


INDIA'S STAND VINDICATED

'Better late than never', is the idiom which best suits to the advice of Advisor to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, Abdul Razak Dawood as he has endorsed the idea of resuming trade with India, which was suspended by Islamabad in August 2019 after New Delhi revoked special status of Jammu and Kashmir. This is not only the single case because if the Pakistani leadership will mull on taking rational steps, whatever India has suggested till date will prove out to be beneficial for both the nations and the people of Indian sub-continent. It is pertinent to mention that the stance of the Advisor of Pak Prime Minister that trade with India is the need of the hour and beneficial to both countries is true to the hilt but the ties between the two nations which are estranged right now can only be sorted out after Pakistan will stop abetting terrorism in J&K and stop from interfering in the internal matters of the country including the Kashmir. This is crucial for the friendly ties to resume between India and Pakistan. Reportedly, the comments from Dawood have raised hopes of a partial revival of Pakistan-India bilateral trade relations. Pakistan was wrong in taking such a hostile stand over Article 370 issue as the same was the internal matter of India and it has nothing to do with Pakistan or any other nation. The stance by the Pak premier's Advisor is sane and that country should give a serious thought to the same to ease off tensions in the region as friendly ties between neighbours is the need of the time in international arena whether it is between India and Pakistan, India and China or for that matter with any other country. Notably, India's move to abrogate Article 370 outraged Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad. Pakistan also snapped all air and land links with India and suspended trade and railway services. India has said that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan in an environment free of terror, hostility, and violence. With the changing mood of Pakistan it seems things will once again take a favourable turn and trade ties will soon be restored for benefit of the people of both the nations.

GOOD FOR COUNTRY

The country needs robust border management and adequate infrastructure to cope up with the foreign threat and also give a secure life to the population living along the dividing lines whether IB, LoC or LAC. The government's proactive stand over the issue is in the interest of every soul which resides near borders and has been in pain since the last several decades due to indifference of successive governments. In this context, the Central Government has approved the continuation of the Umbrella Scheme of 'Border Infrastructure and Management' (BIM) over the 15th Finance Commission Cycle from 2021-22 to 2025-26. This clearly shows that the government is committed to improving border infrastructure and management. This decision will strengthen the border infrastructure for improving border management, policing and guarding the borders, which is quite necessary especially in J&K which is facing Pakistani aggression for the last over 3-4 decades. The money stipulated for the border management and infrastructure development is Rs 13,020 crore. This will help in the creation of infrastructures such as the construction of border fences, border floodlights, technological solutions, border roads and Border Outposts (BOPs) and Company Operating Bases (COBs) to secure the Indo-Pakistan, Indo-Bangladesh, Indo-China, Indo-Nepal, Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Myanmar borders. As far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, the government led by PM Narendra Modi has already done a lot of work in raising border infrastructure, especially bunkers to save people from unprovoked firing from Pakistan side as earlier there used to be colossal losses due to unhindered fire from the enemy side. Reportedly, under Phase-I about 8,500 out of total 9,905 bunkers in five districts of Jammu province are ready for use by the villagers residing near the International Border and Line of Control with Pakistan. It is likely that under Phase-II 15,000 more community and individual bunkers will be constructed to make borders safe for the people living in the vicinity. It is however praiseworthy that through back channel talks India has successfully rejuvenated 2003 truce pact between India and Pakistan in February last year thus ensuring complete truce on borders with Pakistan although infiltration attempts and smuggling of arms, ammunition and narcotics is reported at times and many such attempts have been thwarted also. The dexterous government is treading smoothly in bringing relief and comfort to the border people and the border management initiatives will also help in easing the lives of border dwellers to level next.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Then Good Luck & Wealth Won't Leave You

Everyone needs wealth in order to live well. Wealth is certainly one of the important means making the existence of humans smooth and comfortable. So, everyone wants to earn a great amount of wealth through various means. Some get successful and some not, yet everyone tries differently.

Attracting Wealth and Good Luck

Further, in attracting wealth and good luck, some people tend to be luckier than others. And many feel it's not fair as someone is too wealthy and lucky while they are not.

The truth is that fortunate ones aren't lucky by sheer chance. They're fortunate because of the mindset they bring to life and the lifestyle they follow despite setbacks. All it takes to make wealth and good luck stay permanently with you is to know the right and the wrong and always adhere to the right way of life despite difficulties.

Here's a story.

Shocking Outcomes from the Bad Phase of Life

Once upon a time there lived a very wealthy man in a

■ MOHANJI

Usually, we have no problem in accepting our strengths. We may even want to tell the world about them. We have only a problem in accepting our weaknesses because we compare with other people.

