



YUVA BHARATI

Voice of Youth

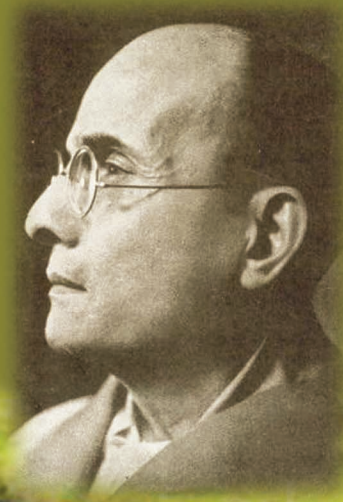
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Goddess
and the
'ism' in us



Leap
for
Liberty



Right To Work...

Invocation

अग्ने नय सुपथा रायेऽस्मान्
विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्यस्मज् जुहुराणम् एनो
भोयिष्ठां ते नम उक्तिं विधेम ॥

agne naya supathā rāye'smān
viśvāni deva vayunāni vidvān ।
yuyodhyasmaj juhurāṇam eno
bhooyiṣṭhām te nama uktiṁ vidhema ॥

O Agni! Lead us on the righteous path for wealth.
Lord! Thou art the knower of all the ways.
Remove from us the sin that leads us astray.
We address our prayers to thee again and again.

The intelligent and the inane



We are starting to hear cries from our brothers, loud and sustained relatively speaking, about the injury that TRP-drunk media-houses inflict on our cultural identity. This is indeed a fact, that the media-houses in their never-satiated greed to grab more eyeballs and hold them for longer and engaged in the never-ending battle of the share market, have at best forgotten the ethos that their role demands or are wilfully violating them in pursuit of money and power. The result is a skew in the perception of the people towards our cultural values and the practices that retain this cultural identity among the people.

While this is an undeniable fact, we must also not fall into the trap of developing an obsessive-compulsive rejection of what the media is presenting as biased information. After all, in this age when even local cablewallas run their own channels, if there is no Hindu media today, we have nobody else but ourselves to blame.

It is essential that we have to know our enemy, but it is absolutely imperative that we know ourselves first. It is a sign of childishness to crib about being bullied and not having the means to respond. It is, naturally, not a method that one would expect a strong-willed society that boasts of having the greatest warriors in its lineage, not to mention the glorious strategists and administrators. In the recent times, an issue about a popular “Godman” (as sannyasis are being called now) has become a huge talking point for people who detest our culture and those that crib about being unfairly portrayed to be demoniac. This issue can be used to diagnose what ails the Hindu society today: a sense of smallness and a drowning feeling of helplessness and an internalization of the accusations thrown by others. Screaming foul, after all, is surely not the way a valiant fighter would respond to a challenge! It is the response of a weakling who has no other recourse to end his misery.

There are allegations about this self-claimed sadhu indulging in actions that are not becoming of a person of his stature and living. And this person is said to have entered into “contracts”, whatever that may mean, with women to engage in “advanced learning programs”. There can be no claim towards any lies in these statements as heard in the media as the person himself or authorised people who talk on his behalf have said as much. Then came the damning hi-tech response to the problem: a you-tube video claiming he had done “nothing illegal”. Pardon me, but if he considered the legality of his actions more important than the morality of his actions, I can confidently say my 12

year old son is a better person than this person is made out to be. Wasn't it Mark Twain who said there are more than enough people to stand up for physical battles but none to fight the moral ones?

Let's be fair: allegations are just that, and certainly not anything more. The instant response of people who value Hindu traditions to these allegations was a knee-jerk "all this is a lie" and "this is a conspiracy to defame Hindu traditions". It is not that everybody who says this are involved with the person under question or have a stake in the outcome of the issue, though some definitely do. It is just that people are so simplistic even when it comes to issues of such magnitude. While it is heartening to note that at least we now have the lung power to make ourselves heard better, compared to 2004 for example, it is silly to shout ourselves hoarse over an issue where the person himself has accepted the allegations as true. We can be pretty confident that anybody who says these things has not seen the video that triggered this storm. "But all this is a video gimmick", "the missionaries have world-class morphing facilities in the US", "this is a world-wide plan to weaken Hinduism" are commonly heard rants. If money can buy such wonderful morphing capabilities don't you think Bollywood, with all the money from cricket also flowing in nowadays, would have used it at least once? Such rants will only portray us as having the levels of intelligence possessed by the fanatic Tamils who still believe Velupillai Prabhakaran is alive and planning a revolution and those that vehemently deny that the Jewish holocaust ever happened.

Let's forget, for the moment, the downright silliness of the reaction. But such a reaction can be understood if we remember that Hindus have come to see themselves as weak and as victims. It is only a scrawny man that cannot take even a small jab and tries to fend off everything and a beggar that hangs on to every shard. A heart of a real fighter is not only one that urges towards victory but also one that has the strength to withstand the hardest of the enemy's blows. If one self-claimed saint has been found to be morally wrong in this case (legally shouldn't matter in the long term for the Hindu tradition), we should have the confidence in our system to stand up and say it was only the individual and not the system that was wrong. But we never hear anything even close to that in public discourse from people that speak for Hinduism. The abusers are not going to stop if that is done, but they are not going to stop anyways. Anybody, especially wielding considerable power, who attempts to protect immorality risks creating a blemish on Hinduism like the one the Catholic Church has created for itself by institutionally and intentionally protecting priests who sexually abused children. It is time somebody put a stop to all this hullabaloo and reminded the Hindus that one man doesn't have the power and cannot be used to demolish thousands of years of tradition however big the institution that he created just a few years ago is and however big his PR empire may be. Let's leave this nonsense alone, move on and start fighting the real battles that Hinduism is facing.

P.Vasanth
YB-ET

RIGHT TO WORK AND NOT to THE FRUITS THEREOF

Prof.P.Ramani

We live in an age and in a world full of challenges, the challenges of globalization, global warming, erosion of moral and ethical codes, crimes against humanity, imbalance between the haves and have-nots, corrupt practices in the judiciary, executive and administrative structures and total bankruptcy of all minimum human values. Yet the world pulls along with no real destination to seek. The working class engages itself in dealing with mundane activities seeking trivial benefits and rights. Humanity has lost itself to the vagaries of a bonded life. But people talk of freedom, dignity, right to living, housing, health education, speech and so on. But they have failed to understand the real purpose of life. Right

to work and compensation for the work carried out are the popular mantras of the day. Can we perpetuate, the inglorious and ignoble practices on this Dharma Boomi, Bharat for ever? How can we ever liberate ourselves from the vestigial remnants of deceptive past which has landed us into the ignominious present. The time has now come to make an introspection and seek truth. We can greatly benefit by seeking truth from the inner self. Unfortunately, we have missed the most precious gifts provided by our ancient scriptures and practices.

Your right is to work only, but never to the fruits there of. Be not instrumental in making your actions bear fruit, nor let your attachment be to inaction. –Bhagavad Gita,(Chapter II Verse 47)

Perform your duties established in yoga, renouncing attachment. Be even-tempered in success and failure evenness of temper is called yoga. – Bhagavad Gita,(Chapter II verse 48)

I think, we have to reorient ourselves and our thoughts in the light of the verses cited above.

The essence of the spirit of Bhagavad Gita can be best understood from these two verses.

