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विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

That man who lives completely free from desires,
without longing, devoid of the sense of “I” and
“mine,” attains peace.

”

~Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 2, Verse 71



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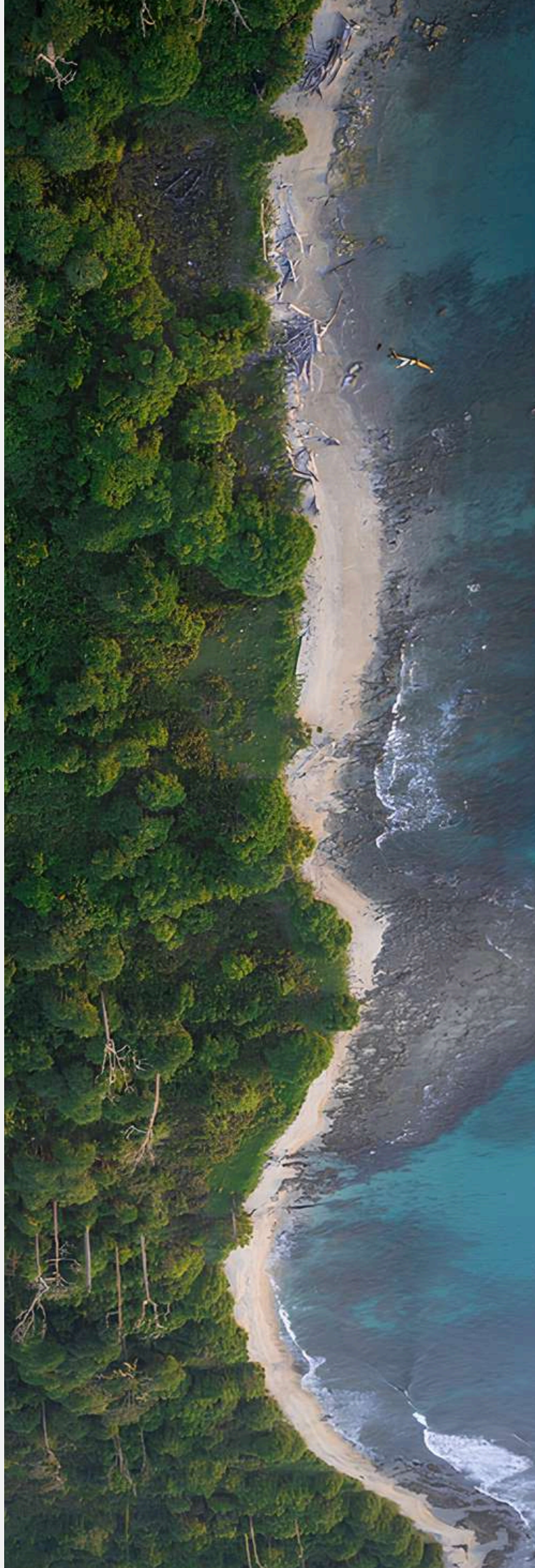
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GEOPOLITICS & CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

The Art Of Strategy Formation: Chanakya Neeti's Relevance In The Modern India

~Daksh Gupta

Kautilya, Vishnugupta, or Chanakya, no matter the name by which one knows him, any individual who is familiar with his contributions to the world cannot overlook him. Chanakya was a master of many domains and was one of the great politicians, economists, teachers, advisors, and philosophers. He is known to have assisted Chandragupta in ascending to power and becoming the first Mauryan emperor. Furthermore, he carried out his responsibilities as the chief advisor to the emperor and his successor. His works and ideas continue to maintain their relevance in the contemporary society. A myriad of his theories provides a direction for policymakers of a nation to act in.

Various economists around the globe have named the 21st century as India's century. In the post-pandemic period, India has been among the world's fastest-growing economies. It has occurred at a time when most global economies, including those of developed nations, have witnessed economic slowdown. This is merely a glimpse of India's extraordinary potential. The current momentum shows no signs of slowing down. The Indian government aims to develop the country in a way that places it uniquely ahead of the world. To bring about the actualisation of this aim, the government has set a target to place India



among the ranks of the developed nations of the world by 2047, which would also mark a hundred years since the country's independence. To achieve these targets, the country needs all-round development from all fronts.

It is remarkable that Chanakya's theories possess such profound relevance for a country like India. Integrating his strategic ideologies and theories with the current policy formulation can lay the groundwork for the developmental trajectory that India aims to achieve in the long run. In fact, some of his theories and ideas have already been adopted by India in the past.

At the time of independence, a major task in front of the Indian decision-makers was to find a way to integrate India and prevent the newly formed Pakistan from gaining control over key strategic locations across India. At that time, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played a pivotal role in ensuring that Pakistan's attempts to take over various areas in India remained unsuccessful. Using his intelligent foresight, he made use of the four upayas, or the ways to resolve a conflict, proposed by Chanakya to accomplish his mission.

The first one is Sama, conciliation. According to Chanakya, peaceful and friendly dialogue should be used as the first resort. Patel skilfully blended diplomacy with friendly dialogue and managed to convince the rulers of several princely states to join India. For example, by engaging in amicable conversations with the rulers of several princely states such as Travancore (present-day Kerala), he convinced them to join India.

The second way is Dana, or Dama, which means price, or paying the value. It means the use of gifts and other forms of compensation to lure the opposition into an agreement. A large number of princely states did not agree to join India after initial conversations. Therefore, in order to convince them, the Indian government offered them a fixed annual payment called 'Privy Purse'. It acted as a financial compensation for the rulers of these princely states in exchange for them relinquishing their ruling powers over their respective states. It played a crucial role in the integration of states like Bhopal and Baroda with India.



The next way to resolve a conflict is Bheda, the use of logic or trickery to get things done in one's desired manner. It involves the use of methods like persuasion, propaganda, and taking advantage of the rivalries existing between different subgroups in the same unit. The success of the previous methods resulted in over 550 princely states agreeing to join India. Therefore, the use of this method was rendered unnecessary.

According to Chanakya, if the first three methods fall short, the final course of action is Danda, the use of force, violence, and punishment to get things done. The first three methods had not worked with the Nawab of Junagadh and the Nizam of Hyderabad. Therefore, the Indian armed forces had to intervene militarily. Through a combination of economic pressure and military forces, these states were merged with India and the integration of India was completed.

Circling back to the present, Chanakya's views on governance, leadership, economic policies, national security, and foreign policies step into the spotlight. Chanakya laid great emphasis on the need of a powerful leader who follows an ethical route to bring about the development of his kingdom. A good leader should always focus on promoting welfare and set a good example for the masses. The current government headed by Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken several dynamic decisions such as demonetisation, implementation of GST, etc. which align well with Chanakya's policies. However, many argue that public opinion should be considered before going ahead with such steps.

Chanakya's Arthashastra explores his views on taxation, resource management, infrastructure development, investment, and international trade.



He believed in fair and equitable tax systems which do not prove to be an overburden on the taxpayers. In his words, taxes should be collected from individuals just like a bee collects nectar from a flower without causing any damage to it. India follows a progressive tax-paying structure, with higher rates of taxes being imposed on individuals with elevated incomes. Moreover, Goods and Service Tax (GST) was introduced to promote simplification of indirect tax structure. However, there is a need to address concerns like tax evasion and other inefficiencies to promote shared prosperity. Chanakya also emphasised the sustainable use of resources to prevent their overexploitation and promote their long-term benefits. Present-day global efforts to combat environmental degradation also focus on sustainability and long use of resources.

Although he is majorly lauded for his diplomacy, his understanding and views on trade were surprisingly impressive. He viewed trade and commerce as major players in promoting economic prosperity. He argued for a certain extent of state control over trade to ensure shared mutual benefits. After independence, the Indian government implemented several measures which were aimed at regulating the activities of domestic industries. Several industries were reserved exclusively for the state.

Moreover, a licensing system was set up, under which firms had to get permission from the government for setting up a new industry, expanding an existing one, or diversifying into a new range of offerings. However, these measures proved to be counterproductive and the economy ran into an economic crisis in the 1980s. Therefore, liberalisation and privatisation were implemented as parts of the New Economic Policy in 1991. They were aimed at reducing the excessive amount of state control over trade. In a favourable turn of events, the economy recovered from the crisis, with positive trends of growth in the real GDP. Therefore, some measures proposed by Chanakya may not be entirely suitable in contemporary society. There is a need to carefully evaluate them in the light of their current feasibility instead of demonstrating blind trust in them.

