

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S IDEA OF BHARAT

■ AKSHIT BARU

September 11, this date in itself is of great importance in world history. This date gives us a reason to remember two ideologies, one which believes in the well being of every living organism on this planet and the other one which believes in killing innocents, doing destruction and an ideology which is the biggest threat to the humanity.

September 11, 1893, exactly 128 years from today, a monk from India showed to the world the great culture of his country at the World Parliament of Religion which was held in.

"Concept of Universal Brotherhood" and "A culture which believes in well being of all" these two things were the main attraction in Swami Vivekananda's famous introductory speech. To know about the second ideology and the other significance of this date "September 11" we need to go back to the year 2001. September 11 attack or more popularly referred as 9/11 terrorist attack that took place on the same date some 108 years after Swami delivered his first speech in the same country.

America was shocked by these terror attacks which was lead by Al-Qaeda which killed around 3000 innocent Americans. That's why in the beginning I mentioned about the two ideologies.

From September 11 to 27, 1893 Swami Vivekananda delivered around 6 speeches based on the concept of "Hinduism" and "Universal Brotherhood" which was indeed the Idea of Bharat. But the most popular among all speeches was the September 11.

In these times when a terror organization is taking control over one of our neighboring country Afghanistan which will be posing threat to the security, peace and humanity, there is a strong need and I would rather say this is our duty of celebrating and spreading Swami Vivekananda's message of universal brotherhood in order to save the humanity from catastrophe.

In his introductory Speech at Chicago, the very first line that he said was "My brothers and Sisters of America" such an extraordinary approach to the crowd received a long appreciation from the dignitaries who were present there. The impact of his speech was such that even in 21st century the very hall at Chicago "The Art Institute Of Chicago" where Swami Vivekananda delivered his speech has become a center of attraction for the tourists from across the world. Some of his quotes are even engraved on the stairs that lead to the hall way. Many intellectuals and researchers have visited that place in recent years. We all can understand the relevance of his speech in current era by this. He's often regarded as the India's Messenger of Peace. Due to this very speech of him, he is considered a key figure in the introduction of Vedanta and Yoga to the West and is credited with raising the profile of Hinduism to that of a world religion in the contemporary times.

Swami Vivekananda emphasized on an argument in the favor of religious tolerance, showing to the world that all religion are to be equally respected. He emphasized the religious pluralism embedded in Hinduism. Contrary to commonplace perception, he did not try to advocate the idea of a Universal religion, not even of a unity of religious thought or practice but the idea of a common goal or destiny (human salvation) for every religious community. Some lines from his speech were: "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth."

Swami Vivekananda through his speech showed to the world why Hinduism is regarded as the "Mother of all Religions" and why Indian Culture and moral values are to be accepted across the globe. Even in his speech he identifies Hinduism as "mother of all religions" in the world. The concept of Santan was appreciated throughout the parliament. Swami Vivekananda also spoke about the importance of abolishing fanaticism in all forms. Also he spoke about the close relationship between Buddhism and Hinduism, that how Buddhism was motivated by Brahmanism and Vedas.

In these hard times when humanity is facing a threat and when the life of a human is least valued, it's our moral duty to remember and to follow the teachings of Swami Vivekananda by whole world. There is a strong need for popularizing his ideas, so that in the near future we don't see much of the second ideology which I mentioned in the beginning of the article. I can surely say this with full confidence that the Journey from "Narendranath Dutta" to "Swami Vivekananda" it shows the glimpse of rich culture and heritage of Bharat. For sure he showed us the path to make this world a better and peaceful place to live. 128 years from now a simple looking monk from Bharat, introduced to the world the very "Idea of Bharat" breaking many stereotypes in context to his nation which at that time prevailed in the west.

