

# seniors **TODAY**

Issue #14 | August 15, 2020

*Life & Times*



## *Medusa's Children*

And how the British  
plundered India

## **First Person**

Artist Angeli Sowani  
on unsung heroes of WWI

+

**Timeless Bharat: The Manoj Kumar interview**  
**Letter from US: Have Moolah, Get a Doolah**

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## The Evil that Men Do Lives After Them

This August 15th, as we celebrate Independence and our achievements as a nation, we must not forget nor forgive the British for 200 years of humiliation, subjugation and loot. A recent study published by a renowned economist Utsa Patnaik for the Columbia University Press estimates that Britain siphoned off a total of nearly \$45 trillion. Besides this, they stole incalculable quantities of wealth, gold, silver, precious stones, and other valuables such as icons, statues, scrolls, books looted from the treasuries of the Indian kings, businessmen and temples. They also extracted precious gems from the marble in the Taj Mahal and its silver doors. They even proposed to cut the marble slabs off the Taj and send them to Britain, slab by slab.

When the British came to India, we were amongst the wealthiest nations of the world with a GDP of 24 per cent. When they left our country, we were amongst the poorest in the world, with a GDP of just 2 per cent. All along, Britain propagated that colonisation of India was not of any major economic benefit and that they sustained the empire for so long was a gesture of benevolence. This propaganda has endured even today as a large section of the British population believes it to be true. The question is: did the Indians ever want to

be exploited? As for the infrastructure that the British talk about, nothing -- absolutely nothing -- was done for the good of India, all infrastructure was strategically planned for the exploitation of Indian resources and their export to England.

It is important that we let our young in schools and colleges know about how the British plundered India. Let this be part of the school and college curriculum. Let there be more stories about the crimes committed by the British from Musheerabad to Mallapur and from Jammu to Jhansi... every little kingdom, town, village has its own story of murder and atrocity.

Britain can never repay the \$45 trillion but an apology from the sovereign or a member of the Royal family could suffice, since all the crimes were committed in the name of the king.

The most cruel man in this narrative -- among the many in the British Raj -- is undoubtedly Winston Churchill. Compared to him, Adolf Hitler comes across as a high school bully.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vickram Sethi".

**Vickram Sethi**

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

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Vikram Sethi

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Narendra Kusnur

### Editorial & Business Office:

FGP Centre, Commercial Union House,

3rd floor, 9 Wallace Street,

Fort, Mumbai - 400 001.

Email - editorial: editor@seniorstoday.in

Email - advertising: sales@seniorstoday.in

### War & History :

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## Contributors

**Suguna Sundaram** editor of some of the most popular (and boldest) fanzines, as also an expert in Indian classical music and dance.



**Deepa Gahlot** is one of India's seniormost and best-known entertainment journalists. A National Award-winning film critic, she has authored several books on film and theatre.

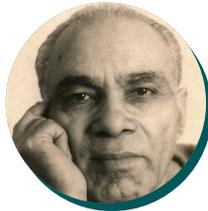


**Narendra Kusnur** is one of India's best-known music journalists. Born with a musical spoon, so to speak, he is a late bloomer in music criticism.



**Prabhakar Mundkur** is an advertising veteran, a lateral thinker, storyteller and musician. A coffee aficionado, husband and a father of two, he also describes himself as dogs' best friend.

**Sat Paul (Sati) Sahni** (1922-2010), participated in the Indian freedom struggle and was a pioneer photojournalist, and an experienced war correspondent.



**Dr Jasbir Singh** is an ENT specialist based in New Zealand, and is an editor with the publishing company Springer Nature.



**Dr Vidhi Kothari Pipara** is a psychologist and counsellor based in Ahmedabad.

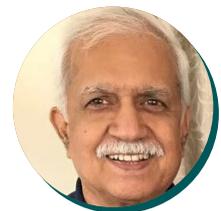


**Sandeep Suri**, a senior corporate executive, is currently a member of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council and working with a UK-based consulting firm.

**Navneet Sahni** has been deeply involved in the travel industry from 1978. Nature, the outdoors and a love for the mountains entices him to explore hidden gems



**YR Anand** is a Partner of Unimark, an international sales and service company. He is a keen sportsman and music lover.



**Minoo Shah** a resident of Texas, USA, since 1976, is a former journalist and has served on many community boards. She is currently studying towards her PhD in the liberal arts and humanities.



**Nagesh Alai** is a management consultant, an independent director on company boards, and cofounder of a B2B enterprise tech startup. He can be reached at [nageshalai@gmail.com](mailto:nageshalai@gmail.com)

# Blood and Plunder

**A sordid, violent history is the legacy that the British Raj left behind, which has hobbled India's growth even long after gaining Independence. By *Vickram Sethi***



In the temple of Athena was a beautiful priestess called Medusa. It was said that when she smiled, flowers bloomed and when the wind blew through her hair, there was celestial music. For, truly, Medusa was the prettiest woman in the land and also much desired by all the gods. To be the priestess of the temple of Athena, she had to be a virgin. It was her aim to be the high priestess of the temple of Athena and with this purpose she rejected all the advances made by Poseidon and the other gods.

One day, Poseidon entered the temple and forced himself upon her. Her calls to Athena did not yield any help. On finding out she was no longer a virgin, Athena was angry and cursed her. That she would become a monster and her head will become a crown of snakes and her gaze would turn anyone into stone. And that she would never find love anywhere ever again.

Medusa was horrified and turned to the other gods for help, she petitioned Athena for pardon. Pleading that Athena was responsible for protecting her as she was held captive in Athena's temple. Once cursed, the spell could not be annulled but after much persuasion it was modified and Medusa would be banned from Athena's temple for a hundred years and banished into a land completely surrounded by water. The moon god granted her succour and a boon that at every full moon she would become a pretty maiden, once again enjoy all the carnal pleasures and have all the lovers she desired.

When the moon ebbed and the night became darker, her snake crown and scales would come back, and she would become the evil monster once again. On the dark night before the new moon, she would give birth and these humans would soon grow up and

become adults. On the full moon night, they would copulate with each other and produce more children on the dark night. And this cycle would go on for a hundred years. Medusa's lover was Lucifer, he was the handsomest of them all and in a hundred years, the island was overwhelmed with the population of evil people. That is when the gods and Athena agreed that Medusa had to be exterminated as evil had firmly taken root on earth.

The children were white as the moon, evil as Medusa and Lucifer. The cycle of copulating on the full moon night and giving birth on the dark night continued for a hundred years. And that island became the kingdom of Lucifer. When these evil beings died, their souls became the evil spirits that even today are commanded by Lucifer and they roam the earth at his will. The wheel of time moved on and the island came to be known as Great Britain.

You have to be of evil birth with evil genes to perpetuate so much misery in the world. Britain ruled over 25 per cent of the land covering 13 million square miles and ruled over a population of 458 million people. If the history of Great Britain were to be written, the word genocide, murder, loot, atrocities, starvation would make the preamble of the book.

One million people died in the Irish famine. 50,000 people died in the Boer concentration camp. The British forcefully transported slaves from Africa - 12-15 million people of which 3 million died from various diseases and their bodies were thrown into the sea.

The British also killed 25,000 Iraqis crushing the Iraqi revolution and similarly in Aden another 50,000 died. And in the Mau Mau uprising, the British were responsible for killing 90,000 Kenyans



*A magazine picture in 1914 of the Koh-i-Noor in the crown of Queen Mary*

and in the Malay uprising over a 1,00,000 Malays died.

To perpetuate so much of evil genocide, brutal murder, atrocities you have to have the genes of Lucifer and Medusa. The British were the most cruel race in modern history.

### **The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre**

Let me put it in another perspective. It is a Sunday morning at the Chelsea flower show and an army battalion guns down all the visitors. I wonder how the modern-day British would react to this. This is exactly what happened in Jallianwala Bagh in the year 1919.

A group of Punjabis celebrating the spring festival, Baisakhi, had gathered in a public garden in Amritsar. There was only

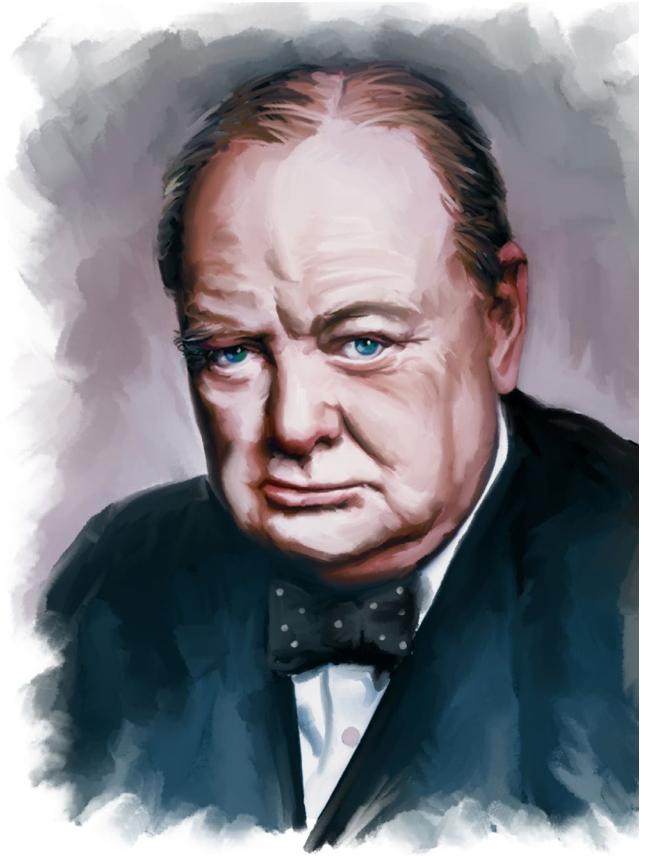
one main entry and four narrow entries from bylanes through which barely one or two people could navigate at a time. A British Army officer Colonel Reginald Dyer got a battalion of his troops who fired indiscriminately on the unarmed crowd of thousands of civilians assembled in the garden to celebrate the Baisakhi festival. The objective was of killing them. The battalion continued firing for 10 minutes killing the thousands of civilians assembled in the garden. He then ordered the gates to be shut so that no one could escape and ultimately no help came to the rescue of the poor helpless victims who were injured and the dead. For two days, no entry was allowed in the garden and people died in the most miserable condition.

Rather than court-martial for murder, Col Dyer was felicitated and awarded a government pension and a title. Why should the Punjabis ever forget this? Like I said earlier, the British were the most cruel race in the history of the world.

### **Winston Churchill and the Bengal Famine**

The British crippled agriculture in India by their taxation policy, land reforms and insufficient agricultural input. All culminating in one of the deadliest famines in the history of the world. A lot has been written about the Bengal famine. This is about Winston Churchill, the then prime minister, who ordered that all the food grains should be exported from Calcutta to England.

Indians were dying like flies. The secretary of state appealed to Churchill for help, but he turned him down saying the Indians do not deserve charity because it would make them lazy. If they cannot live within what they produce then they deserve to die. Finally,



*It is by now well-known that Winston Churchill caused the deaths of countless people in the Bengal famine*

he turned around and said: “I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion. The famine was their own fault for breeding like rabbits.” At the height of the famine between January and July, Britain exported more than 70 million kilograms of grains and around 10 million Indians died of starvation. In the Bengal famine, the British took our grain from the starving people of Bengal to fill the bread basket of London. I wonder what he would have made out of this famine if children with these names would have also died – Julian, Celia and Edwina, Winston and Arabella, Nicholas, Emma, Charlotte, Rupert and Jeremy.

When conscience-stricken British officials wrote to him pointing out that people were dying because of his decision, he wrote on the file: “Why hasn’t Gandhi died?” On another occasion, Churchill commented, “It is alarming and nauseating to see Mr

Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir... striding half-naked up the steps of the Vice-regal Palace. We should be rid of a bad man and an enemy of the Empire if he died.”

### **Churchill's Role**

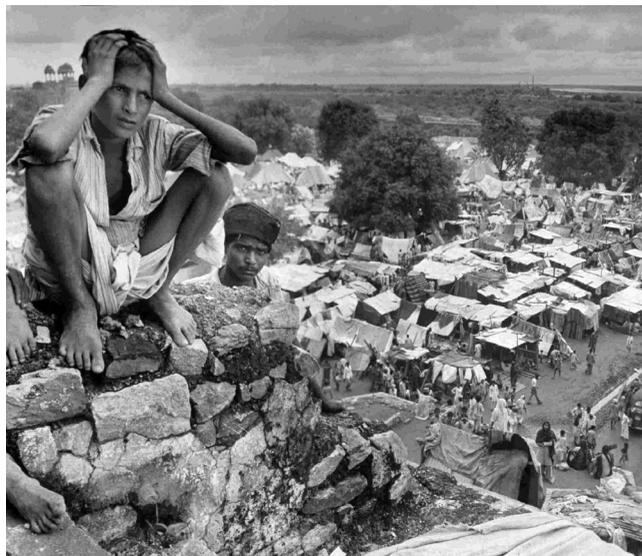
The world now wakes up to the fact that Winston Churchill was racist. During his tenure as minister for war and air in 1919, he wrote a memo: “I am strongly in favour of using poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes,” advocating the use of chemical weapons primarily against Kurds and Afghans.

Justifying the genocide against the Red Indians of America and the Aborigines of Australia, he said, “I do not admit for instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America or the black people of Australia.”

The fact is that a stronger race, a higher-grade race, a more worldly-wise race had come in and taken their place. For a man who was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst, and knighted by the Queen, Winston Churchill was probably the world's No 1 murderer. Hitler in comparison comes across as a high school bully.

### **Partition of India**

The Partition of India on the basis of religion was no less a tragedy than the Holocaust. Across the Indian subcontinent, communities that had coexisted for a millennium attacked each other in a terrifying outbreak of sectarian violence. Hindus and Sikhs on one side and Muslims on the other. In Punjab as well as in Bengal. A savage intense genocide and carnage that the country had never witnessed before. Fifteen million people had been uprooted and over 5 million were dead. The



*A distraught boy on the wall of a refugee camp in Delhi during Partition, in 1947*

comparison of the Partition to the Holocaust is not as farfetched as it may seem.

### **The Loot from India**

As we look back, we realise that the British plundered India in so many different ways that it would be impossible to cover all in a small 2000-word essay. An economic study conducted by Utsa Patnaik for the Columbia University Press concludes that the British took 45 trillion pounds out of India in 200 years of rule. Nobody in the government seems to contradict these findings, hoping that people would forget.

Systematically, the British plundered India. They now claim that they built infrastructure - the railways, the fact is these railways were built to connect the areas of produce to the port to ship it back to England. The railways didn't connect towns or places of pilgrimage which people would have liked to visit. They destroyed the handloom industry by breaking the looms of the weavers and cutting off their thumbs. From being a world famous exporter of fabric - silks, muslin, cotton... - India became a net importer of British fabric. Every action of the British was to loot and

plunder India for the benefit of Britain. The Indians fought alongside the British in the first and the Second World War. Some 50,000 Indians lost their lives and Indian taxpayers actually coughed up a 100 million pounds. India supplied 17 million rounds of ammunition, 600,000 rifles and machine guns, 42 million garments were stitched and exported from India, and 1.3 million Indians served in the war. For this, the British promised us independence but changed their minds. We need to recognise that Britain retained control of India not out of benevolence but for the sake of plunder, and violently plunder they did.

The men who came to work in the India subcontinent were from the most distressed background of the midlands who were so poor that if they didn't come to work in India all they would have is bread to eat. Having come to India, they lived as the aristocracy that they had left behind, large colonial houses and a retinue of servants. A vast majority of them were corrupt. They looted the kingdoms and sent back artefacts, precious stones, idols from various temples and even dismantled a large stupa and shipped it back to Britain. It is on display at the British museum.

Walk in to the Indian section and you will see the loot that is on display and this is just 10% of what they have in stock. Every single museum in Britain has Indian artefacts that have been looted by the British. In fact, the entire British museum has stuff stolen from all over British colonies. The Governor General of British India Lord Bentinck wanted to dismantle the Taj Mahal and take it to England, marble slab by marble slab. They had already stolen the silver doors and the precious stones embedded in the marble. The idea that the British gave India

independence is a myth. The fact is that post the World Wars, Britain was in a terrible financial crisis. And there was no other way but to let India go. India's freedom struggle goes back to 1857; it wasn't the Second World War that created this aspiration for freedom. In fact, the irony of it is that the oppressiveness of the British brought the Indians together to fight for independence. The worst thing that the British did was to steal India's soul. A district magistrate was required to create a Hindu-Muslim riot which he engineered with the help of the local kotwal. A pig head was thrown in the front of a mosque and a cow head in front of the temple. This is no exaggeration and it is said that their promotion depended on how many riots they could engineer. Eventually the British planted so much of poison and hatred that they divided India on the basis of religion. Unfortunately, the hatred is still there.