A conversation between two great friends (Bhagavan and his ardent devotee, namely

Lord Krishna and Arjuna) proves to be a spiritual discourse for all of us. May be, Lord Krishna awaits an opportunity to bless his devotees, to impart spiritual knowledge for the well being of humankind. In yoga practice, we don't practice for ourselves but we practice for the divine. The only aim is to work for the will of the divine in the world to effect a spiritual transformation. The object is not 'mukthi' for the individual, though mukthi is a necessary condition of the yoga. The object is to liberate



and transform all human beings. What we aim to achieve is 'ananda' not for the individual but to make the divine ananda descend upon the entire earth. Every yoga seeks to lead the 'Sadhak' towards the divine and unite him with the divine. Sri Aurobindo has made use of the quintessence of all yogas and emphasizes the synthesis of karma, gnana and bhakthi yoga. Sri Aurobindo leads us through a four stage process to karma yoga.

Karma Yoga

Stage I

The realization of karma yoga can be best understood by studying Gita. Sri Aurobindo has enlarged the perspectives as propounded in the Bhagavad Gita. We believe that we do everything. But we should believe that we work only for the Divine. We should believe in the dictum 'sarvam krishnarpanamastu' (Everything is dedicated to Krishna).

Stage II

We should not try to expect any fruit for our action. We should take the result of our actions with equanimity, with no feelings of joy or sorrow. We must surrender ourselves before Him.

Stage III

When we master the first two stages, we shall realize that we are not the doers and we are only the instruments of the Divine. Through Bhakti and self-surrender, we can qualify for his divine grace.

Stage IV

Once we become instruments of the divine and shed our ego and all the forms of attachments, we become committed to the work we do. Thus, karma yoga prepares us for jnana yoga.

Gnana yoga – the yoga of divine knowledge

To become enlightened, we must seek knowledge. To learn Maths, Physics and Chemistry is one thing. To develop consciousness beyond these knowledge factors and to understand the infinite Divine is yet another.

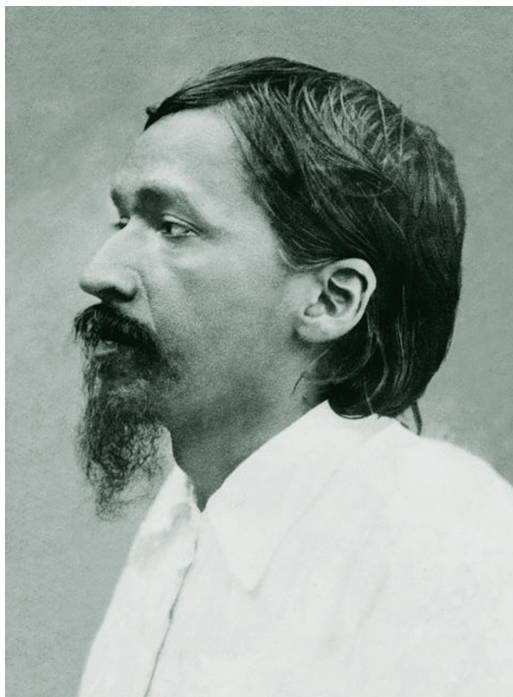
Vedantic philosophy tells us that this knowledge to understand the infinite consciousness which is ineffable is the only truth in this ever changing world.

How can we realize this infinite consciousness? At best, to begin with, we can achieve through a series of sessions on 'Atma vichara' and meditation and reflection and slowly graduate

towards higher realms of knowledge and thought processes. We must understand that the primary duty of every human being is to understand the infinite consciousness. We should develop an attitude of detachment. We should not believe that we have to renounce work. If we renounce work, the transformation of the mind, the vital and the body can never become a possibility. The idea is that we should get rid of all forms of attachments. The moment we shed 'ego' and 'falsehood', we will definitely feel the presence of the infinite 'ananda'. We cannot seek total renunciation like the yogis and

munis to merge with 'Brahman'. However, as Sri Aurobindo believed we can seek inner renunciation through 'self-introspection' or 'atma vichara' with a sense of detachment from the worldly pleasures. We must constantly reflect on the basic truth that we are not the body, the vital or the mind but an eternal, infinite immortal entity.

Bhakti Yoga – the yoga of Divine love



The principle of Sri Aurobindo's Bhakti yoga is to utilize all normal relationships of human life and make efforts to realize the Divine. Meditation and prayers take us nearer God. Pure and intense thoughts of the God can take us towards him more easily.

A devotee or practitioner of any form of yoga can seek realization of God. But Sri Aurobindo teaches us the trimarga or synthesis of yoga, namely, aspiration, rejection and surrender.

Aspiration

We must aspire to seek His divine grace. This can be best achieved through 'vichara'. A study of scriptures can help us in enhancing our faith; we may also do 'japa' and 'tapa'. Then, we may undertake some work and perform it for the sake of Divine.

Rejection

We should reject mind's undesirable elements, beliefs, opinions, ideas, etc. We must free ourselves from undesirable desires, wants, demands, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, greed, envy,

jealousy, lust, dishonesty, ego, etc.

The best way to overcome all these petty things can only be through 'prayers'.

Surrender

Finally, surrendering our self before the infinite divine can take us to higher realms of joy. But self-surrender is the most difficult to practice. But it is possible with some efforts and through true renunciation. We should believe that the body, mind and life no longer belong to us.

Let us, as sons and daughters of the greatest nation, Bharat Mata learn to keep performing our duties without worrying much about the results and seek enlightenment and rejuvenation.

How can we do this in the modern materialistic society which is bereft of any value system but has fixed some price for every kind of work carried out.

Only Sri Aurobindo can lead us to the kindly light Bhagavan Krishna in our endeavour to seek right to work and not to the fruit thereof.

PROSPEROUS INDIA

Indian tradition emphasized economic activities

P .K anagasabapathi

India is an ancient civilization with thousands of years of history. It is almost impossible to find out the period of birth of the country due to her remote antiquity. This is the reason why the national poet Subramania Bharathi proudly noted: "Even the archeologists who find out what happened during the ancient periods find it difficult to trace as to when India was born; Such is the nature of our motherland."

We know that India is a great country, where many great rishis and sages lived and where the immortal writings such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharatha and the Ramayana were executed. Many of us also know that for centuries knowledge and wisdom spread out from here to the different parts of the world. Some of us may also know that India was a pioneer in diverse fields such as mathematics, literature, science, medicine, technology, astronomy, philosophy and religion.

But these facts alone cannot explain India. She is much more. Maharishi Aurobindo noted that India possessed abundant energy and creativity in diverse fields over many centuries continuously: "For three thousand years at least, - it is indeed much longer, - she has been creating abundantly and incessantly, lavishly, with an inexhaustible many-sidedness, republics and kingdoms and empires, philosophies and cosmogonies and sciences and creeds and arts and poems and all kinds of monuments, palaces and temples and public works, communities and societies and religious orders, laws and codes and rituals, physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of Yoga, systems of politics and administration, arts spiritual, arts worldly, trades, industries, fine crafts, - the list is endless and in each item there is almost a plethora of activity. She creates and creates and is not satisfied and is not tired; she will not have an

end of it, seems hardly to need a space for rest, a time for inertia and lying fallow. She expands too outside her borders; her ships cross the ocean and the fine superfluity of her wealth brims over the Judea and Egypt and Rome; her colonies spread her arts and epics and creeds in the Archipelago; her traces are found in the sands of Mesopotamia; her religions conquer China and Japan and spread westward as far as Palestine and Alexandria, and the figures of the Upanishads and the sayings of the Buddhists are re-echoed on the lips of Christ. Everywhere, as on her soil, so in her works there is the teeming of a superabundant energy of life....."

Not many of us know that India remained a world leader in the fields of economics, business and trade also. Experts note that the Indus Valley civilization that flourished between 2800 BCE and 1800 BCE had an advanced and flourishing economic system. Archeological evidences indicate that there were well planned cities during those times.