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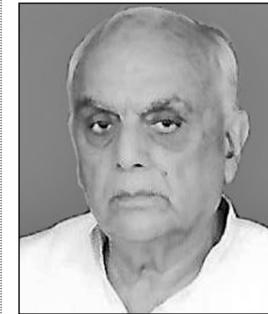
OFF 'D' CUFF The Grand Symphony

The dictionary meaning of an atheist is one who does not believe in a god, but Vivekananda defined an atheist as one who does not believe in the glory of one's soul. Likewise, sin is generally regarded as the wilful breaking of religious or moral law, but Vivekananda observed that the greatest sin is to consider oneself to be weak. 'You will understand the Bhagavad Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger,' he said. He justified image-worship, undervalued during his time, by alluding to its psychological use as an aid to concentration. In his view, one does not move from error to truth, but from lower truth to higher truth — from forms to the formless, and even beyond.

Vivekananda's concept of religion transcends doctrines, dogmas, and pedagogy. His assertion that all religions are essentially in harmony with one another

Satish Kapoor

Taliban's Ghost-A Cause of Concern?



■ ER. P.L. KHUSHU

The definition of a ghost as per Standard English grammar means an apparition of a dead person which is believed to appear or become manifest to the living, typically as a nebulous image. Some call it a red blood cell that has lost its hemoglobin. Probably that is the present situation about Taliban in relation to India. This ghost has to be taken care of, before it penetrates into the dreams of the so called day dreamers in Kashmiri who are grossly mistaken about position of Kashmir with India, under the changed scenario. The changed scenario as referred to here has relevance to the abrogation of the Article 370 and 35 A, when Jammu & Kashmir now is a different entity as a full invincible part of India.

Now the Taliban's have taken over lock stock and barrel with the disdained connivance and support of our deadliest enemy the Pakistan, along with the cheerful patting of our thorny and focused inimical country the China. Pakistan has definitely a point to attain by trying to utilize the services of the Taliban and the soil of Afghanistan for fomenting more trouble for India through its terror hubs already at work in Kashmir and around. Pakistan has no other viable national job to perform, other than to be the source country for nurturing and producing terrorists, through its terror hub factories and workshops. China is utilizing this occasion to symbolize its perennial animosity with India over the border issues around Ladakh and the like. Probably China is trying to display its second front against India through the corridor of Afghanistan by siding with Taliban, by shedding crocodile tears for the Taliban. China is unable to foresee that most of the global powers across the world are seriously watching the happenings in Afghanistan after the takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban, because of their past malignant record of being the recognized and declared terrorists, with global infamy. Is China doing so at its doom, as both Russia and USA had to eat the humble pie in this regard as neither of these powerful countries could retain Afghanistan perpetually?

As per Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, the Soviet-Afghan War was a conflict wherein insurgent groups, known collectively as the Afghan Mujahideen, as well as smaller Shi'ite and Maoist groups, fought a nine-year guerrilla war against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Army throughout the 1980s, mostly in the Afghan countryside. The Mujahideen were variously backed primarily by the United States, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, China, and the United Kingdom; the conflict was a Cold War-era proxy war. Millions of Afghans were killed and millions more fled the country as refugees, mostly to Pakistan and Iran. Between 6.5%-11.5% of Afghanistan's population is estimated to have perished in the conflict. By the mid-1980s, the Soviet contingent was increased to 108,800 and fighting increased, but the military and diplomatic cost of the war to the USSR was high. By mid-1987 the Soviet Union, under reformist leader General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, announced it would start withdrawing its forces after meetings with the Afghan government. The final troop withdrawal started on 15 May 1988, and ended on 15 February 1989, leaving the government forces alone in the battle against the insurgents, which continued until 1992, when the former Soviet-backed government collapsed. The Soviets' failure in the war is thought to be a contributing factor to the fall of the Soviet Union. It has left a mixed legacy in the former Soviet Union and in Afghanistan. Additionally, U.S. policies in the war are also thought to have contributed to a "blowback" of unintended consequences against American interests, which led to the United States

entering into its own war in Afghanistan in 2001. Subsequent to the USA's involvement in its own war in Afghanistan in 2001, this costly war with failed objective, botched up strategies resulted in the inglorious exit of Americans from Afghanistan, with about more than 2000 American soldiers dead, with over \$2 trillion spending on such a failed misadventure of staying in Afghanistan for about 20 years. The 20-year American-led experiment to turn a rogue state into a Western-style democracy has come crashing to the ground.

