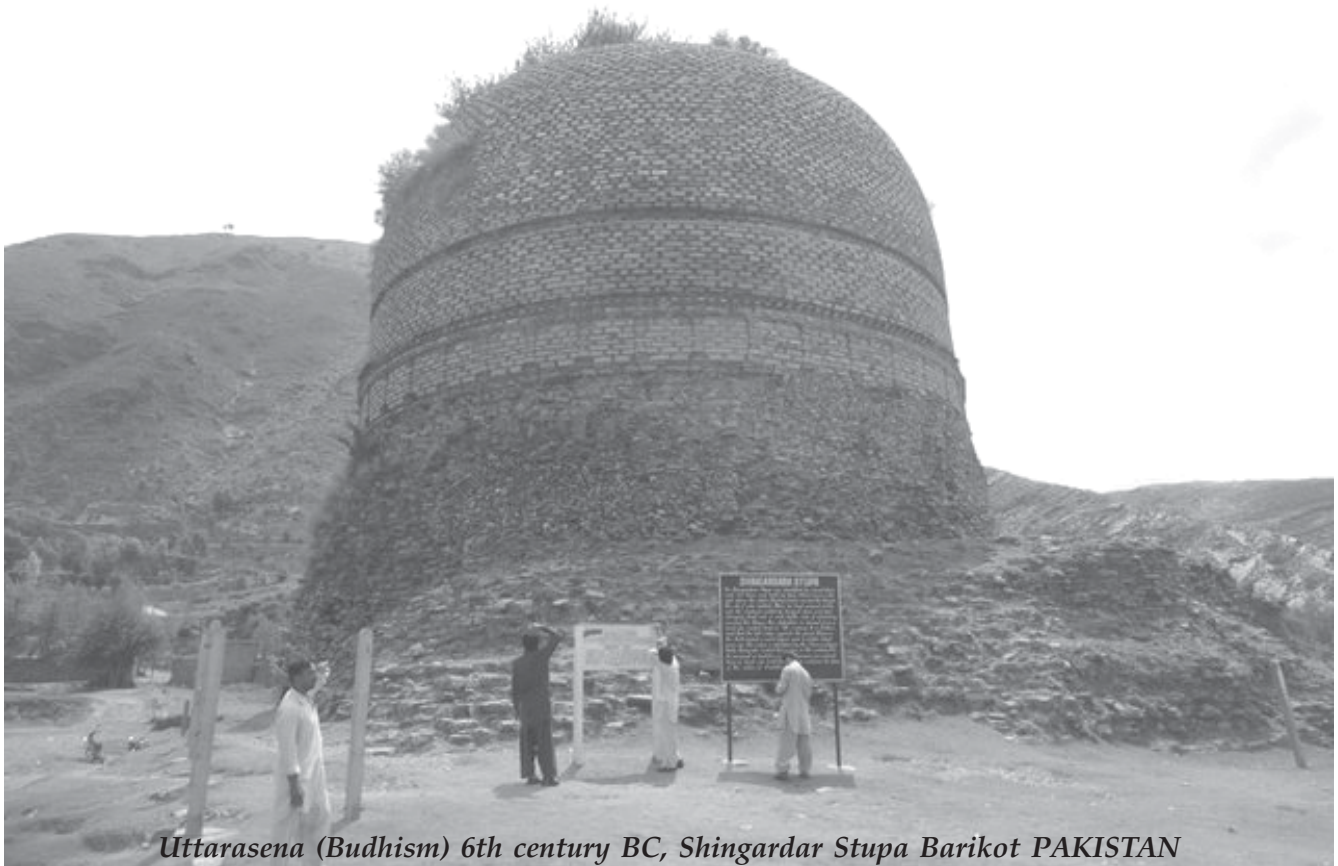
forging inter-sect and inter-faith harmony, will in turn result in promotion of global peace and love. In the end I would say, this book by Shabaz Muhammad is a good addition to the store of books on Swat, and will prove enormously useful for the students of schools, colleges and universities alike.

I would also extend my heartiest felicitations to Shahbaz Muhammad on the publishing of his fifth book. And thanks to Christian Study Centre (CSC), Rawalpindi for their financial support, and Environmental Protection Society (EPS), Swat for materializing the publishing of *Suvastu*.

I would end by quoting a few verses from *Suvastu*;

Love existed among them,
Even if be a Muslim or non-Muslim;
The only thing that mattered,
No matter whom; they were humans.

Shared by Arshad Karim



Uttarasena (Buddhism) 6th century BC, Shingardar Stupa Barikot PAKISTAN

Irom And The Iron In India's Soul

Irom Sharmila's struggle is going on and on. This article is as relevant today as it was when her epic fast entered tenth year.

IROM SHARMILA'S STORY SHOULD BE PART OF UNIVERSAL FOLKLORE. IN THE TENTH YEAR OF HER EPIC FAST, SHOMA CHAUDHURY TELLS YOU WHY SOMETIMES, TO accentuate the intransigence of the present, one must revisit the past. So first, a flashback.

The year is 2006. An ordinary November evening in Delhi. A slow, halting voice breaks into your consciousness. "How shall I explain? It is not a punishment, but my bounden duty..." A haunting phrase in a haunting voice, made slow with pain yet magnetic in its moral force. "My bounden duty." What could be "bounden duty" in an India bursting with the excitements of its economic boom?

You are tempted to walk away. You are busy and the voice is not violent in its beckoning. But then an image starts to take shape. A frail, fair woman on a hospital bed. A tousled head of jet black curls. A plastic tube thrust into the nose. Slim, clean hands. Intent, almond eyes. And the halting, haunting voice. Speaking of bounden duty.

That's when the enormous story of Irom Sharmila first begins to seep in. You are in the presence of someone historic. Someone absolutely unparalleled in the history of political protest anywhere in the world, ever. Yet you have been oblivious of her. A hundred TV channels. An unprecedented age of media. Yet you have been oblivious of her.

In 2006, Irom Sharmila had not eaten anything, or drunk a single drop of water for six years. She was being forcibly kept alive by a drip thrust down her nose by the Indian State. For six years, nothing solid had entered her body; not a drop of water had touched her lips. She had stopped combing her hair. She cleaned her teeth with dry cotton and her lips with dry spirit so she would not sully her fast. Her body was wasted inside. Her menstrual cycles had stopped. Yet she was resolute. Whenever she could, she removed the tube from her nose. It was her bounden duty, she said, to make her voice heard in "the most reasonable and peaceful way".

Yet both Indian citizens and the Indian

State were oblivious to her.

That was three years ago. On November 5 this year, Irom Sharmila entered the tenth year of her superhuman fast — protesting the indefensible Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) that has been imposed in Manipur and most of the Northeast since 1980. The Act allows the army to use force, arrest or shoot anyone on the mere suspicion that someone has committed or was about to commit a cognisable offence. The Act further prohibits any legal or judicial proceedings against army personnel without the sanction of the Central Government.