As a nation, we should institute a trial of war crimes against the British perpetrators of cruelty, murder, genocide and other crimes, that men across the 200 years committed. Try them in absentia and award them suitable punishment. This trial must be conducted in England just so that the present-day Britain has a better idea of its past.

Finally, the Kohinoor diamond. It is well-known that Maharaja Dilip Singh didn't gift the diamond to Queen Victoria. The British put a gun to his head and took it. To me, the Kohinoor which the British sovereign wears on her head is the symbol of 200 years of loot, murder, genocide and all the evil things that human beings can do. It is the biggest symbol of sin. And if the sovereign wears this symbol of sin on her head, so be it. This is the biggest blood diamond in the world for all to see.

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# Indian Soldiers of the Great War

Artist *Angeli Sowani* shares the stories and celebrates the unsung Indian heroes of World War I

***“For God’s sake don’t come, don’t come, don’t come....”***

This is the story of a million Indian soldiers who joined in the efforts of the Great War, 74,000 of whom died. Of the men that crossed the KaloPani—*‘thinking he was going to Vilayat after all, England, the glamorous land of his dreams, where the sahibs came from, where people wore coats and pantaloons and led active fashionable lives.’*

## **The trigger**

On June 28, 1914 Archduke Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was assassinated. Two months later, Britain declared war on Germany. But the impact of this war would echo far beyond the shores of Europe, throwing into its mix soldiers and countries from across the World – this was a war of Empires.



Painting by Angeli Sowani

## **The Empire needs men!**

Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India announced that India was at war too. This was done without consulting any of the Indian political leaders of that time. One of the reasons for the Indian political parties to go along with this, was that they would surely get a better deal for Independence, once the war was over.



*This soldier is protecting Hindustan, he is protecting his home and his family. The best way to help the family is to get enlisted in the Army*

Once the wheels of War started moving, so did the fundraising and recruitment of soldiers in accordance with the theory of “martial races”: the categorisation, by the British, of people into those that were considered typically brave and well-built for fighting, and those that were not. Recruited soldiers came from the Punjab, Northwest Frontier, and the hills of the Himalayas. In these areas, nearly 40% of all young men enlisted.

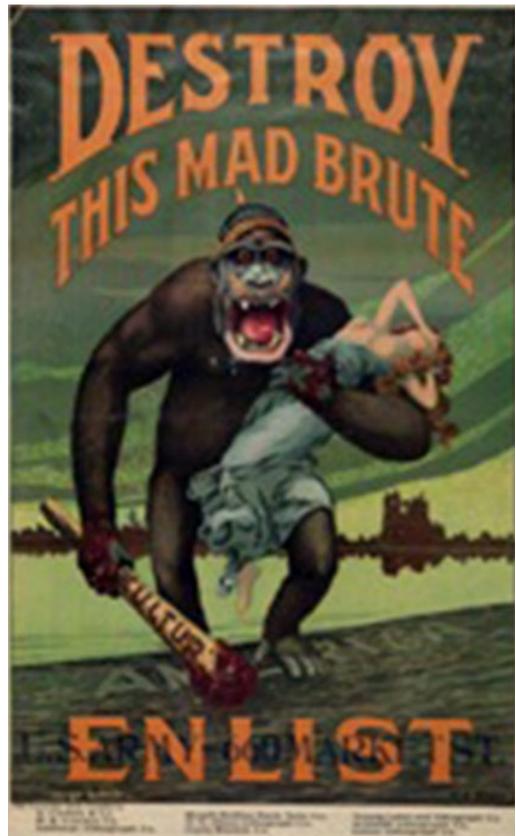


*Early recruitment focused on building a sense of glory*

Early in the war, young men were enthused to enlist through propaganda posters and fairs held in rural villages.

Recruitment songs blared out:  
*“Here you get shoes, there you will get boots!  
 Get enlisted!  
 Here you get torn rags, there you will get suits!  
 Get enlisted!  
 Here you get dry bread, there you’ll get biscuit!  
 Get enlisted!  
 Here you’ll have to struggle, there you will get salutes  
 Get enlisted!”*

While early recruitment focused on building a sense of glory, by 1917 a quota system had been put in place where each province had to provide a certain number of soldiers. Sometimes aggression was used, and it did spark off riots in some areas.



*Young men were enthused to enlist through propaganda posters and fairs*

In the Punjab, women would sometimes follow their men, pleading with them not to go. They even threw stones at the recruiters, and used their songs to mark their anger:  
*War destroys towns and ports, it destroys huts*

*I shed tears, come and speak to me  
All birds, all smiles have vanished  
And the boats sunk*

*Graves devour our flesh and blood*

By the end of the war it is estimated that India, “the Jewel in the Crown” had provided over a million Indian combatant and non-combatant soldiers, 1,70,000 animals and £121.5 million (about £8.5 billion today) in funding to the war effort.

### **Across the Kalo Pani**

Early morning, on the 26th of September 1914, as the sun was rising over Marseilles, ships carrying the first Indian Soldiers - from the Lahore Division- sailed into the harbor. As the anchor was dropped the soldiers, seasick and pale after the journey, appeared on the ship’s deck.

*‘Marsels!’*

*‘We have reached Marsels!’*

*‘Hip Hip Hurrah!’*

*The sepoy were shouting excitedly on the deck...*

*The King-Emperor, too, had sent them a message... congratulating them on their personal devotion to his throne, and assuring them how their one-voiced demand to be foremost in the conflict had touched his heart”*

Massia Bibikoff, a Russian Artist, was in Marseille to sketch the arrival of the troops; in her words, “There was not one less than five feet eleven in height, slender, beautifully proportioned...it was a delirious scene. People who were drinking in the cafes stood up and shouted “Vive L’Angleterre! Vivent

Les Hindous! Vivent Les Allies!”

According to Santanu Das, a prominent World War 1 historian, “no army was so hotly pursued by the imperial paparazzi.”

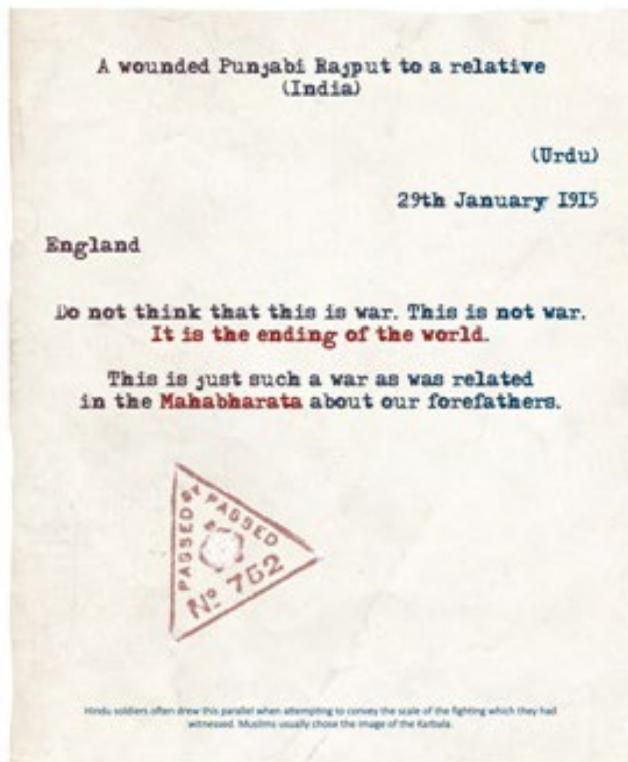


Indian troops welcomed in Europe  
Source, Santanu Das

### **Into the fray**

Of course, the brutality of war in the trenches soon banished any illusions of glory, as a letter home by one of the soldiers poignantly illustrates:

*“... For God’s sake, don’t come, don’t come, don’t come to this war in Europe. Cannons, machine guns, rifles and bombs are going day and night, just like the rains in the month of Sawan. Those who have escaped so far are like the few grains left uncooked in a pot.”*



#### *An anguished letter home*

In total 74,000 soldiers from the Indian Subcontinent were killed in the Great War, and thousands more brutally wounded and mentally damaged. But from this darkness, stories of bravery emerged.

In 2019, I put together an exhibition at the Jehangir Gallery, called “Medals and Bullets”, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of the war. The exhibition focused on the eleven Indian men who were awarded the Victoria Cross in the Great War, along with photographs, films and excerpts of the countless letters that were written home sharing the true experience of war.

What follows are portraits I painted of four of these Victoria Cross holders, together with press articles written about them at the time.

#### **DAFADAR GOBIND SINGH VC – “THE HORSEMAN”**

*London Gazette, 11 January 1918*

*Gobind Singh, Lance-Dafadar... awarded the*

*Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in thrice volunteering to carry messages between the regiment and the Brigade Headquarters, a distance of one and a half miles over open ground, which was under observation and heavy fire of the enemy. He succeeded in each time delivering his message, although on each occasion his horse was shot and he was compelled to finish the journey on foot. Dafadar Gobind Singh was present at Buckingham Palace at his investiture.*



*Dafadar Gobind Singh. Painting by Angeli Sowani*

#### **NAICK DARWAN SING NEGI VC – “INVINCIBLE”**

Extract from the Gazette of India: Army Department, Delhi, 15 Jan. 1915, Indian Army.

*“His Majesty the King-Emperor has been graciously pleased to approve the grant of the Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery while serving to No. 1909, Naick Darwan Sing Negi, 1st Battalion, 39th Garhwal Rifles. For great gallantry on the night of 23-24 Nov., Festubert, France, when the regiment*

*was engaged in retaking and clearing the enemy out of our trenches, and, although wounded in two places in the head, and also in the arm, being one of the first to push round each successive traverse, in the face of severe fire from bombs and rifles at the closest range”*



*Naick Darwan Sing Negi. Painting by Angeli Sowani*

### **INDRA LAL ROY - “LADDIE”**

2 December 1898 – 22 July 1918

Indra Lal Roy was the sole Indian World War I flying ace. At a time when the British did not consider Indians to be capable of even running their own country, Roy broke through the colour and race barrier to become an officer and fighter pilot in the Royal Flying Corps – the elite of the elite.

In the course of 13 days between July 6th and July 19th, 1918 Roy claimed ten aerial victories; five aircraft destroyed and five ‘down out of control’; in just over 170 hours of flying time. He was shot down on the Western Front over France on July 22nd 1918 and was buried with full military honours in France by the Germans.

Roy was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross – the first Indian to receive this honour. The citation in the London Gazette on 21st September 1918 praised Roy as ‘a very gallant and determined officer whose remarkable skill and daring had on one occasion enabled him to shoot down two enemy machines in one patrol’.



*Indra Lal Roy. Painting by Angeli Sowani*

### **RIFLEMAN KARANBAHADUR RANA VC - “THE LEVELHEADED RIFLE”**

*London Gazette, 21 June 1918*

*“Karanbahadur Rana, No. 4146, Rifleman, 2/3rd Battn. Queen Alexandra’s Own*

*Gurkha Rifles. For most conspicuous bravery, resource in action under adverse conditions, and utter contempt for danger. During an attack he, with a few other men, succeeded under intense fire in creeping forward with a Lewis gun, in order to engage an enemy machine gun which had caused severe casualties to officers and other ranks who had attempted to put it out of action. No.1 of the Lewis gun opened fire, and was shot immediately. Without a hesitation Rifleman Karanbahadur pushed the dead man off the gun, and in spite of bombs thrown at him and heavy fire from both flanks, he opened fire and knocked out the enemy machine-gun crew; then, switching his fire on to the enemy bombers and riflemen in front of him, he silenced their fire. He kept his gun in action and showed the greatest coolness in removing defects which on two occasions prevented the gun from firing.”*

*Naik Karanbahadur Rana was personally decorated with the Victoria Cross by His Majesty the King-Emperor.*



*Rifleman Karanbahadur Rana. Painting by Angeli Sowani*

## **A history forgotten, and remembered**

Sarojini Naidu, the nationalist leader and poet, wrote in 1915:

*“They lie with pale brows and brave,  
Broken hands*

*They are strewn like blossoms mowed  
down by chance*

*On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders  
and France”*

This was meant to be “The war that ended all wars”. It was the first time in history that nations across the world had pitted themselves against one another, for the age-old reason for any disagreement: power. In all, 40 million people were killed or left injured, and 16 million animals lost their lives. World War I was followed by the first global pandemic – the Spanish Flu – driven by the enormous worldwide movement of people, which killed another 50 million, including at least 12 million Indians.

India had hoped for a ‘better deal’ if they joined in the war – this deal never came.

In 1922, a disillusioned Rabindranath Tagore wrote:

“The West comes to us, not with imagination and sympathy, that would create and unite, but with a shock of passion – passion for power and wealth – passion that is a mere force, which has in it the principle of separation, of conflict.”



**Angeli Sowani** has lived and painted in Delhi, Kathmandu, Bangkok, Hong Kong and now lives and works in London. She can be reached via [www.angelisowani.com](http://www.angelisowani.com)

# Timeless Bharat

As India celebrates its 73rd year of independence, the world is seeing unimaginable change at the physical, mental and emotional levels, in the wake of the current pandemic that has gripped the globe in its vice. In the yearning for the 'good old days', *Suguna Sundaram* takes a trip down memory lane with veteran actor Manoj Kumar, who in his heyday and even long after, embodied the pure and patriotic spirit of Bharat

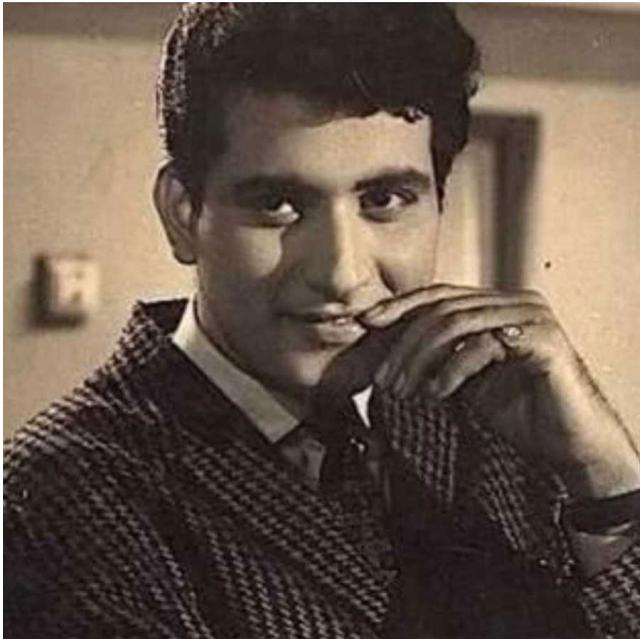
## ***“I worshipped the name Bharat”***

He was born Harikrishna Giri Goswami, in 1937, in pre-Independence British India in the North West Frontier Province in Abbottabad (now Pakistan, and now infamous for harbouring the dreaded terrorist Osama Bin Laden). Migrating to India as refugees during Partition, young Harikishan was deeply impacted by what he saw around him during the nation's fight for freedom from the British. His family settled in Delhi and rebuilt their lives from there. Harikrishna would later become Manoj Kumar, the actor famed for his Mr Bharat persona and portrayals.

Harikrishna grew up in the politically volatile climate of an India struggling for

identity. Recalling his childhood and youth, he says, “Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was my first love. He got independence for India on October 21, 1943 (when he established Azad Hind - the Provisional Government of Free India), and that was acknowledged by a dozen other countries including the USSR. Sadly, he was underplayed by our own leaders, who didn't give him credit.

“My first brush with nationalism started when I was arrested among other children for participating in a protest juloos (against a case on three officers of the Indian National Army) from Lal Quila when I was not even 10 years of age. I spent a few days in jail. My dad asked me then if I even knew the meaning of INA. I didn't, but I was fired by zeal for freedom fighters and the cause.”



*Manoj Kumar was a hit romantic hero, but he chose radical roles in films like Roti Kapda Aur Makaan, and Shor, besides the patriotic ones*

Reminiscing, he goes back and forth in time. “Gandhiji visited my village when I was 13. My second love was Bhagat Singh and his felt hat,” he smiles. Adding, “So all these people literally came into my system. It was the air I was breathing, the nationwide atmosphere, my very upbringing.” That explains why patriotism, long before it became a fashionable word to bandy about, was in Harikrishna Goswami’s very blood and breath.

Independence won and past it, Harikrishna, who was passionately fond of films, completed his graduation in Delhi and came to Bombay to join the film industry, making an unremarkable debut at age 20. A fan of Dilip Kumar, he rechristened himself Manoj Kumar, after the senior actor’s character in the 1949 film Shabnam.

A couple of films down the line, he started playing leading man and the sixties were the years Manoj Kumar established himself as a popular romantic hero and a versatile actor with a brooding mystique. He did noteworthy films like Woh Kaun Thi (with Sadhana), Himalay Ke God Mein and

Hariyali Aur Raasta (with Mala Sinha), Patthar Ke Sanam, Neel Kamal, Gumnaam, Purab Aur Paschim (with Saira Banu), Do Badan (with Asha Parekh), Sanyasi (with Hema Malini), Dus Numbri, Beimaan, and many more commercially successful films.