Should China learn from it and avoid its doom in encouraging the Taliban with its sole purpose of belittling India, which now has a strong military position which was exhibited to China in its recent border expansion policies. China saw the mirror first time that India cannot be chided easily now under the leadership of Modi, when the past historic hiccups of China against India is a tale of the past, wrapped and buried in the coffin of present military might of India.

Nearly 11 million Uighurs live in Xinjiang in the far northwest of China, an arid region of mountains and expansive steppes. What is happening to the Uighurs in China? In recent years, the Chinese government has launched a crackdown on Uighurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, including sweeping surveillance, mass detentions and forced assimilation. Video cameras and police checkpoints keep citizens under constant watch. The United States government has estimated that more than a million Uighurs, representing nearly 10 percent of the Uighur population in Xinjiang, have been locked up by Chinese authorities. This will come to surface today or tomorrow, when China will not be able to stop the spread of Islamic terrorism in its own country. Should China play the second fiddle against India under the circumstances? With its peregrine diplomatic policies of expansion and hegemony, China will see its perish in the present global scenario of Islamic fundamentalists' universal call for global jihad to liberate Islamic lands from its enemies in its congratulatory message to the Taliban for taking over Afghanistan.

As far as India's concern in regard to Taliban is concerned, it may sound like a serious concern, when Pakistan might take a recourse to utilize the services of Taliban in aggravating its position to augment its fomenting of terrorists acts in Kashmir, particularly using the left over military arsenals in bulk by US in Afghanistan for the Taliban, after its unceremonious exit from Afghanistan. With Taliban in control of Afghanistan, many in India fear that sections within the Taliban group could now set their eyes on Jammu and Kashmir, egged on by anti-India elements within Pakistan, when the present rulers of Pakistan are the policy makers for Taliban for their future course of governance and actions. Just three days after a visit to Kabul by the ISI chief, Lt Gen Faiz Hameed, the Taliban announced a 33-member interim setup led by veteran political leader Mohammad Hasan Akhund, a close aide of the group's founder, Mullah Mohammad Omar, who died in 2013. It is being held widely that in the formation of the Taliban government Pakistan's ISI played the dormant role. The India is equally concerned about the links between Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and terror groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) that are active in Afghanistan. These two terror groups have been mostly involved in the terror attacks in Kashmir.

Hardliners get key posts in new Taliban government. The Taliban have announced an interim government in Afghanistan, declaring the country an "Islamic Emirate". The new cabinet, entirely male, is made up of senior Taliban figures some of whom are notorious for attacks on US forces over the last two decades. It will be led by Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, one of the movement's founders, who is on a UN blacklist. Sirajuddin Haqqani, the new acting interior minister, is head of the militant group known as the Haqqani network who are affiliated with the Taliban and have been behind some of the deadliest attacks in the

country's two-decade-long war; including a truck bomb explosion in Kabul in 2017 that killed more than 150 people. Unlike the wider Taliban, the Haqqani network has been designated a foreign terrorist organization by the US. It also maintains close ties to al-Qaeda. As per reports the Haqqani's inclusion in the cabinet, it involves the role of Pakistan's ISI in this regard. Pakistan's intentions are thus brazenly doubtful and hazy, as far as its expansionist policy of terrorism against India particularly in Kashmir is concerned.

India is watching the situation in Afghanistan with a serious concern, as such a concern by India cannot be ignored looking to the sad and the shady past of the Taliban. Probably the Taliban - 2, will not fall a prey to any bad maneuvers of either Pakistan or China to abet and involve itself in any hostile acts against India, particularly in Kashmir and will not allow itself to be used against India for Kashmir. Any such move will be punished with bitter consequences both for the Taliban and Pakistan including China. India has already come in combat gear without making any noise in this regard.

