

# Invocation



आयुर्यज्ञेन कल्पतां  
प्राणो यज्ञेन कल्पतां  
चक्षुर्यज्ञेन कल्पतां  
श्रोत्रं यज्ञेन कल्पतां

āyuryajñena kalpatām  
prāṇo yajñena kalpatām  
cakṣuryajñena kalpatām  
śrotram yajñena kalpatām

May we gain all power to our life through sacrifice, all power to our life-breath through sacrifice, all power to our eyes through sacrifice and all power to our ears through sacrifice.

Yajurveda 9 – 21.

# Bharathiya Nav Varsh : A Lasting Testimony to Maha Bharath



The Bharathiya calendar begins on the month of Chaitra. There are natural, historical and spiritual reasons to mark the commencement of the year on the first day of Chaitra :

*Natural :* The spring season commences, the trees bear new foliage and appear fresh. In the Shrimad Bhagawad Gita, the Lord says, "Among the seasons, the exhilarating Vasant Season (Spring) is my manifestation". In this season, the weather is pleasant and exhilarating. There are fresh shoots, green leaves, flowers, and greenery all over.

*Historical :* Lord Rama, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu returned to Ayodhya after slaying the demons and Ravan, an evil King of the demons. Also he slayed Bali, a powerful and evil king of Kishkinda on this day.

*Spiritual :* On this day Lord Brahma created the universe. The Satya Yug began. By the grace of the Divine, as the children of Maha (Akhanda) Bharath, we are in the threshold of new year, namely, the beginning of yet another year. You may call it by any name as children belonging different parts of India. The commencement of another new year (Nava Varsha) is a single event which can eventually tell us very clearly in unequivocal terms that India is emotionally, socially, culturally, religiously ethically, geographically, historically, philosophically, economically and morally a well-knit single nation. Only the ignorant shall believe that India has been unified by the British and 'gifted' to India. The enlightened always have believed and continue to believe that there are common emotional bonds amongst the people from Kandahar to Kanyakumari. The very presence of Bamiian Buddha statues in Kandahar region is an indicator that our people have ruled the state very powerfully 2500 years ago. Somehow and somewhere, we have been inattentive to our firm beliefs that we have been overtaken by the 'powers' that be that we face confusion world over.

Baisakhi or Vaisakhi is an ancient harvest festival. It marks the beginning of a solar year. For our dear Punjabi friends, it marks the birth of Khalsa movement at Anandapur Sahib in 1699 or the beginning of the Sikh New Year. *Wahe Guruji Kip Khalsa Wahe Guruji Ki Fateh.*

Baisakhi marks the beginning of the Hindu Solar year. Nepal, the only Hindu Kingdom (till yesterday) springs up with great festivities to mark the occasion. In Orissa, the commencement of the new year marks the celebration of *Maha Vishuba Sankaranthi* or *Pana Sankranthi*. Special poojas are performed by the Oriya people all over the state to welcome the new year. The Bengalis of 'Sonar' Bengal look forward to the celebration of

*Naba Barsha* or *Pohala Baisakhi* to coincide with the beginning of the New Year. People of Kamrup (Assam) and Tripura do not lag behind the Bengali in their new year festivities. They welcome their *Rongali Bihu*. In Kerala, the beginning of the New Year is marked by the opening of the temple dedicated Lord Swami Ayyappa. The Malayalis celebrate the '*Vishu*' festival to mark the beginning of the new solar year. In Tamil Nadu, the Tamils celebrate the '*Puthandu*'. According to Tamil Panchang, there are sixty years which appear in cycles. This year, the Tamils bid farewell to '*Virothi*' and welcome the New Year. '*Vikruthi*'. In fact, Lord Karthikeya is worshipped by all Tamils as Lord Muruga in his six abodes on this special day. One of them is 'Swamimalai'. There are sixty steps leading to the sanctum sanctorium of Lord Swaminatha or Lord Muruga, each step indicating the name of a year in the Tamil Panchang. In Himachal Pradesh, Goddess *Jwala Mukhi* is worshipped on this day to commemorate the beginning of yet another new year. The festival is celebrated by the Sinhalese and Tamils alike in a big way in Sri Lanka. After all, the Sinhalese and the Tamils of Sri Lanka had their roots in Maha Bharath. Thus, the celebration of 'Nav Varsha' or new year in 'Maha Bharath' is a strong indicator of unity and integrity of all the people of this region.

Prof P.Ramani  
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# Nanaji: Some reminiscences

P.Parameswaran



SHRI Nanaji Deshmukh is no more. A mighty banyan tree has fallen leaving a huge void difficult to fill. But the strong and solid foundation he laid and the model role that he played, I am confident, will ensure the continuity and healthy growth of his great visionary projects.

When Poojaniya Balasaheb Deoras, the Sarsanghachalak asked me, immediately after the lifting of the emergency, to go to Delhi and assist Nanaji Deshmukh, the Chairman of the Deenadayal Resarch Institute in the capacity of its Director, my heart missed a beat or two looking at the formidable challenge it involved, and fascinated by the immense potentialities it held out. Nanaji was no stranger to me. I knew him very intimately. We had worked together

in Bharatheeya Jan Sangh. He was a very hard taskmaster who spared neither himself nor those who worked with him.

When Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan launched the country-wide "Total Revolution Movement", Nanaji Deshmukh was one of his most trusted lieutenants. Alarmed by the sweep and support for the movement Prime Minister Indira Gandhi imposed emergency to suppress it and put all the country's opposition leaders behind the bars and tried to snuff out the flames of democracy, Nanaji went underground, toured across the country incognito, united all democratic forces, built up a mighty movement for resistance and restoration of democracy, successfully fought against Indira Gandhi's autocratic regime and brought unprecedented electoral success to the opposition. That led to the formation of the Janata Government at the Centre. Nanaji's stature as a national leader rose sky high.

Morarji Desai, the new Prime Minister offered Nanaji Deshmukh the prestigious and powerful post of the Cabinet Minister for Commerce and Industry. But Nanaji declined the offer saying that what he wanted was transformation of the society by working among the people, and that also among the rural masses which cannot be achieved through governmental authority. This single act of turning down the much coveted Cabinet Minister's office added immensely to the prestige and charisma of Nanaji.

He offered me the room adjacent to his own personal suite. But I preferred to stay at Keshav Kunj, the RSS Headquarters. I had a feeling that to be too close to such a powerful personality may not be very comfortable. But he was always accessible. I could watch him at close quarters, almost all the hours of the day. Every morning

there used to be such a large number of visitors waiting in queue, people consisting of all segments of the society right from ministers, political leaders, executives, and poor farmers from far off villages etc., each one with some problems or requests or prayers for help. It took all his morning time to meet them and listen to them. Besides these, he used to invite very many important people, not only from Delhi but from other parts of the country also. Many of them used to stay at the guest house. These were

important guests whose needs and comforts had to be looked after. Persons like George Fernandas, Chandrashekhar, Madhu Dandavate, BD Jetty, Dr Karan Singh and many others of high eminence were frequent visitors. Nanaji used to entertain them and hold personal talks on



matters of great importance. This gave me the rare opportunity to come in touch with people who mattered in public life and to learn a lot of valuable lessons. An unforgettable personality who used to frequently visit and spend long hours with Nanaji was the formidable doyen of Indian Journalism Ramnath Goyanka the Chairman of

Indian Express group of papers.