Studies show that business and trade were vibrant even in the earliest periods. Business historian Agarwala observes: "Even some 53 centuries ago, the people were linked in a vast trade network. Much of Harappa's trade undoubtedly travelled along the Ravi river, eventually reaching the Indus. And some of it surely went by that main stream river to Mohenjodaro, Harappa's sister city some 400 miles to the south." India's trade was not confined to the borders of the country. It extended beyond the boundaries to many distant lands. Agarwala mentions: "Archeological excavations testify to the existence of the ports of Lothal (Gujarat) and Rann of Kutch, Dholavira which have extensive trade exchanges in the time of the Indus Valley civilization with the Dilmun civilization of

Bahrain and Kuwait in 3000 BC and later.”

Historians note that Indians had trade contacts with far off lands like the Middle East, Roman Empire and South East Asia even during the earlier periods. India's trade relationship extended to different parts of the world with the setting up of trading colonies in other countries.

Most of us have a feeling that economic development, business and trade are all products of modern economic systems, which were born in the western countries after the industrial revolution. But evidences testify that India had her own advanced economic system and India was actively engaged in international trade as early as five thousand years ago. We have to remember here that some of the western countries of the contemporary periods were 'born' only in the last few hundred years. The noted economic historian Andre Gunder Frank asserts categorically: "So it is wrong to attribute the birth of capitalism to the European nations. It is even more wrong to assume that the economic development began with 'the rise of the west.'"

Any country cannot evolve an active economic system within a short period. A country cannot engage in international trade with exportable products without the necessary skills and expertise. The country should have had strong fundamentals built over centuries to remain an active economy with heavy presence in international trade.

Hence India must have developed her economic system over many centuries even before the time of the Indus Valley civilization. She must have taken necessary steps to cultivate the required expertise to make exportable products through serious efforts for many centuries before that period. Only then could India have had an advanced economic system during those periods.

So the notion that the Indian tradition concentrated only on godly and metaphysical matters concerned with the 'other world' and did not take interest in aspects related to the economy and business is totally wrong. India did attach importance to the making of wealth since the earlier times. The scriptures, sages and traditions emphasized people to engage

in productive economic activities and create wealth. The Rig-Veda, believed to have been written five thousand years ago and considered as the oldest sacred text in the world, underlines this point through the following words: "Let a man think well on wealth, and strive to win it by the path of,

Law and by Worship....." The popular Tamil scripture Thirukkural, urged everyone to engage in making wealth.

The kings were advised to plan the economic policies and participate continuously in the management of the economy. Arthashastra, the first book of economics in the world, advises the king to be "ever active in the management of the economy because the root of wealth is economic activity; inactivity brings material distress. Without an active policy, both current prosperity and future gains are destroyed" The states were also advised to plan for efficient and diversified economies. Arthashastra notes: "the main guiding principles of the administration of the economy were that the state should run a diversified economy actively, efficiently, prudently and profitably."

It is important for the modern youth to understand that the Indian tradition emphasized different economic activities for creating wealth and achieving material prosperity.



Andre Gunder Frank

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Leap for liberty- it shook the world !!

Manoj Shankar Naik

Down the memory lane:

It was the 7th day of July 1910. An Indian revolutionary arrested in London was being brought to India by the sea route in a steamer. It had been anchored at the port of Marseilles off the coast of France in the evening due to some engine trouble. As the night fell, sleep eluded the heavily guarded young revolutionary for he sensed a heaven sent opportunity of escape. When the dawn of 8th July broke, he sought the permission of the guards to attend the call of nature. Once inside the water closet, he acted with amazing swiftness. Bolting the door of water closet from within, he jumped up, squeezed himself through the narrow porthole at the top of water closet using gymnastic skills, plunged into the sea and was swimming away to freedom. The born hero of Hindustan had escaped !

He was none other than Vinayak Damodar Savarkar better known by the legendary epithet *Swatantryaveer* prefixed to his name.

Capture and re-arrest :

The guards noticed Savarkar swimming away from the steamer and fired bullets at him. Ducking under water every now and then to avoid the bullets, he swam on for about 10 minutes and climbed the harbour of Marseilles on reaching there. The pursuers caught up with him and captured him with the help of French policeman. Savarkar, an Oxford educated barrister had sound knowledge of law and kept arguing that his arrest on French soil was gross violation of international law

but to no avail. The French policeman had been bribed to hand over Savarkar and he was brought back to India.

International Furore:

The escape of Savarkar, his illegal arrest on French soil and subsequent trial highlight two things- firstly, the importance of this event in Indian history, nay the history of world and secondly the complete neglect shown by Indian historians in academic history written for school curriculum. Mark the following facts.



M. Jean Longuet

- Savarkar was the first political prisoner in the history of world whose "arrest issue" was fought out in the International Court of Justice at Hague.
- He was also the first political prisoner who was sentenced to fifty years of imprisonment in Andamans – half a century of deportation- unheard, unsurpassable and unique event in the history of world !!
- Savarkar's daring bid at escape was flashed by international news agency Reuter. His arrest was strongly condemned by M. Jean Longuet , the grandson of Karl Marx in French news paper *L' Humanite*. Even the great Russian literary figure Maxim Gorky praised the heroism of Savarkar and denounced the British government for savage sentence inflicted on Savarkar.
- International press journals (*L' Eclair*, *L' Monde*, *Le Temps*, *Le Matin* , *Daily*

Mail, Der Wanderer, The Freewoman, The Morning Post to name a few) voiced their protest against the violation of International law due to arrest of Savarkar and also his subsequent deportation. The protests, criticism and condemnation could be heard around the world by the ambassadors and embassies of countries like Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, France, America, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Paraguay.

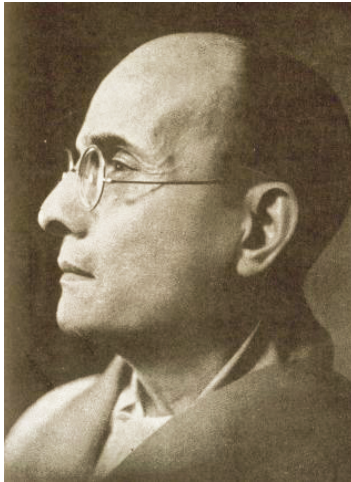
- Even in England itself, Guy. A. Aldred, the editor of *Herald of revolt* fought vociferously for release of Savarkar by appeals, speeches, and series of articles written on behalf of "Savarkar Release Committee" established in London.
- Such was the impact created by this singular event in Savarkar's life that his biography had appeared in almost all the European languages when he was still in his twenties- he had become a legend at too young an age and European press hailed him as martyr. Need it be added then that his biographies have appeared in almost all Indian languages? In a letter written to M. Pierre Khorat (a French biographer of Savarkar), Professor F.M. Zandrine of Italy compared Savarkar to Joseph Mazzini, the father founder of Italy.

The international furore created by the epic escape of Savarkar made the world at large aware of Indian freedom movement !

Yet Indian history books do not make even a cursory mention of this epoch making event of Indian history. It is no wonder that writers

like Manini Chatterjee take advantage by underplaying the event as *Marathi folklore* (Indian Express, Mumbai, Sept 21, 2004). An international event of epic dimensions which drew the attention of the entire globe is given a regional touch; besides the word folklore implies an element of fiction and exaggeration and thus misrepresents this event. Can shamelessness go further?

Memorial to Savarkar- will it materialise ?



Veer Savarkar



Guy. A. Aldred

But the world is not ignorant of history. The French government has paid a tribute to Savarkar's bravery by granting permission for construction of Veer Savarkar's memorial at France. We are now in the year 2010, exactly 100 years have passed since this epic escape took place. Retired IAS officer V. Sundaram writes in *News Today*, an English evening daily published from Chennai- "...the fair and equitable Government of France gave permission for the installation of a statue of Veer Savarkar as early as in 1999. The shameless antinational Government

of India is sitting tight over the request seeking permission for the installation of the statue of this greatest freedom fighter in Indian history. A doubt, therefore, arises in the minds of all patriotic Indians that we might be deprived of a historic memorial to Veer Savarkar owing to the treacherous and treasonable apathy of the Indian Government. It is the duty of all of us nationalistic citizens of this country to see that this memorial is constructed."

