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“My religion is truth, love and service to God and humanity. Every religion that has come into the world has brought the message of love and brotherhood. Those who are indifferent to the welfare of their fellowmen, whose heart are empty of love, they do not know the meaning of religion.”

—Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

We are witness to greater levels of insanity in the name of religion being spread world over. With Boko Haram targeting girls, women and innocent people, with attacks on journalists by extremist outfits, with poisonous concepts like ‘love jihad’ being spread by hindutva goons, mass conversions of minority communities into Hindu religion, attack on school children by Taliban, to name a few. We are getting pulled deeper into culture of intolerance and violence. Where are we heading? What kind of society we are passing to coming generations? What values our children are inheriting? What is happening today has happened in past. Our shared past of pain and struggle.

This culture of intolerance and violence poses major threat to a progressive society that leaders like M. K. Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had envisioned. The bigger question is; have we forgotten our lessons from the shared past?

I

A rail carriage
With lotuses
Entered the house today.

Cheers and festivities all around
Heralding the new era of good.
A silent spectator,
I was complacent in a
Self-indulgent stupor.

I couldn't mourn
For it was our doing.
Just cringed at the
Plight of those living
in crevices and darkness of the home.

All collateral damage
For spring cleaning.

II

They were lovingly called
Mighty.

Blackbirds were rounded up
And put in cages.
A protective rule.

Blackbirds closed to the outside
world.

The Blackbirds sang softly
Home began to resemble
A prison

Two of them, unwilling to comply,
Stood out.

They sang sweet songs of
wide open spaces
and drifting over rainbows.

With gentle tunes of freedom.

Hesitant to rebel,
The other blackbirds
Stayed quiet.

Feathers ruffled,
Ever so slightly
the Mighty crushed resistance.

Separated the two and
their masculine voices
overwhelmed the cages
Every hour of the night.

The only freedom accepted was one
they permitted.

Blackbirds succumbed again;
Reluctantly accepting this
Life as their own.

Undertones of unease spread like
wildfire.

Yearning for the blue skies
They glimpsed out their window

Gentle turned to rage.
Rage to mutiny.

The Mighty watched impotent.
An uprising.
a second coming.

Blackbirds scaled high
In defiance.
Songs of survival and hope
on their lips.

III

I nudged the little one
down roads untravelled.
New dawns of light breeze,
basking in lush gardens of peace;
Miracle nights of wandering streets.
I wanted her to inhale
A life free of errors I knew.
I am here, my dear,
In solidarity.

Murderer

'Murderer,'
they said
in hushed tones.
Careful lest their voices carry.
They labelled her
A ruthless killer.

They misread her choice,
misunderstood her rights,
misrepresented her freedom.
Stripped of them all,
Or, did she freely grant it?

Treated like an outcast,
Murderer was all she was.

One act wiped
Clean her identity.
Never mind that
She was single, smart, funny
Independent and working.
Or that she wasn't ready.

What was the crime,
you ask?
You might not believe me.
Or you will, too, twist
this into an act of pride.

Allegedly
she killed his pride,
his ego, his might.
As she walked into
The doctor's office.

You know the murderer that she was.

Khudai Khidmatgar or “Servants of God”

Tariq Zaman

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PAKISTAN

From last four decades a question that keeps popping up in discussions on violence, terrorism, Mujahideen and the Taliban is the following: is the use of force and violence inherent to Pakhtun culture? Superficially it seems that it must be so because the Pakhtuns, known as Pathans in the rest of the South Asian subcontinent, have been bearing firearms since a long time. The gun culture in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (NWFP) is linked to the "twin pillars of Pathan tribal society," (Palin, 2005) *melmastia*—hospitality and *badla*—revenge. Many invasions of India and other super powers including the recent War on Terror and US backed Afghanistan and Russia war were launched from the north-western mountain passes by the Afghans belonging to Pakhtun tribes and clans. Therefore, in popular memory a proclivity towards violence has been associated with the Pakhtuns. This, however, is a myth derived from an essentialist understanding of any culture. Against such 'evidence' and when we search history of South Asia, we see the fact that the Pakhtun leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988) and his Khudai Khidmatgars or Red Shirts movement is one of the most organized movements of peaceful resistance to colonial rule. Before initiating this movement Ghaffar Khan founded several reform movements, the Anjumen-e Islah ul-Afghan in 1921, the farmers' organisation Anjuman-e Zamidaran and the youth movement Pakhtun Jirga in 1927. Trying to further spread awareness on Pakhtun issues Abdul Ghaffar Khan founded the magazine Pakhtun in May 1928. Finally in November 1929, almost on the eve of the Qissa Khwani bazaar massacre the Khudai Khidmatgar were formed.

IDEA OF THE MOVEMENT.

For Abdul Ghaffar Khan, violent confrontation with the British was counterproductive because the colonial state always succeeded in defeating armed resistance. Therefore, peaceful resistance was the only effective method to protest colonial domination. He said that "violence needs less courage than nonviolence," and "violence will always breed

hatred. Nonviolence breeds love." (Pal, 2001). The Khudai Khidmatgar movement started initially as a social reform initiative, more equitable land distribution, and religious harmony, promote modern education and opposed tribal vendettas among the various tribes and clans. The most significant feature of the Khudai Khidmatgars was their adoption of the non-violence and strict adherence to it. The volunteers were taught not to resort to violence and also not to carry weapons. More emphasis was given upon the forbearance and tolerance.

Eknath Easwaran wrote that, "Their motto was freedom, their aim, service. Since God himself needed no service, they would serve his people. The Khudai Khidmatgars, under the leadership of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, became history's first professional nonviolent army. Any Pathan could join, provided he took the army's oath:

I am a Khudai Khidmatgar; and as God needs no service, but serving his creation is serving him, I promise to serve humanity in the name of God.

I promise to refrain from violence and from taking revenge.

I promise to forgive those who oppress me or treat me with cruelty.

I promise to refrain from taking part in feuds and quarrels and from creating enmity.

I promise to treat every Pathan as my brother and friend.

I promise to refrain from antisocial customs and practices.

I promise to live a simple life, to practice virtue and to refrain from evil.

I promise to practice good manners and good behavior and not to lead a life of idleness. I promise to devote at least two hours a day to social work.

For a Pathan, an oath is not a small matter. He does not enter into a vow easily because once given, a Pathan's word cannot be broken. Even his enemy can count on him to keep his word at the risk of his own life. Nonviolence was the heart of the oath and of the organization. It was directed not only against the violence of British rule but against the pervasive violence of Pathan life. With it they could win their freedom and much more: prosperity, dignity, self-respect" (Easwaran, 2002).

Ghaffar Khan's main emphasis was on the prevention of blood feuds, particularly amongst the first cousins (tarburs). The Pakhtuns really were violent exhausted by the blood feuds, after having heavy losses both physically and materially. They also wanted a remedy to these feuds. Moreover, they were told that by adopting non-violence the Pakhtun would never be defeated, as although violence could be countered by more violence. This sense of pride in registering victories over the colonial government gave the Khudai Khidmatgars more popularity and people started registering themselves in the Khudai Khidmatgar organisation in large numbers.

"There is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pathan like me subscribing to the creed of nonviolence," Ghaffar Khan is quoted in Easwaran's biography. "It is not a new creed. It was followed 1,400 years ago by the Prophet all the time when he was in Mecca." For Khan, Islam meant muhabbat (love), amal (service), and yakeen (faith). But the movement was nonsectarian. When Hindus and Sikhs were attacked in Peshawar, 10,000 Khidmatgar members helped protect their lives and property. And when riots broke out in the state of Bihar in 1946 and 1947, Khan toured with Gandhi to bring about peace (Pal, 2001).

Many authors observed and acknowledged that although the character of the movement was intensely Islamic but one of the objectives of the organization was the promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity.

In the early 1990s, Banerjee, a lecturer of anthropology at University College London, spent months in the frontier region with Khan's family and interviewed seventy surviving Khidmatgar members. She says that while people initially joined the organization due to Khan's charisma and persuasiveness, later on it was due to the excitement of becoming part of something larger than themselves. And their commitment to nonviolence was stronger than their allegiance to Khan. When Gandhi asked some of them in 1938 if they would take up violence if Ghaffar Khan told them to, they replied with an emphatic no. Volunteers went to the villages and opened schools, helped on work projects, and maintained order at public gatherings. From time to time they drilled in work camps and took long military-style marches into the hills.

THE STRUCTURE

As majority of the volunteers were poor, and

thus could not afford any special kind of uniform. They were advised to dip their ordinary clothes in brown or chocolate colour, which was cheap and easily available. It was this distinctive colour that earned the Khudai Khidmatgar movement activists the name "the Red shirts" or surkh posh.

Shri Kanhiya Lal Khattak was a red shirt volunteer in this movement. He states that, "This is the uniform of Khudai Khidmatgars who fought with non-violence with the British. We used to wear a red shirt, red trousers, and red turban. It meant that we'd exchange our blood for freedom. Inquilab Zindabad! (Long live the revolution!), Hindustan Azad! (Freedom for all!) This was the slogan of Badshah Khan. We used to walk with him wearing red. Red was our uniform" (McLuhan, 2008).

From the beginning, the Khudai Khidmatgar leaders had put great emphasis on discipline. The volunteers were organised and drilled in military fashion. They were also given military ranks i.e. generals, colonels, captains etc. The volunteers had their own flags: red in the beginning, later tri-colour. The men wore red uniforms and the women black. Khan set up a network of committees called Jirgas, named and modeled after the traditional tribal councils. Villages were grouped into larger groups, responsible to district-wide committees. The Provincial Jirga was the ultimate authority. Officers in the ranks were not elected, since Khan wanted to avoid infighting. He appointed a salar-e-azam or commander-in-chief, who in turn appointed officers to serve under him. Other ranks included Jarnails (Generals). The army was completely voluntary; even the officers gave their services free. Women were recruited too, and played an important role in the struggles to come.

The Khan toured incessantly, traveling twenty-five miles in a day, going from village to village, speaking about social reform and having his movement members stage dramas depicting the value of nonviolence. Within a short span of time, they established a network of the organisation in the province, particularly the rural areas, hitherto neglected by other political organisations. No accurate figures are available regarding the exact number of the Khudai Khidmatgar members and the branches. However, a careful study reveals that the membership reached twelve to fifteen hundred. Many factors contributed to the popularity of the Khudai Khidmatgars. Different sections of the Pakhtun society interpreted its

programme in their own way. 'To the Pakhtun intelligentsia, it was a movement for the revival of Pakhtun culture with its distinct identity. To the smaller Khans, it was a movement that demanded political reforms for the province that would enfranchise them and give them a greater role in the governance. Its anti-colonial stand suited the majority of the anti-establishment Ulema, who always regarded British rule in the sub-continent as a 'curse'. For the peasants and other poor classes it was against their economic oppressors, British imperialism and its agents the pro-British Nawabs, Khan Bahadurs and the big Khans' (Shah, 2007).

SUFFERINGS

The British treated Ghaffar Khan and his movement with a barbarity that they did not often inflict on other adherents of nonviolence in India. "The brutes must be ruled brutally and by brutes," stated a 1930 British report on the Pakhtuns. The British thought of Ghaffar Khan's movement as a ruse. To them, A nonviolent Pathan was unthinkable, a fraud that masked something cunning and darkly treacherous (Easwaran, 2002). The British thus reacted with a singular ferocity to the Khidmatgar desire for independence from British rule, subjecting Khidmatgar members throughout the 1930s and early 1940s to mass killings, torture, and destruction of their homes and fields. Khan himself spent fifteen of these years in prison, often in solitary confinement. But these Pakhtuns refused to give up their adherence to nonviolence even in the face of such severe repression.