The cultivation of the patriotic hero, epitomised by his characters, aptly called Bharat across films, began with Shaheed, in 1965, a film based on his real-life hero, the revolutionary Bhagat Singh. Manoj Kumar says, “I was doing very well as a romantic hero since I started working in films. Par Bharat banne ke liye, I staked my career and all that came with my early success. Then followed Upkar, where I first played Bharat. He was a jawan and he was a kisan (apparently Lal Bahadur Shastri had requested him to make a film on the ‘Jai Jawan Jai Kisan’ slogan - the film was also Manoj Kumar’s debut as a director). In Shor, which was not the story of Bharat, my character was named Shankar. I worshipped the name Bharat.”

He continues further, “I remember how V Shantaram, who was a huge director and senior, met me one day and when I touched his feet, he said: “You do great work, you work from your heart”. I folded my hands and said, “Coming from you, that is a compliment. But main dil se nahin, aatma se kaam karta hoon”. That’s when he embraced me and clasped me to his heart.”

As a matter of pride, the veteran also said: “When I played Bharat, I never ever touched the heroine. In any of those films. Uski maryada ko hamesha rakhi maine.” A dozen questions arose, but I latched my tongue. Manoj Kumar has since acted in and directed a number of films with patriotic themes, earning himself the name Bharat Kumar/ Mr Bharat, and is even referred to as the resident patriot in Bollywood.



*Manoj Kumar with Sadhana in Woh Kaun Thi, in a still from the iconic song Lag ja gale*

### **Patriotic fervour**

Upkar opened the floodgates for Manoj Kumar, and awards and accolades began raining, in multitudes. His films also had notable patriotic songs that are sung even today with equal ardour and fervency. 'Mere Desh ki Dharti', 'Hai preet jahan ki reet sada', 'Channa Jor garam' and the Kranti Title track, as well as other immensely unforgettable songs like 'Kasme Vaadein Pyaar Wafa Sab', 'Main na Bhulunga,' 'Zindagi ki na toote ladi', and the likes.

The seventies saw a successful run for Manoj Kumar as an actor, with self-directed hits in the socially provocative Roti Kapda Aur Makaan, Sanyasi and Dus Numbri.

Manoj Kumar's grandest film in terms of cast and setting was Kranti, in the early eighties. The film was the story of India's struggle for independence. Kranti had a mega-cast, led by Manoj Kumar's idol, Dilip Kumar. Viewed in 70 mm, the film drove the public to hysteria and had audiences throwing money on the screens. That was

also the actor-director's last successful film, by all parameters.

Manoj Kumar quit acting in the mid-eighties, and his last directorial with his younger son Kunal, the patriotic Jai Hind, at the turn of the century, failed to capture the box-office.

As Mr Bharat, Manoj Kumar had patented the character and body language to a consummate extent that was immediately identifiable. In his nearly five-decade long career, he earned numerous awards at multiple levels. In 1992, he was bestowed the Padma Shri by the Government of India. His films also won National Awards. And his contribution to cinema earned him the highest Indian cinematic honour, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2016.

A pious man, who doesn't wear his religion on his angavastra, he was given recognition by the Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust in Shirdi which renamed the Pimpalwadi Road in Shirdi as Manojkumar Goswami Road in 2011.

There has been no actor who has embodied the Mr Bharat role with the conviction of Manoj Kumar. Asked to comment on who amongst the actors did he see as someone who successfully carried that baton forward, and the octogenarian shrugs and says simply: “They don’t make patriotic films with that kind of fervour any more. The whole meaning has changed in the current day. The nationalistic spirit of patriotism is not what I grew up with. I have no right to discourage them, filmmakers and actors are trying. But it is not just enough to feel the condition of the role. Bharat is not just a character one can assume at will. You have to live it, breathe it, it must be steeped in you.”



*Manoj Kumar in Upkar. “Bharat is not just a character one can assume at will. You have to live it, breathe it, it must be steeped in you.”*

### **MANOJ KUMAR’S MUSINGS...**

On the eve of Bharat’s 73rd Anniversary of Independence, the 83-year-old Manoj Kumar spends moments of recollection in what was and what is. He is keenly clued in to the political and social climate of the country even today, but his thoughts are tinged with a wistfulness for a bygone era where everything was different. A few quotes from what he opines...

- Deep patriotism doesn’t come to the surface, it is embedded under your skin. You have to live it to feel it. Whatever you inhale, you have to exhale, like I did.
- My party is my country.
- Fighting for freedom is easy. But to safeguard it and nurture it is a lifelong exercise of conscious application. We have to treat and cherish our country like a mother treats her child.
- We keep looking to the government for change and to blame in crises. But the government cannot effect change unless we are ready to change and correct ourselves.

We need to look within for what needs to be done. Everybody is busy in the pursuit of personal security. But unless you secure your country, how can we move forward?

- When I was young, everything and everybody was imbued with goodness - the people, teachers, leaders, parents, and society - everyone aspired to goodness and that was the overall ambience and atmosphere that fed my spirit. Today, human virtue and values neelaam ho chuki hai. It is very sad to see that the moral fibre and integrity has eroded to such an extent. Bohot milavat hai har cheez mein.
- The destiny of a country is designed by soldiers, not statesmen.
- The Army does not have to prove anything to the people.
- Duniya talwaar ki dhaar par chal rahi hai aaj.
- We as citizens have a right to question everything, no doubt. But for our government to function better and more effectively, we need a very strong Opposition party.

# The Cause of the Nation

*Deepa Gablot* looks back on an improbable but fiercely patriotic film, which is now remembered chiefly for its songs

## Samadhi (1950)

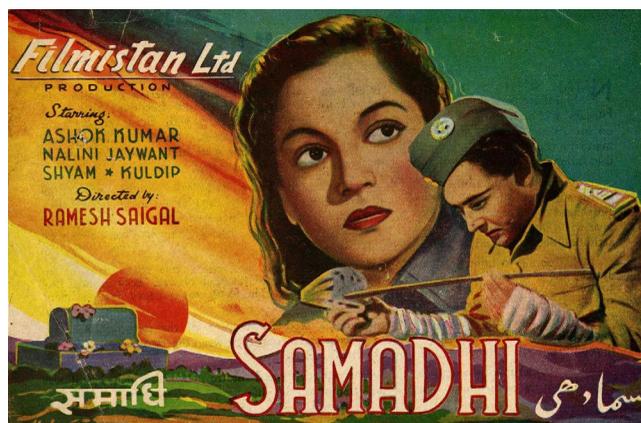
Those who have not seen *Samadhi* (1950), or even heard of it, must have at least tapped their feet to the impossibly cheery Gore gore o baanke chhore (the remix if not the original), or listened to distant echoes of the patriotic *Kadam kadam badhaye ja* on Independence Day.

Made soon after Independence, when the mood in the country was a mix of upbeat and sombre, Ramesh Saigal paid a tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, with this film about the Indian National Army. It is one of the few espionage films made in India (the genre is more popular now), and certainly a rare one with Catholic (possibly Anglo-Indian) leading ladies.

It begins with a variation on *Jana gana mana* (today, it would have caused riots), and goes to follow Netaji (played by a dead-ringer actor called Colin, who seems to have vanished after this film) to Malaya, where he gives a rousing speech to the Indian community settled there, and then auctions a garland. After some fierce bidding, it is

picked up by an earnest Shekhar (Ashok Kumar) for seven lakhs (a fortune at the time), which is all he has, and he also joins the INA. His blind father Ram Prasad (Badri Prasad) is proud of his son, more so when his older son Suresh (Shyam) has broken his patriotic heart by working for the British army. The youngest son Pratap (credited as Sashi Kapoor, but despite the resemblance, the actor could not have been Shashi Kapoor-- the age doesn't match) is as *deshbhakt* as his father.

Predictably, Suresh is sent to Malaya to



The film played on the fervour of newly independent India



*Ashok Kumar and Nalini Jaywant had a palpable chemistry on screen*

arrest Shekhar, where he meets his dancer sweetheart Dolly D'Souza (Kuldip Kaur). She hates the Japanese who killed her father for being a British collaborator, and wants revenge. Since Netaji has allied with the Japanese, she plans the decimation of the INA with a mysterious and murderous Boss (Mubarak).

Meanwhile, Shekhar has encountered Dolly's sister Lily (Nalini Jaywant) and fallen for her. After Boss observes his eager expression while watching her dance to Gore gore, he forces Dolly to assign Lily the job of stealing a crucial document from Shekhar. The information contained in it reaches the British and results in major losses for the INA. Boss makes plans to assassinate Netaji during a show by the sisters, but the shooter fails.

Lily is distraught, but so in love with Shekhar (she calls him "hero") that she cannot break up with him. Again, she is forced to get information from Shekhar, who promises to marry her after he returns from his mission. In typical film fashion, Suresh and Shekhar confront each other on the battlefield, and both are wounded.

The D'Souza sisters are arrested for spying,

tried by an INA court and sentenced to death. As penance for his inadvertent role in the massacre of his comrades, Shekhar volunteers to go on a suicide mission to blow up a bridge, that would lead to battle between the British and the INA in Kohima. He does not know that Netaji has pardoned the sisters and recruited them to his side to spy on the British. Shekhar lands up at the rendezvous point, and who should he find there, but Lily, Dolly, Suresh, still faithful to the 'enemy' side, and the ubiquitous Boss! Shekhar and Lily succeed in blowing up the bridge, but with guns booming all around them, there is no way of getting out alive; in wounded condition, both crawl over to Indian soil, and die at the place where a samadhi is built to mark their sacrifice. After all these years, the film (dialogue by Qamar Jalalabadi), while too far-fetched to be based on a true story as claimed, is entertaining, its nationalism worn proudly on its sleeve without demonising the British. Ashok Kumar and Nalini Jaywant were allegedly in love when it was being made, and the spark shows. C Ramchandra set Rajendra Krishan's lyrics to melodious music. Ashok Kumar and Nalini Jaywant went on to have long and successful careers. Shyam was killed tragically young a year later, in a horse-riding accident while shooting for Shabistan. Kuldip Kaur died in 1960 of untreated tetanus.



*A passionate Shekhar pledges to join the INA*

# Singing for the Country

It's the season for patriotic songs on radio and TV – and streaming apps. *Narendra Kusnur* has the definitive list



This year, because of quarantine and social distancing, the quantum of Independence Day public functions will be reduced. However, patriotic songs played at such events are known by many, and there is always a good amount of airplay on radio and television, and over loudspeakers. Most patriotic songs are inspired by India's Independence struggle but we also find some in reaction to the wars India fought against China and Pakistan. Some songs talk of the nostalgia felt by Indians staying abroad.

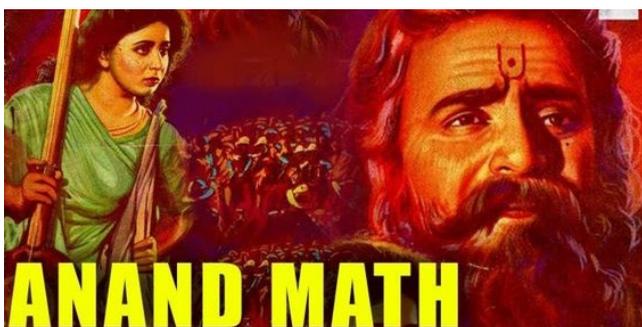
Here we choose 20 such songs. Most are from the movies but we have chosen some non-film ones too. The order is chronological, and the cut-off point is 1997, when India celebrated 50 years of Independence.

## 1. **Saare Jahaan Se Acchha** - traditional (written in 1904, first performed in 1924)



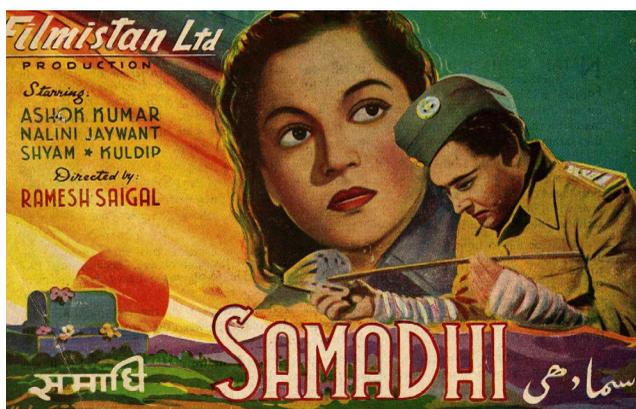
Written by poet Mohammed Iqbal, this became an anthem for opposition to British rule. It was also one of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite songs. There have been many later recorded versions, including the ones by Pandit Ravi Shankar and Lata Mangeshkar.

## 2. Vande Mataram - Anand Math (1952)



Based on words by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, this was also a popular patriotic song during the Independence movement. The film version was composed by Hemant Kumar, with separate renditions by him and Lata Mangeshkar.

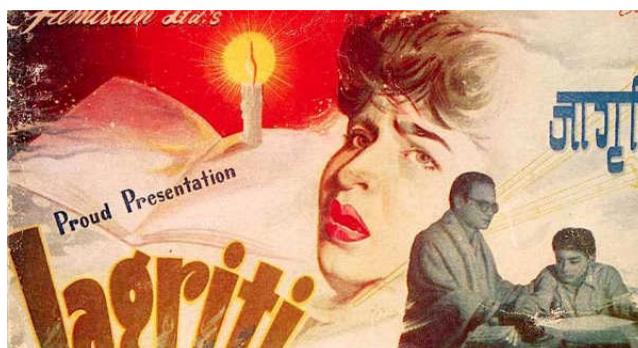
## 3. Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja Samadhi (1950)



The original song was a quick march for Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army, written by Vanshidhar Shukla. This film version was composed and sung by C. Ramchandra with Rajendra Krishan adapting the lyrics. A.R. Rahman did a later version in the 2004 film Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, The Forgotten Hero.

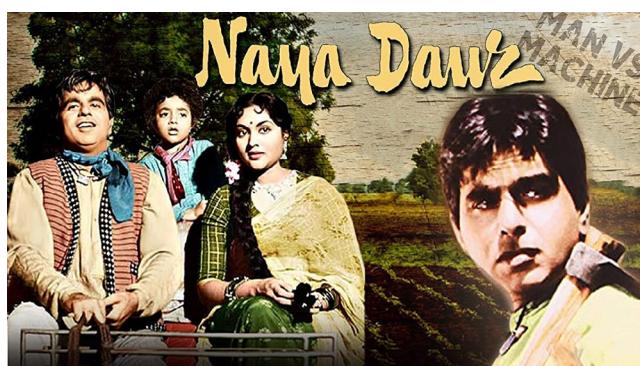
## 4. Aao Bachchon Tumhe Dikhayein Jagriti (1954)

This classic was written and sung by Kavi Pradeep, with music by Hemant Kumar. The film had other memorable patriotic songs like 'Sabarmati Ke Sant' by Lata Mangeshkar



and 'Hum Laaye Hain Toofan Se' by Mohammed Rafi.

## 5. Yeh Desh Hai Veer Jawanon Ka NayaDaur (1957)



Picturised as an energetic village dance, this song proved music director O.P. Nayyar's ability to do rustic tunes. Sung by Mohammed Rafi and Balbir, it was penned by Sahir Ludhianvi. The fact that star actor Dilip Kumar led the dance sequence added to the charm.

## 6. Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai (1960)



Mukesh, Manna Dey and Mangeshkar combined on this classic composed by

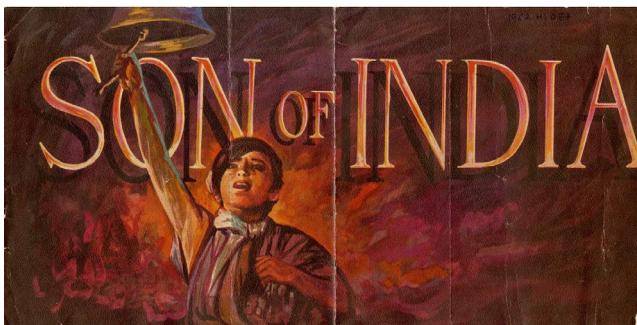
Shankar-Jaikishen and filmed mainly on Raj Kapoor. Lyricist Shailendra touched a chord with the lines “Hum us desh ke waasi hai, jis desh mein Ganga behti hai”.

### 7. Aye Mere Pyare Watan Kabuliwala (1961)



Prem Dhawan wrote the unforgettable words “Ae mere pyare watan, ae mere bichhde chaman, tujhpe dil qurbaan, tu hi meri aarzoo, tu hi meri aabroo, tu hi meri jaan”. Sung by Manna Dey, it was composed by Salil Choudhary and picturised on Balraj Sahni.

### 8. Nanha Munna Raahi Hoon Son of India (1962)



The magical combination of music director Naushad and lyricist Shakeel Badayuni create this gem, sung by Shanti Mathur and chorus. This worked well as both a children’s song and patriotic tune, and was performed regularly in schools.