Nanaji's room had no chairs or tables. It was simple, but elegant and truly reflected his personal style. He used to squat on the carpet. For writing he had a small desk. Friends visited him there. Of course, for distinguished visitors there was always a neatly arranged VIP room with its wall decorated with a life-like portrait of Shri Guruji.

Though his headquarters was Deenadayal Research Institute, New

Delhi, his heart was away in the rural areas he had selected for development work. At that time, Gonda District in UP was his

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prime concern. He had also selected rural areas in Maharashtra and Bihar. He had to keep in close touch with those

distant areas and most of his time he spent

there, travelling, planning, executing and overseeing the various development proj-

money from such sources and spending it in the poverty stricken rural areas for the



Nanaji with former Prime Minister Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee

ects - most of them quite original and innovative.

The idea of deploying young married couple as life workers- Jeevan Vritis-was the brain-child of the hard core pragmatist in Nanaji. He knew from his experience in the RSS that it was difficult to get life workers who would remain bachelors all through. Even more, for working in a rural society, among the common people married couples will be more natural and suitable. Only they should have deep dedication to live a life of utter simplicity.

He had wide contacts among the circle of great industrialists who had built their own empires. I saw that they had immense respect for him. They trusted his sincerity and commitment to the poor. Nanaji knew the fine art of extracting

ing frequent seminars, symposia and lecture series to which most eminent people were invited. Nanaji's fame and the institution's name had such a magic effect that

welfare of the villagers. He was frequently on tour. Though he had an authoritarian trait in him, he also knew how to delegate authority to trusted persons at different levels. It was my experience that so far as the ideological aspect of Deen Dayal Research Institute is concerned, he delegated full autonomy to me and also guaranteed adequate financial support. He appreciated my organ-



Nanaji with former President Sri Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam

anyone who is invited would feel it an honour to come and participate. Towering personalities like Morarji Desai, Swami Ranaganathanda, Justice Chandrachood, Justice VR Krishna Iyer, many Vice Chan-

cellors and eminent academics had been our guests of honour and very prestigious programmes were regularly organised.

When I broached the subject of starting a quarterly Journal to spread the message of Deenadayal Research Institute, he was all enthusiasm and also promised adequate financial assistance through regular advertisements. He also encouraged me to select my own assistants. There was no dearth for suitable subject matter because the country's most well known writers were eager to contribute to the journal. The name of the journal was selected by Nanaji himself, Manthan. Within a short while, it became a prestigious journal and gained scholarly acceptance.

Nanaji was a great visionary who wanted to transform the society, accepting all the good aspects of modernity while keeping deeply rooted in the culture of the land. This required immense pragmatism and also co-operation of a good number of talented people from many fields. He was fortunate in having all this at his command. He had the extra-ordinary capacity to take co-operation from all, without interfering with their freedom of initiative. At the same time he could gently guide them whenever necessary; keeping close watch over everything that was happening and giving timely encouragement. He was a rare personality combining in himself the qualities of an RSS Pracharak, the Gandhian commitment for rural development and his own innovative and imaginative creative genius. Nanaji was one who believed in solid work and despised empty oratory. He opted out of power to be at the service of the nation at the grass-root level. He was not enamored of party politics and politicians. He knew most of them too intimately to put much faith in their words.

In fact those who knew him closely know how distressed he was at the way Indian politics was drifting and deteriorating day by day. He used to frequently circulate letters expressing his feelings of depression and calling upon people who mattered to set their hearts on improving the situation by active intervention as well as personal behavior.

Media calls Nanaji a social activist. But he was not one in the usually accepted sense of the term. Social activists of today generally follow the modern western paradigm. Nanaji was radically different. He was a system builder - a truly Bharatheeya system, based on our cultural and spiritual values, tuned to the needs and requirements of the present situation. That is what he attempted in Gonda and successfully executed in Chithrakuta group of villages - establishment of a miniature Rama Rajya. That is his real contribution. He was closer to Gandhiji and Shri Guruji than any so called social activists.

Chitrakut was his last and lasting contribution - a unique success story in the history of social transformation. Valmiki made Chitrakut immortal through the epic Ramayana. Nanaji immortalized both Chitrakut and himself by his monumental achievement at this holy, historical spot.



# Why did the British Quit India?



S.Shivsankar

In popular knowledge, the reasons for the exit of the British from India have been appropriated for a few specific elements. This misappropriation was accomplished by miscreants with obvious nefarious motives and continues to be renewed through insidious academic articulation bolstered through the power and legacy accumulated by the lineage of those same mischievous elements. However, there is a perceivable decline in the number of subscribers to this portrayal, for the simple reason that the facts contradicting it are available in abundance. The legitimacy of this misappropriated rendition of the events that forced the British to acquiesce independence to our nation is now vehemently challenged by the intelligentsia and is gradually questioned at all levels.

One such series of events, which lends credibility to the doubts aroused about the academically inflicted history and which was regarded by the British themselves as one of the critical factors that compelled their exit<sup>1</sup>, is the mutiny among the ranks of the Royal Indian Air Force and subsequently the Royal Indian Navy<sup>2</sup> during the months of January and February 1946.

## The Initial Mutiny

The mutiny by the Royal Indian Air Force was actually initiated at the Karachi RAF

station on the evening of 17 January, 1946<sup>3</sup> by the British airmen who were discontent with the deliberately slow pace at which the demobilizations were implemented. However, it immediately spread to over 60 RAF stations across the Indian subcontinent and to far away Singapore and Malaya base stations.

This mutiny was in effect a strike by the personnel of the RAF demanding faster demobilization and allocation of better provisions and facilities for the servicemen, while they awaited their dispersal. This strike lasted for about ten days. Except for a few court-martials and detentions, this was a peaceful affair. However, it triggered general unrests at all military establishments and surrounding civilian habitations and set a precedent for the subsequent mutiny by the Royal Indian Navy.

## The Royal Mutiny

News of the mutiny by the Royal Indian Air Force had spread across all military stations and adjoining areas. Also, the famed Red Fort trials of captured INA officers during the months of November and December 1945 had kindled the nationalist spirit into fiery flames. The Indian troops were not left untouched by the widespread passions evoked by the freedom struggle. All this in addition to lingering discontent about the demobilization and uncertainty of peacetime assignments hastened the deterioration of the situation.



