

Meeting With Master

by

Vanisha Uppal

In the year 2010 I had an intense inner desire to read Bhagavad Gita. After reading it a couple of times, I realised that somehow, somewhere I was missing the point, so I read it again and again. Each time I discovered a new insight which, it seemed, had never been told before. I felt Krishna was telling something, which was hidden behind the literal words. It was difficult to understand what needed to be done. Only thing I understood was, that I should follow my heart, else not following my heart would eat me up.

My destiny had a plan for me and I was ready to receive it. My grandmother's death became the turning point in my life, for the cremation of ashes, whole family went to Haridwar. After completing the rituals, we all decided to go to Rishikesh, to a known ashram near Triveni Ghat. After spending two days in peace, on the third and last day of our trip, my Papa, my sister and I, went to Triveni Ghat early morning. The view of the river Ganga and the Ghat caught my eye. I did not want to leave the sight of it, however, my sister, dragged me away from it.

We were back in Delhi. I started getting some beautiful dreams connected to river and water. Something was pulling me from inside. One day, I packed up my little bag, for no reason at all and took a night bus to Haridwar. I got down in early dark morning somewhere in Haridwar. I took an auto and went to Triveni Ghat with a plan to be there for three days. The view of Ganga gave me immense happiness. The whole first day I was sitting at bank of river, doing nothing, watching the water flowing, taking an occasional bath and eating very little.

Next day, by afternoon, I suddenly became very sad. While walking on the bank of the river, I asked God "why am I here and how do I attain you?" Immediate I got the answer from

inside, "reach no duality". I asked again, "Tell me the way to reach to no duality". I kept waiting but no replay came. In the evening out of nothing, I had a desire to buy my birth stone. From where to get it? I remembered my visit to Rishikesh in childhood; there were many gem shops near Laxman Jhula.

Next morning I took an auto and went to Laxman Jhula, got down in front of Kriya Yoga Ashram Gate. I overlooked that, silly of me, and went straight to closest gem shop and bought my birth stone. Soon after that I got a phone call from a friend, in the middle of the conversation, very causally he mentioned about Kriya Yoga teaching in Rishikesh. Don't know why the word Kriya Yoga was all over my mind. "If I am here then why not look for Kriya Yoga". I intensively started looking all around, without any clue about Kriya Yoga. I walked down the whole mountain and around the Ganga, and became very tired. I finally reached across to the other end up to Ram Jhula. I stopped by at Shivananda Ashram and asked, "Is there any Kriya Yoga learning centre near by". They told me you just passed it in the back.

Mystically, my starting point was my destination, I guess I had to make whole journey to realise this. It did not take me long to decide that I would like to come back next month for the Kriya Retreat which would be conducted by Master Per. I neither saw any website nor read anything about Master, yet I was extremely happy to enrol myself for the course.

It was the 6th of September 2014, first time, I saw Master at the initiation, and I still remember his deep blue eyes, humble nature, yet having confidence like a lion. His silence needed no introduction. He was very different from the conventional and tradition Sadhus. He was not wearing any outer symbolic signs, like orange dress, beard and an attitude of having attained so much.

Everyone feels so comfortable with him like being with a true

friend. He treats everyone equally. He neither brags about himself, nor does he give any theoretical knowledge. He inspires others to practice and to have their own experiences during the retreat. His teaching is to the essence.

His guided words, during the practice, always help me to go deeper in my own being. I was eagerly waiting to hear his voice in middle of the practice. His whole being is filled with so much of silence. His mere presence and voice is a complete meditation. At first I thought how he can teach the most difficult thing 'to meet the true self', in the most simple way, whereas others have written big books and talked great on spirituality. But now I know, that the one who knows the subject so very well, can only teach and make it simple for others. Before every session I close my eyes with Master's vision, sitting on chair with white shawl on his legs, that is the magical view for me.

My first two residential retreats, I willingly maintained maximum outer quietness. I watched master coming out of his room and going for long walks. His presence changes the whole atmosphere of the place. He carries an aura of light with himself. People around him are touched by the joy of freedom and love. Instantly a poem surfaced from the bottom of my heart after the first retreat with him.

During those days, I was sitting on the first floor, the glass door was closed, no one from outside could see inside. I saw master came out from his room; he wore his shoes and gave one glance to the glass door, as if something was pulling him towards upstairs. He hesitantly took one step up and after a little wait he took one more step. I was watching this and thought; "Would he climb up to me or will he just turn around and go for his walk, I have come a long way in search of him, he should also find me too". Slowly he hesitated but climbed to the last platform and immediately I opened the door. He was very happy to see to me and I too was. He sat with me and asked some questions. It was a ten minute talk. His presence

intoxicated me.

I went back home after the retreat, two things I was sure, first Kriya Yoga is meant for me and second I would join Master every time he comes to India for a retreat. I took the practice very sincerely. In meditation I got connected with him, I could feel his presence, it was very strong. I eagerly waited for next retreat, literally counting the days.

Master Per has lived his whole life while handling the duality in the most beautiful way. He does it effortlessly, we however makes tremendous efforts to reach to the silence, which we are unable to sustain for long. Managing to hold on to the inner silence for a longer time is itself a great task. We easily fall back to restlessness and duality. Whereas, he swiftly travels from 'duality' to 'no-duality' and sustains it. He says "More silence inside improves everything in life". He supports his disciples when one is in the practice. Master has ability speed up one's progress and give the experience of beyond if one is in regular practice.

He taught me how to breathe, as if I have never taken breath in the same way before.

Poem below ——

MASTER

An Aspiring face of moon after dark night
Like a fragrance spread through and might
Just looking at him, all my doubts are gone
All questions are answered in his silence drawn
He knows everything, how can one hide,
An Aspiring face of moon after dark night

His silent presence is greater than million words,
He knows how and when to guide
He spends his lonely long hours in bringing down the light,
Just to give our soul a greater height
An Aspiring face of moon after dark night

His looks pour nectar on our rough and dry restless souls,
The words he utter as instruction are so very pure,
Just we have to be receptive to get it right,
His love is infinite and selfless, he doesn't hold anyone so tight
What if he is physical apart, that does not make him too far,
He is in my heart, I can feel him and sees him beside.
An Aspiring face of moon after dark night

Liberating our minds with this Independence Day IIIT Delhi

Independence, freedom, Liberation, one of the most wonderful feelings one can ever experience. It's the 68th year of our National independence and we are proud of it. Our generation is lucky to be born in an independent India and yes we love it. But how independent can we call ourselves if we are slaves of our situations, feelings and thoughts.