When it came to international trade, he prioritised national interest and mutual benefits. He felt that international trade can play an important role in promoting domestic business, attracting foreign investments and generating employment. Before 1990s, the Indian government discouraged international trade to protect the domestic industries from the well-established foreign industries. When India decided to implement globalisation, the Indian economy reaped the benefits of international trade, such as finding new markets for domestic produce and having better foreign relations. However, it is important to keep strategic considerations in mind. According to Chanakya, trade ties with potential enemies should be limited to a particular extent as they could strengthen their economies. Currently, India has kept limited trade ties with countries like Pakistan.

Chanakya was a staunch proponent of national security. His Saptanga theory is closely correlated to national defence.



Under this theory, he describes seven elements of a state that are instrumental in safeguarding it. According to him, diplomacy is essential to avoid unnecessary aggression and maintain peace. India has forged strong diplomatic ties with several countries across the world. Moreover, it has invested in the defence infrastructure by focusing on indigenous production of defence equipment. These moves have contributed to making India less dependent on Western nations and promoted self-reliance.

Chanakya's perspectives on foreign policy were strategic and aimed at developing the economy and maintaining stability in the state. He believed that collecting useful intelligence about neighbouring or enemy states was essential to identify their weaknesses and potential threats. The Rajamandal Theory and the Shadgunya Siddhant are two of his most prominent theories in foreign policy.

The Rajamandal Theory:

In his Rajamandal theory, he points out that it is possible to change one's friends, but it is impossible to change one's neighbours. This theory portrays a sequence of concentric circles which surround a central kingdom.

The centre of these circles is known as the vijigishu, the state with ambitions and desires, usually the one which is being referred to. In the present context, India

can be seen as a vijigishu, a country with goals, ambitions, and a vision. Chanakya states that geographically contiguous states are natural enemies, or ari. India has a long history of animosity against Pakistan. Several territorial disputes, cultural and regional differences, and other geopolitical issues have contributed to the widening gulf between the two nations. A mitra is a friendly state. Such states serve as reliable economic partners, strategic allies, and security partners. Lately, Bangladesh and Bhutan have been allies to India, and are, therefore, friendly states. An arimitra is an enemy's friend. Chanakya advises to remain cautious when it comes to dealing with such states, because an enemy's friend is also an enemy. China is one of Pakistan's greatest allies. India has already run into disputes on various fronts with the country. An ariari is an enemy's enemy. The vijigishu should try and befriend such states, because an enemy's enemy is a friend. India has befriended Japan, which is China's enemy. The two countries have worked together on infrastructure development. Moreover, both nations hold deep respect for each other's culture. A parshnigraha is an enemy in the rear. There are several nations which aim to improve their standing in the global arena and may prove to be potential threats for developing countries like India. An akranda is defined as a friend in

the rear or a friend which is needed as a backup. Israel, France, and Russia have openly shown support to India on various geopolitical issues. These countries have also been dependable trade partners. India has also developed friendly relations with USA, which is an enemy of China.

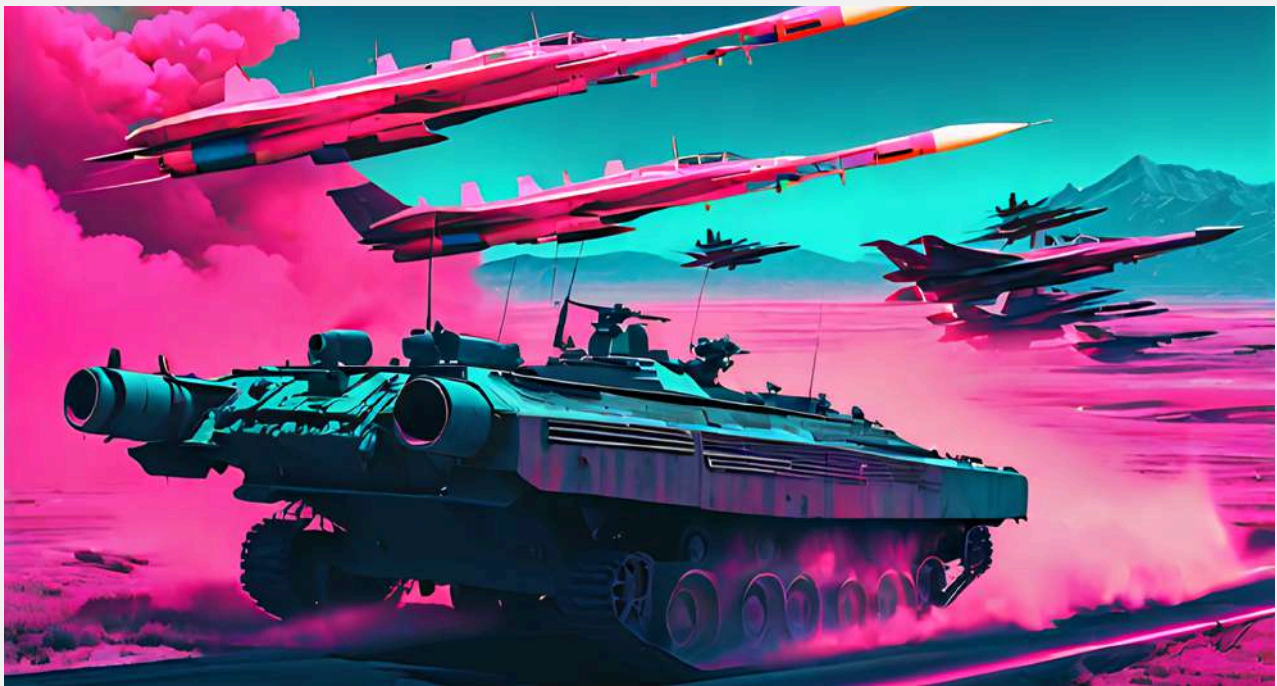
Shadgunya Siddhant:

Chanakya's Shadgunya Siddhant is a six-fold policy technique, which lays down six ways of dealing with internal and external dilemmas confronted by a state. The principle of sandhi, which means a treaty or an agreement to maintain harmony, involves the use of methods that promote peace. It involves developing diplomatic ties with foreign nations to foster mutual interests. India has actively been a part of various global groupings like BRICS, SAARC, etc. which aim to promote cooperation among group members. The principle of vigraha is the use of force by waging war to achieve a goal. For instance, in 1971, India intervened militarily to provide aid in Bangladesh's freedom struggle. Asana demonstrates the use of a neutral stance when dealing with certain complex situations. In the recent Russia-Ukraine war, India chose the path of neutrality and avoided taking any sides. Yaan involves the execution of several diplomatic operations to gain an advantage over foes. The instances of the surgical strike and the Balakot airstrike undertaken by the Indian armed forces against terror camps in Pakistan as a response to the increasing terrorist activities serve as examples of the principle. The principle of samashraya refers to finding shelter for the purpose of forming strategic alliances and dealing with common threats. India has formed strong relations with the USA and Japan to deal with the growing threat of China.

Lastly, the principle of dwaidbhava implies the use of a dual policy approach which includes methods like creating discord to achieve diplomatic goals.



India's foreign policy has been applauded across the globe. In recent times, India has managed to maintain friendly relations with Russia and the West, despite the growing strain in relations between the West and Russia. It is a testament to India's growing international reputation and standing. The increasing growth rate and infrastructural development provide a strong base for India to propel itself among the ranks of the developed nations in the future. Some of Chanakya's ideas are questioned by critics. However, it is important to keep in mind that these ideas came up in ancient times and are considered to be relevant in those times. These ideas need to be appropriately bent to suit the modern era. For India, it is essential not to lose focus. It is important to learn from the mistakes that other developed nations have committed, since there will never be enough time for India to commit those mistakes and then learn from them in the future. By embracing Chanakya's ideas and teachings without blindly trusting them and forming appropriate policies, India can map out a path to sustainable development in the long run and serve as a beacon for the world to emulate.



The Middle Eastern Muddle and its Ramifications on the Emerging World Order

~Anindya Chatterjee

When Francis Fukuyama proclaimed “The End of History” in his titular essay of 1989, ascribing the prophecy of an era of permanent peace to the ascendancy of Western liberal democracy; little did he know that his prediction would be falsified by over 20 times in the following three decades itself.

Though the paradigm of contextualizing the human history of warfare as a linear progression from one epochal event to another has been employed by prominent scholars such as Hegel and Marx, contemporary geopolitical events tell otherwise. With the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War, Israel-Palestine conflict and tensions between China-Taiwan threatening to escalate, any aspirations of world peace

have been effectively scuttled in at least the medium term.