Harsh might seem the words but they tell the truth. From Tilak to Lala Lajpatrai, Mahatma Gandhi to Subhash Bose, C. Rajaji to Ras Behari Bose and innumerable patriots have written or spoken glowingly about Savarkar's dedication, integrity, patriotism- they cannot be recounted here for

want of space.

Even England has honoured Savarkar. In 1985, The Greater London Council put a Blue Plaque (symbol of British honour) outside India House where Savarkar lived during his revolutionary days. On the plaque are inscribed the words-“ Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966)- Indian Patriot and Philosopher lived here.” Unveiling the plaque,97 year old Fenner Brockway who had closely observed the Indian freedom struggle spoke glowingly on the unflinching patriotism of Savarkar. He further added that Savarkar had thought of Indian Independence much before Indian National Congress. Sunil Gavaskar had been invited as chief guest.

But after independence the Congress party has always claimed credit of independence for itself . It has rarely given any credit to the revolutionaries and has always drummed one theme-The Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi won independence by non- violence. It is noteworthy that in an interview given to the Marathi daily *Loksatta* (dated 10/12/09), Lata Mangeshkar, the queen of melody and winner of highly acclaimed Bharat Ratna award lamented the fact that after achieving independence we Indians failed to give Veer Savarkar the honour which he richly deserved. She further added that this failure on the part of independent India would always remain as a painful thing in her heart throughout her life.

(PS: 28th May is the birth anniversary of Veer Savarkar)Manoj Shankar Naik,
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Goddess and the 'ism' in us

S.Aravindhan

Indian culture is a unique culture in the whole world. Its uniqueness is not from any revelation of a non-human divine source in the sky but in its ability to evolve and sustain a civilization based on natural diversity and its human corollary pluralism at all levels of existence. Many Indologists have tried to project Hinduism as a colonial construct. They have argued that it was a hybrid between what they call 'Brahminism' and colonial tendency to categorize things based on the Protestant notion of 'ism's. The word 'Hindu' itself they point out is of foreign origin. There is a tendency among urban-Hindus to accept this categorization either explicitly or implicitly. Thus Vedas become a revelation rather than Vedic insights of the seers being inner-truths they discovered and which they want every human to discover for himself /herself. Often this leads to the construction of a Hinduism that mirrors Abrahamic religions in its outlook, reactions and responses. Puranas and Ithihasas become literal histories with their poetic beauty and inner explorations lost. A confrontation with science sets in. Timelines clash. Stagnation of mind and society gets hailed as virtue.

In the interaction if not the clash of civilizations

such posturing will not help. What is more, they will inevitably harm the Hindu cause.

We need to understand that Hinduism is not the religion of the concrete jungle but the forest. In fact the entire Hindu civilization has its roots in the forest. The Poet explains:



India's best ideas have come when man was in communion with trees and rivers and lakes, away from the crowds. The peace of the forest has helped the intellectual evolution of man. The culture of the forest has fueled the culture of Indian society. The culture that has arisen from the forest has been influenced by the diverse processes of renewal of life which are always at play in the forest, varying

from species to species, from season to season, in sight and sound and smell.

Not from the sky in the form of threatening commandments did our civilization rise but from the forests in the form of loving insights. Not a changeless order that strangles the human spirit but a changing vibrant dynamic rhythm that is the essence of all existence.

Goddess symbolizes that.

In *Chilapathikaram*, (Tamil Epic of the Anklet) the Jain saint who wrote it gives us a glimpse of that primeval (not primitive) image of that Goddess- and to him it should have come—from where? Neolithic times...we can only guess.

You stand enveloped by the
skin of the elephant, tiger
skin adoring Your waist You
stand on the head of the dark
buffaloe. Stand
as the way You
stand all Celestials
prostrate before
You. You stand on
the scriptures as
their Scripture Very
light of the Gnosis
Thou art and
Unwavering flame
of wisdom Thou
stand.

This is the imagery of a primordial tribal Feminine figurine – clothed in the skins of wild animals, and She stands on the scriptures – the so-called revealed wisdom, on all traditions and customs and the ways of life that society imposes on truth. But she is the uncontrollable wild Truth to which as Swami Vivekananda said societies should bow their head or perish. She is in the individual the ultimate experience of Truth. She is worshipped by tribal ballads and before Her Celestials prostrate.

In the Western cultures she was humiliated and exiled as Pandora and Eve and she was ignored as Gaia. As Sophia she is unsung appendage of an inhuman Bronze Age invention called god. The Western humanity would have to wait for two thousand years enduring the brutal killing of Hypatia, burning of the libraries of Alexandria, witch hunts, inquisition, colonization and genocides in Africa and Americas. Then their science discovered Her

tentatively and hesitatingly as Gaia.

But let us return to India.

Goddess as Consciousness –the essence of all Existence as primeval feminine- standing on the revealed wisdom, is an imagery that is as beautiful and as it is persistence throughout India. In Upanishad she appears as Uma and humbles the Devas who pride themselves with their power and victory over demons. She makes Indra know the Brahman.



Sri Lalitha Sahasranama (Thousand names of the Beautiful Goddess) speaks of Vedic scriptures wearing the dust in the feet of the Goddess on their forehead. The imagery is also repeated in the enchanting poetry of Abhirami Bhattar of seventeenth century we again have the imagery of Vedas being the pedestal on which the Goddess stands. In the spiritual-social reform movement of Ayya Vazhi in South Travancore in the eighteenth century one finds the same symbolism – here the Vedic scripture is substituted by the thousand petal lotus and the pure flame of consciousness is depicted

arising above it.

This placing of the individual realization and spiritual experience over organized systems is the underlying feature of Hindu civilization. This is the only civilization of the Goddess that has survived from the neolithic times when humanity discovered the Goddess in the cycles of nature around them, above them and within them. She represents freedom and liberty; she represents diversity and pluralism and she embodies the Truth which transcends not only the narrow walls that the humanity has built but the very confines of space and time. Hinduism is worth defending and dying for –

for in Hindu civilization alone Goddess lives and reigns.

Hinduism is the religion of the developing country or a third world nation. And Hindu civilization today is pitted in a competition against predatory cultures which have the backing of developed countries. An impoverished society has to choose its tools of fight and defense in a war it never initiated. It is of course tempting to imitate the aggressor and answer in his own coin for the acts of transgression he does. To use his tools we need to reorganize or at least project ourselves like the aggressor. And that leads to the legendary situation of slayer of the dragon becoming the dragon. The defenders of Dharma then have to search for knowledge-intensive intelligent ways of resistance. Democratic pluralistic cost-effective path ways which are at once decentralized and well-networked have to be evolved at the grass roots.

This is the fight of the Goddess and the fight of the Goddess it should be – not any ‘ism’.

Meaning of Dharma Ways to protect it

N. Krishnamoorti

Sumati: Mother! There is so much degradation of our religion, culture and public life. Why does not God take an **Avatara** to protect Dharma and rejuvenate it as He has promised in the Gita!

Mother: God's ways are strange. In Rama Avatara He came down personally, destroyed rakshasas. In Krishna Avatara, He not only annihilated rakshasas, Himself, He also instructed Arjuna and goaded him to work for protecting Dharma. Therefore God gives us Dharmashastras to teach us what to do in hours of crises.

