Past and Present: Can History Teach Lessons

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George Santayana, "Those who cannot remember the past are

Condemned to repeat its mistakes."

In this paper I pose the question whether history can teach us lessons, why, for example, mutual acts of violence by religious actors in South Asia that caused countless deaths and destruction, do not lead to a more reasonable response to future conflicts. This paper will follow three major contemporary conflicts as experienced personally. The first is drawn from a journal I actually wrote in 1993 as a Fulbright Professor at the university of Delhi in the Spring Semester. The second is the story of the *Al Quaeda* attack on New York on 9/11, 2001, which I experienced and gave my response at a conference at my university shortly afterwards. The third and final part is a section from a lecture I gave at the university of Delhi's Philosophy department in 2020 on the friendship of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Mahatma Gandhi. The first two segments show clearly that we do not learn lessons from past history. The final segment, however, on the friendship between Gandhi and Ghaffar Khan and their commitment to Satyagraha give us hope that the nonviolent method of the struggle against injustice can be successful.

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Journal of my Fulbright Fellowship to India, 1992-1993

It was a cold December night when I arrived at Indira Gandhi International airport. I was met by a representative of the Fulbright Organization who took me to a small hotel in Connaught Place. It was winter in Delhi and, of course, I was not prepared for it. As arranged, an official of he US Fulbright Office came to take me to the Fulbright Office. There I filled out forms, received my first stipend, and learned that I would be staying at the Delhi University Guest House, North Campus, where I would be teaching one class at the post-Graduate level, and another at the South Campus. I was then introduced to Ms. Rajni Nair, the Indian coordinator of the program. Rajni was a remarkable person who taught me much of Indian culture. She remains for me one of the most gifted directors of programs that seek to bridge the gap between different cultures.

I duly moved to the Delhi university guest house and met the chairperson of the history department, Professor Bhatia. I was surprised how beautiful the campus was. Although it was still winter, when the sun came out, it felt warm, unlike the winters in New York. Modeled on the University of Oxford, England, there were several colleges of the University. Walking through the large university garden you come to the entrance of the Faculty of Arts departments. There is a large bronze statue of Swamy Vivekenanda. I was assigned two post-graduate courses on the European Middle Ages:

one at the North campus close to the guest house and the other on the South campus. My classes were on three days which gave me time to attend lectures and conferences at the university, give lectures at other universities in India, and so get to meet scholars from other parts of India. Above all, I found time to meet with my students in both classes and so developed a warm relationship with them. In addition, I was able to visit many archaeological sites and so nourish my interest in the ancient and medieval history of India. Another feature of my own development as a scholar was my association with the premier research institute of India on developmental studies, The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, and, importantly, meeting Dr. Suresh Sharma and his wife, Deepa. They lived in the University Guest House.

Anxiety over the wintry weather and the challenge of teaching Indian students, I found the students at Delhi University very well prepared academically for graduate study. Most of the students in both classes were women, and I found them to be brilliant. They were as thoughtful, intelligent, and critical as my students in New York. The boys in my class at the north campus, next to the guest house, woke me up at 6 in the morning as soon as they found out that I was a cricket player. These memories remain fresh today as I write this some 25 years later. It was wonderful and precious to share breakfast, lunch, and dinner with other faculty who were staying at the Guest House. Not only faculty. A long and abiding friendship with the cook, Mr. Prem, developed, and continues as I write this, as we are now both retired. His story will be told later also. Many friendships developed that have remained strong to this day. Such was the character of my Fulbright experience in India that, looking back, I can say that the experience of India educated me fully in what was left out of my earlier educational experience.

Of course, it was not the case that I had found my *Shangri La* in India in 1992-1993. Politically. It was a very tense time. On December 6, 1992, a large crowd of activists inspired by conservative Hindu organizations, supported by the political party, the BJP, (*Bharatya Janata Party*), assembled outside the sixteenth century Babri Masjid in the city of Ayodyha, reputed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama, considered one of the holiest sites of Hinduism. The mosque was built by the leader of the invading Mughals, later Emperor Babar, in 1528. It was alleged that the mosque was built at the site of a temple to Lord Rama. Both Hindus and Muslims used the site for their religious services until 1859 when there arose violence. The British built an outer railing to separate the courtyard of the mosque to avoid disputes. In 1949 the issue of the mosque raised its ugly head again when statues of Lord Rama were placed inside the mosque, allegedly by Hindu groups. Each side claimed title to the land. The gates to the mosque were locked. In the 1980s the Hindu activist group, the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad*, raised its voice in support of building a temple to Lord Rama at the site and was supported by the BJP Party. A proposal was supported by a district judge in 1986, namely, that the gate to the temple should be re-opened and Hindus permitted to worship there. In 1990 L.K. Advani, leader of the BJP, led a march to Ayodhya in support of the Hindu movement but was arrested. A large number of activists continued the march and engaged in battle with government forces. Several people were killed. In the ensuing political

crisis, a new election was called and the BJP increased its representation in the national parliament.

This was the historical context of the march to the *Babri Masjid* on Dec. 6, 1992 by some 150,000 activists of conservative Hindu organizations. When they reached the temple, speeches were given by the leaders. A cordon of police was placed in front of the Masjid. A young activist carrying a saffron flag broke through the cordon, followed by a host of others carrying axes, hammers, and other implements. Outnumbered, the police fled. The rally then turned violent. The mosque was demolished and resulted in violent riots between Hindu and Muslim communities. The number of dead was put at 2000. The destruction of the Masjid led to the burning and looting of homes and places of worship and spread to many cities like Mumbai, Surat, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Delhi, Bhopal, and other cities. The riots in Mumbai witnessed some 400 deaths. The violent demolition of the Babri Masjid led to retaliation by Muslim groups. A wave of terrorist acts led to a climate of fear in India at that time. In Pakistan and Bangla Desh, Hindu temples were destroyed and jihadi groups called for death to Hindus and Indians. On March 12, 1993, a car bomb exploded in the Mumbai Stock Exchange. Fifty people were killed. Shortly after that blast some 12 bombs were detonated throughout Mumbai in hotels, banks, and a shopping complex. Some 257 people were killed, and 1400 injured. These blasts were viewed as revenge for the demolition of the Babri Masjid by Hindu nationalists.

As I write this introduction, I recall also the attack on the parliament building in Port of Spain, Trinidad, by a radical Islamic group, the Muslimeen, in August 1990. I was visiting my family in San Fernando, Trinidad, at that time. I can remember the fear when it happened. I was sitting in the verandah that Friday evening at 7 p.m. when my brother, Mickey, came home and told us to put on the TV as the Muslims had taken over the country. I thought initially that he had taken too many drinks, but I turned on the TV and we saw an Afro-Trinidadian man and others, with guns in their hands. The leader, Abubaker, a former Trinidadian policeman, dressed now like a Muslim cleric, declared that he was now in control of the country. This event sent the entire country into panic. The following day we learned somewhat what had taken place. Abubaker and his followers had stormed the parliament while it was in session and held prisoner the members of the legislature. The army and police had responded outside the building. The revolutionaries had obviously hoped that large numbers of Trinidadians who were experiencing a deep recession at the time would join them. This did not happen. The stand-off lasted about two weeks. Abubaker was able to negotiate a surrender and the army and police were able to rescue the parliamentarians. There were few deaths but the destruction in Port of Spain was great. Of course, the terrorist act in Trinidad was unrelated to the situation in India in 1992-93, and had nothing to do with the Babri Masjid. But, in another perspective, it shared an important perspective and question, namely, the rise of Islamic radical militancy, which has continued to the first part of the 21st century, namely, the rise of such groups like Al Quaeda and Isis. The point here is that in late 1992 and 1993 in India the climate of political violence was serious and fear was real.

I begin this diary of my Fulbright visiting Professorship in India with a quotation from Gandhi about the diary as an important literary form: “For one devoted to truth, it serves as a sentry, because its entries have to be true. If indolence done, work shirked it has to be mentioned. Once we regularly start writing, we ourselves will know what to write and how. Of course, there is one condition. We will have to he honest, otherwise the diary becomes a counterfeit coin. But if it contains truth, it becomes more valuable than a sovereign.”