The Israel-Palestine conflict has been at the forefront of geopolitical turbulence, especially in the West Asian region. The struggle emanates from a complex interaction of religion, invasions and colonialism amongst several factors. The article seeks to provide a historical narrative leading to the creation of the modern-day states of Israel and Palestine. Further, it provides a detailed exposition of the devastating October 7 terror attacks orchestrated on Israeli soil. Concludingly, an evaluation of the stances adopted by influential state actors such as the U.S., China and India has been undertaken to provide a holistic geopolitical analysis of the said issue.

Early History

The theological underpinnings of the religion of Judaism can be traced back to the reign of King Hezekiah, the ruler of Judah in the late 8th century BC [approximately 741 BCE]. At the time, the region was roughly contoured along the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern state of Judah. After witnessing the vanquishing of Israel by the rampant forces of the Assyrian Empire, Hezekiah promptly commenced to achieve political consolidation.

One of the mediums of the said unification was transitioning the till then pagan faith to a monotheistic religion contemporarily known as Judaism. The new theological framework mandated the sole worship of "Yahweh" [the proto-Israeli God]. Veneration of all other deities including Yahweh's wife was prohibited. This led to the crystallization of the Jewish faith as a monotheistic orthodoxy over the course of the next few centuries. However, the resistance offered by the kingdom of Judah was crushed by the Assyrian army despite the best efforts of the king and his loyal subjects.

Judah and Israel were subjected to multiple invasions in the next few centuries each modifying their culture and demography. However, it wasn't until the Roman Empire that a lasting contribution was made to the nomenclature of the region. The Romans were a unique tribe of proselytizing polytheists who forced the worship of multiple deities upon their subjects. This was fundamentally discordant with Jewish beliefs which had transitioned to being antagonistic towards idolatry and polytheism post the Hezekiahn religious reforms. The social strife was further exacerbated through the tyrannical rule of Nero leading to widespread economic disparities.

The worsening situation gave away to Jewish Roman wars and valiant Bar Kokhba



rebellion, both of which were brutally crushed by the Roman empire.

To add insult to injury, the 'First Temple', one of the holiest shrines in Jewish faith, was plundered and a pagan construction was installed at its very place. Further, the region was renamed Palestine from the word "peleshet" translating to enemy in Hebrew. Thus, it was psychological warfare to conquer over the vanquished subjects on the part of the Roman Empire, which unintentionally gave birth to the Palestinian identity; to be re-invigorated some twenty centuries later.

The San Rimo Conference

Multiple invasions in the region forced the Jewish population to migrate to Europe and parts of Arabia over multiple centuries. The traditional hostility towards the religion and the hatred towards Jews for being "blood-liable" for the crucifixion of Jesus, compounded the ensuing tale of misery, delinquency and ghettoization. However, with the darkening dogma of religion came the light of emancipation and economic opportunity.

Money lending, accruing interest, or any establishment of financial institutions is traditionally prohibited in Christianity and Islam. This led to Jews employing themselves in such activities, accumulating wealth and social

prosperity in the process. They were in fact, the primary financiers of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain and the subsequent Anglo-Boer wars in the late 19th century.

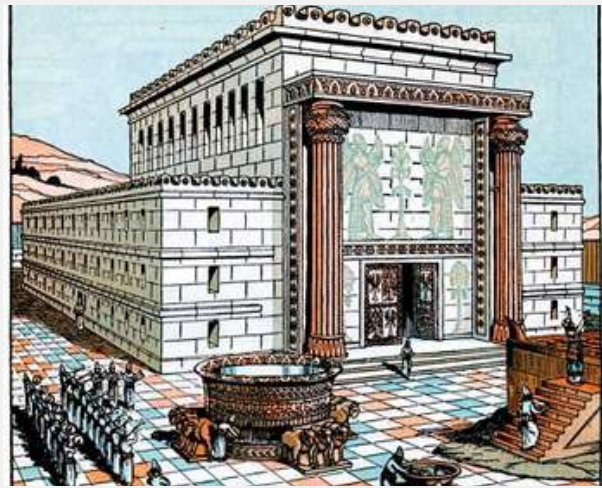
The enhanced social capital led to activists like Theodore Herzl advocating for the creation of a Jewish State along the historical kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The movement coincided with the fall and subsequent division of the Ottoman Empire following its defeat in World War I.

It is interesting to note that the currently contentious and vibrant Palestinian identity was virtually non-existent throughout Islamic history. It was birthed as a part of the San Rimo conference which litigated the creation of the four mandates of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. The area was renamed Palestine after 2000 years due to the Christian fixation with the Latin origins and adopted the nomenclature of the Roman Empire. Incidentally, the same San Rimo conference gave rise to the Balfour Declaration acceding to the creation of a modern Jewish State. Therefore, colonial endeavours inextricably tied the fortunes of two soon-to-be warring nations, birthed as a consequence of geopolitical and geographical ignorance.

World War 2 and the Arab Israeli Wars

Waves after waves of decolonisation followed suit after the conclusion of WW2. The contentious region bore a similar fate of a three-way partition. The area was divided into Israel, Palestine and the international mandate of Jerusalem. However, the geographical contours were far from being crystallized.

Jewish migration to Israel had commenced post the Balfour declaration itself. The community brought with them economic prosperity and technological advancement "turning the desert green" within two decades. Increased employment, though, led to a collapse of eminent feudal structures thereby weakening the command of Muslim overlords in the Palestinian and Jordanian region.



These developments as noted by the Peel Commission Report, antagonised the neighbouring Islamic mandates towards Israel thereby re-inforcing the traditional Palestinian hostility.

The geopolitical fissures gave way to three Arab-Israeli wars, each consolidating the territorial hold of Israel in the region. The country reached its zenith post the Six Day War in 1967 which led to its administrative hold over the Jordanian West Bank, Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula. The new 'country' was over 3 times Israel's current territory. However, these annexations were later ceased in subsequent peace deals with the three nations.

Modern Era

The Palestinian cause has been sought to be legitimised and represented by chiefly two organisations, namely the Palestinian Liberalisation Organisation (PLO) and a terrorist outfit Hamas. PLO rose to popular support after the defeat of the anti-Israeli forces in the 1967 war. Under the famed leadership of Yasser Arafat, it gradually transitioned itself from advocating the extermination of Israel as a nation to espousing an amicable two-state solution. However, the process of peace being excruciatingly slow and steadfast increments in Israeli settlements in West Bank and Gaza every time it emerged victorious, drew the organisation considerable flak.



Subsequent radicalisation of the local population shored up support for hardline outfits such as Hamas. The terrorist organisation was established in conjunction with the infamous Muslim Brotherhood with the sole objective of usurping the Israeli state. It believes in waging a holy war (Jihad) against the Jewish Israeli State as a religious duty of Palestinian Muslims. It was Hamas which masterminded one of the worst-ever terror attacks on Israeli soil on October 7, 2023.

What Happened on 7th October?

The October 7 invasion is the 3rd deadliest terror attack since the 1970s and has the highest amount ratio of per capita casualties in modern history. Around 1200 Israeli nationals have been reported dead with several more kidnapped, raped and tortured. For context, the figures roughly translate to 2 lakh Indian victims when comparing the magnitude of the population. This instance of terror has been attributed to a multitude of causal factors. Israeli intelligence suffered a rare operational failure due to the possible absence of large-scale sub-conventional conflict for quite a few years.

They had failed to detect military consolidation by Hamas near the southern border with stocks of ammunition buried under schools, hospitals and residential areas. To make matters worse, Palestinians employed by Israeli firms and homes for domestic aid or blue-collar jobs were



notorious for relaying information regarding the precise location of Israeli settlements along the southern border. This resulted in restricted alternatives for evacuation, thereby causing heavy civilian casualties.

Unfortunately, Palestinian casualties as a consequence of Israel counter strikes have been disproportionate in comparison. The Health Ministry of Gaza which has maintained a database of mortalities since the incident has recorded over 30,000 deaths.

Though credible allegations of over reporting have been levelled by international agencies, this is still a considerable number. Though questions regarding the disproportionate impact of military counter-offensives must be asked of Israel, the answers are not straightforward. Gaza has one of the highest fertility rates (3.38) across the world with children making up nearly half of the population. This has established a correlation with Hamas using women and children as hostage shields in sensitive areas, so as to mitigate Israeli military presence in the region. Additionally, ammunition yards are often developed beneath schools, hospitals and residential areas. Although Israel gives a 'tap' warning before bombing any such contentious region, incomplete evacuation and the ricocheted blasts as a



result of the blowing up of IEDs and other explosive material disproportionately impact civilian mortality.

Geopolitical Stakeholders and Their Vested Interests

Israel has consistently drawn support from Western democracies such as the U.S.A., U.K. and France. It has also contributed militarily to the tripartite aggression against Egypt in the second Arab-Israeli war in conjunction with Britain and France. Palestine, on the other hand, has found steadfast support in the Arab world and Turkey.