How often we tell our selves "Don't get angry" or "Don't be sad" or "don't think too much about this"? But we end up being even, angrier, sad or stressed up by exactly that which we do not want to think about. We conclude by that its not in our hands. Does this mean that we are slaves of our situations, feelings or thoughts? This Independence Day lets pledge to attain freedom that matters the most. FREEDOM OF THE MIND.

We all would love to be in control of our selves. Not be sad when we don't want to, not be anxious if we don't want, and most of all think of only what we want and not of what we don't. There are ways to liberate ourselves from these

shackles. For that it's important to know that according to the theory of cognitive psychology all our emotions arise from our thoughts, for example, a thought like "its unfair to us" makes us feel sad, similarly if we think " the other person is wrong" we feel angry, and so on and so forth. It's so important and at the same time so easy to monitor our thoughts, which are many a times irrational. It's the habit of our minds to straight away jump to the worst case scenario situations and underplaying ourselves.

Monitoring and studying our thoughts would first of all help us to understand the root cause of our stress. It's a fact that its not the stress which is the problem, but why are we stressed is the real problem. The thought which is causing that stress is the real problem. After we learn how to monitor and study our thoughts, the next step is to logically bring them back to reality. Bringing the thought back to reality will make us realise that the actual situation is never that bad as we imagined it to be, immediately making our emotions a little comfortable. Thoughts are the basis of all emotions and behaviours and he who learns to have a control over his thoughts is the one most liberated and free.

Also, from this independence day let us all start practicing positive mental health practices like yoga and meditations which make us relaxed and more poised in life. The world is waking up to the benefits of yoga and meditation, with an exemplary show on this International Yoga Day, then why not us. Besides, Yoga and meditation not just relaxes us but also improves our physical health, increases our concentration, gives us better control over our feelings and makes us a wholesome healthier human being. This Independence Day let our mind and soul fly high with the kites, soaring in the sky with freedom and happiness.

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Discovering Cultural Unity in a Diverse Asia by Manohar Khushalani

The One Asia project which was born in Auroville, two years ago, held an exhibition and a series of performances in Mid December, at IIC. According to Jyoti Naoki Eri, its Founder Director, the aim was to present Asia's cultural richness and profound spirituality by underscoring the oneness of its spiritual beliefs.

The entire event was bound together by 'Ek Sutra' a Calligraphic exhibition created in collaboration with Qalamkaari Trust. Nineteen artists had presented their works at this exhibition. Some of the works were unusually innovative. Qamar Dagar's Peacock assembled with hindi alphabets and Irshad Farooqi's Qoranic verses carved out of a wooden wheel attracted attention. As one Calligrapher put it, he turned to this art form, because people had stopped writing.

I attended one of the workshops conducted by a Dutch Performer, Grace Gitadelila, introducing a South Indian art form called Kolam, popularly known as Rangoli in North India. This form includes intricate rice-flour designs that are drawn on the floor outside homes. Kolam's are considered auspicious and it is believed that the rice-flour, which may be eaten by birds and insects, symbolise reverence for all life forms. Amongst other documentaries, there was the screening of a remarkable film, Koi Sunta Hai, which interwove the folk music of the mystic poet Kabir with the musical works of the late vocalist Kumar Gandharva. It traced out Kumar's sources of inspiration – common folk singers such as an urban folklorist,

a street fruit seller, a social activist and a Dalit folk singer.

In the end the audiences were regaled by a surprise live vocal performance by the Director of the Film, Shabnam Virmani, who was accompanied by one of the Singers from the film itself, Prahlad Tipanya

Selections from the Annual Open Frame Film Festival, New Delhi by Tarini Sridharan



Still from Sadir to Bharatanatyam

This year's Annual 2012 Open Frame Film Festival, organized by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, included a series of compelling, thought-provoking films on a variety of diverse subjects. Light on the Dark Side (2012), a documentary directed by Geeta Singh, stood out in its aesthetic restraint. While its subject dealt with the phenomenon of blind individuals who had discovered their latent genius for photography, the film's tone remained controlled, light and celebratory, ending with a close up of the determined, relentless strumming of the sitar by one of the blind

photographers who was also musically gifted. Nidhi Tuli's *A Saroj Khan Story* (2012) was a stirringly poignant eye-opener into the Bollywood industry, captured through the portrayal of a brave and talented genius. The film delved into the life of Saroj Khan, arguably one of the greatest choreographers of the industry, yet consigned to a relative obscurity. Saroj's vulnerability and heartbreak were brought out at every point, with the film interspersing conversations with her, alongside visually creative ways of revisiting landmark moments in Bollywood. In *Freedom Song* (2012), co-directors Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and Subi Chaturvedi combined eclectic musical styles and references to popular culture in a brilliantly engaging and intensive documentary interrogating the levels of intolerance in India, with a special focus on the ethical dilemmas surrounding freedom and artistic expression. Delhi-based filmmaker Viveka Chauhan's *Sadir to Bharatanatyam* (2012), a documentary tracing the evolution of a classical dance form in India – Bharataynatyam – left a lasting impression. The film, which incorporated insightful interactions with brilliantly gifted dancers Navtej Johar and Aranyani Bhargav, pitted the historical evolution of the dance against questions of modernity and its influences on perceptions of the body, sensuality and culture, through a stunning interplay of music and dance put together in a brief 27 minutes. The screening was followed by a discussion with director Viveka Chauhan, historian Uma Chakravarti and moderated by filmmaker Anandana Kapur. When asked what inspired the theme for her film, Viveka Chauhan responded that she'd been reading about it for a long time. "Whenever you talk to people there's a kind of 'hush-hush' about it. There are not even enough dancers who really know about the Devadasis," she elaborated. Bharatanatyam as a dance had itself become synonymous with Indian culture. She referred to the insight Navtej Johar had made in the film – that bharatanatyam dancers had in some senses become literal "ambassadors of Indian culture", a state of affairs Johar himself found counterproductive to being an artist. A