In the single worst incident, the British killed at least 200 Khidmatgar members in the Qissa Khwani bazaar, Peshawar on April 23, 1930. Gene Sharp, who has written a study of nonviolent resistance, describes the scene on that day: "When those in front fell down wounded by the shots, those behind came forward with their breasts bared and exposed themselves to the fire, so much so that some people got as many as twenty-one bullet wounds in their bodies, and all the people stood their ground without getting into a panic. . . . The Anglo-Indian paper of Lahore, which represents the official view, itself wrote to the effect that the people came forward one after another to face the firing and when they fell wounded they were dragged back and others came forward to be shot at. This state of things continued from 11 till 5 O'clock in the evening. When the number of

corpses became too many, the ambulance cars of the government took them away." (Easwaran, 2002). The carnage stopped only because a regiment of Indian soldiers finally refused to continue firing on the unarmed protesters, an impertinence for which they were severely punished.

The Qissa Khwani Bazaar massacre was followed by a second firing incident at Peshawar on 31st May, killing twelve persons. On 16th May, Utmanzai was devastated by troops. On 25th May, the army ransacked Takkar, a village in Mardan; worst kinds of atrocities over the Khudai Khidmatgars were committed. On 24th August, a peaceful mob at Hathi Khel (Bannu) was fired upon, killing seventy persons at the spot. A ban was immediately put on the Khudai Khidmatgars, Zalmo Jirga, FPCC and Naujawan Bharat Sabha (Frontier Branch). On 16th August, Martial Law was declared and for the time being the Province was cut off from the rest of the sub-continent; visits to and from the province were not allowed and all sorts of communication were strictly censored.

In June [one month], 500 tons of bombs were dropped over the Pathans but their spirit remained uncrushed. The number of Red Shirts increased from a couple of hundreds to 80,000 (Tendulkar, 1960).

On previous occasions, when the Khudai Khidmatgars had not yet pledged themselves to non-violence, all such acts of provocations were avenged by the Pakhtuns, whenever, they got an opportunity. However, now they were told to bear all these atrocities and insults with forbearance and courage, and not to retaliate. The Khudai Khidmatgars simply followed Ghaffar Khan and offered no resistance to the government. Ironically, appalled at the attitude of the government oppression and as a reaction to the government atrocities over the non-violent Khudai Khidmatgars, a large number of the Frontier inhabitants enrolled themselves in the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, thus providing a boost to the Khudai Khidmatgars. Before 23rd April 1930, the Khudai Khidmatgars were about twelve hundred, but, after the government repression, within a couple of months, their number exceeded twenty-five thousand.

On 3rd September, 1939, World War II broke out. Britain declared war on Germany and asked her Dominions to follow suit. The colonies endorsed

the decision. The Congress Poona Offer (September 1939) of conditional support to the British war efforts had created confusion within the Congress. Ghaffar Khan, a member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), was unhappy over Congress's decision. He had pledged to non-violence and one of the main purposes of the Khudai Khidmatgars was to serve all humanity alike. 'We have been condemning war and their horrors', Ghaffar Khan remarked, 'and now is the time to prove our sincerity and resist all attempts to be dragged into any wicked combination for that purpose' (Khan, 1940). He decided to resign from the CWC. Informing Gandhi of his resignation from the Working Committee, he wrote:

"Some recent resolutions of the Congress working Committee indicate that they are restricting the use of non-violence to the fight for India's freedom against constituted authority. How far and in what manner this will have to be applied in the future I cannot say. The near future will perhaps throw light on this. Meanwhile it is difficult for me to continue in the Congress Working Committee, and I am resigning from it. I should like to make it clear that the non-violence I have believed in and preached to my brethren of the Khudai Khidmatgars is much wider. It affects all our life, and only this has permanent value. Unless we learn this lesson of non-violence fully we shall never do away with the deadly feuds which have been the curse of the people of the Frontier. Since we took to non-violence and the Khudai Khidmatgars pledged them to it, we have largely succeeded in ending these feuds. Non-violence has added greatly to the courage of the Pathans. Because they were previously addicted to violence far more than others, they have profited by non-violence much more. We shall never really and effectively defend ourselves except through non-violence. Khudai Khidmatgars must, therefore, be what our names imply pure servants of God and humanity by laying down our own lives and never taking any life" (Shah W. A., 2010).

Ghaffar Khan also informed the Congress high command of his resignation from the Working Committee. By his resignation, Ghaffar Khan proved himself to be a firm believer in non-violence. Moreover, this also proved that being a man of strict principles, in no way he was ready even to follow Gandhi blindly. On occasions like this he proved that their organisation, i.e., the Khudai Khidmatgar, was a separate organisation, only

collaborating with Congress in their joint struggle to get independence from the British yoke. The rest of the Khudai Khidmatgars and other like-minded people in the NWFP endorsed Ghaffar Khan's decision. After the AICC resolution at Ramgarh, making it clear that in no way the Congress would endorse the British war aims, Ghaffar Khan rejoined the Congress. He was instantly authorised by the Central Organisation to provide guidance and to direct the Congress Satyagraha movement in the NWFP.

In August 1947 Pakistan and India got freedom in result of the movements like Khudai Khidmatgars but the Pakhtuns, against their wishes were forced to join a state against which till recent past they were struggling. Under the changed circumstances, on September 3-4, 1947, the Khudai Khidmatgars and their affiliated bodies met at Sardaryab (Peshawar) and pledged loyalty to the new country. The provincial authorities, with Abdul Qaiyum, as the new Frontier Chief Minister, who was notorious for his anti-Khudai Khidmatgars attitude, started a campaign of intimidation and torture against the Khudai Khidmatgars. So the Khudai Khidmatgars and Pakhtun only got a new master instead of freedom. In age of ninety three Badshah Khan was sent to jail by Pakistani Government as he continued his struggle for provincial autonomy and identity to this land of Pakhtuns so as a leader he suffered more pain than his followers Khudai Khidmatgars.

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Frontier Gandhi's posers relevant even today

Nitya Menon

INDIA

During his four-day tour of Tamil Nadu in December 1969, the leader had posed uncomfortable questions on the treatment of Indian Muslims

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly referred to as the Frontier Gandhi or Badshah Khan, died at the age of 97 on January 20, 27 years ago.

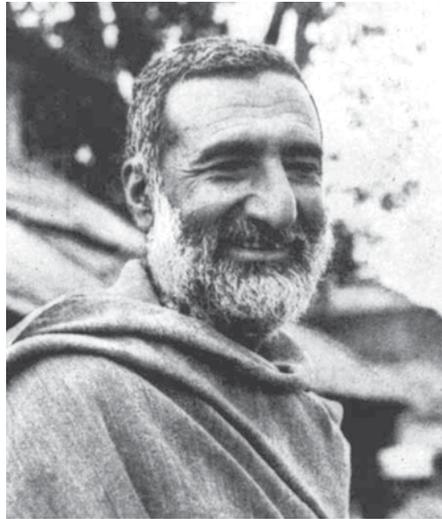
Known as one of Mahatma Gandhi's most enduring disciples, the freedom fighter who eventually made Pakistan his home was one of the few leaders who remained popular among Indians even after Partition. However, in his four-day tour of Tamil Nadu in December 1969 as part of Gandhi's centenary year celebrations, the leader ruffled quite a few feathers by posing uncomfortable questions on the treatment of Indian Muslims.

According to reports in *The Hindu*, it was at Coimbatore where Khan, talking of the communal riots that had broken out at Ahmadabad, said 'in the name of secularism one or two Muslims are appointed and would be allowed to rise to high positions while the majority suffered'.

The allegations unsurprisingly provoked outrage. In a series of Letters to the Editor, readers expressed anguish articulating polarising opinions.

For instance, K.P Ramaratnam from Coimbatore wrote, "We sincerely trust and hope that a professed Gandhian like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan would rather try and heal the wounds of communalism by treating and speaking to all in India as Indians rather than dividing them like Hindus and Muslims."

On the defensive, V Ramamurthy from



Madras wrote, "There are many Muslim High Court Judges, ministers, legislators, scientists, businessman and army men who are doing their duty for the cause of India's progress... I have own doubts whether a non-Muslim personally would receive such treatment in Pakistan as Mr. Ghaffar Khan had received in India."

However, there were also voices which struck a more reflective note. Capturing the irony of the polarising responses, P.K Shabbir Ahmed from Madras, asked "Is it fair to be delighted when he [Khan] calls upon Muslims in India to develop a greater sense of nationhood on the one hand and on the other resent his lamentation that victims of Ahmadabad riots were too afraid to speak the truth?"

He went on to say, "As one who sacrificed his best part of his life struggling for India's freedom, for the upliftment of the downtrodden and for communal amity ... Neither Indians nor Pakistanis are prepared to give him the freedom to look upon himself as a citizen of undivided India..."

With fundamentalism is on the rise, the uncomfortable questions that Khan posed during his Tamil Nadu tour remain remarkably relevant even today. There seems to be no better way to commemorate his legacy than by recalling his unflinching observations.

Source : <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/frontier-gandhis-posers-relevant-even-today/article6810108.ece>

A Page from My Diary

My Personal Composite Heritage

Mahnaz Rahman

Aurat Foundation, PAKISTAN

After shifting to Lyallpur (now called Faisalabad), at the age of five, I made a trip to Delhi with my mother and other siblings to visit my Dada (grandfather). He opted to stay in India with my step grandmother and children. His house was known as Chandwali Haveli (Moon Mansion). I still remember climbing the stairs of Qutub Minar with one of my uncles. As my mother and aunt were fond of watching movies, they took us to watch 'Baiju Bawra' and another movie or other movies. My mother and aunt bought many silk suits in Delhi which the Pakistani custom confiscated at Wagha border. Later my aunt used her connections and after some days my mother got back her favorite silk suits.

One vivid memory of those days is of Cotton Mill Mela (fair). The owner of cotton mill was a Hindu industrialist. He migrated to India but came to Pakistan for this Mela, the event for which people waited for an entire year. The mushaira or poetry recitation function used to be the most popular event, famous poets like Jigar Muradabadi and Zehra Nigah used to attend that event. Later, the Hindu owner sold the mill and this activity ended with it. As a child, I used to accompany my mother to attend this event. Cultural and extra curricular activities were at peak in schools and colleges as well. My mother was fond of literature. I often overheard her discussing Quratulain's novel "Meray bhi sanam khanay" and Sahir Ludhyanvi's collection of poetry

"Talkhiyaan" with her friends.

My father used to discuss politics with his friends. Once when I went to his room, he was discussing a news with one of his friends. I could see their perplexed faces and stayed there to listen to them. They were discussing a news from Sri Lanka. M Bandra Nieke had announced to contest for the seat of Prime Minister because her politician husband had been murdered. Both men were bewildered that how would she run her election campaign. I can still visualize my father's friend saying sarcastically, "she would make her children stand by her side and would start crying (instead of delivering election speech)." I was a kid then but i still felt bad about the comment. That man could not imagine that a woman could contest for the highest office of the country. He could not imagine in his wildest dreams that one day in his own country a young Pakistani woman would become the Prime Minister, not once but twice. Had she not been assassinated, she (Benazir Bhutto) would have made it the third time as well.