These alliances, however, are not entirely based on ideological commitment and goodwill. As with all things geopolitical, they incorporate the transferable exchange of tangible benefits. The famed Jewish lobby is active and influential in Western countries, with them being a considerable vote bank and possessing the wherewithal to fund election campaigns. Israel also has a well-entrenched intelligence network, which is instrumental in American operations in West Asia and Afghanistan.

For Muslim countries bordering the contentious region such as Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon; a weak and battered Palestine corresponds to a burgeoning refugee crisis with significant demographic and economic consequences. Additionally, the Arab world is characterised by considerable dependency on the Ulema who play an important role in mobilising subjects despite discontentment with the royal regimes.

Abandoning the Palestinian cause would risk antagonising these clerics whose support is crucial in resisting democratic aspirations.

Middle and regional powers such as Russia, China and India have a relatively nuanced take on the conflict. They espouse consistent advocacy towards a two-state solution coupled with the expression of concern regarding human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank. However, there is discordance pertaining to the recognition of Hamas as a legitimate expression of Palestinian aspirations. Russia has for long engaged with Hamas and while it has not labelled it as a terrorist organisation, Moscow has condemned individual instances of terror perpetrated by the outfit. India, on the other hand, recognised Hamas for the first time as an active participant in the conflict with Israel through its official statement regarding the October 7 terror attack.

The Israel Palestine conflict is a unique and complex admixture of theology, imperialism and geopolitics. The Jews have had a historical recollection of the region as their original homeland, despite waves after waves of migration arising due to devastating invasions. The Palestinian identity, through a consequence of Roman and Anglophile nomenclature also commands a theological relationship with Jerusalem, it being the place from which the Prophet is set have alighted for heavenly abode. The ensuing conflict has claimed several innocent lives thus far, often polarising countries and international alliances. The world should collectively strive for an amicable two-state solution in the region, with special emphasis on curbing human right violations.

Sunrise of Cooperation: Crafting a Global Energy Cooperation through Cross-Border Electricity Trade

~ Tulsi Mahanto

Introduction

We are like tenant farmers chopping down the fence around our house for fuel when we should be using Nature's inexhaustible source of energy – Sun, wind and tide... I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that ~ Thomas Edison

The world is currently in a critical moment; on the one hand, we face diminishing fossil fuel resources and, on the other hand, a pressing necessity for a shift towards sustainable energy. In 2020, fossil fuels, renewable energy (mostly hydro, wind, and solar), and nuclear energy comprised 83%, 12.6%, and 6.3% of the world's total energy consumption (Holechek et al., 2022). To meet increased energy consumption by 50%, renewable sources, particularly solar energy, could be the most promising. Nevertheless, solar adoption poses three significant challenges: security, sustainability, and sovereignty. This paper focuses globally on the scarcity of solar energy adoption due to intermittency and reliability issues (Md, 2023).

In light of these challenges, this paper proposes the formation of – Global Energy Cooperation, an umbrella organization between countries to unite to harness solar energy collectively, transcending geographical constraints.

This article proposes two proposals:

- (i) Implementation of CBET: Cross-border electricity trade and
- (ii) Attain a global Interconnected electricity grid in line with One Sun, One World to achieve a sustainable and interconnected global energy future.

Current Challenges

Solar energy is the most abundant energy resource on earth --173,000 terawatts of solar energy strikes the Earth continuously. That is more than 10,000 times the world's total energy use. (Chandler, 2011). However, technological, financial, and political viability has hindered large-scale adoption.

1. Variability: Geographical Disparities in Solar Irradiance

Solar energy utilization has a notable obstacle arising from the unequal dispersion of sunshine worldwide. Regions' proximity to the equator sees a greater intensity of sunlight, rendering them optimal for solar power generation. In contrast, areas at higher latitudes experience reduced solar irradiance, limiting the efficiency of solar panels. According to a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), this geographical variability poses a substantial hurdle to the widespread adoption of solar energy (The Verge). In total, 93% of the global population lives in

countries where the average daily photovoltaic(P.V.) potential ranges between 3 and 5 kWh/kWp. Around 20% of the global population in 70 countries have excellent conditions for P.V., where the long-term P.V. Output average exceeds 4.5 kWh/kWp per day. (Suri et al., 2020)

2. Intermittency and Nighttime Energy Needs:

The inherent intermittency of solar power generation further compounds the challenges. Solar panels produce electricity during the daytime, making nighttime a period of diminished energy production when energy needs are at peak. For example, Electricity consumption typically cycles each day, with the lowest demand occurring around 5:00 a.m. and the highest demand occurring at some point during the day (depending on the season). Electricity consumption in the summer increases rapidly through the day along with temperature, reaching its maximum around 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. Average U.S. hourly electricity load peaks during the summer (Hodge, 2020). This presents a critical obstacle to ensuring round-the-clock electricity. (Mahajan et al., 2023)

3. Technological and Infrastructural Barriers:

The Technological and infrastructural limitations are the reason for the slow adoption of solar energy. The development and adoption of solar technologies require huge investments. In 2022, \$2.8 trillion has been invested in energy, out of which \$1.7 trillion has been invested in clean energy. In 2022, for every dollar spent on fossil fuels, \$1.70 went to clean energy. However, by 2030, we need \$3.4 trillion for clean electrification (Crownhart, 2023). The existing power grids are inadequate to handle the integration of large-scale solar energy, and significant infrastructure upgrades to facilitate the seamless integration of solar energy into the existing grid system are needed (Dvorak, 2022).



4. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:

The complex landscape of policies and regulations further hinders the rapid expansion of solar energy. Divergent policies across nations create uncertainties for investors and developers. To overcome these challenges, a comprehensive global approach is essential. The UK-India Green Grids Initiative, as reported by the U.K. government, signifies a step towards international collaboration in overcoming regulatory challenges (U.K. Government, 2021).

5. Economic Viability and Affordability:

While solar energy has the potential to fulfil all our energy needs, the initial costs of \$3-4 trillion till 2050 are associated with solar installations, which makes the adoption difficult. Particularly for developing nations, Economic viability and affordability remain key challenges; bridging this gap requires innovative solutions and global cooperation. Globally, forecasts suggest that investment in grids will need to double to meet net-zero CO2 emissions by 2050. This equates to at least \$21.4 trillion worth of investment, with \$4.1 trillion required to sustain existing grid infrastructure and the remaining \$17.3 trillion to expand the Grid to accommodate new electricity generation and consumption(Owusu,2023).

Proposed Solution

1. Cross-Border Electricity Trade

The vision of Global Energy Cooperation materializes in the form of Cross-Border Electricity Trade (CBET), a cooperative approach to international energy sharing. To solve geographical disparities in solar irradiance, variability and intermittency, CBET aims to create an interconnected cross-border global electricity grid, facilitating the seamless trade/exchange of solar energy across nations, ushering globalization of electricity.

Integration of Global Electricity Grid:

The implementation of CBET requires the integration of a global electricity grid. By connecting disparate national grids into a unified system, nations can efficiently share surplus solar energy with those experiencing lower solar exposure. Further, it also solves the problems of intermittency as it offers an opportunity to use solar energy 24 hours a day even when the sun is not shining over us because it is shining somewhere else on the globe. This integration demands substantial infrastructural investments of \$1 trillion in solar investment by 2030 and international collaboration from governments and multilateral institutions, but promises to address the geographical limitations of solar power generation (Bhaskar, 2021).

Inter Sea Grid: The Role of Submarine Power Cable

To further enhance the efficacy of CBET, an Inter Sea Grid is proposed. Various countries have invested substantially in the research and development of submarine power cable networks to transport renewable energy. The U.K. recently approved a power grid project worth over \$2.27 billion to install a 190km subsea electricity superhighway for transporting power from Scotland to England. Denmark is launching its Viking Link submarine cable (1400 MW) to export clean wind energy from Denmark to the U.K. The demerit is, however the cost, as, the cost of

submarine cables vary quite a bit, with communication submarine cables typically costing between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per km and submarine power cables costing over \$2.5 million a km (Bradstock & Taleb, 2023)

2. One Sun, One World, One Grid: A Step Toward Cross Border Electricity Trade

The International Solar Alliance was conceived as a joint effort by India and France to mobilize efforts against climate change by deploying solar energy solutions. At present, 116 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement.

Complementing the CBET initiative is ISA's ambitious concept of One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG). This is the first tangible initiative which envisions a unified global power grid powered by solar energy, transcending national borders and leveraging the collective potential of sunlight-rich regions.