### 9. Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon non-film (1963)

One of Mangeshkar’s all-time classics,



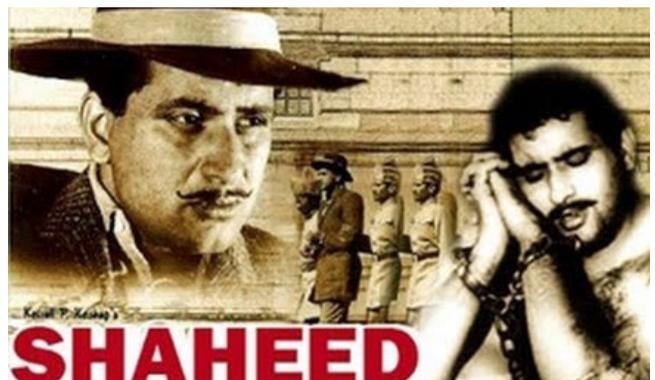
penned by Kavi Pradeep and composed by C Ramchandra. The song was written in the aftermath of the 1962 Indo-China war, and even brought Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to tears when it was performed.

### 10. Kar Chale Ham Fida Haqeeqat (1964)



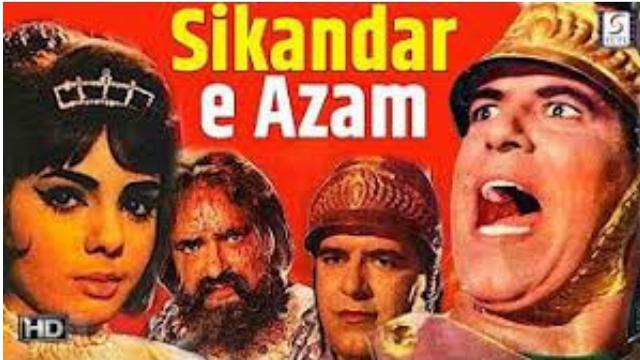
Lyricist Kaifi Azmi wrote “Ab tumhare hawale watan saathiyon” in this song from Chetan Anand’s war film. Music was by Madan Mohan and Rafi sang it soulfully. The song is part of most Independence Day ceremonies.

### 11. Ae Watan, Ae Watan - Shaheed (1965)



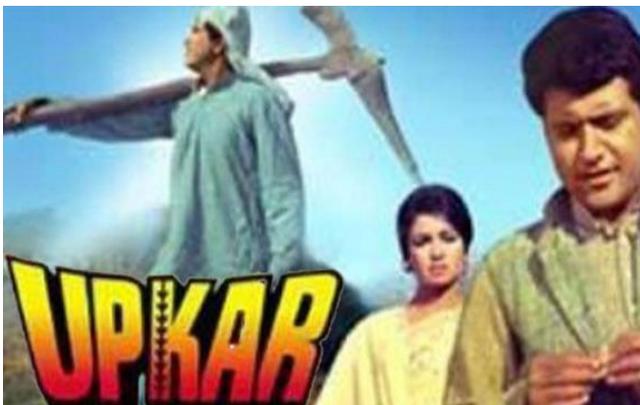
Prem Dhawan composed and wrote this song sung by Rafi. The film was based on the life of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, and also had the popular songs 'Mera Rang De Basanti Chola', 'Watan Pe Marne Waala' and the Bismil Azimabadi-penned 'Sarfaroshi Ki Tamanna'.

**12. Woh Bharat Desh Hai Mera Sikandar-e-Azam (1965)**



Describing the beauty of India, Rajinder Krishan wrote “Jahaan daal daal par sone ki chidiya karti hai basera, woh Bharat desh hai mera”. The song was composed by Hansraj Behl and rendered by Rafi.

**13. Mere Desh Ki Dharti - Upkar (1967)**



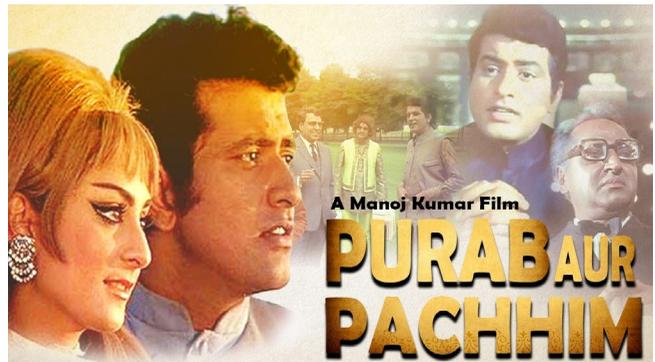
One of Mahendra Kapoor’s most famous songs, this was picturised on Manoj Kumar and composed by Kalyanji-Anandji. Gulshan Bawra wrote the lines “Mere desh ki dharti sona ugle ugle here moti, mere desh kid harti”. A must on Independence Day and Republic Day.

**14. Taqat Watan Se - Prem Pujari (1970)**



Rafi and Manna Dey were joined by a chorus on this group song composed by SD Burman and written by Neeraj. It was picturised on Dev Anand and others, and became a regular feature at school functions.

**15. Hai Preet Jahaan Ki Reet Sada Purab Aur Paschim (1970)**



Indeevar’s lines “Bharat ka rehne waala hoon Bharat ki baat sonata hoon” became a favourite. Sung by Mahendra Kapoor and composed by Kalyanji-Anandji, this song was picturised on Manoj Kumar.

**16. Hindustan Ki Kasam Hindustan Ki Kasam (1973)**



A tribute to those in the Indian Air Force, this song featured Manna Dey, Rafi and others. Music was by Madan Mohan, with Kaifi Azmi writing “Na jhukega sar watan ka har jawaan ki kasam”. The war film starred Raaj Kumar.

**17. Dil Diya Hai Jaan Bhi Denge Karma (1986)**



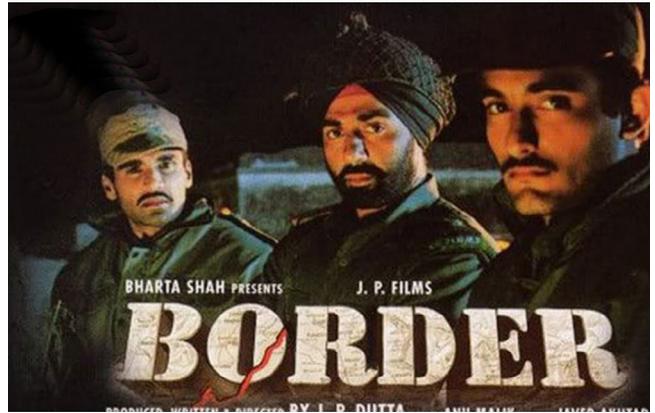
“Dil diya hai jaan bhi denge ae watan tere liye”, wrote Anand Bakshi in this song composed by Laxmikant-Pyarelal and sung by Kavita Krishnamurthy and Mohammed Aziz. The song took place at a function held in a prison, and was motivational in nature.

**18. Bharat Humko Jaan Se Pyara Hai Roja (1992)**



Rahman’s music in Mani Ratnam’s Roja gave him a major career boost. It was released in Tamil first before being dubbed, and the Hindi lyrics were written by P.K. Mishra. Hariharan sang this outstanding song.

**19. Sandese Aate Hain Border (1997)**



Like many songs in J.P. Dutta films, this was shot on a lavish scale. Composed by Anu Malik and written by Javed Akhtar, it was sung by Sonu Nigam and Roopkumar Rathod. It was a major hit that year.

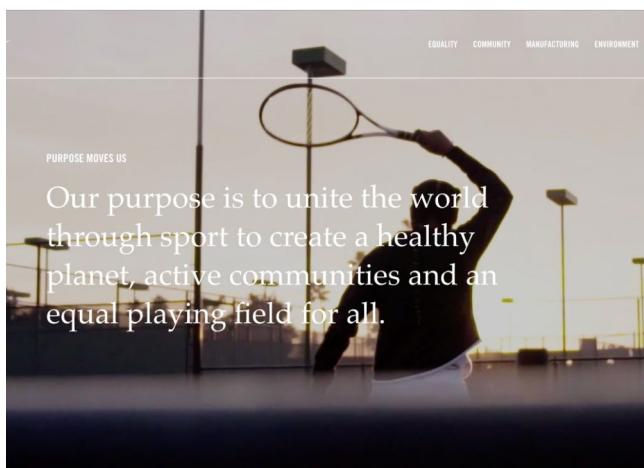
**20. Maa Tujhe Salaam non-film (1997)**



This was the opening song of Rahman’s album Vande Mataram, released to mark 50 years of Independence. The composer sings the song himself, and the lyrics are written by Mehboob. The video by Bala and Kanika also made news because of its scale.

# Brand Purpose and Justice

Brands are increasingly under pressure to be seen as just and egalitarian, writes *Prabhakar Mundkur*



The death of George Floyd did not have only cultural repercussions on the way we view discriminatory behaviour based on colour, but it has also shaken up in many ways the world of brands and the way they are marketed. It became an important inflection

point for marketers to reassess what their brand beliefs were.

Increasingly the pressure is on brands to show that they are fair, 'just' and do not differentiate on the basis of differences between people. Brands and consumers have become more than just sellers and buyers. Over the last decade, social activism has been something that brands all over the world have been forced to participate in.

The great Stephen King, the father of strategy planning, once said, "Brands are like people." That statement rings truer today than ever before. If brands are indeed like people, then it demands that brands – like people – will be fair, just and non-discriminatory.

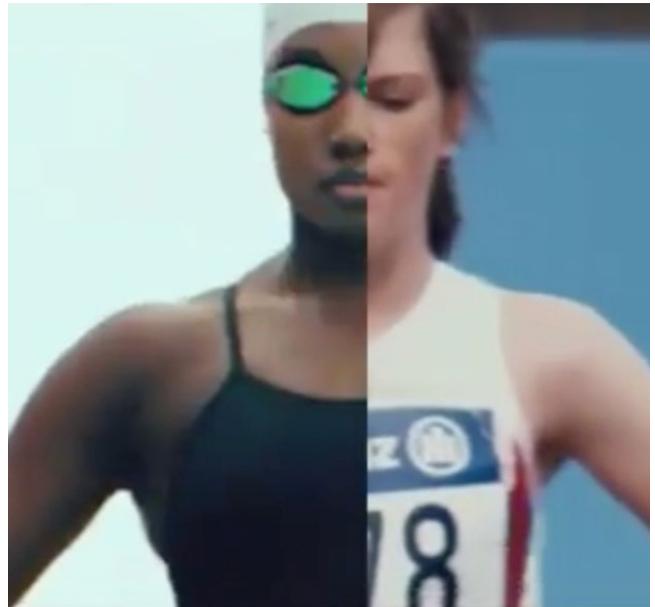
For once,  
Don't Do It.

The Don't do it ad from Nike which does a flip on its famous baseline "Just do it".

Some brands like Fair & Lovely, whose very basis of survival was the difference between fair and dark skins, have had to recalibrate their compasses to dissolve those differences and bury them in the past. In a major show of their intentions they have even changed their brand name from Fair and Lovely to Glow and Lovely. But that is not all. Future advertising hopefully will also not make fair women feel superior to dark women in any way. So, brands that have discriminated in the past are busy trying to make good for what they have done so that they can be forgiven.

The Edelman Trust Barometer 2020 showed that a majority of 63% were concerned about racism in America. It is no surprise therefore that most brands took up the cause post the death of George Floyd. But are brands expected to take up social issues? The Edelman Trust Barometer again tells us that consumers do expect brands to take up social issues.

However, more interesting is brands like Nike, which never discriminated, taking up the cause of discrimination and showing what a 'just' brand it is, by saying all athletes are created equal in their latest commercial which is most likely going to be the talk of this year. Not only have they managed to compensate for the feelings of what the pandemic has done to us, they have managed to say that all athletes are equal. That athletes from every sport go through the same triumphs and agonies irrespective of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or what sport they play.



The key frame of the #YouCan'tStopUs Nike film.

It is titled #YouCan'tStopUs, and one can't help feeling that it is also saying that even the pandemic won't stop sports. After all, closed gyms and empty stadiums have demotivated the entire sports community. It has a powerful message about hope. The film has 24 sports, 53 athletes, and 72 sports sequences.

Is Nike the only brand that is reacting to the event that shook the world? Amazon responded with an ad on Twitter that took up the case of racial discrimination quite strongly.

## CONSUMERS EXPECT BRANDS TO ACT

Percent of customers who are belief-driven buyers

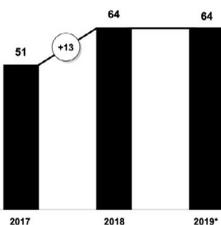
● ● ○ Change, 2017 to 2018

### Brand Democracy

I believe brands can be a powerful force for change.

I expect them to represent me and solve societal problems.

My wallet is my vote.



### Belief-driven buyers:

- choose
- switch
- avoid
- boycott

\* a brand based on its stand on societal issues

The inequitable and brutal treatment of Black people in our country must stop.

Together we stand in solidarity with the Black community – our employees, customers, and partners – in the fight against systemic racism and injustice.



Disney @Disney · Jun 1

We stand for inclusion.

We stand with our fellow Black employees, storytellers, creators and the entire Black community.

3.2K

15.4K

64.2K

Without the black community,  
Reebok would not exist.

America would not exist.



More brands will show their support in the future and make sure that they don't make moves that may reflect their own sense of justice when it comes to discrimination. Amazon, Disney and Reebok joined the fray with these ads.

Increasingly everyone around us, whether they are colleagues, friends, or plain consumers, are demanding justice all the time. This is evident from the number of petitions that are drawn up with an organisation like change.org. This demand for justice also extends to brands in the marketplace. People want their brands to stand with them as they fight for justice. This is particularly true of the newer generations i.e. the Millennials and Generation Z.

Over the last many years Brand Purpose has become more important than any other strategy document for a brand. It defines how the brand thinks about the world, and what are its reasons for being, besides of course making money. About a decade ago it was OK for a brand to just have a profit objective, but alas no more.

Brand purpose is the aim and goal of a brand. And 2020 has forced brands to incorporate a sense of justice into their ethos.

It was Benjamin Franklin who said, "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are." The George Floyd event proves this statement was true.



# Are you a writer?

## Do you have a story to tell?

**Seniors Today** is looking for writers to write about life after retirement, travel experiences, good health, money and personal interests. If you believe you have an interesting story, write to us at [writers@seniorstoday.in](mailto:writers@seniorstoday.in)

# Why 'Quit Kashmir' Failed

A close look at the past politics in Jammu and Kashmir, by the late political correspondent *Sati Sabni*, gives valuable insight into the state's turmoil

## **The Quit Kashmir Movement: 1931 - 1947**

The origins of the cultural and religious divide in Jammu & Kashmir can be traced back to the "The Treaty of Amritsar" 1846. This treaty was a very significant milestone in shaping the destiny of the present-day state.

The treaty signed between the British East India Company and the Hindu (Dogra) ruler Raja Gulab Singh after the First Anglo Sikh War, established the princely state of Jammu & Kashmir under the suzerainty of the British. The treaty declared, "The British Government transfers and makes over, forever, in independent possession, to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body, the Kashmir Valley as well as the area of Gilgit to the north." This new "princely state" comprised territories which at one point in time had been independent principalities:

Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Mirpur, Poonch, Baltistan, Gilgit, Hunza, Muzaffarabad, Nagar, and some other nondescript kingdoms.

The treaty further stated that the British East India Company Raj would provide aid to the monarch of Kashmir in protecting his territories from disruptive forces. It also mentioned and stated the monarch's allegiance to the British and as an acknowledgement of that article of the treaty, the primacy of the British East India Company rule, the monarch was required to present annually one horse, twelve shawl goats, and three pairs of impeccably woven Kashmiri shawls. By asserting this clause the colonial authority on the Dogra monarch formed a relationship that would influence politics and religion in the region until the present time.



*The condition of the poor and their lack of representation led to the first people's movement*

### **British moves**

The first major “play” by the British came in 1925 when Maharaja Hari Singh was installed as the ruler (Maharaja Pratap Singh had no male heirs and was interested in announcing a distant relative as the successor).

By that time there was a nationalistic and anti-feudal movement in the state and Maharaja Hari Singh squashed it forcefully. The movement actually started due to the difficult and poor conditions the Muslims lived. Having little or no representation in nearly all walks of life led to a lot of discomfort. Even in the state forces of 13 battalions, only one comprised of Muslims. They had severe restrictions on keeping arms and sharp instruments, so much so that it was difficult to get permission to slaughter animals for eating. Land was bestowed to a select few by the monarch and Kashmiri farmers worked on those as mere labourers. Kashmiri Muslims were denied the right to gain an education; excluded from the civil services; disenfranchised; and prevented from participating in political activities without governmental permission. This generated a lot of resentment, and with the winds of change which were in any case blowing across India, could Kashmir be far behind?