After merely weeks in India I have begun to focus on some political issues that interest me. Almost everywhere in the world nations seek a pure national culture and practice ethnic cleansing of those they deem outsiders and different. That such an ideology infects now Hinduism, a religion that has as its cardinal tenet the imperative of tolerance since no religion has all the truth, is testimony to the madness that is prevailing civil society. Don’t they understand that there is no choice but to accept difference and diversity from their long history? The invasions of history and migrations have thrown every culture on each other. To have a sense of history does not mean to want to correct history, but to accept it and to make the future more humane. History cannot be made pure. It reveals the ugliness, ambiguities, and contradictions of people. I find the debate on this issue in the newspapers excellent. They all cry for secularism, but they don’t really define it. The life of the friend I met on the train to the Taj Mahal seems like a good definition. His religion, he says, is a private affair. He cared for devotion to Krishna and every month went on a pilgrimage to Mathura; on his public life, he respected all peoples and religions and followed the laws of the constitution. I found him open, reasonable, and funny. He loved India and had no desire to go abroad. I hope I meet Shiv again. I agree with the actress Sharmila Tagore (married to the cricketer, the Nawab of Pataudi) who said that India should be building hospitals, not temples. But what are the causes of this religious fundamentalism that is rearing its ugly head? Why are Saddhus so important now? I cracked up when I read Sri Chinmoyanand’s defense of the demolition of the Babri Masjid: “The Kar Sevaks (Temple volunteers) demolished the form of a temple, not a real temple.” Such reasoning makes only a Jesuit happy. I feel strongly that in addition to political opportunism as a cause, a millennial movement is taking hold. It is really a desire for justice and hope in a troubled time, but it places hope in the affirmation of a narrow cultural identity. In its name and objective all manner of brutality and barbarism are permitted. Whether India’s constitution is strong enough to resist this movement is uncertain. In its short life since its formulation in 1950, India’s constitution has more amendments than the US constitution. India’s social reality of a multitude of castes, minorities, religions, and huge population makes it difficult to respond justly and quickly to claims of equality. There are thousands of versions of Hinduism, in addition. Secularism in the developing world seems too abstract for most people. On the other hand, it is the only guide to build a new society on justice and equality. Indeed, all Hindus I have met are anguished over the unprovoked destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya and the religious riots. But how can Indians stop the march of the BJP political party? Two elections ago they won

two seats in the lower house; in the more recent election they got 119 seats. Is confrontation by civil society the best strategy to challenge the Hindutva ideology of the BJP? Or, should critics find ways to persuade the BJP that their political philosophy and practice will lead to the destruction of the ideals of India as encompassed by its democratic and liberal constitution; that all sides should negotiate and compromise in the interest of the people of India who have suffered enough from earlier partitions. The arrest of the BJP leader, L.K. Advani, was a mistake. A national unity government is preferred in times of crisis, not confrontation. But, while the character of the BJP remains uncertain (to me), I would say that negotiation and dialogue should be tried.

As I walked the sacred grounds of Gandhiji's cremation site at Rajghat last Friday, I was moved to tears. The Ayodhya incident, the Kashmiri and Sikh problems and the general history of India after Nehru's death in 1962 made me feel that Gandhiji's ideals and methods were no longer valued in India; elsewhere too, I might add. But, as I pored over the daily newspapers, I saw that Gandhian groups were arising everywhere to counter the aggressiveness of the Hindutva movement. The Ayodhya incident might have a silver lining after all. Secularism and liberalism are too abstract for India's masses; they can appeal to the educated elites. Gandhi's principles of social service can restore India to a more humane path. I already see its resurgence; it will make a powerful antidote to the Hindutva of the BJP. The crowning moment at Rajghat was meeting several Indian secondary school students, nattily dressed in their school uniforms. They were obviously from a prestige school and were already sure of what they wanted to do. Two were going to medical school, and the rest to engineering. They wanted to practice their English with me. They reminded me of my own youthful experience in Trinidad at Presentation college. All the historical traditions of India resided in them. Their dress made them look Western but their hearts were also Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, and Christian.

I then took a rickshaw to Nehru's memorial. It was very moving the last time I visited India. It did not seem to be as well-kept as then. It could be my own imagination playing tricks. Nehru meant much to me and I was probably seeing the Hindutva hand everywhere. Nehru wanted democratic socialism to be the anchor of Indian nationalism. But socialism is like ideal Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, etc. Their ideals are too difficult to achieve. Only a few can live up to their ideals. It is religion and myth that inspire the masses of people everywhere in the world. The European Enlightenment of the 18th century confronted and attacked religion in the name of science and reason. That is why in the West secularism places itself in opposition to religion. The Western imperial powers transplanted secularism in the colonies in the same way. But it was bound to fail. Secularism was identified with imperialism. I sound anti-secular. I am not. It lies at the core of my values. Lodged in the figure of a V.S. Naipaul, I can see its possibilities. But I see it also in my friend from England, Barry. There is no warmth or ease in his relations with anyone. He is bright and honest. How different is Dr. Sinha. In my estimation, he was more humane in that he showed a willingness to reach to all, cook and professor. He was living in Canada for some 30 years. He was unwilling to pass judgment on anyone. I make a judgment that I made of the people of Mexico years

ago: The people of India of all sectors of the socio-economic ladder are wiser than we in the West. The crisis here is political and economic, not moral. Nehru's comments about Gandhiji resonate still: "He has shown us the way to live and the way to die, and if we have not understood that lesson, it would be better we raised no memorial to him…He was proud to be a Hindu and an Indian. Though he was intensely religious and came to be called the father of the nation which he had liberated, yet no narrow religious or national bonds confined his spirit. And he became a great internationalist, believing in the essential unity of humans, the underlying unity of all religions and needs of humanity, and more specifically devoting himself to the service of the poor, distressed and oppressed millions everywhere."

Delhi:

Only on return from Jaipur last night did I realize that Delhi was now my city. Whatever section I walk or ride the sentiments are warm; At the modern, British, New Delhi and Connaught Place, you do get the sense of the power of British imperial power. The Greco-Roman and Victorian buildings remind one of their heyday. The pillars could do with some paint. But, to be truthful, they would have to be painted regularly. The pollution is excessive. Chandni Chowk, on the other hand, is more feminine. Despite the chaos, noise, streets crowded with auto rickshaws, cycle rickshaws, cars, horse-driven carts, alleys leading to Jama Masjid, and people, there is a charm of this thousands -of years-old place, as old as ancient Babylon. The Jain temple that houses the hospital for birds at the Red Fort end of Chandi Chowk, gives a feminine introduction to old Delhi. As you walk up the street, there are hundreds of stores and shops. You buy cloth for a suit and get it measured and sewn in an hour. Like many ancient cities, some buildings look as though they could fall at any time. There were several small Hindu temples along the way, and an impressive, grand Baptist Christian Church which also had a school on its grounds. The most impressive of all were the narrow alleys and streets that led to the magnificent Jama Masjid, the Mughal-built mosque. The side streets also had a myriad of stores and shops. Riding a cycle rickshaw through the winding alleys was a delightful adventure. Climbing the steps up to the entrance of the Masjid was not easy for me. I had to be careful. As I entered, the grandeur and power of the place was overwhelming. If the architecture of the white marbled Taj Mahal seduces you to enter by its delicate beauty, the Jama Masjid overwhelms you by its power and its beauty too. At certain hours of the day, the Muezzin calls the people to pray and the chants are just beautiful and moving. After they are completed, we sat around the main pool in the center or go to the prayer coves to pray to the almighty. The Masjid is almost always crowded with families and children playing around and chatting. The experience of Chandni Chowk is the opposite of, say, Rajghat which overwhelms one with its quiet and simplicity and beauty. Both convey an almost religious emotion. I would add that I have a similar experience at the university grounds where I am staying. The many gardens, college campuses of Delhi University,

University road where I am staying, the ridge, the walks through the university park to my office at the main campus, were a delight. In the evenings I would walk down University Road to Lancers' Rd. to the fruit vendor and the seller of nuts, Mr. Amarnath. I got used to cows and monkeys roaming the streets and walls. Walking merrily up University Rd. one afternoon, a monkey grabbed my bag of oranges and fled. I met my students regularly at the cafeteria and in the parks and conferences. I used to like New York in this same way. Staying at the university guest house has turned out to be just what I needed. Meeting and conversing with professors from all over India and the world over meals in an informal and simple setting has been enriching spiritually. I wished I could accept all the invitations to visit their homes. Nobody puts on airs of superiority. It is not only the sparkling conversation that was interesting; it is also the sense of genuine concern that one encounters. Also, I must mention the fact that it is not only the educated elite who have enriched my stay; the women who clean my rooms, the cooks who give me my meals are dear to me like my own family. We have a warm relationship. I know this for sure, and I have known this for a long time: my own peace needs associating with both "haves" and "have little." My connection to materially disadvantaged people is genuine and they sense this. The nuts and fruits vendors have been important to my experience here in India. We don't know each other's language (I wish I did), but we respect each other. Their eyes light up whenever we meet. 19th century European travelers saw only 'black faces' in their encounter with Indians which they interpreted as backward. I see my own face when I meet them, unique, interesting faces which, if offered opportunities, would prove to be creative and imaginative.