Draconian in letter, the Act has been even more draconian in spirit. Since it was imposed, by official admission, thousands of people have been killed by State forces in Manipur. (In just 2009, the officially admitted number stands at 265. Human rights activists say it is above 300, which averages out at one or two extrajudicial killings every day.) Rather than curb insurgent groups, the Act has engendered a seething resentment across the land, and fostered new militantcies. When the Act came into force in 1980, there were only four insurgent groups in Manipur. Today, there are 40. And Manipur has become a macabre society, a mess of corruptions: insurgents, cops and politicians all hand in glove, and innocent citizens in between.

A FEW YEARS ago, an unedited CD began doing the rounds in civil society circles. It showed footage of humiliating army brutality and public rage. Images of young children, students, working-class mothers and grandmothers taking to the streets, being teargassed and shot at. Images of men made to lie down while the army shot at the ground inches above their heads. With each passing day, the stories gathered fury. Disappeared boys, raped women. Human life stripped of its most essential commodity: dignity.

For young Irom Sharmila, things came to a head on November 2, 2000. A day earlier, an insurgent group had bombed an Assam Rifles column. The enraged battalion retaliated by gunning down 10 innocent civilians at a busstand in Malom. The local papers published brutal pictures of the bodies the next day, including one of a 62-year old woman, Leisangbam Ibetomi, and 18-year old Sinam Chandramani, a 1988 National Child Bravery Award winner. Extraordinarily stirred, on November 4, Sharmila, then only 28, began her fast.

Sprawled in an icy white hospital corridor that cold November evening in Delhi three years ago, Singhajit, Sharmila's 48-year-old elder brother, had said half-laughing, "How we reach here?" In the echo chamber of that plangent question had lain the incredible story of Sharmila and her journey. Much of that story needed to be intuited. Its tensile strength, its intense, almost preternatural act of imagination were not on easy display. The faraway hut in Imphal where it began. The capital city now and the might of the State ranged against them. The sister jailed inside her tiny hospital room, the brother outside with nothing but the clothes on his back, neither versed in English or Hindi. The posse of policemen at the door.

"Menghaobi", the people of Manipur call her, "The Fair One". Youngest daughter of an illiterate Grade IV worker in a veterinary hospital in Imphal, Sharmila was always a solitary child, the backbencher, the listener. Eight siblings had come before her. By the time she was born, her mother Irom Shakhi, 44, was dry. When dusk fell, and Manipur lay in darkness, Sharmila used to start to cry. The mother Shakhi had to tend to their tiny provision store, so Singhajit would cradle his baby sister in his arms and take her to any mother he could find to suckle her. "She has always had extraordinary will. Maybe that is what made her different," Singhajit says. "Maybe this is her service to all her mothers."

There was something achingly poignant about this wise, rugged man on the sidelines – loyal co-warrior who gives the fight invisible breath, middle-aged brother who gave up his job to "look after his sister outside the door", family man who relies on the Rs 120 a day his

wife makes from weaving so he can stand steadfast by his sister.

It was a month and a half since Singhajit had managed to smuggle Sharmila out of Manipur with the help of two activist friends, Babloo Loitangbam and Kangleipal. For six years, Sharmila had been under arrest, isolated in a single room in JN Hospital in Imphal. Each time she was released, she would yank the tube out of her nose and continue her fast. Three days later, on the verge of death, she would be arrested again for "attempt to commit suicide". And the cycle would begin again. But six years of jail and fasting and forced nasal feeds had yielded little in Manipur. The war needed to be shifted to Delhi.

ARRIVING IN DELHI on October 3, 2006, brother and sister camped in Jantar Mantar for three days – that hopeful altar of Indian democracy. Typically, the media responded with cynical disinterest. Then the State swooped down in a midnight raid and arrested her for attempting suicide and whisked her off to AIIMS. She wrote three passionate letters to the Prime Minister, President, and Home Minister. She got no answer. If she had hijacked a plane, perhaps the State would have responded with quicker concession.

"We are in the middle of the battle now," Singhajit had said in that hospital corridor. "We have to face trouble, we have to fight to the end even if it means my sister's death. But if she had told me before she began, I would never have let her start on this fast. I would never have let her do this to her body. We had to learn so much first. How to talk; how to negotiate — we knew nothing. We were just poor people."

But, in a sense, the humbling power of Sharmila's story lies in her untutored beginnings. She is not a front for any large, coordinated political movement. And if you were looking for charismatic rhetoric or the clichéd heat of heroism, you would have been disappointed by the quiet woman in Room 57 in the New Private Ward of AIIMS in New Delhi. That 34-year-old's satyagraha was not an intellectual construct. It was a deep human response to the cycle of death and violence she saw around her — almost a spiritual intuition. "I was shocked by the dead bodies of Malom on the front page," Sharmila

had said in her clear, halting voice. “I was on my way to a peace rally but I realised there was no means to stop further violations by the armed forces. So I decided to fast.”

On November 4, 2000, Sharmila had sought her mother, Irom Shakhi’s blessing. “You will win your goal,” Shakhi had said, then stoically turned away. Since then, though Sharmila has been incarcerated in Imphal within walking distance of her mother, the two have never met.

“What’s the use? I’m weak-hearted. If I see her, I will cry,” Shakhi says in a film on Sharmila made by Delhi-based filmmaker Kavita Joshi, tears streaming down her face. “I have decided that until her wish is fulfilled, I won’t meet her because that will weaken her resolve... If we don’t get food, how we toss and turn in bed, unable to sleep. With the little fluid they inject into her, how hard must her days and nights be... If this Act could just be removed even for five days, I would feed her rice water spoon by spoon. After that, even if she dies, we will be content, for my Sharmila will have fulfilled her wish.”

This brave, illiterate woman is the closest Sharmila comes to an intimation of god. It is the shrine from which she draws strength. Ask her how hard it is for her not to meet her mother and she says, “Not very hard,” and pauses. “Because, how shall I explain it, we all come here with a task to do. And we come here alone.”

For the rest, she practices four to five hours of yoga a day — self-taught — “to help maintain the balance between my body and mind”. Doctors will tell you Sharmila’s fast is a medical miracle. It is humbling to even approximate her condition. But Sharmila never concedes any bodily discomfort. “I am normal. I am normal,” she smiles. “I am not inflicting anything on my body. It is not a punishment. It is my bounden duty. I don’t know what lies in my future; that is God’s will. I have only learnt from my experience that punctuality, discipline and great enthusiasm can make you achieve a lot.” The words — easy to dismiss as uninspiring clichés — take on a heroic charge when she utters them.

For three long years later, nothing has changed. The trip to Delhi yielded nothing. As Sharmila enters the tenth year of her fast, she still lies incarcerated like some petty criminal in

a filthy room in an Imphal hospital. The State allows her no casual visitors, except occasionally, her brother — even though there is no legal rationale for this. (Even Mahasweta Devi was not allowed to see her a few weeks ago.) She craves company and books — the biographies of Gandhi and Mandela; the illusion of a brotherhood. Yet, her great — almost inhuman — hope and optimism continues undiminished.