### **Movements begin**

In 1939, the All India States People's Conference (AISPC) took up the case and started a movement to help the plight of the Kashmiris with a representation to the monarch to form an equitable and responsible government. Once the AISPC took this up and adopted the resolution, there was formed a Hindu revivalist party – the Dogra Sabha led by the Pandits and Dogras in Jammu and another movement, Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam led by the Mirwaiz of Kashmir. Both movements were keen to improve the living, social and educational reforms for the state subjects. However this was short-lived as the government banned all Muslim organisations. Matters came to a head when there was a major labour shortage at the Kashmir Silk Mill in Srinagar, owned by the Maharaja.

It revealed the terrible conditions that the workforce had to endure; most of the underpaid, overworked, and shabbily treated labourers in the mill were Kashmiri Muslims. In 1924 a delegation of eminent Muslims protested to the Governor General, Lord Reading, by submitting a letter about the despicable conditions and the exploitative practices. Young and educated Muslims formed a reading society – which was known as the “Fateh Kadal Reading



*A dozen shawl goats were among the tributes given to the British under the 1846 Treaty of Amritsar*

Party” and they highlighted the injustice being meted out by way of publications and articles in various newspapers. A very prominent figure of this Reading Room Party was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, whose anti-establishment stance and general opposition to the Maharaja made him a popular and well respected figure. He soon organised the All India Kashmir Committee as its leader, and formed a Jammu and a Srinagar representative. This committee was tasked with the following specifically:

- 1) giving financial support to the political agitators;
- 2) providing financial assistance to the dependents of incarcerated political leaders, martyrs, and those wounded in confrontations with the police;
- 3) arranging for medical treatment of the injured;
- 4) arranging legal defence for political workers;
- 5) providing legal assistance to the preparation of cases before the Middleton and Glancy Commissions.

### **Struggle over jobs**

Subsequently the Glancy commission advocated that there should be more religious freedom in Kashmir, and emphasised that the government could not exercise its authority at places of worship. More importantly it also mandated that education should be open to all and more schools should be opened. More Muslim teachers needed to be appointed, and a special office for the administration of educational institutions for Muslims should be established.

Above all they recommended that jobs should be open to all members of society. Obviously all this was not liked in the Dogra Durbar and there was a struggle between the



*The pathetic circumstances of silk mill workers spurred the formation of a representative body and eventually a formal party*

Mirwaiz of Kashmir (the titular head of the Muslims) and the young Sheikh Abdullah who was now seen as the leader of the oppressed Muslim masses. Sheikh Abdullah soon formed the Muslim Conference but until and unless it had any sort of power they could not do anything.

### **Civil disobedience**

Unfortunately the Maharaja was not willing to establish any form of democratic governance, and in 1933-34 civil disobedience led to the first democratic election in the valley. Over the next few years, the political ideology of the Muslim Conference greatly brought about pride in regional identity. Abdullah was able to get together an efficient organisation of young like-minded people committed to the party's ideology, whose emphasis was portraying a Muslim identity, which promised social and political enfranchisement. In the first election they won 14 out of 21 seats allotted to Muslim voters in the State Assembly. This branch of the government had only consultative and no legislative powers.

Over the next few years Sheikh Abdullah tried to form a secular fabric in the society and started a movement also. In 1938 the Muslim Conference was replaced with a more secular outfit – All Jammu & Kashmir



*The Glancy commission advised education for all, and the opening of more schools*

National Congress, again headed by Sheikh Abdullah. The idea was to align with the Indian National Congress at the National level, thereby becoming a mainstream party. The espoused cause of it being left of centre Socialist pitted it against the Dogra Durbar, and helped it to form a distinct Kashmiri identity. This very timely move brought the Hindus and Muslims together and with this new-found confidence and backing, the Sheikh and his political organisation demanded that the Treaty of Amritsar be revoked and monarchical rule ousted. Thus was formed the Quit Kashmir movement, aligned to the larger Indian struggle for independence. Unfortunately, this did not work out to the expectations of the leadership as the Hindus and Sikhs of the state, who were the major beneficiaries of the state largesse which they would lose, opposed the movement.

### **Sedition charges**

In May 1946 the Sheikh was sentenced to nine years in prison on charges of sedition for having led the Quit Kashmir movement against the Maharaja's regime. Sheikh Abdullah's trial started at the Badami Bagh cantonment. Pt Nehru constituted a committee of defence headed by himself for the Sheikh's trial. The committee included

renowned people like Bhulabhai Desai and Asaf Ali. While Pt Nehru was on the way to Kashmir he was arrested and later sent back. During his trial he gave his reasons for this movement and had said:

Where law is not based on the will of the people, it can lead to the suppression of their aspirations. Such law has no moral validity even though it may be enforced for a while. There is a law higher than that, the law that represents the people's will and secures their well-being; and there is the tribute of the human conscience, which judges the ruler and the ruled alike by standards that do not change by the arbitrary will of the most powerful. To this law I gladly submit and that tribunal I shall face with confidence and without fear, leaving it to history and posterity to pronounce their verdict on the claims that I and my colleagues have made not merely on behalf of the four million people of Jammu and Kashmir but also of the ninety-three million people of all the States of India [under princely rule]. This claim has not been confined to a particular race or religion or colour...I hold that sovereignty resides in the people, all relationships political, social and economic, derive authority from the collective will of the people.

Unfortunate for Abdullah, despite a lot of support from the Congress, the movement was crushed politically and militarily. It is reported that in 1946 Sheikh Abdullah sent a telegram informing the British Cabinet about the ground situation and the Amritsar Agreement had outlived its life. A severely fragmented Kashmiri National Congress was at the mercy of the Maharaja's severely divisive policies and wanted to further divide the state's religious ethnicity. They introduced the two scripts – Devnagri and Persian – which further drove in the wedge.



*It was thought that the Quit India movement would inspire the similar Quit Kashmir movement, but that did not happen*

An irreplaceable rift between the Hindus and Muslims was being created – obviously a short-sighted policy.

### **Religious divide**

On the national scene, Mohammad Ali Jinnah was pushing and insisting with Abdullah to extend his support to the Muslim League – the organisation that was at the forefront of the creation of Pakistan. Sheikh Abdullah was averse to a religious divide as it was against his very principle. The Indian National Congress, which had supported the Quit Kashmir movement, backed the Sheikh's call for a plebiscite on the creation of two countries. The Congress advised the Maharaja, right up to 1947, to gauge the public mood before taking any call on the future of the state. On the very eve of Partition the Maharaja was busy trying to hold onto power as the state itself was very fragmented. Jawaharlal Nehru was vocal about retaining Kashmir in India to validate the secular credentials; Jinnah never once publicly asked Kashmiris to align with Pakistan till as late as 25th July '47.

Maharaja Hari Singh was indecisive and some say that he was keen on remaining independent of the two countries. One wonders how he wanted to sustain this notion, especially as his political and military power was very limited. It seems

that the Maharaja had almost made up his mind not to become part of either of the Dominions. There were some reasons for this. Firstly, it was the statement of Muslim League that the ruler was the ultimate authority to decide the issue of accession. Secondly, he feared that the Muslim majority state would not willingly support him if he decided to accede to India. Lastly, he did not want to accede to Pakistan for obvious reasons.

Two other major influences working on him were – Prime Minister RC Kak, who reportedly advised him to delay decision to accede till after the two Dominions had been created, and the second influence was Maharani Tara Devi. The Indian Government opposed this stance whereas the Pakistanis supported it as they had nefarious designs. Lord Mountbatten also visited Kashmir in June '47 to talk to the Maharaja about the decision to align with one of the two countries but the Maharaja refused to meet him. History bears witness to the events that treacherous Pakistan brought upon Kashmir and ultimately the Maharaja had no option but to accede to India on Oct 26, 1947.

### **Ringside Seat**

I was involved in the movement, being a student in Kashmir at that time. Apart from being involved in student politics, I too was part of a small group which was debating the Naya Kashmir manifesto to be unfolded after the Quit Kashmir movement. The Indo-Soviet Friendship Society was formed at the end of 1941 / beginning of 1942. A branch started in J&K also. It was a non-political body. I was its General Secretary for 18 months. Its task was to create public awareness among the people on the issue of Imperialist war vs Peoples' War. Meanwhile



*With pressure from both sides, the Maharaja was unwilling to pledge allegiance to either India or Pakistan – but ultimately had to side with India*

Churchill's War Council of the British Empire had included Maharaja Hari Singh as a member. For me the situation was problematic. I was involved with the anti-war effort because of my association with NC, AISF and Indo-Soviet Friendship Society. On the other hand my father was a Darbari (courtier). My mother was part of the Maharani's Ladies Club, meant to boost the war effort. I was closely associated with NC leaders like Sheikh Sahib, Bakshi Gh Mohd. Someshwar, KN Bamzai, JN Zutshi, DP Dhar and Mr Sadiq.

A very important event was the visit of Mr Jinnah to Kashmir in 1944. Jinnah main reason to travel to Kashmir was to win over Sheikh Abdullah but the latter did not bite the bait. Sheikh Sahib told Jinnah plainly that he would not allow his party to go with the Muslim League at any cost. I had a rare chance to meet with Mr Jinnah and get his views generally on Indian and state politics. I observed that he was quite disappointed

with the reaction he received from all walks of society in Kashmir and not just Sheikh Abdullah.

Within the National Conference there was polarisation along "pro-Maharaja" and "anti-Maharaja" lines. Jinnah's unsuccessful visit had acted as fuel to this polarisation. In a session of NC in Jammu Province it was decided that "We have reached limit of our patience and need to start agitation against the Maharaja". The NC leadership had also in mind the Quit India Movement which had yielded big dividends to Congress. So they thought they could replicate it in Kashmir by launching the Quit Kashmir Movement. They forgot that people had made big sacrifices in the Quit India Movement. There were few such people in Kashmir. Many people wanted to use movement for personal aggrandisement and personal gains. This was the main reason for the failure of the Quit Kashmir Movement.

# Struggling to Hear

***Dr Jasbir Singh*** explains what is age-related hearing loss, and what you can do about it

Normal human ears can hear everything from a whisper to the sound of an engine. Decrease or loss of hearing is called deafness by the general population. Almost half of us develop age-related hearing loss, known as presbycusis, by the age of 75 years and most by 80-90 years of age. Incidence of hearing loss in men is greater than in women, probably due to higher exposure to noise. Before we discuss more about hearing loss, it would be a good idea to have some knowledge about the hearing organ and how we hear.

The ear is the hearing organ in humans. It has the following parts: (i) External ear consisting of pinna and ear canal. (ii) Tympanic membrane or eardrum. (iii) Middle ear or tympanic cavity consisting of three small bones called ossicles and the middle ear cavity that is filled with air and

connected with the back of the nose via the Eustachian tube to equalise the pressure in the middle ear. (iv) Inner ear consisting of cochlea (for hearing), semicircular canals (for balance) and vestibule (also for balance). When a sound is made, the sound waves travel down to the ear canal and strike the eardrum. The eardrum vibrates and transmits sound waves to the ossicles, which amplify the sound and send the sound waves to the cochlea. The cochlea converts these sound waves to electric impulses and transmits them to the brain through the auditory nerve. The brain interprets these impulses as sound.

## **Common causes of hearing loss**

**Ageing:** Generally, ageing causes wear and tear of the structures in the cochlea, which then cannot convert sound waves to electric



*A sudden loud blast of noise can rupture the eardrum and cause hearing loss*

impulses and transmit them to the brain and thus, hearing loss occurs. High-pitched sounds become muffled or it becomes difficult to pick up some words against the background noise.

**Ear wax:** Gradual buildup of ear wax can block the ear canal and prevent the sound waves from reaching the eardrum.

**Ruptured eardrum:** The eardrum can get ruptured by a loud blast of noise, sudden change in pressure, poking by external objects like ear buds, or infections. These factors can cause sensorineural or conductive type of hearing loss.

### **How do I know if I have hearing loss?**

Ask yourself the following questions. If you answer “yes” to three or more of these questions you may have hearing problem.

[Source: National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, USA]

Do you sometimes feel embarrassed when you meet new people because you struggle to hear?

Do you feel frustrated when talking to members of your family because you have difficulty hearing them?

Do you have difficulty hearing or understanding co-workers, clients, or

customers?

Do you feel restricted or limited by a hearing problem?

Do you have difficulty hearing when visiting friends, relatives, or neighbours?

Do you have trouble hearing at the movies or in the theatre?

Does a hearing problem cause you to argue with family members?

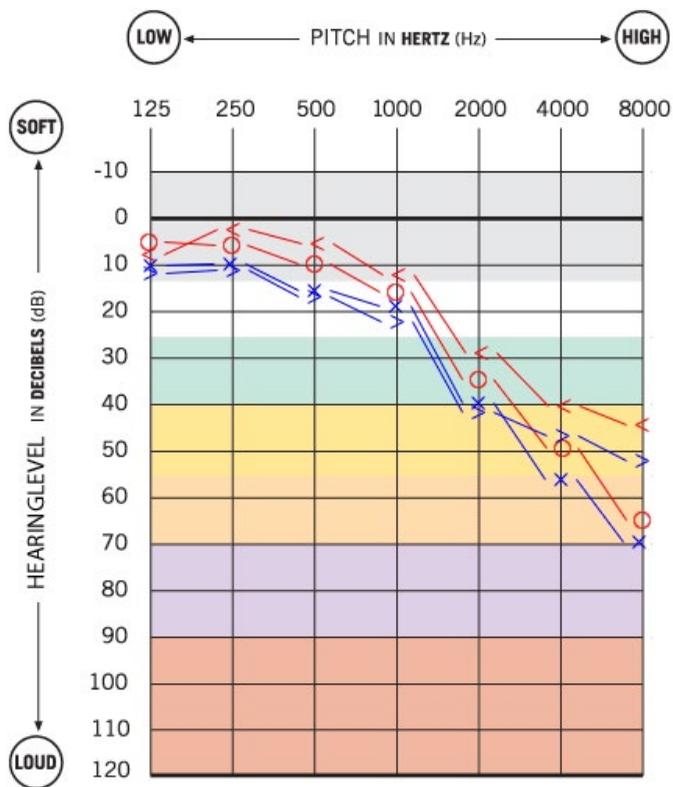
Do you have trouble hearing the TV or radio at levels that are loud enough for others?

Do you feel that any difficulty with your hearing limits your personal or social life?

Do you have trouble hearing family or friends when you are together in a restaurant?

### **What should I do if I have trouble hearing?**

If you think you have a hearing problem, you should seek advice from your family doctor, an ENT specialist (an otorhinolaryngologist) or an audiologist, who will conduct a hearing test. The hearing test will generally show a high-frequency hearing loss in age-related hearing loss. See a typical audiogram of age-related hearing loss showing dip in the hearing at higher frequencies (2000 to 8000 hertz).



Typical presbycusis audiogram

## What devices can help age-related hearing loss?

There are a number of devices, but a hearing aid is the most commonly prescribed device. Other devices include a cochlear implant, bone anchored hearing systems, etc. Hearing aids are electronic devices used to make the sound louder.

## Types of hearing aids commonly used



Body worn Behind the ear In the ear In the canal  
Commonly used hearing aid types

### Hearing aid types

**Body-worn:** This was the first type of hearing aid developed, but is rarely used these days. Body-worn hearing aid consists

of a case worn in the pocket or on a belt and an ear mould connected to the case by a cord.

**Behind the ear (BTE):** BTE hearing aids are the most common hearing aids used today. They have a small case that fits behind the pinna and provides sound to the ear via a small length of tubing or an electric wire to a miniature speaker placed in the ear canal. BTEs can be used for mild to profound hearing loss. These days almost invisible miniature BTEs are available, which have a hairlike sound tube.

**In the ear (ITE):** ITE hearing aids fit in the outer ear bowl (called as concha). ITEs are custom-made for each individual.

**In the canal (ITC):** ITC hearing aids are small and custom-made to fit in the ear canal, thus making them invisible and comfortable.

For more information about the type of hearing aid that will best suit your lifestyle and budget, you should contact an audiologist near you.



Difficulty in hearing which impacts your personal or business life is an indicator of hearing loss



## Share Your Grief

***“Grief, I’ve learned, is really just love. It’s all the love you want to give, but cannot. All the unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in the hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go.” – Jamie Anderson***

Psychologists believe writing about grief can reduce pain. Research has found that putting down one’s thoughts about worries and concerns can help those looking for ways to cope with their grief.

While writing requires motivation, energy and dedication, it’s easy, less stressful and all one needs is a pen, paper, computer or your device keypad. You don’t have to talk to anyone about it.

At Seniors Today, we are happy to provide you a forum to publish your personal accounts. Simply mail them to us at [editor@seniorstoday.in](mailto:editor@seniorstoday.in) with Share Your Grief in the subject. Please also include your name and contact number so that we may contact you in case we wish to make any clarification. While we would like you to write the first person account with your name, we will – needless to say – not disclose your information if you wouldn’t like us to.