The mistreatment of Indian ratings by the British officers and the degrading quality of provisions allowed to them was the last straw for the Indian personnel serving in the RIN. On 18 February, 1946 the ratings at Bombay began a strike and occupied the shore establishment *HMIS Talwar*. On the same day, Indian ratings in Karachi seized control of *HMIS Hindustan*. A naval central strike committee was formed by the mutineers and MS Khan was elected president and Madan Singh, the vice president.<sup>4</sup>

The mutiny spread to Ten establishments and 45 ships, besides 11 miscellaneous ships and four flotillas<sup>5</sup>. These included the shore establishments *HMIS Akbar, Talwar, Machlimar, Hamla, Cheetah* Castle and Fort Barracks; Sloops—*HMIS Narbada* and *Jumna*; Frigate—*HMIS Dhanush*; Corvettes—*HMIS Gondwana, Assam, Maharatta* and *Sind*; Fleet Minesweepers—*HMIS Kumaon, Kathiawar, Khyber, Punjab, Bombay, Madras, Orissa* and *Oudh*; Trawlers—*HMIS Agra, Cuttack, Karachi, Lahore, Madura, Nautilus, Nasik, Patna, Poona*; Auxiliary Vessels—*HMIS Kalavati, Ramdas, Dipavati* and *Bhadravati*.<sup>6</sup> at Bombay and the shore establishments *HMIS Bahadur*, Boy's Training Establishment, *Chamak*, the Radar School and *Himalaya* the Gunnery School; ships—*HMIS Hindustan* and *Travancor* at Karachi.<sup>7</sup> These were soon joined by the ships and shore establishments at many other naval bases, providing the mutineering ratings with access to wireless communication, arms and ammunition.

They started coordinating a RIN mutiny spanning the entire South Asian region – from Karachi to Bombay, Calcutta to Vizag and as far as Singapore and Dutch East Indies. Both Hindus and Muslims in the service of the RIN acted together in this mutiny, even as communal tensions were running high among the commoners. RIN flags were removed and the flags of Congress and Muslim League were hoisted aboard all ships and establishments under control of the mutineers.

Unlike the peaceful affair of the RIAF mutiny, the RIN mutiny soon acquired gigantic proportions with far reaching implications. The ratings began moving around the streets of Bombay with Tricolors and Netaji's pictures. That was all necessary for the public to join the

strike and very soon there were widespread protests. This immediately attracted the attention of the British government at London, which was greatly alarmed at these sudden and unexpected developments.

On 19 February 1946, Admiral JH Godfrey threatened the ratings with complete destruction, which was followed by Admiral Rattray demanding the unconditional surrender of the rebelling forces. Bombers from the Royal Air Force were employed in intimidating maneuvers and the Royal Artillery was called in. The situation slipped beyond threats and gunfire was exchanged leading to many casualties on both sides and considerable destruction to the *HMIS Hindustan* in Karachi.

In the meanwhile, the raging unrest that had begun to engulf the nation, whose momentum presented a high likelihood of sidetracking their efforts and in fact their entire role, at last forced the Congress and Muslim League to be involved. They promptly decried the valiant effort by the Indian sailors and refused to lend their support to this *leaderless and shortsighted agitation*, as they labeled it.

That the support of these leaders was immaterial to either the sailors or the people is a different facet. This was demonstrated by the fact that in spite of the call for *no strike, no demonstrations* in the Presidency of Mumbai by the leaders of both Congress and Muslim League, more than 300,000 workers joined the strike. Brutal state repression was as usual the answer by the British and it resulted in the killing of 300 civilian protestors and injuring of a few thousands in the indiscriminate firing.

Still, the representatives of the mutiny consented to negotiations headed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The volatility of the issue imposed the British to concede to the demands of the sailors, the immediate of which was redressal of their grievances regarding the provisions and facilities, as also the fair and impartial treatment by British officers.

Unfortunately, though it was agreed that none of the rebel sailors and personnel will be punished, many ratings and petty officers were subsequently court-martialed.

## Aftermath

While the actual mutiny came to an end with the surrender of the revolting sailors. Following the RIN mutiny, many Indian non-commissioned officers in the British Indian Army began disobeying orders from their superiors, en masse. Emotions were running high among the Indian troops who were an amalgamation of all different peoples residing in India.

They were constantly abused and ridiculed by the British troops serving in the same army, which greatly hurt their pride. However, their courage and bravery of their exploits in action during the numerous battles of WWII, had won them laurels from a large section of the allied troops. These Indian soldiers, sailors and airmen had the opportunity to fight for the liberty and freedom of many nations all over the world. They had first hand experience of the struggle

against oppression, the similar kind as that operating in their own motherland. Therefore, they seized at the opportunity presented by the mutiny to express their angst and frustration against the British.

Unlike the First War of Independence, this eventful series of rebellions among the Indian troops have not been accorded even a cursory mention in academia controlled popular history. However, as mentioned initially, the British considered this to be an immense setback, which impressed upon them the truth that the occupation of India by force is no longer possible. This fact among others necessitated the British into making a decisive and speedy exit from India. Of course, even in such from such a tight spot, they strategically manipulated the vivisection of India is the subject of an entirely different discussion...

## References

1. **Majumdar, RC**, *Three Phases of India's Struggle for Freedom*, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1967, pp. 58-59
2. An extract from a letter written by P.V. Chakrabarty, former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, on March 30 1976, reads thus: "When I was acting as Governor of West Bengal in 1956, Lord Clement Attlee, who as the British Prime Minister in post war years was responsible for India's freedom, visited India and stayed in Raj Bhavan Calcutta for two days. I put it straight to him like this: 'The Quit India Movement of Gandhi practically died out long before 1947 and there was nothing in the Indian situation at that time, which made it necessary for the British to leave India in a hurry. **Why then did they do so?**' In reply Attlee cited several reasons, **the most important of which were the INA activities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, which weakened the very foundation of the British Empire in India, and the RIN Mutiny which made the British realise that the Indian armed forces could no longer be trusted to prop up the British.** When asked about the extent to which the British decision to quit India was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's 1942 movement, Attlee's lips widened in smile of disdain and he uttered, slowly, 'Minimal!'"
3. **Duncan, David**, *MUTINY IN THE RAF - the Air Force Strikes of 1946*, The Socialist History Society Occasional Papers Series No: 8, Introduction, pp. 3
4. **Witness to history – Total Recall**: Spectrum, *The Tribune*. Sunday, March 21, 2004
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# Career Counseling and Parents Role!

Bhadrinath Pani

“My son should be an IITan”, “My kid should be a great singer”, “Mine a cricketing star” the list continues.

All parents want their children to excel and be first in all their endeavors. Childs success is viewed as parents and if they fail, parents see this as an act of ignominy. Kids are forced to many extra – curricular activities at a very tender age. We constantly want our kids to learn something every second. Are children a means to satisfy our dreams? Are they our investment option?

Swami Chinmayananda says, Parents role is like a gardener, they do not create a seed, and they do not create water or soil. Parents are just an assembler trying to ensure a congenial environment for the seed (Kids) to grow. If the seed have something in them they sprout. Adding too much of fertilizer or pesticide is not going to do any good to the kids. Even after all the efforts, the seed doesn't grow as expected then parents are not to be blamed. Parents are just an instrument.