Tasmac chastram pramanam te
karyakaryavyavasthitou

Jnatva sastravidhanoktam karma kartum iha
rhasi (Gita 16/24)

Who knows? In future Avataras He may even motivate people to think for themselves and act to protect Dharma. Jacques Monod a Nobel Laureate says Human evolution teaches man to direct the growth of man. Man himself will decide how to grow

uddhared atmana 'tmanam na' tmanam
avasadayet

Sumati: That will be a great burden and strain on Mankind!

Mother: What else will God do? Spoon feed him? Make man's life struggle-free? Then mankind will lose all zest for life with nothing to achieve, nothing to do, nothing to strive for! God comes to uplift man, not to make him lazy and dependent. This effort to achieve and facilitate the process of speeding up human

destiny is called **Purushartha**!

Sumati: Why should we struggle at all? Why don't we reconcile to the inevitable?

Mother: To struggle, to find to achieve not to yield in Man's Dharma! His very nature 1) Swabhavastu pravartate, 2) Kartum Na Ichchasi yan mohat karishyasi avashopi tat 3) Nigrah: kim karishyati, 4) Vayur navam ivambhasi forces him to make efforts.

Sumati: What is Dharma?

Mother: It is Hindu's way of life; the word Dharma has been variously interpreted as 1) Ordinance 2) Usage 3) Duty 4) Right 5) Justice 6) Morality 7) Virtue 8) Religion 9) Good works 10) Function 11) Characteristic 12) Supporter and sustainer. In the Kathopanishad the word Dharma is interpreted as Atman itself!

Sumati: What does it mean in practical life?

Mother: It means how you are – achara (character) and how you behave (vyavahara). In case you commit a mistake how quickly do you correct yourself (prayaschitta).

Sumati: When do I practise Dharma?

Mother: Practising Dharma is not a part – time job. Dharma covers all your thoughts and actions. Dharmic activities start when you are conceived in your Mother's womb, and they covers the life for twenty one generations of your descendants! When a human being is born he / she is like an animal, by the practice of Dharma by his / her parents, himself / herself / and the sons and daughters, a person is converted into a full-fledged human being and is gathered

into Devas and merges into the Perfect Man. Therefore Dharma is a behavioural code for taking a human being into Paramatman. It is also a code for establishing relations - your relation with your true self, your relation with your parents, relationship with all the society, your relationship with the entire nature, the panchabhutas, the living beings, including the vegetation.

Sumati: Modern science also talks about the “web of life”, synergy, the interrelatedness of all that exists.

Mother: But the concept is very old. Our relationship with the entire inanimate Nature is defined by the word YAJNA. Man’s relation with the entire society is regulated by DANA. Man’s good behaviour in his personal life is called ‘TAPASYA’. A human being is very patiently, carefully, lovingly trained to practise Dharma.

Sumati: Are there various types of Dharma?

Mother: Yes, general observances such as truthfulness, ahimsa, efforts, surrender to God, non-stealing, cleanliness are common to every one, irrespective of social status or position or age group. They are called Sadharana Dharma. This is what Patanjali, Sri Krishna, Buddha and Gandhiji recommended for the entire society. Patanjali calls them Yama and Niyama. Then there is Vishesha Dharma. When you are ill, I shall not give you a bath. I shall sprinkle a little Gangajal on your head. When there are many guests in our house, I am busy I may not go to our temple but just bow down in the direction of our village temple. Next is Apath Dharma. When one’s life is in danger, a person should save his life even if it involves telling a lie or hurting others. Only Sannyasins are allowed to die for truth. For others saving the body to protect Dharma is called Apath - Dharma.

Sumati: I remember Dharmaraja Yudhisthira saying “**Ashwattama iti kunjara**” to escape the danger of being imprisoned and killed by Drona. Is this Apath-Dharma?

Mother: Yes. But that does not absolve a person from punishment. As soon as the danger is gone, the person should practise - prayascitta dharma, an expiating act. Fasting, Gangasnan,

Shiva Darshan etc. Finally all human beings should strive to get spiritual liberation. It is Moksha Dharma.

Sumati: Are all these dharmas to be practised every day?

Mother: Those that are to be practised daily are called Nitya Dharma - Love, truth, charity, worship of God, Swadhyay etc. There are special acts like long pilgrimage, Satyanarayana Puja, temple conservation etc which are performed occasionally. They are called Naimittika Dharmas. They are occasional.

Sumati: Why is Dharma given so much importance in our culture?

Mother: Dharma is our very life – breath. It covers every aspect of our existence. Dharma regulates every second, every day, every paksha, every month, every Ayana, Samvatsara, of our life, our entire life, so that each person can lead a happy, ethical, purposeful and useful life leading to public welfare, National welfare and universal welfare. Our work, food, prayer, gifts, tapasya, every fragment of life is governed and guided by Dharma, so that we can make the best out of our life, a rare gift of God, Human Birth in the Punya Bhoomi of Bharata.

Sumati: What is the relation between God and dharma?

Mother: God has revealed himself as Dharma, Dharma Shastra.

Tasmac chastram pramanam te
karyakaryavyavasthitou

Jnatva sastravidhanoktam karma kartum iha
rhasi (Gita 16/24)

God is 1) Dharma – the law of life. 2) Dharmakrit. He made the Dharma. He follows it. 3) Dharmagup - He protects Dharma. 4) Dharmayupa: He is the sacrificial post for the Dharmas. 5) Dharma viduttama: the best among the knowers of Dharma. 6) Dharmadhyaksha: the Lord (Head) of Dharma. 7) Dharmi – the supporter of Dharma.

Sumati: How has God revealed the Dharma to us?

Mother: Through the Vedas. Gautama Dharma Sutra says Vedo Dharma moolam – Tadvidam Smritishee. Manu goes one step further. He says (2/6) Vedokhilo Dharma moolam smritishee cha tadvidam Acharaschaiva sadhoonam Atmanastushthireva cha. 1) The whole Veda is the foremost source of Dharma and 2) next the tradition and 3) practise of those that know it (the Veda). And further the 4) usages of virtuous men and 5) self-satisfaction.

Sumati: Who are the saints and rishis who codified Dharma?

Mother: Dharma is not born from books. It has emanated from wonderfully vibrant God and Men of impeccable character, disarming simplicity, exemplary conduct and inspiring love. Bhishma pitamah says “Achara prabhavo Dharma: Dharmasya Prabhurachyutah: Dharma is born of good and proper behaviour; Achyuta is the Lord of Dharma. It is the beauty of life that inspires others; not inhibited, deliberate and structured behaviour learnt from books! Therefore, our sciences like temple- architecture say that whenever you get a doubt, follow the footsteps of an elderly professional. The code for house-hold rituals says: Everything cannot be reduced to writing; see the elderly lady of good character and do as she does!

Sumati: A wholly predetermined, code loses all spontaneity and makes life a hurdles - race.

Mother: Not necessarily. When you learn Music you have to be aligned to Shruti, keep exact swarasthanas and stay within the tala. All these do not hinder your Music. When you have learnt them and absorbed them, singing becomes a joy, letting you forget all the difficult hours of your practise. The purpose of the rules of Dharma is to bring out the best in you; not to act as a speed-breaker. A good brake in your car makes the journey safe and fast. Dharma saves you from frittering away your energies in purposeless, directionless wandering.

Sumati: I like the example of Music better. Now I would like to hear some names of law-givers of Dharma, names atleast.

Mother: There are many authors. The predominant ones are 1) Gautama 2) Apastamba 3) Vasistha 4) Manu 5) Yajnavalkya 6) Parasara

7) Narada 8) Brihaspati. Kalpa Sutra one of the Vedangas has three parts 1) Srauta Sutras – on Vedic sacrifices 2) Grihyasutras - on Domestic ceremonies such as marriage, upanayana and 5) Dharmasutras on – Economic life, Politics, Governments, civil and criminal law.