Global Implementation of OSOWOG:

The vision behind the OSOWOG initiative is the mantra that "the sun never sets". OSOWOG has gained momentum globally with initiatives such as the Green Grids Initiative. In 2021, the GGI was launched in partnership with One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) during the COP26 World Leaders' Summit.



Prime Ministers of the U.K. and India jointly adopted the One Sun Declaration, endorsed by 92 countries. This declaration established the partnership between the two initiatives to tackle the global challenge of a powered future: how to build and operate electricity grids capable of absorbing and transmitting variable renewable while meeting growing power demands sustainably, securely, reliably, and affordably (Green Grids Initiative, n.d.)

Small Steps towards CBET

Several nations have already embarked on smaller-scale versions of cross-border electricity trade showcasing the feasibility of OSOWOG.

- **USA-CANADA:** The U.S. and Canadian electric power grids are connected by 35 transmission lines from New England to the Pacific Northwest. In 2020, 26 states imported electricity from Canadian provinces, with more than 1 million MWh of electricity being transmitted to eight states in the USA. Further, Several new cross-border transmission lines have been proposed. For example, the Champlain Hudson Power Express is a 1,000 – 1,250 MW high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line from the Canadian border to New York City, expected to go into service in 2025 (Vine, 2021)



A study from MIT demonstrates the favourable cost implications of implementing this type of trading relationship. 4 G.W. of new transmission capacity from Quebec to New England and New York could save \$2.4 and \$3 billion a year, respectively. (Vine, 2021)

- **Indian Subcontinent:** India, Nepal, and Bangladesh are working on a trilateral power trade deal where Nepal will supply up to 500 MW of hydropower to Bangladesh using India's transmission line. Further, Nepal and India have agreed to set the target to reach 10,000 MW of electricity export to India in the coming decade. However, the energy source is hydropower, not solar (CHAUDHURY, 2024).

3. Overcoming Technological and Regulatory Barriers

The successful implementation of CBET and OSOWOG hinges on addressing technological and regulatory challenges. Initiatives such as the Green Grids Initiative and the commitment made at COP26 emphasize overcoming these barriers to facilitate the global transition to solar energy. While there is a need for global regulations, few regional-level policies are being formulated; while only partially focused on solar, they could become a guiding principle to achieve CBET.

EU Taxonomy:

The E.U. Taxonomy is a framework developed to help project developers and investors navigate the transition to a low-carbon, resilient, resource-efficient economy. It sets technical screening criteria that guide what investments constitute green finance. The principles for the technical screening criteria for electricity transmission and distribution include to

- Support the integration of renewable energy into the power grid.

- Support the transition from carbon-intensive energy supply via electrification and the parallel development of low carbon power generation capacity.
- Support grid management technology used for integrating low carbon emission generation and demand-side energy savings

CBET can be achieved in 3 ways. Each way does have regulatory issues and involves different levels of cross-border coordination. CBET types include:

- **Tenant generation:** Here, a generator exports power to another country over a dedicated cross-border transmission line with little or no connection to the host country's system.
- **A bilateral contract:** Here, power moves through both national networks and across transmission interfaces linking the two grids.
- **An integrated market:** Here, cross-border trades and all other power flows are optimized simultaneously over multiple networks. (Schroeder, 2019)

Research and Development

Investing in research and development is paramount for overcoming technological barriers. In 2021, the solar energy value chain has attracted investments of USD ~220 billion. United States of America, China, Vietnam, Japan, Spain, South Korea, Australia, Italy, Germany, and India; these economies together accounted for 79% of total solar investments (International Solar Alliance, n.d.). The corporate funding in the global solar sector rose 55% to 28.9 billion during January-September 2023, mainly due to the push to meet energy transition objectives, said Mercom Capital (Economics Times, 2023).

Conclusion

In forging a common future powered by the sun, this is just the beginning. The challenges of depleting fossil fuel and the

scarcity of solar energy adoption demands not just tweaking changes but an unwavering commitment to change.

Global Energy Cooperation, encapsulated in Cross-Border Electricity Trade (CBET) and the concept of the One Sun, One World, One Grid initiative, stores the potential to unlock a new era of a Globalized electrified world. The successes witnessed in small-scale ventures illuminate the possibilities of a solar-powered future. The possibilities are limitless, and the goal of One Sun, One World, One Grid with CBET will pave not just the course of future energy but the trajectory of global unity.

In conclusion, the essay is a call to action for nations to join hands, transcend obstacles, and collectively script a solar-powered future of a united world.

A person with long hair tied back, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and pants, is sitting in a meditative lotus position on a sandy surface. They are facing away from the camera, looking up at a vast, starry night sky. The sky is filled with numerous bright stars and a prominent, glowing band of light, possibly the Milky Way, stretching across the upper half of the frame. The overall atmosphere is serene and contemplative.

THOUGHTS & SPIRITUALITY

प्रेम- परिभाषा से पार

~Shivam 'ShabdarthSidh'

आज कुछ अलग विषय पर चर्चा करेंगे - कुछ ऐसा जो हमारे सभी के जीवन में बहुत ही आसानी से समाया हुआ है, लेकिन क्या सिर्फ समाया होना काफी है या हमारी उसके प्रति कुछ जिम्मेदारियां भी है ?

बात करेंगे प्रेम की | क्या है प्रेम? क्या सिर्फ उसे एक परिभाषा में बंद कर रखा जा सकता है? या फिर यह भी अनंत ,अनादि और हम सबका अपना स्वरूप है ?

चलिए मैं आपसे एक पल के लिए ठहरने का अनुरोध करूंगा। जरा आप सोचिए की प्रेम क्या है ? थोड़ा रुके होंगे न, थोड़ा झिझके होंगे ना। झिझक स्वाभाविक है। हमारे जीवन के कई ऐसे पहलू हैं, जिन्हें हम सोचते तक नहीं, लेकिन वह हमारे जीवन के एक अभिन्न अंग है। अब आप अपने दूरभाष यंत्र में उपयोग होने वाले यूपीआई को ही ले लीजिए। 2016 में सब ने कभी नहीं सोचा होगा कि एक आम सब्जी वाला , एक दिहाड़ी मजदूर या एक बस कंडक्टर , यह सभी अपने फोन से राशि का लेनदेन कर रहे होंगे। यहां तक भी ठीक है। लेकिन, सिर्फ यहीं तक इसका जादू सीमित नहीं है। नवंबर 2023 के आंकड़ों के अनुसार ,भारत के कुछ 30 करोड़ नागरिक और 5 करोड़ विक्रेता यूपीआई का उपयोग कर रहे हैं। यह संख्या यूपीआई उपयोगकर्ताओं का अपना एक अलग देश बना सकती है और यह देश पृथ्वी का चौथा सबसे अधिक जनसंख्या वाला देश होगा। इन 30 करोड़ और बढ़ती जनसंख्या का एक-एक रुपया कीमती है और हमारे देश के महान वैज्ञानिकों , नीति निर्माता और इंजीनियरों ने इसे इतना सरल, किंतु अतिशय सुरक्षित बनाया है। और तो और भारत पहला ऐसा देश है जो इतनी बड़ी जनसंख्या को यह उपयोग करने का मौका देता है। आप विदेश में जाइए , वहां लोग अभी भी नोटों की गड्डी लिए घूम रहे हैं।

खैर यह तो सिर्फ एक उदाहरण था, आपको जागरूक करने के लिए। जागरूकता इस बात की सोचिए क्या हो रहा है आसपास और क्यों हो रहा है ? कैसे हो रहा है ?

हां , तो हम कहाँ थे? परिभाषा - प्रेम क्या है? मैं आपको एक सटीक उत्तर नहीं दे पाऊंगा, परंतु आपको सोचने पर मजबूर करूंगा कि आपके जीवन में कौन सा प्रेम सही बैठता है?