Lord Krishna says I am the mother; I am the father and the grandfather of this entire universe. Then why are we parents worried about our kids. Things will happen even without us and no one is indispensable. The child belongs to the God and for that all of us are part of God. We will do our duty and the lord shall take care of the rest. This vision of Gita should guide us in day to day action of ours.

Choosing between various technical options like B.E, MBBS, or CA is always considerably easy. As parents it is important that we give our kids the power of discretion, the intellect to segregate good and bad things and most importantly the will power to rise up every time one falls. There are a few simple things to be remembered in molding a child's career.

To begin with stop “investing on” the kids and start “investing in” them. “Invest in” ensures inner unfoldment and lasting prosperity. Do not be mad behind getting good math's



tuition, science classes or good schools. Always remember Swami Vivekananda on the true education. He says, “*The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion is it worth the name? We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.*”

If you want your kid to listen to you then the first thing to do is avoid sermons. Understand that kids are allergic to advice. Do not try to impose anything on kids. Raising your voice creates uncertainty and fear in their minds. Affection is the way to their minds but also remember Love and Law only can provide

good results. Take interest in their interest and let your child create confidence in you. Discuss all things in a friendly manner, so that kids could confide in you.

*"A family that prays together stays together"*. Practise all things together in a family and spend quality time with the family. This helps to solve most of the problems faced by the kid. Start practicing all the values which you want your kid to follow. Be the change because *"Culture cannot be taught, it can only be caught"*. Kids always follow you, they can easily detect hypocrites.

Always keep your cool when dealing with kids. Try to recollect your teen days, every one of us were rebellious! Yours is not a unique problem, it is being faced right from Socrates days. So concentrate on providing a holistic approach focusing on physical fitness, mental strength, intellectual capability, an undaunted spirit and infinite love for fellow beings.

Once again remember:

*"Children are like the arrow which comes through the bow but doesn't belong to that bow; it just follows its course"*

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# Grannys Wanted



Brinivasa Desikan

Indians, it is said, have this tendency to believe in a lot of myths simply out of faith in the person saying it and without verifying any basis for the stories. I was just about to find out how much of this is true. The only difference was that these myths were not about supposedly imaginary deities, but about other countries and people. Just like everybody else in our country, I was fed with all these fabulous tales of how wonderful life is in “the land of freedom” and “the land of opportunities” and how different the people there were. So as I stepped out collecting the baggage into San Francisco, my first trip beyond our borders, I was becoming worried that there was something wrong with me. Things didn’t seem all that different! Yeah, there was no dust on the roads and the cars were bigger, but is that all there is to it? The people were behaving exactly the same way as they do here excepting the ever-used and timeless “Hey! How are ya?” that was often exchanged more as a custom and a habit than any real interest to communicate or build a conversation. I tried hard to find out that magical difference that made this the legend that it was to our people back home and it was a real struggle. My first few hours were spent in anxiety that maybe I

don’t fit in here – I really didn’t see anything different from back home. Surely, all those stories from everybody who has travelled were not false! There just had to be something wrong with me! Then I noticed the initial signs of revelation – the often referred to discipline in the roads and clean habits of the people. Now, I was settling in. I thought to myself: now my mothers and brothers will also have something to tell our relatives: all the “great things in the US” – another brick to build and reinforce the legend.

A couple of days into the trip, I convinced myself that I have to feel good about the whole experience. I made a conscious effort to see and remember all the “good things” around me, but it wasn’t so easy after all. Somehow I didn’t feel taller buildings or better roads or a GPS enabled life deserved the kind of adoration that our people had for life here. And just to set the record straight, there were power-cuts there too unlike what we had been fed to believe. Maybe I had to interact more with the locals here to see how life really was. I started to spend more time with the people at office. The first thing I noticed was that these people really didn’t have the same kind of regard to people close to them as we did. One of my colleagues, I will call

him Peter here (for obvious reasons), started this rant about his in-laws and how much of a pain his wife was. We had shared more than a few hours and several official emails together, and here he was talking about his wife and family in ways that was incredible. I thought it was all a big joke; that he was trying to bring something in so that we could build a conversation. After all, I did that to my close friends who knew me enough and wouldn't mind it. A few days later, Peter was helping me by driving me to pick up some groceries when his wife called. Peter

told her, shouted actually, that he was too busy and couldn't do something that she had asked him to do. I was in a bit of a sticky situation. I told Peter that the groceries were not that important and that I didn't know he had other things to do. "I wouldn't have done it anyway. Dont even bother" was the reply, grinning like a kid who had gotten away with mischief. This was just the first in a series of events including Peter's proud claim that he had 16 girlfriends before he "married this one a year ago" that made me realize that he really meant what he had said early on; that these weren't just points to build a conversation. These points were the conversation. Inside the store, I saw this really cute doll-like child just in front of me in the billing queue. Out of sheer force of habit, I smiled, pinched his cheek and gave a little tap on his head. Peter forcefully struck my arm away. "Do you want to get yourself arrested? You could be jailed for abuse if the parent decides to call the cops..." That really shook me up. So it's not just in the movies then. There really are such crazy

people. He told incidents of a school teacher getting a 7<sup>th</sup> grade child arrested because he hugged her when saying thank you for helping him pass the exam; of his friend in Arizona being shot at because he knocked on the wrong door. This was later reinforced when I saw a sign in a ranch in Atlanta that read "Trespassers will be welcomed with a shotgun". Not so welcoming and friendly a people as they are made out to be.



I also noticed something very different there: advertisements in TV called out to people who were feeling lonely to use product x or visit place y to "have fun".

How can people be lonely here? After all, there are also innumerable ads for agencies that arranged for dates for singles and get-togethers for families. But just looking around, it was suddenly so obvious. How could I have missed this all along? It's not that many people were lonely. Everybody was lonely! That is why these agencies were putting out so many advertisements in the first place. Everybody was looking to get to something that will cure



them from loneliness. Every single activity of their life was an attempt to rid themselves of the pain of being lonely. Starting from paying for expensive memberships into churches to music concerts to everything else – the entire society is trying to fill up a vacuum of identity. They simply don't have anything to identify themselves with. All that fabulous and shining external luxuries and all the latest toys that are being invented here is the people's attempt to gain an identity. Thousands of companies are selling all kinds of products which they say will make them happy. But even after decades of using all such products, people are still hopeful that "something" will happen and they can become happy. In the endless

search for happiness or even a stable marriage probably wasn't too successful.