One of the most important incidents of my childhood was the imposition of martial law by Ayub Khan. The prices of commodities fell down, city became clean and butchers put nets to keep the flies away from meat. I remember some aunts came to our house to take my mother for shopping as prices of crockery and other items had gone down. My mother did not go with them as she thought that prices would remain low forever. For common people martial law meant low prices and cleanliness but after a short period things came back to the old pattern.

During those days, Kennedy was the president of USA. He and his wife were very popular in Pakistan. My mother and many others in Pakistan loved the couple. After his assassination my mother kept his family photos for years. Jacqueline Khennedy was loved by every one here. My father used to discuss with his friends about Soviet Union President Kruschev, how once in UN session, he took out his shoe and tapped it on the table. How he once drew red circle around Peshawer on the map as a spy plane had taken off from an air base in Peshawer. After growing up I came to know that the Americans took a base at Badaber and Kruschev drew a red circle around Peshawar on his map after a U2 from there was shot down by the Soviets and pilot Gary Powers captured. However, at that time I was too young to understand the politics but yes I used to read each newspaper, magazine and novel that I could get hold of.

One person who took part in decisions regarding my future was Zaheera Bader, an editor and publisher of a monthly called Harem Lahore. Unlike other women's magazines of those days, this magazine catered to intellectual needs of both men and women. M. Aslam, Raja Mehdi Ali Khan (from India), Khurshid Alam (by the pen name "Khawer"), Bashir Riaz (who later rose to fame as Benazir Bhutto's personal secretary during her exile days in London and a stalwart of Pakistan People's Party) and many others wrote for this magazine. Zaheera aunt was a very good friend of my mother's. She often used to visit us in Lyallpur. During one of such visits, I suggested her that she should have a children's page as well in her magazine. She immediately agreed and asked me to write a story for that page. Initially, I was flabbergasted, but it was my responsibility to write something because she had agreed to publish a page for children on my request. After some days, I penned down a

story and showed it to my father. After reading the story, he refused to accept that I wrote. Seeing his response, I started crying and felt like tearing down the pages but eventually I posted it. Next month, the story was published.

During our stay in Lyallpur, my Dada and Dadi (paternal grand parents) once came to visit us from Delhi. I still remember the blue satin gharara (a form of skirt) and printed shirt which they brought for me. I loved the outfit.

Another pleasant memory of Lyallpur days is when MCC and Pakistan Cricket team came to Lyallpur to play a first class match. During those days Fazal Mehmood was captain of Pakistani team, he was extremely handsome and a heart throb of many. No wonder why teachers and seniors were very excited when he came to town. My grand mother was also very fond of cricket and used to take us to the stadium every day. Saigols had taken responsibility for logistics of MMC team. They stayed in a bungalow, right opposite our house, no wonder we the children were very excited. Once Pakistan's famous singer Iqbal Bano also came to participate in a cultural program and stayed in the same bungalow.

Life was full of joy but then my parents went through a personal crisis, which made us leave Lyallpur. My father went to Karachi to find a new job and we joined him after few months. In the beginning we did not like Karachi at all. On the other hand our Karachi relatives were very emotional about Karachi. Our displeasure in regards to the city always led to a heated discussion between us. One old aunt used to say, "after spending one or two years in Karachi, you would not like any other city". She was right because after some time I fell in love with the city. I passed seventh grade from Kohinoor School, Lyallpur and took admission in 8th grade. My mother's cousin, Chand Baji, took me to a school only to find out that I

couldn't get an admission in the 8th grade. In Karachi the students had to study either Persian or Arabic as an optional subject but in Punjab students could choose either Persian or Arabic or Algebra. I had taken Algebra as an optional subject so I was disqualified to be admitted to the 8th grade. Kaneez fatma, Chand Baji's friend, was running a private school called Kashmir school. Kaneez Fatma later became the most famous labor leader of Pakistan. Chand Baji discussed my problem with her and she came up with an amazing solution. In Karachi, students were expected to study Persian or Arabic till 8th grade. So I gave two tests (English and Mathematics), which I cleared easily and took admission in 9th grade. Since then, I have always demanded a uniform syllabus for the entire country so that the students don't have to suffer in case of their parents' transfer.

After coming to Karachi, I got hooked to Ibn.e.Safi's novels. During those days there were many small libraries in Karachi and were called "Aath Aana"(fifty paisas) libraries. Ibn.e.Safi was our Agatha Christie!!! After reading one novel, people used to wait eagerly for his new novel. In class ten, I started writing for Daily Hurriyat's student page. A.R.Mumtaz was in charge of student page. My mother, like most mothers in Pakistan, wanted me to become a lady doctor. So, I took admission in a pre-medical group in Sirajud collage. It was a private college founded by Raja Sahib Mehmoodabad. He migrated to Pakistan after Independence, but got disillusioned because of the political turmoil and eventually migrated to Iraq. Subsequent, he settled in London, and became the director of Islamic Culture Centre for a short while. He died on October 14, 1973 in London and was buried at Mashhad, Iran. My first year in Siraj.ud.Daulah college was really

remarkable. Professor Mujtaba Husain, renowned critic of Urdu. He used to teach us Urdu, he used to invite Josh Maleehabadi (Shair-e-Inqilab) to our weekly literary programs. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru tried hard to convince Josh to remain in India but he opted for Pakistan. Raja Sahib Mehmudabad and Abul Hasan Ispahani(two important figures of Pakistan movement) also used to visit the college. Our English lecturer, Prof. Atique Ahmed was also a renowned literary critic. I can still visualize him reciting William Wordsworth's poem Daffodils for us.

I was a first year student in 1965, when the presidential election took place. The opposition parties knew that individually they could not defeat Ayub Khan so they all got united and requested Mohterma Fatima Jinnah to contest election as their candidate against Ayub Khan. People flocked to her election meetings but Ayub still managed to win the election with the help of government machinery. In September 1965, Indo-Pak war commenced. Ayub Khan was the president of Pakistan and Lal Bahader Shastri was the Prime Minister of India." During the 1965 War, the Soviet Union adopted a neutral stand and offered its good offices for a peaceful settlement between the two warring states. The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan met at Tashkent on January 3, 1966. The conference lasted from January 4-10, 1966, in which they agreed to create good relations in accordance with the UN Charter, to promote understanding and friendly relations and a total pull-out of troops before February 25, 1966 to their pre-war positions. Russia emerged as a peace-maker at a time when the US was involved in the Vietnam War."

The Tashkent agreement resulted in a rift between Ayub Khan and his young foreign minister Z.A.Bhutto. I remember schools and colleges were shut down due to strikes and protests against Tashkent agreement. Bhutto kept telling people that he was going to

disclose the secrets of Tashkent agreement (which he never did). At that time, my father had shifted to Shikarpur, Sindh. My brother, Shiraz and I went to spend our holidays with him. We were visiting Sindh's interior for the first time and it was a unique experience for us. My father had gone there to set up a beverage factory for a Karachi based industrial group. The factory was at the outskirts of the city and our residence was at the upper floor of the factory. People of nearby villages were very hospitable, some of them got jobs in the factory as guards or support staff. They brought pure butter, honey and partridges as gifts for us. My father made sure that before going to bed both of us should drink a glass of (pure) milk. After ten days when we came back to Karachi, people were amazed to see glow on our faces. Soon after, my mother with our youngest brother Faraz (old then), joined my father while my three brothers and I lived in Karachi with our grand mother. To fulfill my mother's dream, I had taken admission in a pre medical group but it didn't take me time to realise that it wasn't my cup of tea. Medical college presented a depressing sight to me while the colourful life of Karachi university (regarding which I used to read in various newspaper's students' pages) attracted me. A song was very famous among students those days:

"Shehr se bara meel parey
Hai ek albeli basti
university, university"

(twelve miles away from the city, there is a wonderful town and that is university). I did not study well and got second division, my mother tried very hard to get me an admission in any medical college of west Pakistan but could not succeed. The only option left was to send me to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) where even a third divisioner from West Pakistan could get a seat on quota, but she could not muster the courage to send me so far away. I went to Shikarpur with my mother and took admission in BA part one in C&S college, Shikarpur.

There was a hell of difference between Karachi and Shikarpur. Karachi was a modern cosmopolitan city while Shikarpur was a small, underdeveloped and backward rural city. My mother and I were the only two women in the whole city who used to move out without veil, burqa or chadder. The people there had no concept that a woman could go without a veil and only a film actress or a foreigner wouldn't wear a veil. Ironically, C&S college was a co-ed. A few girls, who took admissions there, were constantly under fear because of backward and feudal mindset of their fellow, male-classmates. I found it impossible to continue my education there. In final year of BA, I took admission in government girl's college, Hyderabad, which was popularly known as Zubaida college. I stayed in college hostel. Hostel life was a new and interesting experience for me. I think, people, who have once stayed in a hostel can never make fuss about food. I made full use of college library in those days and read all famous novels of Urdu but Quratulain's "Aag ka Darya" and Sahir's "Talkhiyaan aur Perchaiyaan" had long lasting impact on my life. In my childhood, I had overheard my mother discussing "Meray bhi Sanam Khanay" of Quratulain with her friends. One of her friends, nicknamed her son, Peechu, after one of the characters' nickname in the novel. I still remember my mother repeating nostalgically some lines of the novel about partition..."Hawaoun ko kaisay taqseem karo gay..."(How will you divide the winds...) But it was Aag ka Darya (river of fire) that was most sought after novel and had everlasting impression on the coming generations. "It is one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century in any language on the theme: time."

Quratulain migrated to Pakistan in 1947 and pursued her career in Government Service but migrated back to India in mid sixties. She was and still is and will remain equally popular in both countries and also in other countries where people can read her novels.

To be continued...

A Hiroshima Survivor : Miyoko Matsubara Tells Hubertus Hoffmann Her Story

Miyoko Matsubara - a Hiroshima survivor: "Suddenly I saw a flash and then an explosion beyond description. My hands were swollen three times their normal size, my face and legs burned."

I am Miyoko Matsubara, a Hibakusha, or an Atomic Bomb survivor.

I am honored to be given the opportunity to share with you my first-hand experience of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

62 years ago, in 1945, Japan was at war. Elementary school children between 8 and 11 years old were urged to evacuate to the countryside for protection from the air raids. Children under 7 years old remained in the city with their families. Therefore, ordinary citizens, particularly children younger than seven, women, the weak, and elderly were left at home. The majority of the A-bomb victims were these innocent, ordinary people. By the end of 1945, almost 140,000 people had perished as a result of the atomic bombing. People did not all die on that very day, but within the same year.

The cause of the death was from the effects of the heat rays, blast and the radiation; the destructive power of the A-bomb. What horrible weapons, the atomic bomb and nuclear weapons can be!

This is a map of Hiroshima after the A-bomb was dropped. The red area is where it was completely burned, a diameter of over 4 km or 2.5 miles. The yellow is where houses were destroyed but not completely burned down.

Our house and also the school I was going to were located in this area but not completely burned down.

My younger brother was 9 years old and evacuated to my father's hometown in Shimane. He returned to Hiroshima with our

aunt. My sister was 5 years old and put in a day care center near where my mother worked. My mother worked for the Army Clothes Factory, a red brick building located about 3 km away from the hypocenter. Glasses shattered here and there and my sister received cuts but my mother was safe.

My elder brother was 17 and took part in military activities in the next Prefecture, Yamaguchi. When he heard the war ended on August 15th, he returned to Hiroshima. He was the so-called secondary A-bomb victim. My father was a fireman and came to the city to help clean up those burned houses immediately after the A-bomb was dropped.