A high-level India-Russia consultations on Afghanistan were the first such review of the situation after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. As Taliban sends conflicting signals, India is maintaining a studied silence. At these meetings, the Indian side pointed to Pakistan's long-standing links with the Taliban and other foreign terror groups operating in Afghanistan, and also raised the special responsibility that Islamabad has in ensuring that Afghan soil is not used to spread terrorism, as per reports emanating from such meetings. There was also convergence on the threat posed by the flow of weapons to terror groups and smuggling across Afghanistan's borders and the high chances of the war-torn country becoming a hub for opium production and trafficking. India and Russia also discussed concrete forms of bilateral cooperation among their security agencies, including upgrading consultations and exchange of information, the reports said.

The BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41 per cent of the global population, 24 per cent of the global GDP and 16 per cent of the global trade. BRICS held a summit very recently in regard to Taliban issues in Afghanistan. In a declaration issued at the end of the summit, the group called for refraining from violence and settling the situation in Afghanistan by peaceful means.

"We call for refraining from violence and settling the situation by peaceful means. We stress the need to contribute to fostering an inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue so as to ensure stability, civil peace, law and order in the country," the BRICS said. "We underscore the priority of fighting terrorism, including preventing attempts by terrorist organizations to use Afghan territory as a terrorist sanctuary and to carry out attacks against other countries, as well as drug trade within Afghanistan," the BRICS said. "We emphasize the need to address the humanitarian situation and to uphold human rights, including those of women, children and minorities," it said. Referring to the threat of terrorism, the BRICS said it is committed to combating the menace in all its forms and manifestations, including the cross-border movement of terrorists.

The summit also endorsed the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan for implementing the grouping's Counter-Terrorism Strategy that was adopted by the NSAs of the member nations of the grouping. "We express strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed. We recognize the threat emanating from terrorism, extremism conducive to terrorism and radicalization," it said.

It is a strong signal to both Pakistan and the Taliban, to desist from any misadventure against India in Kashmir; when it can have very serious consequences for the Taliban, as also for the entire Pakistan as a nation.

(The author is a chartered consultant civil engineer, passionately attached to his mother land - Jammu & Kashmir).

Transformation (a) to (z), pathway to happiness

■ CAPT PURUSHOTTAM SHARMA (RETD)

Doing good to others is not a duty. It is a 'joy' for it increases your own health and happiness.'

"Yah Shashtra Vidhimutsriya Vartate Kamakarata Na Sa Sidhimavapnoti Na Sukham Na Param Gatim" 'One who is indifferent to the injunctions of 'Shastra' (scriptures) and acts in arbitrary manner according to his own will, attains neither perfection nor happiness nor the supreme goal.'

Gandhi ji, our BAPU, said "Whenever I see an erring man, I say to myself. I have also erred, when I see to a lustful man, I say to myself: so was I once, and in this way I feel kinship with everyone in the world and feel that I cannot be happy without the humblest of us being happy."

Eternal happiness is the most valuable attainment achievable by means of following the 'Shrey Maarg' (path of goodness or righteousness) as per our Upnishads. It can be perceived only when one ceases to respond to worldly temptations. From the beginning of time, man has been striving to make his life more and more comfortable and happy. Just means in that direction is path of 'Dharma' and 'Dharma' alone. It is the man alone who is capable of making life happy by virtuous thoughts, words and deeds. We must carry a firm belief that all selves are one. That feeling of oneness will bring selflessness, undivided love and happiness. It is said that which man can do is impossible of achievement by gods and demons. Real happiness lies in conquering the vices particularly the six foes of man, namely, lust, wrath, greed, attachment, egotism and jealousy.

There are occasions which make the whole country happy and joyous. Our Independence on August 15, 1947, from the shackles of slavery (180 years under Mughals and 190 years under British) brought greatest happiness to the Nation. Adoption of own National Flag, Emblem, Anthem and Constitution brought great happiness to us all.

The play of Jana Gana Mana (our National Anthem) record before the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1947 in New York held in all praise and prestige by the gathering for its significance and magnificence made the country very happy.