But the brother’s frustration is as potent. The failure of the nation to recognise Irom Sharmila’s historic satyagraha is a symptom of every lethargy that is eroding the Northeast. She had already been fasting against AFSPA for four years when the Assam Rifles arrested Thangjam Manorama Devi, a 32-year-old woman, allegedly a member of the banned People’s Liberation Army. Her body was found dumped in Imphal a day later, marked with terrible signs of torture and rape. Manipur came to a spontaneous boil. Five days later, on July 15, 2004, pushing the boundaries of human expression, 30 ordinary women demonstrated naked in front of the Assam Rifles headquarters at Kangla Fort. Ordinary mothers and grandmothers eking out a hard life. “Indian Army, rape us too”, they screamed. The State responded by jailing all of them for three months.

Every commission set up by the government since then has added to these injuries. The report of the Justice Upendra Commission, instituted after the Manorama killing, was never made public. In November 2004, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh set up the Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee to review the AFSPA. Its recommendations came in a dangerously forked tongue. While it suggested the repeal of the AFSPA, it also suggested transferring its most draconian powers to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Every official response is marked with this determination to be uncreative. The then Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee had rejected the withdrawal or significant dilution of the Act on the grounds that “it is not possible for the armed forces to function” in “disturbed areas” without such powers.

Curiously, it took Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi to raise proportionate heat on Irom Sharmila, on a trip to India in 2006. “If

Sharmila dies, Parliament is directly responsible,” she thundered at a gathering of journalists. “If she dies, courts and judiciary are responsible, the military is responsible... If she dies, the executive, the PM and President are responsible for doing nothing... If she dies, each one of you journalists is responsible because you did not do your duty...”

Yet, three years later, nothing has changed. After the boundless, despairing anger of the ‘Manorama Mothers’, the government did roll back the AFSPA from some districts of Imphal city. But the viral has transmitted itself elsewhere. Today, the Manipur police commandoes have taken off where the army left off: the brutal provisions of AFSPA have become accepted State culture. There is a phrase for it: “the culture of impunity”. On July 23 this year, Sanjit, a young former insurgent was shot dead by the police in a crowded market, in broad daylight, in one of Imphal’s busiest markets. An innocent by-stander Rabina Devi, five months pregnant, caught a bullet in her head and fell down dead as well. Her two-year old son, Russell was with her. Several others were wounded.

But for an anonymous photographer who captured the sequence of Sanjit’s murder, both these deaths would have become just another statistic: two of the 265 killed this year. But the photographs – published in TEHELKA – offered damning proof. Manipur came to a boil again.

Four months later, people’s anger refuses to subside. With typical ham-handedness, Chief Minister Ibobi Singh first tried to brazen his way through. On the day of Sanjit’s murder, he claimed in the Assembly that his cops had shot an insurgent in a cross-fire. Later, confronted by TEHELKA’S story, he admitted he had been misled by his officers and was forced to set up a judicial enquiry. However, both he and Manipur DGP Joy Kumar continue to claim that TEHELKA’s story is a fabrication.

Still, hope sputters in small measure. Over the past few months, as protests have raged across the state, dozens of civil rights activists have been frivolously arrested under the draconian National Security Act. Among these was a reputed environmental activist, Jiten Yumnam. On November 23, an independent

Citizens’ Fact Finding Team released a report called *Democracy ‘Encountered’: Rights’ Violations in Manipur* and made a presentation to the Central Home Ministry. A day later, Home Secretary Gopal Pillai informed KS Subramanian, a former IPS officer and a member of the fact-finding team, that the ministry had revoked detention under the NSA for ten people, including Jiten. In another tenuously hopeful sign, Home Minister P Chidambaram has said on record in another TEHELKA interview that he has recommended several amendments in AFSPA to make it more humane and accountable. These amendments are waiting Cabinet approval.

IN A COMPLEX world, often the solution to a problem lies in an inspired, unilateral act of leadership. An act that intuits the moral heart of a question and proceeds to do what is right — without precondition. Sharmila Irom’s epic fast is such an act. It reaffirms the idea of a just and civilized society. It refuses to be brutalized in the face of grave and relentless brutality. Her plea is simple: repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. It is unworthy of the idea of the Indian State the founding fathers bequeathed us. It is anti-human.

It is true Manipur is a fractured and violent society today. But the solution to that can only lie in another inspired, unilateral act of leadership: this time on the part of the State. Eschew pragmatism, embrace the moral act: repeal AFSPA. There will be space beyond to untangle the rest.

But unfortunately, even as the entire country laces up to mark the first anniversary of Mumbai 26/11 – a horrific act of extreme violence and retaliation, we continue to be oblivious of the young woman who responded to extreme violence with extreme peace.

It is a parable for our times. If the story of Irom Sharmila does not make us pause, nothing will. It is a story of extraordinariness. Extraordinary will. Extraordinary simplicity. Extraordinary hope. It is impossible to get yourself heard in our busy age of information overload. But if the story of Irom Sharmila will not make us pause, nothing will.

Courtesy—Tehelka.com

1984 The Open Wound

'In a riot, two sides clash. This was a massacre'

FORGOTTEN CITIZENS 1984, SEEKING JUSTICE, a travelling photography exhibition initiated by senior advocate HS Phoolka, commemorated 28 years of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Arpana Caur, 58, artist and one of the organisers, tells Aradhna Wal about the need for public intervention in cases of marginalisation of minorities and how art must record history to prevent atrocities from happening again.

EDITED EXCERPTS

The project is called Forgotten Citizens Seeking Justice. What is being recalled?

I knew of this senior advocate, HS Phoolka, who had been fighting nearly 100 cases related to the 1984 Sikh riots for 28 years. Two years ago, I met him at an environment conference. This exhibition came about when he realised, with only four cases left, that he had only been dealing with words and that there was no visual impact. People gave up out of exhaustion and lack of initiative. Eyewitnesses died. So Phoolkaji called some of us and said that we need to draw public attention to this. He, together with the Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Lok Raj Sangathan and a handful of young volunteers, put together the exhibition.

How can art agitate for justice?

The photographers who captured the riots are eyewitnesses. Ram Rahman was there in Trilokpuri and Sondeep Shankar worked for *The Telegraph* then. Phoolkaji had 30 images with him already. Ram visited Trilokpuri, especially Block 32 where 400 men — the poorest of the poor carpenters, rickshawallas — had been killed. He had an image of a mother holding the finger of her son. The rioters had cut off the finger to remove the ring after burning the body. Phoolkaji felt that a travelling exhibition was

needed to remind people that this happened, so that it doesn't happen again. It seemed appropriate to start with Jallianwala Bagh.

What has dominated your memories of the 1984 riots?

I have vivid memories of living with my mother in a rented house in Niti Bagh. Our landlord was a Supreme Court lawyer and a member of the Rajya Sabha. During the riots, he approached the court and said that a prominent *sardarni* (my mother) was his tenant; hence his house was in danger. The court ordered us to vacate in six months. We were without a home, and had to stay in a friend's drawing room for six months.