I had a strange conversation with an Indian professor of Botany at the guest house. When I told him that I was a professor of history, he asked me my "honest" opinion of the dispute between Hindus and the "secularists." I gave my own view, reflecting Gandhiji's. For fifteen minutes he interrupted me to tell me that Gandhi and Nehru were wrong and have led India astray. He was adamant that India must be a Hindu India; he condemned India's media for always condemning Hindus. For him, Islam is the one religion that cannot get along with different other religions. His friend, also a Botanist, arrived and presented a perspective and vision that was Gandhiji's. Some see in Gandhi's teaching of tolerance, hope; other Hindus see assertiveness and revivalism as their hope. Although the economy is not doing badly, Indians are pulled by this Hindu-Muslim predicament. In my own time, the weight of British imperialism was the obsession of our generation. The consequences of conquests, colonialism, and oppression are no less valid of Muslim conquests than those of European Christians. By a strange irony, the rise and vehemence of recent Islamic fundamentalism and evangelical Christianity in the USA could have unwittingly led to the rise of Hindu militancy.

I was a participant at an international conference on Democracy in South Asia. It was a stimulating experience. As happens in many conferences everywhere, I made friends with Mohammed Khan of Bangla Desh, and Tom Power from Australia. Dr. Jain, Chair of the Political Science department, was so happy at the success of the conference

that he invited us to his home for dinner. The discussion at the conference was sharp, ironic, and polemical. Of the papers presented, the one by Sudha Pai caught my attention. Comparing the societies in Brazil and India, she brought a different focus to the conference. I took issue with the general audience that suggested that the trend towards democracy was driven more by external factors, namely, the alleged triumph of democracy in the cold war, and the argument that movements towards democracy were fueled by the failures of military and authoritarian rule. I added that democracy still had to deliver more jobs, equality for women, health care, education, etc. Otherwise, democracy will be rejected.

My class today was wonderful: Christendom: Pope and Emperor. I could see that the students were deeply interested in the topic due to the many questions they posed. The political atmosphere in India at the time was suffused with the issue of religion and politics. Looking at the issue from the experience of the West brought thoughtful questions and analyses from my students. They were happy and felt free to use the insights of my classes on the crusades by the West against Islam to see how to understand the violence between Hindus and Muslims at that time. After class, I attended a department meeting. Professor Chakravarty, the senior historian, who became a close friend, raised a motion to hold a meeting of all professors to support secularism and condemn the rampant religious movement in the country. All members found his anxiety appropriate. They feared that if the supporters of religion in politics gained power, the Gandhian and Nehruvian vision of a liberal and socialist India will be crushed. At dinner I dined with Dr. Sinha and his wife, Mina. What a wonderful person he is. Close to 70 years old, tall, thin, and gentle, he is a professor of Engineering. Two weeks ago, his comment on the Ayodhya event was that it was the first time that Hindus had destroyed a temple of worship. He wants me to visit his cousin who teaches at Benares Hindu University whose field of research is the Greeks in India. They are moving to an apartment on Sunday and it is hardly likely I will meet him again. I will miss his friendship and wisdom.

Varanasi:

My trip to Varanasi and Sarnath was filled with wonders. I took the Kashi Vishwanath Express, a train travel that took 17 hours – the longest train ride I have ever taken. Sleeping on the top bunk was quite comfortable and the cabin was heated, thankfully. The train arrived at 6 a.m. I did not want to contact the Benares Hindu university at such an hour and decided to take a room at the Siddharth hotel, a very pleasant hotel that was near the Ganga river. After a warm shower I took a cycle rickshaw to the Ganga. Wow! What a sight! Varanasi is the oldest continuous city in the world. It existed at the time of ancient Babylon, Nineveh, and great ancient cities, and continues today. The view was majestic and yet I felt totally at home. My feelings were the same as walking on the beach at Mayaro in the early morning in Trinidad as the sun was arising. The kids were playing cricket on the banks of the river. I rented a boat for a couple f hours. My rowers were Vijay Baboolal and his sister, Rekha. I asked their ages: Vijay was 9 and his sister was 8. As we rowed out to the center of the river, with the sun rising on one side and the old city perched on the other side, I was so moved by the

occasion that I felt that I had to thank God for the opportunity to experience this beautiful moment at this sacred site. On that day there was a festival to Lord Shiva and thousands were wending their way by boat or walking along the banks of the river to the main *ghat.* I had one eye on the ritual of this magnificent scene taking place and the other on the curiosity of my two young friends. They were intelligent, curious, and friendly. Rekha wanted to be an engineer and Vijay seemed resigned to be a boatman. As we moved to dock at the main *gha*t, the close-up view of the men and women bathing in the Ganga and performing their rituals, the colored sarees of the women, the noises of the beggars, all gave an excitement to that moment that demonstrated the power of Hindu beliefs. I will never forget that scene. By the time I set out to return to the hotel around 1 p.m. the pilgrims were beginning to disperse. Activity takes place in the mornings when they pray to the Sun-God, the river Ganga, and Lord Shiva. I decided to visit the craft shops and was able to walk along the narrow, winding streets of old Benaras. On my way I went to the Vishwanath Temple (the Golden Temple) where only Hindus could enter. I had to view it from the building opposite. There is a Mosque next to the temple. If the Hindutva movement gets any stronger, they will destroy the Mosque and such an act will unleash riots that will lead to unimaginable deaths unless Indians start demonstrating actively against the Hindutva movement. After a short rest I returned to the main *ghat*; this time I went to the burning *gha*t to view the sacred rituals of cremation. The bodies of men are dressed in white, and the women in colored sarees. After they are dipped in the Ganges, they are placed on the pyre where they are burnt. I saw a family drop a small baby into the Ganges. I was told that babies, sadhus, those who die from small pox, cobra bite, or lepers are not burnt; their bodies are considered pure and dropped in the Ganges.

The river and the city are beautiful in the evenings. The pilgrims prefer to go shopping for a saree or something special before they return home. It was still dark the following two mornings when I went to the river. But to see the sun rise over the Ganges is for me one of the wonders of the world. Only seeing the Grand Canyon can match this sense of awe, this incomparable beauty of nature. The city, the river, and the sun perform like a symphony every morning. For me only a Ravi Shankar morning raga can capture it. We small creatures can only stare, struck by this creation of nature.

As soon as I returned to the hotel, I set out for Sarnath to visit the Buddhist monuments. The town of Sarnath is relatively peaceful compared to Varanasi. The archaeological park is beautifully constructed. All the Buddhist societies of Asia have placed a temple there. Sitting under the Banyan tree, next to the sculpture of Lord Buddha and his first five disciples, and walking around the giant Stupa where he gave his first sermon and preached the Dharma, the eightfold path to enlightenment was moving to me. From the3rd century B.C.E. to the 12th century A.D. Buddhism flourished. Gautama had come like me to visit Benaras around 500 B.C.E. and stayed in Sarnath. Buddhism was strong in India and devotion to Buddha spread all over India to Afghanistan in the North to Sri Lanka in the South. By the 12th century A.D. Turkish invaders had destroyed the beautiful temples built by the great emperor Ashoka. I went in to visit the Chinese Temple. I chatted with a young monk from Taiwan who said that

he missed his Guru more than his parents. Wandering around the temple garden, I met a Chinese engineer who was organizing the refurbishing of the temple. Suddenly a monk came out and invited me for a meal. The dumplings and vegetables were delicious. I had a funny discussion with them. There is something in the experience with Buddhists that is uniquely appealing. Their warmth and generosity make you open up in a disarming manner. I then went to the Japanese temple which was elegant and moving; It seemed modelled on the temple at Nara. A family from Ladakh made that visit human. I then went to the Tibetan temple where I met friends who would become close friends to today and made me understand the Tibetan cause and the Dalai Lama profoundly. This experience set in motion a development in my mind and heart that I think made me wiser and humble. Tashi and Chhati were doctoral students. With my friends I had one of the happiest times of my life. Their presence illuminated for me their view of the world that touched me deeply. They took me to the university and to the delightful little museum that housed the valuable manuscripts of Tibetan Buddhism and history. I felt that I was in the presence of wise persons. Their kindness, generosity, and warmth brought similar feelings that I had.

I remember reading Swamy Vivekananda's book on meditation where he said that caring for others is the essence of religion. Tashi gave me a little book about the Dalai Lama. I remember a line that I have always recalled to friends and students: The purpose of life is to help others; if you cannot help them, don't hurt them. This lesson is for me the essence of the wisdom.