It made the country happy and proud when on June 12, 2007, daily session of the Senate of the United States started with our Gayatri Mantra.

Shri Guru Granth Sahib is one of our best spiritual classics. Its rescue from the critical situation and bringing to India from Afghanistan in August last with swift and reverential treat was profoundly welcomed and hailed by our country and by the devotees across the world.

To bring happiness to the people:

A) It should be ensured that no interruptions in the proceedings of legislature are caused and business hours are fully utilized for the benefit of the electorate;

B) Stringent measures must be taken to check the growing population with unwanted children particularly

ly among the poor which result in beggary, crime and mushrooming of 'Jhugis/Jhonpris', resulting in appalling living conditions;

C) Curse of corruption flowing in the stream that drags and tempts people at the helm of affairs to commit corrupt practices in every sphere is eating the vitals of the society and causing sufferings to the people and this evil needs to be put to an end at the earliest;

D) The culprits who incite the innocent people to indulge in mass violence and destruction of public property must be severely dealt with;

E) The world body should be strongly supported by all nations to curb the scourge of ongoing terrorism by fanatics and fundamentalists causing bleedings and killings of the innocent people;

F) Firm hand and effective preventive measures to plug the menace of cruelty and sexual assaults on innocent women and children required to be taken;

G) Serious thought needs to be given to framing policies to create employment opportunities and steps must be taken at the earliest to provide everybody with some job/work to do to keep away starvation;

H) Our 'Ann-Daatas' must receive unflinching support from all quarters for fetching him rich yields which should male him, his family and countryman (his dependents) happy;

I) Our bureaucracy ought to play pivotal role in the implementation of various welfare schemes/measures legislated with a view to secure 'Roti', 'Raiment' and 'Roof' for all as delivery of social 'justice' at all levels contributes to the happiness of all;

J) Those occupying high chairs must muster enough courage and will-power to curtail growing economic inequality among the people so that the underprivileged are uplifted and gradually brought at par with others;

K) Steps must be taken to stop indecency by playing vulgar songs and unpleasant worded writings in public places and buses that are forcibly made heard and seen by school going children, ladies and elderly persons;

L) There should be no delay in delivery of justice due to failures of Panchayats to solve local problems;

M) Professional and public servants must take due care to adhere to the ethics in their dealings;

N) Vigorous efforts must be made to pull out persons suffering from enslavement of addiction found crowding the wine shops, causing ruin of many families and furtherance of this vice in the society at large;

O) Employers must shed the vile and brutal behavior towards their ill paid employees to make the working place harmonious;

P) Perverted and shameful conduct of some so called 'Dharma Gurus' infuriated and made sad millions of people who had transplanted their faith and reverence in their spiritual masters, therefore, constant vigilance needs to be exercised so that no such breaches in mutual trust recur;

Q) The disgraceful acts of scams and scandals involving swindling and defrauding of huge sums of national wealth by some depraved minded persons need to be

dealt firmly with exemplary punishment by simplifying the process in dealing with such culprits;

R) Suitable preventive measures need to be taken to curb the unrest caused by turning institutions of higher learning into political fields;

S) All of us must stop the sinful practice of enormous wastage of hard-earned food grains and heaps of leftover precious food often witnessed particularly in social gatherings;

T) Concerned authorities must ensure adequate and regular water and power supply to avoid hardships to the common people;

U) Business community must, on its own, realize its duty and obligations towards their own brethren and must stop the sinful acts of hoarding, adulterations, evasion of taxes, high profit margins and other malpractices;

V) There should be affordable health-care facilities to the people specially to the underprivileged, however, admirable steps being taken are making people happy;

W) Our Netajis are neither coming upto the expectations of the electorates nor aiming at energetic governance and need to demonstrate determination, honesty, commitment, innovation, simplicity, selflessness and truth like Gandhi Ji, Lal Bahadur Shastri Ji and Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam, if they are to prove their worth;

X) The nation needs to bridle the fanatics quarreling in the name of religions and hurting the God who resides in every being;

Y)