In an environment that so aggressively promotes individual freedom and rights, and coming from a place that is often made fun of for its arranged marriages and restrictive social practices, I could feel nothing but pity for all these people. Reality on both sides is extremely different. For all that talk of freedom, corporations have control over people's lives in ways that we really can't imagine back home. Genetically modified food, untested for any long term problems, is what is used daily. Even the nation's security is outsourced to companies; its military campaigns in faraway

lands are outsourced to companies that often have unconditional and unchallenged bids for government deals. Advertisements selling medicines openly state that "severe side-effects for some people" cause death. But these are the same medicines that doctors prescribe (or what the companies want the patient to ask the doctor for), the ones that the insurance companies pay for and people have to consume.



search they end up depressed because the majority almost never find it, some of them fool themselves that they have. There are depressions that are unheard of at home. There are even mothers of new-borns harming or killing the child and sometimes themselves because they are not able to pursue their happiness-search. They called it postpartum depression (psychosis when severe). Treatment for this includes having home-visitors, support groups and psychotherapy. I enquired why the grandparents weren't around to help with the stress for the new mothers. In their late 50s and early 60s, quite many live away or are still out dating. Even at that age, their personal

"well-informed, well-educated" people that we suppose them to be. These are just regular people who are stuck in a place and system from which they are unable to free themselves. We have heard it a thousand times, but it's worth repeating and remembering – that old lady in our village wearing the wrinkled old sari has something that entire continents soaked in riches and luxury are looking for: a social identity.

# Srinivasa Kalyanam at Vivekanandapuram



**S**rinivasa Kalyanam or Sri Venkateswara Kalyanam is being held daily at the temple [Tirumala] from time immemorial. To extend the benefit of darshan to lakhs of people who cannot see the grandeur of the ceremony and also to take the Lord to the people TTD has decided to perform Srinivasa Kalyanams throughout the country. This Srinivasa Kalyanam was the 70<sup>th</sup> Kalyanam of the Lord of seven hills. These Kalyanams are being overseen by Hindu Dharma Prachara Parishad under the auspices of TTD.

Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam has organized Srinivasa Kalyanam in our campus at Kanyakumari on 28<sup>th</sup> February near the beach. It was pournami, Sunday. The entire beach area was cleaned and developed into a 20 acre land for the Kalyanam. TTD, Chennai local committee looked after the

arrangements. Information was disseminated by distribution of 5 lakh invitations in the districts of Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi. Local TV Channels, news papers,







AIR, SMS and Fm were also roped in. Entire campus was dressed up and ready for the grand occasion of Lord's marriage ceremony. Arches, festoons and banners welcomed about 5 lakhs of devotees from the afternoon of 28<sup>th</sup>. A magnificent stage was laid by L&T and a grand set/design of the Tirumala main temple was built by the famous art director Sri Thota Tharani. The entire back drop has an ambiance of golden vimanam of the temple. The Vivekananda Rock Memorial, Thiruvalluvar statue and Devi Kanyakumari temple formed the natural backdrop of the stage. It was Na Bhooto Na Bhavishyati.

The idols of Lord Venkateswara with divine consorts Sri Devi and Bhoodevi reached the campus in the early morning of 28<sup>th</sup> at 1.30 a.m. These idols were brought from Tirumala temple, Tirupathi. The idols were placed on the grand stage near the beach. Few of the lucky kendra workers spent that night



with Lord Venkateswara on the beach, alone, immersed in the ocean of bliss and blessings of spiritual vibrations. The experience is not only unforgettable and incomparable; it is once in a life experience to be with the Lord all alone. By 5.30 a.m. the wake up suprabhatam was sung in traditional tune by the pujaris who came from Tirumala. It was a reverberating experience. Besides the suprabhatam, there was also the traditional Kerala temple chanda melam which

added to the suprabhatam. The sun rise was also exceptionally wonderful as if the sun himself is welcoming Lord Venkateswara, at Kanyakumari. The sun rise was like a bindi in the sky, as if goddess nature welcoming the Lord. After suprabhatam, thomala seva was done and concluded with archana by 8 a.m. Sri Srinivasa was also accorded poorna kumbham by 108 women traditionally dressed in Kerala attire with flowers.

In the evening between 4-5p.m. there was a musical concert by Sri Rajesh and party. From 5.30-6.30 p.m. the whole area filled with the ocean of humanity were taken to spiritual heights by flute maestro Sri Hariprasad Chowrasia. The moon rise has added to the atmosphere surcharged with divine presence. The actual kalyanam ceremony began after the melodious Annamacharya kirtanas by the renowned singer Smt Shobha Raju of the TTD. All the rituals and traditions were followed by interspersing with Annamacharya kirtanas and Tamil devotional songs by Smt Soumya. Sharp at 8.32 p.m. Lord Srinivasa tied the auspicious knot, Thali, to Padmavathi daughter of Akasha Raja. The vedic chants and mantras forming part of the



kalyanam has left an indelible mark in the minds of the people. Sri Velukudi Krishnan swami's running commentary, helped one and all to understand the intricacies of traditional Hindu marriage. At the time of tying Thali, the skies was lit up with brilliant display of crackers which awed everyone for half an hour. The kalyanam concluded at 9 p.m.

TNSTC has made arrangements for about 400 buses to transport the devotees from all the three districts. Thitupati laddu and cooked prasadam was distributed to all the devotees. Around 5 Lakh people attended this programme.



# Jallianwala Bagh massacre : A Human Shame and a Challenge to Civil Liberties

Prof.P.Ramani

The World War I began with the misconceived perception amongst the people of the world . The promise of freedom after the war suited the British legacy of 'divide and rule' and to seek the unqualified loyalty and goodwill of the Indian people of Britain. British India contributed massively to the British War effort by providing 'men', 'methods' and materials both human and financial. An estimated 1.3 million Indian soldiers and labourers served the interests of the British in Europe, Af-

Indians in the U.S., Canada and Germany led by the Ghadar Party and the Berlin Committee wanted to resurrect the lost Indian fight for freedom, on the lines of the great uprising of 1857. Attempts were made to set Afghanistan against the British. The attempt at Singapore what was known as the Singapore mutiny was also foiled. But the spirit of freedom was looming large in the hearts of the Indian people. However, the British could suppress the spirit of the Indians by their draconian law, Defence of India Act, 1915.



The well in which hundreds of people jumped and died in the Punjab and Middle East. The Indian Princes and the British Indian Administration kept sending large amount of food, money and ammunition. However Punjab and Bengal were volatile for the obvious reasons (we know how much the people were hurt after the division of Bengal).

The war resulted in heavy casualties (an estimated 43,000 Indian soldiers died) outbreak of epidemic and soaring inflationary trend. Naturally, the Indians were restless.

British Indian soldiers started defecting to overthrow the British rule. The powerful Indian nationalist movement and the extremist groups in the Indian National Congress decided to sink their differences and work unitedly to throw away the British. The much awaited free governance, if not total freedom was only an illusion. The Montague Chelmsford Reforms and the provisions therein could not be satisfactory. Madame Bikaji Gama termed it unsuitable for the British to offer and unworthy for the Indians to accept Mahendra Pratap's provisional government in Afghanistan supported the Indian freedom movement. The confusion already prevailing in the post war period forced the British Government to appoint the Rowlatt Committee to assess the situation. The Rowlatt Act (1919) recommended extension of Defence of India rules. It gave special powers to silence the press including detaining the political activists without trial, arrest without warrant anyone suspected of sedition or treason as well as special trial before tribunals in camera. Naturally patriotic

minded citizens were upset. It was around this time Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was emerging as a leader of the Indian masses. Gandhi called for a protest against the Rowlatt Act. The situation in Punjab was not under control. There was total breakdown of rail and telegraphic communication system. The



movement gained momentum in the first week of April. Perhaps the whole of Lahore was in the streets.