Sumati: Somehow I get the impression that the Dharma Shastas impose on lot of rules and regulations on the Grihastha: why?

Mother: Hindus consider Grihastha ashrama (the house-holder) as the centre of the society. Tiruvalluvar the Tamil saint puts it succinctly. The householder is the main - stay of all who follow the three other paths of life – Brahmachari, Vanaprasthi and Sannyasins. They all beg food from the Grihastha. Further, the King (Government) taxes only the Grihastha. The trader gets his profits from the Grihastha and the servants are paid the wages by the Householder. The Householder is allowed to enjoy pleasures unopposed to Dharma (Dharma aviruddha) – He is permitted to accumulate wealth (within limits). It is his duty to give others; He should never beg. It is a sin for a Grihastha, to beg, whereas begging is a virtue for all other ashramas. A Grihastha is the producer of wealth. He practises and promotes the fourfold purusharthas Kama – pleasures not opposed to Dharma; Artha – within the permissible limits of Dharma; Dharma practising for Kama or Artha or for Moksha. He spends his wealth for 1) pleasures - Kama 2) for furthering his riches (Artha) 3) for promoting Dharma a) Ishta-Vedic sacrifices or (b) purta-charitable activity or 4) Moksha for going on pilgrimages or on Gurudakshina.

Sumati: What position do Dharmashastras give to Ahimsa – Love?

Mother: Wherever Dharmic virtues are listed, Ahimsa and Satya (Truth) get the first place. The Anusasana Parva of the Mahabharata says. “Ahimsa paramo dharmah: “Vinobaji feels that all active virtues such as Fearlessness, initiative, courage, working ability come from the practice of **Truth** and all passive virtues such as Love, humility and self-restraint spring from the practice of **Ahimsa**. In this manner, he summarises all of Hindu Dharmic values into Satya and Ahimsa. Kautilya prescribes for all men as Dharma, ahimsa, satya, sauca, anasuya,

anrsamsya and kshama.

Sumati: How was Dharma instilled, propagated and sustained?

Mother: Dharma as I told you is the connectivity between the individual and the larger entities such as family, society, community, Nation, world and Nature. It is taught in the family, society, in groups. By repeated exposure to values such as truth, ahimsa and tyaga, the child gets used to those values. Mother gives it to the child; the father explains it. The Teacher teaches it. The law punishes any deviation. The society at large provides a congenial atmosphere for its practise. The government enacts such laws to sustain Dharma and punishes any transgression. The ruler himself is punished for any deviation from Dharma.

Sumati: I have read Asamanja of Raghukula was excommunicated by his own people when he went against Dharma.

Mother: Yes, Even the King was not exempted from the practice of Dharma. In fact all over India, Manu's dharma shastra was in force, the duty of the government was not that of enacting new law, but to implement the Dharmasastra in spirit.

Sumati: What was the impact of such Dharma on the society?

Mother: A well-knit and well-integrated society, disciplined family, acharavan individuals, good governance, high productivity and prosperity and all-round happiness expressed in creativity, art, architecture, temple, town-planning, music, painting, trade, international relations etc. was the sign of a Dharmic society. Foreigners have recorded a high level of personal honesty and social prosperity in India.

Sumati: How did the system get degraded?

Mother: We became complacent, lost shraddha, took things for granted. As Swami Vivekananda says, when the body is weak, germs attack it and produce diseases. Alien rulers, alien values affected India. They made it a point to destroy India's social structure, social fabric. They drove our women inside our homes. In all societies, woman sustains the finest aspects of Dharma and culture. Aggressive societies rob

the social space of gentler, subtler forces of the society; thus the women lost their social space. Nowadays, our media propagate alien lifestyles, values and world views. Our education system failed our people in giving them moral education, education in compassion and education in aesthetics, education in Dharma. Earlier our laws were extensions of our social mores, a systematization of our community values, education in compassion, education is aesthetics, education in Dharma. The society could practise them without the necessity of rewards or punishments or with minimum of them. Now slowly the drift is towards laws and regulations which have little to reflect the usages and desires and wonts of our people. The result is drift, degradation and the law has to be implemented only through reward and punishment.

Sumati: How are we to retrieve the lost ground? How to stem the rot?

Mother: In such situations, we should remember that prevention is **Not** just better than cure, prevention is the only cure. Swami Vivekananda's concept of Dharma extends from day-to-day service all the way to restoration of spiritual and social values in the society. Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi emphasized persuasion, teaching, education, dialogue, as instruments of social change. Personal character of the workers of Dharma (Achara) is a great force. The betrayal of Indian values by exposing our youth to alien TV, Cinemas, Newspaper and other Media, has to come to an end. Certain amount of insulation of our society from the onslaught of vulgar values may become inevitable; well behaved individuals, good families, thousands of working youth, a broad social consensus supported by legal frame work have to work together, Sama, dana, bheda and danda have to work in various mixtures. We should remember that civilization is nothing but self-restraint. Exemplary individuals and groups can do wonders.

Sumati: In short?

Mother: Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have put their solutions in one word **TYAGA**.

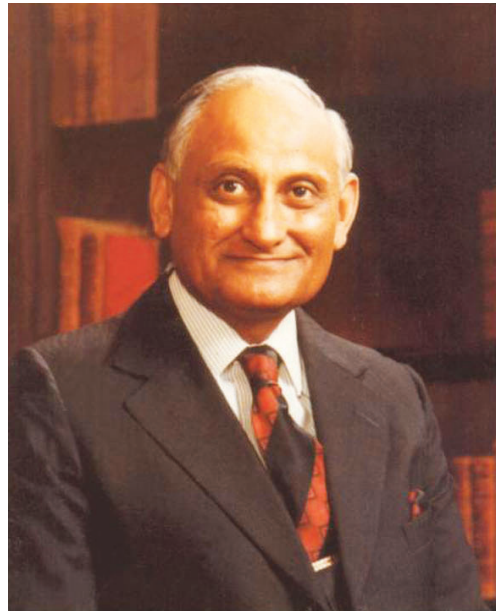
We record with regret, the passing away of Shri Ganga Prasad Birla, the well-known industrialist, educationist, social worker and a patron of Hindu dharmic institutions. He passed away at the age of 87 in the night of Friday 05/03/10 at Kolkata. He was the son of the legendary industrialist Shri B.M. Birla. His industries include Hindustan Motors, Orient Paper, Hyderabad Industry etc. He established the Birla institute of technology at Ranchi. He also established a number of colleges, schools, research institutions and museums. The world famous B.M. Birla heart research institute and Kolkata medical institute were established by him. He built beautiful and majestic Vishnu temples in Hyderabad, Jaipur and Bhopal.

In appreciation of his services, to our country, the Government of India decorated him with Padmabhushan in the year 2006.

Shri G.B. Birlaji was closely associated with the Vivekananda Kendra as a patron. He used to give valuable advice on developmental activities to the Kendra workers. He loved the Kendra workers and gave time for them readily. He visited Kanyakumari along with his family and gave great encouragement to the Kendra's Rural Development activities. The Kendra remembers him with gratitude for his service and advice.

Shri Shivapoojan Singh, our senior Kolkata worker attended the condolence Baithak and offered Shraddhanjali. Shri G.P. Birlaji leaves behind him his wife, a son Shri Chandrakant Birla and a daughter. The Vivekananda Kendra

offers condolences to the bereaved family and to the many service organizations started or funded by him. The Kendra workers pray for the peace of this great son of India and a patron of Hindu dharmic causes.