प्रेम तो मनुष्य को अपने अर्थ /धन से भी होता है। वह उसे सहेज कर रखना चाहता है। क्या यह प्रेम अलग है उन चीजों के प्रेम से जो आपके बचपन की साथी थी और आप भले ही उनके दर्शन साल में एक बार करें पर करें , पर जब कबाड़ वाले को दी जाती है , तब जरूर आपको चोट पहुंची है ? क्या आप इसे प्रेम नहीं कहेंगे ? चलिए मैं आपके सामने कुछ और उदाहरण देता हूं।

क्या हम उसे प्रेम कह सकते हैं जो एक पुत्र को अचानक एक दिन कच्ची उम्र पार करके किसी गहरी सोच के दौरान समझ आता है कि वह अपने पिता या माता की एक छवि है? आप सोचिए कि वह पुत्र अपने पिता की कोई आदत से कभी-कभी परेशान सा रहता है। मान लीजिए कि वह कार चला रहा है और उसके पिता उसे बार-बार कार चलने पर टोकते जरूर हैं। भले ही उसे कार चलते हुए 5 या 10 साल ही हो चुके हो। एक दिन अकेले जब उसके पिता उसके बाजू में कार में नहीं बैठे हैं। वह यूं ही कार चला रहा होता है और सोचता है कि यह भी तो एक तरीके से उसी समान है जैसा कि वह अपने काम के दौरान करता है। उसे अपना काम किसी और को देना पसंद नहीं आता और वह खुद उसे चीज को करना चाहता है। वैसे ही उसके पिता जो शायद 20 या 30 साल से गाड़ी चला रहे हैं, वह हो सकता है कि यह



सोचते हो कि उनके जैसी निपुणता अभी उनके पुत्र में नहीं आई है। जो स्वाभाविक है। तो शायद यह एक सोचने के लिए उसे पहलू देता है और मैं इसे भी प्रेम कहना चाहूंगा। कि अपने पिता के प्रति सम्मान और उनके कार्यों, उनकी बातों के बीच या पीछे कोई ना कोई कारण होगा, यह समझ लेना ही प्रेम है।

पंडित ओम व्यास ओम की रचना - माता और पिता, कहती है:

**"पिता जीवन है, संबल है, शक्ति है
पिता सृष्टि के निर्माण की अभिव्यक्ति है**

**पिता उंगली पकड़े बच्चे का सहारा है
पिता कभी कुछ खट्टा, कभी खारा है"**

माता का अपनी संतान के प्रति भी प्रेम अलग ही है। जो उसके दूर होने पर, जो उसके मना करने पर भी अपनी ज़िद मनवा लेने में है। अपने नाम से कुछ चीज लेना और फिर अपने बच्चों को दे देना भी इसी प्रेम में आता है।

ओम व्यास जी की ही कविता याद आती है -

**"माँ संवेदना है, भावना है, अहसास है माँ
माँ जीवन के फूलों में खुशबू का वास है माँ**

**माँ रोते हुए बच्चे का खुशनुमा पलना है माँ
माँ मरुथल में नदी या मीठा सा झरना है माँ"**

प्रेम अपने मित्र से भी होता है। अलग प्रकार का प्रेम। जो उसके साथ मुश्किल घड़ियों में भी हसी के फुव्वारे छुड़वा सकता है। यह प्रेम ही है जो मित्रता को एक सर्वश्रेष्ठ गुण बनाता है। आप ही सोचिए, हमारे ग्रंथों में कई बार यह भाव आए हैं जब परिवार आपके साथ नहीं खड़ा था लेकिन आपका मित्र आपके साथ ज़रूर था।

जब अर्जुन अपने ही भाइयों के विरुद्ध धर्म युद्ध करने की विडंबना में थे तब श्री कृष्ण ने ही अर्जुन को पार्थ कहकर वो संबोधन किया जिसका विश्व आज गुणगान करता है। इसी के साथ ही जब कर्ण को उसकी मां ने त्याग दिया था तब दुर्योधन ने उसे भाई से भी ऊपर स्थान दिया था। यही कारण रहा की वे धर्म के विरुद्ध भी जाने को तैयार थे, जब उन्हें अपने मित्र का साथ देना था। यह प्रेम नहीं है तो क्या है आप ही बताइए।

एक प्रेम हमें अपने जीवन संगी या प्रेमी/ प्रेमिका से भी होता है। यह भी मित्रता की तरह ज़रूरी नहीं है की एक ही बार हो। माना की इतिहास की कई गाथाएं इन्हीं पर आधारित हैं की सच्चा प्रेम एक बार ही होता है, लेकिन क्या आपने सोचा भी की क्या वह प्रेम अधूरा नहीं रह गया?

यूँ तो इश्क के सात मुकाम होते हैं -

1. दिलकशी (चाहत)
2. उंस (स्पंदन)
3. मोहब्बत (अनुराज)
4. अदीकत (श्रद्धा)
5. इबादत (उपासना)
6. जुनून (पागलपन)
7. और फिर मौत

लेकिन आप खुद सोचिए, चाहे राम-सिया हो या राधे कृष्ण, उनका प्रेम अधूरा ही रह गया। बाकी प्रेम कहानी जैसे रोमियो जूलियट या लैला मजनू ने तो उनको ज़िंदगी पूरी जीने से पहले ही सातवें मुकाम पर पहुंचा दिया। शायद इसलिए मैं तो कहूंगा की हमारे हिंदी के अध्यापक सही ही कहते थे, "प्यार नहीं है खेल बच्चों का, उसमे निकल जाता है तेल अच्छे अच्छों का"।

खैर हिंदी की बात हो ही रही है तो उसमे आपके एक और प्रेम को जोड़ लेते हैं। यह प्रेम है "हिंदी" शब्द को कैसे लिखते हैं उससे। यह पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी चला आ रहा है की हम "हिन्दी" लिखते हैं न की "हिंदी"। आप अगर बचपन से अभी तक अपनी जो भी हिंदी की किताब उठा कर देखेंगे तो पायेंगे की आपकी वर्तनी गलत थी शायद। भले ही वह मान्य जरूर हो, लेकिन यह आपका अपनी सीखी हुई चीज़ से प्रेम ही तो था जो आपको 12 साल तक (कम से कम) उस गलती को नज़र अंदाज़ करने पर मजबूर किया।

यह छोड़िए, हम प्रेमी/साथी से प्रेम की बात कर रहे थे। यह भी तो प्रेम ही हैं जो आपको नापसंद होने के बावजूद भी आप अपने साथी के लिए उन चीज़ों को करना चाहते हैं। या यूँ कहूँ की करते हैं। आप अपनी बेइज्जती तक सह सकते हैं अगर बात आपके प्रेम की हो। चाहे दुनिया आपको बदलना चाहे तब भी आप बदलना नहीं चाहते, लेकिन आप अपने प्रेमी के लिए पूरी दुनिया को बदल देने की क्षमता रखते हैं।



प्रेम हमें अपने आप को उसे वक्त तक खींचने की क्षमता देता है ,जो हमने सोची तक नहीं थी। शायद नया-नया इस प्रकार के प्रेम को महसूस किया हूं। तो जरूर कहूंगा कि यह प्रेम भी एक अलग प्रकार का प्रेम है और इससे भागने की नहीं, अपितु इसको अपनाने की और इसे समझने की जरूरत जरूर है। यही प्रेम ही तो है जो कोई गीत सुनकर आपको किसी शख्स की याद दिलाता है।

जहां लगाव है, वहीं अलगाव है। तो प्रेमी संगिनी की बात हो और बिछड़न की ना हो ऐसा कैसे हो सकता है ! और बिछड़न का मतलब है दुख, दुख में हमें ईश्वर ही तो याद आते हैं । इसलिए लेख के अंत में मैं आपका आपके ईश्वर से प्रेम भी ज़ाहिर करना चाहूंगा। आपका अपने ईश्वर से यह प्रेम ही तो है जो उसके घर को पूजने और ईश्वर को सर्वज्ञ मानने में के लिए मजबूर करता है। जो आपके साथ आए दिन घटित हो रहा है वह अच्छा और बुरा सब ईश्वर की देन है। यह आपका उसके प्रति प्रेम ही तो है। और शायद अगर ईश्वर है, तो उनका आपको आज तक ज़िंदा रखना - क्या यह प्रेम नहीं है? नहीं तो कई जानलेवा बीमारियां चाहे तो दो दिन के मेहमान बना सकती हैं । उन्हें हमने 80 90 साल की उम्र तक जीते देखा है। यह ईश्वर का आपके प्रति प्रेम कहा जा सकता है।

मैं अक्सर यह पंक्तियां अपने मित्रों को कहता हूं और शायद यह आपको प्रेम की परिभाषा भी दे जाए इसलिए इसलिए इस लेख का अंत करते हुए दुष्यंत कुमार जी की कुछ पंक्तियां आपके लिए छोड़ जा रहा हूं -

"खुदा नहीं न सही आदमी का ख़्वाब सही

कोई हसीन नज़ारा तो है नज़र के लिए

वो मुतमइन हैं कि पत्थर पिघल नहीं सकता

मैं बे-क्रार हूँ आवाज़ में असर के लिए "

The Resurgent Spirit of India: A Call to Youth for National Greatness

~Anonymous

"Never lose your faith in the destiny of India" - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

What Netaji said many years ago in a completely different time and circumstances is applicable even today.

India is the oldest civilisation and has survived even to this day. All other civilisations except for the Chinese have been wiped out. In the ancient times, the major civilisations sprung up due to the presence of the rivers. Egyptian civilisation sprung up on the banks of the Nile river. However, the civilisation in India sprung up on the back of seven rivers which is why the landmass of India is often known as the Sapt Sindhu.

