

Warnings of History

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While the modern, largely European concept of nation-states is just about 200 years old (22 principalities of Germany were united by Bismark in 1871 under Prussia's leadership to become the German nation state; still leaving out German Austria as a separate state; England is UK only since; Italy is one nation state only for less than 150 years with various city states and provinces united as the modern republic of Italy by the efforts of Garibaldi and Mazzini; USA is a nation state only since 1786.....), the people of India had always considered themselves as one people, Bharatiyas; in one country Bharat Varsha. The Sanatana Dharma and its culture unite the people. We have been one people, one nation with one land but many kingdoms all owing allegiance to *dharma*. The same gods, the same temples, the same tirthas, and same mythologies were revered by all the people, all over the land but in their different languages, ways of life, and food and clothing etc.

2 First, it was the communists of India who said (in the 1940s) that India is not one nation but a conglomeration of nationalities; they said that Muslims (by dint of their religion); people speaking different languages like Telugu, Tamil, Gujarati , Marathi are all different nationalities, each one entitled to its own sovereign state. This evil formulation to disintegrate the millennial Bharatiya Rashtra came out of the evil application of Joseph Stalin's theory of nationalities and their right to self-determination. Under Lenin and Stalin, the dictatorship of the communist party



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created proforma independent republics for the different nationalities like Uzbeks, Tajiks, Georgians, Ukrainians, Armenians, etc. They were in fact vassal states of imperial Russia.

3. The communists in India were outdone by the evil genius, Mohammed Ali Jinnah and his Muslim League. First, Jinnah and the Muslim League said that Muslims in India are a minority and wanted safeguards to preserve their religion in a democratic India where Hindus would be the overwhelming majority. Gradually, Jinnah and the Muslim League abandoned the concept of minority and safeguards for it in favour of the concept of Muslims as separate nation. This notion was already promoted and broadcast by the communists. In the event, India was partitioned, Congress party and Mahatma Gandhi who swore that India would not be allowed to be divided humiliatingly succumbed to terrorism of the Muslim League unleashed on their Direct Action Day 16th August 1946 and the massive violence unleashed on Hindus from then onwards. The Muslim inhabitants of India who voted and rioted for the partition of India and created the Islamic state of Pakistan from where all Hindus and Sikhs etc had been completely cleansed, are now once again asserting their separate entity and as in the past, the vote-hungry Congress presided by a foreign-born person is taking several steps to confirm the separate Muslim identity and eventually, nationhood.
4. The Sachar Committee report accepted by the Congress led UPA government will be accelerating the demand of the residue of Muslims in our country for separate nationhood and separate states. 126 districts in the country are earmarked for Muslimfication by the Ministry of Minority Welfare presided over by Abdul Rehman Antulay. In this context, it would be most educative if we read some of the passages from Kulapati K M Munshiji's short work.

5. Warnings of History (Trends in Modern India) published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in 1963.

“What are the forces which lead to the rise or fall of nations? How do nations rise and fall? That implies another enquiry : What are the factors which go to make a virile nation? When do they run amuck?

“These factors, though often derived from geographical compactness or the unity of language, are not necessarily dependent on them. Men living in the same geographical area do not necessarily make a nation. Men speaking the same language or following the same religion do not always make a nation. Switzerland and Canada are multilingual nations. UK and USA, India and Pakistan, though speaking the same language are different nations.

“Three such factors are invariably found in virile nations: common memory of achievements, will to unity, and habitual urge to collective action.

“First, the people constituting a nation have a common memory of great heroes and exploits of great adventures and triumphs in the past. Japan, perhaps, represents the finest example of ancient memories, tenaciously preserved. The same could be said of Hindus, but I wonder whether the same would be said about them two decades hence.

“Historic forces often have not given a common memory to communities living in a single country; they often look upon their past from different angles, and, in consequence, cannot form a nation. Hindus looked up to Rana Pratap and Shivaji as their heroes; the Muslims admired Mahamud Ghazni and Aurangzeb; in this antagonistic outlook lay the seed of Pakistan. The common memory, though limited, which we now share in India is that of mutual influence in the past, and of freedom struggled

for and won in the present.

The British and the French in Canada, and the French, the Germans and the Italians in Switzerland, have short but living memories of common adventures and triumphs sufficiently vital to make them a nation.

“The USA has solved the problem in a characteristic way. Every year foreign emigrants pour into the country, fleeing from oppression or seeking wealth. However, due to its educational system, in the third generation if not in the second, their descendants acquire, as if they were their own, the memories of Washington and Abraham Lincoln and of the colossal achievements for which USA stands.