The 27 Year War That Changed Course of Indian History-II

attempt failed. In the same time one of the Aurangzeb's generals, Hussein Ali Khan , attacked Northern Konkan. Sambhaji left Janjira and attacked Hussein Ali Khan and pushed him back to Ahmednagar. By this time monsoon of 1682 had started. Both sides halted their major military operations. But Aurangzeb was not sitting idle. He tried to sign a deal with Portuguese to allow Mughal ships to harbor in Goa. This would have allowed him to open another supply route to Deccan via sea. The news reached Sambhaji. He attacked Portuguese territories and pushed deep inside Goa. But Viceroy Alvor was able to defend Portuguese headquarters.

By this time massive Mughal army had started gathering on the borders of Deccan. It was clear that southern India was headed for one big conflict.

Sambhaji had to leave Portuguese expedition and turn around. In late 1683, Aurangzeb moved to Ahmednagar. He divided his forces in two and put his two princes, Shah Alam and Azam Shah, in charge of each division. Shah Alam was to attack South Konkan via Karnataka border while Azam Shah would attack Khandesh and northern Maratha territory.

Using pincer strategy, these two divisions planned to circle Marathas from South and North and isolate them.

The beginning went quite well. Shah Alam crossed Krishna river and entered Belgaum. From there he entered Goa and started marching north via Konkan. As he pushed further, he was continuously harassed by Marathas. They ransacked his supply chains and reduced his forces to starvation. Finally Aurangzeb sent Ruhulla Khan for his rescue and brought him back to Ahmednagar. The first pincer attempt

Timeline – Marathas under King Sambhaji (1680 to 1689):

After the death of Shivaji in 1680, a brief power struggle ensued in the royal family. Finally Sambhaji became the king. By this time Aurangzeb had finished his North missions and was pondering a final push in Deccan to conquer all of India.

In 1681 Sambhaji attacked Janjira, but his first

failed.

After 1684 monsoon, Aurangzeb's another general Sahabuddin Khan directly attacked the Maratha capital, fort Raygad. Maratha commanders successfully defended Raygad. Aurangzeb sent Khan Jehan for help, but Hambeerrao Mohite, Commander-in-Chief of Maratha army, defeated him in a fierce battle at Patadi. Second division of Maratha army attacked Sahabuddin Khan at Pachad, inflicting heavy losses on Mughal army.

In early 1685, Shah Alam attacked South again via Gokak- Dharwar route. But Sambhaji's forces harassed him continuously on the way and finally he had to give up and thus failed to close the loop second time.

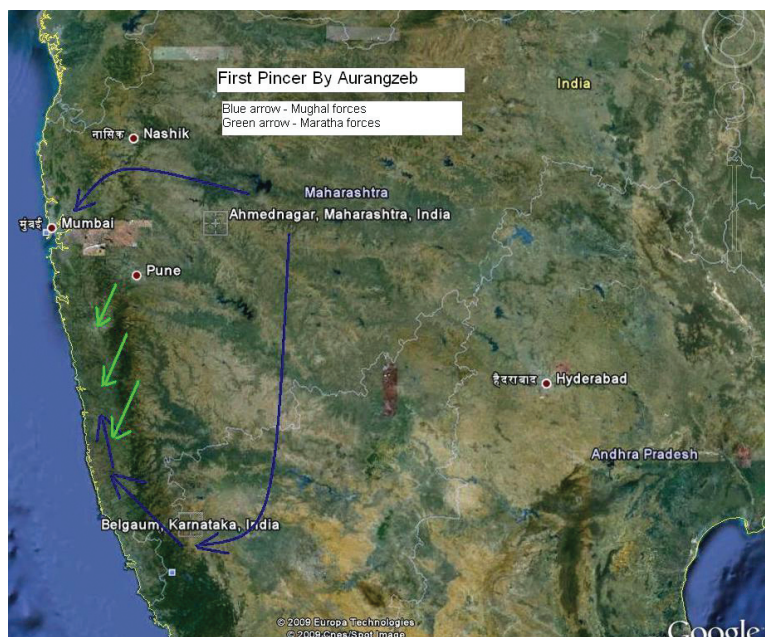
In april 1685 Aurangzeb rehashed his strategy. He planned to consolidate his power in the South by taking expeditions to Goalkonda and Bijapur. Both were Shia muslim rulers and Aurangzeb was no fond of them. He broke his treaties with both empires and attacked them. Taking this opportunity Marathas launched offensive on North coast and attacked Bharuch. They were able to evade the mughal army sent their way and came back with minimum damage.

On Aurangzeb's new Southern front, things were proceeding rather smoothly. Bijapur fell in September 1686. King Sikandar Shah was captured and imprisoned. Goalkonda agreed to pay huge ransom. But after receiving the money, Aurangzeb attacked them in blatant treachery. Soon Goalkonda fell as well. King Abu Hussein of Goalkonda was captured and met the same fate as Sikandar Shah.

Marathas had tried to win mysore through

diplomacy. Kesopant Pingle, (Moropant Pingle's brother) was running negotiations, but the fall of Bijapur to mughals turned the tides and Mysore was reluctant to join Marathas. Still Sambhaji successfully courted several Bijapur sardars to join Maratha army.

After fall of Bijapur and Goalkonda, Aurangzeb turned his attention again to his main target – Marathas. First few attempts proved unsuccessful to make a major dent. But in Dec 1688 he had his biggest jackpot. Sambhaji was captured at Sangmeshwar. It was in part his own carelessness and in part because of treachery. Aurangzeb gave him option of converting to Islam, which he refused. Upon refusal, Aurangzeb, blinded by his victories, gave Sambhaji the worst treatment he could ever give to anyone. Sambhaji was paraded on



donkey. His tongue was cut, eyes were gorged out. His body was cut into pieces and fed to dogs.

There were many people who did not like Sambhaji and thus were sympathetic to Mughals. But this barbaric treatment made everyone angry. Maratha generals gathered on Raygad. The decision was unanimous. All peace

offers were to be withdrawn. Mughals would be repelled at all costs. Rajaram succeeded as the next king. He began his reign by a valiant speech on Raygad. All Maratha generals and councilmen united under the flag of new king, and thus began the second phase of the epic war.

27 Years War TimeLine – Marathas under King Rajaram (1689 to 1700)

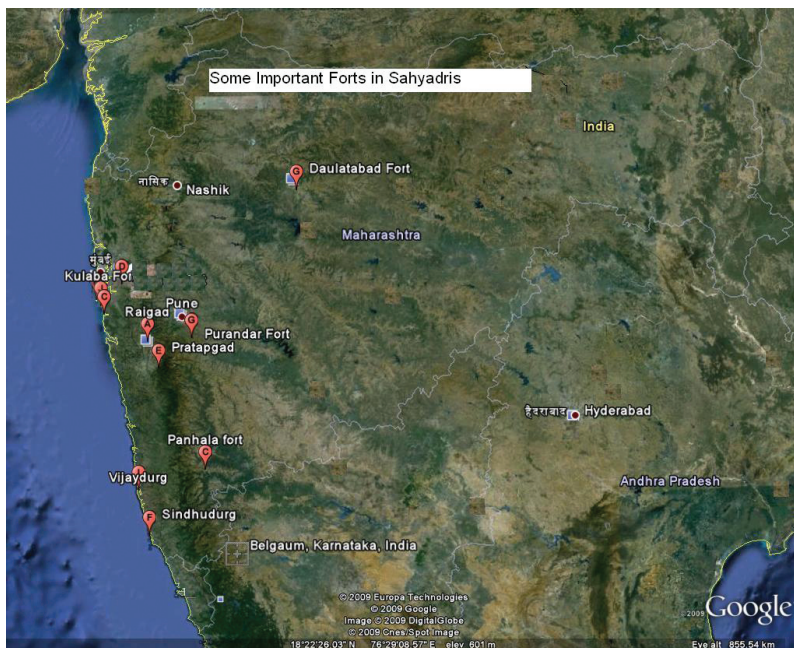
To Aurangzeb, the Marathas seemed all but dead by end of 1689. But this would prove to be almost a fatal blunder. In March 1690, the Maratha commanders, under the leadership of Santaji Ghorpade launched the single most daring attack on mughal army. They not only attacked the army, but sacked the tent where the Aurangzeb himself slept. Luckily Aurangzeb was elsewhere but his private force and many of his bodyguards were killed.