We were two women helpless in front of a powerful man. That's when you realise how much of a minority you are. From a friend's balcony I could see the smoke rising from the burnt shops in South Extension in Delhi. I knew a man, all of 5 feet, nothing with a squeaky voice, who used to give me rides to the studio on his motorbike. He and his children were killed. By the time we got to his place to save his wife, she had lost her mind. I worked in the relief camps later, and can't even describe the suffering I saw there. You can't call these riots. In a riot, two sides clash. This was a plain and simple massacre.

The campaign includes a petition to the government for proper investigation and

legal action. Has there been a response to that?

Art here is used as a tool for recording memories. Teesta Setalvad's activism for the Gujarat riots, using art and photography, has been an eye-opener. The judgement set a precedent and bolstered Phoolkaji's initiative. If there is protest, if there is media support, then maybe something can happen. The exhibition has caused people in different cities to break down. This isn't driven by anger; it's a plea for justice. As for the legal response, only time will tell.

What has been your own response as a Sikh?

I, like all Sikhs in 1984, felt marginalised. Your sense of belonging gets destroyed. The men who killed Mrs Gandhi deserved punishment, but not the innocent poor on the streets. Why wasn't the Army called in on time? Sikhs have always been a large part of the Indian Army and sacrificed

so much for it because they saw themselves as Indians first. Such marginalisation creates a feeling of insecurity. All these *tarkhans*, who earned Rs 100-200 a day, lost their lives. They were the easy victims. The rich people in South Delhi were only looted. But the poor lost their lives. And that is sick.

In Rwanda, they say forgetting a past atrocity is the best way to move on. As a culture we memorialise and archive our collective tragedies. What is the wisdom of either course?

I saw an exhibition on the Rwanda genocide in Germany. A white artist had done a lot of work on it. The site he chose was a gas chamber where Jews were killed. It is important to remember. People are helpless in front of mobs. But if there is media awareness, if there is justice, perhaps it won't happen again. Otherwise, our country is a tinderbox waiting to be lit up.

Courtesy—Tehelka.com

1984

By Davinder Ranu

In the land of democracy and freedom
On the Delhi streets
Thousands of innocent Sikhs were killed
Where was the Indian Government and the police?
Mobs raping the Sikh women
Cutting the young Sikh children in half
Everyone just standing there, having a good laugh
Overnight the killings increased
Went on for days
Mobs cursing at them for being a Sikh
To be a Sikh in "our" country...
Getting murdered is the price you pay

The Indo-Afghans. South India. Vijayanagar. Babar. Sea Power

Jawaharlal Nehru

THE DISCOVERY OF INDIA

Indian history has usually been divided by English as well as some Indian historians into three major periods : Ancient or Hindu, Muslim, and the British period. This division is neither intelligent nor correct; it is deceptive and gives a wrong perspective. It deals more with the superficial changes at the top than with the essential changes in the political, economic, and cultural development of the Indian people. The so-called ancient period is vast and full of change, of growth and decay, and then growth again. What is called the Muslim or medieval period brought another change, and an important one, and yet it was more or less confined to the top and did not vitally affect the essential continuity of Indian life. The invaders who came to India from the north-west, like so many of their predecessors in more ancient times, became absorbed into India and part of her life. Their dynasties became Indian dynasties and there was a great deal of racial fusion by intermarriage. A deliberate effort was made, apart from a few exceptions, not to interfere with the ways and customs of the people. They looked to India as their home country and had no other affiliations. India continued to be an independent country.

The coming of the British made a vital difference and the old system was uprooted in many ways. They brought an entirely different impulse from the west, which had slowly developed in Europe from the times of the Renaissance, Reformation, and political revolution in England, and was taking shape in the beginnings of the industrial revolution. The American and French Revolutions were to

carry this further. The British remained outsiders, aliens and misfits in India, and made no attempt to be otherwise. Above all, for the first time in India's history, her political control was exercised from outside and her economy was centered in a distant place. They made India a typical colony of the modern age, a subject country for the first time in her long history.

Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion of India was certainly a foreign Turkish invasion and resulted in the Punjab being separated from the rest of India for a while. The Afghans who came at the end of the twelfth century were different. They were an Indo-Aryan race closely allied to the people of India. Indeed, for long stretches of time Afghanistan had been, and was destined to be, a part of India. Their language, Pashto, was basically derived from Sanskrit. There are few places in India or outside which are so full of ancient monuments and remains of Indian culture, chiefly of the Buddhist period, as Afghanistan. More correctly, the Afghans should be called the Indo-Afghans. They differed in many ways from the people of the Indian plains, just as the people of the mountain valleys of Kashmir differed from the dwellers of the warmer and flatter regions below. But in spite of this difference Kashmir had always been and continued to be an important seat of Indian learning and culture. The Afghans differed also from the more highly cultured and sophisticated Arabs and Persians. They were hard and fierce like their mountain fastnesses, rigid in their faith, warriors not inclined towards intellectual pursuits or adventures of the mind. They behaved to begin with as conquerors over a rebellious people and were cruel and harsh.

But soon they toned down. India became their home and Delhi was their capital, not

distant Ghazni as in Mahmud's time. Afghanistan, where they came from, was just an outlying part of their kingdom. The process of Indianization was rapid, and many of them married women of the country. One of their great rulers, Alauddin Khilji, himself married a Hindu lady, and so did his son. Some of the subsequent rulers were racially Turks, such as Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, the Sultana Razia, and Iltutmish; but the nobility and army continued to be mainly Afghan. Delhi flourished as an imperial capital. Ibn Batuta, a famous Arab traveller from Morocco, who visited many countries and saw many cities from Cairo and Constantinople to China, described it in the fourteenth century, perhaps with some exaggeration, as 'one of the greatest cities in the universe.'

The Delhi Sultanate spread southwards. The Chola kingdom was declining, but in its place a new sea-faring power had grown. This was the Pandya kingdom, with its capital at Madura and its port at Kayal on the east coast. It was a small kingdom but a great centre of trade. Marco Polo twice visited this port on his way from China, in 1288 and 1293, and described it 'as a great and noble city,' full of ships from Arabia and China. He also mentions the very fine muslins, which 'look like tissues of a spider's web' and which were made on the east coast of India. Marco Polo tells us also an interesting fact. Large numbers of horses were imported by sea from Arabia and Persia into south India. The climate of south India was not suited to horse-breeding, and horses, apart from their other uses, were necessary for military purposes. The best breeding-grounds for horses were in central and western Asia, and this may well explain, to some extent, the superiority of the central Asian races in warfare. Chengiz Khan's Mongols were magnificent horsemen and were devoted to their horses. The Turks were also fine horsemen, and the love of the Arab for his horse is well-known. In north and west India

there are some good breeding-grounds for horses, especially in Kathiawar, and the Rajputs are very fond of their horses. Many a petty war was waged for a famous charger. There is a story of a Delhi Sultan admiring the charger of a Rajput chief and asking him for it. The Hara chief replied to the Lodi king: 'There are three things you must not ask of a Rajput : his horse, his mistress, or his sword,' and he galloped away. There was trouble afterwards.