fascinating and detailed discussion shaped itself around the clash of modernity and its implications in terms of sexuality, the body, and the history of the Devadasis, who were originally viewed as court dancers; a perennial moral taint surrounding them. These origins were sharply countered by their successors who developed a more spiritualized outlook, as if to wipe out the previous image. Someone in the audience made the comment that Muthulakshmi, "the daughter of Devadasi", was highly "moralistic" and yet had to face the consequences of this taint. As Navtej Johar asserted in the film: "In the original tradition, sensuality was considered alright, it was accepted and a natural part of the dance and its beauty. Now, with modernity, it has become 'coy' and ugly and unnatural, and this has problematized things to quite an extent." On the suggestion that the film was postmodern rather than modernist, in light of its exploration of 'bodies' and 'culture', and of a "gay male dancer finding himself creatively through such dance", Chauhan responded "We wanted to look at history here, and that always alludes to sensuality. In the past, even a certain gesture or movement would mean something and hold significance." Uma Chakravarti commented on how the transformations in the 80s and 90s development of feminist theories had opened up the way for interior stories and that questions of gender were critical to creative expression, as were those of identity. Viveka Chauhan revealed "Aranyani Bhargav is dealing with the same issues, and she says a lot of young people are in training but really aren't aware of this heritage, and even the ones that are, don't know what to do with it." Another notable film was the 52 minute documentary Marine Drive (2012), directed by Krishna Bagadiya. In the discussion that followed, Bagadiya related how he had grown up living in Marine Drive; he had seen Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan dancing in the streets under his window and it had always held a special place for him. Moderator Samina Mishra asked if he had planned to have the film focus so much on his uncle Atul, and people in the audience were curious as to how his family had reacted,

considering the film seemed to exclusively feature them in unflinching detail. Bagadiya replied that his family hadn't seen it yet, but went on to make the disclaimer that throughout shooting, everyone had been responsible for what they were saying and he hadn't in any way 'commented' on them as a director. He added "I've taken a cell, an organ, of a part of Bombay, and tried to show one person in the film – my uncle Atul." On how the title was connected to the themes explored in the film, especially his focus on Marwaris, he explained "A location has an impact on its people. Take Sunset Boulevard, or David Lynch's Mulholland Drive. Marine Drive is very special because you have a lot of family homes, like havelis, and there are many Marwaris settled in this area. And my uncle – perhaps I can explain it this way – Bombay was like Sin City, and my uncle is a product of Bombay, and a product of modernity, including its vices and its glamour, and this sits uneasily with the other theme of tradition."

Snake, Love and Sexuality

Ravindra Tripathi's

theaterama



There are a lot of stories in Indian mythology and folklores where you find the snake or the serpent as sexual motif. Some modern plays are also based upon it. For example Girish Karnad's play Nagmandala. The snake as sexual motif is not limited only to India. In 13th bharat rang mahotsav, the Japanese play ***Ugetsu Monogatari*** (directed by **Madoka okada**) also presents the snake as a charmer and lover of human being.

It is story of 10th century Japan. There is a young man, named Toyoo, son of a fisherman. He lives near seashore. A beautiful woman named Manago comes to his home in a rainy night. Toyoo is attracted towards her. He also lends his umbrella and promises to meet her again in near future. After some days he goes to her house on the pretext of going back his umbrella. During that he gets intimate with her. Manago gives him a beautiful sword as a token of their relationship. But after sometime it comes out that the sword was stolen from a shrine. Toyoo is caught by the officials on the charge of

theft. He is taken to the house of Manago and there it is discovered that actually Manago is not a woman but a serpent. She transforms herself as a woman to get Toyoo love. Now the question is what will happen of their relationship. Will Toyoo accept Manago, the serpent as his beloved or leave her?

Ugetsu monogatari is a play about coexistence of natural and supernatural in human life. We are fascinated by supernatural things but it is not always joyful. Sometime pain and sorrow also come with joyful supernatural. Are we ready to accept both of them? Or we want to enjoy one and discard the other thing? Actually ambivalence is part and parcel of life.

It is a stylized play and full of body movements. Four actresses play role of Manago one actor of Toyoo. The director of the play Madoka okada is known for his experimentation. He also assimilates the linguistic beauty of Japanese and traditional theatre of Japan. There are elements of pantomime in it also. It must be underlined that there a good plays from non-western countries in this festival. It is time to call it international bharat rang mahotsav.

‘The Park’ as a metaphor

Ravindra Tripathi's

theaterama



Three benches for three – yet no space –
a scene from '*The Park*'

The 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsva has started with fanfare. Although the city of Delhi is freezing with severe cold, the theatre lovers are daring with enthusiasm to watch the plays. Even those who can't get ticket or passes, can enjoy food with fire in *The Foodhub*, which serves delicious kababs and momos . But let us talk about theatre instead of cold and food.

In Sriram Centre, on 8th of January, '*The Park*', jointly written and directed by Manav Kaul and Kumud Mishra, witnessed a houseful of appreciative audience.

'*The Park*' is a play of just four characters, mainly three, who come in a public park during daytime. of course reasons for their coming to the park are different. One wants to spend some leisure time, the second one to have a nap on a bench and the third one, to watch a woman after she has had a shower.

There are three benches in the park, so there should be no problem for separate and independent spaces for them. But the problem starts when all of them want a particular bench for themselves. No one wants to leave his preferred bench. They argue and fight over their 'rights'. The play starts as a comedy but slowly and gradually it becomes serious. Laughter disappears and serious identity issues appear. Right over the bench becomes a bone of contention between them. The burning topics of displacement and dislocation of people, the Indian adivasis, the Palestinians, the Israelis come in foreground

and in the process a comedy turns black. The play becomes a metaphor. A metaphor for struggles of indigenous people fighting for their demands in many parts of the world . Who has the right of land where Israel exists today? The Israelis, who are there today or the Palestinians, who are displaced? What is the basis of their rights? Who has the rights in Mumbai? Does the marathi speaking person have more rights there than those who don't know this language? These issues come during their arguments.

As the arguments go further, tension develops and all of them start fighting among themselves. the dialogue is broken. This shows how we, human beings, don't settle our differences amicably and democratically. This is not happening only in India, but everywhere.

'The Park' ends on positive note and initiates a process to think about how we bear our children. What is the state of our education system? The actors gave commendable performances.

A Magic Lantern Presentation

**Flash-point human rights film festival
comes to Delhi**



Still From 'Suddenly Last

Winter'

The three-day Flashpoint Human Rights Film Festival, which brings together eight extraordinary films from around the world that deal with human rights issues, gets under way in New Delhi on Thursday. The films urge people to reflect, react, revolutionalise and act as a 'flashpoint' to usher in change.

The festival has already been held in Mumbai from December 8-10, 2010. The New Delhi edition would include special focused thematic screenings and panel discussions.

The eight documentaries to be screened at Flashpoint, which were part of the 'Matter of Act' programme at the Movies That Matter Film Festival 2010 in the Netherlands, highlight the extraordinary work done by human rights defenders across the world, and their fight against injustice and oppression. These films show what great dangers these activists have to face to do their work where freedom of speech, the right to a fair trial and the right to life are violated.