This positive development was followed by a negative one for Marathas. Raigad fell to treachery of Suryaji Pisal. Sambhaji's queen, Yesubai and their son, Shahu, were captured.

Mughal forces, led by Zulfikar Khan, continued this offensive further South. They attacked fort Panhala. The Maratha killedar of Panhala gallantly defended the fort and inflicted heavy losses on Mughal army. Finally Aurangzeb himself had to come. Panhala surrendered.

Maratha ministers had foreseen the next Mughal move on Vishalgad. They made Rajaram leave Vishalgad for Jinji, which would be his home for next seven years. Rajaram travelled South under escort of Khando Ballal and his men. The queen of Bidnur, gave them supplies and free passage. Harji Mahadik's division met them near Jinji and guarded them to the fort. Rajaram's queen was escorted out of Maharashtra by Tungare brothers. She was taken to Jinji by different route. Ballal and Mahadik tirelessly worked to gather the scattered diplomats and soldiers. Jinji became new capital of Marathas. This breathed new life in Maratha army.

Aurangzeb was frustrated with Rajaram's successful escape. His next move was to keep most of his force in Maharashtra and dispatch a small force to keep Rajaram in check. But the



two Maratha generals, Santaji ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav would prove more than match to him.

They first attacked and destroyed the force sent by Aurangzeb to keep check on Rajaram, thus relieving the immediate danger. Then they joined Ramchandra Bavadekar in Deccan.

Bavdekar, Vithoji Bhosale and Raghuji Chavan had reorganized most of the Maratha army after defeats at Panhala and Vishalgad.

In late 1691, Bavdekar, Pralhad Niraji, Santaji, Dhanaji and several Maratha sardars met in Maval region and reformed the strategy. Aurangzeb had taken four major forts in Sahyadrais and was sending Zulfikar Khan to subdue the fort Jinji. So according to new Maratha plan, Santaji and Dhanaji would launch offensives in the East to keep rest of the Mughal forces scattered. Others would focus in Maharashtra and would attack a series of forts around Southern Maharashtra and Northern Karnataka to divide Mughal won territories in two, thereby posing significant challenge to enemy supply chains. Thanks to Shivaji's vision of building a navy, Marathas could now extend this divide into the sea, checking any supply routes from Surat to South.

The execution began. In early 1692 Shankar Narayan and Parshuram Trimbak recaptured Rajgad and Panhala. In early 1693 Shankar Narayan and Bhosale captured Rohida. Sidhoji Gujar took Vijaydurg. Soon Parshuram Trimbak took Vishalgad. Kanhoji Angre, a young Maratha Naval officer that time, took fort Kolaba.

While this was in work, Santaji and Dhanaji were launching swift raids on Mughal armies on East front. This came as a bit of surprise to Aurangzeb. In spite of losing one King and having second king driven away, Marathas were undaunted and actually were on offensive.

From Khandesh, Ahmednagar to Bijapur to Konkan and Southern Karnataka, Santaji and Dhanaji wrecked havoc. Encouraged by the success, Santaji and Dhanaji hatched new action plan to attack Mughal forces near Jinji. Dhanaji

Jadhav attacked Ismail Khan and defeated him near Kokar. Santaji Ghorpade attacked Ali Mardan Khan at the base of Jinji and captured him. With flanks cleared, both joined hands and laid a second siege around the Mughal siege at Jinji.

Julfikar Khan, who was orchestrating Jinji siege, left the siege on Aurangzeb's orders and marched back. Santaji followed him to North, but was defeated by Julfikar Khan. Santaji then diverted his forces to Bijapur. Aurangzeb sent another general Kasim Khan to tackle Santaji. But Santaji attacked him with a brilliant military maneuver near Chitaldurg and forced him take refuge in Dunderi fort. The fort was quickly sieged by Santaji and the siege only ended when most of the Mughal soldiers starved and Kasim Khan committed suicide. Aurangzeb sent Himmat Khan to reinforce Kasim Khan. Himmat Khan carried heavy artillery. So Santaji lured him in a trap in the forest near



Dunderi. A sudden, ambush style attack on Mughals was followed by a fierce battle. The battle ended when when Himmat Khan was shot in head and died. All his forces routed and Santaji confiscated a big cache of weapons and

ammunition.

By now, Aurangzeb had the grim realization that the war he began was much more serious than he thought. He consolidated his forces and rethought his strategy. He sent an ultimatum to Zulfikar khan to finish Jinji business or be stripped of the titles. Zulfikar khan tightened the Siege. But Rajaram fled and was safely escorted to Deccan by Dhanaji Jadhav and Shirke brothers. Haraji Mahadik's son took the charge of Jinji and bravely defended Jinji against Zulfikar khan and Daud khan till January of 1698. This gave Rajaram ample of time to reach Vishalgad.

Jinji fell, but it did a big damage to the Mughal empire. The losses incurred in taking Jinji far outweighed the gains. The fort had done its work. For seven years the three hills of Jinji had kept a large contingent of mughal forces occupied. It had eaten a deep hole into Mughal resources. Not only at Jinji, but the royal treasury was bleeding everywhere and was already under strain.

Marathas would soon witness an unpleasant development, all of their own making. Dhanaji Jadhav and Santaji Ghorpade had a simmering rivalry, which was kept in check by the councilman Pralhad Niraji. But after Niraji's death, Dhanaji grew bold and attacked Santaji. Nagoji Mane, one of Dhanaji's men, killed Santaji. The news of Santaji's death greatly encouraged Aurangzeb and Mughal army.

But by this time Mughals were no longer the army they were feared before. Aurangzeb, against advice of several of his experienced generals, kept the war on. It was much like Alexander on the borders of Taxila.

The Marathas again consolidated and the new Maratha counter offensive began. Rajaram made Dhanaji the next commander in chief. Maratha army was divided in three divisions. Dhanaji would himself lead the first division. Parshuram Timbak lead the second and Shankar Narayan lead the third. Dhanaji Jadhav defeated a large mughal force near

Pandharpur. Shankar Narayan defeated Sarja Khan in Pune. Khanderao Dabhade, who lead a division under Dhanaji, took Baglan and Nashik. Nemaji Shinde, another commander with Shankar Narayan, scored a major victory at Nandurbar.

Enraged at this defeats, Aurangzeb himself took charge and launched another counter offensive. He laid siege to Panhala and attacked the fort of Satara. The seasoned commander, Prayagji Prabhu defended Satara for a good six months, but surrendered in April of 1700, just before onset of Monsoon. This foiled Aurangzeb's strategy to clear as many forts before monsoon as possible.

In March of 1700, another bad news followed Marathas. Rajaram took his last breath. His queen Tarabai, who was also daughter of the gallant Maratha Commander-in-Chief Hambeerrao Mohite, took charge of Maratha army. Daughter of a braveheart, Tarabai proved her true mettle for the next seven years. She carried the struggle on with equal valor. Thus began the phase 3, the last phase of the prolonged war, with Marathas under the leadership of Tarabai.

The signs of strains were showing in Mughal camp in late 1701. Asad Khan, Zulfikar Khan's father, counselled Aurangzeb to end the war and turn around. This expedition had already taken a giant toll, much larger than originally planned, on Mughal empire. And serious signs were emerging that the 200 years old Mughal empire was crumbling and was in the middle of a war that was not winnable.