I ran into Prof. Saffir Jaffrey, a colleague in the history department, who stays at Gwalior House. A Muslim, he looks like a brown Abraham Lincoln. We had a long conversation. Speaking in a measured tone, he intimated his fears for India and the rise of communalism. The analysis gaining ground in India is that since Islamic fundamentalism will become the new 'evil Empire,' the political establishment in the USA will support and encourage Hindu fundamentalists as a way of containing Islamic ascendancy. I am skeptical of this analysis. The Indian intelligentsia are noted for their paranoia at conspiracy theories. Still, we should not ignore their fears. The cold, inhuman ways in which the cold war doctrine was framed and executed constitute the evidence to substantiate their thinking.

Earlier in the day I had lunch with a professor of physics from Gwalior University. He felt that Hindus had a point of view that was defensible. He said that Ayodhya, Mathura, and Varanasi were the three most sacred sites for Hindus and they were demanding only that the adjoining mosques built by the Mughals to impress Hindus by their power and not now used as mosques be removed to other sites. In his mind, Christians, Jews, and Muslims have their sacred places for themselves alone. This was an interesting argument. I contended that while the demolition of the Babri Masjid can be explained politically, the act broke the law passed by the Indian Supreme Court. In my lights, the means and consequence brought violence, deaths and injuries, and the perpetrators should be held accountable. Zaffir then offered a new way of looking at the issue. He said that the Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam had a mostly single holy book, centered holy places, and relatively uniformity of beliefs.

Hinduism has no single holy book, a multitude of beliefs, and thousands of practices. The polytheism of the Vedas, the monism of the Upanishads, the interior religion of Vedanta all militate against a single view of Hinduism. What the BJP and some Saddhus are trying to do is to make Hinduism uniform. This will be impossible.

My class on the rise of Christianity was enlightening. The students asked thoughtful questions. The most difficult was asked by a young Indian woman. She asked if Christian teaching was so humane and altruistic as presented in some of the readings why had Christian churches in Europe and Latin America supported the powerful in society. Later in the class, she pulled me up: "Professor, you did not answer my question." I answered honestly and publicly to her: "How could I? I shared your skepticism." Religions seem to have always sought an alliance with the powerful to advance its causes, in my view. Unrehearsed, this extemporaneous question and answer broke whatever barrier between my students and me. They no longer seemed intimidated by my answers or interpretations. The sensed correctly that I too was constantly examining the answers to the very questions they posed, that I too was in the same boat as they were, trying to find hopeful answers to questions of the day by examining the past. I was amazed that Indian students found reading texts by Boethius, Jerome, and Augustine enlightening to them. I borrowed from the library a book recommended by a friend at the Guest House, A.K. Narain, *Indo-Greeks*. It brought back echoes of a class I took with Professor Anton-Hermann Chroust in 1969. In his discussion of Plato's Republic, he said that following the death of Socrates, his master, Plato had made his way to Iran which was a center of Indian thought, and that was why Plato's thought seemed so Indian. In his work, Prof. Narain, a cousin of Dr. Sinha at the University Guest House, argued that after Cyrus of Persia had conquered Asia minor in 545 B.C. there was a sizeable Greek community in Eastern Persia and North West India. These Indo-Greeks and Iran Greeks had assimilated to Indian and Persian cultures unlike the Greeks who came after Alexander the Great's invasions in the 330s B.C. who remained culturally Greek. The Indo-Greek Empire of Menander in the North West was very interesting. I knew so little of this story. Menander died in 130 B.C. Menander was a convert to Buddhism. Greek influence was also significant in the great Mauryan dynasty of Ashoka. This vignette of Greek influence in India also explains the change in the iconography of Lord Buddha from an empty throne to the portrayal of Buddha as a person. Some scholars see the Greek Apollo as the exemplar for the human portrayal of the Buddha.

On my way to the American Express Office I marveled at a European playing the Indian flute beautifully. It reminded me of Bismillah Khan, a Muslim, playing the Shehnai at the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Benaras and last week in a Christian church. Last night, on my usual walk to Lancers' Rd. village, I met the daughter of my friend, the fruit vendor. Her name was Prem Lata and her daughter remembered me from my visit to her school a few weeks ago. I wished I knew Hindi. Prem Lata showed me two letters; one was a recommendation in English from a school principal saying that she was an efficient Ayah in a school, and the other was an application for a job. In the letters, they said that her caste was *chamar,* one of the lowly castes. I did not know if

she was asking me for a job or a letter of recommendation. They lived in a clean bungalow house opposite the fruit stand. They clearly have done well. The letters showed that a lowly caste was not an impediment to advancement. The lady who does my laundry, my dhobi, takes care of her ailing husband, sent two sons and two daughters to the university; one has an M.A. The lives of ordinary Indians have been the miracle of my passage to India so far. Many others have made their passage to India; among them were Pythagoras, Apuleius, and Plotinus, in the ancient world. Their passage to India was to learn about the well-known discipline for the reunion of the soul with the divine and to seek a mystical experience. In the 1890s scholars of the East India Company were amazed at the wealth of knowledge of India and with their translations into English provided for the world a new source of knowledge about philosophy, mathematics, grammar, linguistics, literature, and history. How ironical it is that two Indian Westerners like V.S. Naipaul and I seemed more interested in the history and culture of India than its theologies. But, to be truthful, I was also interested in its spiritual traditions and it was while researching the story of Gandhi's truth that I developed the interest in Buddhism, Jain, and several versions of Hinduism, especially the Bhakti movement and the Upanishads. I tried to read as many works on caste as I could, but my knowledge of it remains limited.

Mathura:

Among the Fulbright scholars who stayed at the Guest House were Laurence Cohen, a medical doctor from Harvard University, now an anthropologist; Balgopal, a social worker from the university of Illinois and a pain- in- the- neck; Dr. Rizvi, and Mukherjee, anthropologists; and George Matthew, a psychologist from Kerala who traces his Christianity to St. Thomas; and a Canadian doctoral student who was writing his dissertation on 18th century Sikh history. Today an urban planner from Amsterdam arrived. He is studying urban planning in India. Yesterday I took the bus to Mathura, a city as old as Varanasi and sacred to Lord Krishna. Driving through the countryside was more enjoyable than by train for me this time. The fields were now lush and green and in parts covered by wild flowers like Silver Lake park on Staten Island in April. Having arrived, my rickshaw driver took me to the famous temples of Mathura in the old city, and most memorable of all the Ghats leading to the Jamuna river. The return trip was enjoyable also. On this trip many pilgrims were returning to Delhi from their pilgrimage.

This morning I played cricket with my team at the university park. My leg-break spin bowling is still sharp and effective among the young players. If I say so myself, I was the pick of the bowlers of my team. But, as my young students on my team said, the age-factor was responsible for being run-out in batting.

I presented a seminar today on Latin America and development to graduate students in political science. Comparing Latin America with India worked very well. The students were interested in the role of the US in the development of Latin America. They knew well the politics of the Cold War and I was surprised how well they knew about the brief government of Dr. Salvador Allende and Chile, and Castro's Cuba. They educated me about Jawaharlal Nehru's socialist strategies for development and the beginning of the opening up of the economy in the early 1990s.

After classes, Mr. Krishnan, a worker at the guest house, invited me to have dinner with his family. He comes from Madras and his wife is from Kerala.It was the best meal I have had since I came to India. My friend, Jyoti Sharma, did tell me that south Indian cuisine was the best.

Calcutta:

As my plane soared over the clouds after take off, all the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas shone majestically. It was a kind of epiphany of beauty and power. It was so clear that I could identify the peaks of Everest, Annapurna, and Katchenjunga. It was as if the Divine master had given me one more blessing.

