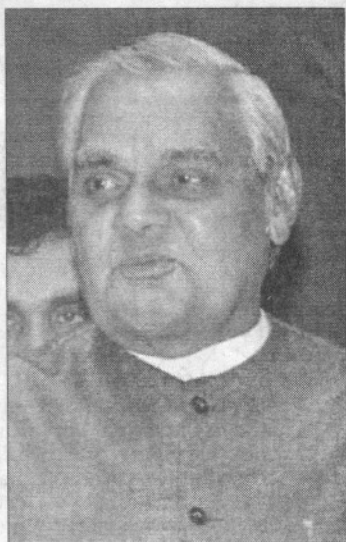




President Perviz Musharraf



Prime Minister Vajpayee

*Nation 3-S. & Pak. F. 2nd India*

# The common thread

BY RAJINDAR SACHAR

**B**JP is working on a planned, deeply thought out divisive strategy for next State and Parliamentary elections. This is highlighted by Prime Minister's call that Hindutva is a way of life and not a religion.

The self vanity of Hindus to project Hinduism as the only religion which teaches a way of life would be presumptuous arrogance. Every spiritual soul in each religion having reached the height of communion with the Universal Soul has the same message of universal love, common humanity and the acceptance that same divine power runs through all human beings though outwardly professing different religions and practices.

The Hinduism 'Vasudhaiva - Kutumbakam' (world is one family) is equally reciprocated in Quran which says "All the created ones belong to the family of God..." so an Arab has no precedence over a non-Arab, a white over a black". And Christ said succinctly "All are children of God".

Hindus pride themselves rightly that its precepts, teachings emphasize pious duty to look after their aged parents and some placing service and devotion to mother as above that of God. Same is the mandate in Quran, namely, "And that ye be kind to parents" and say "My Lord; bestow on them Thy mercy even as they cherished me in childhood".

As an ennobling illustration of friendship Hindus recite the story of Lord Krishna (Mahabharat) being so generous and considerate to his classmate Sudama whose family was amongst the poorest. Equally in comparison is saying in Quran. "He is the best of all the friends in the eyes of God who is good to his friend and same is

whelming poverty ridden masses. This is not a cliché. It is a reality. According to the human development report a country in which the capacity of each individual to spend is limited to US\$ 2 per day is a situation of below poverty level and if US\$ 1 per day is below extreme poverty level. The per capita income of India is 480 dollars annually. It is quite clear that barring a few privileged the overwhelming millions of residents are living below extreme poverty level.

Thus, this is the real conflict between Indian Vs. Bharat.

One of the tragedies of our narrow outlook is that though some of most crucial and important part of respective religions are similar, they are not known to the other.

Many non-Muslims are not familiar with the fact that pre-Islam society in Arab land worshipped as many idols as are worshipped in India. Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) led a revolt against idolatry and call for belief and faith in one universal God. Similar onslaught was initiated by Swami Dayanand in 19th Century, who was the bitterest opponent of idolatry.

He maintained that there is not a single verse in the Vedas to sanction invocation of the Deity and likewise there is nothing to indicate that it is right to invoke idols. He said "idol worship is a sin". His remedy, in his own words: "Under a righteous Government these lovers of idols (priests) would have been compelled to earn their living by breaking stones, making bricks and carrying materials for building purposes or doing the like work".

BJP Government which invoked reverentially the name of Swami Dayanand in Gujarat elections may consider acting on his advice.

Thy mercy ever as they cherished me in childhood".

As an ennobling illustration of friendship Hindus recite the story of Lord Krishna (Mahabharat) being so generous and considerate to his classmate Sudama whose family was amongst the poorest. Equally in comparison is saying in Quran. "He is the best of all the friends in the eyes of God who is good to his friend and same is true of the neighbours".

As far as the dignity of labour, note Quran saying, "The best earning is that which you earn with your own hands. It is better to carry a bag of goods than beg". The same spirit and attitude of mind runs through our Bhagwad Gita, which says, "Do your duty, and leave the result to God".