The films look at human rights issues like human trafficking and child prostitution; violation of international laws on war and peace; atrocities under military regimes; religious fundamentalism and homophobia; political annexation/occupation

and oppression; women disempowerment and honour killings; ravages of civil war and hostilities; and war crimes and killing of innocents.

The films being screened are *Redlight* by Guy Jacobson and Adi Ezroni; *Song For Amine* by Alberto Bougleux; *Suddenly, Last Winter* by Gustav Hofer and Luca Ragazzi; *The 10 Conditions Of Love* by Jeff Daniels; *The Sari Soldiers* by Julie Bridgham; *To Shoot An Elephant* by Alberto Arce and Mohammed Rujailah; *Women In Shroud* by Farid Haerinejad and Mohammad Reza Kazemi; and *Women In White* by Gry Winther.

“Screening of these films along with panel discussion and media campaigns could possibly bring about a change in perceptions and mindsets and initiate action. Flashpoint intends to spotlight human rights issues and make a call for the audience to act as ‘Flashpointers’,” said Sridhar Rangayan of Solaris Pictures, which is organising the festival.

Solaris Pictures has consistently been making films on issues such as homosexuality and gay rights, films that engage the audience and initiate dialogues on issues dealing with health and sexuality, human rights, and the gay and transgender communities.

The festival, which will be held at Alliance Francaise, is being co-organised by Magic Lantern Foundation, non-profit group working with culture and human rights. The foundation is involved with production of documentary films that explore aesthetics and politics, campaigning with films on issues of social justice, culture and censorship, media education to critically assess the dominant media, intervening in the construction of media policy, dissemination of independent films, and curation and organisation of film festivals.

There would also be two panel discussions. The first, on ‘Rising intolerance’, is being supported by the Human Rights Law Network. The second, on ‘Gender and conflict’, is being

supported by UN Women.

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ANNEXURE – I

Redlight

Dir: Guy Jacobson / Adi Ezroni

2009, 72 min / United States / English, Khmer / English
Subtitles

According to estimates, one million children end up in the sex industry every year. Especially in Southeast Asia, the problem has taken on huge proportions. 'Redlight' tells the personal stories of two young Cambodian victims of child traffic and two brave women who fight this form of child abuse: human rights defender Somaly Mam and politician Mu Sochua. Both were nominated for the Nobel peace prize in 2005. The directors Guy Jacobson and Ali Ezroni, who received the prestigious Global Hero Award for the film, that contains poignant victims' accounts and hidden camera images from brothels.

Former sex slaves try to get back on track after their gruesome experiences. Others try to bring to trial those responsible for their ordeal. But they face tremendous risks to find eyewitnesses and sue brothel keepers.

Official website: <http://www.redlightthemovie.com>

Song For Amine

Dir : Alberto Bougleux

2009, 53 min. / Spain, France, Italy / Arabic, French /

English Subtitles

Countless people have been subjected to forced disappearance since the early nineties, when Algeria waged war on radical Islam. According to official statistics published by the Algerian government 6,000 Algerians have 'disappeared' in the 1990s. Human rights organizations consider the actual number to be much higher, though. Amine Amrouch disappeared on 30 January 1997, when he was abducted by the security forces in Algiers. Since that time his mother Nassera Dutour spends her days campaigning for truth and justice. She presides the Mediterranean Federation on Forced Disappearances (FEMED) and is a spokesperson of a movement created by the relatives of victims of forced disappearance in Algeria. "At first we asked the government to return our children alive", she says. "Now we ask them to tell us the truth and render their bodies." 'Chanson pour Amine' sheds new light on the impact of a forgotten war against Muslim fundamentalism. A war that has already cost more than 200,000 human lives.

Official website: <http://www.memorial-algerie.org/>

Suddenly, Last Winter

Dir: Gustav Hofer / Luca Ragazzi

2008, 78 min. / Italy / Italian / English Subtitles

'Suddenly, Last Winter', an ironic documentary that won several prizes at international festivals, tells the story of Gustav Hofer and Luca Ragazzi, the directors of the film. Their lives are turned upside down when the Italian government introduces a bill to reinforce the legal status of gays and unmarried couples. The bill provokes a country-wide debate and stirs a wave of homophobia in Italy. The Vatican and the conservatives speak out against the government's plans, arguing that the end is near if the bill is voted. Gustav and Luca, who have been together for eight years, set out on a journey to hear all sides and come across an aspect of Italy they did not know

yet. Intolerance appears to be more widespread than they thought.

Awards: Special Jury Award – AFI Dallas IFF 2009 Special Mention Panorama Programme – Berlin Film Festival 2009 Best Documentary – Cordoba Idem Festival 2009 Nastro d'Argento for best documentary – Italian Film Critics Awards 2009 Best Film – El Ojo Cojo Festiva

Official website: <http://www.suddenlylastwinter.com>

The 10 Conditions Of Love

Dir: Jeff Daniels

2009, 53 min / United States, Australia / English / English Subtitles

Rebiya Kadeer once embodied China's economic success. Born to penniless parents, she worked her way up and became one of the ten richest people in China. The government honoured her at the International Women's Conference that took place in Beijing in 1995. But besides being extremely successful, Rebiya is also an Uyghur woman. Uyghurs are people with a Turkish origin who live in the Xinjiang autonomous region. China is mainly interested in the territory of the Islamic Uyghurs because of the large oil and gas reserves. When delivering an address to the National People's Congress, Rebiya decides to put the cat among the pigeons. She criticizes the influx of Han migrants in Xinjiang, arguing that they take the Uyghurs' jobs and undermine their culture. Rebiya is arrested and detained. Six years later, more dead than alive, she is allowed to leave prison and goes to the United States. There, she campaigns for the human rights of the Uyghurs, which takes its toll on her children.

The human rights defender Rebiya Kadeer has been nominated three times for the Nobel Prize

Awards: Best Social & Political Documentary – Australia 2009

Official website: <http://www.10conditionsoflove.com>

The Sari Soldiers

Dir: Julie Bridgham

2008, 92 min / Nepal, United States / English, Nepali / English Subtitles

When Devi, mother of a fifteen-year-old daughter, witnesses her niece being killed by the Royal Army of Nepal, she decides to speak out in public on this crime. In retaliation for her open-heartedness the army kidnaps her daughter. 'The Sari Soldiers' follows Devi on her quest to find her daughter and in her struggle for justice. Apart from Devi, five other brave women are portrayed who, based on different convictions, try to shape Nepal's future. They do this against the background of an intensifying civil war between the armed forces and the Maoist insurgents. The rebels have stepped up against king Gyanendra who is in power since his brother killed their father in 2001. The new king does not have much consideration for democracy and seeks to curtail civil liberties in Nepal. Although the women have different points of view regarding the conflict, director Julie Bridgham has succeeded admirably in getting their stories across. The documentary has received several prizes, including the Nestor Almendros Prize from the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival.