My arrival at Calcutta was pleasant. As the taxi drove to the city, I felt that I was in the Caribbean. Some streets were lined with coconut trees and coconut vendors were seen everywhere. I arranged for my hotel at the airport. My small hotel*, Sana'* was in the center of the city, two minutes from Jawaharlal Nehru Rd. I walked around the city for two hours, overawed by the hub of activity, rickshaws, tea shops, and textile hawkers. This picture seemed to give the stereotypical picture of Calcutta a ring of truth. I had dinner late at night at a nearby Chinese restaurant. I got up the following morning sick. My bones ached and my stomach was upset. I still went out. Walking through Lenin Street, up Bentinck Street, observing the majestic Victorian, masculine buildings, though decaying now, I remembered my history lessons. The names of the streets and buildings were all familiar to me. Of course, Calcutta was the capital of British India until it was transferred to Delhi in 1919. But I also remembered that Calcutta was the home of the Tagores, Ram Mohan Roy, and also Mother Teresa. The sense of history made me forget that I was not feeling well. I decided to return to the hotel to take a rest. When I woke up at 3, I was off again, this time to the temple of Kali. I was feeling a little better. My guide, Samir Bannerjee, explained the mysteries of the Kali temple to me. What had seemed a metaphor for irrationality to me now was reasonable to me, thanks to Samir. Kali represents the divine mother and protector and is worshipped all over India. The representation of Kali is forbidding, to use a mild description. Her three large eyes, four hands, and a scimitar has been interpreted in this way. Her three eyes and the scimitar represent divine wisdom killing the asura (human knowledge): Two hands hold the scimitar; the other two hands represent the advice, not to worry (*abhaya* and blessings). In short, devotion to the divine must conquer human knowledge before *moksha* (liberation) can be achieved. The temple feeds a thousand people every day. The devotion to Kali gave Calcutta its name. I took a taxi to another

well-known place, the Victoria memorial grounds. An unremarkable statue of Queen Victoria was placed in the center of the park. I use the word 'unremarkable' because there was discussion by the imperial government to knock down the Taj Mahal and replace it with the Queen Victoria statue. The following day I felt much better and decided not to eat much. I walked to the famous bridge, Howrah bridge on the Hoogly river. The area around the Howrah rail station at the bridge is one of the distinct features of Calcutta. Here must be thousands who live in the railway station. Though Calcutta seems more crowded than Delhi, the buses are not as crowded. I was surprised when I found the reason. They have a metro underground rail system.

I then too a bus to the north of Calcutta to visit Sri Ramakrishna ashram and temple. Also, Swamy Vivekananda's home where he studied under Sr. Ramakrishna. I met the teachers and some students of Sri Ramakrishna vocational school. It was delightful. Bengalis are among the most politically sophisticated people I know. I felt completely at home with them. In addition, they are among the warmest people, quick to reach out to others. Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda lived there for a while. It was beautiful and unique. I met another teacher who had brought his class to the temple. He was giving them instruction about the teachings of Ramakrishna. The temple in Belur Math is wonderful and its architecture is a lesson in philosophy. The sides are constructed like a mandir, a masjid, and a church, signifying the equality of journey to the divine.

Leaving this revered place that made me so happy, I was anxious to visit Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity monastery. The visit proved to be one of the joys of my life. The monastery was in the center of the city, on S.N. Bannerjee's Rd., not far from the hotel where I was staying. The sisters were dressed in white dresses, bordered with blue trimmings, barefooted. The Indian sisters were scurrying around cleaning up with their buckets and water. Then, going up to the second floor where the chapel was, they knelt in service. Their backs were to me as they prayed before the simple altar with a statue of Christ that read: "I thirst." The nuns chanted and I shivered. Why, I did not know. It was like an epiphany, a beautiful moment that suggested that something mystical moved me. All this was unexpected . But there was more to follow. An Indian came downstairs and I chatted with him. He, a Hindu, said that he had just seen Mother to invite her to his daughter's wedding. I thought that she was ill because there was news that she was ill and was treated at a hospital. My friend then said to me, why don't you visit her. Surprised, I asked where she was. My friend replied, " in her office." Hesitatingly, I went up. She had come out of her office and came to the four of us who were waiting. She greeted all of us. She held my hand, asked where I was from, and chatted with each of us as if she knew us for a long time, then prayed with us and gave us a little prayer written on a piece of paper with her signature. She had such a strong, sensitive face. She willingly agreed to have her picture taken. I think that she will surely be made a saint. Whether she will or will not, is not important to me. Her commitment to serving the poor men and women, the sick and suffering makes her worthy of special recognition by all of us now and the future. I noticed as I was leaving the convent a sign that read: If you want peace, seek out the poor." As I knelt in the

chapel afterwards, she came in, knelt, and kissed the floor as Indians do. It was a powerful religious experience for me. This experience capped a day of epiphanies, lessons I will always remember.

Jorasanko, Calcutta:

This morning I visited Rabindranath Tagore's home in Jorasanko. Situated in the center of the city, it is now a university of the fine arts. That area of Calcutta is quite noisy now but as you enter the campus, a tone of peace and tranquility hits you. There was an exhibit of paintings in the courtyard, all created by students. I met four students who were studying vocal music. I then entered Tagore's home where he lived and invited Gandhiji and other friends. The first room was his bedroom where he died in 1941. In the other rooms were his bookcases, photos taken by him of friends like Einstein, Charlie Andrews, and Gandhiji. While browsing, I remembered that the Bengal Renaissance of the late 19th and early 20th century actually was born here. Rabindranath's father and Ram Mohan Roy challenged traditional Hindu society and started the Brahmo Samaj movement here which had a significant influence on the nationalist movement. I sat in the room for a while knowing that the Tagore's, Dutt's, Nehru's, Gandhiji, and the Thakurbhai's, those women of the Tagore family who rode horses, crossed the seas, took part in acting on the stage and generally challenged traditional society. I met an official of the university, Ashok Chakrabarty, who exemplified the spirit of Tagore and the Bengali spirit. He lamented that they were going to move the university that Tagore founded elsewhere and make Jorasanko a museum. Why they would make a living, dynamic place a museum was beyond us. The pictures of Einstein and Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhiji and Kasturba in the room brought a good feeling. I felt that I was actually meeting them personally in that room. Ashok and I spent only an hour in the room and I felt that he was like a brother. We shared so many human values, and artistic sensibility, too. I forgot to mention an incident earlier where I was haggling over the cost of the taxi when a stranger intervened and paid the taxi driver and left."

REFLECTIONS ON THE TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE USA

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, AND ITS AFTERMATH

Like so many of us, I witnessed on television almost from the beginning the unfolding of the terrifying events of September 11. I was filled with awful anxiety about the safety of my spouse who worked near the World Trade Center. And, again, like many, I sent and received frantic messages to family and friends all over the world that we were safe. As we became aware of the enormity of the crimes – innocents traveling on planes, innocents at work in the World Trade Center, and innocent firemen and policemen trying to save lives – a painful depression set in; This, in addition to seeing parts of our city being physically destroyed. During the first few days, we learned that many of the casualties were from all over the world – some say from 62 countries. There were, for example, 15 from Trinidad, more than 500 from South Asia alone; 200 from England, 60 from Australia. Although the agents of these horrible actions had conceived of their plot as directed at America, the suffering and the significance of the suffering were visited on all the peoples of the world. That was why all peoples grieved with us. This was a human tragedy, not only an American tragedy.

Can these acts be justified? What are we to make of those who claim that they were motivated by what they perceived as unjust US policies, policies that resulted in the suffering of their people? Let me quote some lines from a poem of Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott that he read in 1964, *A Far Cry from Africa*, a poem inspired by a discussion at the university arising from the deaths of British people after the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya. One group said that imperialism, "that leprosy of Empire," was so horrible that violence, even some death, was necessary. Walcott's poem is a categorical rejection of this line of argument:

White child killed in bed,
Violence of beasts on beasts,
Brutish necessity, a waste of our compassion,
Wipes its hand in the napkin of a dirty cause,
Upright man seeks his divinity
By inflicting pain.

The poet's condemnation of the infliction of suffering is a good introduction to the thought and movement of Mahatma Gandhi that shape my own understanding and response to the problematic issue of whether defensible goals can be justified by any means necessary. Gandhi was in London in 1909 to lobby for his nonviolent movement in South Africa, and met many Indian nationalists who had started movements against British imperialism. Many disagreed with Gandhi, among them V.D. Savarkar, an Indian nationalist who had argued that violent means were legitimate to end imperialism. Gandhi appeared on a panel with Savarkar on the topic of interpreting the *Ramayana*, a sacred text for Hindus. Gandhi argued that it supported nonviolence; Savarkar, on the other hand, responded that it supported violence in a good cause. During the journey back to South Africa, Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj* (1909), 275 pages, on the ship's stationery. When he got tired, he wrote with his left hand (40 pages), so overcome with emotion was he by Savarkar's stance on the means of achieving home rule for India. He wrote, "India can gain nothing from the rule of murderers, no matter whether they are black or white." The main theme of his book was that violent means was "brute force," and that nonviolence

was “soul-force.” Repeated throughout the discourse was his answer to the question, “Why should not every means be legitimate to achieve “good” ends? Gandhi answered: “To accept the position that the force of arms was just and necessary to achieve a good end was like saying that you could get a rose by planting a noxious weed, or crossing the ocean in a cart.”