# Exercises to improve healing

**If you're recovering from an injury, don't avoid exercising as it can help you get better faster, explains *Dr Vidhi Kothari Pipara***

Older adults are more susceptible to have chronic wounds, bruises and injuries than younger people. Advancing age has a detrimental effect on wound healing process. As we grow old our responses slow down, energy levels are reduced which makes the healing process of our body slow.

Unless bedridden, it is a misconception that you should avoid all exercises if you have a wound. On the contrary, a daily routine of exercises and physical activity can help prevent injuries as well as improve the healing process of the body. According to a study conducted at Ohio State University, working out regularly can speed up the wound recovery process in older adults by 25 percent.

Exercise rids the body of inflammation and restores health. The increased blood flow and oxygen level step up the healing process. In fact, exercise should be an integral part

of wound management and the wound care regimen.

## **Remaining active**

Expectedly, it can be challenging to remain active with an injury, abrasion or trauma. One needs to be extra careful. But with appropriate medical bandages, dressing and recommendation, a gentle workout programme suitable for your capacity and



*Pranayama breathing exercises are also useful*



*Yoga is a practice you can safely incorporate into your routine, but always check with your doctor*

flexibility can be devised by your health care professional.

Maintaining an active lifestyle even during injuries (only on consultation with your doctor) will help:

- Strengthen the bones and muscles, thereby reducing the risks of injuries through falls and loss of balance. This ultimately helps one to live independently and prevent most of the age related injuries.
- Improve the energy levels and body functioning.
- Can also prevent, delay or reduce the effects of diseases like osteoporosis, diabetes, blood pressure, heart diseases, dementia, etc.
- In most cases it helps improve the mood, thereby reducing the chances of depression, anxiety, etc.
- Mental exercises definitely do help in improving the cognitive function.

There are different kinds of exercises that one can incorporate in one's routine safely:

- Jogging
- Brisk walking
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Dancing
- Stretches
- Body Weight Exercise (push-ups, sit-ups)
- Yoga
- Pranayam

If you are not able to exercise because of the

healing process, you can undertake certain activities that you can include in your day to day life to ensure enough physical activity and mind distraction:

- Taking the stairs instead of the lift.
- Walking or cycling instead of driving at least short distances, like going to the place of worship, park etc.
- Playing mind games like chess, Sudoku, puzzles in the newspaper, etc.
- Doing light exercises and stretches while watching TV.
- Doing a little household work like gardening, watering the plants, hanging and folding the clothes, etc.
- Many times exercising alone can get boring and lonely, so one can exercise with a group of friends in a park.

### **Take precautions**

While exercising is very beneficial to us at any given point of life, it is important to never forget these precautions:

- Always warm up and start slow.
- Do not exercise if you feel ill.
- Take it easy if you feel too tired and if your muscles and joints are sore.
- Consult an expert in case you experience any kind of discomfort like chest pain, dizziness, breathing difficulties, etc.

“Let each day become more fulfilling than the past one and life become more beautiful the longer you live.”



*Walking is a good way to be active without straining yourself; use support if needed, take a companion if you can, and follow your doctor's advice*

# Picnic on Mars?

Your next leisure trip could literally be out of this world, writes **Sandeep Suri**

If I ask you to pick your next holiday destination that is quite literally 'out of this world', perhaps today, you may not consider booking a trip in outer space, but this is soon going to be a reality! It is the future of tourism, or can be regarded as the next big disruptor for the airline industry.

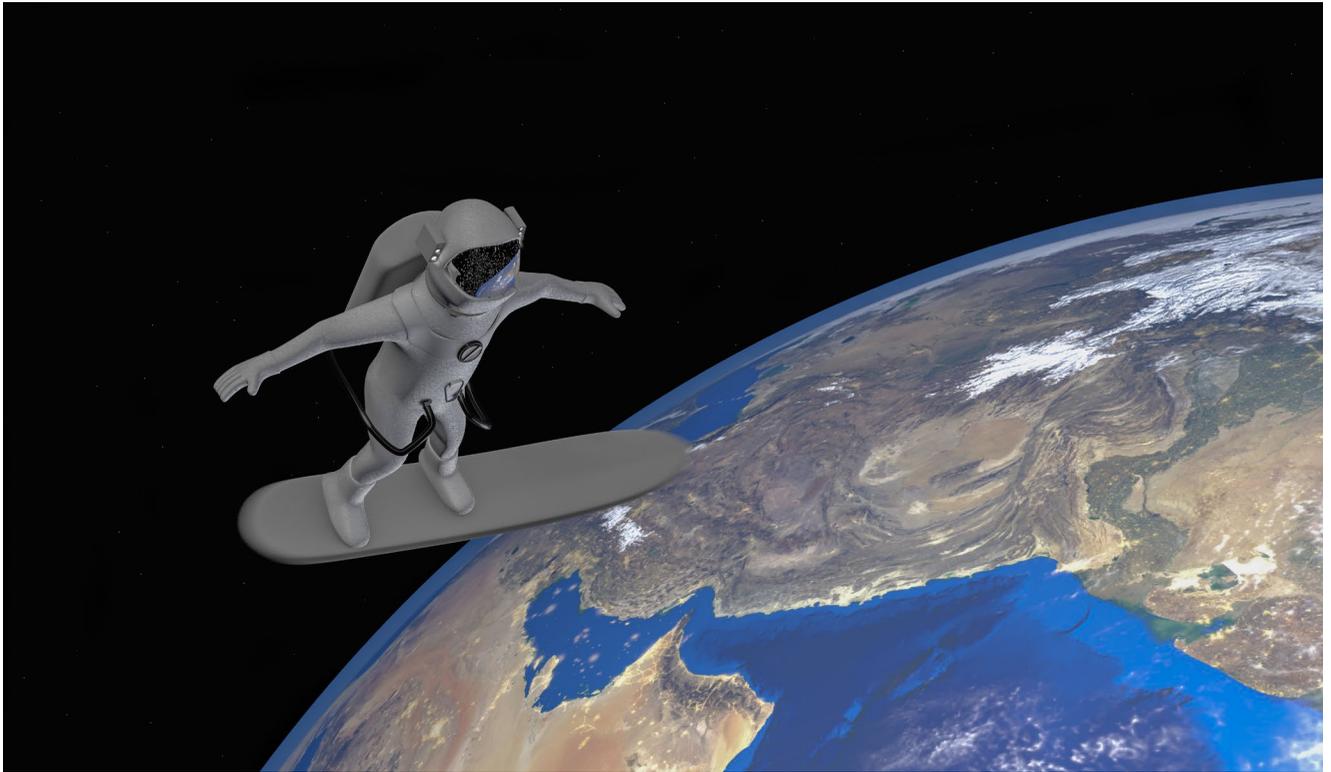
It may be difficult for us to comprehend for now but remember, am not narrating a science fiction or it's not a sci-fi fan's fever dream. This isn't just good news for some of us with a burning desire to visit the Moon, see our home planet from space or set up a picnic camp on Mars — if you're a keen traveller, it's highly likely you'll eventually benefit from developments relating to space exploration. In fact, several companies, including Boeing, Elon Musk's SpaceX, Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic, and Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin, are sprinting to perfect their race towards space.

## **Curiosity and opportunity**

Business is already putting sustainability at the forefront of what they do on Earth, and in the years ahead, the same shall be applied to our activities in space. Today space is not just an economic opportunity but also a subject of intellectual and spiritual curiosity. In today's world it is considered big opportunity for business!

Most likely, the first few flights will be near the edge of space — more than 100 miles above Earth — where you can have a 'no gravity' experience and enjoy the view. Well, if you are willing 'to be taken for a ride' and your wallet can afford it, prepare for sticker shock — Virgin JGalactic is selling tickets for a whopping price of \$250,000!

Intergalactic exploration doesn't come cheap. Initially travelling to space will be costly and not for everyone. While only a limited few will have the opportunity to design a travel



*The final frontier, backpacks and surfboards in space*

itinerary around space as the cost is the biggest prohibitor. Just in case you are like me and would like to explore space virtually, disruptive forces are likely to change the nature of space exploration gradually. With technology improving at an unprecedented pace, virtual reality will play a significant role in giving people the experience of space travel. This will be critical for building up interest in space.

### **The cost factor**

On the other hand, once commercial space flights begin operating like on a consistent basis, efficiencies will naturally occur, costs will start going south. The first few passengers will pave the way, and the goal is that eventually it becomes something more within reach for others. Moreover, as the economy of scale kicks in, the cost will eventually come down. And for those who can afford it, this should be an experience to cherish for a long time!

It could be some time before just anyone

gets an opportunity to visit outer space, but with current developments underway, one can only hope that things expedite, and it soon becomes a reality for a much larger population. So, watch it — 30-minute flights from London to New York—and potentially a holiday to Mars — could become a reality much sooner than you think. Don't be surprised if your family and friends say — bon voyage for a trip to space in the next few years. Enjoy the ride!



*What is a holiday without pictures to prove you were there?*

# The Land of High Passes

Very much in the news, Ladakh is the travel focus for this month.

By *Navneet Sabni*

La Dakh – the land of high passes – is the northernmost portion of India, a vast land that is mostly barren, yet one of the most beautiful and rich areas of our great country. Contrary to most people's thinking, this is an area which is probably one of the most "senior-friendly". What is really important for all of us who are above the young age of 60 to remember that as the average height of the two main valleys (Indus Valley and Nubra) is above 9000 ft (above sea level), some basic precautions are required, but the rewards are immense.

Leh is the capital of this large Union Territory and is very accessible with several flights a day from Srinagar, Delhi and Mumbai. The best time of the year is from

May till October. However, I would avoid going from mid May till the first week of July as the school holidays makes the place crowded. Also, as demand is high the hotel and flight rates too become prey to one of the basic principles of economics. Any trip with friends and like-minded people heightens the tour, and in this area – even more so.

The flight in itself is something worth taking for this trip. It holds the world record of crossing the maximum number of mountain ranges in the shortest duration of time. Here's a tip: It is worth your while to pay the 200 – 300 Rupees extra to take a window seat on the left-hand side of the aircraft from Delhi / Mumbai, as on a clear day you can be rewarded by glimpse of

Nanga Parbat and the twin peaks of Nun & Kun. The landing into Leh is also spectacular with aerial views of a few monasteries like Matho, Phyang, Lamayuru (for flights from Srinagar) and Spitok. The snaking Indus river and the greenery on the banks makes it a sharp contrast to the brown and barren mountains.

### **Mandatory precautions**

The first and absolute must “precaution” one has to follow strictly after arrival by flight is to reach the hotel or your guest house, rest and sleep. The basic idea is to acclimatise to the high altitude. The first day is a mandatory rest day for everyone. Most hotels and guest houses have magnificent views of the Stok Khangri range, so why not sit back in your room sipping tea / kahwah and taking in the scenery? The second golden cardinal rule is to remain well hydrated – Ladakh being a high-altitude desert, the body loses a lot of fluids which need to be replenished. Needless to say,

alcohol should be avoided for this reason alone.

An ideal programme of a week will cover the 3 most important areas of the Indus, Sham and Nubra valley. So on the second day of your trip you set off by a private car for a visit to Stok Palace, Thikse and Hemis monasteries. The palace houses the royal costumes and artefacts, but more importantly it gives you a beautiful view of the city of Leh from across the river with the backdrop of Khardungla. The newly built massive statue of the Buddha is very humbling.

Thikse and Leh are two of the biggest monasteries in Ladakh and belong to two of the most dominant sects of Mahayana Buddhism – the yellow hat Gelugpa and red hat Kargyu. The beautiful frescos and “thankas” which adorn the walls are breathtaking. The Maitreya (Buddha of the future) and Guru Padmasambhava statues in Thikse and Hemis are simply awe-inspiring.



*Nubra, one of the two main valleys, is about 9000 feet above sea level*

## Pangong Lake



*Pangong Tso is truly a mesmerising sight*

The next day we left early for a long day's excursion to the beautiful Pangong Lake on the eastern border with China. One of the picturesque Himalayan lakes, only one third is with India and the rest in Chinese occupied territory. The azure blue water changes colours with the angle of the sun and is truly a mesmerising sight. Of late the authorities have banned overnight camping on the banks for environmental reasons, and so one needs to drive back via the third highest motorable road in the world, Changla pass (17550 ft).

After a night of rest, the next morning we drove to Nubra valley. Before leaving Leh we stopped at the Shanti Stupa, situated on a hilltop overlooking the city of Leh. The white monument against the brown mountains really stands out and is probably the most photographed place in all of Ladakh. The next part of the drive was exciting as we were driving to reach the world's highest motorable point in the world – Khardungla (18379 ft). Separating the Indus Valley and Nubra this is a very important road pass as it carries all supplies for the glacier hotspot – The Siachen. After a quick photo stop we drove down to the district center of Diskit and the nearby Hunder village. The Nubra valley is lower in altitude than the Leh (Indus valley) but is better climatically.

Due to the high mountains, rainfall is very scarce and so it is classified as arid wasteland. However the hard working locals have started farming and have orchards too. The most unique geographical feature of this valley is that you can see many sand dunes with snow covered mountain tops in the back ground. To complete the image of a desert where there are sand dunes, can camels be far behind? Bactrain camels – the famous 2 humped camels are to be found in very few places in the world, Nubra being one. Nubra was part of the great silk route and so traders would bring these camels, laden with goods, from Mongolia. Evidently some traders just settled down here and so you have these magnificent beasts of burden here.



*Sakyamuni Buddha (The Buddha of the past)*



*Thiksey is one of the two biggest monasteries in Ladakh*

### **A billion stars**

We drove to one apple orchard at Hunder and slept the night in a beautiful and comfortable Swiss Cottage tent. In the evening the biggest treat came, I swear that I have never seen a billion stars in the sky and that sight alone made my visit worthwhile. After an early morning walk in the orchard picking apples and small, but sweeter than sugar, Apricots from the trees, breakfast was one of the most memorable memories amidst trees and mountains. After our byes, we packed and left for the very picturesque Deskit monastery which is dwarfed by the huge statue of the Maitreya Chamba. Later we drove back with many photo stops and arrived back in Leh by late afternoon. That evening in Leh we decided to shop and eat in one of the many fantastic restaurants which dot this city. In fact it is difficult to choose from the wide variety of gourmet places. It was the last day of our visit but still

one very keenly awaited as the drive to Lamayuru is considered to be the highlight of the visit. We stopped at the gravity defying magnetic hill and the Gurudwara Patthar Sahib before driving along the Indus river. The climb to Lamayuru (the main road to Srinagar) and the general area around is known as the “Moon scape” and very picturesque. A quick dash into the beautiful 13th century monastery gave an insight to the teachings of Lord Naropa – the founder of this remote monastery.

After a really satisfying Indian Tibetan meal at the monastery restaurant we drove back and stopped to visit the oldest standing monastery in Ladakh, Alchi (10th century). This unique structure is made out of wood and the frescoes inside are a must visit. The small but very important statue of Avlokiteswara – Lord of Mercy & Compassion is amazing. The famous mantra “Om Mani Padme Hum” rings in my mind

every so often. It is one of the most soothing mantra and chanting this guarantees a calm mind. The last evening in Leh too was magical as we dined at a Tibetan-Ladakh restaurant overlooking the pedestrian only main street of Leh. You are spoilt for choice of restaurants as there are Mughlai Indian, Kashmiri, Chinese, Israeli, continental, Pizza and Burger places all over. A special recommendation is to get a “ Yak Milk Cheese” while in Leh ( available at a few places).

The flight back to Delhi was uneventful but full of beautiful mountain memories.