“In India, eleven years have been wasted by a sterile educational policy. (*Our education continues to be not only sterile but poisonous as regards India's true history*). Many things could have been done in this interval to give to young men and women a common memory of our struggle. But it was not done. A generation [*two generations by now?*] has now grown up which takes freedom for granted but draws no inspiration from the way it was won.

“The second factor which plays a great part in the birth and growth of a nation is the will to national unity in a people. Nationalism implies a sustained effort on the part of the people to *will* themselves into a nation.

“But who are the people? In all collective affairs of men, we should remember, it is what Toynbee calls the dominant minority which speaks, creates and leads that counts. The masses are passive, following its lead or submitting to its influence or coercive power. When I speak of the will to unity, therefore, it is primarily the will of the dominant minority that I mean.

“The will to national unity is hard to develop, but easy to be dissipated. Generally it is dissipated under certain conditions:

“First, if the dominant minority has no sense of mission as regards the future of the nation;

“Secondly, if its will to unity is fragmented by contradictory loyalties;

“Thirdly, if it becomes psychologically alien to the masses.

“All nations which have risen to greatness have been characterized by a sense of mission.

“In Japan we found a deep sense of mission. Its people cannot think of themselves as a lost people; they have faith in their culture and destiny; they have no regrets and no frustration.

“The dominant minority in USA has also a sense of mission to spread its free way of life throughout the world, to combat totalitarianism and to be in the forefront of material achievements. It is this Pillar of Fire which leads them on and leaves them no rest.

“This sense of mission we found very highly developed in Germany. In course of three decades the land twice came under the heels of foreign armies and its people were desiccated as never before in history. And yet their sense of destiny never dimmed; they reconstructed their life long before their conquerors could repair the ravages inflicted by victory.

“The strength of Communism is not in the validity of dialectical materialism, not in its armies and collectives, not even in Sputniks. It lies in its intellectuals who, intensively indoctrinated for two generations, have but one mission in life; to fulfill what they consider to be the predestined role of Soviet Russia in communizing the world and dominating it. The fundamental problem of the world therefore is whether what is called the ‘Free World’ can produce a matching sense of mission.....

“This sense is perhaps at its white heat in little Israel. Men and women come there from different parts of the world. Often they do not know any common language. Israel itself is suspended precariously over the mouth of a volcano---Arab hatred. And yet they are convinced that this little patch of a desert

is their 'Promised Land'; that their race is pre-destined to an honoured place among the nations. Their passionate faith in the Jewish nation therefore is a burning flame welding them together. It drives them to perform the superhuman task of making ancient Hebrew a modern bond of unity and face the potential disasters with the indomitable calmness of a God-inspired mystic.

“During the last hundred years when we were struggling for freedom, the dominant minority of India had developed a sense of mission. We believed in our right to be true to our own culture; in our duty to suffer and, if need be, die for freedom; in our destiny to be free in order that, with the aid of our spiritual heritage, we could redeem mankind.

“If our sense of mission weakens,---as it has been of late---that is, if we cease to be true to ourselves and our culture; we lose confidence that we have a great role to play in history; if we come to look upon ourselves as a miserable, weak and poor people with no pride in our past and no faith in our future---our outlook will cease to be positive. Frustration, disappointment or despair will seize us. Disintegration will follow.

“However, the Indian mind through the ages had a deep sense of mission, and sooner than we realise, the younger generation will recapture it.

“Take the second condition. If a large section of the dominant minority prefers caste, region, linguism or religion as the object of paramount loyalty, the will to unity will be fragmented. In all countries, most people who constitute the dominant minority have a variety of loyalties; loyalty to one's family, to one's caste or class, to one's region or language, to one's religion and to one's nation. In a properly inter-related scheme of loyalties, the loyalty to the nation should dominate all other loyalties. That has been so in Germany and Japan, and that is the cause of their rise even after their catastrophic collapse in World War II.....

“The process going on in our country for the moment deserves serious attention. In the past, the Hindus had a superior loyalty to their religion, to Aryavarta---the Karma Bhoomi---in which they were

born. But this group loyalty is being displaced by Indian nationalism and almost in the hour of victory, it, as well as the new nationalism, are being undermined by loyalty to the caste or the region. Prophets of disintegration are talking about nationalities in India, not the Indian nation. In search of regional selfishness we are also apt to forget our paramount loyalty to the country as a whole.....

“A pessimist would think that we are reverting to the pre-Akbar period, when region warred with region and all of them opened the gates to slavery. However, this is a passing phase; but it will pass only if the fundamental devotion of the average Indian to the Motherland is so strengthened that it will sweep away the caste or regional loyalties. We will have to go through distressing trials if this does not happen in the immediate future.

“The third condition arises from an impact of a conquering culture upon another. It raises no problems in USA and the countries of Europe, for there basically the outlook of the dominating minority and the masses is the same, for the leaders have drawn inspiration from the soil.