I would like to take this opportunity to present some drawings I drew three years ago she is referring to her drawings, Kindly refer to the source and extract the drawings and include here if possible. The students practiced in the school ground which was 2.4 km from the hypocenter. How innocent we were, not knowing anything about the United States developing nuclear arms while we were drilling for attacks with bamboo spears.

HIROSHIMA SURVIVOR MIYOKO MATSUBARA

There was no summer vacation for students during the war. At the time when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, I was only 12 years old, working as a mobilized student, demolishing wooden houses in order to prevent the spreading of fires. I was about 1.5 km or less than a mile away from the hypocenter. In the morning of August 6, 1945, the skies were perfectly clear, and as the sun climbed higher in the sky, the temperature rose rapidly. About 350,000 people were in the city on that day including more than 40,000

military personnel. Many students, including myself, were working on six building demolition sites, or in factories or military facilities.

When I was working with my classmates, helping to dismantle wooden houses, my best friend, Takiko, suddenly shouted, "I can hear the sound of a B-29." I thought this was not possible, because the air-raid alarm had already been cleared, and the few B-29's spotted in the daytime had not attacked Hiroshima before.

I looked up and there, high in the sky, I could see white smoke trailing from the plane. Suddenly, I saw a flash and then an explosion beyond description. I quickly lay flat on the ground. I heard an indescribable, deafening roar. My first thought was that the plane had aimed at me. I learned later that the first atomic bomb had not only been aimed at me, but at the entire city of Hiroshima.

I had no idea how long I had been lying there, but when I regained consciousness, the bright sunny morning had turned into a dark horrible night. I was enveloped in a dense, dusty mist. Takiko, who had been standing next to me, had simply disappeared. I could see no one. Then I realized that maybe I had been thrown some distance by the blast. I found myself lying on my right side.

I rose to my feet and was shocked when I looked at my hands. They were seriously burned and swollen about two or three times their normal size. Most of my blue clothes were gone. The only clothes remaining on my body were dirty white underwear. I thought that the white color protected me from being burned to death - as you know, black absorbs light, and white reflects light.

I realized that my face, hands, and legs had been burned and were swollen, with skin peeling off and hanging down in shreds. For the next three days, I was on the verge of death. I suffered from a lingering high fever, diarrhea, vomiting, and bleeding gums. Half of my hair fell out. Severe Keloid scars

started to develop on my face, arms, and legs.

Seven months later, I got healthy enough to return to school. I kept studying hard, but because of my poor health and severe keloid scars on my face, I could not get a job even though I managed to graduate from school.

About ten years after the bombing, when I was a young adult, there were numerous times when I deeply felt the pain of being discriminated against by my own society. For example, when I was on the train, no one would sit next to me because they feared that I had been exposed to radiation and was therefore contaminated. For the same reason, no man wanted to marry me. Daily life was difficult, unbearable, and painful. Life itself was hell.

Around that time I began visiting Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto's Church. I faithfully attended his Monday evening gatherings for atomic-bomb survivors where, listening to sermons and singing hymns with others, my heart gradually came to find peace.

Soon after the war, my father started a new business—the making of concrete blocks used in construction work. In order to get sand from the river, we moved to the riverside, and built a small workplace hut, the size of a 6 tatami-mat rooms, with a tin roof and plywood walls. There was no space for a toilet and so whenever nature called, we walked down to the riverside.

My elder brother became depressed after Japan lost the war and he became an alcoholic. He got married when he was young but both he and his wife died when they were 33, leaving 3 small children. As if following them, my father died of cancer. During the 20 years after the war, we lost three of our loved ones and during those years, I was in and out of hospitals struggling with the after-effects of the A-bomb. I and my aged mother took care of the 3, 5, and 9-year-old children my brother

and his wife left behind. I decided to raise my brother's children for him. The children love me as their own mother, and their love has brought me endless joy and added much-needed sweetness to my otherwise bitter life.

In 1953, a Christian society in Japan made it possible for me to undergo cosmetic and corrective surgeries. I had twelve operations over a seven-month period. As a result, I was able to open and close my eyes and to straighten out my crooked fingers and arm. The operations made my life somewhat more bearable, and helped me regain some of my lost dignity. After the operations, I returned to Hiroshima, wishing to express my gratitude to those who helped me by doing whatever I could to help other people. For the next eight years, I worked as a live-in caretaker for 30 sight-impaired children.

My one pleasure each week was attending Sunday morning services at church. The Americans I met there did not fit the image I had formed of them earlier. They were extremely kind, and deeply regretted their country's atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One of them was Mrs. Barbara Reynolds who later founded the World Friendship Center (WFC) in Hiroshima. She was a pious Quaker who devoted her life and all she had to make Hiroshima internationally known. Because of her efforts of good will, she eventually became a special honorary citizen of Hiroshima, in 1985. Her hatred of the bombings was so strong and her caring for the victims so real, I often wondered how she could possibly be from the same country as the men who had bombed Hiroshima.

In March 1962, just before the U.S. resumed nuclear testing and after I had been working at the home for the sight-impaired children for eight years, I found a way to work at helping to abolish nuclear weapons. Through the help of Barbara Reynolds, who organized the World Peace Pilgrimage, I was chosen as a representative of Hiroshima to present the

heartfelt message of the survivors of the A-bomb. We visited 14 countries in five months, including the United States, England, France, West and East Germany and the Soviet Union. Everywhere, we appealed for a ban on nuclear testing.

I owe what I am today to the love of Mrs. Barbara Reynolds and many other people. She is the one who persuaded and encouraged me to speak of my experience to foreigners in English even though I had no confidence in my ability or sufficient knowledge of the English language in my view. She and many kind Americans helped me overcome the fear of speaking about my experience. I am very grateful to all of them.

Gradually coming to like and trust Americans, I realized that had the Japanese possessed the A-bomb, we, too, would have used it. The real enemy, therefore, is not America. It is war and nuclear weapons. Those weapons must be abolished.

However, the past continues to haunt me and other A-bomb victims. In 1988, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and had to have an operation. The operation got rid of the cancer, but soon after that three polyps were found in my stomach. The doctor says these polyps need to be checked regularly because they may develop into cancer. I am still suffering from various illnesses. And I have never married and am still single today.

The effect of the atomic bombing was far-reaching and everlasting. It indiscriminately took the lives of numerous innocent people in an instant. Not only that, even today, six decades after the war, about eighty thousand people in Hiroshima are still suffering from the effects of radiation.

The war ended 62 years ago, but for the Hibakusha, the atomic bombing and the war are not just events of the past. They continue to haunt us, both mentally and physically. Radiation causes cancer. Even after we recover from one form of cancer, we live with the constant fear that the cancer will return or that

a different form of cancer might develop. In a sense, for the Hibakusha, every day is “August the 6th”. We have not escaped the war and the A-bomb, nor will we ever. It’s always with us.

My younger brother, so-called secondary Hibakusha, had struggled with various illness and leukemia. He died five months ago.

I have no words to express my own sorrow so the poem that Touge Sankichi wrote comes to mind :

Give me back my father, give me back my mother;
Give me back my grand parent;
Give me back my children.
Give me back myself,
Give me back my people.
As long as men live in this world,
Immutable peace
Bring back peace.
And I feel compelled to say
Please bring me back my brother
Bring me back Masaru

I would like to appeal to you that we, the Hibakusha, have overcome the feeling of hatred and have tried to create a peaceful world non-violently. Therefore, I would say to the people in the world, that Hiroshima is the model of peace and of being a vital city. This is the spirit of Hiroshima. I hope that other countries can learn from our experience in order to stop future wars and prevent endless conflicts.

Today, the total amount of nuclear weapons possessed by the seven declared nuclear countries is probably over 12,000. In addition, the number of nations that have nuclear weapons is still increasing.

We human beings are living with the continual possibility of being exterminated. If we do not do away with all nuclear arms on earth, we cannot expect a bright future.

Nuclear weapons are manufactured by human beings. War is started by us human beings, too. Peace begins when we share our sufferings with each other. We must all strive to overcome hatred and learn to love one

another. The most important task for the people of the world is to cultivate friendship through exchanges involving religion, art, culture, sports, education, and economic assistance.

I am going to do my best to keep the spirit of the Hibakusha and Hiroshima alive—the spirit of reconciliation and overcoming differences between people including those of the U.S. and Japan. No one else should ever need to suffer as the A-bomb survivors have.

I am now over 74 years old and physically weakened because of radiation-related diseases, but I will keep rallying for nuclear abolition and working towards world peace as long as my health condition allows me to do so. I have shared my experience with people of all over the world for more than 45 years because I don’t want you and future generations to experience the same tragedy that I had. My only wish is that you will live happy and peaceful lives. With this spirit, I have and I will continue to talk about my experience. So, let us get united and work hard for world peace!

In the center of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, you will find the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims. Inscribed on that monument are the words, “Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the evil.” Those words express the spirit of Hiroshima.

When you go back to your home, I urge you to please tell your family, friends and relatives about the horror of the A-bomb and about the intense desire of the people of Hiroshima to eliminate nuclear weapons.

We rely on you to continue our fight for nuclear abolition around the world. We also rely on you to prevent the evil from being repeated. We rely on you to work towards creating a peaceful world. In other words, we, the Hibakusha, are passing along our torch of hope and peace to you. Please keep the torch burning—forever.

Source : <http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com>

Cultural Heritage of Seraj

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Whenever we wish to see seraj all of sudden Shiraz in Pakistan or in Afghanistan comes to our mind. Nobody knows that there is another Seraj which is in India. Seraj is a small geographical area between Himachal Pradesh's Kullu and Mandi districts. The region has its own culture. If put in modern terms, it still has its tribal nature. With expansion of education, media and modern life, it is very difficult to find such a rich culture anywhere in the world. One can find cultural diversity in Seraj. High pitched songs can be heard on some mountain top with a simultaneous drum beatings on some other mountain. One can see young people going to the village fair and the old one's taking cows and bulls to pastures for grazing. A dancing deity and a garlanded cow can be seen at the same time. It has its bullfight like Spain, at the same time it has a carnival like atmosphere like that of Latin America as its traditions. If Japan has Haikus, similarly it has Lamans. If there is a flower festival in the world, then Seraj has Kujjo and Satu festivals; all of these have different shades, shapes and time. Seraj is as spectacular as other renowned places in the world with honest, hardworking and joyous people who populate it. The worship their deities, respect them as their ancestors and believe in them as if their family members but they aren't fundamentalists. Entertainment is in their blood.

Seraji festivals are celebrated according to the season, environment and daily life of this region. Their commencement and end are not fixed though. From January, till December some part of Seraj or the other has a festival. If the northern region of Seraj is celebrating a festival then the southern part won't have any festival at that time. All seasons and festivals correspond with each other in Seraj. If one assumes that any society's culture reflect its mode of production then this definition fits perfectly in Seraj. The Seraji culture very well describes its people. They are hard toiling masses, full of joy

and happiness. Music and Dance are a part and parcel of Seraji lifestyle and every Seraji can be heard singing. Apart from their culture and traditions, Seraji are great hosts and respect their guests tremendously. Guests often visit the region during the festivals which makes it necessary to describe the Seraji festival. One can divide Seraji festivals in the following categories:

1. Winter festival (January to March)
2. Spring (April and May)
3. Summer (June to mid July)
4. Rainy (Mid July to 1st week of September)
5. Autumn (September to December).