A day after the *Al Quaeda* attacks, our President declared that we were at war, and subsequent moves in Congress confirmed this. There was some debate about the use of the word, war. A Belgian representative suggested that “mobilization” might be a better word. In the case of the attacks of September 11, the unprovoked attack on the US and the death of so many civilian casualties seem to give unequivocal grounds for war as self-defense. The answer to the question is complex, one that cannot be unequivocal. The administration has stated that the goal of its mission is the eradication of terrorism, a project that most nations in the world would find laudable in its general terms. The People’s Republic of China asked that they be told what were the targets and for assurances that innocent people would not be hurt. If there is evidence that Bin Laden was the person who planned the plot, then the vast majority of nations would support a mission to persuade the rulers of Afghanistan to extradite him and even a military mission to seize him (tried by President Clinton’s administration in 1998 after the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania). The investigative and legal approach was done in 1993 (the bombing of the World Trade Center) and the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma in 1995, and the current investigation of possible accomplices of the terrorists in the US and the world. The uniqueness of this event and the complexity of the alleged purpose of the mission are the reasons why our allies in Europe, including Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, England, even Russia, have praised the restraint so far and urge even greater caution. Middle Eastern and Asian nations who have supported us have placed conditions on the war.

Still, almost all media pundits have concluded that there will be an attack against Afghanistan. Interviews with Secretary of State Colin Powell, a BBC online story on Monday (Sept. 17), said that the administration had planned an attack against the Taliban for October. Although vice-president Cheney denied any Iraq role in the 9/11 event, someone must have leaked the story that the ongoing investigation had revealed a connection to Iraq.

I find unacceptable revenge or punitive action as legitimate grounds for war. If war on Afghanistan and, perhaps, Iraq, will be the targets of the war against terrorism, I must confess that I have grave fears for the success of this mission. My fear about this war is that it will not eliminate terrorism. Indeed, as explained so far, it may create greater resentment in parts of the world where politics are complicated, and may lead to the expansion of terrorism, not to mention untold suffering to innocent civilians in other countries in addition to casualties among our troops.

I urge restraint and sympathy with the peoples of Afghanistan despite my revulsion at the policies of the Taliban regime, and the actions of Bin Laden and his group. From 1978 to the present the peoples of Afghanistan have been subjected to endless wars of liberation, civil wars, religious and social tyranny. A report from the UN a few weeks ago said that 1 in 6 people of Afghanistan would die from civil war or malnutrition. Millions of refugees are in camps in Pakistan or Iran; a hundred thousand more are now at the closed borders of Pakistan and Iran. In an earlier period from 1839 to 1919, Afghanistan was caught up in the Great Game between Russian expansion and British imperialism. The British sent wave upon wave of punitive strikes, justifying their repression with the answer that “savages cannot be met and checked with civilized warfare” (Sir Neville Chamberlain, 1859), and later in the 1930s, “The brutes must be ruled brutally and by brutes.” If we make war on the people of Afghanistan, we will do well to remember the words of Annie Besant in defense of Pashtuns: “We loudly proclaimed that we

had no quarrel with the Pashtun nation, yet we burnt their villages, destroyed their crops, stole their cattle, looted their homes, hanged their men as rebels if they resisted, while we drove out their women and children to perish in the snow. Englishmen, with wives nestled warm in your bosoms, remember these Pashtun husbands, maddened by their wrongs. Englishwomen, with babes smiling on your breasts, think of these sisters – women, bereft of their little ones. The Pashtun loves wife and children as you do. He also is husband and father. To him also the home is happy; the hearth is sacred. To you he cries from his desolate fireside and from his ravaged land." (1897) On the other hand, the Staten Island Advance published a report that thanks to training from the CIA, the Taliban guerrilla force is no ragtag army but a fierce fighting outfit that will be a force to reckon with.

Is Iraq another target for war? In an interview on Sunday, September 16, vice president Cheney told Tim Russert that Iraq had no connection to the terrorist acts of September 11. By Tuesday, Sept. 18, there was talk on television that one of the terrorists, Mohammed Atta, had had an interview with an Iraqi official earlier in the year. Since our focus is on preventing terrorism for the future, can anyone doubt than an attack on Iraq, after 10 years of terrible sanctions and bombing, sanctions that resulted in a half a million deaths of children from malnutrition, as documented by UN reports, will create legions of anti-American terrorists?

The war against terror will place a terrible burden on South Asia, especially Pakistan and India, two nations that possess nuclear weapons and which remain in conflict. Both nations have pledged support for the US initiative, but consider for a moment that, despite President Musharaff's assurance, large numbers of Pakistanis oppose any US invasion. Although India has offered bases for the invasion, Indians are worried because there are 120 million Muslims in India. Already the Imams of Delhi and Bombay have said that they will protest if a US invasion takes place. The prospect of an invasion, led by the West, is causing great nervousness and fears for destabilization in the countries of South Asia, no strangers to the terrible consequences of terrorism.

We should lament the rush to strengthen national security laws and institutions, and listen to scholars of US history and politics as to whether our fears are realistic or unnecessary. But it seems unlikely that a war will be averted, a war that will be popular (80% support it).

We must, nevertheless, remind ourselves that the academy has an important role to play in countering violence and terror. Respect and sympathy for the humanity of other peoples, cultures and nations, criticism and self-criticism, constitute the journey we must take. In the US we have made progress in the last several years – world history courses, expansion of the curriculum to include the study of peoples and societies outside the West, foreign languages, international study, etc. We must not let national security interests lead this initiative. I call this the Constructive Program against Terror.

The "Constructive Program" proposes that knowledge of others is one important way to understand what we sometimes call "evil." Of course, no one can say that we can finally overcome evil once and for all, but we can minimize it by teaching the value and quality of life that are based on rights, openness, freedom from fear, and the usefulness of dissent. The academy must become peace bridges when, as all wars do, opponents are demonized so that we don't revert to disabling dualities like Islam and the Rest, the West/ non-West, etc. Such a Manichean view of the world sets in motion the cycle of violence that is the harbinger of wars and intolerance. The experience of the pain caused by the destructiveness of September 11 is so profound that the emotion of grief can understandably seek for consolation in retaliation. We in the academy must therefore remain active in proposing that democracy and diversity should shape our world, and be willing to defend the human rights of all. Wars, little wars, terrorism, threaten these values.

ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN and His *Khudai Kidmatgar:*

How are we to understand the ups and downs of fortune of Gandhi's friend and exemplary Satyagrahi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan?[1] Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a Pashtun, committed his long life to construct the foundation of modern life for his people on their more humane traditions of honesty and simplicity. Inspired by the teachings of Islam and Gandhi's *Satyagraha*, Khan created an original institution, the *Khudai Khidmatgar* or Servants of God, that grew to some 100,000 members, dedicated to establishing constructive programs throughout the villages of the North West Frontier Province, educating the people, especially women, and generally trying to improve the material condition of all. Khan joined Gandhi's movement and hoped that its success would bring not only independence for India but also freedom and responsible autonomy for his Pashtun people who had suffered greatly at the hands of British imperialism from the creation of the North West Frontier in the 1890s.

Damning Pashtuns as irretrievably violent and quick to seek vengeance, the British were unwilling to grant reforms to the NWFP that they gave to the rest of British India. When Gaffar Khan joined Gandhi in the Satyagraha movement from the Rowlatt Acts to partition, they suffered terrible repression. Ghaffar Khan spent some 15 years in British jails, at times under harsh conditions. His nonviolent Servants of God army experienced the most extreme torture and indignities from British rule. Yet, Ghaffar Khan kept insisting that his fight was against British rule, not British people. He was affectionately called the "Frontier Gandhi," and it was a measure of the highest respect for their work that their achievement was called that of the "two Gandhis."[2] Released from jail in 1934 but banned from returning to his home, Ghaffar Khan, his brother Dr. Khan Saheb, and later his daughter and sons, lived at Gandhi's ashram in Wardha. Their friendship and love were splendidly illustrated in the daily prayers at the ashram where, asked to read from the Koran but sometimes forgetting to bring his glasses, he would read with Gandhi's glasses;[3] Or their walks together every morning and evening after which Ghaffar Khan would assist in washing Gandhi's tired feet. Gandhi called the friendship of the Khans "a gift of God."

Visiting Visva Bharati University in Shantiniketan in September 1934 where his son Ghani was studying, Ghaffar Khan was moved with joy when the poet Rabindranath Tagore described him as a votary of truth and love, values that the students at the university would always cherish, and one of the truly great people "whose hearts are for all who belong to all the lands of the world."[4]

Exiled for 6 years, Ghaffar Khan returned home in 1937. Grateful for his warm stay at Wardha, he pleaded with Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru to visit his home to see the beauty of the North West Frontier, and the affection that Pashtuns had for Gandhi, Nehru, and the Congress leaders. Nehru visited the province in October 1937 and was overcome by the generosity and hospitality of the people, marveling at the development of the nonviolent army of the *Khudai Khidmatgar*. He noted with great interest that this province did not then show the communal spirit and bigotry that were beginning to shake the rest of India, and he felt sure that this was because of the efforts of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his movement. As his hosts took him to places of interest like the Khyber Pass, Nehru's sense of history filled him with awe at the places that memorialized India's ancient civilizations from the ancient Aryans to invasions of Alexander the Great and the Greeks, the Scythians, Turks, and Huns who conquered and settled in India, not to mention the great Buddhist Empire of Ashoka and Kanishka whose influence in the Frontier Province was considerable. The peoples of the Frontier inherited the legacy of some of the great civilizations of India, a perspective that was so different from their depiction as savages portrayed by the British imperial administration.