In Amritsar, an estimated 5000 people gathered in the first week of April. In the next few days the situation deteriorated. Michael O' Dwyer, Governor of Punjab, grew suspicious of the people and believed that the people would revolt just as they revolted in 1857, sometime in May when the British would have withdrawn to hills to evade the summer heat.

On April 10, 1919, the people of Punjab protested before the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, Punjab. They demanded the immediate release of the popular



Bullet ridden Walls

leaders of the Indian freedom struggle, Satyapal and Saifuddin Kitchlew, who were earlier arrested and sent to undisclosed destinations. The protesters were fired and several of them

were killed. Scores of government buildings, bank buildings and railway station were attacked. The violence continued unabated. In the police firing a number of protesters got killed. In retaliation, the public killed at least 5 Europeans.

The Punjab government tried to get most parts of Punjab under curfew and martial law by April 13. There were a number of restrictions and curbs on the civilians. Not more than three were allowed to assemble in any public place.

On April 13, 1919, thousands of people gathered in the garden of Jallian Wallabagh near the Golden Temple, Amritsar on the occasion of Baisakhi, marking the commencement of the New Year.

The meeting began at 4.30 p.m. An hour later, Brigadier Reginald Dyer led a group of 90 British soldiers and Gurkha soldiers. They carried machine guns and positioned their vehicles outside the gate at the entrance to the place of assembly which was so narrow.

Jullian Wala Bagh was surrounded on all sides by buildings and private houses. Many of them were locked and some of them had narrow entrances. The main entrance was broader and it was guarded by the troops. People had gathered to celebrate Baisakhi. There was no provocation

Suddenly General Dyer ordered the troops to open fire without even warning the people to disperse. He directed the soldiers to fire at the densest portions of the crowd. They continued firing till they completed firing all the 1600 rounds were exhausted.

Apart from the deaths caused as a result of firing,

several deaths were caused by stampedes at the narrow entrance as the people tried to escape. Many sought to escape death by jumping into

the well inside the compound. 120 bodies were recovered from the well. At least one thousand people were killed and another thousand got injured. The injured could not be removed as the curfew was clamped. The Government tried its best to suppress all information. But the news spread like wildfire.



The Memorial

General Dyer reported to the Lt.Governor of Punjab Sir Michael O' Dwyer who approved of Brigadier Dyer's action and permitted clamping of curfew and imposition of martial law after obtaining permission from the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford.

Dyer appeared before the Hunter commission of inquiry to probe the massacre ordered by the Secretary of State for India Edwin Montague, Dyer admitted that he knew about the proposed meeting even four hours earlier and he did not take any preventive steps. He went to the site with the deliberate intention of killing the people assembled there. He claimed that he could have disbursed the crowd without firing but they would have come back again. He would have made use of the machine guns but these were on armoured cars which could not enter the bagh. He had the audacity to testify before the commission of inquiry that he did not stop firing even when the crowd started dispersing. He admitted that he did not take

any steps to treat the wounded. When asked why did not treat the wounded he had the inhuman wicked monster in him which made him utter : "It was not my job. Hospitals were open and they could have gone there". The Hunter Commission did not provide a healing touch to the Indians as expected.

The Britons in India and Briton and the British Press defended Dyer as man who saved the British pride and honour. Some called him as 'the saviour of Punjab'. Some senior British officers appreciated General Dyer. The House of Lords commended him. But the House of Commons censured him. However Sir Winston Churchill set the record straight : "The incident in Jallian Walla Bagh was an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation". Afterwards, Dyer was officially asked to go by the British government. The shame that has been cast upon the humanity can never be forgotten as long as civilized societies exist on earth.



Sardar Uddham Singh

Jallian walabagh massacre is a standing testimony to the in human and shameless act of the British against humanity and an open challenge to civil Liberties. The wounds caused to us do not heal at all.



## The 27 Year War that changed the course of Indian History - I

Kedar.Soman

School children in India learn a very specific blend of Indian history. This school version of history is stripped of all the vigor and pride. The story of Indian civilization spans thousands of years. However for the most part the schoolbook dwells on the freedom struggle against British and important role played in there by the Indian National Congress. We learn each and every movement of Gandhi and Nehru, but not even a passing reference is made to hundreds of other important people and events.

My objection is not to the persons Gandhi or Nehru. They were great men. However the attention they get and the exposure their political views and ideology gets is rather disproportionate.

And thus it comes no surprise to me that rarely we talk about an epic war that significantly altered the face of Indian subcontinent. The war that can be described the mother of all

wars in India. Considering the average life expectancy that time was around 30 years, this war of 27 years lasted almost the lifespan of an entire generation. The total number of battles fought was in hundreds. It occurred over vast geographical expanse spanning four biggest states of modern India- Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. For time, expanse and human and material cost, this war has no match in Indian history.

It started in 1681 with the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's invasion of Maratha empire. It ended in 1707 with Aurangzeb's death. Aurangzeb threw everything he had in this war. He lost it all.

It's tempting to jump into the stories of heroics, but what makes the study of war more interesting is the understanding of politics behind it. Every war is driven by politics. Rather war is just one of the means to do politics. This war was not an exception.

Shivaji's tireless work for most of his life had shown fruits by the last quarter of seventeenth century. He had firmly established Marathas as power in Deccan. He built hundreds of forts in Konkan and Sahyadris and thus created a defense backbone. He also established strong naval presence and controlled most of the Western ports barring few on end of Indian peninsula. Thus tightening the grip on trade routes of Deccan sultanates, he strangled their weapons import from Europe and horses import from Arabian traders. These Sultanates launched several campaigns against Shivaji, but failed to stop him.

On the Northern front, several Rajput kings had accepted to be the vassals of Mughals. Aurangzeb had succeeded to the throne after brutal killing of his brothers and imprisonment of his father. With Rajput resistance mostly subsided and the southern sultanates weakened, it was only matter of time before Marathas were in his cross-hair.

At the time of Shivaji's death in 1680, Maratha empire spanned an area far more than the current state of Maharashtra and had taken firm roots. But it was surrounded by enemies from all sides. Portuguese on northern Coast and Goa, British in Mumbai, Siddies in Konkan and remaining Deccan sultanates in Karnataka posed limited challenge each, but none of them was capable of taking down the Marathas alone. Mughal empire with Aurangzeb at its helm was the most formidable foe.

For the most part, Aurangzeb was a religious fanatic. He had distanced Sikhs and Rajputs because of his intolerant policies against

Hindus. After his succession to the throne, he had made life living hell for Hindus in his kingdom. Taxes like Jizya tax were imposed on Hindus. No Hindu could ride in Palanquin. Hindu temples were destroyed and abundant forcible conversions took place. Aurangzeb unsuccessfully tried to impose Sharia, the Islamic law. This disillusioned Rajputs and Sikhs resulting in their giving cold shoulder to Aurangzeb in his Deccan campaign.