Obstacle towards acceptance: On one side, you have your distinct natural, spontaneous, effortless side. You don't have to force yourself to do it, it comes naturally to you. There's no pressure. It's not even about habits or likes and dislikes. It's just you being natural: naturally kind, compassionate and loving. On the other side, you have society - education, parents, religion etc. - telling you how you should be. For the sake of society or somebody, you try to compromise. That's where the non-acceptance happens. Herein lies the conflict. That natural aspect, when restricted, gives birth to conflict. It is very important for you to come back to your natural state.

Inclinations and tendencies: Life is driven by inclinations and tendencies. If you understand your tendencies, you understand yourself. You need to start looking within. A particular tendency's expression could be alcohol or cigarette or eventually addiction. Take most of the crimes we see in the world. This tendency was present in the person long before he commits the actual crime. The tendency was ignored but it developed and developed and developed, and finally, became a crime. Then immediately the police, judges and prison catch him and stamp him a 'criminal'. So a person's tendency evolves into a state or a situation. During childhood, these tendencies are visible. Children don't hide; they display every inclination or tendency. As they grow

Respect women- hypocrisy must go

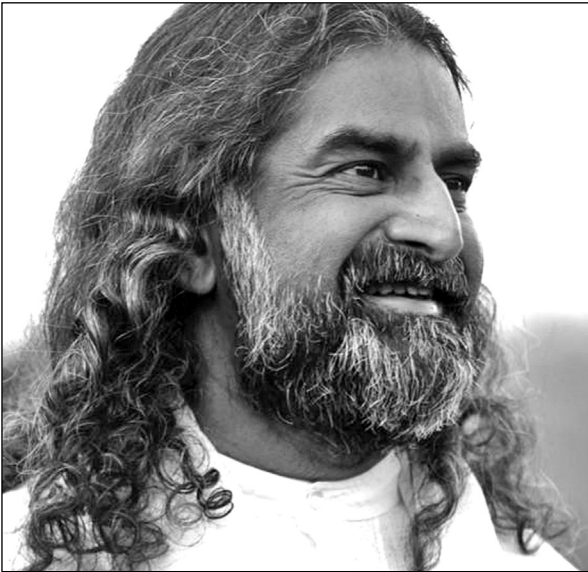
■ M R LALU

Multiplicity is what the fabric that a society is woven into. Variety gives it the essential beauty and makes it adorable. India has its strength in encompassing such diversities into its fold irrespective of their source and sociability. This has been the idea that we, as a nation, believed and followed. Societies, mostly patriarchal in nature across the globe, positioned themselves above the essential femininity and setting a hierarchy confining and conveniently forcing it to confess to what the patriarchy dictates. To some extent India is not different. Putting a veil around what the patriarchy believed as a safe and standard custom for the women, in a society of rigid phraseologies, we become advocates of women's rights. Lustrous vocabularies such as women rights, religious freedom, liberty and equality would decorate our debates. Lamentations on women rights will be aired to houseful audiences by channels, with no deliberations arguing on what, if someone wants to unveil themselves from the suffocating and incarcerating attires imposed on them by the same patriarchy. So, the convenience of the mighty gender is running the show. Everything can be justified and suppressed to the level of its satisfaction. Young girls choosing Hijab over education in the recent tussle in Karnataka reveals this superimposed hand of an invincible patriarchy. No wonder, it can't work otherwise. The discourse is about constitutional rights being forcefully trodden to dust by a constitutional establishment, the government. The constitution, being indiscriminate on religious rights, equally blessed everybody with freedom to express and prosper. Therefore, someone's right to choose between what is professed in religion comes under religious freedom and apparently unquestionable. Attempts to question such practices should definitely be addressed inside the boundaries of the constitutional values. Going beyond it definitely invites unpleasant repercussions.

Do religions, to what a large number of cohorts are submissive to, give them the freedom to take a breath of personal liberty, without being oppressed and persecuted by the mighty dominance of the masculine? An answer to this question will be the most unpleasant in today's tensed atmosphere. Without adequate reforms put in place, no practices, however good and astutely followed they are, will survive the storm of time. Of course, for a period of time, such suppressive and

forcefully submissive choices enforced on people will run. But the efficacy and reliability and divinity of such practices will remain questioned and surfaced blowing the lid of discontent. In a democracy, the constitutional values need to be upheld as supreme while respect for individual choices is upheld. When individual choices are being caricatured as the maxim and if they bring collective negative repercussions while the orthodoxy taking center stage in retaliation, there needs to come reforms for the collective good. Religions, not open to reforms and inefficient to change as per the demand of time, remain obsolete and disturbing irrationally inviting distress in the amiability of every society. The feminine, being susceptible to such dominance remains a pitiable reality. Women across the globe are frequently forcefully pressed to silence and to what we call a family, a minute segment of the society itself, is an example for such dominance and suppression. Starting from an innocent scratch of a male toddler in the school, to the one blow she received at the face from a belligerent husband, a woman seems to be too self-ordained to be tortured. Facing an acid attack in the street to a torture inside the confinement of a home, she is made to suffer. Considered as an object of pleasure for men, religions gleefully grant authority to them accentuating their power and ensure the subservience of women to the maximum.