“In India and in several countries in Asia, however, the outlook of the dominant minority which has grown up under the influence of an alien culture tends to differ from that of the masses. As a result, the minority is no longer emotionally responsive to the urges which characterise them, as it speaks, thinks and acts under the influence of an alien outlook; the masses also do not feel a sense of identity with it. Once this situation arises, the dominant minority, however active, is looked upon as alien and the will to unity becomes weak.

“In the pre-Gandhian period, to take our own case, the English-educated minority was Westernised in thought and outlook and the leaders often found it difficult to think in terms of the urges of the masses. Gandhiji could establish a complete identity between the minority and the people, because in this fundamental outlook he was one with them. He was to them not a Westernised political leader, but the sage, the saint and the saviour, of whom they had dreamt throughout the ages.

“It was expected that, after freedom, our dominant minority, following the Gandhian lead, would maintain this sense of identity with the Indian masses. Unfortunately, a new class has sprung up which again speaks in Western terms—I include Soviet countries in the West—and seeks to force Western experiments on our people. While this class complains that the masses do not respond to its call, it does not see that the fault is its own. It has not learnt to reflect the mind of the masses. It does not know the idiom of their life. It is too deeply engrossed in leading, directing and organizing from a higher pedestal. It does not realize that the aliens, though they may not be in blood and religion but only in feeling and thought, could only enforce a change, they could never inspire it.

“That is why the ruling class in many countries finds the Communist technique of coercing the masses to their way of living so handy.

“The last factor of great importance which goes to make a vigorous nation is the capacity of the people for collective action.

“The will to national unity is sustained only when the people are led, time and again, by the dominant minority to act with a common motive. The will when untranslated into action is only a morbid sentiment. Lurid examples of such sentiment having dominated us in the past can be easily found in our history.

“In the past, for instance, we dreamt of an Aryavarta and a Vikamaditya for centuries but it did not generate power to take collective action. When Prithviraj Chauhan fought Mahamed Ghori on the North-West Frontier, the rest of Hindu India looked on, and some of his Hindu neighbours nibbled at his home territory.

“I have never seen such a spontaneous urge for collective activity as in USA. Given a cause, however trivial, the people, even the children, organize themselves for collective effort. Even forward planning in industries is done by voluntarily organised groups or universities. Members of the Bar, generally the most individualistic of professions, are collectively working for constructive work. They neither look

for initiative nor help to the government. Herein lies the greatest strength of American democracy.

“If any man knew the secret of inspiring collective action, it was Gandhiji. Not only he gave us a sense of mission but led us to spin in a mass, to learn Hindu and to invite Harijans into our temples, to break laws and go and herd ourselves in jails.

“In recent years, the dominant minority in India, with its sense of mission weakened, has failed to inspire us to collective action. At one time I thought that tree planting would become a spontaneous national movement as in Japan; our officers, too superior to care for mass reaction, saw to it that it just lapsed back into a forest department activity.

“Shramdan again, looked upon in UP, for some time at any rate, as a new religion had the seed of a dynamic collective action to reconstruct rural life. It inspired the will to work together for a time. But our development projects, in spite of their high potential for releasing collective action, are just official activities imposed from above; they have allowed Shramdan to peter off.

“You will see from what I have stated that common memories of achievements, will to unity and urge to collective action, play a great part in the rise of nations. If these factors do not exist, there is no nation. If they are weak, the nation is weak too. If they are fragmented, the nation tends to disintegrate. It is equally true that if they run amuck, nationalism explodes through sheer exuberance.

“When these factors become very powerfully inspired by an active sense of mission, they often lead to expansionism as in the case of Hitlerite Germany, or to exhausting wars as in the case of the wars which Napoleon and Aurangzeb waged. They may also lead to an inflated ambition to dominate the world or to enrich themselves at the cost of others as in the case of the Colonial Powers of the recent past.

“The process appears to be something like this: When nationalism runs riot, it acquires great strength and collects enormous wealth. Then material prosperity and hunger for power obsess its dominant

minority to the exclusion of higher values. Once this phase sets in, national resurgence passes its zenith and begins to decline.

“Several dangers then face a prosperous and powerful nation. It may invite the wrath or jealousy of rival nations and go down before them in disastrous wars. It may also play up to its reputation and embark on suicidal conflicts, as in the case of the late Empire of Austria.

“Another danger, though insidious, is more potent. With great material prosperity and unlimited power, a nation loses its capacity for distinguishing between the true and the false, the right and the wrong, the beautiful and the ugly. The sense of mission disappears and men sink into sensual and material beings stripped of a sense of divinity. At this stage they lost their sense of imperishable spiritual values.....”



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