Gandhi made two visits to the Frontier Province, the first in February and the second in September 1938. As old and young village men and women came to greet him bringing gifts of fruit, goats, sugar-cane, and even home-made bread, Gandhi was moved to tears of joy. He held discussions, gave lectures on nonviolence, and observed carefully the ways of living of the people, concluding that it was a miracle that a people who were known for violence and revenge could so radically transform their lives in such large numbers. For years Gandhi had seen for himself the quality and dignity of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Now he marveled at witnessing in the flesh the discipline and commitment of thousands of Pashtuns to nonviolence. This experience demonstrated the truth of his deeply-held beliefs like nonviolence, Hindu-Muslim unity, and that the constructive program was the key to transforming a society. In his discussions, Gandhi reminded his audiences that they should be proud that the nonviolence of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the *Khudai Khidmatgar* was built on the legacy of the great Buddhist civilizations of ancient India that preached *Ahimsa*. Taken on a tour of Taxila, Gandhi was reminded that a great Buddhist university flourished there for a thousand years and, as his eyes focused on a pair of silver anklets in the museum, he recalled that his own mother used to wear silver anklets. In the figure of his friend Ghaffar Khan, Gandhi found that *Ahimsa* was also an essential part of Islam, and that the brotherhood of man really meant the brotherhood of all mankind. His parting advice was that if self-discipline and self-realization were at times elusive they should remember to cultivate infinite patience, "even the patience of emptying the ocean with a blade of grass."[5]

Despite his experience of long years in and out of British jails in the 1920s and 1930s, Ghaffar Khan found comfort in that his causes showed signs of progress. The Salt March *Satyagraha* had made freedom for India seem possible. In addition, his constructive program to educate and improve the material condition of the people in the North West Province was yielding promising results. Ghaffar Khan held firm to the principles of nonviolence, freedom from British imperial rule, the social progress of the poor masses of India, and Hindu-Muslim unity. Aware that some criticized these ideals as impossible to achieve, he likened his faith in the transforming power of love and truth to a seed that must remain in the ground for a time before it ripens and multiplies. There was a feeling of hope when Nehru and Gandhi visited the North West Province in 1938, especially after the Congress had won a great victory in the elections of 1937.

The 1940s brought bitter pills to swallow as World War II opened a new Pandora's box of trials and tribulations for India's independence movement. Britain's desperate situation in Europe saw the rise of leaders like Winston Churchill who were opposed to negotiating with Congress leaders who were willing to support Britain provided they gave clear signals that they would grant independence to India. Repressive policies, especially following the threat posed by Japan, meant that India's Congress leaders spent the later years of the war incarcerated. Worse followed. From 1940 Mohammed Ali Jinnah energized the Muslim League, and his expanding movement demanded a separate homeland for Indian Muslims and recognition for the Muslim League as the sole representative of Muslims. Supporting the British in the war, Jinnah clung stubbornly to his idea of Pakistan.

With the end of the war and the victory of the Labor Party the plans for independence moved inexorably towards partition, a solution that saddened Gandhi and Ghaffar Khan, and sent them into deep despair. Gandhi found the idea of the "vivisection" of India unbearable; the depression was worse for Ghaffar Khan. He had committed the fate of the North West Province, a 95% Muslim province, to Congress and a united India. He had also refused to support Jinnah and the Muslim League, describing them as advocates of the Muslim elites who did little for the masses.

On the political road to partition, the fragile project of Hindu-Muslim unity burst into fragments. From 1946 to early 1948, from Noakhali and Calcutta to Bihar and then to the Punjab and the North

West Frontier, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh Indians terrorized each other; some 500, 000 people were killed, and 15 million left their homes hoping to find security among their co-religionists. Ghaffar Khan commented to Gandhi that India had become "an inferno and my heart weeps to see our homes set on fire by ourselves."[6] Gandhi, Ghaffar Khan, and supporters went from village to village to bring hope and courage, preaching tolerance and nonviolence. In Bihar especially, the picture of the lean, tall figure of Ghaffar Khan next to Gandhi accompanied by friends captured the courage of the Satyagrahis, and showed the usefulness in the depth of human destructiveness of what Gandhi called Truth-force and Ghaffar Khan termed Service to God in restoring relative calm to social passions that have gone beyond the control of reason.

To those from all religions who cried for vengeance, Ghaffar Khan condemned them as ignorant of the meaning of religion whose hearts were empty of love. Proclaiming his admiration for all religions, he enunciated his own understanding of his religion, "My religion is truth, love, and service to God and humanity."[7]

Having supported Congress and rejected Jinnah and the Muslim League, he saw clearly that though the North West Frontier Province had voted in favor of a united India and Congress as the representative of all Indians in the 1937 and 1946 elections, the acceptance of partition on the basis of religion meant that Jinnah would claim the North West Frontier Province for Pakistan. In one of their final conversations Ghaffar Khan lamented to Gandhi that his people would now be under the domination of Pakistan to which Gandhi replied that he was filled with inner agony.

The imperial government's demand that the NWFP hold a referendum to determine its status made it clear that the British government had thrown its support behind Jinnah and the Muslim League, and effectively put an end to Ghaffar Khan's proposal of an independent *Pashtunistan.* Jinnah remained unbending and there followed a campaign of vilification of Ghaffar Khan and the *Khudai Khidmatgar*. The North West Frontier Province became part of Pakistan which was inaugurated on August 14, 1947. What little hope remained for Ghaffar Khan seemed ruined when news reached him of Gandhi's assassination on January 30, 1948.

Often ridiculed as a "Hindu," Ghaffar Khan attended the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in February 1948 to pledge his loyalty and the loyalty of Pashtuns to Pakistan, and to make his case for an autonomous *Pashtunistan* within Pakistan claiming that the name North West Frontier was given by the British.

Repeating that he had no desire to establish a sovereign state and to fragment Pakistan, he all the same explained why he could not support the Muslim League which he felt was more interested in political power and in preserving the dominance of the business, landed, and military elites than in serving the masses of people who were poor. He also explained why he had supported a united India and Congress, and why he was an advocate of nonviolence. Ghaffar Khan spoke the truth to the powerful as he understood it at all times, whether British, Indian, or Pakistani. There were principled positions that he would not compromise. When Jinnah advised him to join the Muslim League as the way to place the politics of his people along a more hopeful road, Ghaffar Khan was adamant that he could not support in principle the Muslim League but was committed to his Khudai Khidmatgar as the way to lead his people and Pakistan to a dignified future. Speaking before the Pakistan Parliament, he insisted that the Khudai Khidmatgar was a social and not a political movement, declaring that far from wanting to destroy Pakistan he saw advantage only in constructive action willing to serve Pakistan and its people.

Fearful that disgruntled opponents would rally around Ghaffar Khan, the Pakistan government arrested him and sentenced him to three years in prison, and unleashed a campaign of terror against the *Khudai Khidmatgar*. He was released in 1954 and was greeted enthusiastically when he returned home in 1955. Declaring that he continued to have faith in nonviolence which he understood as the force of love, he hoped that Pakistan would become a peace-loving country and play a role in peacemaking in international affairs.[8]

In making Ghaffar Khan its "prisoner of the year" in 1962, Amnesty International wanted to spotlight the fact that he had been incarcerated almost continuously since 1948 for his campaign for the rights of Pashtuns. His health had deteriorated so badly that he was released in 1964. It is of some interest that Ghaffar Khan spent 15 years in British jails and 16 years in Pakistan jails. Reflecting on the injustice meted out to him, he said that both British and Pakistan governments had used force to govern Pashtuns, and he wondered whether Pakistan would suffer the same fate as the British in India.[9]

When he learned in May 1964 that his friend Jawaharlal Nehru had died, he sent a moving note to his daughter Indira Gandhi praising her father as his friend who tried to put in practice Gandhi's ideals of love and peace on earth. After receiving medical treatment in London where he met Indira Gandhi, Ghaffar Khan accepted the offer of exile in Afghanistan and residence in Jalalabad. He was welcomed enthusiastically by the Prime Minister and thousands of Afghans where he was free to correspond and meet with close friends from his freedom struggle days like Pyarelal and Vinoba Bhave who expressed their sorrow over his suffering and the cruel treatment he received. They still assured him that he remained a beacon of hope for the Gandhian movement in the world. Ghaffar Khan replied to their earnest and warm letters by repeating old themes that he sometimes felt let down by his Congress comrades who could have done more to support his movement, and he believed that Gandhi would have helped them if he were alive. Pyarelal visited him in July 1965 and left a beautiful description of a man who was now 75 years old who suffered unjustly countless years of imprisonment, many of them in solitary confinement: "The countenance bore marks of intense suffering but the eyes beamed deep compassion, and an air of kindliness surrounded him."[10] But it was not the story of suffering that caught Pyarelal's attention. It was the courage and unconquerable spirit of this man of God. When asked what his future plans were, he replied that he was going to re-start the Khudai Khidmatgar movement and organize his people divided for centuries by Mughal, British and Pakistan governments. Pained that they were considered as an uncivilized people, and aware of how imperialist forces have ravaged their lands and cared little to uplift the people, he wanted to change this situation, to build schools and hospitals, and construct institutions of freedom so that they could stand on their feet before the world with pride.