These festivals correspond with the harvest, cultivation, nature worship and local myths. Local deity, being an integral part of these festivals and Seraji culture, is worshipped during this time. And of-course, Dancing and Feasting become important factors as well during this time.

Winter Festivals :

Seraj's winter never end and it remains cold throughout the year. But for convenience, one demarcates between harsh winters (mid December to 1st week of March) and the rest of the year. During the peak of winters, the entire region remains covered under the carpet of snow and almost all outside activities end. People are bound to stay indoors and they often indulge in activities like knitting sweaters, socks, weaving and making shoes out of hemp (For the last 20-25 years), these shoes are no longer made because of a ban on cannabis cultivation because it comes under the NDPS Act). During this time, the elders spend most of their evenings telling stories to the young ones, a favourite recreation of all, which usually goes on till late in the night. There is also a saying in the local dialect that stories are found when maze comes and they are forgotten when barley is ready to be harvested. The number of festivals celebrated during winters fall down because it is believed that the local deity goes up to heaven to fight against the devil during this time. So, telling stories to each other remain the only pass-time for this short period.

It is believed that the deities come back to their respective places on the first day of Makar Sankranti (in mid Jan) or on the first day of Fagun (mid-Feb). Their coming back commences the stream of festivals.

On the day of Makar Sankranti everybody gets up around 3 am. After taking a bath in the morning, sweets are prepared and taken to the temple to be offered to the oca deity. Every villager gathers at a fixed time at the temple, deities are unveiled and the festival begins with distributions of the sweets. Next day, children go from one house to another to collect chestnuts and friend barley grains which are locally called Khod-Modi. In this month, it is necessary to invite married sisters and aunts along with their families for a day. In this way this goes whole month. Then the 1st day of Fagun is celebrated as carination day of local deity, and Gur-deity's representative narrates the story of recent fight with demons and makes prediction for whole year. Then Faguli festival begins which is a festival of mask dance. It happens when the region is covered with snow, thereby only the same vilage or the nearby villages participate in this festival. The dates are adjusted according to the convenience of everybody and rare is taken that celebrations happening in two different viallages clash with each other. So, each village gets to host the festival. Since the entire region is covered in snow, people from far off villages rarely participate. Famous Fagulis are Kadheri Bith, Beholo, Bini Bushlad, Teel- ercha and Paldhi. Paldhi village in Banjar's Faguli is considered to be the special among all. In this, a mask clad man a remains in a cave overnight, even when there is a snowfall. Next morning, before the dance, he does a prediction for the year with people having complete faith in his prediction. Hence, everyone waits for this and it usually happens on sixth or seventh day of the month. During Faguli local millet grain are fried and given to everybody, chestnuts are also thrown to the crowd. In Bahu (a vilage) special dress made of grass is worn by the dancers, masked men are heroes of this event. Masked men give blessings to all by presenting the barley grass to all. This is called Juba in local dialects. Beauty of Faguli festival is that the God is made of grass and in the end it is thrown in front of the public

and whoever picks it up hosts, a feast for the entire village that night. In Faguli, masked men from so-called 'upper' caste men go to the so-called 'lower' caste houses to get chestnuts, while giving them blessings. In some parts it is celebrated every third year. Here, the mask dance is different from the mast dance of Buddhism. Balatuar is also a very important fair of Balagad and nearby villages.

Shivratri festival also comes in the month of Fagun, as most of the inhabitants of hills are worshiper of Lord Shiva therefore this festival is the biggest festival of this region. All people who live away from their houses come back to their respective houses to celebrate it. Festival mood begins at least 15 days before the actuals festival or in some parts more than that also. People go from one house to the other, dancing, at least 15 days in advance. The host offers tea and local snacks to the dancers and participants. Due to lack of activity during the day time (because of snow), people sometimes, dance till morning. Women are also a crucial part of these festivities. Three days before Shivratri, leaves of particular trees are collected to make a model of Lord Shiva out of them. This is locally called 'Jaddo' whereas some people call it 'Chhado'. In every house, festive food is prepared to invite Lord Shiva. On the day of Shivratri, houses, together or alone, sacrifice goats. Prayers are held, leaves in the shape of Lord Shiva are worshipped and food is offered to Shiva in every house. After dinner, every villager assembles at a fixed place and then everyone roams around the village, from one house to another, dancing, singing etc. The host house, which the group visits, offers it food, meat etc. eventually roaching to the house where Shiva is made. In the morning, Shiva is given a heart-felt farewell with an assurance that he would come again next year with his team. It is important to mention here that everyone visits each and every household irrespective of any caste. Shivratri, which is celebrated in Mandi is famous across the globe. In outer Seraj people distribute oil cooked food to their close relatives for next 15 days. Festival is the biggest Seraji festival. Deo Osani in Kotla and Chakurta area is also a great festival here.

Holi, which is locally called Faag, is also celebrated with great pomp and show. People start roaming around from one village to another, dancing, throwing colours at each other. Villagers give money to the dancing troops when they cross their villages, also offering them snacks and tea. The numbers of groups vary from four to five. They perform skits apart from playing with colours. Some wear masks, cross dress and perform various roles. On the day of Holi, the entire village assembles at one prefixed place. They dance together, play with colours and a common feast is organised. Thachadhar's Holi is quite famous. Faag of Batala Jalori and Rampur Basher is also very famous.

Spring Festivals :

In few parts of Seraj Juba is not given on Faguli day but on 1st day of month Chait (mid-march). On that day a Chetru bith (a deity made of grass is prepared by children) is taken around village by children, with cooked traditional food in the shape of goat to a fixed place where they are collected. These are collected from each family and children select eldest among them as Gur. It is a kind of play in the end of which children dance with Bith, singing traditional Bith songs. When everyone is busy in dancing, Gur throws the Bith in front of the children and whoever picks it first, gets a prize from the village eldest. Subsequently he invites all children over to his house for tea.

Regional new year also falls in the month of Chait. On this day, children collect red-coloured earthly insects called Falfa Raja (it is believed that seeing these insects would be fruitful for the entire year). They are given jaggery by every household. Baisakhi as well celebrated with great enthusiasm. All houses are decorated with Burans flower (which is now state flower of Himachal Pradesh). The village fair also begins at this time, whose days vary from village to village. Barodhar Jach, where only women dance in the honour of Devi Chandi, is also a part of this. This festival is celebrated in the entire region at the same time. They are mainly known as Virshus and Thirashus of Outer Seraj i.e. Lagauti thirashu is on different day from nearby village Shuad Thirashu. The Baisakhi festival is also

celebrated as Padai festival in some areas of Seraj. Padai is a cedar tree which is cut in forest and brought to temple complex without breaking its top. Then it is erected in temple complex on a fixed spot with sweets tied on its top. It is a branch less tree, young people are asked to climb it. Whoever climbs first, gets the first prize. In few places, it is held on different dates, for example in Dehuri area of Outer Seraj it is held after Rakshabandhan. This is also like nature worshipping, Jibhi mela and Nagani mela are devoted to nature. In Nagani places are named after this fair. A place called Jibhi is named after a local legend and its tongue is called Jibhi deo. In Sainj area of Seraj and Roopi, fairs are held in many places. The most famous fairs among them are Dehuri and Sainj mela. Since they happen on different dates, people of these areas and deity can participate in all of these. These Seraji festive fairs are related to nature, so the deities are also named after nature. Vanshira is a famous deity of Sainj, whose name means the head of the forest. In the month of Baishakh, most of the local deities go to the hill tops to please Joganis to protect their subjects from hailstorms and other natural calamities. On the twelfth day, near Shuru Batal, deities called Sharinga Rishi and Balunag come to protect people from natural calamities. Since cattle is an important factor in agriculture, therefore they are sold and purchased in the fairs which are related to this trade. These fairs are called Nalawar. The famous fairs of Seraj are held in Kheod near Gohar and Lamathach in Mandi Seraj. A competition of wrestling is also during these fairs which are known as Chhinj. Anni fair of Outer Seraj is also very famous for its traditional dance. People of Balichoki area go to Chunjawala peak to celebrate Hum and get blessings, the eldest member (men) from each family of this area keeps a fast during the day.

As harvesting comes to an end by the month of Jeth (mid – May) famous Banjar fair starts, this fair is not only related to harvesting but it is also the first trade of the year related to the local trade where people sell products which they have collected from the forest. Kedar visit by local deities are also taken in this month to please Joganis of Sikari. Few deities

go to Lambhari, Bunga Shupa Kuni And Hanspuri kund near Gusaini to please Jogani of those places. Bali mela and Kuthah mela of Mandi Seraj are also trade fairs. They follow Banjar fair. Fair of Thachi and Hidav, in respect of Demon turned Goddess Hadimba is also very important in Seraj. Jhiru fair of Bagga Srahan is also important.

Summer Festivals :

As June comes near the harvesting season starts in upper Seraj and it goes on until July 1st week. The festivals of that region begin with the Satu festival in Podi and Bharadi which are very famous. A flower and Satu offering to local deities named as Kujo festival are held in Teel and Dhaion. A famous fair named Nahuli is held at Kamrunag lake Kumrah near Ruhanda in Mandi Seraj. Shadanu of Shanghar, Shensher and Khun in outer Seraj are also famous. Bull fight on top of grassy land on 20th Ashad (3rd or 4th July) is the main attraction. This place is named as 20th Ashad after this fair. Here, bulls from all native families fight against each other on this day. Champion, along with his owner, gets a prize from the deity. The rice plantation season in this region is called Ruhini, so Ruhini of Shanger and Shensher are quite famous. Women, while planting rice saplings, sing as well as throw mud at male members. Every household help each other without exchanging money. In few villages, Jolai is celebrated which is associated with the harvesting of barley. In this, women of the entire village cut crop in a particular field and men carry the harvested crop to the owner's house. The local deity is also brought to the owner's house where he organises a feat for everyone. In the day time harvesting is done amidst local band and singing, in the night after dinner a community dance takes place, where men and women dance together. This happens only in certain villages, also after a long gap and depends on the wish of the person who plans to organise it. Khunachi village also has a three day fair called Mihach Mela. Jagra at Khouli is also celebrated at this time. According to an old tradition, one person from Nihari area is expected to attend this fair because it is believed that the deity of Khouli came from Nihari. Therefore a person from that village has to attend it in order

to honour the deity and the fair. At Shat, Kandi (Juhlunag) and Shakiran, hair of new-born male infants is cut on a mass level. These festivals at these places are also centre of attraction. Fair of offering Ghee to Devi of Sareulsar known as Buddi Nagin (mother of all snake gods) is also celebrated here. Apart from these, few deities take up a tour of Kandi Dhoul, though it is occasional. Whereas Hargi festival is inter-Deoli (a village under one deity) tour which lasts upto 6-11 days. Hargis between Teel March and Shangad, Shansher, and Katurni and Banogi are famous.