Late in the fourteenth century, Timur, the Turk or Turco-Mongol, came down from the north and smashed up the Delhi Sultanate. He was only a few months in India; he came to Delhi and went back. But all along his route he created a wilderness adorned with pyramids of skulls of those he had slain; and Delhi itself became a city of the dead. Fortunately, he did not go far and only some parts of the Punjab and Delhi had to suffer this terrible affliction.

It took many years for Delhi to wake up from this sleep of death and even when it woke up it was no longer the capital of a great empire. Timur's visit had broken that empire and out of it had arisen a number of states in the south. Long before this, early in the fourteenth century, two great states had risen—Gulbarga, called the Bahmani kingdom,¹ and the Hindu kingdom of Vijaya-nagar. Gulbarga now split up into five states, one of these being Ahmadnagar. Ahmad Nizam Shah, the founder of Ahmadnagar in 1490, was the son of Nizam-ul-Mulk Bhairi, a minister of the Bahmani kings. This Nizam-ul-Mulk was the son of a Brahmin accountant named Bhairu (from which his name Bhairi). Thus the Ahmednagar dynasty was of indigenous origin, and Chand Bibi, the heroine of Ahmednagar, had mixed blood. All the Muslim states in the south were indigenous and Indianized.

After Timur's sack of Delhi, north India remained weak and divided up. South India was better off and the largest and most powerful of the southern kingdoms was

Vijayanagar. This state and city attracted many of the Hindu refugees from the north. From contemporary accounts it appears that the city was rich and very beautiful. 'The city is such that eye has not seen nor ear heard of any place resembling it upon the whole earth,' says Abdur-Razzak, from central Asia. There were arcades and magnificent galleries for the bazaars, and rising above them all was the palace of the king, surrounded by 'many rivulets and streams flowing through channels of cut stone, polished and even.' The whole city was full of gardens and because of them, as an Italian visitor in 1420, Nicolo Conti, writes, the circumference of the city was sixty miles. A later visitor was Paes, a Portuguese who came in 1522 after having visited the Italian cities of the Renaissance. The city of Vijayanagar, he says, is as 'large as Rome and very beautiful to the sight'; it is full of charm and wonder with its innumerable lakes and waterways and fruit gardens. It is 'the best-provided city in the world' and 'everything abounds.' The chambers of the palace were a mass of ivory, with roses and lotuses carved in ivory at the top—'it is so rich and beautiful that you would hardly find any where another such.' Of the ruler, Krishna Deva Raya, Paes writes: 'He is the most feared and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry; he is one that seek to honour foreigners, and receives them kindly, asking about all their affairs whatever their condition may be.'

While Vijayanagar was flourishing in the south, the petty sultanate of Delhi had to meet a new foe. Yet another invader came down from the northern mountains and on the famous battlefield of Panipat, near Delhi, where so often India's fate has been decided, he won the throne of Delhi in 1526. This was Babar, a Turco-Mongol and a prince of the Timurid line in central Asia. With him begins the Mughal Empire of India.

Babar's success was probably due not only to the weakness of the Delhi Sultanate but

to his possessing a new and improved type of artillery which was not in use in India then. From this period onwards India seems to lag behind in the developing science of warfare. It would be more correct to say that the whole of Asia remained where it was while Europe was advancing in this science. The great Mughal Empire, powerful as it was in India for 200 years, probably could not compete on equal terms with European armies from the seventeenth century onwards. But no European army could come to India unless it had control over the sea routes. The major change that was taking place during these centuries was the development of European sea power. With the fall of the Chola kingdom in the south in the thirteenth century, Indian sea power declined rapidly. The small Pandya state, though intimately connected with the sea, was not strong enough. The Indian colonies, however, still continued to hold command over the Indian Ocean till the fifteenth century, when they were ousted by the Arabs, who were soon to be followed by the Portuguese.

*Synthesis and Growth of Mixed Culture
Purdah. Kabir. Guru Nanak. Amir Khusrau*

It is thus wrong and misleading to talk of a Muslim invasion of India or of the Muslim period in India, just as it would be wrong to refer to the coming of the British to India as a Christian invasion, or to call the British period in India a Christian period. Islam did not invade India; it had come to India some centuries earlier. There was a Turkish invasion (Mahmud's), and an Afghan invasion, and then a Turco-Mongol or Mughal invasion, and of these the two latter were important. The Afghans might well be considered a border Indian group, hardly strangers to India, and the period of their political dominance should be called the Indo-Afghan period. The Mughals were outsiders and strangers to India and yet they fitted into the Indian structure with remarkable speed and began the Indo-Mughal period.

Through choice or circumstances or both, the Afghan rulers and those who had come with them, merged into India. Their dynasties became completely Indianized with their roots in India, looking upon India as their homeland, and the rest of the world as foreign. In spite of political conflict, they were generally considered as such and many even of the Rajput princes accepted them as their over-lords. But there were other Rajput chiefs who refused to submit and there were fierce conflicts. Feroze Shah, one of the well-known Sultans of Delhi, had a Hindu mother; so had Ghyas-ud-Din Tughlak. Such marriages between the Afghans, Turkish and the Hindu nobility were not frequent, but they did take place. In the south the Muslim ruler of Gulbarga married a Hindu princess of Vijayanagar with great pomp and ceremony.

It appears that in the Muslim countries of central and western Asia Indians had a good reputation. As early as the eleventh century, that is, before the Afghan conquest, a Muslim geographer, Idrisi, wrote : 'The Indians are naturally inclined to justice, and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are well-known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side.'²

An efficient administration grew up and communications were especially improved, chiefly for military reasons. Government was more centralized now though it took care not to interfere with local customs. Sher Shah (who intervened during the early Mughal period) was the ablest among the Afghan rulers. He laid the foundations of a revenue system which was later to be expanded by Akbar. Raja Todar Mal, Akbar's famous revenue minister, was first employed by Sher Shah. Hindu talent was increasingly used by the Afghan rulers.

The effect of the Afghan conquest on India and Hinduism was two-fold, each development contradicting the other. The immediate reaction was an exodus of people to the south, away

from the areas under Afghan rule. Those who remained became more rigid and exclusive, retired into their shells, and tried to protect themselves from foreign ways and influences by hardening the caste system. On the other hand, there was a gradual and hardly conscious approach towards these foreign ways both in thought and life. A synthesis worked itself out: new styles of architecture arose; food and clothing changed; and life was affected and varied in many other ways. This synthesis was especially marked in music, which, following its old Indian classical pattern, developed in many directions. The Persian language became the official court language and many Persian words crept into popular use. At the same time the popular languages were developed.