Masih Alinejad, the renowned Iranian journalist is a living example to what she calls a fight against the acrimony of the religious patriarchal establishment. She, being freed herself from the veil, had to flee from her homeland and take asylum elsewhere. Her "My Stealthy Freedom" is a social media movement that attracted thousands of veiled lives. Every woman for that matter, is a silent rebellion boiling inside the four walls of the patriarchy. With more than a million followers in Facebook, world across, she raises questions on the unscrupulous and irrationally justified religious male dominance. The days to come might witness a volcanic eruption of the feminine anger against the male infringement. Legitimizing the subordination of women in the name of religion is tantamount to disrespect the constitutional values of a democracy, which is also a challenge that is thrown in advance to check the reactions. The essential point is, when personal choice and freedom are being debated at length, voices against the extent to



older, they have more means to execute them and a larger canvas to experience.

Introspection: This is why the scriptures talk more about introspection, or 'Manana' in Sanskrit. You introspect deep within before you meditate. We are so busy meditating that we hardly check if we are alright and aligned, but we are busy doing

some practices. That is often escapism. Sit down and look at your own inclinations: "In which situations was I getting angry or judging people?" If you really concentrate into yourself, you realise: these are my inclinations; those are my tendencies; this is natural for me; that is unnatural for me. Then you have come into full contact with yourself. More than meditating on some theory, you must spend this time. This will be more effective than any practices - meditation, Kriya or Yoga. This connection which you make with yourself is the foundation. A still mind has its roots in total acceptance and no expectations.

Expectations and Prejudice: We diagnose ourselves: "I have a lot of anger sitting in me." That is a symptom. Behind the anger, there could be a disappointment about something. And behind the disappointment, there could be an expectation.

There is a root cause for everything. What exactly is the root cause? Expectation! That did not happen, then disappointment happened, and the expression is anger. The society sees this man is angry and responds to you with anger. When you look at somebody, you immediately have some prejudice in mind. You don't look at anybody afresh. 'Oh, this guy, I've seen him. He's like that guy.' He may have nothing to do with that other guy, but you associate already. Our mind does a lot of processing using old data which is already sitting there. It takes this old data and puts it on somebody else who has nothing to do with it. We look at everybody through the eyes of prejudices. We don't experience that reality or truth as it is, because we don't give it a chance.

(For more information please logon to www.mohanji.com).