Rainy season is often collected with romance, so all the major fairs of Seraj happen during the rainy season. Many fairs have a lot of folk lore's behind them. Most popular tale in the shape of a song is of fair Gadagusain with 60 Madyalis and Shangdu Deo. It is a love tale and it has attained such a huge status that in every small or big function in Seraj it is sung with great devotion. Hum of Percha, Mihara, Dehuri Sainj and Panjo of Balo and Chhunar are famous fairs that are held during the night. Baggi and Tandi Jach (means fair) follow Balo Panjo in between rest day as well. On the morning of Balo Panjo there is a bull fight and the winner gets a name as Midachi (means champion). Hum and Panjo are festivals where people march from their villages to temple with huge torches made of wooden sticks in their hands. This procession is worth watching. These torches are put together in the temple complex that gets transformed into a big bonfire. Everyone, young or old, men or women dance on drum beats around this bonfire, making a circle. Men who play the drums sit in the middle of the circle. Traditional and other popular local songs are sung by dancers with local music the whole night. Palach and Jamad Jach and Chhatri mela are also very famous for traditional Seraji dance. These take place in the middle of August. Tunger fair is dedicated to cowherds and shepherds. It is believed that a long back ago, cowherds who used to bring their cattle here to graze, started this tradition. It is also believed that earlier, it used to happen in April. During those days, there

used to be a shortage of food-grains, a condition which used to worsen in this month. In this area, the season of harvest is in June and July, so from then onwards, the fair started getting celebrated in August. It is held in a place, deep into the forest. Processions which take the deities to the forest resemble the carnival of Latin America. Bhumara Firiaut is also very important event of this region, which is celebrated every year after Bala Hum.

Autumn Festival :

The season starts to change, year's second harvest also gets completed by this time. Second harvest is known as Shayari, from which the Shayari festival takes its name. The festival is celebrated in the entire region on the same day. Shayari food is prepared and offered to the local deities. The fair starts during the day time and its length of the days varies from place to place. In Saini, Dharmi of deities keep a fast for seven days until Shayari. They take only fruits and water and break their fast on the day of Shayari. Shayari of Shakti, Shanger, Deoutha, Kalwari and Percha are quite famous. By October, the season of sowing comes to an end in the upper regions of Seraj. Since people are free, they spend their nights, dancing and singing. Jagras are held at this time in which people take torches in a procession to the village temple. During this procession, they dance until the next afternoon. Alawah Jagra, Mohani Jagra, Lagisher Jagra and Bushlad Jagras are very famous here. Since the seasonal flowers start to decay at this time, various flower festivals are celebrated. In these festivals everyone wear garlands and dance. This is called Barelga. Gusaini and Chalaudi Barelgas are famous here. On Malpuno, men and women apart from ornamenting themselves with flowers, decorate their cows and bulls with flowers. On this day, if a bull comes back in the evening with his garland intact which, then the owner has to worship him at the door of the cowshed in the evening. Deheli Tungar and Kati Jach near Ghat are also festivals celebrated in forest and on top of the mountains.

Winter starts to approach which makes

people to start collecting essential items. To fulfill this famous trading and cultural festivals begin. Kullu Dushara is famous across the world and it begins with children performing Haran dance at night. In this performance, two kids dress up like Haran (local name of Deer) and a group of boys and girls follow them, singing Haran songs. They go from one village to another and people give them grains. On the last day, these young performers have a collective feast. Lavi is the oldest trade fair of Himachal. Rampur Buser Lavi is world famous it reminds us of the trade between Tibet and India in sweet old days. Lavi is also celebrated in outer Seraj. Here also same rule applies that dates of these will not clash with Lavi in other places. Therefore its dates are different, for example Lavi of Shuad will come before Lavi of Chhiura. In the last Lavi of Rampur Buser will commence. Here people sell woolen clothes and dry fruits. Last but not the least Mohani Jagra and Thata Diwali invite Serajis to celebrate these. It happens a month after Diwali in other parts of India. In outer Seraj, Gushaini area it is known as Budhi Diwali, in these also people go to temple with lighted wooden torches to temple and dance in the night. In Shilli area of Bathad it is known as Deauli in which different type of fire plays are demonstrated, in this area this is held in different days in nearby villages. Taghiyra and Podi Jach ends this festival chain in December. Although there are many fairs and festival in Seraj, but here I have tried to give a brief description of main festivals of this region. Seraj is always vibrant and lively, be it hard work or enjoying life in fullest terms.

Note : Gur—A representative of deity who speaks on behalf of deity with his order. Jach : Mela—fair. Bith—deity made of grass for special festival. Jado—a garland made of tree leaves and considered as Lord Shiva by local people. Seraji—every thing belonging to Seraj. Hargi—bilateral tour of village deities.

Diminishing Spaces for Dissent

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INTRODUCTION

On 14 February, 2015 at the 9th Vibgyor film festival, religious vigilante right-wing forces attacked the organizers for planning the screening of documentary, 'Ocean Of Tears'. The documentary focuses on the Kunan-Poshpora mass rape case². According to reports and interviews, Billal Jan's documentary, 'Ocean of Tears' has received censor board clearance with a U certificate which allows unrestricted viewing. While the right wing forces attacked the venue, the police went hand in hand and stated the screening would cause a law and order problem.

The threat is not only to spaces like Vibgyor; in the recent past, one has seen many similar incidents whether it's Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen's visit to India; release of a book, screening of mainstream films like Vishwaroopam or OMG! Oh My God or rights of political activists to raise their dissent against working of the state.

Apart from threat and criminalisation of dissent, the other questions are :

What is dangerous for a society and who decides that? What is the standard of moral authority for a society so pluralistic like ours? What is Indian culture that should be guarded and protected?

The attack on alternate spaces like Vibgyor reflects the larger malaise in our society and political system that aims to defuse any dissenting voices. By attacking

these spaces, right wing forces and communally charged groups attempt to garner greater support; breaching all the democratic ideas and secular principles enshrined in our constitution. The Indian constitution upholds freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1) (a). Though not an absolute right i.e. reasonable restrictions can be imposed to limit the exercise of Article 19(1)(a).

Even though India is governed by a secular constitution that guarantees freedom of speech and expression, fundamentalist forces of various colours have thrived in our society and have taken on the 'moral authority' to preserve the nationalist identity. They have unleashed violence at various forums³ to prevent any violation of their nationalist identity.

Article 19 is one of the most important articles in the Indian Constitution; it represents the ideals that our forefathers set out to achieve. At the core of democracy lies the right of people to express their views; including dissent. However, what is evident in recent cases is a pattern of criminalisation of dissent. As long as dissent respects other person's dignity, it should be allowed.

A clear example of criminalising dissent is under article 124A of IPC. Sedition charges under Article 124A of IPC are part of our colonial past and infamous for they were imposed on Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. This provision continues to be enforced even today. A case in point is the unlawful and unconstitutional arrest of human rights activist Dr. Binayak Sen under Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act

2005 (CSPSA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967. Sedition as defined under IPC Section 124 A says,

“Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the government established by law in India, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine.”

Holding and expressing views that are different from the state’s or government’s view is not a crime. The charges of sedition also work towards censoring various forms of art and writing.

The right to express dissent is integral to freedom and speech guaranteed under Article 19. It is the responsibility of a secular state to curb increasing fundamentalism and ensure that the secular guarantees of the constitution are followed in practice. Imposing unreasonable restrictions on a citizen’s view/work/art is not only subjective and unconstitutional in the eyes of law but also an arbitrary exercise of power by the Indian state.

It is important to stand up against vigilante forces, George Washington’s words come to mind about what the future holds for us, ‘*if the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter*’.

It is important to safeguard such spaces and dissenting voices. A vibrant and inclusive democracy is one where individuals have the

right to participate fully and on many occasions hold the state accountable for its (mal) functioning. Individuals should have a secure environment to express their dissent.

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1. Pallavi Gupta is working as Director at CACIR Asmita Resource Centre for Women. She is presently pursuing her PhD at Council for Social Development Hyderabad.
 2. On the night of February 23-24, 1991, a Battalion of the 4th Rajasthan Rifles 68th Brigade conducted a cordon-and-search operation in the adjacent Kunan-Poshpora villages in Kupwara of Jammu and Kashmir. What happened after that has remained a subject of rage and fury, allegations and denials, claims and counter-claims. Villagers have alleged that army personnel raped anywhere between 23 to 100 women repeatedly through the night. If true, this would make it the single biggest instance of sexual violence by the state forces in India’s history. The Army has denied the accusation, calling it baseless and a malicious lie. The case has never been investigated to its logical conclusion through established process. Source : <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/unravelling-a-mass-rape/article4892195.ece>
 3. Instances of violence by right wing forces: attempts to pull out and pulp all copies of Wendy Doniger’s book *The Hindus: An Alternative History*; protest by right wing forces at the Kala Ghoda festival Mumbai to pull out the play Ali J.

COMMERCIAL SURROGACY : Autonomous Choice or Exploited labour?

Ravneet Param

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will attempt to unpack Surrogacy, while simultaneously critiquing the exploitation which the private clinics are involved in. First I will underline the reasons which have enabled commercial surrogacy to grow in contemporary Indian context. Secondly, I will try to question Liberal Feminism's stand of Surrogacy as an 'autonomous choice'. Thirdly, I will try and explain the way through which a surrogate's labour is exploited and finally by taking up Marx's idea of 'Alienated Labour', I will try to explain the alienated labour performed by a surrogate mother.

In a Patriarchal and Patrilineal structure, women's primary responsibility remains to produce 'sons', for the institutions of family, kinship and patrilineal succession rely completely on a woman's ability to produce a legitimate inheritor. These institutions further depend on caste and blood purity because property can be inherited only by a legitimate heir. Therefore, 'infertility' or the inability to reproduce is completely undesirable, thus an infertile woman's existence becomes stigmatised. This is the social context in India, which has enabled the free market, aided by NeoLiberal policies of the State to propagate notions of exclusive genetic belonging, thus also leading to a proliferation of new forms of Surrogacy and Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART). Commercial gestational surrogacy is a practice of carrying an artificially fertilised egg in one's womb in exchange of money. The embryo is fertilised within the laboratory with the assistance of ARTs and artificially transferred to a surrogate's uterus, though it may belong genetically to the commissioning parents.

India in particular is becoming a hub of 'reproductive tourism' across the globe because of the availability of cheap ART market. State

rather than focusing on preventing secondary infertility caused by poor nutritional status of women and providing basic facilities, is supporting the private sector by giving them full freedom to work at their own whims (Qadeer, pg. 28). Higher foreign exchange and earning profit have become the driving force of a NeoLiberal State and the priorities to provide basic amenities beneficial in preventing infertility are sidelined. Indian State's priority to be involved in ventures that garner profit is evident from the fact that the domestic infertility rate in India is 8%-10% which is primarily because of the lack of basic infrastructural and nutritional facilities (Qadeer and John, pg. 10). Infertility is not even considered in domestic priorities but the fact that surrogacy market is blooming is because of the profit it is incurring from foreign clients.

Surrogacy, because of artificial insemination has become a more desirable alternative to 'own' a child (Qadeer, 29). Surrogacy and ART, on a surface level, seem to be questioning the essentialism of genetic parentage but the fact that the entire process is carried out in secrecy (in most cases), reconstitutes the stigma attached to infertility, thus propagating the traditional values regarding notions of family and kinship. The proliferation of Surrogacy and ART have also undermined the popularity of adoption (Qadeer, pg. 8) Adoption as a practice undermines the value attached to the purity of blood, thus further undermining and challenging the patriarchal notions of family and kinship. ART helps fuelling the patriarchal dream of having one's own blood and owning it. Another question that also has been asked that for whose benefit are technologies like ART being popularised by the market as well as the State? The cost of the treatment which goes around in lakhs very well makes it evident the pro-bourgeoisie nature of these technologies. The benevolent rhetoric of giftgiving that surrounds ART (mostly created and popularised by the market and private investors), glosses over the mental and physical hazards faced by the

surrogate mothers. There is a constant effort on part of the private medical industry to silence, invisibilise and negate surrogate mother's experience. They are only indulged in the rhetoric of their success rates and no attention at all is paid towards the psychological well being of the mother.