Among the unfortunate developments that took place in India was the growth of *purdah* or the seclusion of women. Why this should have been so is not clear but somehow it did result from the inter-action of the new elements on the old. In India there had been previously some segregation of the sexes among the aristocracy, as in many other countries and notably in ancient Greece. Some such segregation existed in ancient Iran also and to some extent all over western Asia. But nowhere was there any strict seclusion of women. Probably this started in the Byzantine court circles where eunuchs were employed to guard the women's apartments. Byzantine influence travelled to Russia where there was a fairly strict seclusion of women right up to Peter the Great's time. This had nothing to do with the Tartars who, it is well established, did not segregate their women-folk. The mixed Arab-Persian civilization was affected in many ways by Byzantine customs and possibly the segregation of upper-class women grew to some extent. Yet, even so, there was no strict seclusion of women in Arabia or in other parts of western or central Asia. The Afghans, who crowded into northern India after the capture of Delhi, had no strict *purdah*. Turkish and

Afghan princesses and ladies of the court often went riding, hunting, and paying visits. It is an old Islamic custom, still to be observed, that women must keep their laces unveiled during the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca. Purdah seems to have grown in India during Mughal times, when it became a mark of status and prestige among both Hindus and Muslims. This custom of seclusion of women spread especially among the upper classes of those areas where Muslim influence had been most marked—in the great central and eastern block comprising Delhi, the United Provinces, Rajputana, Bihar, and Bengal. And yet it is odd that purdah has not been very strict in the Punjab and in the Frontier Province, which are predominantly Muslim. In the south and west of India there has been no such seclusion of women, except to some extent among the Muslims.

I have no doubt at all that among the causes of India's decay in recent centuries, purdah, or the seclusion of women, holds an important place. I am even more convinced that the complete ending of this barbarous custom is essential before India can have a progressive social life. That it injures women is obvious enough, but the injury to man, to the growing child who has to spend much of its time among women in purdah, and to social life generally is equally great. Fortunately this evil practice is fast disappearing among the Hindus, more slowly among the Muslims.

The strongest factor in this liquidation of purdah has been the Congress political and social movements which have drawn tens of thousands of middle-class women into some kind of public activity. Gandhiji has been, and is, a fierce opponent of purdah and has called it a 'vicious and brutal custom' which has kept women backward and undeveloped. 'I thought of the wrong being done by men to the women of India by clinging to a barbarous custom which, whatever use it might have had when it was first introduced, had now become totally useless and was doing incalculable harm to the

country.' Gandhiji urged that woman should have the "same" liberty and opportunity of self-development as man. 'Good sense must govern the relations between the two sexes. There should be no barrier erected between them. Their mutual behaviour should be natural and spontaneous.' Gandhiji has indeed written and spoken with passion in favour of women's equality and freedom, and has bitterly condemned their domestic slavery.

I have digressed and made a sudden jump to modern times, and must go back to the medieval period after the Afghans had established themselves in Delhi and a synthesis was working itself out between old ways and new. Most of these changes took place at the top, among the nobility and upper classes, and did not affect the mass of the population, especially the rural masses. They originated in court circles and spread in the cities and urban areas. Thus began a process which was to continue for several centuries, of developing a mixed culture in north India. Delhi, and what are known now as the United Provinces, became the centre of this, just as they had been, and still continued to be, the centre of the old Aryan culture. But much of this Aryan culture drifted to the south, which became a stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy.

After the Delhi Sultanate had weakened owing to Timur's incursion, a small Muslim state grew up in Jaunpur (in the United Provinces). Right through the fifteenth century this was a centre of art and culture and toleration in religion. The growing popular language, Hindi, was encouraged, and an attempt was even made to bring about a synthesis between the religious faiths of the Hindus and the Muslims. About this time in far Kashmir in the north an independent Muslim King, Zainul-abdin, also became famous for his toleration and his encouragement of Sanskrit learning and the old culture.

All over India this new ferment was working and new ideas were troubling people's

minds. As of old, India was sub-consciously reacting to the new situation, trying to absorb the foreign element and herself changing somewhat in the process. Out of this ferment arose new types of reformers who deliberately preached this synthesis and often condemned or ignored the caste system. There was the Hindu Ramanand in the south, in the fifteenth century, and his still more famous disciple Kabir, a Muslim weaver of Benares. Kabir's poems and songs became, and still are, very popular. In the north there was Guru Nanak, who is considered the founder of Sikhism. The influence of these reformers went far beyond the limits of the particular sects that grew up after them. Hinduism as a whole felt the impact of the new ideas, and Islam in India also became somewhat different from what it was elsewhere. The fierce monotheism of Islam influenced Hinduism and the vague pantheistic attitude of the Hindu had its effect on the Indian Muslim. Most of these Indian Muslims were converts brought up in and surrounded by the old traditions; only a comparatively small number of them had come from outside. Muslim mysticism, and Sufism, which probably had its beginnings in neo-Platonism, grew.

Perhaps the most significant indication of the growing absorption of the foreign element in India was its use of the popular language of the country, even though Persian continued to be the court language. There are many notable books written by the early Muslims in Hindi. The most famous of these writers was Amir Khusrau, a Turk whose family had settled in the United Provinces for two or three generations and who lived in the fourteenth century during the reigns of several Afghan Sultans. He was a poet of the first rank in Persian, and he knew Sanskrit also. He was a great musician and introduced many innovations in Indian music. He is also said to have invented the *sitar*, the popular stringed instrument of India. He wrote on many subjects and, in particular, in praise of India,

enumerating the various things in which India excelled. Among these were religion, philosophy, logic, language, and grammar (Sanskrit), music, mathematics, science and the mango fruit!

But his fame in India rests, above all, on his popular songs, written in the ordinary spoken dialect of Hindi. Wisely he did not choose the literary medium which would have been understood by a small coterie only; he went to the villager not only for his language but for his customs and ways of living. He sang of the different seasons and each season, according to the old classical style of India, had its own appropriate tune and words; he sang of life in its various phases, of the coming of the bride, of separation from the beloved, of the rains when life springs anew from the parched earth. Those songs are still widely sung and may be heard in any village or town in northern or central India. Especially when the rainy season begins and in every village big swings are hung from the branches of the mango or the peepul trees, and all the village girls and boys gather together to celebrate the occasion.

Amir Khusrau was the author also of innumerable riddles and conundrums which are very popular with children as well as grown-ups. Even during his long life Khusrau's songs and riddles had made him famous. That reputation has continued and grown. I do not know if there is any other instance any where of songs written 600 years ago maintaining their popularity and their mass appeal and being still sung without any change of words.

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1. *The name and origin of the Bahmani Kingdom of the South is interesting. The founder of this state was an Afghan Muslim who had a Hindu patron in his early days—Gangu Brahmin. In gratitude to him he even took his name and his dynasty was called the Bahmani (from Brahmin) dynasty.*
 2. *From Sir H. M. Elliot's 'History of India', Vol. 1, p. 88.*

The Birth of Poetry

Christopher Caudwell

III

All peoples present, to ethnologists who live among them, distinct individualities, as indeed do animals. Among the Australian aborigines, as Gillen and Spencer have observed, men acquire reputations for special types of socially useful dexterity and exercise it to an extent which shows that differentiation already exists. Some division of labour has appeared but it is still mainly genetic. It is not produced by a complex which moulds each generation, and leads to the formation of a class.