Awards: Nestor Almendros Prize – Human Rights Watch Film Festival 2009; Grand Jury Prize – Tri-Continental Film Festival 2009; Best of Festival Prize – Watch Docs 2009; Special Jury Award – One World Human Rights Documentary Festival 2008

Official website: <http://www.sarisoldiers.com> | www.butterlampfilms.com

To Shoot An Elephant

Dir: Alberto Arce / Mohammed Rujailah

2009, 112 min. / Spain / Arabic, English / English Subtitles

What is it like to live in the Gaza Strip, an area of about 140 square miles that is home to one and a half million Palestinians? Unemployment is high and almost half the population is under fourteen year. In 'To Shoot an Elephant' director Alberto Arce zooms in on life in Gaza, which is occupied by Israel. As a member of the International Solidarity Movement, one of the few aid organizations that is still active in the Gaza Strip, Arce was filming there late 2008 and early 2009, when fighting between Israel and Hamas intensified. Approximately 1,300 civilians were killed in the hostilities and air attacks that took place during that period. Arce was one of the few foreign journalists that witnessed the shelling from within the Gaza Strip. The filmmaker turns his camera on the ambulance personnel. They take the dead and wounded off the street, putting their own lives on the line. When they try to shelter a corpse, they get fired at.

Awards: Best director award – Florence's Festival dei Popoli 2009; Golden Butterfly Amnesty International's A Matter of ACT Award for the best documentary – Movies that Matter Festival 2010

Official website: <http://www.toshootanelephant.com>

Women In Shroud

Dir: Farid Haerinejad / Mohammad Reza Kazemi

2009, 73 min. / Iran, Canada / Farsi / English Subtitles

Imagine a 21-year-old woman being forced into prostitution by her mother since she was nine years old, and frequently being raped by her brothers. What would be an appropriate punishment in a case like this? In Iran, the death penalty is applied. For the 21-year-old woman, that is. Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the Iranian legal system has been all but favourable to women. Women accused of adultery can be stoned

to death – even without proof of guilt. Although stoning to death has been officially abolished since 2004, it still occurs. The documentary 'Women in Shroud' follows a group of Iranian lawyers and human rights defenders that campaign against these unfair convictions. Their activism is not without danger, though. The central figure in the documentary, Shadi Sadr, was arrested in 2007 during a peaceful protest, and in the summer of 2009 she was beaten up by militias while she was on her way to the Friday prayers. In 2009, Sadr received the Human Rights Defenders Tulip from Dutch foreign minister Verhagen, and she will be a guest of honour at this year's Movies that Matter Festival.

Awards: Cinema for Peace Human Rights Award- Berlin International Film Festival 2010;
Golden Butterfly, Amnesty International's A Matter of ACT Award for the most impressive human rights activist / organization: Shadi Sadr – Movies that Matter Festival 2010

Women In White

Dir: Gry Winther

2009, 52 min. / Cuba, United States, Spain / Spanish, English / English Subtitles

From the moment he came to power in 1959, Fidel Castro led Cuba with an iron fist. A system of informants and secret police ensured that dissidents were given no chance to voice their views. When, in March 2003, all eyes were directed at the invasion of Iraq, seventy-five journalists, writers and human rights activists were arrested. They received prison sentences of 20 to 30 years. Two weeks later, the wives, sisters and daughters of the prisoners decided to come together to pray for their loved ones. Since then, Las Damas de Blanco, or the women in white, walk silently through the streets of Havana. Their actions are not without success: twenty men have been released since they began. In 2005, the European Parliament awarded the women a freedom of speech

award. Although the regime keeps a close eye on the women, they continue on with their silent protest. Now only 12 are left in prison. The women's fight led to the release of the others, but the ones released were forced to live in exile. The 12 refused to leave Cuba and therefore are still in prison. The women therefore still march through the streets of Havana. For the first time, these women share their stories with the world in the documentary 'Women in White'.

Awards: Norwegian Award for Cinematography 2009

Official

website:

<http://www.nordicworld.tv/catalogue/1191/program/program/null>

Full

details:

<http://magiclanternfoundation.org/film-fest/flashpoint-new-delhi/>

A political play from Bolivia

Ravindra Tripathy's

theaterama



EN UN SOL AMARILLO-

Photo: Radoslav Pazameta-Lucasninos Cuadro

We, in India, are familiar with South American writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mario Vargas llyosa and others. But we know very little about theatre of Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and other Latin- American countries. Fortunately, in 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsav there are some plays from these countries which show how lively the theatre scene is there. One can feel the 'politics of theatre' in these plays. But it is not only

the political component which is important; there is also immense aesthetic depth in these plays. You can say that Latin-American theatre is as lively as its fiction and poetry.

'En un sol Amarillo' (In a yellow sun: memories of an earthquake) is play in Spanish from Bolivia. Directed by **Cesar Brie**, an eminent Bolivian director, this play is about a natural tragedy that took place in this South-American country. On the night of 22nd may 1998, Bolivia was rocked by a massive earthquake, which devastated many cities and towns. A lot of people became homeless. Children died without proper care. The international community sent all type of aids but the government of Bolivia couldn't distribute it properly and massive misuse of funds aggravated the plight of people. Corruption went rampant. The basic infrastructures were destroyed and remained inbuilt. Those who raised a voice were maimed, misappropriation of fund by the bureaucracy and political class knew no bounds and the victims were mistreated. People died and politicians laughed.

The play is based upon the research and information about this earthquake and subsequent suffering of the people. So there is a lot of reality here. But this is not only a docu-drama. Here you see reality as well as the imagination, prose as well as poetry and design as well as acting. There is physical theatre and comedy in it also. Interweaving of wit, humor, pathos makes this play a human tragedy. We can see here what is happening not only in Bolivia but all over the world. There are many stories of catastrophe also in India, which are full of administrative lapses, monetary mismanagement and political insensivities. The Indian audience will easily identify with this play. The director of the play, Cesar Brie, had to flee Argentina in 1976 because of dictatorship in that country. He lived and worked in Denmark, Italy and Poland before settling in Bolivia.