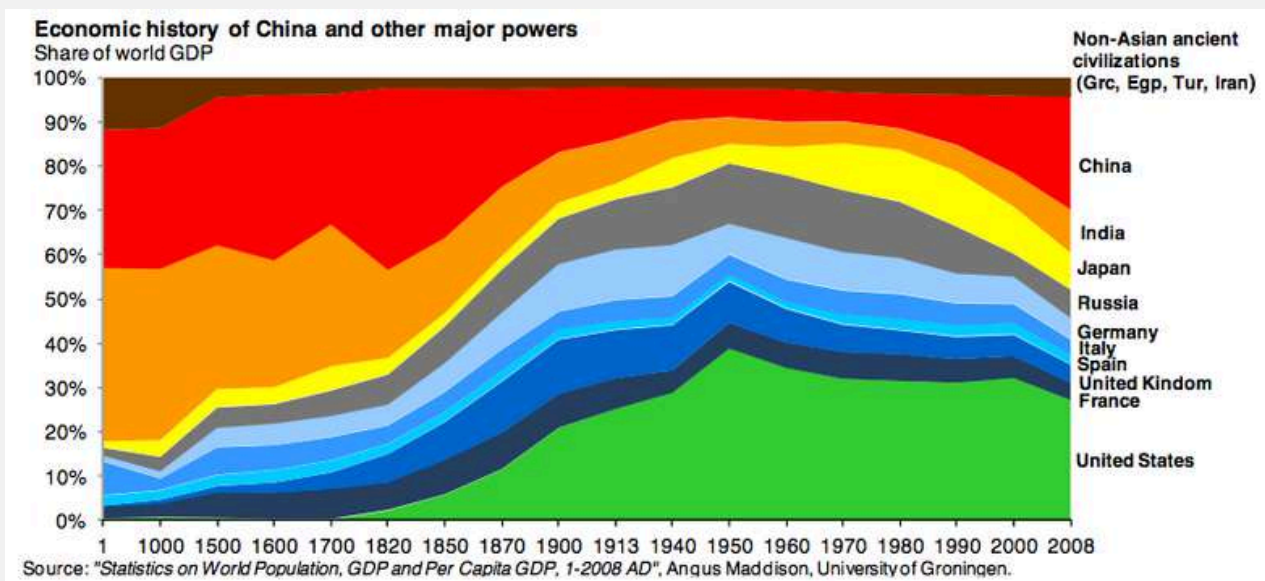
During the ancient era, India was known as a golden bird because of its wealth. It used to be one-third to one-fourth of the world GDP. It was but natural for foreign invaders to try to get their hands on the wealth of

India. However, the solid defence of India held up against such invaders. Even Alexander was fought to a standstill by Porus who ruled only a small province in modern day Pakistan.

However, the greatness of India fell along with the multiple invasions that battered India starting with the famous invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji who destroyed Nalanda University, one of the oldest and biggest universities in the entire world.

The reason I spoke about the greatness of our civilisation is to emphasise how it should be our foremost duty to regain that greatness.

Ever since foreign occupation, India has been losing its position in terms of greatness for the past 500 years. What used to be a nation holding 25%-30% of the world GDP reached as low as 3% of the world GDP in 1950 despite being one



of the largest countries in terms of population. Even when we look back a couple of decades, India used to be a country which few people used to refer to as one which is to be taken seriously.

However, now India is considered a force to be reckoned with. It is the most dominant power in the Indian Ocean region. It has the second-largest army in the world (second only to China and ahead of the United States). The Indian economy is currently the fifth largest in the world in terms of nominal GDP and is also the fastest-growing major economy. In a couple of years, it is expected to outstrip Germany and Japan to become the third-largest economy. When we look in terms of PPP, India is already the third-largest economy. Even the future holds rich prospects for India as it is expected to be the only major economy not projected to have a recession for the next couple of decades.

Today, all the major powers - Russia and the United States - are working hard towards maintaining friendship with India because they understand that India is the only nation which can provide an effective counter to the China threat. India's foreign relations has also never been better with good ties with both Israel and other middle eastern countries.



Source

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-balancing-act-between-russia-and-the-us-amidst-growing-tensions>

Today India is also reasserting its presence culturally with a focus on disseminating the greatness of yoga, rebuilding the Ram temple, etc. Destroying the colonial legacy and celebrating our heroes like Shivaji

Maharaj, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and felicitating them for their greatness and for their true contributions.

My point through this discourse is that India is making a comeback. However, the task is far from complete. This is just the beginning. We need to make further leaps in becoming the largest economy in the world, becoming militarily powerful, and spreading our culture all over the world. The task most definitely falls on us, the youth. We are the ones who will be carrying the nation on our shoulders on the path of greatness. Even minor contributions from each one of us can change a lot. One of the best things to have happened is the change in the attitude of Indians.

Our parents' and grandparents' generation used to be embarrassed of identifying themselves as Indians outside our country. They were not unjustified given India's position across all aspects. However, ever since liberalisation and the IT boom and India earning a space in the global IT industry, the attitude has seen a shift. Today the change is taking place towards one where we are proud of not only our nationality but also of our culture. This also has to translate into the work that we do. As Sanjeev Sanyal famously stated, certain regions, especially Bengal, had been suffering from the problem of poverty of aspiration.



Source 1 & Source 2

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/pm-modi-unveils-new-ensign-of-indian-navy-in-kochi/articleshow/93938890.cms>



We must make sure not to fall into such a trap as there is little rescue out of such a situation and ultimately leads to the hell hole situations Bengal and Bihar are experiencing today.

Our youth must be hungry for more and be willing to set our own standards. One of the interesting facts to be noted is that India is consistently ranked lower than countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc in indicators like press freedom index, democracy index. I have only point to make in response to this. India is a democracy which has survived for 77 long years. In spite of multiple political assassinations and civil unrest, elections have been conducted regularly in spite of huge cultural differences, whereas our neighbour has succumbed to military dictatorship in spite of having greater cultural homogeneity.

I am making it a point to assert that Indians know how to live harmoniously despite the occasional small fights. It is ingrained in our culture and this has been one of the greatest teachings from our history and our motherland. Never forget that in the ancient era India used to spread its culture all across the world. When we go to countries like China, Japan and the Southeast Asian countries, we will see a major presence of Indian culture everywhere.

My immediate recommendation as part of the foreign policy would be to enhance our diplomatic relations with our South-East Asian neighbours on this basis. We must not forget that Japan has been the country which helped us the most in our Independence struggle by helping the Azad Hind Fauj and the efforts of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Henceforth I give this as a call to all youth to never lose faith in the destiny of India because India is proving its grit even in this difficult time of impending economic crisis and war. There are multiple ways of serving the nation. Being great movie makers, entrepreneurs, political leaders are just some of the ways. Therefore, I urge all youth to join hands and work together to restore the greatness of our motherland to her ancient glory of **civilisational** greatness.

Jai Hind!



TRENDS

The K-pop Model of Soft Power and India's W.I.S.H

~ Sudeeksha Suman



After the release of the debut song, 'Lazeez' by the first Indian Pop girl group W.I.S.H on March 1st 2024, everyone has been wondering if India is also going to follow the K-pop model of soft power, taking I-pop to a new height.

The K-pop model of soft power can be called a tried and tested model in establishing one as a soft power leader. The South Korean economy has received huge benefits from their K-pop Idol groups. These Idol groups not only make music but also set trends for many industries. Some of the hugely influenced industries are Fashion, Cosmetics, Tourism, Plastic Surgery, etc. Initially, the influence of Idol groups was limited to SouthEast Asian Countries like China, Japan, and Taiwan, but this was later spread over throughout the world with the success of the Korean Boy Band 'BTS'. BTS opened a whole new market for Korean soft power and brought immense profit to the Korean economy. According to research, BTS attracts over 800,000 foreign tourists to Korea each year, stimulating 5 trillion Korean dollar spending every year.

The profit earned by private players like Hyundai, Samsung and Coca-Cola has seen an immense rise globally by appointing the boy band as their ambassador. South Korea is a country where an adult man has to serve in the military mandatorily, but considering the economic benefits BTS brought in, there was a heated discussion in the Korean National Assembly where the Defense Committee proposed to exempt the group from the service. BTS may be the one to make this model successful in the global market but they are not the only one, there are several other boy bands and girl bands following in their footsteps.

The K-pop Industry is led by the production houses among which there are three houses on the top of the pyramid. Majorly the market is controlled by them but once in a while a band belonging to a smaller production house is able to make it big like BTS who belonged to a smaller production house.