Surrogacy has been hailed by the liberal stream of feminism as an 'individual reproductive autonomy' where women work as 'market actors', selling/renting their wombs in exchange of a monetary profit. Commercial Surrogacy by many is seen as a 'choice', a choice which enables them to earn money. For liberal feminism the freedom to 'choose to contract' becomes agential. By calling a commercial surrogacy contract as an act of agency on part of the woman, liberal feminism seriously lack in understanding the socioeconomic conditions which mark the woman's 'choice' of renting her womb. The systematic and continuous discrimination through the institutions of caste, class etc restrict her access to resources and opportunities. It is rather a case of selfdirected violence where because of economic deprivation (in most of the cases) women are forced to take such a decision. So, calling surrogacy as individual autonomy seriously undermines and glosses over the material conditions which force most women to be a part of the surrogacy market. Liberal feminism by romanticising the 'choice', 'individualises' and 'desocialise' it. Moreover 'consent' in any form doesn't legitimatise the harm of the 'labour contract' and the stakes involved in such a contract. In response to a death of a surrogate mother in May 2012 (The Times of India, 2012), Brinda Karat wrote about the growing exploitative ART industry :

It is said that the surrogate is asserting her independent agency to better her life and that of her family. But what does "choice" mean when she did not choose to be poor, she did not choose to be unemployed.. [W]hen poverty is not a choice, then to call desperate survival strategies that women adopt an expression of women's agency is to make a mockery of the concept. (Karat,2012)

Another aspect of commercial surrogacy which liberal feminism misses is the objectification

of the surrogate mother and the child. As I have already discussed that in a patriarchal structure, a woman's primary (and only) role is to reproduce and across cultures women have been tied down to their biological roles which also restricted them to the household. Surrogacy, even though blurs and challenges the assumed dichotomy between the public and the private, it also reduces the surrogate to her most basic biological role to reproduce (thus objectifying her). Surrogacy has emerged as an industry where renting a womb and giving birth have become like commodities to be exchanged in a market (Banerjee, pg. 28). The biological mother, like a babyvending machine gives birth to a child and that child, like a 'commodity' is sold to the social parents (It remains specified in the contract that the gestational mother should not get emotionally attached to the child).The labour contract is underpinned with exploitation because though the commercial gestational surrogate gets paid, most of the profit is extracted by the private clinics and doctors. So unlike 'giftsharing', as surrogacy has been hailed as by the private enterprises, it is a form of exploitation of labour and objectification of the mother and the child.

With the advent of Neoliberal market and policies, the old binaries between the public and private are blurred, specifically in case of commercial surrogacy (Hewiston, pg. 4). There is reduction in State's welfare expenditure which has shifted the financial burden and risk on individual families. Hewiston talks about that how the private, i.e the household becomes a realm of commercial exchange, where the commodified womb becomes a machine of producing babies and earning money. Like a free market, household becomes a space of profit earning where 'wages' can be paid and "investments can yield results" (Hewiston, pg. 4). However it is important to note that that buyer/seller dichotomy remains the same across the globe. It is the upper caste/class who is the 'buyer' and the lower caste/class as the 'seller'. Because of the hold of private enterprises over the surrogacy market (specifically in the Indian context), the division between women belonging to different classes has expanded and has become more stark. Women belonging to privileged classes have the resources to 'purchase' the gestational

services of a less privileged woman. The entire industry caters to only one section of society, a section which has the means to mobilise the resources.

Carrying a baby by a surrogate mother could also be seen as a 'performance'. SAMA Team in its report discusses that how gestational mothers are supposed to be 'submissive' and should act in accordance with all the requirements of the contract. Her choice to be a surrogate mother is further underscored by vulnerability because of the 'interchangeability' of her situation (Saravanan, pg. 6). There is constant fear to fulfil pre-given behavioural requirements and if the surrogate fails to do so, she can easily be replaced. Her subjectivity is constantly denied because she is expected to behave in a certain manner (stereotypical womanly manner). Thus, the choice is severely limited and to call it as a choice is also a negation of the exploitation that marks a commercial surrogate's existence.

Marx's primarily criticises Capitalism's pretence of prosperity, freedom and development under the garb of exploitation. In "Commodity Fetishism", Marx argues that real social relations within a Capitalist Society are garbed under the presence of commodities. Commodities form an intrinsic and vital part of the capitalist society than the human labor. Marx explains that human labor gives value to the product but it appears as if the value results from the nature of the products. Within the capitalist society, value is attached to the commodity itself and no attention is paid towards the labor doled out to produce that commodity. Through his analysis, Marx explains that how a worker feels alienated from the commodity that she produces. The worker has no control or agency over the product that she produces, she is disconnected from her own labor. Marx posits that a commodity is viewed only in terms of a final product while the processes through which it underwent remains veiled and, therefore, disregarded. A commodity's value is achieved only in terms of 'exchange' in the market. Therefore, the exchange value is based on the human activity under particular historical and social conditions. The worker in a capitalist society sells the labor, hence getting a small return, the capitalist on the other hand sells the commodity and gets a greater

return. The worker in this process has neither control over his product nor any agency. A surrogate, like a worker in a factory, has no control and agency over her 'product'. Her labour too like that of a worker is 'alienated' because of the fact of relinquishment. Private clinics in a capitalist society, which supposedly are in charge of the entire process negate and exploit the labour put in by the surrogate mother simultaneously obtaining the entire profit. Because of the lack of legal intervention, the amount of compensation received by the surrogate remains extremely low.

Surrogacy as an industry is expanding at an exponential rate. Under the covers of giftgiving and sisterhood, exploitation of the surrogate mother is extreme and rampant. Since there is no serious intervention by the State, the private health industry by using the patriarchal dream, has reconstituted it. Because of this expansion, better ideas like adoption have been depopularized. There is a serious need that the State should realise the exploitation which pervades the surrogacy industry and should come up with strict guidelines to restrict this ever growing industry.

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Why ‘Kiss of Love’ is Highly Important and Should Have Our Full Support

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As many readers will know, a ‘Kiss of Love’ event was organized in Delhi on 8th of November. An initiative of Pankhuri Zaheer and some other students from Jawaharlal Nehru University and the University of Delhi, it was held at Jhandewalan, at the Delhi headquarters of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, the ideological mentor of India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other organizations which collectively comprise the so called ‘SanghParivar’.

The event saw enthusiastic participation of hundreds of youth from various universities and colleges in Delhi, including Jamia Millia Islamia, Ambedkar University, Hindu College, Lady Shri Ram College and Miranda House apart from a huge contingent from JNU. Several middle aged and older people too were present to affirm every individual’s right to love and to choose his or her own partners. The protesters sang songs, exchanged hugs and kissed, including homosexually, much to the chagrin of the RSS and ‘Hindu Sena’ volunteers who had been counter mobilized by the right-wing. A large police force was also present at the venue of the demonstration.

This demonstration was held in light of the similar event in Kochi, Kerala, which was organized against ‘moral policing’ that has seen a sharp increase with the victory of the Narendra Modi led BJP in the general elections in the country held in May.

VULGAR ATTACKS

Perhaps unsurprisingly, as soon as information about the demonstration went online on Facebook, its organizers especially the female members among them, started receiving vulgar and hateful phone calls and messages, which advised them about their ‘shameless’ and ‘slutty’ behavior and made recommendations about the people they could sleep with, since clearly their ‘hormones were out of control’. Fed up with the constant harassment, some of the organizers actually had to shut off their phones, and even cease communication with the Press, even though their verve in seeing the event through did not wane.

Thus, supporters of the campaign, such as myself, who had written in support on its Facebook page started being contacted by members of the national press, including almost all major dailies, and thus I found myself becoming a sort of ‘defacto’ spokesperson of the campaign, in a completely unstructured and spontaneous way.

QUESTIONS RAISED

Many of the questions that the Press posed pertained to what opponents of events like ‘Kiss of Love’ have been saying about it. This line of opposition falls within the rubric of four broad questions, and I believe that it might be useful to put these questions and my responses in public through these pages, in order to incite comments and discussion and to hopefully motivate further action on this extremely important matter.

These questions are by no means unique and regularly come up in the public discourse in India over matters of love, sex and free expression in general.

First, should one support 'Kiss of Love' type of events, and if so, why? I believe one absolutely must. I believe it is an excellent initiative and many more such initiatives should be taken up, all across the country and the broader South Asian region and particularly in areas where such things as choosing

As the experience of countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and many others demonstrates, societies which had become relatively free and open in the Sixties and the early Seventies, have slipped into soul crushing fanaticism and un-freedom after the religious Right (of which the RSS is a prime example in India) engineered a massive reaction against all kinds of progressive tendencies.

one's own partner, which are taken for granted in any modern society, are still huge battles (i.e., almost every Indian family, certainly including almost the entire upwardly mobile, 'educated' middle class)

To me one of the most important measures of health and happiness of a society is the freedom accorded to people to love freely, and choose their partners freely (of whatever gender and sexual persuasion).

Recently we have had a setback in India when the Supreme Court struck down the forward looking judgement of the Delhi High Court de-criminalizing Homosexuality. Many who had felt empowered to come out of the closet in light of the HC verdict have now had to face oppression after the SC verdict re-criminalized a completely natural sexual impulse. This battle has now been taken up again in the Supreme Court, and one hopes the Court will set aside its earlier verdict.

Second, do demonstrations of this kind

actually serve some purpose, or are such events only about being trendy and 'cool'? I think it is crucial for people, especially the young, all over the country to assert their right to their bodies, to choose their own

partners and their sexual orientation. It is deeply shameful that we still witness 'honour killings' where the 'crime' is nothing but cohabiting with the person one happens to love.

It is crucial in light of the fact that the ruling national party, the BJP, made

'love jihad' its main campaign slogan in recent by-elections. Love Jihad is the notion that members of the Muslim community are 'luring' Hindu women to marry them so as to change the latter's religion and produce Muslim children, ultimately culminating the 'Islamisation' of India.

The fact that such absurd fears have become mainstream enough to be taken up by major national parties shows how close India is to slipping into an even more un-free, almost theocratic condition not dissimilar to the situation (for example: with regards to Blasphemy laws) that exists in Pakistan after the rule of the dictator Zia ul Haq.

Third, aren't there 'more important' things that should engage the attention of the youth? As I say above, all those who value freedom, and wish for India to remain a free society (a society in which enclaves of freedom – such as universities and some urban spaces – have been created and there

has historically been the push, since independence, of modernizing more spaces) must support initiatives like Kiss of Love, to counter the poisonous, socially divisive propaganda of the Love Jihad variety.

These societies, and others like them, have consequently seen the obliteration of liberal, leftist and socialist thought and social practice, all in the name of 'pride', 'hurt sentiments', 'authentic traditions' etc. India seems to be on the brink of something similar, where the historically open and plural nature of the society is being sought to be radically re-engineered from within.

In a nutshell, one can't be complacent about freedoms and rights. These must be fought for and vigorously defended.

PLEASE DON'T KISS IN PUBLIC, WE ARE INDIAN

Fourth, many who support the idea of freedom of choice – in abstraction – are saying that this is a 'wrong' way to protest. India is a conservative country which frowns upon 'public displays of affection'. Why choose such a mode of protest which may be offensive to many?