Russia-Ukraine tension

■ R K SINHA

The situation of war between Russia-Ukraine remains unceasing. It's feared that Russia may attack Ukraine at any moment. Due to this troublesome situation, a mounting challenge has also arisen in front of India. Thousands of Indian students pursue medical, dental, nursing, and other professional courses in Ukraine. In light of a possible war between Russia and Ukraine, they want to leave and return home safely. The question is how many flights will have to be sent to bring such a large sum of Indian youths studying in Kyiv and other cities of Ukraine? This is being discussed by the government at the top level and preparations for the journey are being undertaken. Undoubtedly, this work needs to be done on a priority basis. Now that Air India is not owned by the Government of India, it remains to be seen how far the government's talks with the new owner of Air India, i.e. Tata Group, have reached to bring the stranded Indians home from Ukraine. In such a situation, when Russia has deployed 1.25 million fully-equipped soldiers on the border for the war with Ukraine, will the Government of India take the services of airlines other than Air India for this vital mission? If we start from the year 2014 itself, then India has utilized all available resources to bring back Indians trapped in other countries safely. During Afghanistan crisis also, thousands of our citizens were brought back safely. Indian Air Force and Air India aircraft continued to bring Indians home from Afghanistan. They were brought to Delhi or other parts of the country via Tajikistan and Qatar. Before this, five Indians, who had been in jail in Togo since 2013, were safely released and brought home. Similarly, in 2015, the Government of India, taking prompt action, brought thousands of Indians stranded in Yemen to their homeland safely. They were taken to Djibouti from the Indian Navy warship INS Sumitra. These people were brought back to India by four planes from Djibouti. These are all examples of recent times which prove that India is capable of bringing back its citizens stranded in other countries. The Government of India is not ready to show its complacency like the previous governments in such situations. Meanwhile, the central and state governments have to urgently consider why such a large number of Indian students go to Ukraine. Every year the Government of India has to spend billions of rupees in foreign exchange due to their going there or to other countries to study. After all, when will we be able to open a sufficient number of colleges in our country which provide high standard degrees of medical, engineering and other courses. One must also think long and hard about the level of education in India and why is it so that every year lakhs of students go abroad for quality education? Why are we not able to provide good faculty and other facilities in our educational institutions? Before proceeding, we must take a look at some statistics. During 2018-19 from India, 6.20 lakh students went outside India to study. These figures have been published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. In 2017-18, 7.86 lakh students went outside the country. Most of them go to other countries only to get a Bachelor's degree. That results in a massive outflow of foreign exchange. It is understandable if Indian students enroll in universities like Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) or Colorado in the US for specific research etc. Everyone knows that some of America's universities have established themselves as the best educational institutions in the world due to their excellent faculty and other facilities. The same can be said about universities like Oxford and Cambridge in Britain. In some institutions, even Nobel laureates teach. Thus there is no harm in enrolling in them. Our premier educational institutions like IIT and Delhi University also attract many foreign students. Many students come to Delhi University from African countries like Kenya, Sudan, Congo, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, Suriname, Fiji, etc. The President of African nation of Malawi, Bingu wa Mutharika, was a student of Shri Ram College of Commerce and Delhi School of Economics of Delhi University. The 36th Prime Minister of Nepal, Baburam Bhattarai, studied at the Capital's School of Architecture and Planning (SPA). The students studying here have contributed immensely to the construction of skyscrapers, highways, flyovers, bridges, etc., in the country. It was established in 1959. These places also witness a flock of students from Iran, Singapore, Malaysia, African countries. There is no problem if foreigners come to India's best Delhi universities and our youth go to world-class institutions. But, if Indian youth start moving abroad for courses like hotel management, MBA, or general Bachelor's degree, then it will be considered a serious matter. It should be known that we will be able to stop the youth from going out of India to study only when we have excellent educational institutions here.

Russia-Ukraine crisis is giving us an opportunity to learn a lot. Surely we will be able to get our citizens out of Ukraine. Our present government has that capability and might. But, we will have to arrange the best education in our own country so that our youth can get admission to good colleges and universities. We have to connect our meritorious youth to the field of education. They also need to be inspired to become teachers and help to provide better facilities. Apart from this, adequate emphasis will also have to be given to research-related work. India needs to open its eyes and strive to improve its academic standards to retain the country's youth and prevent brain drain.

(The author is a senior Editor, Columnist and former MP).

YOUR COLUMN

Effect of vaccine

Dear Editor,

The word that has engulfed the world the most in the last nearly two years is Vaccine. Governments worked hard to achieve this, the arrangements made for its supply in every corner of the world united day and night, risking their lives, medical workers engaged in the work of vaccination and people got it installed. Here we have left the most important link of these vaccines to the scientists, because the rest have taken a sigh of relief after completing their work, but the scientists still did not get this opportunity. They are the scientists who were first involved in this work and they are the scientists who are still engaged in it. It was the scientists who showed the first ray of hope through their activity, and they are the scientists whose activity is going to continue till we are completely sure. The work that has been done in the last two years regarding the vaccine and its effects in world, perhaps was never before. That is why in the last few days, many researches have come out, which clear many of our doubts about the natural immunity of the epidemic and the immunity of the vaccine. The question has been raised for a long time whether the vaccine is more effective or herd immunity. Conventional thinking says that the development of natural immunity is more important than the

vaccine. Therefore, whoever got COVID, doctors kept advising not to get the vaccine until sometime after that. The thinking was that in such a situation there is no immediate need for a vaccine. But the new research that is coming out tells a different story. Research from Washington University School of Medicine suggests that even if you have natural immunity, you still need the vaccine. Research has found that the body needs a lot of energy to produce antibodies on a large scale. The body cannot do this work for a long time, so it quickly reduces their number. Therefore it is necessary that anti-bodies are taken from outside, and this work can be done only by the vaccine. On the other hand, scientists at Stanford Medicine have found that due to COVID vaccines, those lymph glands of the body are activated, which helps in the production of antibodies. Whereas a study by Tel Aviv University is showing that those who got the vaccine were found to have 0.4 percent chance of getting COVID again, while those who did not get this fear was found to be 3.3 percent. For this research, more than 83 thousand patients were studied. From these researches, we can also understand how the third wave of COVID was dealt with so easily in India and the rest of the world. These studies have come at a time when the World Health Organization is constantly warning that the time has not come to relax the restrictions of COVID too much, as wearing masks, maintain social distancing and vaccination is still very important.

Vijay Garg.