Arunachal Pradesh on The Theatre Map of India

Ravindra Tripathi's

theaterama



No doubt, the Hindi language has many local dialects. But have you ever heard of Arunachali Hindi? Yes, it exists. You want to know where it is? It is in Arunachal Pradesh of course. But why is it Arunachali Hindi, it is difficult to say because it is just like standard *khariboli* chaste Hindi. But whatever it is, it was a nice experience to watch the play and listen to the language.

I am talking about '***Drowa Jhagmu: Ek Devi Ki Kahani***' (Drowa Jhagmu: the story of a goddess). It is a play from Arunachal Pradesh, directed by **Suk Bahadur**, a National School of Drama graduate.

'***Drowa Jhagmu: Ek Devi Ki Kahani***' is based upon a mythological story of Arunachal Pradesh. A king named Kalawangphu was famous for his violent nature. He loved bloodshed. One day,

when he went hunting, his dog got lost somewhere in the forest. While searching for his dog, he met a beautiful woman, who was really a fairy called Drowa Jhagmu. The king wanted to marry her, but Drowa Jhagmu put a condition before him – he will have to shun violence and lead a peaceful life. The king accepts this condition and both of them got married and had two children, a son and a daughter.

Meanwhile the king's first wife returned (she had gone somewhere for a long time). Seeing the new queen and her two children she becomes furious and plots a conspiracy. The king is dethroned and arrested. The fairy returns to her world, the two children had to hide themselves from the first queen, who acquires all the power. But at the end, all goes well. The son becomes the king with the help of his fairy mother. He rescues his father, the first queen, who is the conspirator is dethroned and killed. The daughter, who is a grown up woman, also joins her brother and father.

The director uses the local Aunachali dance forms; *yak dance*, *aji lhamu dance*, pantomimes and mask dances to weave the production. The actors did their hard work, although there is need of more refinement in the area of voice modulation. It is a good thing that Arunachal Pradesh is coming on the theatre map of India.

Ram Janmabhoomi Vs Babri Masjid

The dispute, as is well known, is that some Hindu organisations claimed that the mosque known as **Babri Masjid** in Ayodhya, a town in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh, was

built by Mir Baqi, a general of Emperor Babar, in 1528 after demolishing a grand temple on the spot, that marked the birthplace of Lord Ram – the most important incarnation of *Vishnu* in the Hindu belief system. So, while the Hindus wanted to remove the mosque from the spot and build a Ram temple there, some Muslim organisations disputed the legitimacy of the Hindu claim. In the independent India, the matter has been in the courts since 1950. The mosque was destroyed on 06th December 1992 when a political rally developed into a riot involving 150,000 people. The report of Liberhan Commission, appointed on 16th December 1992 to investigate the demolition of Babri mosque, was tabled in the Indian parliament on 24th November 2009 and it has listed people responsible for the demolition of the mosque, indicting some very senior political figures of India.

No doubt, the manner the disputed structure called Babri Mosque was demolished on 06th December 1992 was wrong. The organisers of the rally on the day had promised to the Union Government and gave an undertaking to the Supreme Court of India that the structure would not be harmed. After giving that undertaking, the act of demolishing the mosque, that too in front of the world television cameras, was unacceptable. It left the Muslim community in India with a feeling of a gross excess and insult, and it belittled the Indian State.

However, the crude nature of the events on 06th December 1992 should not blind us to the truth of history and propriety. As this writer has argued in another article published in this magazine, where some Hindu groups were the guilty party, no one has the right to attack others' places of worship. And if it has been done by someone in the past, mature and civilized behaviour requires that it should be apologised for, and the mistakes rectified. As the Liberhan Commission acknowledges, Ayodhya is of special importance to Hindus. Justice MS Liberhan makes the observation:

“This Place had become emotive issue owing to its position as the birth place of Ram, a theme present in every facet of the culture, connecting the past with the present & the future.”
(Report of the Liberhan Ayodhya Commission of Inquiry, para 9.5, p. 24)

The Muslim groups at the forefront of this dispute contend that there are provisions in the Quran, according to which no mosque can be constructed at someone's place of worship. So, this mosque could not have been built by destroying a temple.

Well, the history does not support this argument.

No historian disagrees with the fact that the Shiva Temple at Somnath was destroyed several times by Muslim invaders and rulers, starting with the plunder of its treasures by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1024, and finally by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1701, who also built a mosque on the spot. There is incontrovertible evidence that 27 temples were dismantled to construct the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque in the Kutub Minar complex. Many parts of the Dilwara Jain Temples complex were destroyed by successive Muslim rulers. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi was demolished four times by Muslim invaders and rulers. Anyone who has visited the site can make out how brazenly the so-called Gyanvapi Mosque is built upon the temple complex to humiliate the Hindu community.

What happened in Somnath, Delhi, Dilwara and Varanasi did happen at many other places. According to some historians, more than 3000 temples have been destroyed and replaced by mosques by Muslim rulers in India.

Regarding the origin of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya, after 17 years of his study, Justice Liberhan concludes that ***“the construction of the mosque by Mir Baqi in 1528 is now an admitted fact.”*** (*ibid*, para 18.9, p 62).

And, there is plethora of evidence to show that the Babri mosque was constructed after destroying a Ram temple on the

spot.

The available records of the Ayodhya dispute in government documents go back to the middle of the 19th century. According to British sources, Hindus and Muslims used to worship together in the Babri Mosque complex, earlier called *Masjid-e-Janamsthan*, for hundreds of years until about 1855. The then Commissioner of Faizabad, P Carnegy, wrote in 1870: *"It is said that up to that time (viz. the Hindu-Muslim clashes in the 1850s) the Hindus and Mohamedans alike used to worship in the mosque temple."* As quoted in a BBC Urdu Service programme, *Meezan*, broadcast on 11th December 1990, earlier in 1861, giving detailed description of Ayodhya in his book, *Historical Sketch of Faizabad Tehsil, including the Former Capital of Ayodhya and Faizabad*, Mr Carnegy had written: ***"It seems there was a grand temple at this place, and in 1528, during his stay in Ayodhya, Babar ordered the destruction of that temple."***

The matter first reached the British courts in 1885-86. Efforts in 1883 to construct a temple on Ram *chabootra* (platform) situated in the complex were halted by the Deputy Commissioner who prohibited it on 19th January 1885. Raghbir Das, a *Mahant* (head priest), filed a suit before Faizabad Sub-Judge Pandit Harikishan seeking permission to construct the temple on this *chabootra* measuring 17 ft x 21 ft. The Sub-Judge, though agreed with Raghbir Das's contention that it was Ram's birth-place, but dismissed the suit. An appeal was filed in the court of Faizabad District Judge Colonel JEA Chambiar. On 18th March 1886, Col Chambiar passed an order in which he wrote: ***"I visited the land in dispute yesterday in the presence of all parties. I found that the Masjid built by Emperor Babar stands on the border of Ayodhya, that is to say, to the west and south. It is clear of habitants. It is most unfortunate that Masjid should have been built on the land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but as that event***

occurred 358 years ago it is too late now to remedy the grievance."