At Pyarelal's invitation, Ghaffar Khan visited India in 1969 to commemorate the anniversary of Gandhi's birth at a time when Hindu-Muslim riots broke out. Crowds listened to him when he protested the communal riots and made a plea for harmony. He received the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding and a gift of 8 million rupees which he hoped to use for the revival of his newspaper and the welfare of the people.[11]

Ghaffar Khan returned to Pakistan from exile in 1972. He was ailing for many years, visiting hospitals in Delhi and the Soviet Union. India honored him with its highest award in 1987, the *Bharat Ratna*. Ghaffar Khan died in Peshawar on January 20, 1988, at the age of 98, and was buried in Jalalabad.

It is tempting to view the life and work of Ghaffar Khan as one more example of the failure of nonviolent struggles. Further, as we observe the fate of Pashtun people in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the crises in the world today, we are justified in asking what if Ghaffar Khan and the *Khudai Khidmatgar* had succeeded, what if India was not partitioned, what if Pakistan had welcomed Ghaffar

Khan and his movement. Such questions, of course, do not take into account the unpredictability of history. In one sense Gandhi had a finely honed sense of the long view of history when he told the *Khudai Khidmatgar* to cultivate the patience of one seeking to empty the ocean with a blade of grass. Echoing Gandhi, Ghaffar Khan forged his vision from his belief in love, truth, and service to God and humanity. A devout Muslim, he held that all religions should be respected equally, and that he himself had learned from other religions. Brotherhood for Ghaffar Khan meant love for all mankind. Shortly before his death, Ghaffar Khan uttered a warning that resonates in every part of the world: "The world needs Gandhi's message of love and peace more today than it ever did before, if it does not want to wipe out civilization and humanity itself."[12] .

The history of national and international conflicts since Gandhi's death does not reveal any significant development towards the victory of nonviolence. No sooner did colonial wars come to an end than the doctrines of the Cold War, nationalism, fundamentalism, and the national security state arose to justify violent means to protect what advocates call defensible ends or just wars. Developed as well as developing nations do not preclude policies of using the military to solve domestic and international conflict. This is not to say that nonviolent movements have not been successful.

The success of the civil rights movement of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the USA during the 1950s and 1960s was, perhaps, the most splendid illustration of the usefulness of the method of nonviolence outside of India. What, then, is the value of this discourse that examines Gandhi's life and nonviolent movement, and that of Abdul GhaffarKhan?

Joan V. Bondurant's magisterial work, *Conquest of Violence*, analyzed Gandhi's movement as a technique for social and political action and, in conceptualizing its meaning, methods and objectives, concluded that *Satyagraha* was universally applicable.[13] Categorizing Gandhian philosophy into objectives, principles, and policies, she put forward that Gandhi's objectives were independence (*Swaraj*) and uplift for all (*Sarvodaya*), while his means were nonviolence and adherence to truth. Aware that he had created *Satyagraha* as a way to resist unjust laws and, later, to transform and change the social system in India, Professor Bondurant argued that a *Satyagraha* movement sought to rectify an unjust situation by persuading opponents through reason of the justice of one's cause which, if it failed, would be followed by self-suffering as the next step of dramatizing the injustice. Finally, if both methods failed to bring about a rational discussion and solution, then nonviolent civil disobedience would be considered.

As Gandhi sought to define his nonviolent movement as Truth-force, he mined the rich potential of the traditional notion of *Ahimsa* or the refusal to injure other creatures in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religions. In addition, his Muslim, Christian, and Jewish friends and his own reading persuaded him that certain core values of Semitic religions supported nonviolence. Nor were Gandhi's sources only religious. In translating Plato's *Apology for Socrates* into Gujarati and distributing it to his supporters in South Africa and India, he made the figure of Socrates a quintessential Satyagrahi.[14] *Satyagraha* meant, then, the force of truth, love, and nonviolence. The Indian traditional imperative not to injure others was expanded to mean love, even love for the evil-doer.

Gandhi's insistence on the relative character of the human search for the truth played a significant part in his definition of *Satyagraha*. Unconvinced that any religious tradition was superior to others and persuaded that all traditions contained the truth partially, he brought this spiritual insight to the world of politics. He had learned early in South Africa of the Jain conception of relative truth. Since it was impossible to know the absolute truth, it was wrong to cause injury to an opponent who should be persuaded rationally and nonviolently to correct the injustice. Nevertheless, in spite of his view of the imperfect understanding of truth by human beings and institutions, he never stopped searching for

the Truth, which he called God and Love. It was precisely its elusive character that conditioned his understanding of truth as more of an awareness than a dogma. Gandhi created many "experiments" to test his spiritual development, some of which brought accusations of obscurantism. Moreover, he used the social and political needs of human beings as the criteria of truth. Love and nonviolence were the means to realize both freedom and uplift for all. As practiced by Gandhi, *Satyagraha* was rooted in a principled notion of truth. His belief that an understanding of truth was relative certainly contributed to his openness and willingness to change his mind on occasions. To affirm that nonviolence was the fruit of courage and not the weapon of the weak, he said that violent resistance against injustice was preferable to cowardice. His critics chided him with recruiting for the British in the Great War. Yet, as he grew older, he seemed to have become firmer in his conviction about the necessity of nonviolent means as he became more flexible on the objectives of his struggles.

It was vital to persuade opponents of the value of such a community, not win victories over them, because they were also to be included in the new community. Looked at from a realistic position, such a view seems utopian. But the holocausts and genocides, not to mention the countless little wars of the recent past, are evidence enough of the necessity of constructing communities where democracy and diversity are respected in the hope that such cruelties and destructiveness are not repeated. There have been many who were influenced by Gandhi's *Satyagraha* movement, most of whom were ordinary men and women who found in the life and activity of Gandhi the inspiration to fight against injustice.

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[1] See the affectionate picture by his son Khan Abdul Wali Khan, "Life and Thought of Badshah Khan," in *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. A Centennial Tribute*, ed. By Ravinder Kumar, Delhi, 1995, pp. 1-21; see also Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *My Life and Struggle*, Delhi, 1969; Jean Akhtar Cerrina, *Islam's Peaceful Warrior: Abdul Ghaffar Khan. A great Leader in the nonviolent tradition of Gandhi and Martin Luther King*, New York: Ex Libris Corp., 2003; Eknath Easwaran, *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam*, California: Nilgiri Press, 199; Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 131-144.
[2] Pyarelal and Sushila Nayar, *In Gandhiji's Mirror,* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 151-165.
[3] See D.G. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Faith is a Battle*, Bombay: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1967, p. 167.
[4] *Ibid*., p. 181.
[5] *Ibid*., p. 236.
[6] *Ibid*., p. 403.
[7] See Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *My Life and Struggle*, p. 195.
[8] See S. Rao, and S. Sohoni, "Badshah Khan: Islam and Nonviolence," in *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. A Centennial Tribute*, pp. 35-49.
[9] He said that he could not hide his feelings about Pakistan because its treatment of Pakhtoons was more cruel and unjust than the British. See Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *My Life and Struggle*, p. 208.
[10] See D.G. Tendulkar, *op. cit.*, p. 524, 527.
[11] See Shev Zaman Taizi, "Bacha Khan in Afghanistan, June 2002," http://www.asianreflection.com/khanafghanistan.shtar/
[12] See Damon Lynch, "Two Islamic Soldiers," http://www.asianreflections.com/twoislamic soldiers.shtul. October 2001; see also Amitabh Pal, "A Pacifist Uncovered," *The Progressive*, February 2002. www.progressive.org/0901/pal0202.html
[13] Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence. The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, revised edition, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 3-35.
[14] *CWMG*, 8, p. 174..