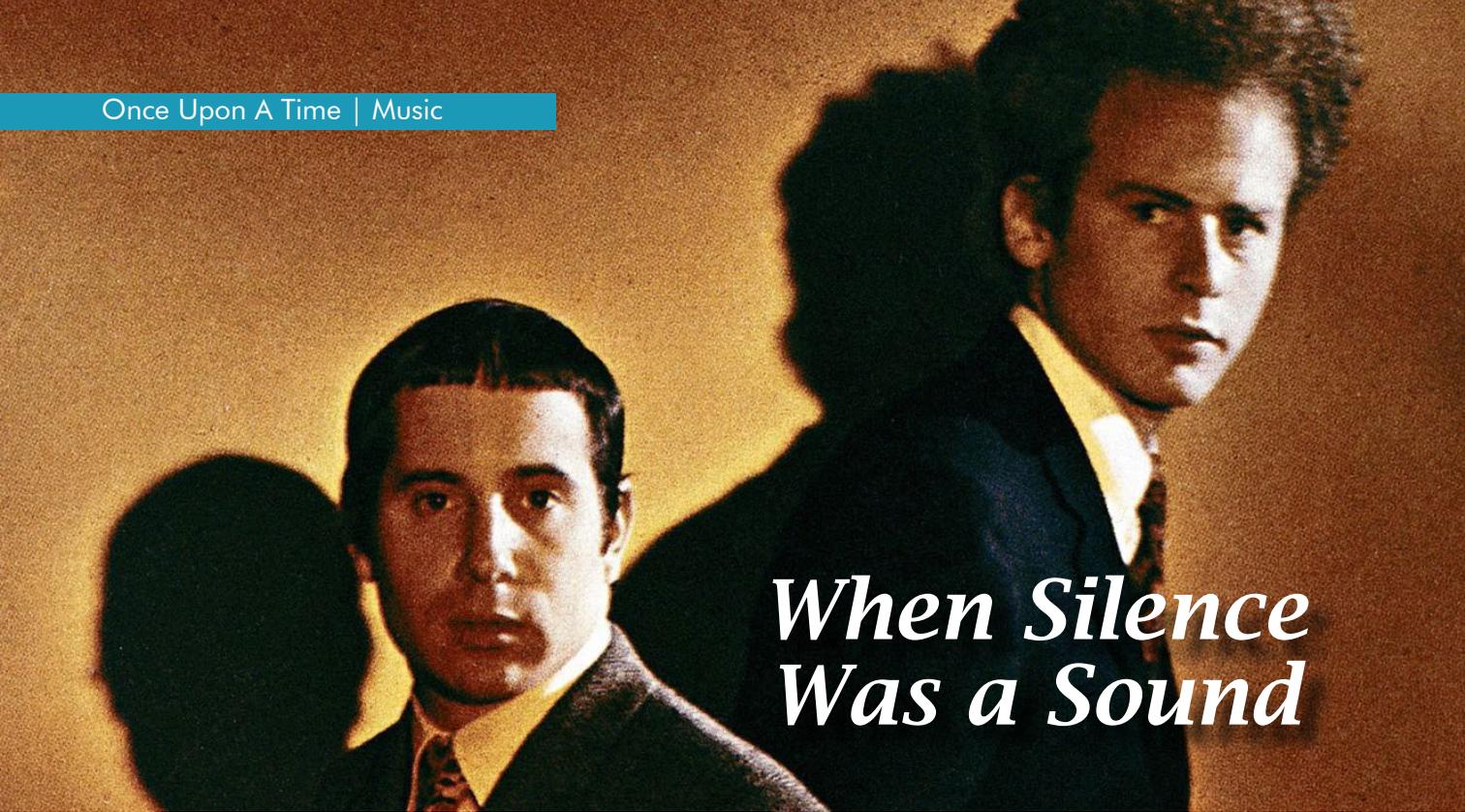
### **Useful notes**

It is very important that you get a good tour operator who has good first-hand knowledge of the region you are travelling to and Ladakh is no different. I am a fan of the internet and online touring, but it is always recommended that you book through a reliable person who in an emergency situation can be contacted and can help in rescheduling quickly. Without a travel professional you really are on your own. Nowadays hotels of all category and price range are available in Leh (INR 1000 – 15,000 a night). It is important that in

Ladakh you get a hotel which is close to the town centre (so that you can walk to the restaurants & shops in your free time), with a good view (after all, is that not what you are going to Ladakh for). Finally it is also important that the hotel has an oxygen cylinder available in the premises as chances are that you will need to take a puff or two during your stay. In any case the locals always suggest that 30 minutes of oxygen intake on the first day works wonders for the rest of the tour. Most hotels offer accommodation with varied meal plans and frankly it is your choice if you wish to try different and local places to eat, like I do. There are excellent camps and small hotels in Nubra which are affordable. It will be advantageous for you to book rooms on all-meals basis, specially as there are very few places outside to eat. At Alchi a new hotel has just come up which compares very favourably to the ones in Leh so if you wish to experience village life stay a night here and walk through the village and meet the friendly people. It is also highly recommended that you hire a good vehicle (for the whole tour) and a friendly guide on the days you are visiting monasteries and monuments.



*The Spitok Gonpa, which you can see while landing into Leh*



## When Silence Was a Sound

**YR Anand** takes a close look at the phenomenon that was Simon and Garfunkel

*Hello darkness, my old friend  
I've come to talk with you again  
Because a vision softly creeping  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping  
And the vision that was planted in my  
brain  
Still remains  
Within the sound of silence*

Rock music fans all over the world easily recognise these lines, with its melodic starting chords, as the start of one of the most recognisable songs in rock history. This was the song that catapulted Simon and Garfunkel to fame and glory.

Many across the world became their fans listening to the soundtrack of the 1967 Mike Nichols film *The Graduate*. The film, of course, was a breakthrough for the young Dustin Hoffman. Their story goes that while writing “Mrs. Robinson”, Paul Simon considered the

title “Mrs. Roosevelt”. When the director Mike Nichols got to know about it, he said, “Don’t be ridiculous! We’re making a movie here! It’s Mrs. Robinson!” And this acted as a booster to the already increasing popularity of the Simon & Garfunkel story.

Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel were both typical second, third generation Jewish immigrants, living in New York city. They met each other while in the same school and started singing together. By 1957, while still in their teenage years, they were performing publicly and even had singles made. At this time, they were performing under the name Tom & Jerry, the name given to them by the record company Big Records. Initially, they were singing in the folksy style like Everly Brothers. Shortly after, they parted company and Paul Simon started pursuing a solo singing career including travelling.



*When Paul and Art used to be Tom and Jerry*

In the meantime, the duo continued studying. Garfunkel studied architecture and mathematics from Columbia University. He ultimately earned a BA in art history, followed by an MA in mathematics education. Simon majored in English literature from Queens College of City University of New York. He also attended Brooklyn Law School for a while.

In 1963, they regrouped and signed up with Columbia records as Simon & Garfunkel, and released their first studio album *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.* This did not do well. None of the tracks reached any popularity, though it has an early version of *The Sound of Silence*. They parted company again and Simon returned to a solo career, this time in England. There, he met Kathy Chitty and she is the

Kathy in “Kathy’s Song” and “America”.

In 1965, a new version of “The Sound of Silence” became a major hit on U.S. AM radio. It reached number one on the *Billboard Hot 100*. Simon and Garfunkel reunited and under the CBS label, released *The Sounds of Silence* album. This contained some of the earlier singles.

During this time, they also released the single; *Homeward Bound*. This was originally released in the UK as part of *The Sounds of Silence* album. But it was subsequently replaced by another song and *Homeward Bound* became part of the next album. It is a lovely ballad about loneliness and the life of a traveling artist, such as the stanza below:

Every day’s an endless stream  
 Of cigarettes and magazines  
 And each town looks the same to me  
 The movies and the factories  
 And every stranger’s face I see  
 Reminds me that I long to be  
 Homeward bound

Simon also recorded his first solo album, *The Paul Simon Songbook*, in 1965. It has future Simon & Garfunkel staples such as “I Am a Rock” and “April Come She Will”.



*The Sounds of Silence album cover*

The Sounds of Silence album is a collection of great songs, which can all be hummed along to. Many of the duo's songs are written by Paul Simon. They are excellent poetry in most cases and very philosophical. Unusually, many of the songs in this album had been part of solo work done by Simon earlier or some work done together. For instance, acoustic versions of "I Am a Rock", "Leaves That Are Green", "April, Come She Will", "A Most Peculiar Man", and "Kathy's Song" were all part of the first Paul Simon album. But they make a great impression as a duo singing with elegant melodic background music and great harmony together.

Anji is a wonderful guitar solo piece, which was a cover version of a song by a friend of Paul Simon from England. "Richard Cory" was based on the poem "Richard Cory" by Edwin Arlington Robinson and is set to lovely music. The lyrics as usual are very thoughtful.

The Sounds of Silence was put together in a hurry. So, to capitalise on their newfound success, Simon & Garfunkel spent time crafting the follow-up studio album, which was Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme, which was issued in 1966. They continued touring the country and college campuses.

The album opens with "Scarborough Fair" and the words of the album title are embedded in the lyrics. It is a traditional ballad, combining nice guitar accompaniment and delicate chimes added with harpsichord embellishments. And who can forget the beautiful and melodious chorus in the background? The album featured Homeward Bound, which was already a well-known single by then.

Film director Mike Nichols, then filming The Graduate, had become fascinated with Simon & Garfunkel's music. This resulted

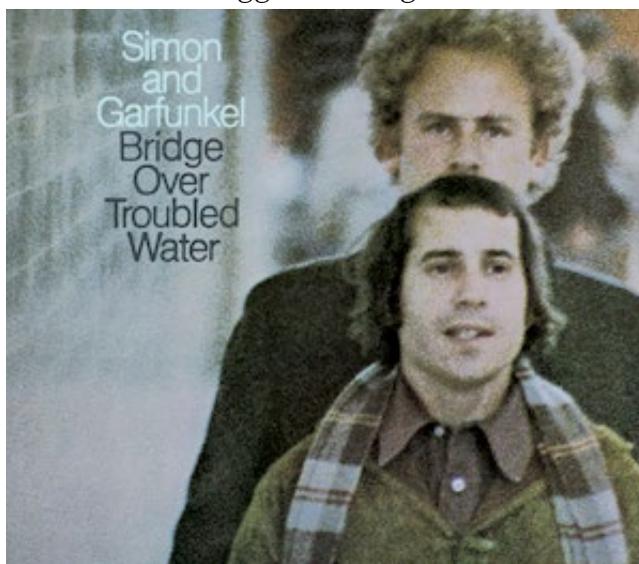
in their collaboration for the film. As per the deal, they wrote three new songs for the film, one of which was Mrs. Robinson. The soundtrack album was also extremely popular.

*Bookends* was the third studio album by them. This was an album that tried to explore life's journey from childhood to old age. Simon's lyrics concern youth, disillusionment, relationships, old age, and mortality. The album features such well known melodies as Bookends, America, Old Friends, At the Zoo and of course Mrs. Robinson.

Bookends, alongside the Graduate soundtrack, made Simon & Garfunkel the biggest rock duo in the world that year. But, by then Paul Simon had started to feel an urge to follow a solo career.

Garfunkel also started acting during this period, after the success of The Graduate. Among his notable appearances were in Catch 22 and Carnal knowledge both directed by Mike Nichols.

*Bridge over Troubled Water* was Simon & Garfunkel's fourth and final studio album and was released in January 1970. It topped the charts in many countries and became their biggest selling album ever.



*The Bridge Over Troubled Water album cover*

This album is also a collection of songs, every one of which is a classic. It includes two of the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful songs, “Bridge over Troubled Water” and “The Boxer”. These have been listed on Rolling Stone’s 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. They are also among the most performed songs in rock music over the decades.

The title song was influenced by gospel music, which was holding sway over Simon at that time. The Boxer, a lovely ballad was one of the toughest songs to record for them. The recording session lasted over 100 hours and took place at several locations. The lyrics to this also touch the heart strings deeply. The chorus of the song, the nine-time chanting of the simple “lie-la-lie”, is surely among the most hummed refrains in rock music.

“The Boxer” was originally written with a verse that is not present in the Bridge over Troubled Water album version. But it has been performed in subsequent appearances of the duo many times. It paraphrases this song beautifully:

Now the years are rolling by me—  
They are rockin’ evenly.  
I am older than I once was,  
And younger than I’ll be.  
That’s not unusual;  
No, it isn’t strange:  
After changes upon changes  
We are more or less the same;  
After changes we are more or less the same.

Sadly, for music lovers, the duo split up after this album was released. For the first few years they did not communicate frequently. But subsequently they performed together occasionally for benefits and fund raising.



To help alleviate New York’s economic decline, a concert was arranged in Central Park on September 19, 1981. This attracted more than 500,000 people, at that time the largest ever concert attendance. The live album of the show, *The Concert in Central Park*, became a smash hit all over the world. After this they continued working on concerts a few times. But there was a no more sustained collaboration like in the past. Many anthologies and collections have been released rehashing the existing music.

In 1990, they were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of fame.



*Though the duo split up, they performed together at concerts and fundraisers*

After the breakup, Art Garfunkel acted in a few movies. He also started working as a mathematics teacher, teaching geometry



*The Bridge Over Troubled Water album cover*

to high school students. Then he released two albums *Angel Clare* and *Breakaway*. Both of them were moderately successful critically and commercially. Right through 1980 to 2000 he battled personal setbacks and depression. But he has been making frequent appearances since then and releasing music.

Paul Simon on the other hand, had a successful solo career since the breakup. In 1970, Paul Simon was released in 1972, preceded by his first experiment with world music, the Jamaican-inspired “Mother and Child Reunion”. The single was a hit. The album received universal acclaim, with critics praising the variety of styles and the confessional lyrics. It later spawned another hit with “Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard”.

Simon’s next project was the pop-folk album, *There Goes Rhymin’ Simon*. It contained some of his most popular and

polished recordings. The lead single, “Kodachrome” was also a great hit. Still *Crazy After All These Years* was his next album. The single from the album, “50 Ways to Leave Your Lover” reached the top spot of many charts.

*One-Trick Pony* and *Hearts and Bones* followed to moderate success. Then came *Graceland*. This features an eclectic mixture of several genres like pop, rock, a cappella, zydeco, isicathamiya, and mbaqanga. Simon wrote songs inspired by the recordings made in Johannesburg, collaborating with African and American artists. It was his most successful studio album and his highest-charting album at the time.

In 1990, he was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame as a solo artist. And he continues to be a successful musician collaborating with many well-known musicians.



## The Art of the Con

The spotlight may be on Indian matchmaking, but it's a much deeper game. *Minoo Shah* has the goods

And you thought marriages were made in heaven and that God donned the avatar of a matchmaker. In which case, I may be able to sell you a heater in the midst of summer. Or, introduce you to a person who promises to make your ordained destiny come true - for a price.

In the last few decades, we have seen matchmaking websites, mail order brides' sites and most recently, reality shows. The fundamental underlying tone - if you have the moolah, I will find you a *dulha* (catering to all sexes). Let me now explain to you the hook, the angle and most often how you are sunk.

As you, the wide-eyed audience, hang on to my every word, I selectively choose my bait from amongst you. The man in his late 40s with a toupee (Sir, you don't fool anyone) sitting to the far left in the 11th row, and you

ma'am with the haughty smile and overly tight-fitting jeans (your youth left you a few years ago) to the demure woman whose widowhood crowns her head and the group at the back who have been around the block more than once. As a matchmaker, I have zeroed in on your desperation and will cash in on it.

### What warning signs?

At this point warning signs of 'buyers beware' should be ringing in your head, but I would be right on the dot if I fathomed that you are ignoring them. Much like a rat trap, in that nanosecond, I have trapped you and put a price on each of your sappy heads. At the end of my discourse, I will have signed you up with a monetary advance and no guarantees from my end. Let me now put across to you some concrete examples based

on the adage of “the house always wins”.

For example, the obnoxious professional who feels she has hung the moon and wants the most perfect sap who is ready to say, ‘how high’ when she says ‘jump’! She is the easiest because all I must do is stoke her ego, set up some dates for her with equally obnoxious guys and charge her a fee per introduction. This cow can be milked for several years because she is in love with herself.

As for the toupeed individual, he wants some mid twenty-year-old college grad for a trophy wife. Well dummy you asked for it and I am going to supply you a bunch of gold-diggers. Your reality is that you have the money and it can buy anything and to prove you right, I will ensure that your dreams come true albeit at a price which will come in a tenfold. First you will pay my fee and then you will support your trophy wife’s lifestyle. She will then take you to the cleaners and you will start from Point A again. Such is the vicious circle of life. And as long as you persist with your narcissism, my coiffeurs will never deplete.

The widow is a bit of a challenge even to my conscience (which I am mostly deprived of). In her case, a victim of circumstances is still a brute for self-inflicted punishment. I ask myself why does she want to get remarried? She has the fat insurance policy her deceased husband left her and a newfound freedom. Well, I surmise that she was raised to be



*If you dream of a fairytale wedding, the matchmaker will probably be able to lull you into it*

subservient and it is the only identity she has. I will introduce her to a ‘foreigner’, by which I mean an actual *‘firangi’* who is mesmerised by the Eastern culture. She will cook and clean for him and he will forever thank his lucky stars because he does not have to work, nor satisfy his woman and will be allowed to continue his couch potato existence with lots of travel in his future. There, I have earned my angel wings and can proceed with my agenda.

### **Millennial mania**

The most fun I will have is with the bunch of millennials. You see they are clueless about what they want out of life. They are the entitled generation whose thinking was also done by their parents. Then these same parents let them loose upon the world with no life skills. You know who I am referring to? Those young ones that took your jobs at a company whose policy required that you train them to quote aptly as *‘aa bel, mujhe maar.’* On a side note – many a corporation whose stockholder portfolio looks red and will never go into the green graph because at their helm is this bunch, whose entire motive in life is to determine if Java Coffee is better than Starbucks. They will go to the ATM, withdraw from a joint account held with their parents and go on frenzied dates after they have paid my pittance - which depends on what car they are driving; Lexus means a Lakh, BMW (Bahut Maal Walla) will sign up an auto withdrawal to me for a year regardless of the match working or not; Tesla – ‘tees’ lakh to begin with! In his case, I will be flying him to all the destinations I wanted to go to ensuring he would meet some empty-headed blonde or brunette to discuss some pseudo intellectual topic of the day.