Again, while rejecting the subsequent appeal filed by Raghubir Das on 25th May 1886 before him, the Judicial Commissioner of Awadh, W Young, wrote in his judgement on 01st November 1886: **"The place where the permission to build the temple is being asked for is situated in a premises that has got a mosque which came into existence because of discrimination and religious repression by an emperor who chose this place for the mosque with total disregard for the Hindus' faith. The access available to the Hindus for entering the mosque is very narrow, and for years they have been trying to get proper facilities for their entrance, and they want to construct two buildings in the premises – one, Sita's Kitchen, and the other, Ramchandra's birth-place."**

As Rashid Ashraf, the producer and presenter of the BBC Urdu Service programme, concludes, though the permission to construct a temple was refused and the Hindus and Muslims continued to worship alongside each other in that complex, it was through this court case that the British judges accepted the Hindu claim that it was the birth place of Lord Ram.

Afterwards, writing in the Faizabad District Gazetteer in 1905, HR Neville made it totally clear that the Janmasthan temple "was destroyed by Babar and replaced by a mosque." Mr Neville wrote: **"The Janmasthan was in Ramkot and marked the birthplace of Rama. In 1528 AD Babar came to Ayodhya and halted here for a week. He destroyed the ancient temple and on its site built a mosque, still known as Babar's mosque. The materials of the old structure (i.e., the temple) were largely employed, and many of the columns were in good preservation."**

(HR Neville, Faizabad District Gazetteer, Lucknow, 1905, pp 172-177, cited by Harsh Narain *The Ayodhya Temple Mosque Dispute: Focus on Muslim Sources*, Penman Publications, New Delhi, 1993).

Thus, after investigating the site and relevant historical documents several times, the British officials and judges agreed that the so-called Babri mosque was constructed on the spot where a Ram temple stood before it.

As opposed to the clear judgements given by the British judges, the courts in the independent India have decided to sit on the matter for ever. Four civil suits regarding the title of **Ram Janmabhoomi** have been filed in the district court of Faizabad, the first one being filed in 1950. After 40 years, in 1989 these cases were transferred to the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court. Since then another twenty years have passed, and no judgement has been made so far. In fact, judges are often quoted as saying that they are not capable of deciding a historical event.

Actually, the most important question is – What are these courts deciding now when twice the British judges had accepted the Hindu claim more than one hundred years ago!

Unable to decide the matter themselves, in 2003 the Lucknow Bench asked the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), to conduct a more in-depth study and an excavation to ascertain the type of structure that was beneath the rubble.

The ASI team was headed by an archaeologist of international repute, BB Lal, who had earlier worked for UNESCO committees and served as President of the World Archaeological Congress. The ASI report indicated proof of a 10th century temple under the mosque. In the words of ASI researchers, they discovered ***“distinctive features associated with... temples of north India”***. The excavations yielded: ***“stone and decorated bricks as well as mutilated sculpture of a divine couple and carved architectural features, including foliage patterns, amalaka, kapotapali, doorjamb with semi-circular shrine pilaster, broke octagonal shaft of black schist pillar, lotus motif, circular shrine having pranjala (watershute) in the north and 50 pillar bases in association with a huge structure”*** (Evidence of

temple found: ASI, The Tribune, August 26, 2003)

However, as the findings of the ASI were not to their liking, the Muslim groups termed the ASI report as “prepared under political pressure”. Zaffaryab Jilani, the counsel of the Sunni Central Waqf Board, said: ***“The ASI has filed a saffron report”***.

Firstly, it is insulting to the integrity of a world renowned archaeologist like BB Lal, who headed the ASI survey. If the Muslim groups do not accept the authenticity of the ASI, one wonders which institution of India they do really respect! The question is, if the ASI is accused of preparing its report under the influence of the Hindu parties, under what political pressure P Carnegy, Colonel JEA Chambiari, W Young and HR Neville made their statements and judgements! The findings of the ASI in 2003 only corroborated the statement made by HR Neville a century ago, as quoted above.

It is because of this *Main-Na-Maanu* (*I-will-not-agree*) attitude of the Muslim groups that the Indian courts find themselves unable to decide the matter. Actually, it is not that all Muslims are against restoration of Ram and Krishna temples. First of all, Shia Muslim organisations have expressed no objection to the Ram Temple. Then, a lot of other Muslim organisations and ordinary Muslims, irrespective of the denomination they belong to, have expressed their support to the construction of Ram temple. The so-called Muslim groups opposed to the restoration of the Ram Temple and other important Indian symbols are dominated by people who actually should have no place in post-partition secular India. For instance, Syed Shahabuddin, the leader of the so-called Babri Mosque Action Committee, is the same person who raised the demand to ban Salman Rushdie's book in India, has been demanding *Shariat* for the Indian Muslims, and championed the Islamist cause in Shah Bano case – denying matrimony to divorced Muslim women. Similarly, Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi was the same person whose followers have been indulging in

violence against Taslima Nasreen and compare Shabana Azmi to prostitutes, and whose party opposed Hyderabad joining India. These people might be living in India, but actually they are soul-mates of the Taliban.

And, rather than being respectfully persuaded to accept the truth and act reasonably, these hard-line Muslim groups are actually being encouraged in their intransigence by the self-professed “secular” politicians and intellectuals of India. ‘Secular’ is the Indian equivalent of the Western concept of ‘non-racist’, and as per the current Indian definition, one is “secular” only if one agrees with Muslim fundamentalists! So, politicians like Mulayam Singh and Lalu Prasad, who openly play casteist and racist politics, are very “secular” because of their proclamations that ‘a Muslim can do no wrong’.