Islam, in Arabic means, surrender, submission to God. The same emphasis on total surrender to God is the teaching of Bhagwad Gita.

Evidently all great souls and prophets have the same vision of God. There is that indissoluble unity of thinking that no religion whether Hinduism or Islam can claim to be the sole interpreter of God's vision. Their paths to reach God may differ but the goal is the same - mainly how to obtain God's mercy and blessings.

Another not so clever slogan being projected by BJP is by seeking to equate Hindutva as Bhartiya. This is utterly unwarranted. I can accept that all people of whatever religion living in this country are Bhartiya - that is resident of Bharat, because our Constitution in Article 1(1) says India, that is, Bharat - the latter has a connotation to territory stretching back thousands of years even before the advent of Islam or Christianity.

So no resident of area whether Hindu, Muslim, Christians living this side of Indus would object to be called Bhartiya. But, if I were a Muslim or Christian I would certainly resent being called Hindu because it amounts to denying me my identity of my religion. As it is, being a Hindu, I reject the twist given by Savarkar that people living this side of Indus are Hindus and the further mischievous twist now being given by equating Hinduism with Hindutva, I consider this as an insult to the ennobling Hinduism lived by Gandhi and Vivekanand and the enlightened universal teachings of Quran as exemplified by the life of Maulana Azad.

No, BJP cannot be allowed to get away with the unacceptable formulation of equating Hindutva with Bhartiya. Yes we are all Indians and Bhartiya and proud of it and also equally proud of being Hindu, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs.

As it is more apt to call Indians as Bhartiya because already in our social set up because of the policies of globalisation there is a conflict of India Vs. Bharat - the former represents the elite and the minority of the privileged few while Bharat represents the over-

laid. He said, "For worship is a sin". His remedy, in his own words: "Under a righteous Government these lovers of idols (priests) would have been compelled to earn their living by breaking stones, making bricks and carrying materials for building purposes or doing the like work".

BJP Government which invoked reverentially the name of Swami Dayanand in Gujarat elections may consider acting on his advice.

In its quest for power BJP is totally indifferent to the damages it may do to one of still surviving institutions - Judiciary. I am referring to its application to Supreme Court for release of acquired undisputed land in Ayodhya to be given to VHP for building a Ram Temple.

I am surprised because BJP has a set of talented lawyers including the Law Minister whom, if they had asked impartial advice would have certainly advised them that it is not possible to persuade the Supreme Court to accede to this request when the matter of mosque is pending in the High Court. VHP still maintains that it will have the sanction sanctorum (Garb Griha) of Temple at the very site of Masjid - thus the Court is being asked to predetermine the decision of the suit.

There is no way Supreme Court can accept such a request unless VHP publicly gives up its claim to Masjid site and the case before the High Court is withdrawn. As a matter of fact Supreme Court has positively ruled in 1994 that the handing over of the so called undisputed area can only be done after implementation and in terms of final adjudication in the suit. Knowing fully well this situation the only motive of BJP is to do public relations exercise with its Parivar and then innocently turn round to blame the Court for want of honouring the Hindutva sentiment. Must cynicism and political morality fall so low.

It is now quite evident that in fight for secularism Congress will not be playing the leading role as is clear from its falling a victim to non-issue of cow slaughter raised by BJP, considering that slaughter of cows and its she calves is already prohibited in the whole of India excepting Kerala and North East.

The talk of cultural nationalism is phoney. The persons living in the Punjab have more cultural closeness in the matter of folk lore, marriage customs, eating habits with Punjabi Muslims in Pakistan. Hindus and Muslims in South have common dress and food habits and social manners far different from the Hindus and Muslims in the North. The effort of BJP to split Hindus, Muslims, and other religions into separate categories is doomed to failure because it is contrary to commonly shared history, culture and philosophy for centuries.

The writer is former Chief Justice of the High Court of Delhi, New Delhi.

E-mail: rsachar1@vsnl.net