Thus, as a rough type of the matrix in which poetry was born, we take the average food-gathering or hunting tribe of today where poetry is charm, prayer and history. This undifferentiated group shares social functions and therefore thoughts in common, and is bound by that 'primitive passive sympathy' which Kohler has observed in anthropoid apes, and which McDougall considers a specific human instinct. With this group appears a heightened language, the common vehicle of all that seems worthy of preservation in the experience of men.

We must think of this language, not as it looks recorded in arid script, but as it was originally born, and as from age to age it lived its group life, accompanied by the rhythmic beating of drums, by dance and gesture, by the violent emotions of the group festival, a fountain of tradition in which not only the living group participated, but also all the ghosts of dead ancestors which are a tribe's chief strength. From this undifferentiated society the class-types proper to the priest, lawyer, administrator and soldier arise by division of labour, and, in the same way, the heightened

language of the primitive corroboree splits into science, history, theology, law, economics and other appropriate divisions of cultural capital. In doing so each department evolves a special phraseology and method of literary attack which not only differs from those of other departments but also from those of spoken speech. But the departments are not watertight compartments. Their development affects each other and also spoken speech, mutually and continuously, because all are rooted in the one developing complex of real social life.

For the sake of convenience we talk of heightened language. But at this stage the adjective should not be allowed to carry any tincture of a value-judgment. For any given people at any given stage of evolution the precise heightening adopted can be defined in objective terms of prosody, musical or choreographic accompaniment or the use of special words not permitted for profane purpose. As yet we have found no reason why an imposed rhythm should improve a language. The reading of almost any manual of prosody will give grounds for supposing that poetry is inferior to unhampered speech as a vehicle of expression, but we claim as yet neither superiority nor inferiority for prosody, only a qualitative difference, and if it be asked why the language should be made different if it was not intended to make it better, an answer can be given. The function of rhythm may be purely mnemonic. This is evidently the case in rhymed wisdom such as :

Red at night,
The shepherd's delight.
Red in the morning,
The shepherd's warning,

or

Ne'er cast a clout
Till May is out.

It was at one time supposed that the 'faculty of attention' was weak in primitive peoples, and that the rhythmic pattern held their wandering attention. Few modern anthropologists would accept this view. Attention is not a 'faculty' but an instinctive component of psychic life, and if anything is more powerful where intelligence is less. A cat stalking a bird, or an Eskimo watching a seal blow-hole, show at least as much attention as a modern scientist watching an experiment. On any matter that interests them—a ritual, dramatic performance or a hunt—primitive peoples show greater capacity for sustained attention than more civilized groups. Rivers has recorded how, during his researches among the Melanesians, he found that an interrogation which left him exhausted and mentally dispersed, found his source of information still fresh and ready to keep up the supply. Yet as between two civilized people, it is almost invariably the interrogated, rather than the interrogator, who tires first.

We call the primitive's heightened language, which is as it were speech in ceremonial dress, *poetry*, and we saw how in the course of evolution it became prosaic and branched into history, philosophy, theology, the story and drama. This raises a question whether poetry was ever anything but a reflection of the undifferentiated economy in which it was born, and whether poetry in its own right has now any real justification for existence. The fact that it still continues to exist is no complete answer, since evolution is full of vestigial organs, and poetry may be one of these. Poetry has an increasingly small 'public'. Alone in literature, it clings tenaciously to heightened language. This might be merely the stigma of degeneration, as if poetry, like a mental deficient, still babbled in a childish tongue outgrown by the rest of the family, which has had to earn its living in an adult world.

We know there is a certain accident in the

survival of poetry. Men speak, tell ancient tales, repeat bits of wisdom, and this vanishes. Poetry in its heightened language survives, and therefore we think of it as 'literature' making too artificial a separation from the rest of social speech. This in turn may lead us to overlook why poetry has a heightened language, why it survives, why it has a relative changelessness and eternity.

Primitive poetry is not so much the matrix of subsequent 'literature', as one pole of it. Because of its collective and traditional nature, it is the one which survives, and leads us, who see in it the sole literature of a primitive people, to imagine a kind of golden age in which even the oracles speak the language of epics.

What is the nature of this other pole? A modern mind, surveying, the primitive scene, and noticing all the vague aspirations, religious phantasies, mythological cosmologies and collective emotions collecting at the pole of rhythmical language, would be disposed to think of the other pole as the scientific pole. This would be the pole of pure statement, of "collections of facts uncoloured by emotion" pedigrees, astronomical calculations, censuses and all other literary productions which aim at a strong grasp of simple reality.

But science is not likely to seem the opposite of poetry to the primitive mind. He does not know of science as a branch of literature. He knows science only as a practice, a technique, a way of building boats and planting trees which can best and most easily be learned through a kind of dumb imitation, because the practice is common to all the members of a tribe. The idea of a statement devoid of prejudice and intended only to be the cold vehicle of sheer reality is quite alien to that mind. Words represent power, almost magical power, and the cold statement seems to divest them of this power and substitute a mirror-image of external reality. But what difference, save of inferiority, is there between the real object and its mirror-image? The image of reality which the primitive

seeks in words is of a different kind: it is a magic puppet image, such as one makes of one's enemies. By operating on it, one operates on reality.

The primitive would defend in this way his lack of interest in the 'photographic' scientific statement. It is a late abstraction in the history of thought, a limit to which all sciences work, but only fully achieve in their mathematic content, perhaps not even then, except in so far as it is translated into the logistic of *Principia Mathematica*.

This colourless statement is alien to a mind shaped by primitive culture, and the primitive does not understand language without a purpose. The purpose of rhythmical language is obvious—to give him that feeling of internal strength, of communication with the gods, that keeps him in good heart, the purpose of non-rhythmical language is equally obvious. There is no question of finding a function for it. The function itself, as in all biological development, created the organ and was shaped by it. The need to extend his personality, to bring it to bear on his neighbours, to bend their volitions into harmony with his, whether in flight, immobility or attack, would have given birth to the gestures and then the grunts which finally became articulate speech. Indeed Sir Richard Paget's plausible theory of the origin of human speech is based on the assumption that man, with tongue and other movable portions of his vocal organs, attempted to imitate in gesture the images he wished to impose on his fellows' minds.

The function of non-rhythmical language, then, was to persuade. Born as a personal function, as extension of one individual volition, it can be contrasted with the collective spirit of rhythmical language, which draws in primitive society all its power from its collective appearance. Poetry's very rhythm makes its group celebration more easy, as for example in an infants' class, which imposes prosody upon the multiplication table it recites, making

mathematics poetical.

As with all polar opposites the two interpenetrate, but on the whole the non-rhythmical language, based on every-day speech, is the language of private persuasion, and rhythmical language, the language of collective speech, is the language of public emotion. This is the most important difference in language at the level of primitive culture

IV

Poetry is characteristically song, and song is characteristically something which, because of its rhythm, is sung in *unison*, is capable of being the expression of a collective emotion. This is one of the secrets of 'heightened' language.

But why should the tribe need a collective emotion? The approach of a tiger, of a foe, of rain, of an earthquake will instinctively elicit a conditioned and collective response. All will be menaced, all will fear. Any instrument to produce such a collective emotion is therefore unnecessary in such situations. The tribe responds dumbly, like a frightened herd of deer.