While the Indian courts express inability to arbitrate in the dispute, in the independent India the people who have arrogated themselves to decide the issue are the Marxist historians of the JNU. One such historian is Prof Ram Sharan Sharma, who writes, ***“Ayodhya seems to have emerged as a place of religious pilgrimage in medieval times. Although chapter 85 of the Vishnu Smriti lists as many as fifty-two places of pilgrimage, including towns, lakes, rivers, mountains, etc., it does not include Ayodhya in this list.”***

Now, the way Prof Sharma quotes *Vishnu Smriti*, it sounds like *Manu Smriti* that every Hindu should be familiar with. By quoting little known book, Prof Sharma wants to prove that Ayodhya is not significant in the eyes of the Hindus! One would like to ask Prof Sharma, as per his research how many Hindus consult *Vishnu Smriti* before embarking on a pilgrimage! I’m over fifty, and I certainly had never heard of this “great” *Smriti* before my research for this article. As regards, Prof Sharma’s assertion of Ayodhya emerging as a place of pilgrimage in medieval times, according to the Cambridge dictionary, medieval times is the period in European history from about 600 AD to 1500 AD. If Prof Sharma accepts

this definition, how does it prove that there was no temple in Ayodhya in 1528? If anything, it only gives credence to the Hindu claim that the temple destroyed by Babar was constructed by Garhwal king Govindachandra (1114–1154).

Prof Sharma also says that Tulsidas, who wrote *Ramcharitmanas* in 1574 at Ayodhya, does not mention it as a place of pilgrimage. This suggests that there was no significant Hindu temple at the site of the Babri Mosque.

This is the most ridiculous argument. Bethlehem wasn't the place of pilgrimage before the time of Jesus Christ's birth. As normal, Ayodhya developed into a place of pilgrimage after the event, while *Ramcharitmanas* is written in the present form, set in Ram's time. Actually, not only is this the most ridiculous argument, it is an attempt to misrepresent Tulsidas and falsify Indian mythology. *Ramcharitmanas* is divided into seven sections. And, out of seven sections, Tulsidas devotes one full section to Ayodhya, called *Ayodhya Kaand*, and celebrates the beauty of Ayodhya at many other places in the book. What could have been a better way of describing Ayodhya as a place of pilgrimage!

Prof Sharma ignores the basic fact that the classic Sanskrit text *Ramayan* by Maharishi Balmiki is the ultimate authentic source of Ram's story, and it celebrates Ayodhya as the birthplace of Ram and its grandeur as the capital of Ram's kingdom.

Another Marxist historian Romila Thapar says, **"If we do not take Hindu mythology in account the first historical description of the city dates back recently to the 7th century, when the Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang observed there were 20 Buddhist temples with 3000 monks at Ayodhya, amongst a large Hindu population. In 1528, nobles under Mughal emperor Babur constructed a mosque over the disputed site. The mosque, called the Babri Masjid, has become a source of contention for some Hindus. At the end of the 19th century, Ayodhya contained**

96 Hindu temples and 36 Muslim mosques. Little local trade was carried on, but the great Hindu fair of Ram Navami held every year was attended by about 500,000 people”.

The question is – why we should not take the Hindu mythology into account? Can we respect Greece, while ignoring the Greek mythology! Can one understand the history of Europe without taking Christianity into account? Or can we understand the Arab world without taking Islam into account? The Hindu mythology is the base of what the world calls Indian culture and civilization. Hinduism and India are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate the two. In many languages of Europe, the word for Indian is Hindu. Or does Ms Thapar believe Hindu mythology is all a myth? Ram's life and Ram's birthplace is a myth? Ms Thapar should explain why half a million people would gather in Ayodhya every year. Does it not mean anything!

In fact, the only myths that are being created are by the self-professed Marxist historians who are spreading the ideas that Babar was an Indian! Ibrahim Lodhi and Alauddin Khilji were indigenous rulers! Well, they were as much indigenous rulers as the Viking and Norman rulers in England, as much as the Dutch and French rulers in India! No one can deny the fact that Babar came all the way from Ferghana (in present day Uzbekistan) and invaded India in 1526 after crossing Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. Even if he didn't construct a mosque at Ram's birthplace, could any of these “intellectuals” tell us what business Babar had to launch unprovoked attacks on Indian kingdoms and murder thousands of innocent people!

Marxists are supposed to side with the victim and fight against present and historical injustice. And, it is historians' duty to pursue the truth, no matter how ugly it is. But Indian Marxist historians have decided to side with an invader, who did everything in his might to crush the local culture and impose a foreign religion and language on

India! Quoting an obscure piece of religious literature and misrepresenting the classic texts to justify the imposition of a foreign culture on a people is not great pursuit of truth, but intellectual dishonesty! In the face of overwhelming historical and archaeological evidence, clutching to straws and denying the oppression is not scientific socialism, but rationalising cowardice!

Had these historians been really pursuing truth, they would have tried to find where the missing pages of *Babarnama* are and who is responsible for those pages gone missing. The Marxist historians have made no attempt to find another book that went suddenly missing in most libraries in India. It was *Hindustan Islami Ahad Mein* (India Under Islamic Resolve) by Maulana Hakim Saiyid Abdul Hai, which like the original *Babarnama* stated to include a chapter that described the demolition of the Ram *Janmabhoomi* and other temples. Instead, these people find solace in siding with the invader and the oppressor. And, these “secular intellectuals” are totally silent to the findings of the ASI in 2003.

These “intellectuals” do not want to know the truth. They fear truth and justice. They call those who speak the truth and seek redress to the past repression communalists and racists!

White Man went all over the world with sword in one hand and the Bible in the other. The native communities of Africa, Asia, Australia and America were colonized, economically exploited and culturally suppressed. Indigenous religious beliefs were dubbed as mumbo-jumbo and Christianity was imposed on the people. Europeans imposed their culture on the Native American Indians. Now, if the Native American Indians demand that they want to retrieve a few symbols of their past culture, would we call them racists! Hindu is nothing else, but a person who maintains a connection with the pre-Islamic Indian culture. They are a defeated people at the hands of Muslim invaders. Now, when the Hindus are asking for

retrieving some symbols of their ancient culture, which were crushed by the invaders, there is nothing communalist or racist about it. On the contrary, those who want to deny the vanquished the right to retrieve symbols of their past culture are actually siding with oppression. Love for the relic of Indian defeat and a symbol of invader's triumphalism is perverted secularism!

We should be mature enough to understand that the struggle against the excesses committed by Muslim invaders or rulers, or by Hindu and British rulers for that matter, does not mean a fight or hatred against the communities those rulers came from, or even against their descendents. Peace and harmony in the society is essential. But falsifying history cannot achieve true harmony. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that we do not bind ourselves in falsehood. The truth of history should never be obscured or denied.

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