Thus in September of 1681, after settling his dispute with the royal house of Mewar, Aurangzeb began his journey to Deccan to kill the Maratha confederacy that was not even 50 years old. On his side, the Mughal king had enormous army numbering half a million soldiers, a number more than three times that of the Maratha army. He had plentiful

support of artillery, horses, elephants. He also brought huge wealth in royal treasuries. Teaming up with Portuguese, British, Siddis, Golkonda and Bijapur Sultanates he planned to encapsulate Marathas from all sides and to form a deadly death trap. To an outsider, it would seem no-brainer to predict the outcome of such vastly one sided war. It seemed like the perfect storm headed towards Maratha confederacy.

Enormous death and destruction followed in Deccan for what seemed like eternity. But what happened at the end would defy all imaginations and prove every logic wrong. Despite lagging in resources on all fronts, it would be the Marathas who triumphed. And at the expense of all his treasure, army, power and life, it would be the invading emperor who learned a very costly lesson, that the will of people to fight for their freedom should never be underestimated.

( to be continued...)

# Avatar - An Indic View



S.Aravindh

**A** vatar is said to be the “dream film” of James Cameron. The film is indeed a mega-graphics fantasy. You enter the fantasy world and come out with a catharsis of a different kind. Somehow that is what almost all Hollywood blockbusters do and with wonderful graphics technology around these today fantasy worlds are available for your pick – if you can shell out enough money. Hence beyond the extravagant and extremely detailed magnificence of the fantasy that Cameroon unveils in the screen, what is that in the film that can appeal to someone who lives in the oldest continuing pagan tradition of this planet – perhaps only one of its kind- Hinduism?

The film is about a westernized corporate humanity sending a “company” along with military units and sociologists to set a base in a planet they name “Pandora”. The name itself is significant. Pandora in Greek mythology was the first woman. In ancient Greek vases she is seen as arising from Gaia – the Earth. There is a strong identity between Pandora and Gaia. As a scholar of Greek mythology says, Pandora is Gaia in human form.<sup>1</sup>

There they find natives called Na’vi – ten feet tall, blue skinned and lynx eyed. In a typical

missionary approach they set up educational institutions and medical services with the aim of making them relinquish their sacred living ground which is part of a sacred grove to the “company” which aims to exploit a rare invaluable mineral underground.

Even as ultimately military option of evicting the natives is being contemplated the corporate also seeks the help of social scientists. There are social science departments on Earth where the humans study the Na’vi culture. The Avatar programme is part of this wherein into the body of a genetically synthesized body of Na’vi the human can graft his mind through machine and then move into the Na’vis becoming “one of them” even as they remain as an outsider inside. Their eyes become eyes of surveillance at worst or at best eyes of curious patronizing eyes of observers observing subservient inferior lives and cultures and never the eyes that seek learning.

Is that a high-tech fantasy?

No. In fact that is what the western anthropology and social sciences have been doing to other cultures. The very nature of these disciplines often born with colonial expansion is built on this infiltrate–disguise-as native-and-study-





repeated in the movie – in another planet conceived in great grandeur reflected even in the minutest detail - a digital extravaganza.

The colonization and destruction of another civilization starts with sending surveyors or spies who are often euphemistically called sociologists or missionaries – call them as you see them fit from your own experience. They

them approach. In India many indomitable local communities offering resistance to British colonialism were infiltrated by missionary scholars whose study of these communities made colonial forces triumph over them. In an encounter of two civilizations seeing the other as a hindrance for expansion comes in Western tradition from deep roots that can be traced back to Joshua and Moses who sought espionage to understand

win the faith of some local residents – the informers. They offer them medical services and set up educational institutions. Yet they see that the residents do not give up their spiritual traditions and culture – which is vital to the grand plan of obtaining what is underneath their sacred ground. And hence ultimately violence is unleashed to destroy them.

The film points out the basic weakness of this approach of encountering another culture. Because such an approach can only observe the superfluous and can never understand its essence. However such a non-understanding is essential for colonizing of another land. It makes the destruction of the other easy by demonizing and de-humanizing them. It happened in the mythology of Bible when the marching hordes of Yahweh believers massacred Canaanites. It happened historically in Americas, Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

The *Avatar* as used here has no Hindu connotations as such. It is a cyber-term for an alter-ego. In the context of the movie it is an alien intruding into the natives with their skin and the alien mind. In fact this can be a metaphor for the entire western social science studying other civilizations along with their native 'informers'. If one thinks of the Marxist sociologist or the native Christian missionary one can understand then what does this Avatar signify. Then there is another strong western archetype which is the 'native princess'. In countless American versions of the coloniser myth the story of Pocahontas is told and retold. In all these the cruelties that the western 'civilization' did to the native traditions become hidden behind the façade of the inevitable and alluring civilizing mission of the westerner with whom the gentle elements in the native culture as personified by the princess fall in love. So the Avatar movie has both the elements of the western-civilizing-colonizing myth.

In all these lands the local traditions were trivialized, distorted, demonized and ultimately destroyed. If not finished off in the mass annihilation a worse fate awaited such people. Along with the disappearance of the local spiritual traditions the people lost their identity and often became marginalized groups living under the mercy of the now dominant colonizers.

Then the proverbial twist in the tale comes.

The familiar scene of western colonization is

Here the 'Avatar' becomes drawn to the native culture and spirituality. The science of the colonisers initially makes an attempt to capture the reality of the spiritual practice of the natives. And it is their science that catches the first fleeting glimpse of how true is the spirituality of the Na'vi.

At a crucial juncture when the earth team goes on a rampage destroying the sacred tree clusters and other native sacred lands, Dr. Grace a scientist tries to prevent them pointing out that the sacred lands of the natives may harbor a scientific phenomenon that is not entirely understood:

What we think we know is that there's some kind of electrochemical communication between the roots of the trees. Like the synapses between neurons. Each tree has ten to the fourth connections to the trees around it, and there are ten to the twelfth trees on Pandora ...That's more connections than the human brain. You get it? It's a network -- a global network. And the Na'vi can access it -- they can upload and download data -- memories -- at sites like the one you destroyed.

Here Cameron has actually used an important concept that our scientists are beginning to comprehend, that the root system of the plants under the terra firma we tread upon – is not just involved in absorbing the nutrients for plant growth, they also communicate through chemicals in a very astonishing ways that we are only beginning to understand. For example here is an extract from a research paper that speaks among things "molecular vocabulary in plant communication":

The chemical communication in and between plants is no complex that more than 20 different groups of molecules with communicatory function have been currently identified. Up to 100,000 different substances known as secondary metabolites are active in root zones for example. This diversity is necessary given the high diversity of microbes, insects and plants in this zone.<sup>2</sup>

However, the imaginative addition that Cameron gives is that the physical planetary connectivity may also be a base for a planetary

consciousness – something of the kind famous psychiatrist Carl Jung called as the collective unconscious.