These houses hold frequent auditions to select the Idol trainees. The Korean government also facilitates this by having several talent hunt shows and competitions both televised and non-televised, they also organize several music festivals both inside and outside the country. These trainees then go through brutal training where they are constantly monitored in every aspect. These trainees are trained in music as well as dance or even acting for that matter.

In the training, the houses strictly monitor every aspect of their private and professional life starting from their diets, clothes, friends, relationships, and personal as well as social communication. Often the members have to sign unfairly long contracts with the houses lasting for 20 years which is also commonly termed as a 'slave contract'. In this aspect, the K-pop industry has seen many lawsuits regarding human rights violations.

However, the Korean government has been very vigilant when it comes to copyright and performer protection laws. The laws have been frequently updated with the change in technology to protect the performers and the golden goose K-pop Industry. A few years ago, the maximum contract length one can sign with the labels was reduced to 7 years and recently an aspect of mental health care among others was added to the performers' protection laws. They also provide support to the artists by funding their travels and world tour concerts.

The Indian Music Industry has been dominated by the film music produced by the playback singers in Bollywood movies, with the majority of the rights to the music belonging to the production houses where the singers and musicians were not even given a share of royalty earned by their music. The production houses would further license or assign copyrights to the record labels. The performers often lost a huge amount of earnings which was produced because of the outside film commission of their work in the form of ringtones, radio, tv broadcasts, public performances, etc.

This was because of the unfair copyright law validated by the Supreme Court where the rights belonged to the producers under employment or work-for-hire contracts. This not only affected the film musicians but also the non-film musicians such as the classical and ghazal performers, they were also not given the rights to the royalties earned by their work and were mostly taken by the record companies. These laws changed with time but the Indian law-making body and the law making process is so slow that the bridging gap between the technology and the laws keeps on getting wider.

The introduction of online platforms like YouTube, Spotify, etc brought in a new revolution in terms of the music industry as it brought in independent performers who published their works on these platforms bringing in the phenomenon of platformization. However, the laws were not enough to protect the rights of these performers from being exploited by the huge record labels. The platforms also suffered from the monopoly of the major record labels, one of the recent examples seen can be the feud between Zee Music and Spotify where Spotify was forced to remove all the songs under the Zee Music labels for months.

The Indian Laws are not known for accommodating easily with time and technology, but in this same environment, we see a rise in the new type of performers segment, with W.I.S.H leading under Sony Music India with Mikey McCleary as their producer. W.I.S.H consists of four female members three of them from Mumbai and one from Chennai. They were all handpicked and approached by McCleary and his team. All the members were already promoting their own music through the online platform that caught the attention of McCleary. They broadly follow the K-pop model. Initially, they were trained in both music and dance and later debuted with their music video “Lazeez”. The members are seen following a dance choreography



as the K-pop Idols are often expected to dance as well as sing, giving out a whole power-packed performance. They have also had a fixed weekly live interaction with their fans on Wednesday following the K-pop model. In their music video, they have a tagline, “Careful what you wish for”, which is something that can be noticed in the music videos of a K-pop girl group BLACKPINK whose tagline is, “Blackpink in your area”.

Sony Music is one of the major dominating record labels in India and being the first one to introduce an I-pop band in the markets is



presented with a large portion of the pie to bite on. This can be seen as Sony Music trying to establish themselves as one of the big I-pop similar to the Korean market's Big three. This came up during a time when the independent artists are gaining a huge support from the Indian audience whereas Bollywood Music has seen a huge decline in the supporters. The other labels will soon join this trend of launching their own I-pop groups. I-pop has huge potential to take the Indian Music Industry forward and to make an identity for India as a global soft power but only if the laws are favorable and the government is supportive towards the performers and the industry. If the government leaves the industry on its own then these performers can also get exploited by the labels as the performers have a long history of getting exploited by the hands of the labels and production houses throughout the world.

India's Startup Landscape

~Divy Dhanotiya

~Raghvendra Singh Chouhan

On 23 July 2021, BSE and NSE rang up the bell for the day's session it was also the ringing of a historic date for Indian Startups. Zomato, one of the poster children of the Indian startup ecosystem got listed on its biggest stock markets. The listing signalled a small victory for an ecosystem that has overcome many hurdles. Today, the Indian startup ecosystem is creating over 12.42 lakh direct jobs, and is 1.17 lakh startups strong, according to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), as of 31 December 2023.

When we look at the history since independence, till the decade of the 1990s, the Indian economy remained dependent on agriculture, small businesses, and PASUs. When the policy of liberalization, privatization, and globalization came, major changes took place in the Indian economy as foreign companies started coming to India, and Indian companies started flourishing with the help of foreign participation. LPG reforms removed many restrictions on the private sector but had negative effects too. After the LPG reforms, India's economy became increasingly dependent on foreign investment, making the Indian economy more vulnerable to global economic fluctuations, as foreign investors could easily withdraw their investments. Another factor holding back economic growth was the lack of new business developments and inventions that could solve problems with technology developed inside the country, thus reducing dependence on foreign companies.

Starting a new business in India remained a challenge despite the LPG reforms. Infosys founder Narayana Murthy described the



Indian environment in the early 1980s was extremely business-unfriendly. Obtaining the basic technology needed to run a company was a battle because of slow bureaucracy and lengthy procedures. He remembers waiting a year for a telephone connection and three years for a license to import computers. He adds, "We had a joke: half the people in the country are waiting for a telephone, and the other half are waiting for a dial tone". Due to the unfavourable conditions in entrepreneurship and challenges in career growth and job opportunities, India experienced a brain drain. Many talented individuals started working in Western countries due to a lack of opportunities within the country. This phenomenon can be observed with a simple exercise of looking at the names of top managerial position holders of many of the world's best companies.

This list includes Satya Nadela of Microsoft, Sundar Pichai of Google, and Arvind Krishna of IBM. The effects of the brain drain were exasperated by the lack of support for entrepreneurs in the country. This lack of support came from the non-existent startup ecosystem that could foster these new ideas and help them.

These obstacles hindered the realization of India's entrepreneurial potential.

India needed their own homegrown Napster, Apple, and Microsoft to change this mindset and spark a wave of entrepreneurship. The Founders and teams at Flipkart, Paytm, Snapdeal, Ola, and PolicyBazaar did that. They did the hard work to lay the groundwork for the startup ecosystem in India. These Innovators overcame the systematic hurdles with out-of-the-box thinking and perseverance.

Yet, India needed a better policy and social ecosystem to realize the potential of its beneficial demographic change and find solutions to its deep-rooted systemic problems. The government changed in the mid-2010s, and policymakers recognized the significant role that startups could play in economic growth and employment generation. This newfound support appeared as a favourable regulatory framework and new initiatives aimed at nurturing the startup ecosystem. The Govt support was focused on promoting a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The advent of the Internet era put the boosters on the development of Indian startups. It broadened their access to markets, capital, and global talent. As their reach in the market became significant, they started to attract the attention of top venture capital firms and investors worldwide, a sign of a renewed trust in India's potential as a centre for innovation and technology. Schemes like Fund of Funds for Startups, Startup India Seed Fund Scheme, and Credit Guarantee Scheme support these new companies in different stages of their business cycle.

As the Indian startup story was getting off the ground came COVID-19. It brought with it a set of challenges. Now, challenges in front of Startups included dealing with WFH, funding freeze, and interrupted operations, which tested their flexibility and adaptability.

However, the response from Indian startups was remarkable, as they quickly adapted to the new Normal". They used their out-of-the-box thinking to leverage technology to address the challenges of the pandemic.

In addition, collective support from society, government, and various stakeholders played an important role in enabling startups in the storm season and emerging strong on the other side. This resilience and determination demonstrated the maturity and depth of India's startup ecosystem, Elevating this ecosystem to a global leader in innovation and entrepreneurship. India now has the third-largest startup ecosystem, a testament to the country's entrepreneurial spirit and ability to promote mass innovation.

This development trajectory is all more influential, which India has encountered historically, especially in economic development. One of the remarkable characteristics of the Indian startup ecosystem is its wide reach, unlike in the US and other countries. Indian startups are not limited to big metros but are now springing up tier 2-3 cities.

India now has at least one recognized startup in every state and union territory, with more than 80% of the districts. This wide distribution underscores the inclusive nature of the startup revolution, underscoring economic development and opportunities across the country. With ample opportunities for growth and expansion, the future appears bright for Indian startups. With continued support from all quarters, India is well positioned to launch its huge talent pool and entrepreneurial energy to bring positive change and shape the future of innovation globally.

“

**I had always been feeling uncomfortable in my
mind about giving advice to others and not
acting upon it myself.**

”

~LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI



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