Many will come and many will go, some will question why they are still single and try to



*A typical example, the professional who has everything and also wants the perfect sap for a partner*

sue me, but I am a woman of purpose. I have a string of lawyers on a contingency basis, an iron-clad contract and a calm disposition. I have Plan B with pertinent responses to their lame questions. Let me reveal to you some of my trade secrets, which are answers developed for atypical situations; here goes:

Obnoxious Girl: Aunty, I have paid all your fees twice over and still do not have the perfect match.

Me: Beta, I think you need to see a life coach (of course for a fee of which I will make a 50% commission)

Toupeed Guy: *Behenji, woh ladki toh chhey mahiney mein, gadi aur cash leke bhaag gayee, sob, sob – kuch ki jiye*, please.

Me: *Bhaiya, rakhi ki saugandh*, please stop crying. I will introduce you to an astrologer (I will only make 20% with this introduction, but he will ensure that the poor sap comes back to me for more)

Widow: Thank you, *aashirwad di jiye aur yeh guru dakshina rakh li jiye*.

Me: Bless you my child (I am shameless, I accept the token gift and go on my way)

Millennial Lexus, BMW, TESLA, etc.: Whoa dude/*dadi*, nothing seems to be working. Look at us, we are still single!

Me: Ok, *chalo toh phir jannat jatey hain aur wahin koi mil jayega*

Millennial Lexus, BMW, TESLA, etc: What is this '*Janna'*

Me (My lifelong ambition to travel in space is about to be fulfilled): That is a place where only Elon Musk can send us. Many aliens with labs will scrutinise you and figure out what species you belong to, and hopefully we will find you a match.

### **Supply and demand**

Through this entire discourse, I may have sounded like a money-grabbing shrew with extraordinarily little empathy for fellow humans. Well, to each his own. Businesses are run on the economic principle of supply and demand. I provide a service and decide my fee. You dare to question my ethics? I think we live in a world devoid of any. You question me on moral grounds citing deceptive practices. Okay, let's parse the scenario where 75% of my clients are dysfunctional spoiled brats with their own agenda. They feel all they must do is give me some money and I will wave a magic wand and make all their dreams come true. We all know life does not work that way. However, for a few days I do brighten their lives with the hope of fulfilling their pie-in-the-sky existence.

Suffice it to say, it is the art of the con conning the con.



*Not a white horse but a silver BMW is what may bring the loaded suitor to the door*



# Me Iyer, You Iyengar

The face-off between the two South Indian Brahmin communities is quite loved and loved over decades, writes *Nagesh Alai*

The other day at dinner, an Iyengar friend of mine asked me if I have tasted the award winning German beer, Ayinger. I had not. So that was an opening for him to tell me condescendingly: “Listen, buddy, the Iyengar you drink, the Iyer you go”. I could not resist responding with the repartee, “Iyengar you are, but Iyer you need to grow”.

The Iyer v/s Iyengar (both South Indian Brahmin communities ) face-offs are quite loved and loved over decades. As I indite my thoughts today, on the 11th August, the auspicious day of Gokulashtami (called Janmashtami too) celebrated the world over by the Hindus, I cannot but help point out that the Iyengars will be celebrating it on 12th August. If you ask an Iyer why, she or he might dismissively say: “Oh, they have to be different’ or pejoratively say: “don’t you know, they are god’s gift to mankind”. Or a gossipy Iyer mami may add mirch to masala and say: “Attukkummattukumrendu kombu, Iyengarukkumoonu kombu.” To translate,

it means a goat and a cow have two horns, an Iyengar has three horns - to signify their ‘exalted’ state of perception.

## Shiva and Vishnu

For the non-cognoscenti, to fast forward the old genesis, Iyers are essentially Shaivites and follow Adi Shankaracharya (an 8th century legendary theologian and philosopher saint ) who revived the then-under-threat Hinduism by peregrinating across India and establishing the four mutts in the four zones besides founding the much respected Advaita philosophy (non-duality or unity of ‘Atman’ and ‘Brahman’). Iyengars are essentially Vaishnavites and follow Ramanujacharya (a 11th century and much revered theologian and philosopher saint) who established Vishishtadvaita philosophy (plurality and distinction between ‘Atman’ and ‘Brahman’ ). He disagreed with the non-dualistic Advaita philosophy and founded his own school of thought. He himself was

an ardent devotee of Vishnu and believed and propounded Maha Vishnu ( or Maha Perumal, as Iyengars would address ) as the Supreme reality.

In a related context, Iyers repose much faith in the 63 Nayanmargal or Nayanars (poet saints who lived between the 6th and the 8th century) who were followers of Shiva and had achieved moksha. Similarly, the Iyengars repose much faith in the 12 Azhvaars or Alvaars (poet saints of similar vintage) who were followers of Vishnu and had achieved moksha. Both Nayanmargal and Azhvaars were instrumental in the Bhakti movement and espoused complete devotion or bhakti as a road to realising the Self.

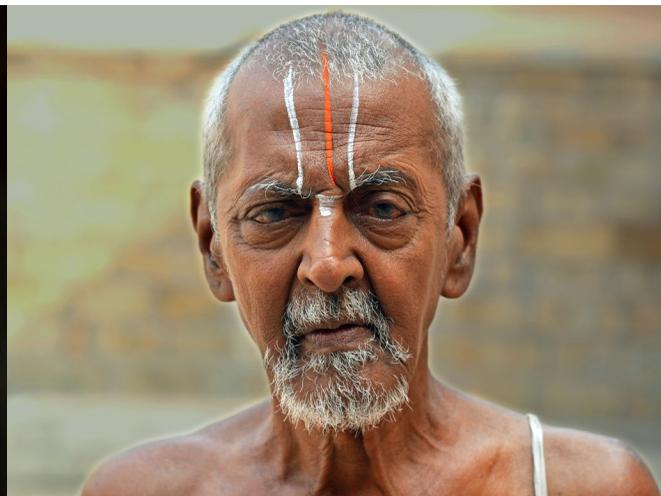
While both Iyers and Iyengars believe in 'kaashiyatrai' (pilgrimage to Kashi/ Varanasi), Iyers regard Rameshwaram (one of the 12 Jyotirlingams in India) and the famed Ramanathaswamy (Shiva) temple as a must-visit pilgrimage while Iyengars regard Srirangam and the famed Ranganathaswamy (Vishnu) temple as a must-do pilgrimage.

### **How you say?**

Etymologically, the term Iyer could have been derived from the work 'aiyaa', a

Tamizh word of respectability, amongst other meanings like elder brother, etc. It could have also had its source from the Sanskrit word 'arya' which means noble. The term Iyengar could have had its source, besides the above, also from the suffix of the word 'garu' (a Telugu word denoting respectability and elder. So, 'ayya-garu' could have over time got colloquialised as Iyengar.

Iyers have 'vadamas' to denote those from the north, while Iyengars have 'vadagalai' and 'thengalai' to denote those from north and south respectively. The difference is essentially the preference of the vadamas/ vadagalais (from the north) to Sanskrit and Vedas while the thengalais have primary allegiance to the local Tamizh language and the hymns of the nayanmargal/azhvaars. It is interesting to note here that between vadagalai and thengalai Iyengars also, there have been simmering differences over centuries like what should the shape of the namam (more of that later) - should it be U-shaped or V/Y-shaped - that is put on the ceremonial temple elephants. Suffice it to say, there have been court cases running into decades over this matter. Perhaps, the courts are also awaiting the divine oracle to settle this! Not surprisingly, in the past, alliances between vadagalais and thengalais were



*It's all on the forehead, when it comes to identity and identification*



*Rasam rice by any other name tastes just as fantastic*

taboo, and continue to be so to some extent even today.

Famous as India is for its myriad cultures, castes and communities and the inevitable concomitant jokes, both Iyers and Iyengars are quite often referred to as TamBrahms collectively by many across India and of course as 'illads' by our North Indian brethren. Trust the North Indians 'not' to do it. Everything goes. But, yes, it is universally accepted and evidenced that many, if not most, of the Iyers and Iyengars are highly qualified and very erudite, making a mark in their chosen fields, be it finance, law, economics, public policy, business, medicine, engineering or what have you. No Ivy league colleges overseas or the premier IIT/IIM institutions in India will have TamBrahms missing from their rosters - both men and women. If there is a flagbearer Iyer business group in Amalgamations Group, there is the reputed TVS Group in the Iyengar fold. If there is an Ariyakudi Iyengar, there is a Madurai Mani Iyer in Carnatic music. The music world is lorded over by the Iyers and Iyengars quite extensively. If Bollywood world has a Hema Malini and a Vyjayantimala as famed Iyengar actors, the

Kollywood world has a Kamal Haasan and a Madhavan as famed Iyer actors. At least they can sing and dance in unison, thanks to Lord Shiva and Maha Vishnu.

### **The stripes have it**

To reconnect with the lighter vein of this article, the Iyers and Iyengars are perhaps horizontally and vertically challenged respectively. An Iyer applies a 3-line vibhuti (ash or bhasma) across his forehead while an Iyengar dons a U- or Y/V-shaped namam (of sandalwood paste and crimson line) vertically on his forehead. If a vertical and a horizontal line intersect, it should be a plus or a multiple, but not in the case of an Iyer and Iyengar; they would rather be cross and unequal!

An Iyer lady would apply a round tikka (red and/or yellow dot) on her forehead while an Iyengar lady will have a blue vertical line (symbolising the blue colour of Vishnu/Krishna). If the Iyer lady is right, then the Iyengar lady has to be left. An Iyer lady will have her saree or the 9-yard 'madisar' pallu draped over her right shoulder whereas the Iyengar lady will have it draped over her left shoulder. After all, the right feels left is wrong and the left feels there is no right!

Lest I forget, Iyer women will have their kondai (hair curled into a ball) right at the



*Doesn't matter what you call it, pongal is still sweet*

centre of the back of the head, while an Iyengar will have 'the andalkondai' off centre to the right and slightly to the front. Mercifully, both Iyer and Iyengar men's traditional dress is veshti (white dhoti) and angavastram (white dupatta type cloth) draped round the neck/over the shoulders. While Iyers are ascetic and restrained generally (Shiva is ascetic with bear essentials), Iyengars are loud and colourful (Vishnu or Krishna are always depicted as well attired and bejewelled). Shiva is seen as 'abhishekapriya' while Vishnu is seen as 'alanganapriya'. That would explain why Shiva temples are shorn of adornments while in all Vaishnavite temples, Vishnu is draped with colourful clothes and jewels. Iyers are more seen as being receptive and inclusive of outsiders while Iyengars can be restrictive and reserved. Iyers believe in and pray to all gods including Vishnu and will visit all temples whereas Iyengars pray only to Perumal (Vishnu) and will not enter Shiva temples.

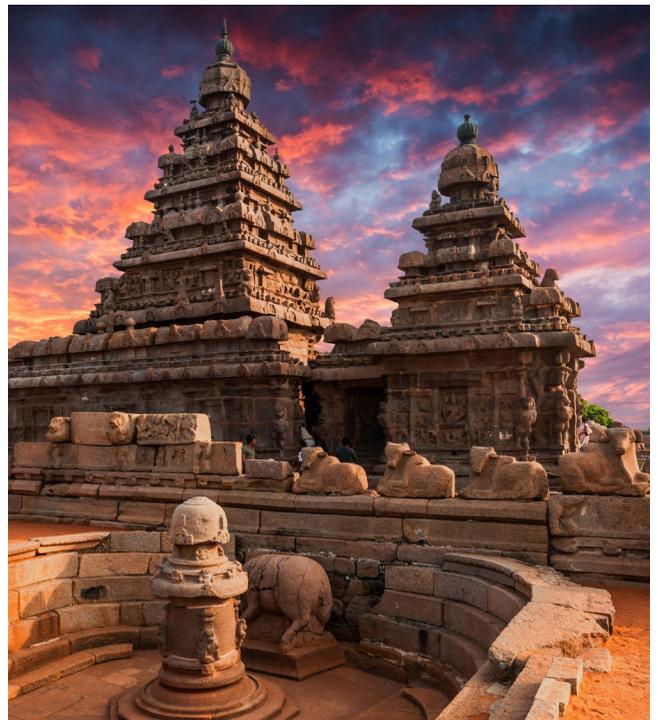
Iyers name their children after Vishnu as well, besides Shiva, while Iyengars will not name their children after Shiva. I recall an Iyer friend, who wanted to learn Carnatic music at Shanmukhananda Hall in Mumbai being asked by an Iyengar officebearer if he was an Iyengar - simply because my friend is named Srinivasan, his son Vijayaraghavan and his father Soundararajan; all Iyengar names. Not surprising that! Talking of faith, the writer is an Iyer, but his kuladeivatamis Lord Venkatachalapathy (Vishnu) residing in the well-known Taanthoni (swayambhu) Malai Temple in Karur. Catch an Iyengar having a Shiva temple as kuladeivatam!

In the past, a marriage proposal between an Iyer and Iyengar would be a no-no and scorned at, resulting in a mini family war. Fortunately, those feelings are by and large

not extant today, given the propensity of the younger generation to inter-caste and inter-faith marriages.

To end the article on a delectable note - an Iyer husband requested his Iyengar wife to organise for rasamsaadam, poriyal and thayirsaadam. She volunteered and happily served him saathumudhu, karimedhu and daddojanam. Confused? It turns out that the Iyer terminologies and their respective Iyengar terminologies for these food items mean exactly the same thing - rasam rice, curry and curd rice! The last I heard of the couple, they were busy confusing each other with their choice of cuisine words and trying to draw a line somewhere between samayal and thaligai (both meaning cooking/food) - vertical or horizontal. Shiva Shiva, Narayana, Narayana!

I am sure that before long, the I'err' and the I'anger' will fuse into calm and cool and there will be no 'You Iyer, Me Iyengar'. After all, Sakkarai pongal (a sweet delicacy) tastes as sweet when called Akkaravadisal.



*A Tamil Nadu landmark, the Shore Temple consists of two Shiva shrines sandwiching a Vishnu shrine*

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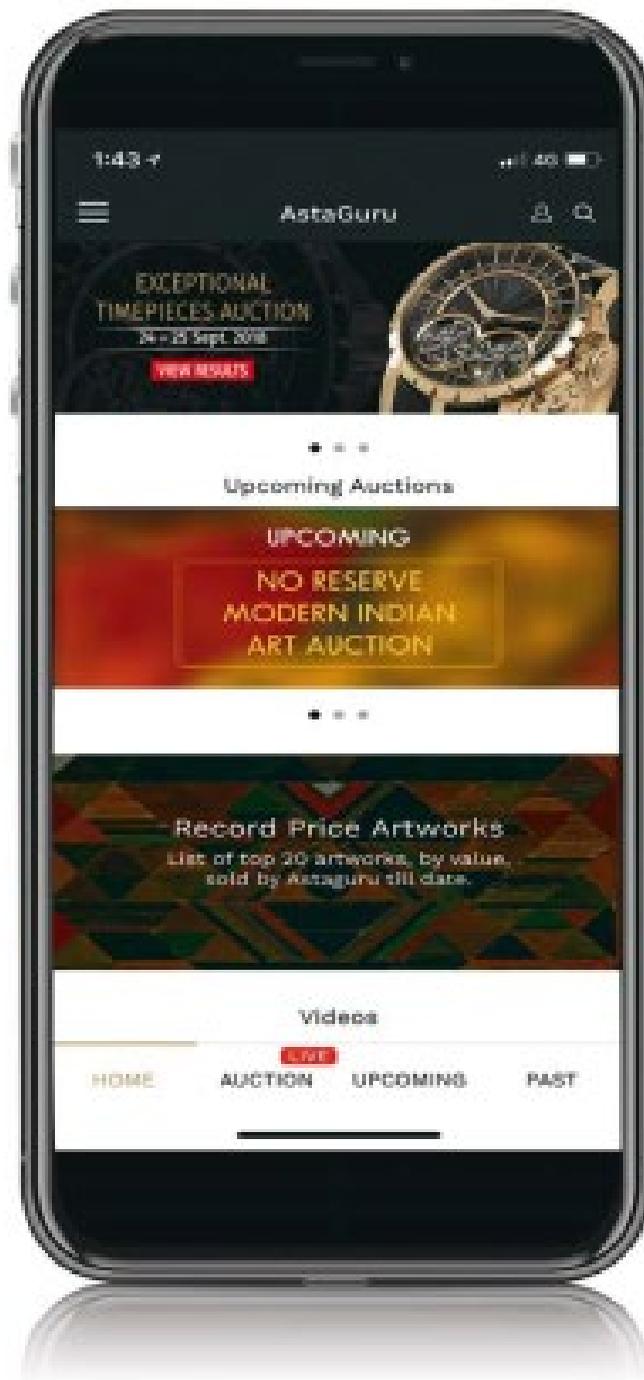
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