But such an instrument is socially necessary when no visible or tangible cause exists, and yet such a cause is *potential*. This is how poetry grows out of the economic life of a tribe, and how illusion grows out of reality.

Unlike the life of beasts, the life of the simplest tribe requires a series of efforts which are not instinctive, but which are demanded by the necessities of a non-biological economic aim—for example a harvest. Hence the instincts must be harnessed to the needs of the harvest by a social mechanism. An important part of this mechanism is the group festival, the matrix of poetry, which frees the stores of emotion and canalises them in a collective channel. The real object, the tangible aim—a harvest—becomes in the festival a phantastic object. The real object is not here now. The phantastic object in here now—in phantasy. As man by the violence of the dance, the screams of the music and the hypnotic rhythm of the verse is alienated from present reality, which does not contain the

unshown harvest, so he is projected into the phantastic world in which these things phantastically exist. That world becomes more real, and even when the music dies away the ungrown harvest has a greater reality for him, spurring him on to the labours necessary for its accomplishment.

Thus poetry, combined with dance, ritual, and music, becomes the great switchboard of the instinctive energy of the tribe, directing it into trains of collective actions whose immediate causes or gratifications are not in the visual field and which are not automatically decided by instinct.

It is necessary to prepare the ground for harvest. It is necessary to set out on an expedition of war. It is necessary to retrench and retract in the long scarcity of winter. These collective obligations demand from man the service of his instinctive energy, yet there is no instinct which tells him to give them. Ants and bees store instinctively; but man does not. Beavers construct instinctively; not man. It is necessary to harness man's instincts to the mill of labour, to collect his emotions and direct them into the useful, the economic channel. Just because it is economic, i.e. non-instinctive, this instinct must be *directed*. The instrument which directs them is therefore economic in origin.

How can these emotions be collected? Words, in ordinary social life, have acquired emotional associations for each man. These words are carefully selected, and the rhythmical arrangement makes it possible to chant them in unison, and release their emotional associations in all the vividness of collective existence. Music and the dance cooperate to produce an alienation from reality which drives on the whole machine of society. Between the moments when the emotion is generated and raised to a level where it can produce 'work', it does not disappear. The tribal individual is changed by having participated in the collective illusion. He is educated-i.e. adapted to tribal life. The feasts or corroborees are crises of adaptation-some

general and intended to last throughout life, such as the initiation or marriage ceremonies, others regularly renewed or directed to special ends, such as the harvest and war festivals or mid-winter Saturnalias.

But this collective emotion organised by art at the tribal festival, because it sweetens work and is generated by the needs of labour, goes out again into labour to lighten it. The primitive conducts such collective tasks as hoeing, paddling, ploughing, reaping and hauling to a rhythmic chant which has an artistic content related to the needs of the task, and expressing the collective emotion behind the task.

The increasing division of labour, which includes also its increasing organisation, seems to produce a movement of poetry away from concrete living, so that art appears to be in opposition to work, a creation of leisure. The poet is typically now the solitary individual; his expression, the lyric. The division of labour has led to a class society, in which consciousness has gathered at the pole of the ruling class, whose rule eventually produces the conditions for idleness. Hence art ultimately is completely separated from work, with disastrous results to both, which can only be healed by the ending of classes. But meanwhile the movement has given rise to a rich development of technique.

These emotions, generated collectively, persist in solitude so that one man, along singing a song, still feels his emotions stirred by collective images. He is already exhibiting that paradox of art-man withdrawing from his fellows into the world of art, only to enter more closely into communion with humanity. Once made fluid, this collective emotion of poetic art can pervade the most individual and private transactions. Sexual love, spring, a sunset, the song of the nightingale and the ancient freshness of the rose are enriched by all the complex history of emotions and experience shared in common by a thousand generations. None of these reactions is instinctive, therefore none is personal. To the monkey, or the man

reared like Mowgli by a wolfish foster-mother, the rose would be something perhaps edible, a bright colour. To the poet it is the rose of Keats, of Anacreon, of Hafiz, of Ovid and of Jules Laforgue. For this world of art is the world of social emotion-of words and images which have gathered, as a result of the life experiences of all, emotional associations common to all, and its increasing complexity reflects the increasing elaboration of social life.

The emotions common to all change with the development of society. The primitive food-gathering or hunting tribe projects himself into Nature to find there his own desires. He changes himself socially to conform with Nature. Hence his art is naturalistic and perceptive. It is the vivid drawings of Palaeolithic man or the bird-and animal-mimicking dances and songs of the Australian aborigine. Its sign is the totem-the man really Nature. Its religion is mana.

The crop-raising and herd rearing tribe is an advance on this. It takes Nature into itself and changes Nature to conform with its own desired by domestication and taming. Its art is conventional and conative. It is the arbitrary decoration of Neolithic man or the elaborate rituals of African or Polynesian tribes. Its sign is the corn-god or the beast-god –Nature really man. Its religion is one of fetishes and spirits.

The introduction of nature into the tribe leads to a division of labour and so to the formation of chiefs, priests and ruling classes. The choreagus detaches himself from the ritual and becomes an actor-an individual. The art depicts noble persons as well as gods. The chorus becomes an epic-a collective tale about individuals-and, finally, the lyric-an individual utterance, Man, already conscious, first of his difference, and then of his unity with Nature, now becomes conscious of his internal differences, because for the first time conditions exist for their realisation.

Thus the developing complex of society, in its struggle with the environment, secretes poetry as it secretes the technique of harvest,

as part of its non-biological and specifically human adaptation to existence. The tool adapts the land to a new function, without changing the inherited shape of the hands of humanity. The poem adapts the heart to a new purpose, without changing the eternal desires of men's hearts. It does so by projecting man into a world of phantasy which is superior to his present reality precisely because it is a world of superior reality-a world of more important reality not yet realised, whose realisation demands the very poetry which phantastically anticipates it. Here is room for every error, for the poem proposes something whose very reason for poetical treatment is that we cannot touch, smell or taste it yet. But only by means of this illusion can be brought into being a reality which would not otherwise exist. Without the ceremony phantastically portraying the granaries bursting with grain, the pleasures and delights of harvest, men would not face the hard labour necessary to bring it into being. Sweetened with a harvest song, the work goes well. Just because poetry is what it is, it exhibits a reality beyond the reality it brings to birth and nominally portrays, a reality which though secondary is yet higher and more complex. For poetry describes and expresses not so much the grain in its concreteness, the harvest in its factual essence-which it helps to realise and which are the conditions for its own existence-but the emotional, social and collective complex which is that tribe's relation to the harvest. It expresses a whole new world of truth-its emotion, its comradeship, its sweat, its long-drawn-out wait and happy consummation-which has been brought into being by the fact that man's relation to the harvest is not instinctive and blind but economic and conscious. Not poetry's abstract statement-its content of facts-but its dynamic role in society-its content of collective emotion-is therefore poetry's truth.

To be Continued...

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