In answer, the modes of protest chosen by movements like 'Kiss of Love' are very useful in that they are exposing the structural hypocrisies of the authorities and political parties. It is notable that the Kiss of Love event in Kerala was not allowed to go on by the police, which has historically shown little inclination to act against violent thugs who have raided bars, night clubs, hotels and other such establishments where 'immoral activities', i.e., people indulging in sexual acts out of choice, rather than our glorious, animal-trading 'arranged marriage' tradition, have been going on.

Activists who have attacked couples on Valentines Day, often in a well orchestrated manner with television cameras in tow, have acted with impunity with no regard for the law or its consequences.

However those deciding to kiss on the streets, were apprehended in advance. This in a state (Kerala) ruled by the Congress, which claims to inherit a liberal tradition!

In light of this, the mode of protest chosen for 'Kiss of Love' is effective, and it exposes hypocrisies which we as a society are highly comfortable with.

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CHAPTER IV

ENGLISH POETS

Christopher Caudwell

...Continued from previous issue

[1.] THE PERIOD OF PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION

I

Capitalism requires two conditions for its existence – masses of capital and “free” – i.e. expropriated – wage, labourers. Once the movement has started, capitalism generates its own conditions for further development. The sum of constant capital grows by accumulation and aggregates by amalgamation, and this amalgamation, by continually expropriating artisans and other petty bourgeoisie, produces the necessary supply of wage-labourers.

A period of primitive accumulation is therefore necessary before these conditions can be realised. This primitive accumulation must necessarily be violent and forcible, for the bourgeoisie, not yet a ruling class, has not yet created the political conditions for its own expansion: the State is not yet a bourgeois state.

In England during this period the bourgeoisie and that section of the nobility which had gone over to the bourgeoisie, seized the Church lands and treasure and created a horde of dispossessed vagrants by the enclosure of common lands, the closing of the monasteries, the extension of sheep-farming, and the final extinction of the feudal lords with their retainers. The seizure of gold and silver from the New World also played an important part in providing a base for capitalism. This movement was possible because the monarchy, in its fight with the feudal nobility, leant on the bourgeois class and in turn rewarded them for their support. The Tudor monarchs were autocrats in alliance with the bourgeoisie and bourgeoisified nobility.

In this period of primitive accumulation the conditions for the growth of the bourgeois class are created lawlessly. To every bourgeois it seems as if his instincts – his “freedom” – are intolerably

restricted by laws, rights and restraints, and that beauty and life can only be obtained by the violent expansion of his desires.

Intemperate will, “bloody, bold and resolute,” without norm or measure, is the spirit of this era of primitive accumulation. The absolute-individual will overriding all other wills is therefore the principle of life for the Elizabethan age. Marlowe’s Faust and Tamburlaine express this principle in its naïvest form.



This life-principle reaches its highest embodiment in the Renaissance “prince.” In Italy and England – at this time leaders in primitive accumulation – life reaches its most poignant issue in the absolute will of the prince – this figure of the prince expresses most clearly the bourgeois illusion, just as in real society the prince is the necessary means of realising the conditions for bourgeois expansion.

To break the moulds of feudalism and wrench from them capital requires the strength and remorselessness of an absolute monarch. Any established bound or let to the divine right of his will would be wrong, for such bounds or lets, being established and traditional, could only be feudal, and would therefore hold back the development of the bourgeois class.

Elizabethan poetry in all its grandeur and insurgence is the voice of this princely will, the absolute bourgeois will whose very virtue consists in breaking all current conventions and realising itself. That is why all Shakespeare’s heroes are princely; why kingliness is the ideal type of human behaviour at this time.

Marlowe, Chapman, Greene, but above all Shakespeare, born of bourgeois parents, exactly express the cyclonic force of the princely bourgeois will in this era, in all its vigour and recklessness. Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, Antony, Troilus, Othello, Romeo and Coriolanus, each in his different way knows no other obligation than to be the thing he is, to realise himself to the last drop, to give out in its purest and most exquisite form the aroma of self. The age of chivalry appears, not as it sees itself, but discredited and insulted, as the

bourgeois class sees it, in the person of Hotspur, Falstaff and Armado, English cousins of Don Quixote.

Even the meanest creature, the empty, discredited, braggart Parolles, realises this unbounded self-realisation to be the law of his stage existence and in some sort the justification of his character:

*Simply to be the thing I am
Shall make me live.*

In this intemperate self-expression, by which they seem to expand and fill the whole world with their internal phantasmogoria, lies the significance of Shakespeare's heroes. That even death does not end their self-realisation, that they are most essentially themselves in death – Lear, Hamlet, Cleopatra and Macbeth – in this too is both the secret of their death and the solution of the tragedy.

The depth with which Shakespeare moved in the bourgeois illusion, the greatness of his grasp of human society, is shown by the fact that he is ultimately a tragedian. This unfettered realisation of human individualities involves for him the equally unfettered play of Necessity. The contradiction which is the driving force of capitalism finds its expression again and again in Shakespeare's tragedies. In Macbeth the heroes' ambitions are realised – inverted. In King Lear the hero wrecks himself against the equally untempered expression of his daughters' will and also against Nature, whose necessity is expressed in a storm. The power of the storm symbolism lies in the fact that in a thunderstorm Nature seems to conduct herself, not as an inexorable machine but like a human being in an ungovernable passion. In Othello man's love realises the best in himself, yet by the free play of that realisation "kills the thing it loves." In Hamlet the problem of a conflict of unmeasured wills is posed in yet another form – here a man's will is divided against itself, and therefore even though nothing "external" can oppose or reflect it, it can yet struggle with itself and be wrecked. This "doubleness" of a single will is aptly symbolised by the poisoned swords and goblet in which the one aim is as it were two-faced, and secures opposite ends. In Antony and Cleopatra and in Romeo and Juliet the fulfilment of the simplest and most violent instinct is to love without bound or compass, and this love ensures the destruction of the lovers, who are justified simply because the love is unbounded, and scorns patriotism, family loyalty, reason and self-interest. Such deaths are

tragic because at this era the intemperate realisation of the self is heroic; it is the life principle of history. We feel that the death is necessary and is what must have been: "Nothing is here for tears."

At this stage the strength and vigour of the bourgeois depends on his cohesion as a class under monarchist leadership. In many parts already a self-armed, self-acting commune, the bourgeoisie in England, has as its spear-head the court. The court is the seat of progress, and its public collective life is for the moment the source of bourgeois progress and fountain of primitive accumulation. The court itself is not bourgeois: it seeks the coercive imposition of its will like a feudal overlord, but it can only do so by allying itself with the bourgeoisie for whom the "absoluteness" of the monarch, although feudal in its essence, is bourgeois in its outcome because it is creating the conditions for their development.

Hence we find Shakespeare, although expressing the bourgeois illusion, is an official of the court or of the bourgeois nobility. Players are the "Queen's Servants." He is not a producer for the bourgeois market or "public." He has a feudal status. Hence his art is not in its form individualistic: it is still collective. It breathes the collective life of the court. As player and as dramatist he lived with his audience in one simultaneous public world of emotion. That is why Elizabethan poetry is, in its greatest expression, drama – real, acted drama. It can still remain social and public and yet be an expression of the aspirations of the bourgeois class because of the alliance of the monarchy with the bourgeoisie.

Elizabethan poetry tells a story. The story always deals with men's individualities as realised in economic functions – it sees them from the outside as "characters" or "types." It sites them in a real social world seen from the outside. But in the era of primitive accumulation, bourgeois economy has not differentiated to an extent where social "types" or "norm" have been stabilised. Bourgeois man believes himself to be establishing an economic rôle by simply realising his character, like a splay foot. The instinctive and the economic seem to him naturally one: it is only the feudal rôles which seem to him forced and "artificial." Hence the story and poetry are not yet antagonistic: they have not yet separated out.

In this era of primitive accumulation all is fluid and homogeneous. Bourgeois society has not created its elaborate division of labour, to

which the elaborate complexity of culture corresponds. To-day psychology, biology, logic, philosophy, law, poetry, history, economics, novel-writing, the essay, are all separate spheres of thought, each requiring specialisation for their exploration and each using a specialised vocabulary. But men like Bacon and Galileo and Vinci did not specialise, and their language reflects this lack of differentiation. Elizabethan tragedy speaks a language of great range and compass, from the colloquial to the sublime, from the technical to the narrative, because language itself is as yet undifferentiated.

Like all great language, this has been bought and paid for. Tyndale paid for it with his life; the English prose style as a simple and clear reality, fit for poetry, was written in the fear of death, by heretics for whom it was a religious but also a revolutionary activity demanding a bareness and simplicity which scorned all trifling ornament and convention. Nothing was asked of it but the truth.

These facts combined make it possible for Elizabethan poetry to be drama and story, collective and undifferentiated, and yet express with extraordinary power the vigour of the bourgeois illusion in the era of primitive accumulation.

Shakespeare could not have achieved the stature he did if he had not exposed, at the dawn of bourgeois development, the whole movement of the capitalist contradiction, from its tremendous achievement to its mean decline. His position, his feudal "perspective," enabled him to comprehend in one era all the trends which in later eras were to separate out and so be beyond the compass of one treatment.¹ It was not enough to reveal the dewy freshness of bourgeois love in *Romeo and Juliet*, its fatal empire-shattering drowsiness in *Antony and Cleopatra*, or the pageant of individual human wills in conflict in *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Lear* and *Othello*. It was necessary to taste the dregs, to anticipate the era of *surréalisme* and James Joyce and write *Timon of Athens*, to express the degradation caused by the whole movement of capitalism, which sweeps away all feudal loyalties in order to realise the human spirit, only to find this spirit the miserable prisoner of the cash-nexus – to express this not symbolically, but with burning precision :

Gold! yellow, glittering, precious gold! No, gods,
I am no idle votarist. Roots, you clear heavens!
Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,

Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.
Ha, you gods, why this? What this, you gods? Why this
Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,
Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:
This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless the accurs'd;
Make the hoar leprosy ador'd; place thieves,
And give them title, knee, and approbation,
With senators on the bench; this is it
That makes the wappen'd widow wed again;
She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices
To the April day again. Come, damned earth,
Thou common whore of mankind, that putt'st odds
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee
Do thy right nature.

James Joyce's characters repeat the experience of *Timon*:
all is oblique,
There's nothing level in our cursed natures
But direct villainy. Therefore, be abhorred
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men!
His semblable, yea, himself, *Timon* disdains.
Destruction, fang mankind!

From the life-thoughts of Elizabethan poetry to the death thoughts of the age of imperialism is a tremendous period of development but all are comprehended and cloudily anticipated in Shakespeare's plays.

Before he died Shakespeare had cloudily and phantastically attempted an untragic solution, a solution without death. Away from the rottenness of bourgeois civilisation, in the island of *The Tempest*, man attempts to live quietly and nobly, alone with his thoughts. Such an existence still retains an Elizabethan reality; there is an exploited class – Caliban, the bestial serf – and a "free" spirit who serves only for a time – Ariel, apotheosis of the free wage-labourer. This heaven cannot endure. The actors return to the real world. The magic wand is broken. And yet, in its purity and childlike wisdom, there is a bewitching quality about *The Tempest* and its magic world, in which the forces of Nature are harnessed to men's service in a bizarre forecast of communism.

1. *In the same way More, from his feudal perspective, anticipates the development of capitalism into communism in his Utopia.*

To be Continued...
Courtesy—Illusion and Reality

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