One of the emotional highs in the film is the destruction of the sacred tree with massive ammunition by the colonizing humans. The arrogance of the aggressor and the pathetic helplessness of the natives is for Hindus déjà vu. For the very scene is a replay of what happened in the sacred forests of Kanyakumari district just two centuries ago and vividly recorded by the Christian missionary concerned:

Some of the demons are supposed to reside in certain trees (compare Deut xvi.21) at the foot of which a rough stone is placed on which turmeric powder is rubbed. None will pass by these places after night. Such trees are usually very large, old and well grown as it is considered sacrilegious and dangerous to hew them down. In some parts of these trees are quite common. In one of the mountains of Travancore grew a noble timber tree which our assistant missionary Mr. Ashton wished to secure for use in the erection of the large chapel at Neyyor. The trunk was so large that four men with

outstretched arms could not compass it and the branches were as thick as the ordinary trees of that species. ...Even the native government has refrained from cutting down the monarch of the forest for their public works. ...The mountaineers firmly refused to assist in cutting down the tree, so that the missionaries had to bring Christian workmen from considerable distance. At last the tree fell with a terrible crash, which echoed amongst surrounding mountains, amidst screams and cries of the heathen who from that time seemed to listen more readily to the exhortations of the missionary. Much of the wood-work of the chapel was made of this single tree; so that what had formerly been used in the service of the devil now became subservient to the worship of the one true and living god.<sup>3</sup>

For a science fiction viewer the evolution of alien societies in the big screen offers interesting insights. While Spielberg block busters Close Encounters of the Third Kind and ET showed

aliens as technologically advanced angels, there has been a more consistent tradition of depicting them as predatory, inhuman cruel invaders or pests. Often the cold war hostilities morphed upon the portrait of alien. Aliens on the silver screen thus reflected deep human fears and hopes.

The Avatar aliens are no exception though they break new ground in our own psyche. Science fiction novel *Dune* by Frank Herbert (published as early as 1965) featured the idea of an ecological religion in alien planet. In this novel a ritual drink –reminiscent of *Soma*- provided the alien tribesmen direct mystical access to a planetary awareness of the dynamic ecological relationships. In the years that followed our own understanding of the ecological crisis in our planet traced its root to the dominant anthropocentric and expansionist Abrahamic world view as shown by Lynn White Junior (in his famous article *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis, Science, 1967*) The late 1980s saw the advent of Gaia hypothesis in the scientific world and its popularization in the public awareness was done by earth loving activists as well as romanticists. Avatar has brought this Gaia-centric vision of spirituality forcefully and aesthetically on the screen.

On the whole the film plays at different levels. It is a critique of western expansionism and how it uses knowledge of other as a weapon of destruction –physically and spiritually. It

also provides an alternative. This alternative is a feminine ecological religion that venerates all life and can connect to that which connects all existence – both animate and inanimate. If Pandora is Gaia, what then is this religion - understanding of which is essential for humans to live in this planet not as cancer cells but in harmony with all life?

Perhaps a Hindu scientist of yester-century, J.C.Bose, gives a clue

When I came upon the mute witness of these self-made records and perceived in them one phase of a pervading unity that bears within it all things: the mote that quivers in ripples of life, the teeming life upon our earth, and the radiant suns that shine above us - it was then that I understood for the first time a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the banks of the Ganges thirty centuries ago: 'They who see but one in all the changing manifestations of this universe, unto them belongs the Eternal Truth - unto none else.'

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### **Jatan Pulu bags Karmayogi Award**

The International Association of Lions Clubs, District 322D, awarded a prestigious Karmayogi Award 2009-10 to Jatan Pulu, Asst. Director Research (Retd), Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh on Mar 6 at Guwahati. The award was given by International Director, Lion H.O.B. Lowal at a glittering ceremony held at ITA Guwahati. Karmayogi award is given to the distinguished people for their dedicated and meritorious services to communities. Jatan Pulu is a first Arunachalee to get such a prestigious award. The award comprises of cash Rs. 51,000, a Shawl and a commendation certificate.

Jatan Pulu, a respectable elderly person from Idu Mishmi community has two books to his credit "Idu Phrase Book" and "Digaru Phrase Book" apart from several articles ranging from research to social issues and traditional practices of the people. He has been closely associated with many philanthropic organizations like Vivekananda Kendra, Idu Mishmi Cultural & Literary Society, Arunachal Vikas Parishad and RIWATCH with his abundance of wisdom, sober nature and ever ready helping nature.

He has been already honored by Silver Medal by Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Scroll of Honour by RMP International World Council of Elders, award by Narayan Bhide Memorial Trust Nagpur.

# Vivekananda Kendra Samachar

## VIVEKANANDA KENDRA MYSORE

Vivekananda Kendra Mysore Branch celebrated Vivekananda Jayanti on 3rd February 2010. A lecture cum interaction session was organised at Amritha VishwaVidyapeetham from 11 am to 1pm. Mananeeya Bhanudasji Addressed the students and had interaction with them. Leading Advocate and Legal advisor to Amma's Ashram also spoke on Swamiji's Life And Works on the occasion. Three hundred students took the advantage of this session.

In the evening a public function was organised at Reserve Bank Of India Colony. Swami Nithyastanandaji Maharaj , President R K Math Mysore was the chief Guest. Sri. Promod Radkar General Manager RBI and Mananeeya Bhanudasji were Guest Of Honor. The Function was Presided by Sri Shama Bhatji. The function was well attended by 150 people.

## SAMUHIK SURYANAMASKAR

Vivekananda Kendra Bhubaneswar organized the Samuhik Suryanamaskar Karyakrama to celebrate the Samartha Bharat Parva & Swami Vivekananda Jayanti on 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2010. 5200 students from 31 schools participated in the final programme.

The programme started at 8.00 am with the lighting of the lamp by the Inaugurator of the programme Swami Shiveswarananda ji Maharaj, President Ramakrishna Mission, Bhubaneswar. Mananeeya Nivedita didi, Vice President Vivekananda Kendra in her key note address called upon the children that Suryanamaskar is one of the medium to prepare ourselves to make Bharat Samartha. Sri Dibyasingha Deb, Gajapati Maharaja, Puri considered to be the living epitome of Lord Jagannath graced the occasion as the Chief



Guest. Impressed by the discipline of the entire event, he said that this indeed is the celebration of national Youth Day in its true spirit. Swami Sivachidananda Saraswati of Divine Life Society in his presidential address made the children to repeat the slogan "I am Bharat" with him and asked them to awaken this spirit in them to really understand Swami Vivekananda's message.

Dr Benudhar Nayak, Registrar Utkal University; Sri Surasen Jena, Odisha Prant Pramukh, Vivekananda Kendra; Smt Lilima Mohapatra, Nagar Pramukh were also present on dais. Sri Santap Kumar Jena conducted the entire programme.



Mananeeya Nivedita Didi along with the Chief Guests